

In The Matter Of:
*BEFORE THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION*

December 20, 2018

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BEFORE THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

DECEMBER 20, 2018
10:00 A.M.

A P P E A R A N C E S

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| MR. JOHNNY KEY | Commissioner (Non-Voting) |
| DR. JAY BARTH | Chairman |
| MS. CHARISSE DEAN | Vice Chairman |
| MS. DIANE ZOOK | Board Member |
| MR. R. BRETT WILLIAMSON | Board Member |
| MS. OUIDA NEWTON | Board Member |
| DR. FITZGERALD HILL | Board Member |
| DR. SARAH MOORE | Board Member |
| MS. KATHY McFETRIDGE | Board Member |
| MS. SUSAN CHAMBERS (via phone) | Board Member |

ADE LEGAL COUNSEL:

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| MS. LORI FRENO | ADE General Counsel |
| MS. COURTNEY SALAS-FORD | ADE Deputy General Counsel |
| MS. JENNIFER DEDMAN | ADE Attorney Supervisor |
| MS. MARY CLAIRE HYATT | ADE Attorney |
| MR. TAYLOR DUGAN | ADE Attorney |

LOCATION:

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
#1 Capitol Mall - Auditorium
Little Rock, AR

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E X H I B I T S

A-2(a) - LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT

EXHIBIT ONE (1)

LRSD Presentation, "Fit to Dream, Disrupt, and Deliver" (provided by Supt. Poore)

EXHIBIT TWO (2)

Communications (provided by Audie Alumbaugh)

EXHIBIT THREE (3)

Letter from IMSE re: Orton-Gillingham program
(provided by Audie Alumbaugh)

EXHIBIT FOUR (4)

Graph: Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child
(provided by Senator Joyce Elliott)

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Good morning, everyone.

3 Welcome to the special meeting of the State Board of
4 Education. I want to note that Susan Chambers is on
5 the phone and so we do have everyone here, either in
6 person or on the phone today.

7 A couple of housekeeping items -- first off,
8 this room is -- surprise, surprise -- at capacity;
9 160 is our capacity. And so we do need to ask if
10 folks could -- we'd appreciate folks not standing.
11 Folks do need to kind of go out if you do have -- and
12 there is an overflow, of course, in the lobby; there
13 is also overflow down the hall on the left, and TVs
14 are available there. I will try -- once we get to
15 the public comment period, assuming we accept public
16 comment, then I would -- I will try to give a few
17 names in advance to give you, if you are in an
18 overflow room, time to get down to this room. We
19 will, of course, take a couple of breaks throughout
20 the day, and some folks may head out and they open up
21 new seats in this room. Okay. So thank you for your
22 cooperation there.

23 I do want to recognize a few elected officials
24 who are here, some of whom I think do want to speak
25 when items come up -- Representative Ferguson is

1 here, Representative Flowers, Senator Elliott,
2 Representative Sorvillo, Representative-elect
3 McCullough, Representative Lowery, Senator English,
4 Senator Johnson, Senator Bond, and Lieutenant
5 Governor Griffin. So those folks are here and some
6 of them will likely want to have their voices heard
7 at some point in the process as well.

8 So here is our game plan for today. It's only
9 two items, but we want to take both of them seriously
10 and have, I know, healthy conversation among the
11 Board. It is our tradition, of course, to also
12 accept public comment. What might be easiest is if
13 we could go ahead and consider the issue of accepting
14 public comment in general, and then we will deal with
15 specific public comments on the items as they come
16 before us. And so if a member of the Board is
17 willing to make a motion on acceptance of public
18 comment, I would entertain that motion now.

19 MS. NEWTON: So moved.

20 MS. ZOOK: Second.

21 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Motion by Ms. Newton, second by
22 Ms. Zook.

23 All in favor say "aye."

24 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Opposed same sign.

1 Okay. And for folks who have signed up, we will
2 ask you to make your public comment at the time of
3 the issue that's on the agenda. There are some folks
4 who have signed up for public comment; it's a little
5 confusing which item they're on, and so I may have to
6 ask some questions along the way to be sure that I've
7 got folks on the right items.

8 A-1: CONSIDERATION OF WAIVER OF EDUCATION-RELATED LAWS IN THE
9 PINE BLUFF SCHOOL DISTRICT

10 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Now we're -- our first item up
11 today is an item that was on the agenda at our
12 meeting last week. This is Consideration of Waiver
13 of Education-Related Laws in the Pine Bluff School
14 District, which is a Level 5 school district.

15 This is my game plan for this item, and a
16 similar game plan for the next item. First item,
17 this comes as a recommendation from the Department,
18 and so I will first give the Department an
19 opportunity, either the Commissioner and/or Dr.
20 Hernandez, to introduce the item. We'll see what
21 questions the board members have of the Department.
22 I'll then give Dr. Owoh, the superintendent, the
23 opportunity to present as well, and see what
24 questions are there. Then we would move into public
25 comment. I would ask board members if we could save

1 motions until after the conclusion of the public
2 comment period, and that would be the time where we
3 would move into motions and then move into any
4 substitutes, considerations, and ultimately votes of
5 that. Is that -- everybody -- does that work for
6 everyone? We'll have a very similar process when we
7 get to Little Rock later in the day.

8 Okay. And so, Commissioner, I'll give this to
9 you.

10 COMMISSIONER KEY: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

11 Dr. Hernandez is available to answer questions.

12 The actual presentation you received last week
13 with the quarterly report on both Pine Bluff and on
14 Little Rock, but I do have something that I would
15 like to begin this with -- and really this applies to
16 both of these items. We also, again, want to make
17 sure you know if you have specific questions about
18 Pine Bluff after reviewing their quarterly report
19 last week that Dr. Hernandez is here to answer them
20 and Dr. Owoh as well.

21 So, you know, this is obviously a very tense,
22 controversial issue that we are dealing with today --
23 or a number of issues. And as many of my fellow
24 Arkansans when we're faced with tense and
25 controversial issues we -- personally, I take solace

1 in --

2 (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: The lights in the
3 auditorium become dim.)

4 COMMISSIONER KEY: Mr. Gilmore, I think you're
5 leaning against the switch there.

6 (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: The lights go back up.)

7 COMMISSIONER KEY: There you go. All right.

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: An auspicious start to the day.

9 COMMISSIONER KEY: Yes. Yes. Yeah, always be
10 careful when your back is against the wall, right?

11 So I take solace, as many Arkansans do, from the
12 wisdom of the Bible and I also take wisdom from the
13 Constitution of the State of Arkansas, which is
14 indeed the foundation of which our government in this
15 state has been laid, and it was by the People. And I
16 want to read to you, just so we as the Department, as
17 Board Members, we can all understand some of the
18 elements that we're working from here.

19 Article 14 -- we all know it, we've heard it,
20 we've read it -- "Intelligence and virtue being the
21 safeguards of liberty and the bulwark of a free and
22 good government, the State shall ever maintain a
23 general, suitable, and efficient system of free
24 public schools and shall adopt all suitable means to
25 secure to the People the advantages and opportunities

1 of education."

2 Another section that addresses the supervision
3 of public schools, "And the execution of the laws
4 regulating same shall be vested in and confided to
5 such officers as may be provided for by the General
6 Assembly." Those are this Board. You are those
7 officers that the General Assembly has established to
8 and confided in you that power and authority.

9 The items you are considering today are in
10 keeping with what the People of Arkansas have spoken
11 through the Constitution and have enabled through the
12 General Assembly and with what has been interpreted
13 clearly by the Arkansas Supreme Court.

14 We've learned a number of important things from
15 the history of state-controlled districts using this
16 authority provided by the General Assembly. One,
17 correcting fiscal issues is much, much easier and
18 quicker than correcting academic issues; academic
19 turnaround takes time. Two, during the time of state
20 control of Little Rock School District through two
21 Commissioners, through three Superintendents, making
22 true progress takes more than just asking one person,
23 the Superintendent, to make turnaround happen. It
24 requires a team of people who are committed to
25 changing the policies and practices of the district

1 and the actions of adults that influence student
2 learning. Throughout this Agency and with the
3 addition of Dr. Hernandez and the Office of
4 Coordinated Support and Service we have created the
5 support team, and each member of that team performs
6 with the utmost integrity and dedication to student
7 success.

8 We've also learned that changing policies,
9 practices, and adult actions can be extremely
10 difficult, which is why the General Assembly granted
11 you, the State Board, the authority to exert certain
12 directives and waive certain education laws,
13 including laws that some deem sacrosanct like the
14 Teacher Fair Dismissal law. When the State Board
15 determines a district is failing to meet the needs of
16 students at the levels demanded by the Constitution,
17 the State Board must also grant the needed level of
18 flexibility to address the policies, practices, and
19 adult actions.

20 If you grant the waiver of Teacher Fair
21 Dismissal and the Employee Fair Hearing laws, I
22 assure you that the waiver will be used judiciously,
23 with equity and integrity. I even ask you to limit
24 the time of the waiver to extend only through the
25 2019-20 school year. The need for this limitation

1 became apparent to me when a group of teachers from a
2 low-performing school met with me. They made an
3 earnest effort to bring reasonable ideas to the table
4 to address issues in the struggling schools. They
5 were concerned the waiver would be in place
6 permanently. They agreed that there was a need to
7 change adult actions in their school and in others.
8 They were concerned that the waiver would apply only
9 to classroom teachers, while they believe some of the
10 performance issues of the district were due to
11 ineffective personnel at other levels. They also
12 implored me not to divulge their names due to fear of
13 reprisals from colleagues --

14 [SOME AUDIENCE LAUGHTER]

15 COMMISSIONER KEY: -- due to fears of reprisals
16 from colleagues and possibly others in the community.
17 Sadly, subsequent events proved their fear of
18 reprisal to be founded. But their willingness to
19 reach out to me and share their perspective helped me
20 realize that there are educators who understand the
21 importance of changing policies, practices, and adult
22 actions to create a better learning opportunity for
23 students, even if those changes create discomfort for
24 the adults.

25 Finally, I support and with all expedience will

1 implement any other directives you may approve today.
2 Beyond the educational obligation in the Arkansas
3 Constitution we must embrace a moral urgency to
4 students -- to the students in Pine Bluff, to the
5 students in Little Rock, to the students in any other
6 district where we are working -- not to the adults of
7 the Department of Education or the State Board, not
8 to the adults of the Little Rock School District, not
9 to the Commissioner, not to the Superintendent, not
10 even to the Governor -- but a moral urgency to the
11 students whose education needs have not been served
12 by past policies, practices, and adult actions.

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you. I'll then go to Dr.
14 Hernandez for --

15 COMMISSIONER KEY: If there are any questions.

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. And so Dr. Hernandez is
17 here for any questions related to the presentation of
18 this item. And then I do want to give the
19 Superintendent the opportunity.

20 Any questions of the Department?

21 [MOMENT OF SILENCE]

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. And so, Dr. Owoh, if you
23 will come up. And I am on the -- on the advice of
24 counsel I am going to go ahead and swear everybody --
25 not the public comment, but folks who actually

1 present today, if that's all right.

2 Do you swear or affirm the testimony you're
3 about to give shall be the truth, the whole truth,
4 and nothing but the truth?

5 SUPT. OWOH: I do.

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Great. Thank you. So I'll let
7 you take it away.

8 SUPT. OWOH: Jeremy Owoh, Superintendent, Pine
9 Bluff School District.

10 Am I answering questions or --

11 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. I will -- I think Dr.
12 Moore has questions. I'll just start over here and
13 we'll come this way.

14 DR. MOORE: Yes. Good morning, Dr. Owoh. Thank
15 you --

16 SUPT. OWOH: Good morning.

17 DR. MOORE: -- for your work. We spoke briefly
18 before this, but I did want to ask you a little bit
19 further. Currently in your policy handbook in the
20 Pine Bluff School District there is a process for
21 grievance if a teacher is terminated. If we grant
22 this waiver, what will that process be --

23 SUPT. OWOH: Yes.

24 DR. MOORE: -- if a teacher is terminated?

25 SUPT. OWOH: Yes, ma'am. There is a policy for

1 all educators, licensed personnel. The first level
2 is Level 1 and that goes to the immediate supervisor,
3 the building principal or the department leader. The
4 second appeal is Level 2, which will be my level, at
5 the superintendency level. And then the Level 3
6 appeal will be to the board -- and in their place, of
7 course, the ADE hearing panel will conduct that
8 hearing.

9 DR. MOORE: Okay. So even if we -- when we --
10 if we were to grant this waiver that process would
11 still be in place --

12 SUPT. OWOH: Yes.

13 DR. MOORE: -- for a teacher or principal or
14 anyone who is terminated under this?

15 SUPT. OWOH: That's correct.

16 DR. MOORE: Okay. Thank you.

17 SUPT. OWOH: Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Mr. Williamson?

19 MR. WILLIAMSON: No, sir.

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Ms. Zook?

21 MS. ZOOK: No.

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: I do have a question, just
23 coming around, and I just wanted some clarification.
24 So it was reported that you were unaware of the
25 request coming from the Department last -- at the

1 meeting last week. Is that accurate?

2 SUPT. OWOH: Yes, sir. Well, I'll tell you
3 this: I knew the possibilities of waivers being
4 proposed as early as November, when we first came to
5 do the report. And so, I was briefed that there
6 would be some possible waivers at the December
7 meeting as well. Yes, sir.

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Uh-huh. So you were unaware at
9 this point --

10 SUPT. OWOH: What the specific waivers would be.

11 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. And were you -- is it --
12 even in your heart do you feel that this is the best
13 path forward at this time for moving the district
14 forward or not?

15 SUPT. OWOH: Thank you, Dr. Barth. I have
16 thought about it; I've thought about it personally
17 and professionally. And through starting my time in
18 Pine Bluff I wanted to make sure that all of my
19 decisions were informed decisions based on my direct
20 observation. So I have spent time throughout the
21 district, in the schools, speaking with staff
22 members, as well as community members, our students
23 who we really need to make sure that we're always
24 focused on. And, honestly, professionally I will
25 tell you that there's more of a concern about

1 personnel outside the classroom than personnel inside
2 the classroom. I feel and for what I'm seeing that
3 if we as leaders continue to start and continue the
4 support that our teachers need, that our students
5 need, that we follow the TESS support system as it
6 was designed to do and support our teachers, our --
7 all licensed staff members, as well as the LEADS
8 process, then we could have the change that we needed
9 --- that we need, that our students deserve. But
10 what I've seen since I've been in Pine Bluff is that
11 there's not a consistent use of TESS, nor LEADS.
12 There's not a consistent support system. There is
13 not consistent effective professional learning to
14 address the needs that we have in our district.
15 There has not been a consistent focus on what's best
16 for our students and our parents as we move forward
17 -- and that has been the biggest or the most
18 significant aspect or situation that I've dealt with.
19 And so with this waiver -- I will admit I'm never
20 comfortable when we're waiving educational laws or
21 any laws.

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Uh-huh.

23 SUPT. OWOH: But --

24 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

25 SUPT. OWOH: But I will say that we need

1 significant change, and what that looks like -- I can
2 tell you that this is uncharted territory. I've
3 never known a school system in the state of Arkansas
4 to waive it, so I do not know what it would look
5 like, what the process would be. But I do know that
6 work must be done at the leadership level.

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. And assuming that to be
8 -- and I have no doubt of your -- because I think you
9 have been on the ground long enough to have an
10 understanding -- you do have some flexibility when it
11 comes to who is leading, in the leadership roles in
12 the district, right, without -- under current law, in
13 terms of removing them from those positions of
14 leadership?

15 SUPT. OWOH: We still will have to follow the
16 same process as --

17 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Right, to -- right, to -- and
18 so if this waiver was applied only to -- not to
19 classroom teachers but to the leadership, those folks
20 who are in leadership roles, what I'm hearing from
21 you is that that is where the most significant
22 challenges exist, based on your early impressions of
23 the district?

24 SUPT. OWOH: Yes, sir. Because it's -- right
25 now, because the leadership consistently has not been

1 there, the support, professionally I cannot say that
2 our teaching staff has had the opportunity to do
3 their job as we need them to do.

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Thank you.

5 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Let's -- I do want to ask folks
7 not please -- this is going to be a long day. And so
8 I would please ask not -- folks not to clap. Clap
9 internally, snap, whatever. But please don't clap to
10 delay our consideration. Thank you.

11 DR. HILL: Dr. Owoh, just one question based on
12 what you -- so if this law -- if this -- the Board
13 approves to pass the Fair Dismissal, remove it, will
14 that prohibit you from doing what needs to be done to
15 -- as you look at the TESS, the things you're talking
16 about, you know what you need to do to improve. So
17 as a board we're here to help you do what needs to be
18 done, as you said, to support the learning in the
19 classroom.

20 SUPT. OWOH: Yes, sir.

21 DR. HILL: So what do you need to do that? And
22 so are you saying what currently is in place allows
23 you to do that?

24 SUPT. OWOH: Well, the process is still -- we
25 would still have to follow the TESS and LEADS process

1 as it stands today. And so, it's a longer process
2 with leaders and with our teaching staff, with all
3 our -- all of our licensed educators. And so what I
4 am saying is that our teachers, our students really
5 need the support -- and whatever it takes to insure
6 that we have immediate support and resources and
7 guidance, monitoring, all of that, then that's what
8 needs to take place. And I feel like that based on
9 what I've seen these past few months is that the most
10 accurate assessment would have to start with the
11 leadership. We have to make sure the leadership is
12 exhausting all avenues of -- and insuring that our
13 teachers, not just that -- the expectation that they
14 are providing the very best education, but they have
15 the resources and the opportunities to do so, which
16 means we have to follow TESS. TESS is the support
17 system. And if we're not following the Teacher
18 Excellence Support System, nor the LEADS support
19 system, then it's hard to assess if we're actually
20 doing all that we can on our part. And that's the
21 most significant, I think, aspect of this is really
22 assessing if we have the right leaders in the right
23 roles, or the right people in general in the right
24 roles, and how quickly can we move down in insuring
25 that the right people are in the right roles. And

1 right now the process is lengthy because of the
2 appeal processes, and so we could -- it could be
3 longer than a year or so before we can make sure that
4 we have the right people in place because of the
5 process, the current process.

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Newton?

7 MS. NEWTON: Dr. Owoh, I want to applaud your
8 understanding that teachers need support and that
9 teachers deserve support and that leadership is
10 important in a district. And so thank you for that.

11 My question has to do with your staff size a
12 little bit. Do you know approximately how much size
13 reduction that you're going to be facing over the
14 next year or so?

15 SUPT. OWOH: Not accurate numbers. No, ma'am.
16 I know currently we have about 235 licensed educators
17 and about 260 classified staff members. And so what
18 we're doing -- and I also know that this past year we
19 had a drop or a decrease in student enrollment of
20 about 450 students, but we did not have the
21 equivalent decrease in personnel members. And so
22 over the break those are the -- that's the work that
23 we're going to start putting pen to paper. We've
24 started the reduction-in-force process of just
25 notifying people about their points. And now we're

1 looking at exactly what we need to make sure that the
2 schools are still supported, but also making sure we
3 have the essential personnel at the district level
4 enabling to -- and able for us to run a 3200
5 enrollment district effectively and efficiently.

6 MS. NEWTON: And I realize that when you're
7 looking at a reduction of force that difficult
8 decisions will have to be made. But, you know, you
9 brought out a great point and I'm very appreciative
10 that leadership -- it has to be the right leaders in
11 the right positions. And would this waiver help you
12 to be able to get the correct people in the correct
13 positions?

14 SUPT. OWOH: Based upon from what I've read and
15 based on -- upon our current -- the waiver of Teacher
16 Fair Dismissal or the outline of Teacher Fair
17 Dismissal and our current process and our board
18 policy, the waiver would expedite that process
19 because of the waiving of the process which is under
20 Teacher Fair Dismissal.

21 MS. NEWTON: And so this would allow you to get
22 the right leaders, the right teachers in the
23 positions that they are most -- I don't want to use
24 the word "qualified for," but their expertise is the
25 best in that particular area. This would allow you

1 to move people, to place people, to get your staff in
2 the best position for students to have the
3 opportunities that they deserve?

4 SUPT. OWOH: Yes, ma'am. And I'll tell you,
5 that has been our goal from day-one. It would just
6 be expedited. And I will also -- I want to make sure
7 I'm clear on this, that we have good leaders in the
8 district.

9 MS. NEWTON: I understand that.

10 SUPT. OWOH: But it's not consistent.

11 MS. NEWTON: Uh-huh.

12 SUPT. OWOH: It's not consistent at the building
13 level K-12 and it's not consistent at the district
14 level. And so we have to make sure that we have --
15 and that's before we even really get into the
16 classroom and see -- because we were in there. But
17 if the leadership is not effective in making sure
18 that they're providing those essential supports, then
19 it's hard for us to really to have a true assessment
20 on really what's needed or what needs to be done in
21 the classroom.

22 MS. NEWTON: All right. And, you know -- and,
23 you know, some of the decisions that we're making
24 today are very difficult. But I always go back to
25 the students, you know, and think about them. And,

1 you know, I'm looking at a crowd, but I'm also
2 thinking about, you know, your students that are back
3 in your district; you know, they're waiting for their
4 opportunities and they're waiting for what they
5 deserve. And, you know, how long do we make them
6 wait is -- I guess is my question. So, thank you.

7 SUPT. OWOH: Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. McFetridge?

9 MS. McFETRIDGE: I'm good. Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Ms. Chambers, do you
11 have anything on the phone?

12 MS. CHAMBERS: Yes. Thank you, Dr. Barth. A
13 couple of questions. Can you hear me okay?

14 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yes, perfect.

15 MS. CHAMBERS: Okay. To follow-up on what Ms.
16 Newton was just talking about -- so, Dr. Owoh, I
17 think you've been helpful because I'm hearing much
18 more of an impetus on getting our faculty and
19 administration at the right size for our current
20 student population. I also had in my head there was
21 a performance element that we're also needing to
22 address to some extent, less than consistent
23 performance from teachers across the board -- and
24 maybe I'm incorrect. But it comes back to your early
25 comments which almost sounded as if what we were

1 trying to solve was different than what this waiver
2 specifically was going to address. So my question
3 is: is there any better way, in your opinion, for us
4 to support you in the changes that you feel are
5 necessary? Is there a different way to execute the
6 Fair Teacher Dismissal policy that's currently in
7 place, or is this what is needed for what you are
8 trying to accomplish for the students right now?

9 SUPT. OWOH: Thank you, Ms. Chambers.

10 Honestly, because it's never been done, I
11 couldn't tell you if -- I couldn't honestly tell you
12 or professionally tell you that it is what's needed
13 because I do not have a model to -- or an example or
14 a situation or case to review and to research. And
15 so I'm not sure if it is -- the waiver of the Teacher
16 Fair Dismissal would solve the issues. I do know
17 that our students deserve a quick change. They
18 deserve the same consistency that they have in two
19 classes at one grade level, three classes at another
20 grade level; it should be consistent each grade
21 level. The matter that we're facing is that each
22 year our students come to the next grade level two or
23 three grade levels behind, so that shows that there's
24 some inconsistencies there. And so that's what
25 should be the discussion -- how do we really address

1 the fact that our students are not receiving the
2 skills, receiving the support that they need to be
3 successful. And if there's attendance issues, if
4 there are other issues that our students are facing,
5 we need to be ready to address that.

6 And so I don't know if it's so much at the
7 teacher level, like I've stated before, or more so at
8 the leadership -- at the building level or at the
9 district level leadership. And so whatever we can do
10 to impact significant change with that process, I
11 think that's what -- the direction that the district
12 needs to move forward in.

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

14 MS. CHAMBERS: Jay, if I could ask one more
15 question?

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yeah, sure.

17 MS. CHAMBERS: Dr. Owoh, do you have any other
18 specific recommendations not currently on the table
19 that get at the last thing that you just said?

20 SUPT. OWOH: No, ma'am, I do not.

21 MS. CHAMBERS: Okay. Thank you.

22 SUPT. OWOH: Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Zook?

24 MS. ZOOK: Yes. Can you explain to me the RIF
25 policy in Pine Bluff and why that might or might not

1 be helpful as far as the goals you want to achieve
2 for your students?

3 SUPT. OWOH: Well, according to the board
4 policy, our reduction-in-force policy starts with the
5 calculating of a points list. And the -- for
6 licensed educators it's the number of years in the
7 Pine Bluff School District, shortage areas, the
8 degrees, the level of degrees -- masters, masters
9 plus 30, and so-forth -- as well as the number of
10 grade levels that a licensed educator has on his or
11 her license. And so after the certain points are
12 calculated, they have a total of points. And so the
13 individual with the highest points of course are
14 placed at the top. So if you have an educator with
15 just a bachelor's or with a lower number of years in
16 the district, they would be the ones RIF'd first. In
17 our case, since we have 41 1240 educators, because
18 the graduate degree section is for licensed areas,
19 then they would have less points. And of course our
20 policy states that any person that does not have a
21 full license, full licensure, would not be -- the
22 person with the full licensure would be granted more
23 priority than the person without the full license.

24 MS. ZOOK: So it's based most -- more on number
25 of years and degrees and those kinds of things than

1 necessarily assessed effectiveness with a student?

2 SUPT. OWOH: Yes, ma'am.

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Any other -- Dr. Hill?

4 DR. HILL: So based on you saying that this has
5 never been done and so we're charting new frontier,
6 do you perceive that the Teacher Fair Dismissal Act
7 will assist or not assist you in reaching the goals
8 that you have assessed that you need to do moving
9 this district forward? Do you perceive this will
10 help you or it won't help you?

11 SUPT. OWOH: And, Dr. Hill --

12 DR. HILL: And the only reason I'm saying it,
13 just as a way to give you support. Because as she
14 said, as we sit here and think about the babies in
15 the class -- and you're the leader --

16 SUPT. OWOH: Right.

17 DR. HILL: We're not there. We're not -- we
18 don't do that there; we do policy.

19 SUPT. OWOH: Right. Right.

20 DR. HILL: And I want -- and so we want to
21 insure assistance, you have every avenue to do what
22 you need to do -- but also understanding that by
23 asking this that you're not -- you still -- as I
24 heard, due process takes place; you make sure that
25 everything -- you're just -- we're giving you the

1 flexibility to do what you need to do to move
2 forward, your perceptions. Because you said there's
3 not a case study, there's not anything there. But
4 what do you need? Does this Act help or not?

5 SUPT. OWOH: And, Dr. Hill, I wish I had -- I
6 think -- I wish it was that simple. But, honestly, I
7 can tell you I don't know because --

8 DR. HILL: Well, I guess my question -- what
9 helps you? I mean, because you're the head -- you're
10 the --

11 SUPT. OWOH: Right.

12 DR. HILL: -- CEO. And so based on the months
13 you've been there --

14 SUPT. OWOH: Right. And, honestly, what I would
15 -- I would say that what would help me is the fact
16 that we have a consistent support system across K-12,
17 our K-12 district, and that the leadership is strong,
18 it's consistent; we have processes in place that
19 everyone -- and policies in place that everyone
20 adhere to; and that when decisions are made they're
21 always made in how it will impact our students every
22 day throughout the year. And so I just -- honestly,
23 I couldn't answer that question if -- either way, if
24 it would benefit us or not.

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. All right. Dr.

1 Moore.

2 DR. MOORE: Yeah, I do have some more questions.
3 Thank you.

4 SUPT. OWOH: Yes, ma'am.

5 DR. MOORE: So you said you had a drop in
6 enrollment of 400 students in this -- from last year
7 to this year. Is that correct?

8 SUPT. OWOH: Yes, ma'am.

9 DR. MOORE: And the district has seen a decrease
10 in -- decline in enrollment over the past decade?

11 SUPT. OWOH: That's correct. Up until last year
12 it was consistently about 200 -- a little bit over
13 200. That was the trend of loss of enrollment. This
14 past year was the most significant drop.

15 DR. MOORE: Okay. So has the district -- you've
16 done RIF before with the staff?

17 SUPT. OWOH: They've done partial RIFs. Most of
18 them have been auxiliary staff, assistant principals;
19 some of them have been classified staff. But they
20 haven't really done major RIFs across the district
21 before.

22 DR. MOORE: Okay.

23 SUPT. OWOH: Not that I know of.

24 DR. MOORE: And then you said you had -- how
25 many licensed teachers do you have in Central Office,

1 do you know?

2 SUPT. OWOH: Licensed educators --

3 [A BRIEF MOMENT OF SILENCE]

4 DR. MOORE: But there has been some reduction in
5 Central Office?

6 SUPT. OWOH: Not major reductions. No, ma'am.
7 There has been some this year. We chose not to fill
8 several positions that -- when staff members left we
9 combined departments and decided not to fill those.
10 We could definitely do some more trimming.

11 DR. MOORE: Okay. So this waiver would allow
12 you to more quickly and effectively switch out things
13 in Central Office?

14 SUPT. OWOH: Well, the reduction-in-force would
15 also help us with eliminating the number of personnel
16 members we have in the district office as well.

17 DR. MOORE: Okay. Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Commissioner.

19 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Owoh, when you were here
20 at the Department, a number of districts came and
21 asked for waivers through Act 1240 or a lot of times
22 they were Teacher Licensure. Did they know at the
23 time if that was going to really benefit them, other
24 than making sure they had somebody that could fill
25 the seat, the opening that they had?

1 SUPT. OWOH: No, sir. Most stated that they
2 wanted to try and see what options they had and see
3 if it did work.

4 COMMISSIONER KEY: And they -- and through that
5 work this board became very diligent in asking those
6 districts, "Would you be willing to bring back a
7 report," and then that became part of the record and
8 the commitment at that point in time?

9 SUPT. OWOH: Yes, sir. That's correct.

10 COMMISSIONER KEY: Okay. So, in effect, if they
11 ask you to do the same thing here with -- bring back
12 how did you use this waiver -- did you use this
13 waiver, how did you use this waiver, and what was the
14 impact, then you would be open to making that
15 commitment?

16 SUPT. OWOH: Yes, sir. I'd definitely be open
17 and willing to make that report.

18 COMMISSIONER KEY: Okay.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Dr. Moore.

20 DR. MOORE: Yeah. Commissioner, I have a
21 question along those lines -- and you might know; I
22 don't know if you have anyone from the Charter Office
23 here. How many charter schools have the waiver from
24 Teacher Fair Dismissal?

25 COMMISSIONER KEY: I don't -- Ms. Freno, do you

1 know? Do you have that information?

2 MS. FRENO: Lori Freno, Department of Education.

3 Most of the charter schools have the waiver of
4 Teacher Fair Dismissal. There are about, I think,
5 two or three district conversion charters that have
6 it as well.

7 DR. MOORE: Okay. So there are other public
8 school districts in the state that have waived this;
9 correct?

10 MS. FRENO: Yes. Most of the open enrollments,
11 which are public schools, and then two or three of
12 the district conversions as well.

13 DR. MOORE: Okay. So hopefully that could be a
14 resource to Dr. Owoh or whoever in making these
15 decisions.

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Zook.

17 MS. ZOOK: Yes. I don't know what the Board's
18 decision will be, but I do know the Charter Panel on
19 Tuesday recommended -- will be recommending to the
20 State Board that Lighthouse in Pine Bluff close. So
21 there are a couple of hundred students that may or
22 may not choose to go to Pine Bluff. So you may be
23 getting a few kids that you might have lost before.

24 SUPT. OWOH: We'll do whatever we can to make
25 sure that they choose the Pine Bluff School District.

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Are there any other
2 questions or comments before we move to public
3 comment?

4 And, Ms. Chambers, I'm -- because you're not
5 here I may forget you at times, from time to time. I
6 will try not to. But please just speak up if you
7 want to say something along the way.

8 MS. CHAMBERS: I will. Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Great. Okay. Now -- thank
10 you, Dr. Owoh, and we may have further questions for
11 you as we move to consideration of this item.

12 PUBLIC COMMENTS

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: So we are accepting public
14 comment. We limit public comment to three (3)
15 minutes, if you can get there, please -- we will set
16 the clock and you will hear an alarm. I have two
17 folks that I know definitely want to speak on Pine
18 Bluff. There are other names on here that -- most of
19 whom I think are on Little Rock. But I'm going to --
20 I know that Representative Flowers is here to speak
21 on Pine Bluff, and I know that Mayor Washington is
22 here to speak on Pine Bluff, and I know that
23 Lieutenant Governor Griffin would like to speak as
24 well. And so what I will do is go in that order and
25 ask y'all to keep it to three minutes. And then if

1 there are other folks that want to speak on Pine
2 Bluff who have signed up for public comment, please I
3 will ask for that after we do these three. Thank
4 you.

5 Representative Flowers.

6 REPRESENTATIVE FLOWERS: Thank you, Mr.
7 Chairman, and to the rest of the State Board. I
8 can't say that I am happy to be here today to speak
9 on this issue, but I am -- and I'll tell you why --
10 because I am here without the benefit of the many,
11 many teachers and other people from my community,
12 many of whom were not aware of this until -- in the
13 last week, many of whom -- or all of whom could not
14 come today. And so I want to touch first on
15 transparency. It is vitally important to the whole
16 concept, I believe -- and I believe all of us would
17 agree with democracy, with local control that we hear
18 a lot about for there to be transparency and for
19 there to be access. And today there are three of us
20 only because our educators are at home educating our
21 students. And so I just would like to start with
22 making that point. And as you think about the
23 decision that you'll make today, hopefully you won't
24 make it today and give our educators an opportunity
25 to come and speak with you. So I would ask you to

1 consider that.

2 I'd like to talk about the impact of this. But
3 before I do, I'd like to make the point that Dr. Owoh
4 has been a wonderful resource, in my estimation.
5 I've had many conversations with him; he's been very
6 open and I feel very confident about his capability
7 and his passion and his vision.

8 With that, I would like to point out that Dr.
9 Owoh is not making this request. He has been put in
10 the position as Superintendent to lead the Pine Bluff
11 School District, and he is not making this request.
12 And what I just heard is that he said he doesn't know
13 how this would affect -- this waiver would affect the
14 school district. What I heard him say is that the
15 biggest challenges that he sees in the Pine Bluff
16 School District is not about teachers and it's not
17 about setting policy that would help him get rid of
18 teachers faster by removing due process. What I
19 heard him say is the problem is leadership. And no
20 matter how many questions were just asked of him, he
21 never said this would help him.

22 (THE TIMER RINGS)

23 REP. FLOWERS: And I would just ask for a little
24 flexibility since the teachers -- the over 50
25 teachers that I met with last night couldn't be here

1 today.

2 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. I'll give you one more
3 minute.

4 REP. FLOWERS: Thank you. I'll just say this:
5 it would be different if this policy was being set
6 across the state. It is not. What this would do to
7 Pine Bluff School District, in a school district that
8 is flanked by school districts that have a higher
9 starting pay for teachers, would now be one other
10 thing for teachers that we would be trying to recruit
11 -- good teachers, certified teachers, experienced
12 teachers, right there from UAPB. They would look at
13 us and say, "Well, of all of these issues, in
14 addition to a low starting pay, that school does not
15 protect me. That school is a school where I might
16 not be able to adequately protect my students, to
17 teach to the top of my experience and my degree, or
18 even to deal with personality issues. I would not be
19 protected, so I'm not going to go there."

20 And so if you are committed to making sure that
21 our Superintendent, who you have put in place to help
22 us out of distress -- if you are committed to making
23 sure that he has everything he needs, then let him
24 lead in the way that he says he sees fit and then
25 according to his vision. And right now, today, nor

1 last week has he presented this waiver to you. And
2 he just stood here and said that this would not
3 necessarily help him, that he doesn't know; it hasn't
4 been done in any other traditional public school. So
5 I would ask you why would you experiment --

6 (THE TIMER RINGS)

7 REP. FLOWERS: -- on Pine Bluff School District.

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you, Representative.

9 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

10 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Next up, Mayor
11 Washington.

12 MAYOR WASHINGTON: Commissioner Key and
13 Respected Members of the Board, you already know that
14 I've been introduced as Mayor Washington of Pine
15 Bluff. And, you know, as I come before you I'm
16 honored to have served 22 years in the -- as a
17 classroom teacher and 16 years as a principal in the
18 Pine Bluff School District. I retired in 2010, after
19 a total of 38 years in education. In 2016, I was
20 elected mayor of the City of Pine Bluff. And as
21 mayor, education is a top -- at the top of my list of
22 priorities, and the success of the Pine Bluff School
23 District is critical to the future of our community.
24 I believe in doing whatever it takes to insure the
25 success of our children, regardless of the politics

1 and the concerns of the adults. That is the reason I
2 was in this room to support State takeover on that
3 day the decision was made earlier this year for that
4 to happen. We were pleased with the outcome and we
5 were pleased with the placement of Dr. Owoh. I
6 believe you have chosen the right person at the right
7 time to help restore the Pine Bluff School District
8 to a level of sustainability. However, it is my
9 belief, as well as others who are in this room, that
10 Dr. Owoh has not been given an adequate amount of
11 time to assess the in-depth state of the district and
12 to chart a path of success for the students. This is
13 vital to maintaining the morale among the district
14 staff and insuring the community -- that the
15 community remains supportive of your efforts.

16 Today, I urge you to table to Fair Teacher
17 Dismissal Act for Pine Bluff. Dr. Owoh answered
18 those questions well and we have to in all fairness
19 realize that he's only been there a good two months
20 -- put in place in September, he was there October
21 and November, and we're in the month of December --
22 and you put such pressure on him to make such a
23 serious decision at this time. Our teachers and
24 students are in the middle of semester exams. When
25 teachers should be preparing students to end the

1 semester, their minds and their focus is on whether
2 they have a job. And I know this because we attended
3 a meeting last night and my phone and my text
4 messages were blowing up all day yesterday. I didn't
5 choose to be here; I felt that I had to be here to
6 respond to the needs of the teachers who could not be
7 here.

8 Yes, our educational system is broken but it is
9 not the fault of the teachers. The Fair Dismissal
10 Act should not end; it should be amended. Any
11 decision on this piece of legislation should be
12 reserved until the end of the year. The
13 disadvantages of making a decision now are far too
14 great.

15 I believe the waiver will make it harder to
16 recruit and retain quality teachers in our district.
17 While accountability and flexibility are critically
18 important --

19 (THE TIMER RINGS)

20 MAYOR WASHINGTON: -- so is equity. The Pine
21 Bluff School District is within a 10-mile range of
22 two districts that have significantly higher starting
23 teacher salaries. If this waiver is approved, these
24 competitors will have significantly more attractive
25 benefits packages and include job protection that the

1 Teacher Fair Dismissal Act provides.

2 I believe that in spite of our challenges the
3 City of Pine Bluff is poised to grow and it is poised
4 to succeed. In 2017, Pine Bluff citizens approved a
5 sweeping economic development initiative that is
6 revitalizing our downtown, investing in our
7 workforce, and growing our tax base. I want Pine
8 Bluff School District to be the best school to teach
9 and to learn in the state of Arkansas. I believe in
10 our students, our teachers, and I believe in our
11 community. I hope you will stand with us in our
12 fight to improve our schools as we work to improve
13 our city. Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you, Mayor Washington.

15 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Lieutenant Governor
17 Griffin. And then I will -- after Lieutenant
18 Governor, we'll move to Ivan Whitfield and LaTonya
19 Webb, which are the last two that I have for public
20 comment on Pine Bluff. But others may want to join
21 -- yeah, I see Representative Lowery. Okay.

22 LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR GRIFFIN: Thank you. Thank
23 y'all for giving me a few minutes, and I thank you
24 for all that you're doing. I know you'd rather be
25 shopping and celebrating the Christmas season, but

1 this is important stuff, and I appreciate it.

2 I want to -- some of the things I want to say
3 also apply to the Little Rock School District as
4 well. But as a state official, also as a father of
5 someone who is a son in public school, I look at this
6 issue from, as we would say in the military, 30,000
7 feet. This is ultimately a state responsibility, as
8 we've heard recited, to make sure that we have the
9 right education for all of the state. Certainly we
10 have districts that separate one part of the state
11 from another and they are managed separately. But as
12 someone who represents all 75 counties, it's all one
13 state. We need every community growing in the same
14 direction. I gave a talk down at UAPB on -- to young
15 kids about STEM education. There's not just one part
16 of the state that we need upping their game in STEM
17 education; we need all of the state upping their game
18 in STEM education. We can't attract companies that
19 we need, like Boeing and Airbus and others, without
20 people to fill the jobs. So this -- Pine Bluff, just
21 like Little Rock, just like the rest of the state --
22 Magnolia, where I'm from -- Camden, where my wife
23 went to public school -- they're all important. This
24 is a state responsibility.

25 I'll say this too: there is no one -- no one who

1 believes in local control more than Tim Griffin,
2 period. Now our system has all sorts of checks.
3 When someone doesn't get the job done usually in our
4 system, whether it's the feds helping out the state,
5 whether it's the state helping out the local, we have
6 backstops. If we fail at a certain level, another
7 level that's above us usually steps in. We had some
8 issues in this state where the feds had to step in in
9 a big way. In fact, one time the 101st Airborne
10 Division was sent to Little Rock. I served with the
11 101st Airborne Division in Iraq. You cede -- you
12 give up the ability to have local control when you
13 don't get a job done. That's not me; that's the law.
14 The law says that. Maybe you want to change the law.
15 Change it. But that's the law. If you don't get it
16 done, somebody else steps in and says, "Hey, it's our
17 responsibility; it's on us." Make no mistake about
18 it, if the state doesn't get it done on education
19 we'll be blamed as a state, not just a part of the
20 state.

21 (THE TIMER RINGS)

22 LT. GOVERNOR GRIFFIN: So I just want to say one
23 thing real quickly. The Superintendent made a
24 comment that really -- that struck with me -- a
25 couple. Number one, he said it's never been done.

1 You know what, there's a lot of stuff in the state
2 that's never been done that we need to be doing.
3 Amen. I'm going to Amen myself. Because there's a
4 lot of stuff -- a lot of stuff that other states are
5 doing that we do not do that we need to get to doing.
6 That's how you compete in this world.

7 But one thing in particular that he said, he
8 said this will expedite the process. He doesn't have
9 to use these tools. We're giving him tools in his
10 toolbox. He doesn't have to use them. If he doesn't
11 need them, he won't use them -- but he said it will
12 expedite the process. You know what, that's
13 important. Why? Because students don't have the
14 time to live in failing schools any longer. They
15 need help now. This is a trauma situation. So
16 "expedite" means faster and that's why I think this
17 is a good thing and I think we ought to all get
18 behind y'all. This is the process. If someone wants
19 to change it, they can work through the process to
20 change it. But I applaud what you're doing and I
21 wish you the very best and I'll help you any way I
22 can. God bless you. Thank y'all.

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you.

24 Ivan Whitfield. Good morning.

25 IVAN WHITFIELD: Good morning to Commissioner

1 Key and to all those that are here today. I'm Ivan
2 Whitfield. I'm from Pine Bluff. I am president of
3 the NAACP. I'm here today not to speak on behalf of
4 the teachers; I'm here to speak on behalf of the
5 children and the parents that's unable to be here
6 today.

7 We in Pine Bluff have taught our children to
8 look their best, to do their best with what they
9 have. We expect them to make high ACT scores. We
10 expect them to try to get scholarships. We expect
11 them to do the best when they're on the job. But
12 it's hypocritical of us to expect the best and we
13 don't try to give them the best. If you pass this
14 waiver, there's a possibility that a teacher may have
15 to be dismissed -- that a class needs to be taken and
16 there's no other teacher there; so now we bring in an
17 uncertified teacher to teach our children. That's
18 just not right. The ACT test would drop. They're
19 not going to take you if you don't score a certain
20 number. It's important that Pine Bluff's teachers
21 stay certified. Don't hurt our children. It's not
22 about the teachers; it's about our children.

23 Pine Bluff School District -- Pine Bluff right
24 now is in the midst of a basketball tournament
25 they're bringing in next week. They're going across

1 the United States and bringing in seven teams they
2 said that are the best in the United States. Pine
3 Bluff School District is the host team. It's
4 hypocritical of us to ask them to perform on a
5 professional -- on a sports arena with the best and
6 we don't provide them the best of the teachers. Our
7 teachers are giving the best they have with what has
8 been given to them.

9 Now I've never worked in the educational system,
10 but I did a little research last night. They've got
11 -- they have this thing called TESS. I think I heard
12 Doc talk about it. I don't know much about it, but
13 I've been a policeman and I understand paperwork.
14 I'm saying to you all today to pass this waiver would
15 hurt our children. If the administrator didn't
16 document, didn't follow the procedure, and now you're
17 going to tell the teacher -- you're going to move the
18 teachers out of the way for what the administrator
19 didn't do. I'm not protecting the teachers; it's
20 hurting our children.

21 I'm saying to you think about our babies. It's
22 just not right. We should -- I've never talked to
23 Dr. -- Doc about this issue. I called him one time
24 to invite him to a NAACP meeting; he had an
25 engagement with some children. I said to him, "Doc,

1 don't worry about us. Go to" -- he told me, "I must
2 go with my kids." I believe if you give him enough
3 time -- you can revisit this at any time. It's not
4 of a great rush that we must do something today,
5 tomorrow, or next week. He's been there two-and-a-
6 half months. Give him an opportunity to do it.

7 Let me close with this: I've been a police
8 officer for 35 years.

9 (THE TIMER RINGS)

10 MR. WHITFIELD: Fifteen years ago, they said
11 Pine Bluff was one of the worst cities to live per
12 capita because of crime. No commissioners came
13 together, no committee came together and said, "Let's
14 drop the level of professionalism for policemen." We
15 had to draw it up, tie it up, and make it work. I
16 checked the record. I think now we're below 100, but
17 we didn't change the rules.

18 I'm asking you all on behalf of our children
19 just don't hurt them. Please, sir -- please, ma'am
20 -- don't do it.

21 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you.

23 All right. LaTonya Webb.

24 Thanks, Ms. Webb.

25 LaTONYA WEBB: Good morning. For the sake of

1 time, all the thank-you's for being here are not
2 necessary. I was only going to speak on Little Rock
3 but I have to speak on Pine Bluff, because your
4 experiment that you're doing with our children and
5 our families has contaminated and spilled over into
6 our lives. Now here, yet again, as was done in -- at
7 -- in Pine Bluff, now yet again in Little Rock. Stop
8 doing what isn't working. What you're doing is not
9 working.

10 Me and my children are survivors of domestic
11 violence. We flee'd to Pine Bluff for safety. The
12 fact that we had no choice in what school we could go
13 to because of the zone put us into the district.
14 Your continual efforts for whatever hatred or
15 whatever divide you have that you are causing from
16 district to district, town to town is affecting me no
17 matter where we go in this state. If you do not
18 observe and see what you're doing that's not working
19 -- I've been told what you -- when you do something
20 that's not working, it's insanity. I hate to give
21 you any type of title, but my frustration is at a
22 level where you're not addressing the problem.
23 You're not addressing the problem. You're cherry-
24 picking who you want to blame, who you want to take
25 the fall. Where is your accountability? Where is

1 your transparency with our children and with these
2 families? It is not working, what you're doing. I
3 don't know what exactly you may need to do, but I
4 know exactly what you're not doing, which is putting
5 the local democratic things in place that we can make
6 decisions about our children.

7 I don't know how many of you live in Pine Bluff
8 or live in Little Rock, but you don't live in our
9 communities. I don't see you in our schools. I
10 don't see you in the environments that you are
11 attacking and breaking down. I don't see that. I do
12 not see that. I don't know what your benefit is in
13 this situation, but I have a bone in this race; my
14 kids have a bone in this race. My daughter and son
15 came from Dollarway. They came from Pine Bluff.
16 They endured this repetitively. Now they're enduring
17 the same thing here in Little Rock.

18 So what you're doing -- and we've been here
19 since 2014, in this state. If what you're doing is
20 working so well, then why are we still being affected
21 four years later? How do we go from six to 22? What
22 are you doing?

23 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

24 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. And the final
25 public comment on the Pine Bluff case is

1 Representative Lowery.

2 REPRESENTATIVE LOWERY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman,
3 and thank you, Members. I appreciate you adding me
4 to speak to this issue, because I started thinking
5 about some of the pushback that I've gotten through
6 the years in speaking on issues that may be outside
7 of my school district, which is Pulaski County School
8 District. And I thought, well, if I'm going to be
9 consistent I need to speak to the Pine Bluff issue as
10 well as the Little Rock School District issue. So
11 I'm going to combine both of those in these comments.

12 You know, I'm looking -- I was just reading last
13 night the language of the Arkansas Educational
14 Support and Accountability Act, and it reflects on
15 legislative findings. And it says, "The State Board
16 of Education notes that the Arkansas General Assembly
17 finds that it is the State's responsibility" -- and
18 then it has four different bullet points and all of
19 them talk about our responsibility to the students.
20 And I appreciate the testimony that we heard
21 previously from one of the gentlemen that really was
22 the only one that focused exclusively on talking
23 about the students. We provide multiple resources to
24 our administrators, to our school districts. It's
25 not just money; it's new programs, whether it's pre-

1 K, whether it's afterschool care, whether it is
2 looking at reading as a science. And this is just an
3 additional resource that we have a responsibility --
4 the state legislature, the Education Committee, the
5 Education Department. I've been very proud to be
6 able to serve on the Education Committee throughout
7 my three previous terms. But I've seen time after
8 time where we provide resources to school districts
9 to be successful. Some of them are resources or
10 plans that are, frankly, experimental; they've never
11 been done before. But that doesn't keep us from
12 exercising them. It doesn't keep us from offering
13 that to the various superintendents or school boards,
14 which in this case would be Commissioner Key and you
15 by extension, enabling you to have this resource,
16 these waivers to be able to see if this is something
17 that can most benefit the students.

18 We -- I have never questioned for a second when
19 I hear testimony or I hear speeches made about how
20 the school teacher, the classroom teacher is the most
21 integral part of student effectiveness. But you
22 can't say that and then not say that sometimes you
23 have to also look at the teacher if there is
24 ineffective assessment that's taking place. It's one
25 of those things we have to -- you can't have the good

1 without the bad.

2 I just want to commend you. I know this is
3 tough. My mother was many years ago -- about 40
4 years ago was on the Pulaski County School Board and
5 some of the most heart-wrenching situations for her
6 --

7 (THE TIMER RINGS)

8 REP. LOWERY: -- was sitting through the night,
9 many times till 5:00 or 6:00 a.m. in the morning,
10 hearing hearing after hearing of teachers who had
11 been found really sometimes by beyond reasonable
12 doubt that they needed to be removed from the
13 classroom, but this process just went on and on and
14 on. And one thing she would always say -- and I'd
15 leave this with you -- in many of those discussions
16 and many of those debates the students -- the welfare
17 of the students was never addressed. It was always
18 the rights of the teacher or the rights of the
19 teachers' union or the collective bargaining rights.

20 You have an opportunity to step up today, which
21 I know you will, to represent the students. They
22 don't have a collective bargaining union, but they
23 have you. And I appreciate your willingness to take
24 on this issue and provide this resource to our school
25 districts.

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you, Representative
2 Lowery.

3 I do have one more time at least on the list
4 from Pine Bluff -- Virginia Hymes. Ms. Hymes, if
5 you'll --

6 VIRGINIA HYMES: I will be brief. And good
7 morning.

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Good morning.

9 MS. HYMES: Thank you, Commissioner Key and the
10 Members of the Arkansas Department of Education for
11 this opportunity to speak.

12 I want to let you know that as a teacher -- I'm
13 a retired teacher and my heart is still with kids.
14 They are our beautiful heritage and we must take care
15 of them. And I have experienced that in the Pine
16 Bluff School District where I taught for 39 years.
17 And I know -- I've just got to say this: we have had
18 14 students that received \$250,000 from the Gates
19 Millennium Scholarship, great kids. We have some
20 outstanding achievements and we have those students
21 who are doing things in this world, not just in this
22 state but in the nation and in the world, and they
23 talk about Pine Bluff.

24 But what I want to say about -- and I'm so
25 thankful for Dr. Owoh. Dr. Owoh is very transparent.

1 There are some things that we do need to sit down and
2 talk. I don't know why the word "labor" comes to
3 mind. It's going to take a lot of work -- and if you
4 look at the word "labor," it's defined as something
5 intent, hard work. And sometimes you're going to
6 give up something; you're going to have to sacrifice.
7 That means you've got to sit at the table and talk to
8 people who are willing to work, and there are many
9 people in the community who's willing to work. Now
10 "labor," again, you think about childbirth.
11 Childbirth, that's a process.

12 I think I heard Dr. Owoh say something about --
13 and I do know he just got there in September, so
14 there's a lot of things -- and he kept highlighting
15 the fact it's not the teachers. Because, again, the
16 teachers are on the battlefield with our beautiful
17 blessings, those children, and they want the best for
18 them. But given that short span of time he wants to
19 sit down with the teachers, with the -- and the
20 students. Oh, the students love this man. And he
21 wants to sit down and have a conversation that will
22 lead to the success of all our students, not just
23 those students that we have graduated and done well.
24 We have graduates that come back and want to give
25 back to these students. But he wants to talk to the

1 community; he wants them to be aware of the fact that
2 we need to do something. I heard him say the
3 leadership, and he did say not all the leadership,
4 just like not all the teachers. That's why it's so
5 important -- in your profession there's a process and
6 you do a process.

7 So I don't want you to think about, you know,
8 even entertaining a thought of this waiver because it
9 will hurt the future of our community. I love the
10 fact that I was able to dream about becoming a
11 teacher at two years old, and that dream came true.
12 Now how many people are going into the education
13 profession? You don't hear a lot, because they hear
14 all these type of things. We need to start talking
15 about the positive things, the positive things that
16 will impact our children. We impact lives for real.
17 Matter of fact --

18 (THE TIMER RINGS)

19 MS. HYMES: -- some of your jobs is due to a
20 teacher. And I just want you to remember we must
21 consider our children because they are the future.
22 And I love the Pine Bluff School District with our
23 great kids. Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you, Ms. Hymes.

25 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: And then Mattie Collins also on
2 the Pine Bluff case. It was -- I apologize; it just
3 wasn't marked originally.

4 MATTIE COLLINS: Good morning.

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Good morning.

6 MS. COLLINS: I'm Mattie Collins. First of all,
7 I want to thank Commissioner Key and the members of
8 the State Board for the opportunity to talk to you
9 about a very important issue, of course -- the
10 application of a waiver of public school employees'
11 rights, because our district has been taken over. I
12 want you to know this waiver request destabilizes the
13 support we have for our wonderful students. The
14 community we work to build, insuring our scholars
15 have the love and support they need, will be gravely
16 affected.

17 I'm proud to say that I'm a retired educator of
18 39 awesome years of teaching. Pine Bluff High School
19 -- go Zebras -- yes. I taught great kids at Pine
20 Bluff High School for 35 years, and presently I'm the
21 president of a nonprofit, a youth mentoring college
22 readiness program, and I am blessed to still be
23 working with outstanding youth. The kids are so
24 excited about their education and working to graduate
25 high school, college, and secure successful futures.

1 In the Pine Bluff community, we are continually
2 working to build strong supportive relationships with
3 our schools to show our students that they deserve
4 the best and we are here to help them to become all
5 that they can be. The work of our educators and
6 community would be undermined at the very time
7 support and investment is needed. The waiver
8 threatens how educators feel about the work they do
9 with the students and the value they serve in the
10 community. It also destabilizes the vision we have
11 of unifying our community. In Pine Bluff we talk
12 about one thing, and that's One Pine Bluff Together.

13 Thank you, Mayor Washington.

14 As a longstanding community leader and educator,
15 I urge you to not support this waiver. Give our
16 families hope. Give our students a chance to thrive.
17 Our scholars deserve the very best. You sent us Dr.
18 Owoh. Our kids love Dr. Owoh. He did something the
19 other day that was so outstanding: for the first time
20 in history that I know of he joined a bunch of kids,
21 along with myself --

22 (THE TIMER RINGS)

23 MS. COLLINS: -- at a community service project
24 at CASA Women's Shelter. They were so excited to
25 have their superintendent accompany them on a

1 community service project. Dr. Owoh is wonderful.
2 Now let's treat our kids wonderful. Thank you so
3 very much.

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you, Ms. Collins.

5 All right. That is the end of public comment on
6 this item.

7 And so I would invite a motion, if there is one.

8 MR. WILLIAMSON: I guess I'll make my motion
9 then. I move that we follow the recommendation of
10 the Department by waiving the Teacher Fair Dismissal
11 Act.

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Is there a second?

13 COMMISSIONER KEY: I would just add that we had
14 asked that it be limited to -- through the 19-20 --

15 MR. WILLIAMSON: Yeah, I'm sorry. Through 19-
16 20.

17 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Is there a second?

18 MS. McFETRIDGE: I'll second that.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Motion by Mr.
20 Williamson, second by Ms. McFetridge.

21 I'll start with Ms. Chambers, on the phone, and
22 see if there are any comments.

23 MS. CHAMBERS: Thank you. Yes, I just wanted to
24 ask if -- kind of back to the earlier comments that
25 Dr. Owoh made. And obviously that's what we're

1 hearing from community members for him. His use of
2 this is at his discretion; is that correct?

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: I'll turn it over to Dr. Owoh.
4 Did you hear Ms. Chambers' question?

5 SUPT. OWOH: I did not.

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: The question was whether its
7 use was at your discretion.

8 SUPT. OWOH: I believe it would be. It would be
9 --

10 COMMISSIONER KEY: And I can confirm that. I
11 mean, he will not be directed how to use the waiver.
12 We don't direct any district when they get a waiver
13 from any of the laws how to use that waiver. All
14 that is subject to the guidelines that you all may
15 put on that and reporting that you all may put on
16 that. But Dr. Owoh has the discretion to use it and
17 implement it as he sees fit.

18 SUPT. OWOH: Yes, sir.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

20 MS. CHAMBERS: Thank you. I think that's
21 important and it does tie back to -- we received some
22 -- with all this information we've received, some of
23 it included some criticism of what appeared to be
24 slowness on how we addressed issues in Little Rock,
25 not acting fast enough to make some significant

1 change. And so we don't want to hamper Dr. Owoh; we
2 want him to have the ability to expedite as he sees
3 fit. So I think between the discretion and (sound
4 cut out briefly) limited to through 19-20, I am not
5 -- I will telegraph I'm good; I'm going to support
6 the waiver. But that's the only question I had.
7 Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right.

9 MR. WILLIAMSON: Dr. Barth --

10 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yes.

11 MR. WILLIAMSON: -- I failed to add that -- also
12 waive the Public School Employee Fair Hearing Act,
13 along with the Teacher Fair Dismissal Act.

14 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Ms. McFetridge, will you
15 --

16 MS. McFETRIDGE: I will.

17 CHAIRMAN BARTH: -- second that? Okay. All
18 right. Thank you.

19 DR. HILL: What was it again? I didn't hear it.

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: It was adding the Fair Hearing
21 portion. It's actually two different laws --

22 MR. WILLIAMSON: It is.

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: -- that are being -- that the
24 request is being waived on, Fair Dismissal as well as
25 the Fair Hearing.

1 COMMISSIONER KEY: They're listed -- and both
2 are listed on the agenda.

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. McFetridge, anything?

4 MS. McFETRIDGE: No. I'm good.

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Ms. Newton?

6 MS. NEWTON: No.

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Dr. Hill?

8 DR. HILL: No.

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Dean?

10 MS. DEAN: I just wanted to echo what my
11 colleague Ms. Chambers said. That was exactly going
12 to be my question, is all these waivers, if I'm not
13 mistaken, are left to the discretion of the
14 superintendent. And as we have heard from so many
15 people from the Pine Bluff community that Dr. Owoh is
16 a great fit for Pine Bluff, that his leadership is
17 trusted, and his discretion is also trusted. I echo
18 that as well. And I believe that in granting the
19 waivers that we will just be equipping him with more
20 tools in his toolbox to do his job. And it says
21 nowhere that he has to use it in any specific time.
22 It doesn't say he has to use it, period. It's at his
23 discretion. So being that we've said that we trust
24 his judgment, we trust his discretion -- he is
25 learning the ropes in Pine Bluff, and I know that

1 there will be even more time that you'll need to make
2 assessments, but I trust your judgment. I trust your
3 ability to lead and to make those decisions as you
4 see fit.

5 So with that said, I will be supporting waiving
6 the Fair Teacher Dismissal Act for several reasons --
7 that there is a sense of urgency right now and I want
8 to be able to give Dr. Owoh the flexibility to do
9 what he needs to do in the district at the time and
10 at the pace that he sees fit; so if he feels like
11 there's some sort of urgency he'll have the ability
12 and the tools to do that. Also the fact that it is a
13 limited waiver, for a limited time, I appreciate
14 that. That gives us an opportunity to see if this
15 works. If it doesn't, it's only for a short time.
16 Also, the due process for the teachers I think has
17 been addressed as well in a question that Dr. Moore
18 asked at the beginning. That was another question
19 that I had.

20 So just to reiterate that I will be supporting
21 this waiver for those reasons.

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Ms. Zook?

23 MS. ZOOK: Okay. I think that it's unfortunate
24 that it's called the Teacher Fair Dismissal because
25 it in fact is the Educator. And from what I was

1 hearing Dr. Owoh said that the concerns he perceives
2 at this point have less to do with the teachers who
3 are actually working with the children, but more to
4 do with the inconsistent application of the support
5 and mentoring. There are many of us -- and maybe a
6 couple of the ladies who spoke -- that taught before
7 this law was passed. We were quality teachers, so we
8 did not have to worry. We taught after and we did
9 not have to worry either time if we were effective in
10 what we were doing. We were valued. And so I think
11 it is unfortunate that it was named the Teacher Fair
12 Dismissal and not the Educator Fair Dismissal.

13 And also if this passes will Dr. Owoh have the
14 opportunity to come back and say "it's working well,
15 I need it to continue another year," or, "I don't
16 want it anymore?" Or would he have that flexibility?

17 CHAIRMAN BARTH: I would -- yes. I mean,
18 obviously the law is broad in terms of this board
19 acting at any time. I did want to note that in Mr.
20 Williamson's motion there was not a reporting
21 requirement outside of, of course, the quarterly
22 reports that we get.

23 MR. WILLIAMSON: And I'm fine with adding that.

24 CHAIRMAN BARTH: And I did hear a desire to hear
25 some -- hear reporting. I think a natural -- I will

1 just suggest a natural place for that reporting might
2 be in the quarterly reports, that that's explicitly
3 tied to that. Does that make sense, Commissioner?

4 COMMISSIONER KEY: Yes. Yes.

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Since we do get those reports,
6 that seems like a natural place. And I don't know if
7 you want to add that --

8 MR. WILLIAMSON: Yes, please.

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: -- to your motion?

10 MR. WILLIAMSON: Yes.

11 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Okay. And, Ms.

12 McFetridge, are you --

13 MS. MCFETRIDGE: Yes.

14 CHAIRMAN BARTH: That's a fairly simple tweak to
15 the motion but I think I heard a lot of interest in
16 reporting, as we have on 1240s.

17 Mr. Williamson, anything?

18 MR. WILLIAMSON: No.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Dr. Moore?

20 DR. MOORE: Yes. And I think I'm asking a lot
21 of clarifying questions, but just to be clear -- so
22 for this current school year their RIF process will
23 be in place, and this waiver therefore is for --
24 teachers will receive new contracts in May, and this
25 will be in place for the next school year. Is that

1 correct?

2 COMMISSIONER KEY: That would be correct.

3 MS. ZOOK: To clarify, I think that because
4 people who are not going to be renewed or maintained
5 have to be notified before May 1st. They may get
6 that notice this year, even though it will not take
7 effect until the 19-20 school year. But those people
8 will be notified by May 1st. Is that correct?

9 COMMISSIONER KEY: Under the -- for the RIF, for
10 any RIF they may do?

11 MS. ZOOK: Well, for the Teacher Fair Dismissal.

12 COMMISSIONER KEY: Well, under the waiver -- I
13 mean, those contracts in Pine Bluff are for the year
14 and subject to the laws that are in place at the
15 time; so the contracts that anybody would receive for
16 the following school year would be impacted by this.
17 So they would be notified prior to receiving their
18 contract for the 19-20 school year that -- this is
19 one of the terms in those contracts. And I'll look
20 to my legal team for affirmation of that. Okay.

21 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Dr. Moore?

22 DR. MOORE: I just wanted to echo the comments
23 of other board members on the great work that Dr.
24 Owoh is doing. As I look at the district this past
25 year, only 14% of students met readiness in English

1 Language Arts. And we want to work with you all; we
2 want everyone in this room to increase that so that
3 more students in your district have chances to
4 succeed in life.

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Dr. Hill?

6 DR. HILL: Did you say that that would come back
7 to this board for 19-20 to go to 20-21?

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: If there was any extension
9 beyond 19-20 it would have to return to this board --

10 DR. HILL: Okay.

11 CHAIRMAN BARTH: -- for that.

12 DR. HILL: All right.

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: I just want to say a couple of
14 things. First off, I want to hearken what's been
15 said about Dr. Owoh. I think I already had a good
16 deal of trust in him; I have more trust in him after
17 today in terms of the grace with which you handled --
18 and the truthfulness with which you handled your
19 testimony today. I want to say that.

20 I am -- to go back to Ms. Chambers' initial
21 question, I have some -- I am disconcerted by the
22 lack of communication that left you in a -- I think a
23 bad spot last Thursday, without knowing that the
24 Department was going to be asking for that waiver. I
25 think it sent some signals to me and some worries to

1 me that that lack of communication -- even though I
2 think you have the intent to use this wisely, I'm not
3 -- I don't have complete confidence you will have
4 absolute freedom to use it wisely. And so I do worry
5 about that.

6 I would've supported a waiver that was limited
7 to non-classroom administrative personnel, in
8 accordance with your testimony today. I would've
9 supported that, but I can't support what is really a
10 hammer. And a hammer --

11 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Excuse me. I'd asked for no
13 outbursts.

14 It's a hammer that I think threatens to decimate
15 trust in the community, as we've heard from community
16 members, and threatens to decimate morale in the
17 community. And so we should've used a scalpel,
18 rather than a hammer. It would've been better for
19 the future and I think better for you and your
20 ability to get your job done well in a trusting
21 manner. I think that's what would've worked best,
22 but obviously I'm outnumbered on this one.

23 All right. I think we are ready for a vote.
24 We'll use a roll-call.

25 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Hill.

1 DR. HILL: Yes.

2 COMMISSIONER KEY: Mr. Williamson.

3 MR. WILLIAMSON: Yes.

4 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Chambers.

5 MS. CHAMBERS: Yes.

6 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. McFetridge.

7 MS. McFETRIDGE: Yes.

8 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Moore.

9 DR. MOORE: Yes.

10 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Newton.

11 MS. NEWTON: Yes.

12 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Dean.

13 MS. DEAN: Yes.

14 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Zook.

15 MS. ZOOK: Yes.

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: I would like to vote.

17 COMMISSIONER KEY: Okay.

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: No.

19 COMMISSIONER KEY: Okay.

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thanks.

21 All right. The vote is 8-to-1.

22 And it's -- do folks need like a three- to five-

23 minute break or do you want to move on to the Little

24 Rock case?

25 Move on?

1 Okay. All right. Thanks, everyone, from Pine
2 Bluff for your dedication in your community. Thanks
3 to Dr. Owoh for being here.

4 And let's do take a three-minute break. It will
5 allow the room to clear a little bit. But no long
6 break, just to allow --

7 (BREAK: 11:28 - 11:36 a.m.)

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: I'll call us back to order. If
9 folks could have their seats -- there are a few seats
10 up here. And ask folks not to stand in the back. If
11 -- maybe there are not seats up here; maybe they're
12 saved. But if you can't sit down in this room, we do
13 ask that you go down the hall. There is space in a
14 couple of rooms down the hall. When we move to the
15 public comment period I will try to read a handful of
16 names at times so folks can know to move this way,
17 and we'll have folks at the back to help with that.

18 A-2: CONSIDERATION OF WAIVER OF EDUCATION-RELATED LAWS IN THE
19 LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Second -- the second
21 item is the Little Rock issue. This, unlike the
22 previous item, does not come with a recommendation
23 from the Department. This instead comes from Ms.
24 Zook who put forward a series of suggested proposals
25 related to our powers under the same Act 930

1 provisions that were part of the previous item.

2 So I'm going to turn it over to Ms. Zook for a
3 very brief introduction, much as the Department did
4 last time.

5 MS. ZOOK: Do you want me to introduce one at a
6 time and then take comment on each one, or do you
7 want me to talk about the variety of things that I'm
8 planning on introducing?

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: I think it's best to go ahead
10 and get the variety of things on the table, because I
11 think it's going to make public comment easier if
12 folks can respond to the areas where they had a
13 particular concern.

14 MS. ZOOK: Okay. One of the things was to have
15 the Little Rock School District adopt and implement a
16 literacy curriculum based on the Science of Reading;
17 and that ADE Division of Learning Services develop an
18 implementation process to insure alignment with
19 academic standards, the Science of Reading, and the
20 RISE initiative K-12.

21 Secondly, to conduct an analysis of the
22 District's systems -- specifically, special ed. and
23 dyslexia; that it be looked at in the special ed.
24 section from child-find all the way through placement
25 and development of an IEP to be sure they're in

1 compliance with IDEA and the Civil Rights laws, as
2 well as the staffing and full implementation of the
3 dyslexia law from the screening to intervention. And
4 then report -- I will ask that that report come back
5 to us by the February 14th State Board meeting.

6 I further will move for a review of the building
7 and departmental funding. I think I mentioned last
8 week I get a lot of reports from teachers who think
9 -- correctly or incorrectly, I don't know -- that
10 different buildings and different teachers are funded
11 differently; that there is not -- nothing clear about
12 how it's done, and that it's not done, in their
13 opinion, equitably. And I'll ask Financial Services
14 from ADE to work with them on that. It's my
15 understanding they have come into the reporting of
16 that slowly, compared to other districts. So I'm not
17 sure if that can be done by the February meeting or
18 not. If it can, that would be great; if it can't,
19 then I fully understand.

20 I'm going to move that we ask the Superintendent
21 and the ADE staff to develop a plan to reorganize or
22 reconstitute the Central Office administration. I
23 think based on the feedback that I've had that some
24 of the problems in Little Rock are very much the same
25 ones that Dr. Owoh referenced in Pine Bluff. I think

1 -- and nothing in this is personal; I know both of
2 these people very well and I have known them a long
3 time. But when the academics of a district has not
4 turned around and two people who are there have been
5 there through the entire time, I will ask that we no
6 longer have the two Deputy Superintendent positions;
7 but instead, get an Assistant Superintendent for
8 Instruction from an applicant pool to look at K-12
9 instruction to assist in the alignment of the
10 curriculum.

11 This is -- will go along with the Covington-Key
12 settlement, which was just specifically redrawing
13 attendance zones and establishing feeder patterns,
14 which will be advantageous to the Little Rock School
15 District blueprint and make that agreement a reality.

16 I move to add a 9th grade at the facility that's
17 part of the Pinnacle View facility, and then make
18 progressions all the way through 22-23. I think the
19 impetus partly for that is when Judge Marshall made
20 his ruling he said that that particular facility was
21 the one that the student body most accurately
22 reflected the City of Little Rock. Which, you know,
23 it's my desire that Little Rock School District
24 become the district that it was when I did my student
25 teaching and teaching here, that when my nieces and

1 nephews and stepchildren attended school here. And I
2 think that having schools that are balanced as far as
3 the different races and the different abilities of
4 the children will aid that.

5 I move to require that Hall High School be
6 reconstituted or reorganized prior to the 2019-20
7 school year, and that the Superintendent,
8 Commissioner, in possible consultation with the
9 principal at Forest Heights, the principal at
10 Henderson, and the current principal at Hall give
11 them input on whether they want it to be like Pea
12 Ridge, which is a part of their building process,
13 their district, where students are given the
14 opportunity to get their core subject areas but
15 they're also given an opportunity to work or
16 internship or do apprenticeships in the community; so
17 that children who are going to have to go straight to
18 work, whether they plan to go to college eventually
19 or not, but would have a trade that would help them
20 pay for college. It might be a GT magnet; it might
21 be an international magnet; it might be a STEM
22 extension from Forest Heights. You know, I don't
23 know. That will be up to the educators to look at
24 that and decide what it is. Because Hall in the past
25 was known as a terrific school and it's very painful

1 that it's now considered an unsafe place to go to
2 school. And at the same time that the 300-plus
3 students who have to go there out of their attendance
4 zone -- that if they want to go back to the schools
5 that are in their attendance zone -- these are
6 primarily the English Language Learners -- that they
7 in fact be given that opportunity; that they not have
8 to wait until there's a new Southwest school or in
9 the process of redrawing. They can go to their
10 attendance zone whenever the time comes.

11 I'm concerned about the students' math and
12 reading abilities. I'm concerned about the English
13 Language Learners and the special needs students.
14 I'm concerned about districts that don't -- that drag
15 their feet or don't follow the laws, especially the
16 dyslexia law. And I want students to get an
17 opportunity in the Little Rock School District to
18 make a year's worth of growth every year. One of the
19 things that federal government allowed us to do, and
20 Arkansas took advantage of, was that now a student is
21 only compared to him- or her-self each year when it
22 comes to growth. It's not based on an academic
23 achievement test, which may or may not work for that
24 student if they read slow or get nervous because of
25 the timing or if there's bias within the test. But

1 50% of that score is based on if this student made
2 three-year -- three months progress last year or six
3 months or nine months, or however much progress they
4 made, then make at least that much the coming year or
5 more. And that way, the school [sic] is based on
6 that, and so that takes away the special needs
7 concerns; that takes away the low socioeconomic
8 concerns; that takes away everything because I'm only
9 being compared to myself and what I did last year.

10 So --

11 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. So just to reiterate, I
12 think I heard seven things there. I heard the
13 reading initiative and implementation of a RISE
14 oriented reading initiative; I heard a special ed.
15 education and dyslexia audit by the February 14th
16 meeting; I heard a report at the earliest time
17 possible of the allocation of funds across buildings;
18 I heard reorganization of the Central Office
19 administration; I heard implementation of revision to
20 attendance zones; I heard a 9th grade addition at
21 Pinnacle View; and I heard some reorganization of
22 Hall High. Is that -- did I get the list?

23 MS. ZOOK: (Nodding head up and down.)

24 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Thanks.

25 All right.

1 MS. NEWTON: Dr. Barth --

2 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Newton.

3 MS. NEWTON: -- I will be making a motion on
4 Teacher Fair Dismissal and Public School Employee
5 Fair Hearing Act.

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. For all teachers?

7 MS. NEWTON: Yes. Not just teachers; across --

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All educators?

9 MS. NEWTON: Educators.

10 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

11 MS. NEWTON: Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

13 SENATOR ELLIOTT: Mr. Chairman, can I just get a
14 clarification?

15 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yes.

16 SENATOR ELLIOTT: Because it was a lot
17 (inaudible, not at the microphone).

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Could you come to --

19 SENATOR ELLIOTT: Yeah. Since I didn't hear the
20 very beginning and that's -- of course I was outside
21 doing whatever, are we having -- are we going to vote
22 on what Ms. Zook has presented -- are you guys going
23 to vote on that proposal and the Fair Dismissal
24 proposal? Are they separate things or are they
25 together?

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: They -- it'll be my view that
2 indeed several of Ms. Zook's items may need to be
3 itemed out with separate votes because of the --
4 because --

5 SENATOR ELLIOTT: Okay.

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Because I think it's -- because
7 of the nature of those proposals being so expansive
8 that it will make sense -- it's possible some could
9 be in some chunks, but that we might indeed have
10 seven different votes there. We would certainly have
11 a different vote on Teacher Fair Dismissal.

12 SENATOR ELLIOTT: And so will the public be able
13 to make its comments before any votes at all take
14 place?

15 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yes. In fact, the public will
16 make comments before any motions are made.

17 SENATOR ELLIOTT: Okay. All right. So we're
18 just being apprised of --

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: I just thought it was important
20 for the Board and the public to get clear on the
21 scope of what the conversation is going to be --

22 SENATOR ELLIOTT: So that's good.

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: -- on this issue.

24 SENATOR ELLIOTT: That's good, so we'll know --
25 so when somebody comes up here with their three

1 minutes they know what --

2 CHAIRMAN BARTH: They know what -- right.
3 Exactly.

4 SENATOR ELLIOTT: Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: And they may want to focus
6 their comments on one item or another or on a variety
7 of things.

8 SENATOR ELLIOTT: Okay. Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Is that clear?

10 SENATOR ELLIOTT: Yes.

11 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. All right. Are there
12 any questions for Ms. Zook, any questions for Ms.
13 Newton, kind of know where this is going? I'm now --
14 anything from the Commissioner?

15 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. -- again, Dr. Hernandez
16 is here if there's anything coming from the quarterly
17 report, that impact or affiliated with any of these
18 topics. And I would just make one correction.
19 Originally, the recommendation of the waiver of
20 Teacher Fair Dismissal and Employee Fair Hearing was
21 a recommendation from the Department, all the way
22 back to the November meeting. If you'll recall, we
23 postponed that because of the negotiations that were
24 going on.

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: But that recommendation was

1 only for teachers in D and F schools?

2 COMMISSIONER KEY: The original recommendation,
3 yes.

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Thank you.

5 MS. KATHY KOHLER: Is it for 19-20 only?

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Well, we will hear the exact
7 motion I guess at the time -- if you want to expand
8 upon your -- the scope of your motion.

9 MS. KOHLER: So you'll give us time to leave the
10 district before you destroy it.

11 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Excuse me. Now let's limit
12 public comment until we go to public comment, please.

13 And so, but there will be an expansive
14 opportunity for you to clarify your motion at that
15 time. One reason for public comments before the
16 motions is those may help shape the motions that are
17 actually made. That is -- that's the reason for my
18 decision to do public comment before we move to any
19 motions.

20 Okay. All right. As before, I'll ask Mr. Poore
21 to come forward and I'll also go ahead and get you
22 under oath. And do you expect anybody else from the
23 District to be making comments or do you think it'll
24 just be you?

25 SUPT. POORE: I would anticipate and hope that

1 as you go into the different individual motions --

2 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

3 SUPT. POORE: -- that there may need to be some
4 specific support from other administrators.

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

6 SUPT. POORE: And that would come through, I
7 would assume, the questions that you as board members
8 would have.

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

10 SUPT. POORE: So right now, it's just me -- but
11 there may be others --

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

13 SUPT. POORE: -- later on.

14 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Well, we will -- we'll
15 swear in other folks if they need to provide
16 testimony along the way.

17 Do you -- if you'll raise your right hand, do
18 you swear or affirm the testimony you're about to
19 give shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing
20 but the truth?

21 SUPT. POORE: I do.

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you, sir.

23 So you've heard the scope of issues coming
24 before us. If you want to make any introductory
25 comments, that's fine. But then we'll turn it over

1 to questions that the Board has.

2 SUPT. POORE: Absolutely. And, Board Members,
3 you have received at the dais a document. And my
4 staff will start to pass this out to the audience
5 right now as well, so that you all have information
6 that the Board has, so that you can see.

7 The opening slide is important to me, and I
8 wanted to add that because, you know, the words that
9 we used this year to introduce our year and then
10 continue to think about what we're doing in Little
11 Rock School District was "Dream, Disrupt, and
12 Deliver." You know, "dream," you've got to have a
13 vision, you've got to be going towards something in
14 order to have people all come together and be unified
15 in their work. "Disrupt" meant that we can't be
16 satisfied with where we're at as a school district.
17 And I feel like throughout our entire year so far
18 that there are people that are stepping up left and
19 right to take on disruption and not, you know, maybe
20 move away from previous things that we were doing, go
21 towards new deliveries. And so disruption has
22 occurred in our district, and really disruption has
23 occurred over at least my three years. And then, of
24 course, there's the "deliver" part, which is really
25 kind of the crux of, you know, why I'm sure many of

1 you are bringing some of the issues forward today.

2 The other important part of this is the verbiage
3 of "The Power of Us." I felt like the reason that
4 the Commissioner and the Governor asked me to come to
5 Little Rock was to be a collaborator, to help people
6 work together. Because I'm just a pretty average
7 guy, but I can tell you this: I'm pretty good at
8 getting people to come together and work on things in
9 a collaborative fashion to create a better product,
10 to create a better delivery, and ultimately to impact
11 achievement.

12 The intent that I see in my role, my job over
13 the three years, is that Little Rock is very much a
14 hot potato in some ways. It is a city that wants to
15 have the very best for their kids but oftentimes, the
16 types of conversations are challenging and it's hard
17 to create consensus. And some of it is in the timing
18 piece and some of it is in historical pieces and some
19 of it is in the just deep passion that people have
20 about certain ways that we operate or try to do
21 things. And all of those things are important.

22 In my packet you do obviously have a letter from
23 me -- and I'm not going to go into that in any more
24 detail or read it to you; you can read that on your
25 own. You also will see a document then that's kind

1 of on page 3 that talks about Significant
2 Foundational Systems that have been developed since I
3 arrived in the school district in 2016. Now the
4 interesting thing about these systems is that --
5 first off, if you think about any organization --
6 okay, it could be an organization that you're working
7 for as a nonprofit, it could be a large business, it
8 could be another school district -- but typically
9 organizations take on two or three things that are
10 really significant foundational changes in systems
11 and they work on them, and then they work on it over
12 a span of two or three years. I never felt like we
13 had that luxury. We had to do multiple things to try
14 to change where we were headed as a district and,
15 again, to create a more collaborative environment and
16 to create an environment where students' needs were
17 being taken care of, staff needs were being
18 supported, and we were utilizing the community to
19 help us move forward.

20 So when you look at this long list, all these
21 things are transformational. If you think of eSchool
22 -- and many of you are aware that eSchool was brought
23 in -- and I remember bringing it into Bentonville as
24 a pilot. And I can remember in that first year as a
25 pilot I had staff saying, "You've lost your mind.

1 Why did you do this to us?" It was transformational.
2 Ultimately, a year later, the staff was appreciative.
3 We're just into that staff being appreciative of the
4 change that we went through last year, and we're
5 still learning. I can go through other items on here
6 but, you know, one of the things that I think about
7 on systems is that -- and, Ms. Chambers, I'm just
8 going to use some advice that you have provided me in
9 my past -- to say that systems actually make good
10 people great people; systems make great people move
11 to an excellent level; and systems oftentimes help
12 support the folks that just aren't going to get it;
13 poor performers, they end up saying and seeing this
14 isn't their place, isn't where they need to be.

15 If there was another thing -- you know, I keep
16 -- you know how you create a document like this and
17 you say -- at some point you've got to stop. Okay,
18 I've got to quit. But I couldn't; in my head I'm
19 still thinking. Like today when you-all started
20 talking about policies, do you realize that's another
21 whole system issue that we worked on with the State
22 to totally revamp all of our policies and we just
23 completed that process this year? All the policies
24 in Little Rock School District, every single one of
25 them, because we were out of compliance, left, right,

1 up and down, everywhere you want to go. And so all
2 those policies have been revamped, and we've done
3 that in conjunction with our Community Advisory
4 Board. And our Community Advisory Board has been a
5 part of multiple parts of these systems.

6 But I also want to share that the Arkansas
7 Department of Education has been a huge partner and
8 oftentimes don't get enough credit for the work that
9 they're doing within the district to help make Little
10 Rock improve in terms of delivery of these systems.

11 If you look at the data sheet then that the
12 Office of Educational Programming -- Educational
13 Policy -- excuse me -- provided, I think it's some
14 interesting data. As you look at this data though, I
15 do want you to think about that basically it's pretty
16 easy to see flat results -- and in many ways, that
17 could be disappointing to you or to me. But if you
18 go capture flat results with another reality -- think
19 of a school district that has had budget reductions
20 of \$50,000,000 in less than five years -- \$50,000,000
21 worth of reductions in five years -- and the changes
22 that occur as you go make those hard decisions to
23 lose \$50,000,000. Think of the reality that we've
24 lost over 1,000 students. And the students that
25 we've lost are families that typically have the

1 ability to make a choice; they're families that have
2 the opportunity to make a choice to go to a private
3 school, to go to a school that is in our surrounding
4 areas, or to access a charter school. So, yes, our
5 results are flat. If you look at it though in terms
6 of what -- the first data sheet, Figure 1, 80.34 --
7 and I'm sure most of you are aware is what is the --
8 I hope I'll end up saying this correct in terms of
9 statistics -- if you're at 80, that is saying that
10 you met your expected growth -- you met your expected
11 growth. Look at our elementary, middle and high
12 school; look at the state's. And overall, we're
13 meeting expected growth other than in the high
14 school, which is a minor -- just a little bit below.
15 If you look on farther, you could then break that out
16 into Language Arts and mathematics. And, again, the
17 trends kind of stay the same. LRSD elementary
18 schools are outperforming the state. Is it
19 statistically significant in how we're outperforming?
20 No. Is it statistically significant that the middle
21 schools and high schools are a little bit under the
22 state? No. That would also not be a correct
23 assumption. If you look then at Figure 4 in terms of
24 the weighted achievement, and in 4, 5, and 6 you can
25 see a decline in performance on achievement for both

1 the state and for LRSD. Now why is that? Well, we
2 also -- we need to remember that the declines in
3 weighted achievement is because we changed the
4 State's cut scores this year and so that made the
5 modification different. Now you can say those cut
6 scores, is that a good thing or a bad thing? I
7 actually don't think it's a bad thing when you think
8 that there's higher expectations. We just have to
9 respond to them. And I hope that's the language and
10 the verbiage that I've used throughout my tenure in
11 Little Rock to say we've got to respond to those
12 challenges. And that's why I wanted to have you look
13 at the significant things that we've done in terms of
14 development of systems.

15 Now one of the things, in talking to Sarah
16 McKenzie, who is leading the Office of Educational
17 Policy -- Sarah, you've been in that role before and
18 maybe you'll be able to add to this conversation --
19 that, you know, when you look at where things are at,
20 one of the things that -- when you look at just
21 performance, you try to have an understanding that,
22 first, are we doing the right things; is this
23 district doing the right things. When you look at
24 those systems, is it the right things? Now if you
25 question whether that's the right things, boy, we'd

1 better start to think about what we're doing as a
2 state too, because these match up fairly well with
3 some of the state initiatives.

4 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

5 SUPT. POORE: That's one thing we need to look
6 at.

7 A second thing that we should look at is do we
8 have the right people in spots and are they working
9 effectively. And so that is something that we look
10 at and consider and try to make sure that we're
11 monitoring that in as aggressive a fashion as we can.

12 To get down then into the very specific motions,
13 and then we can follow-up with questions you have --
14 and I'm not going to be able to probably address
15 every specific motion right now. I just want to kind
16 of give an overview of how I look at things.

17 First off, I believe in the work that we're
18 doing in the District. I believe in the work we're
19 doing with the Department of Education. I believe in
20 the work that we're doing with multiple stakeholders
21 within our community, which includes our teacher
22 association, which also includes our community -- and
23 our community has stepped up in some really
24 significant ways. When you go from \$19,000,000 of
25 volunteerism to \$27,000,000, that's pretty cool --

1 just in one year. And I believe we'll beat that
2 record again this year.

3 I am open to any form of review that you can
4 possibly ask and want to have upon this district.
5 I'll never back away from it. You can come monitor,
6 you can come look at us. But we should also be kind
7 of smart about this. We just had a SPED review in
8 2016, and we got everything cleaned, and it was minor
9 things that had to be adjusted for 2017. We also
10 know that there's an intense SPED review coming again
11 next year, because that's the cycle that takes place
12 within the administration. And we should also
13 remember that SPED and dyslexia should be looked at
14 separately, and that may be something that you want
15 to tackle as a part of your motions, because they are
16 two different things, although I agree that there is
17 overlap and support that comes from the SPED world
18 into what we do with dyslexia.

19 Next, I would tell you that I'm very proud of
20 the work that we did this year to negotiate out our
21 professional negotiated agreement. I'm proud of both
22 sides. I'm proud of the negotiated agreement that
23 was presented and approved by our Commissioner. I'm
24 proud that the Commissioner took a stand that hasn't
25 happened in any district that I can ever be aware of

1 that he approved the document first before the
2 teacher association did. Now he did that to try to
3 -- in my mind anyway -- I don't want to speak for him
4 -- but in my mind, he did that to instill trust in
5 the process. Now I can also share with you in terms
6 of my word and where I'm at with trust is that I
7 negotiated that agreement under some language that I
8 heard from the Commissioner and then brought that
9 into the negotiating table. But the way that we were
10 going to work on the professional negotiated
11 agreement was to work to move towards addressing
12 schools that had D's and F's. And that wasn't an
13 easy conversation, as you can probably well imagine,
14 and you can sense that probably within this room. It
15 wasn't an easy conversation, but we got there. But
16 we did not talk about doing this across the body of
17 all of our educators -- and for that, I'm opposed.

18 I'm -- I will tell you that I agree with Dr.
19 Owoh in terms of his assessment, that there is
20 administrative positions that we constantly need to
21 be reviewing. And I'm more open in that regard in
22 terms of having that possibly be a part of what you
23 end up looking at. But the work that we did -- I'm a
24 person that wants to live by my word. I want to
25 stand behind what I was given as my charge, and I'm

1 very proud of the document we produced that is the
2 professional negotiated agreement for our staff. So
3 as you look and consider that particular thing, you
4 know, we looked at it as we worked on that, as a D
5 and F; we looked at it in terms of a concept of a
6 scalpel, not a chainsaw or a hatchet, that were
7 things that we talked about. But I do understand and
8 hope and maybe give -- I would like for you to -- I'm
9 not opposed to consideration of saying that we need
10 to do something different within the administrative
11 group. But I will tell you, if you're saying, you
12 know, the specific thing about my staff and my Deputy
13 Superintendents and reorganization and all those type
14 of things -- and I know Ms. Zook comes in it with a
15 very -- in her eyes, of viewing this as the right
16 thing. I will tell you that I'm very much opposed to
17 that motion, and I can go into more specifics, if
18 need be. But I'm proud of the people that I get to
19 work with within my cabinet and I'm proud of the
20 things that are taking place in this district.

21 Remember, data often is a lagging indicator.
22 And that's one of the things that Sarah McKenzie said
23 to me, "If you have -- if you're doing the right work
24 and you're developing the right culture within your
25 district" -- those are two things that I really

1 believe are in place -- "then the data results will
2 come."

3 I know you have a sense of urgency. I'm telling
4 you, there's people behind me that have a sense of
5 urgency. There's a whole community of Little Rock
6 that has a sense of urgency. But we've got to do
7 this the right way and we've got to be true to the
8 words that we've shared with our community, and
9 that's what I hope I always will represent as the
10 Superintendent of Little Rock.

11 Final thing just in terms of the data, because I
12 think the data does make you -- it makes you uneasy;
13 are we doing the right thing or not doing the right
14 thing, and the results are flat. Again, think about
15 the fact of how many different systems that we've
16 implemented that are, I believe, all the right
17 systems, from support to learners that have issues in
18 their home environments to making those try to go
19 away or support them so they're better prepared, to
20 data systems, Professional Learning Communities,
21 training -- and you can read and I don't want to go
22 through every one of those. But we're doing the
23 right work.

24 And the other thing that you have to consider in
25 terms of flat results is, wow, we've cut \$50,000,000

1 out of this budget and our results are flat. I'll
2 leave you with that. Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you, sir.

4 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. I did want to note
6 that Representative Blake is in the room. He wasn't
7 noted earlier. So thanks for being here, Charles.

8 So I'm going to start with Ms. Chambers, on the
9 phone, to see if she has any questions, either of the
10 Department or of Superintendent Poore.

11 MS. CHAMBERS: So one question, Dr. Barth, is
12 does the Department of Education -- and maybe we're
13 only dealing with one thing. I got a little bit
14 confused if we were talking about Fair Dismissal or
15 we were talking about the -- a number of things that
16 Ms. Zook spoke to. But does the Department of Ed.
17 support approving each of the things on the table, or
18 we'll hear from them individually as they're brought
19 up and discussed in more detail? That's really the
20 only question I have right now.

21 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yeah. I think that's a fair
22 question. In terms of -- I don't know how -- if you
23 want to literally walk item-by-item or if you want to
24 talk more generally about where the Department is.
25 This does not come as a recommendation, but that

1 doesn't mean the Department is -- doesn't have
2 opinions on it.

3 COMMISSIONER KEY: Right. And, you know, in my
4 opening statement, which applied for both Pine Bluff
5 and Little Rock, we're supportive of what actions
6 you-all take. These typically come -- you know, not
7 -- this -- these particular things don't come in the
8 form of recommendations because they are -- they are
9 elements of the statute that are within your
10 authority. So, you know, we -- the specificity with
11 which Ms. Zook presented some of these, you know, we
12 have said we would work with Mr. Poore on -- with
13 whatever plans that y'all required from us, on Hall,
14 on Central Office, all of those things. So,
15 generally supportive. But as far as the specifics of
16 some of those elements I think those are best worked
17 out by the District personnel and the Department
18 personnel. So if you want to get into specific
19 things, once those motions come up, we can do that.
20 But generally I'm supportive of the elements that
21 have been presented.

22 MS. CHAMBERS: And I do -- I would just say in
23 response -- thank you, that's very helpful -- as we
24 do go through them more specifically, if there's any
25 color commentary to bring it helps to know that we

1 could do all these things because they're under
2 statute. I would be looking for advice from the
3 Department on should we do them based on all the
4 things going on right now. So if we could keep that
5 in mind, that's great.

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you, Ms. Chambers.

7 Ms. McFetridge, any questions?

8 MS. MCFETRIDGE: I think that's what I really
9 struggle with. I feel like we got these items by Ms.
10 Zook today without really having an opportunity to
11 study any of the issues ahead of time. So I really
12 -- I struggle with that myself.

13 When we're talking about funding allocations to
14 different schools and different schools getting
15 different amount of monies, do you want to -- are you
16 ready to talk about that today?

17 SUPT. POORE: Well, I can give you -- actually,
18 we can provide a report fairly quickly to you on
19 that. And I appreciate your comment that I think
20 this is one of those things that should be studied.
21 We've used that as a part of our facilities work over
22 the last three years that we can identify. So as an
23 example, Baseline Elementary actually gets more money
24 coming into it per pupil than any other school in our
25 district. Now the reason for that is because they

1 get grant funding, and so the grant funding that
2 comes into that site is much higher. You look at
3 Central High versus any other high school in our
4 district, Central High gets the lowest amount of per
5 pupil funding compared to any other high school. And
6 the reason for that is because the other high schools
7 have additional grant funds that come in, either from
8 the state or the federal level or even community
9 level. So the money -- we can identify very clearly
10 where the money is going within each school
11 environment and we can show you exactly the breakdown
12 of that, and that's very transparent. And it's
13 actually available -- if you click on our blueprint
14 right now, for the community blueprint, I believe
15 that's on there as one of the supporting documents.

16 MS. McFETRIDGE: Well, how would you even begin
17 to balance that out?

18 SUPT. POORE: You can't. That's the honest
19 truth is that you can't, and you don't want to
20 because you want to try to provide additional
21 resources for schools that are in most need. And now
22 you may think that our choice of allocation is
23 inappropriate, but some of that is governed by the
24 State. As an example, right now our 10.03 money
25 that's coming to the district, the money that is

1 there for our two high schools -- actually, our three
2 high schools, it's significant amounts of dollars
3 that are there for a planning grant. And it's
4 different for Stephens Elementary. Now Stephens
5 Elementary is also a school that has significant
6 needs, but because of its size of its school they're
7 getting less portion of the dollars compared to what
8 the high school is. So, you know, all these things
9 are unique in terms of how it works. And many of
10 these things are not dictated at all by the District;
11 it's dictated by the grant program that we've worked
12 with the Department on.

13 MS. McFETRIDGE: Do you feel like your parent
14 volunteer funds -- I know that's always been an issue
15 too. You know, some schools are able to raise more
16 PTA money than others. And is there a way to even
17 begin to balance that out?

18 SUPT. POORE: You're absolutely correct that,
19 you know, schools like a Don Roberts, as an example,
20 or a Forest Park and our other elementary -- they are
21 going to have PTAs that raise a great deal of money.
22 I would agree with that. Some of that then -- you
23 also have to understand is that those schools --
24 Roberts now for the first time actually has title
25 funds this year, but Forest Park -- I hope I'm

1 correct in saying they do not. So the, you know,
2 title helps compensate for some of those things. But
3 also then the grants are -- many of the grants are
4 loaded more heavily for either underperforming
5 schools or schools that have higher free and reduced
6 lunch populations.

7 MS. ZOOK: Okay. I think I wanted --

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Commissioner -- excuse me, Ms.
9 Zook.

10 MS. ZOOK: Okay.

11 COMMISSIONER KEY: Yeah, let me respond on the
12 allocation per school. One of the elements of the
13 Every Student Succeeds Act is that states will have
14 to start reporting that. That's a requirement that
15 has not been in place in the past. So our system
16 now, we -- Arkansas is actually one of the leaders in
17 collecting that type of data and having an ability to
18 report it. So your -- the issue that has been
19 brought up before y'all is simply something that we
20 have to do for the whole state. I understand Ms.
21 Zook wants us to bring that back, and she also
22 mentioned programs. So we don't look at it based on,
23 you know, certain like whatever programs within the
24 district. But within the building level those
25 allocations and expenditures are captured and we can

1 easily work with the District to fill in any holes
2 that might be there on our end.

3 MS. ZOOK: And I think the point I was making is
4 that the perception of the people in the building is
5 that it's not equal and they are not aware maybe of
6 what you're saying about the 10.03 grants and about
7 this school or that school. So I think for teacher
8 morale and principal morale if they understand, "No,
9 if you are exactly like this school, you would get
10 this kind of money, it's based on a lot of things."
11 And I just wanted to, you know, clarify for them that
12 -- excuse me -- that no, it's good; you know,
13 everything is fine. I wasn't questioning the way it
14 was done; I was concerned about the perception that
15 it's not done fairly.

16 SUPT. POORE: Well, and you all know that --
17 some of the facts that you work on and present, it's
18 oftentimes challenging, even though this data has
19 been out there for three years, of us being able to
20 formally say "here's how much we put per student to
21 each building;" it often doesn't get disseminated.
22 But as an example to your point, when Roberts was
23 declared to have a high enough free and reduced lunch
24 population one of the first things we did -- I told
25 Dr. Mitchell, "We've got to bring that into the

1 elementary school and make everyone -- all the
2 elementary principals aware that this is going to
3 happen this year." Because, guess what, it wasn't
4 that we got extra money for the district; it meant
5 that by law Roberts should get some now and it also
6 then decreased some of the funding levels for the
7 other schools. And so we try to be very transparent
8 as big things come in. Right now, probably the big
9 thing that we're working on in terms of grant funds
10 are those 10.03 planning grants that we're working
11 with the Department hand-in-hand on.

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Great. Ms. Newton?

13 MS. NEWTON: Before, a comment. I just -- I
14 have to publicly voice that I disagree with a
15 statement that was made earlier about the support the
16 Department would give, of being smart with waivers
17 and support to districts. And I have complete
18 confidence in our Commissioner and the people at the
19 Department that they will do what's best for kids.
20 And so I just want to publicly say that.

21 As far as the waiver, I want to kind of tell you
22 why I'm thinking about all educators, not just D and
23 F schools. It goes back to a comment that I read in
24 the last quarterly report that says, "Although we
25 receive the knowledge in theory, it was not

1 implemented." And these D and F schools, they did
2 not get there on their own; they did not get there by
3 themselves. Many times there's leaders that need to
4 step forward and, you know, sometimes say hard
5 things, do hard things, make hard decisions. And so
6 to put it all on one school or one teacher or
7 whatever, I think it has to be all administrators.
8 It has to be all instructional leaders who are given
9 the responsibility for making sure that our students,
10 our children, the ones that we love more than
11 anything in the world have the best education that
12 they deserve. And that's why that I think that we
13 have to look at not just one or -- or just a few
14 buildings, but we have to look at district-wide, is
15 everyone doing the job that we have been given the
16 responsibility -- and it's a tremendous
17 responsibility. When you start taking responsibility
18 for someone's child, for someone's future, to make
19 sure that they have what they need when they go out
20 in the world, then we can't take it lightly. We've
21 got to make sure that everyone has those best
22 interests in their heart and we can't put it on the
23 backs of just a few schools, of just a few people.
24 It has to be everyone in the district. We're in this
25 together, and we want what's best for kids. And so

1 that's why that I feel that it needs to be district-
2 wide.

3 SUPT. POORE: I don't know if you wanted me to
4 comment, Ms. Newton?

5 MS. NEWTON: I just wanted you to tell -- I
6 wanted to tell you --

7 SUPT. POORE: Okay.

8 MS. NEWTON: -- why I was looking at it that
9 way.

10 SUPT. POORE: Okay.

11 MS. NEWTON: So it's up to you if you want to
12 comment.

13 SUPT. POORE: I will comment. You know, and one
14 of the things that -- I do appreciate the fact that
15 we use a language in Little Rock; one is "The Power
16 of Us," and the other one, that Mr. Hill helped us
17 with, is "One Rock." You know, we use that term
18 quite a bit, "One Rock," you know, because it has a
19 symbolism that we have to be together; we have to do
20 some things united in terms of delivery -- and that's
21 those systems again. And you know better than anyone
22 else, Ms. Newton, when you look at these symptoms as
23 an educator -- former educator that if you don't have
24 those things in place you're not going to move
25 forward. And we had a lot of things that were not in

1 place or not developed fully. I'm reminded of Ms.
2 Fox, one of our Community Advisory Board members,
3 that -- you know, one of her concerns has been --
4 when we come to reporting on different things about
5 where we're at with our poor performance schools,
6 she'll say, "I've heard some of this before. You
7 know, I've heard about 'we're going to use data.'
8 I've heard 'we're going to have Professional Learning
9 Communities.' What's different?" Well, I hope one
10 of them is -- I hope it's me, a little bit. You
11 know, and I don't mean to be egotistical but, you
12 know, you had -- before Mike Poore you had five
13 superintendents in seven years; before Mike Poore you
14 had 24 superintendents in 30 years. Before this
15 whole thing, the governance model, also in my opinion
16 -- and I know there'll be some people that won't like
17 me saying this -- I don't think that, from what I can
18 see, that it was working as effectively as it should
19 and that -- as much as we need local control back,
20 we're going to have to figure out a governance model
21 that actually works, and that's going to take
22 leadership.

23 So the point that you're making about all
24 schools, your -- the one thing that I would be -- I
25 wouldn't be honest with myself or with you if I said

1 that do we have teachers that are poor performers in
2 an A school; we do. We also have great teachers,
3 amazing teachers that are at D and F schools. And,
4 you know, one of the things that we talked about with
5 the D and F group is that, you know, the stimulus --
6 I don't know if that's even the right word -- this is
7 going to be a different thing for us to tackle.
8 We've come up with a good due process with those D
9 and F schools and I think that -- you know, well, I
10 think we'll manage that well.

11 But I also want you to know this week I shared
12 with the Commissioner -- and I haven't done this on a
13 day-to-day basis with the Commissioner because I
14 didn't think it was what he needed and that wasn't
15 what he asked for. But I felt like as a part of this
16 conversation he needed to see what Mr. Burton is
17 doing with principals that he sees aren't quite
18 getting some things done that he expects as a part of
19 LEADS evaluation. I needed the Commissioner to see
20 what Dr. Mitchell is doing with teachers, through
21 their principal, that aren't performing quite as
22 well. And so I haven't been sharing that before
23 because I honestly didn't think that was a part of
24 the relationship that he needed to see. But in this
25 environment I needed him to see it, and that allows

1 me now to be public with you to say we are doing the
2 work necessary to take care of some of the issues
3 that are of your concern by using TESS and LEADS
4 appropriately, and now negotiating out an agreement
5 with the Teachers Association to move forward on the
6 D and F's.

7 I understand your point of view. I just wanted
8 to give a little bit different point of view.

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Dr. Hill?

10 DR. HILL: So, Mr. -- Superintendent Poore, what
11 are your -- probably the best way to say this --
12 based on Ms. Zook's list, your response to those
13 things that -- is there a working relationship that
14 you perceive that needs to take place to formulate
15 what's right -- I mean, what you say you feel like --
16 what you've shown to the Commissioner to say "I've
17 done this?" And then we're asking for questions or
18 things that a board member wants to see, a working
19 relationship -- I mean, what do you perceive that
20 needs to take place for this unified approach to One
21 Rock?

22 SUPT. POORE: Well, you know, first off, I think
23 -- and I think the Commissioner would back me up --
24 that he and I sometimes laugh about how often people
25 think that he and I are like on totally different

1 planets or that he's not supportive of what's going
2 on in Little Rock -- and that's not the truth. He
3 and his staff are very engaged. His staff was with
4 us last week on an HR system. Dr. Mitchell was in
5 that room, Dr. Fields was in that room, Robert
6 Robinson was in that room -- all employees that have
7 been with the district for a long period of time.
8 And if you go ask Mike Hernandez, who was leading --
9 helping lead that meeting, did Little Rock make any
10 excuses about where we're at within our HR systems,
11 did Little Rock say no to any help or support that
12 the State was providing through the human capital
13 grant movement -- never; did not happen. Because
14 that's our culture that's changed, of people saying,
15 "Hey" -- Dream, Disrupt and Deliver, that's not just
16 words; those are things that we're actually doing
17 right now. And so, you know, I think -- and I hope
18 I'm answering your question, Dr. Hill -- that my
19 belief is that, you know, there probably needs to be
20 another mechanism -- and I know we've kind of gone
21 back and forth in terms of how Little Rock reports.
22 I think you were frustrated with my report just two
23 weeks ago -- but guess what, it was a screwed up
24 agenda. Okay, I'll push some back a little bit on
25 you guys because it -- there was no way you were

1 going to get through that agenda. And then we get to
2 5:15, but we have a public forum set up that night.
3 So, you know, we got -- I talked fast to try to get
4 in -- and maybe we need more depth of talking. Ms.
5 Chambers and Mr. Barth talked at a meeting maybe five
6 or six months ago about a special meeting just for
7 Little Rock to talk about what transition looks like.
8 And many of these things that we're talking about are
9 elements of transition, not only into governance but
10 into transitions of support from the Department or
11 even expectations that need to come back into the
12 district. And so I welcome that.

13 I also will reiterate the welcoming of any type
14 of review that the Department comes in at us and
15 says, "We want to look at dyslexia, we want to look
16 at your SPED." We're -- we will do -- we'll open the
17 doors and have that type of review available to you.

18 So I hope that answers your question.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. All right.

20 Are you good?

21 MS. DEAN: Yes.

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Ms. Zook, anything?

23 MS. ZOOK: I think --

24 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Microphone.

25 MS. ZOOK: The Commissioner started out today's

1 meeting talking about when we would intervene on
2 fiscal distress, that it really was almost solely
3 dependent upon the Superintendent and working with
4 the finance and working like that. But we have
5 learned that academics is not different; it's
6 dependent on way more than just "the guy." And I
7 think as try as you may that -- and this board did
8 give Superintendent Kurrus and you both three-and-a-
9 half years now. And I think the impetus of these
10 kinds of things is that we believe some of these
11 things, like we did with Pine Bluff, need to be done
12 sooner rather than later. I guess Little Rock is
13 like the oldest child, you learn a lot about
14 parenting with the oldest child. And we have learned
15 that as a state board -- because of our
16 responsibility through the Constitution and through
17 the Supreme Court that we need to get more involved
18 and more directive sooner. And I think that's why
19 this is coming up three-plus years into the
20 intervention, is because it needed more than "the
21 guy;" it needed everybody working together. And what
22 you found is much what we found when we go into the
23 district, is that there are lots more things there
24 that need tweaking or changing or doing away with
25 than you can get in a regular report, which is what

1 we were getting before. And I think that what we're
2 wanting to do now is things that we believe will
3 directly impact student achievement. Because even
4 though your numbers and your charts showed the
5 district-wide and the statewide, it didn't really
6 show those individual buildings and those individual
7 children who are just not having their needs met.
8 Whether the teacher and the principal don't know what
9 to do, or whether they are not willing to do, I don't
10 know; you know, I don't know those individual
11 teachers. I know some of them, but I don't know as
12 many as you do.

13 So I think that's where I'm coming from on this.
14 And anything that we as a board can do to back you
15 up, to assist you, to help speed things along, that
16 will get to the heart of the matter, which are the
17 children, then I think -- at least that's where I'm
18 coming from with regard to all of this.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Can I ask a quick follow-up to
20 that? And then I'll get Mr. Williamson.

21 So on the list of things that we're being asked
22 to -- or will be asked to consider later today, which
23 of those things do you see as harmful to your ability
24 to move the district forward?

25 SUPT. POORE: I think that, you know, that there

1 needs to be a limitation on where you all go with
2 this Fair Dismissal, and we stick with what we
3 shared.

4 And I also believe that, you know, the
5 reconstituting of the Central Office, that -- well,
6 I'll honestly say I guess if that's your view then
7 you're looking at almost like a vote of no-confidence
8 of your Superintendent. That's my opinion. And so I
9 don't mean to be that direct, but this is high-stakes
10 stuff we're all talking about here. And so that's
11 how I view that -- because that's why I presented all
12 these systems.

13 The third thing is that we have done a very
14 collaborative process in terms of the community
15 input. And I know many of you have worked on that
16 very thing -- how do communities interact and how do
17 you try to generate it. Is what we do perfect in
18 terms of how we try to engage the community? No.
19 But I can tell you how our process went for this
20 blueprint for facilities. It started in August and
21 it's still not quite done because the survey just
22 ended last night. I don't even know what those
23 results are. We know that we're presenting a
24 recommendation to the Commissioner. But it had a lot
25 of people involved and it went to five different

1 school sites and there were two different surveys and
2 everything was captured. And so, you know, I think
3 that, you know, the work there -- it may be, if
4 anything, that you direct your Commissioner because
5 he's at a place now where he gets to make a decision
6 on the facilities to modify.

7 I will share that our Community Advisory Board
8 on facilities did take a step back on Hall High
9 School and said that they wanted to wait another
10 month before they approved anything on the plan and
11 wanted to explore a little bit more deep options.
12 So, that one is one that's left hanging from the vote
13 that took place this week.

14 CHAIRMAN BARTH: And so both the -- so the Hall
15 High piece and then Pinnacle View as well, those that
16 have to do with facilities, would be areas of concern
17 for you because they tie back to --

18 SUPT. POORE: Tie back to our own process with
19 the community.

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. So the two personnel
21 items and then those two items related to facilities
22 are the ones that cause you the most concern?

23 SUPT. POORE: Correct. But I hope you also
24 heard me say that I'm willing to -- yeah, I'll stick
25 with those.

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yeah. Okay. I just wanted to
2 get clear on where we have areas of tension with your
3 vision and where we don't.

4 Mr. Williamson?

5 MR. WILLIAMSON: I don't have anything.

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Dr. Moore?

7 DR. MOORE: I actually have a lot of questions,
8 if you don't mind.

9 I appreciate you being here and the hard work
10 you're doing. You know I'm a product of Little Rock
11 School District and know there's a lot of good being
12 done in the district. But as we look at the data,
13 32% of your students are meeting readiness in ELA and
14 that needs to change. That's what we're doing.

15 A part of the conversation of Teacher Fair
16 Dismissal, we have to talk about attracting and then
17 retaining the best teachers. And currently your
18 salary schedule rewards longevity. You have a lower
19 starting salary and some of the highest salaries as
20 you move up the ladder. Have there been
21 conversations in the district? I know you've cut a
22 lot of funding -- but conversations about shifting
23 around salary schedule at all?

24 SUPT. POORE: There have. And one of the things
25 that -- that conversation began last year with the

1 Commissioner and myself of talking about it. And, of
2 course, our folks are aware of that; the Teachers
3 Association is aware of that as well in terms of kind
4 of a salary ranks.

5 And specifically to Ms. Moore's point -- Dr.
6 Moore's point is that the -- our starting teacher
7 salary, for all members of the Board, when you look
8 at -- and I'm going to say this very generically --
9 but more or less if you look at the first five, maybe
10 even the first eight years, our salary range right
11 there is extremely low and we'd be ranked somewhere
12 between 95th to 100th in the state. But then if you
13 take in a more in-depth review and say, okay, let's
14 just look at it in terms of our neighbors -- okay,
15 Benton, Bryant, Cabot, Conway -- we would again come
16 in way behind.

17 So we have talked with our negotiation group of
18 remodeling, restructuring that. And the method for
19 that is to collapse steps, and we're going to be
20 working on that this spring. That was work that was,
21 you know, kind of in the way of doing things. It's
22 kind of tough again to figure out how to collapse
23 steps in the middle of budget reductions, because
24 we'll have additional budget reductions this year.
25 But we're committed to trying to make that happen.

1 And that -- by the way, just for the community's
2 sake, the budget for salary collapse -- we've got to
3 figure out a way to do that and it's not on the backs
4 of the facility plan for that specific action to
5 collapse those steps.

6 DR. MOORE: I know it is unfair to compare
7 districts. But Springdale being your closest in size
8 to you, their starting salary is, you know -- you
9 know the numbers -- \$12,000 more than yours. And so
10 I know there are other resources in the state and I
11 would encourage y'all to look at them and others as
12 you look at that in the future.

13 My next set of questions are on the union
14 contract, and I just wanted to put this out there.
15 So the PNA that was signed did not specifically
16 include D/F schools for the Teacher Fair Dismissal;
17 correct? It said "all schools may be included if the
18 waiver is sought."

19 SUPT. POORE: I believe that the -- there's
20 multiple sections of that PNA, and I don't have it in
21 front of me; so I apologize. And, Commissioner, you
22 may have it in front of you, but I -- because it
23 looked like I saw you open it. But the first section
24 was about the right of you as a board to seek a
25 waiver and that did not create any limitations.

1 DR. MOORE: Okay. And then I think further in
2 that it did establish though a grievance process.
3 And no matter what we do today that grievance process
4 between you and the union is still in place for all
5 employees in the district. Is that correct?

6 SUPT. POORE: Well, yeah. I mean, we've got a
7 process to handle grievances and we also have amended
8 our processes, specifically trying to address the
9 fact that we might have this waiver come forward on D
10 and F schools, to how we would handle moving forward
11 on a dismissal so that there would be a due process.
12 Because that was another one of the things that the
13 Commissioner shared very strongly when he brought
14 forward the idea of a waiver was we will have due
15 process -- it's a scalpel, not a hatchet -- and it
16 was to be in F schools. So those were the things we
17 worked on.

18 DR. MOORE: Okay. And I think -- I mean, myself
19 included definitely, certainly sees this as not a
20 mandate for you to go and fire teachers. This is a
21 tool that you can use. And that tool -- though I do
22 want to dig a little bit further -- a teacher -- if
23 we were to grant this dismissal process, you could
24 not go in and fire a teacher tomorrow and they would
25 be gone; there is -- there will still be a process in

1 place for that teacher to appeal and have a hearing
2 before they were terminated?

3 SUPT. POORE: What you stated is correct.

4 DR. MOORE: And that is for union and non-union
5 teachers?

6 SUPT. POORE: Correct.

7 DR. MOORE: Okay. And the union will be
8 involved in that process as outlined in that
9 grievance process?

10 SUPT. POORE: If the teacher has the Association
11 as their representative, then yes, they would be
12 probably supporting that teacher in the steps that it
13 would take to go through the termination.

14 DR. MOORE: Okay. And I'm certainly no expert
15 in labor laws, but do know that this -- these
16 protections are more than an average employee
17 anywhere in the private sector in the state because
18 of the ways of the state. And I think that's being
19 lost in the conversations, so I just wanted to point
20 that out. But again appreciate the hard work you're
21 doing, so thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Commissioner?

23 COMMISSIONER KEY: Yeah, if I may. And also,
24 Dr. Moore, just to point out the addition of language
25 in the PNA on emphasizing TESS and getting -- using

1 -- better, stronger use of TESS as a development tool
2 for -- as part of this process of improvement.

3 SUPT. POORE: And the Commissioner can also
4 share on that, TESS and LEADS, that Little Rock
5 School District was again one of the last ones to
6 implement the TESS and LEADS system. And that --
7 please understand that wasn't necessarily something
8 that was totally broke; in fact, there was a system
9 that was strong in evaluation components. In many
10 ways, the TESS model matches fairly well with the
11 previous one. But the level of training that we've
12 done with TESS and LEADS, and then the work that you
13 do with educators to help provide growth and
14 feedback, I think that this year has been a year
15 where you're really seeing some changes in terms of
16 the dialogues and the goal-setting that's occurring
17 between professionals and then the interactions with
18 administrators; it's much more deep than it has been
19 in the past.

20 DR. MOORE: And just to continue on that -- so
21 whatever is decided on Teacher Fair Dismissal, you
22 all will still continue to use TESS and support your
23 teachers in the best manner possible?

24 SUPT. POORE: That -- I believe that to be true,
25 yes.

1 DR. MOORE: Okay. One more set of questions
2 there. For LEADS, looking at principals, I think the
3 first idea is that a Teacher Fair Dismissal waiver,
4 which, as Ms. Zook pointed out, is a misnomer. It's
5 not just for teachers; it's for all who hold a
6 license, which includes principals and
7 administrators. Do you feel that you're able to
8 faithfully carry out the LEADS assessments and the
9 support for administrators so that you can best
10 support them -- but also, when it comes to making a
11 hard decision, to dismiss them if needed?

12 SUPT. POORE: Yeah. And, you know, we've made
13 changes in -- you know, that's another thing that,
14 you know, we have had those things of making changes,
15 both -- not just for budget reduction, but also
16 things -- changes in performance and moving people or
17 having people leave.

18 DR. MOORE: Your D through F schools, there
19 seems to be a lot of turnover in principals. Is that
20 something that you're going to be able to work on?

21 SUPT. POORE: Well, it would be unfair if I
22 didn't say that we've also had a high amount of
23 turnover in teachers as well in the D and F schools.
24 So, you know, we've had more transition in those
25 schools because of the challenge and some of the

1 accountability measures probably even. The
2 administrators that we have right now in terms of
3 principals that are in place, I've got to tell you,
4 Ladies and Gentlemen, we've got some really
5 outstanding principals in place. And I'm excited
6 about the work that they're doing with their staffs
7 and feel like it's probably one of the strongest
8 groups of professionals I've had the opportunity to
9 work with. They match up well with Bentonville or
10 Colorado Springs or wherever else, Springdale. We've
11 got really, really good administrators in place. And
12 I know many of you have gotten to interact with some
13 of those folks, and some of you have gotten to
14 interact with a whole bunch of them, and I hope you
15 would echo my comment on that.

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Any other questions?

17 DR. MOORE: (shaking head from side to side.)

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Any other questions on
19 this side -- or Ms. Chambers?

20 MS. CHAMBERS: Nothing right now, Jay. Thank
21 you.

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. All right.

23 Okay. Thank you, Mr. Poore. I'm sure we'll
24 hear from you a little bit later as well.

25 PUBLIC COMMENTS

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. So we are now at public
2 comment on this Little Rock item. And just to let
3 everyone know, we have just over 40 folks who have
4 signed up to speak. So my -- yeah. So that means,
5 you know, we have a little over two hours of public
6 comment if everybody took three minutes. I would --
7 my requests are that folks, if possible, cut their
8 comments to the greatest degree possible. If you do
9 have -- if someone else has made a point, obviously
10 recognizing that your own perspective is valuable in
11 and of itself -- but if you do, rather than
12 reiterating the entire comment made earlier, if you
13 can simply agree with someone and not repeat that,
14 that will speed up the process and I think make for a
15 better public comment, so that we can then return to
16 some more important conversations we need to have up
17 here.

18 Okay. So that is where we are. And first up is
19 Stephanie Harpole. The first three names are
20 Stephanie Harpole, Dallas Guynes -- Guynes -- Dallas
21 Guynes, and Lizbeth Huggins. Okay. If y'all could
22 kind of line up, then I'll kind of say a few names
23 just to move things along. And if you'll state your
24 name -- if everyone will state their name for the
25 record that will help us enormously.

1 Welcome.

2 STEPHANIE HARPOLE: Hello. My name is Stephanie
3 Harpole. I am the mother of three kids -- two boys
4 and a girl. My boys have dyslexia, which happens to
5 be the most common learning disability. My boys were
6 not taught how to read in Little Rock School
7 District. My oldest son is now in high school. So
8 his experience was, you know, 2010, 2011, he was
9 tested at Fulbright. The psychological examiner told
10 me all signs point to dyslexia, but the Little Rock
11 School District doesn't recognize that as a learning
12 disability. He got an IEP based on auditory
13 processing. He was sent to the special ed. room an
14 hour a day for 1st through 5th grade. He left
15 Fulbright reading on a 2nd grade level. At parent-
16 teacher conferences when I would ask, "Hey, what's up
17 with his reading," it was deer-in-the-headlights;
18 nobody knew, "Uh-h-h-h."

19 So when my younger son started the same signs of
20 dyslexia in kindergarten, I knew better. He is five
21 years younger. So the summer between kindergarten
22 and 1st grade, 2015, I had him privately tested; it
23 came back, what a surprise, he's dyslexic. When he
24 started 1st grade I immediately said, "I want him
25 tested; I want -- you know, I know for a fact he's

1 dyslexic. Here's my testing." And Sabrina Stout
2 from downtown, the elementary literacy coordinator,
3 came to the meetings; she said, "Oh, no, you can't
4 use this testing; it's too old." It was two months
5 old. We had to do new testing by the district, which
6 then gives them 90 days to further delay, you know,
7 my child learning how to read. Basically, she
8 delayed intervention for five months. Then when he
9 finally did get it, it was mixed with guided reading,
10 which is balanced literacy. Dyslexics need
11 structured literacy. And after six months of their
12 intervention and no progress I pulled him out.
13 Thanks to the Succeed Scholarship, both of my boys
14 attend private schools that see to all of their
15 academic needs.

16 And based on, you know, the district average of
17 68.4% reading on grade level -- and on their website
18 they say for the 2017-2018 school year 1,198 kids
19 have been identified as having characteristics of
20 dyslexia, when the school population is over 22,000.
21 And 20% typically is what the dyslexic population is;
22 that's not 1,000 kids.

23 (THE TIMER RINGS)

24 MS. HARPOLE: So there's 3,000 falling through
25 the cracks.

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you. When did your
2 children leave the district?

3 MS. HARPOLE: My youngest son left 2017.

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. All right. Thank you.
5 All right. Next up --

6 DALLAS GUYNES: It's Dallas Guynes Green.

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Guynes. Thank you.

8 MS. GUYNES: It's like wine, like drinking
9 wines, with a G on it.

10 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Got it.

11 MS. GUYNES: But it's spelled --

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you.

13 MS. GUYNES: -- G-u-y-n-e-s.

14 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you.

15 MS. GUYNES: And I'm a dyslexia advocate. I'm a
16 volunteer. I'm not a lobbyist. I don't get a
17 paycheck. I have chosen to basically sacrifice what
18 I need to be doing financially to do this, because
19 this needs to be fixed. My dad is dyslexic, I'm
20 dyslexic. I grew up in the Delta. I went to a
21 public school. I was smart, I was bright, I was
22 intelligent -- and then about 2nd grade I no longer
23 was smart, bright, and intelligent. I was, like I
24 said, in a public school. My 2nd grade spelling
25 teacher couldn't spell, but the principal wouldn't

1 fire the teacher because of the red tape and the
2 unions. So my parents -- my dad drove the same truck
3 my whole life. When I graduated from high school my
4 dad got a new truck, because they paid for me to go
5 to a private school. But I still lagged. I was
6 average. I was considered lazy. I never could seem
7 to finish whatever it was I was doing, because I
8 couldn't read and comprehend the material. The
9 highest I ever made on the ACT is a 19. Of course, I
10 never did really take it again and try again once I
11 got older and had memorized more words.

12 What I'm seeing today is there's this huge
13 discussion about should we get rid of people that
14 need to go. It's crazy to me. I'm in the healthcare
15 profession if -- when I do work. If you can't
16 perform, you're gone; somebody else comes in. You
17 asked -- it was a question I was going to ask about
18 the due process, Dr. Moore. I don't understand why
19 aren't we protecting children? We have almost 40
20 years of scientific proof on how the brain learns and
21 we continue to not do it or pretend that we're doing
22 it and do things called balanced literacy, which it's
23 just the same ol', same ol' thing. But over and over
24 again what keeps me motivated and what keeps me
25 sacrificing vacations and Botox and nails and college

1 money to put up for my two daughters that will go to
2 college is the fact that I have seen so many
3 children, that have been told they can't learn, get
4 the appropriate reading curriculum, and start reading
5 and comprehending and engaging in class; and they're
6 no longer in trouble and they are the star pupils.

7 And I just want to commend everyone on this
8 Board that is working to fix that, because the root
9 of every socioeconomic problem we have in this
10 country -- when you get down to it, it's illiteracy.
11 It's not two parents at home; it's not drugs; it's
12 not alcohol. It all goes right back to illiteracy.
13 And why --

14 (THE TIMER RINGS)

15 MS. GUYNES: -- would we not fix it if we know
16 how to.

17 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thanks.

18 MS. GUYNES: Thank you for your time.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thanks, Ms. Guynes. I
20 apologize again about your name.

21 MS. GUYNES: It's okay. It's fine. I'm used to
22 it.

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Lizbeth Huggins.

24 And then Amber Jones and Molly Humphries will be
25 the next two names.

1 I do want to note -- excuse me just a second.

2 MS. HUGGINS: That's fine.

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: We do have some elected
4 officials here. I do know that they have to be in
5 meetings in other cases. If they will get word to us
6 that they need to speak so that they can go on to a
7 meeting, we will give them that respect, because they
8 do have conflicts today. So please let me know --
9 let either the Commissioner or I know and we will
10 make that happen. Thanks.

11 LIZBETH HUGGINS: Good afternoon. My name is
12 Lizbeth Huggins, and I am a product of the Little
13 Rock School District. I attended McDermott,
14 Mitchell, Dunbar, Parkview, and graduated from Hall.
15 Back in the 80s everybody wanted to go to Hall, and I
16 was one of those. My husband and I live in North
17 Little Rock with our two sons who have only attended
18 Little Rock schools. I don't have enough time to
19 give you my whole story. Some of you I have
20 contacted individually in the past, and I appreciate
21 the response. Since Monday those of us who've been
22 labeled dyslexia -- well, we are dyslexia advocates,
23 we've been labeled dyslexia zealots this week. We've
24 embraced that term. We have been subjected to name-
25 calling, bullying, and a personal attack on my

1 personal safety this week. See, our experience in
2 the district is that the teachers have been doing
3 everything -- have been willing to do everything to
4 help my dyslexic child, even though they weren't
5 allowed to say the word dyslexia.

6 We're sending teachers to RISE training, but
7 then administrators are turning around and purchasing
8 materials that do not support that training. And so
9 we're setting our teachers up for further failure
10 when we're not supporting them. So we can't blame
11 the failures of the schools on the teachers, when the
12 teachers lack proper support from administration.
13 Administration is making curriculum decisions that --
14 someone told me this week that teachers have some
15 input into the selection.

16 In all of our struggles to have my child
17 identified with dyslexia and be provided with the --
18 what he needs to be successful, all of our problems
19 in getting him help have come from the Central
20 Office. It started eight years ago, when he was in
21 the 3rd grade, and we've requested a referral
22 conference to have him evaluated for dyslexia. The
23 psych examiner, without ever introducing herself,
24 came in the room and said, "You're not getting
25 anything because your kid is on grade level." The

1 conference further deteriorated when she looked at me
2 and said, "You really want your child in special
3 ed.?" This attitude has been perpetuated by others
4 in the district as well, with Sabrina Stout telling
5 me she didn't believe me that my child had dyslexia,
6 even though I had an outside evaluation. My response
7 to her was that if she wasn't qualified to diagnose a
8 child with dyslexia, then she shouldn't be qualified
9 to un-diagnose that child. Ms. Stout emailed
10 colleagues that she was willing to follow his 504
11 plan that provided him with intervention and audio
12 books.

13 This refusal to follow his 504 plan resulted in
14 my filing a complaint with the Office of Civil
15 Rights. She also lied to the OCR investigators about
16 that plan. We're still waiting for that to be
17 resolved. But one of the results of that complaint
18 is that there is always someone from the Central
19 Office in our 504 meetings. We were put in the hands
20 of --

21 (THE TIMER RINGS)

22 MS. HUGGINS: -- Chandle Carpenter in February
23 of this year, who has now become the District's
24 dyslexia specialist. I just pray that she is allowed
25 to do what she knows needs to be done.

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you.

2 MS. HUGGINS: Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Next up, Amber
4 Jones, Molly Humphries, and then Jennifer Lusk.

5 AMBER JONES: Thank y'all for allowing us to
6 speak today. My name is Amber Jones and by
7 profession I'm a historic preservation consultant. I
8 do own my own business and so, like some of my other
9 advocates in the Arkansas Dyslexia Support Group, I
10 take off frequently and volunteer my time to go into
11 schools, not only around the state but here in the
12 Little Rock School District.

13 And in my personal experience, you know, what
14 I'm seeing is at the elementary level we're not --
15 we've had curriculum failure because we have not had
16 a Science of Reading program in place, obviously,
17 since that is all kind of new. But we've not been
18 identifying the dyslexics and we have had that law
19 since 2013, let alone the fact that dyslexia is
20 covered under special ed., under SLD -- Specific
21 Learning Disorder. And just this past week I see
22 posted on social media from Little Rock School
23 District employees that say that dyslexia is not
24 covered under SPED when, you know, in fact it is.
25 And then we're sending them links to IDEA to in fact

1 show them and circle it where it says dyslexia under
2 IDEA. So it's astounding that trained personnel, you
3 know, are basically denying children education, when
4 that is supposed to be our sole goal here, for either
5 lack of knowledge or -- you know, I hate to think
6 it's intentional.

7 Recently, I was at Horace Mann Middle School
8 advocating for a couple of students; one was on an
9 IEP, one on a 504. And the parents both told me that
10 in an elementary they had gone to -- their elementary
11 schools which are Little Rock School District schools
12 -- and said, "My child -- you know, there's something
13 wrong here." And the school said that they're
14 dyslexic but they would not give them intervention
15 because either they were on grade level or they
16 didn't have a program. So they never received
17 intervention in elementary school. Here they are in
18 middle school and they're really beginning to
19 struggle because this content is revving up in middle
20 school because we're getting ready for high school.
21 And as I sat in the meetings, they did not have a
22 program to offer for the dyslexics. They apparently
23 at Horace Mann did not have anyone trained to deliver
24 intervention.

25 And then my other issue was that -- and Mr.

1 Poore presented this in the packet that he presented
2 y'all -- he said that they picked this Orton-
3 Gillingham program for dyslexia. Well, that is the
4 IMSE program. The program name is really Recipe for
5 Reading. And I have the emails from the program,
6 from IMSE, that says that program is not for
7 dyslexia; that your non-dyslexic students will do
8 well with that program, but your dyslexic students
9 need to look at something -- their other program
10 called SPIRE.

11 (THE TIMER RINGS)

12 MS. JONES: So we have, you know, multiple
13 issues going on.

14 Finally, these --

15 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Just totally fast.

16 MS. JONES: Finally, these middle school kids
17 want to go to Parkview. And then just last week
18 there was a letter put out, you know, asking --
19 notifying Parkview students that they're going to be
20 dismissed from Parkview because they can't keep their
21 grades up. Well, if you've not been taught to read
22 because you're dyslexic -- I mean, that's not fair
23 that you've not been taught to read in elementary
24 school, you're not going to be taught to read in
25 middle school, and now we're going -- you get to go

1 to Parkview, this wonderful school that has all these
2 wonderful attributes of education and whatnot -- oh,
3 but if after a semester there if you can't keep your
4 grades up you're going to be dismissed. That's not
5 fair.

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you, Ms. Jones.

7 MS. JONES: Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Molly Humphries. Thank you for
9 being here.

10 MOLLY HUMPHRIES: Thank y'all so much. I
11 appreciate it. And I thank you for all of your
12 wonderful work that you're doing in keeping both the
13 staff in the Little Rock School District and the
14 parents accountable for the success of the students.

15 Again, my name is Molly Humphries. I'm with the
16 Arkansas Dyslexia Support Group. But I also want to
17 say that I'm a big advocate of literacy in itself, in
18 the wholeheartedness of literacy in giving our
19 children -- all children the right to read. That's
20 not being done in Little Rock School District.

21 Currently, 31% of the elementary and middle
22 schoolers across all grades are reading. That means
23 69% are not reading at their grade level. It's
24 astonishing. 75% of 10th graders across Little Rock
25 School District high schools are not reading; they're

1 not comprehending. They're standing in class --
2 sitting in class, standing in class, whatever it is;
3 they have no idea what's going on. This leads to
4 stress, anxiety, stomach aches, leaving schools,
5 parents screaming at the top of their lungs because
6 they don't know what's going on, they don't know how
7 to save their child. They go to the District, they
8 ask for help. We've talked to these parents; the
9 District is not helping. It's not to say that some
10 of the specialists aren't helping and it's not to say
11 that this is the teacher's fault, because it is not
12 the teacher's fault. You cannot blame teachers that
13 have not been trained appropriately to teach children
14 to read and you cannot blame them if they've not been
15 given the materials. It's not their fault. You have
16 to give them the opportunity to teach these children
17 and you have to make sure you provide them with the
18 information and the support that they need to do the
19 right thing for these children.

20 But who you can look at is the administration --
21 and I'm not talking even about principals; I'm
22 talking the Central Office. They've been given an
23 adequate amount of time to align the teaching with
24 the curriculum. In 2017, the RISE initiative was
25 implemented. This January that will be two years --

1 two years to get the material right and they're just
2 now looking at it. That's two years of teacher
3 stress; that's two years of students' failure that is
4 under our watch as adults. This is on us. This is
5 on all of us. This is on everyone in this room. And
6 until we stand up and say "no more" these children
7 are going to fail on our watch.

8 (THE TIMER RINGS)

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you, Ms. Humphries.
10 Jennifer Lusk, Audie Alumbaugh, and Angela
11 Hunter are the next three.

12 JENNIFER LUSK: So I'm Jennifer Lusk and I am a
13 classroom teacher in the Little Rock School District.
14 I am a highly, highly qualified teacher; I am a
15 passionate teacher. And it is my hope that I can
16 speak to you with the voices of the people behind me.

17 And so what I want to do is I want to do
18 something called a stand-up/sit-down activity, and
19 I'm going to stay within my three minutes. Okay? So
20 I'm going to ask all of the teachers in the room to
21 please respond to the statements that I make by
22 standing up if it applies to you.

23 All right. Please stand if you have regularly
24 spent more than 10 hours a week, outside of the
25 eight-hour school day, grading papers, lesson

1 planning, et cetera. Thank you.

2 Please stand if you work a second job in
3 addition to the overtime hours that you work as a
4 teacher.

5 Please stand if you teach in a classroom that
6 does not have adequate supplies for your students.

7 Please stand if you've ever felt a lack of
8 support from the administration at your school
9 regarding student discipline.

10 Please stand if you teach in a classroom or a
11 building that is full of leaks, mold, mice and/or
12 roaches.

13 Please stand if you have fed students at school
14 who either did not have lunch money or had no lunch
15 from home.

16 Please stand if you have counseled and comforted
17 students and their families who were dealing with
18 drugs, death, financial problems, or other problems
19 that impacted their education.

20 Please stand if you've helped students pay for
21 uniforms or equipment they needed to participate in
22 sports and other extracurricular activities.

23 Please stand if you've ever helped students and
24 their families connect to services related to
25 homelessness, hunger, drug addiction, mental illness,

1 or family counseling.

2 Please stand if you've had to regularly justify
3 your job -- the job you pour your heart, soul and
4 finances into -- to people who have never, ever
5 taught in a classroom themselves.

6 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE AND YELLING]

7 MS. LUSK: I care deeply; my colleagues care
8 deeply about what is happening to kids in our
9 buildings and our classrooms.

10 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

11 MS. LUSK: You have tied our hands, you have put
12 Duck tape over our mouths and you have not listened
13 to us on every level that makes sense. We are with
14 these kids every day. We have so much insight that
15 we can give you and you don't listen to anything that
16 we have to say. That's what needs to be changed.

17 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you.

19 Audie Alumbaugh.

20 AUDIE ALUMBAUGH: Here I am.

21 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you.

22 MS. ALUMBAUGH: Here's a handout for you as
23 well. Thank you for that presentation. And I will
24 venture to say that we would not have the same
25 response if we asked that of administrators.

1 Thank you, Commissioner Key, Chairman Barth, and
2 Members of the Board for this opportunity. My name
3 is Audie Alumbaugh; I'm co-founder of the Arkansas
4 Dyslexia Support Group. I travel around the state
5 for free and advocate for children. I quit my job.
6 This is what I have done for two-and-a-half years. I
7 do not make a dime off of reading failure. I was a
8 high school math teacher. I do have a master's in
9 special ed., but I was a high school math teacher and
10 I had beautiful minds in my classroom that could not
11 -- that could work a calculus problem but could not
12 read the problem.

13 So I got really busy, in 2008, in investigating
14 what had happened to reading in our country. That's
15 when I discovered the Science of Reading. So, in
16 2013, 2015, and 2017, we got really busy passing some
17 literacy legislation -- and you can -- you all
18 probably are familiar with all that. But SLD is a
19 category under IDEA. The largest population is SLD;
20 it's about 30% of students who have an IEP, and in
21 that category the largest portion of those students
22 have dyslexia. They learn through an Orton-
23 Gillingham program, which is the framework, but there
24 has to be a program attached to that.

25 So if you look, in 2016, we had a memo or a

1 policy or however -- minutes that came from the head
2 of psychological evaluators, warning the
3 psychological evaluators to not identify or say --
4 well, not say the word dyslexia in any of their
5 reports. That was on page 1.

6 If you flip, we asked what -- in 2016, in
7 February -- no, in December, Senator Elliott and I
8 and a colleague met with Baker Kurrus. We asked him
9 about the program he had -- that they were using. He
10 had just written a check but he could not name the
11 program, which was odd because in the Little Rock
12 School District none of the interventionists that we
13 participated in meetings with could name the program
14 they were using either. They picked a company --
15 he'd said, "I picked the company, we wrote the
16 check," and -- but he couldn't give us a name,
17 because he said he wasn't an educator. Meeting after
18 meeting after meeting in the Little Rock School
19 District, neither could the interventionists tell us
20 what program they were using.

21 When we finally found out what program they were
22 using, we contacted the company. You will see the
23 email. We asked them about the fidelity parameters.
24 Fidelity is how a program should be used, how the
25 authors believe it should be used, like medicine --

1 you take medicine how the doctors say. These are
2 evidence-based programs but they must be used with
3 fidelity. So we asked what the fidelity was. Little
4 did we know, we found out that it wasn't really
5 intended for dyslexics; it was intended for just
6 general ed. students that they do real well, and they
7 recommended using another one of their programs,
8 which is SPIRE. So he also said if you use it with
9 dyslexic students that you would use it in one-on-one
10 and not really any groups larger than six at any
11 time. I now know -- we've been in every school in
12 this district, I've been in every district in this
13 state except for three, and we now know that there's
14 groups of seven, eight --

15 (THE TIMER RINGS)

16 MS. ALUMBAUGH: -- so outside of the fidelity
17 parameters.

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you so much.

19 MS. ALUMBAUGH: Am I done?

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: You are. Three minutes.

21 MS. ALUMBAUGH: Okay. You can look at Mr.
22 Poore's recommendation. The easiest -- the easiest
23 law in 2017 was reporting on the page, their website,
24 what program they're using. They won't even say the
25 program because we all know it is not for dyslexics.

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you.

2 All right. Angela Hunter, and then Mia Kamille,
3 I believe, and Angela Alexander.

4 Thank you.

5 ANGELA HUNTER: Hi. My name is Angela Hunter.
6 I'm a parent of two girls in the Little Rock School
7 District. I'm here to implore you to return control
8 of LRSD back to the democratic elected local school
9 board --

10 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

11 MS. HUNTER: -- and to not waive the Teacher
12 Fair Dismissal Act. Strong public education is the
13 backbone of a modern democracy. A high school
14 diploma, and the skills and knowledge it confers, is
15 absolutely essential for the individual success of
16 our citizens and the collective success of our
17 nation. Public education is one of the things we
18 have gotten right in this country -- well, almost
19 right. As with so many other institutions, we have
20 long failed Native Americans, African Americans, the
21 poor, and those with disabilities of various kinds.
22 We have made progress in righting some of these
23 wrongs, but not all and not enough. In alarming
24 ways, we are heading backwards rather than forwards,
25 and I fear that the items on your agenda today are

1 part of that terrible trend, even if your intentions
2 are noble -- and I'm sure that some of them are.

3 Here we are just a stone's throw away from the
4 statue of the Little Rock Nine, and institutional
5 racism and low socioeconomic status still play a
6 major factor in the educational outcomes of our
7 children. When you look at the list of schools that
8 are rated as failing or near failing, you tell me
9 what you see. If all you can see is a handful of bad
10 teachers, then I say that you are blind and willfully
11 so. If all you can see is the story told by a school
12 grading system that changes almost yearly and bases
13 itself heavily on standardized test outcomes, then I
14 say that you are looking only at the surface and not
15 solutions; that only allows the real wounds to
16 fester, rather than heal.

17 In 2017, this Board classified the LRSD as,
18 quote, "in need of Level 5 intensive support." For
19 the life of me, I do not understand how the proposals
20 being voted on today show support for all the
21 students in this district. I see the old capital
22 punishment method, called Death by a Thousand Cuts.
23 You are cutting up the heart of our education system
24 when you remove due process from our teachers. When
25 you disrespect our teachers you are bleeding the

1 life's blood of our educational system. I am a
2 professor and I am extremely passionate about
3 education. But were I a K through 12 teacher I would
4 never want to work in a district that treated me like
5 this. I would not want to work in a place that
6 looked at both the successes and the failures of a
7 school and decided that being able to fire me more
8 easily was the best plan forward.

9 Furthermore, you have no evidence that this in
10 particular or any of the other items on your agenda
11 today, to which I cannot speak in detail because I
12 was not aware of what they were, will actually help
13 students. We need some evidence on that.

14 Please do not make decisions today that may harm
15 the LRSD for years to come. I stand with the
16 teachers I've entrusted to educate my children, who
17 are also some of the folks on the frontline and
18 dealing with the wrongs that this society is all too
19 eager to ignore. We give them supplies and we ask
20 them to heal a nation. I agree that many of our
21 schools need intensive support, and I hope that they
22 get it, but it's not through what you are considering
23 today.

24 Thank you for your time.

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you, Professor Hunter.

1 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

2 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Mia -- is it
3 Kamille? Is that right?

4 [MOMENT OF SILENCE]

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Not here.

6 COMMISSIONER KEY: Well, they reminded me that
7 some may be coming from --

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yeah, and that's why I was
9 doing several names in advance. And so if folks are
10 down the hall, please head this way when you hear
11 your name. And we'll certainly pick back up with her
12 if she is here.

13 Angela Alexander. Welcome.

14 ANGELA ALEXANDER: Thank you very much. My name
15 is Angela Alexander and I'm a proud parent of two
16 girls in the Little Rock School District. I've been
17 an active member on the PTA board for five years now.
18 I'm at one or both of my girls' schools multiple
19 times a week, whether it's attending school-wide --
20 the school-wide morning assembly, eating lunch with
21 my kids, or fulfilling PTA duties. I know what goes
22 on at the schools. I see how hard the teachers work,
23 how often they stay late afterhours, how they use
24 their own resources to provide supplies for the
25 classrooms, and at times provide basic needs for the

1 kids, like food or clean clothing, so that the child
2 can turn his or her attention to the lessons instead
3 of their empty tummies.

4 I decided early on to support our school because
5 I can see and understand that being a teacher is
6 truly one of the hardest and most important jobs in
7 the world. I could never do it.

8 Studies show that teaching is also one of the
9 most stressful jobs, ranking up there with ER
10 doctors. These studies also show that a lack of
11 support greatly increases these already stressful
12 positions. And guess what, high teacher stress
13 levels are usually associated with poor student
14 results, such as lower grades and frequent behavior
15 problems. If teachers already have extremely
16 stressful jobs and also don't have the positive
17 support that they need to be most effective, how
18 could it possibly help if they're in constant fear of
19 losing their jobs at the drop of a hat without due
20 process? Our teachers can't afford to have anything
21 else stripped away from them. The turnover rate is
22 already too high. And who's going to take these
23 positions if our teachers are fired? Would that
24 require more waivers for unqualified and uncertified
25 replacements?

1 I'm here today asking that you please vote no
2 for the -- on the waiver of the Teacher Fair
3 Dismissal Act.

4 And also I believe that the time has come for
5 the people of Little Rock to be able to elect a
6 school board who will listen to our teachers' needs
7 and support them, as they do the most important job
8 in the world: educate.

9 Thank you so much.

10 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you very much.

11 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. The next three
13 names: Phillip Thompson -- I apologize for not
14 mentioning this -- Phillip Thompson, Dallas Green,
15 Jeff Grimmett.

16 Okay. Jeff -- yeah.

17 MS. GUYNES: I'm Dallas Green.

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. That's --

19 MS. GUYNES: But I'll come up there again.

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yeah, okay. Yeah. Okay.

21 Jeff, you can go ahead. And if Phillip comes
22 down -- the next names will be -- Tippi McCullough
23 and then Teresa Knapp Gordon will be the next two
24 names.

25 JEFF GRIMMETT: Hello everybody. My name is

1 Jeff Grimmett. I work at Henderson Middle School,
2 one of the schools that have been talked about quite
3 a bit. First of all, I want to ask the Board -- I do
4 think another person has mentioned this -- but all
5 the motions that Ms. Zook has made, I think that
6 y'all need more time to discuss it. And I would ask
7 that y'all table them until another meeting. That's
8 just -- that's a lot of stuff to go over, so -- and
9 very little notice and it's too important to rush it
10 through.

11 But specifically I want to talk about Teacher
12 Fair Dismissal. And as -- I had some notes, but I'm
13 going to -- I heard some important things that Dr.
14 Moore said and some other members of the Board.

15 First of all, about TESS, if TESS is what's
16 going to be used to make these recommendations for
17 dismissal, I think that there's a major problem
18 because TESS is -- it's used in a way that is very
19 inconsistent, from my experience, from administrator
20 to administrator. I'm on my fourth administrator now
21 after 12 years. Of course, TESS is newer than that,
22 but it's not used in the same way by different people
23 and across campuses too. So I think that's a very
24 important consideration that y'all think about. I
25 mean, it seems like y'all are going to vote to waive

1 it anyway. So I just -- I want you to -- I'm just
2 being real -- I want you to think about the specifics
3 of how it would work. And if TESS is one of the
4 factors that's going to go into how a teacher is
5 chosen to be dismissed, there needs to be a lot more
6 accountability about how that is used going forward.

7 Just a couple of other things -- thank you,
8 Jennifer Lusk; you said everything that I wanted to
9 say about what teachers do every day.

10 And also just another thing that Dr. Moore
11 talked about -- and I just -- you talked about RIF a
12 lot. RIF is not the same as Teacher Fair Dismissal;
13 correct? So I don't understand what those questions
14 were about. So I just would like some clarity on
15 that.

16 Other than that, I'm just going to keep it brief
17 and thank you for listening.

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you, Mr. Grimmatt.

19 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Unless Phillip or
21 Mia came in, Representative McCullough.

22 REPRESENTATIVE TIPPI McCULLOUGH: Mr. Chair, I'm
23 going to wait and go toward the end and let the rest
24 of the community go first.

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Sure.

1 SENATOR JOYCE ELLIOTT: And, Mr. Chair, as last
2 time, the legislators said we would -- those of us
3 who told you we would.

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Okay. And I'll wait --
5 but I will -- I'll let others -- I won't let you
6 speak for others, so --

7 Teresa Knapp Gordon. And then -- yeah.

8 TERESA KNAPP GORDON: Good afternoon. Who am I?
9 I'm a parent; I'm a citizen; I'm a taxpayer; I'm an
10 advocate for children in the Little Rock School
11 District; I'm also a 22-year veteran teacher. I'm a
12 National Board certified teacher, who has also
13 renewed. I have a master's degree in Library Media
14 and Information Services. I'm also the Little Rock
15 Education Association president. I'm a union boss.

16 I want to talk to you for just a minute about
17 the great things that are happening in Little Rock
18 School District. We have partners in Little Rock
19 School District that are contributing to the success
20 of our children. We have community partners; we have
21 business partners; we have faith-based partners; we
22 have increased parental involvement.

23 Our outstanding students in every single school
24 are doing things beyond our wildest imagination. We
25 have increased collaboration for improvement, working

1 with Mr. Poore and the administration every single
2 day.

3 Since the takeover of Little Rock School
4 District, teachers have lost pay; we have decreased
5 benefits; we have less resources for our students.

6 There have been multiple charters approved
7 within our school district boundaries, which have
8 drained our resources. And this is not isolated to
9 Little Rock School District; this is happening across
10 our country. It is political.

11 Educators in our district should be supported
12 and respected, and each of you should be encouraging
13 that. Educators have sought out and paid for out of
14 their own pockets professional development and
15 assistance in order to better serve their children
16 while we have been under state control.

17 You have created a situation where a certain
18 principal thinks it is okay to stand in front of his
19 staff and tell them that he will have the ability to
20 fire them, that he will have the ability to
21 reconstitute his school soon, and he will get rid of
22 anybody who is not on his team. You have created a
23 situation where that same principal thinks it's okay
24 to come and meet in secret to undermine the
25 negotiations process that is a collaborative process

1 with the school district.

2 (THE TIMER RINGS)

3 MS. KNAPP GORDON: There are no A-rated schools
4 in the entire state with a majority of African
5 American and/or low-income students. Only three B-
6 rated schools in the entire state exist -- and two of
7 those are Little Rock School District schools, Gibbs
8 and Williams. Since we have been under state control
9 we have gone from 6 to 22 schools in distress.

10 It's time to give the district back. It's time
11 to show the educators that you support our district.
12 We are educators; we are professionals. We will not
13 be bullied, and we will stand up for our students.

14 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you.

15 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. So we're now moving on
17 -- Carol Roddy, Jennifer White, and Dianna Varady.

18 UNKNOWN PERSON: They're all --

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Down the hall, okay. Let's
20 wait just a minute until -- Carol Roddy, Jennifer
21 White, Dianna Varady. There we go. There's Carol
22 Roddy. And then the next two names are -- after
23 Dianna are Wendy Sheridan and Herb Rule.

24 Welcome.

25 CAROL RODDY: Good afternoon. I'm Carol Roddy.

1 I'm a resident of Little Rock; I am a proud parent of
2 a graduate of the Little Rock School District; and
3 several years ago, I was an unsuccessful candidate
4 for the Little Rock School Board. I tell you all
5 this to tell you that I care deeply about the Little
6 Rock schools. I even substitute teach occasionally
7 in the Little Rock schools because I like to get in
8 and keep my finger on the pulse of what's going on in
9 our school system.

10 I hope you as members of the State Board have
11 done the same. I hope you've been in the Little Rock
12 schools.

13 Mr. Key, you said the moral urgency is to
14 students -- and I believe that it is this Department
15 that has failed these students. You have had control
16 of the Little Rock schools for nearly four years and
17 yet, we sit waiting to see what kind of a design or a
18 plan to transition back to a local board. Thus, the
19 State Board and you sit as the board for the Little
20 Rock School District. And I believe that some of the
21 problems that you, Ms. Zook, pointed out and some of
22 the things we've heard today are problems that would
23 be handled by a local school board.

24 And I'm just here to say, and I promise you
25 this, we are active and we are here. There's rooms

1 full of people, not everyone wanting to speak. But
2 we will turn this State Board into the Little Rock
3 School Board, if that's what we have to do, by
4 showing up, telling you what's going on, and getting
5 you involved in giving us back our schools.

6 Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thanks, Ms. Roddy.

8 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Next up, Jennifer
10 White.

11 JENNIFER WHITE: Yes. My name is Jennifer White
12 and I have been a teacher in the District for 13
13 years. I was a parent first before I was a teacher,
14 so -- I now have grandchildren in the district. And
15 some of the things that have stood out to me are -- I
16 heard someone speak about consistencies. And we say
17 that we want to do the best by our students, and
18 we've got the RISE initiative, which I think is
19 great. But are the charter schools being held to the
20 same accountability? Because the law actually states
21 it has to be a licensed elementary teacher. I have
22 yet to see any documentation about how many licensed
23 elementary teachers are in charter schools. And then
24 when I serve a population of students who are 95% on
25 free and reduced, and I look at the numbers on the

1 State website of those same students being served in
2 the charter schools, those schools are making D's and
3 F's too and they already have Teacher Fair Dismissal
4 Act.

5 ESSA requires that we use evidence-based
6 strategies, materials, things of that nature. There
7 is no evidence that that works. If it worked, then
8 every school that served a high population of poverty
9 students would make an A. That is my deepest concern
10 because I, like you, Ms. Zook, I am concerned about
11 every student. I heard you speak of that. I heard
12 someone say that there's no other thing to look at,
13 but we do have things to look at because it's not
14 working statewide.

15 We want expertise in our educational leaders,
16 but it starts at the top. I think every teacher in
17 this state deserves to have qualified administrators,
18 qualified board members, qualified Commissioners. I
19 also think that with the waivers -- some of these
20 waivers are ridiculous: waiving the pledge, waiving
21 mandated vaccinations, waiving Arkansas African-
22 American history, waiving every kind of licensure
23 there is for teachers. Yes, there are some in North
24 Little Rock; it's on your own document that I looked
25 at on ADE.

1 What are we doing? This is not the answer,
2 waiving every single thing that directly affects
3 students. I'm sorry; I have no faith in that. We do
4 need change, need actions. We do have an urgency for
5 students. There are at least seven charters who
6 teach similar populations that still have a D and F
7 right here in Little Rock. It's not even county;
8 it's statewide. I've already emailed you all my 2:00
9 in the morning findings.

10 But I should not be publicly shamed for
11 defending my students. With the waiver of
12 protections, if I were to stand before an
13 administrator --

14 (THE TIMER RINGS)

15 MS. WHITE: -- to advocate for those students, I
16 could be punished for that. That's not right.

17 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you.

18 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Dianna Varady, and then Wendy
20 Sheridan.

21 DIANNA VARADY: I'll be brief. I have a
22 prepared statement I'm going to read.

23 Thank you, Dr. Barth, Members of the Board, and
24 Commissioner Key.

25 My name is Dianna Varady and I am the proud

1 parent of a student in the Little Rock School
2 District. I have the privilege of serving on the
3 Little Rock Area Public Education Stakeholder Group,
4 and I want to take this opportunity to again thank
5 Commissioner Key and the State Board for allowing me
6 to serve on that committee.

7 I'm here to express my concern with the waivers
8 being considered today by the Board for the Little
9 Rock School District.

10 Our son happens to be one of the students in the
11 District who receives special education services, and
12 he is thriving. He has been afforded a truly
13 excellent education from kindergarten all the way
14 through middle school and now in high school, thanks
15 to the dedicated teachers, administrators, and staff
16 of the District.

17 As you well know, we have a disproportionately
18 large population of students in the District who
19 require intensive support -- students, like my son,
20 who receive special education services; students who
21 are English Language Learners; and students who live
22 in neighborhoods that have a high concentration of
23 families living in poverty.

24 I'm not sure how administrators, teachers and
25 support staff can chart a path forward for these

1 students when they are constantly looking over their
2 shoulders. My worry is that the waiver of the
3 Teacher Fair Dismissal Act will make it more, not
4 less, difficult to retain high-quality staff. And I
5 fear that this waiver will result in our most
6 talented and committed educators fleeing to
7 neighboring districts.

8 As for the other items being considered today,
9 my concern, as always, is that any sweeping changes
10 to the district without careful consideration and
11 study and without buy-in from the community will
12 further divide district stakeholders, the city of
13 Little Rock, and the region.

14 Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you.

16 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

17 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. So Wendy Sheridan,
18 Herb Rule, and Marsha Spears.

19 WENDY SHERIDAN: Thank you. My name is Wendy
20 Sheridan. I did speak with you last week, but I
21 think that points towards how important I think this
22 is, because I would like to speak again.

23 I am the parent of two LRSD students. They
24 attend Williams Magnet Elementary and have thrived
25 there. Their teachers consistently surpass my

1 expectations, and I have very high expectations. I
2 come from a family of educators; I know what it's
3 like to be on the other side. And I support my
4 teachers and I support my teachers -- the students at
5 my kids' school.

6 Over the last three years I've volunteered
7 countless hours at my kids' school and I currently
8 serve as the PTA president. Needless to say, I'm at
9 that school a lot. I also work a full-time job. I
10 see those kids -- I see the teachers arrive early, I
11 see them staying late, I see them tutoring and
12 leading clubs, and meeting with parents, and meeting
13 with administrators; they have school-wide meetings,
14 they have grade level meetings; they have, "Oh, let
15 me meet with this teacher," "Let me meet with the
16 reading specialist," "Let me meet with the speech
17 pathologist." They meet and meet and meet, all for
18 our kids. That is what they do. I see them struggle
19 to figure out how to reach that little boy who just
20 can't seem to sit still for more than two seconds and
21 definitely isn't interested in learning sentences or
22 regrouping. I've seen them cry because they know
23 there's a kid going home where they don't have a
24 parent that's going to tuck them in or cook them
25 dinner, much less help them with their homework. I'm

1 partial to my students -- my teachers at Williams,
2 but I know that there are teachers just like them at
3 every other school in this district and across this
4 state. They've seen far greater challenges. I do
5 not believe that teachers are the reason our schools
6 are failing.

7 Williams Magnet is a diverse school, both
8 racially and economically. As pointed out earlier,
9 we are one of the few schools with a majority African
10 American student body that is a B school -- three in
11 the state, two in Little Rock. I wonder why the
12 Board has not looked more at what's happening at
13 Williams Magnet and Gibbs Elementary; why we can't
14 look to see what those teachers are doing, what the
15 administrators are doing, why we are successful when
16 others aren't.

17 I am confused because while we are a B school
18 our testing scores are on par or better than those A
19 schools. The only thing I can find from my research
20 is that tardies and absences are taken into account
21 when coming up with these grades. I'm not sure why
22 we're holding teachers accountable for parents not
23 being able to get their kids to school on time.

24 Last week it was stated that things aren't
25 moving quickly enough. I agree; they're not. But I

1 don't think the direction we've moved in is working.
2 More schools are failing, enrollment is dwindling,
3 buildings have continued to be neglected, and
4 students' best interests are ignored. Over the last
5 several months I've attended meetings concerning the
6 new blueprint for the district. I've sat in state-
7 of-the-art school buildings and I've also sat in the
8 buildings that have holes --

9 (THE TIMER RINGS)

10 MS. SHERIDAN: -- in the roof and puddles on the
11 floor.

12 I ask that you do not move to dismiss the Fair
13 Dismissal Act. It's been in place for 39 years. I
14 know it's hard; I know it takes time. But I want to
15 tell you what I tell my children when they say
16 something is too hard: we can do hard things.

17 Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you.

19 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Is Herb Rule here?
21 Is he down the hall still?

22 Okay. Marsha Spears?

23 Okay. Okay. Senator-elect Johnson, did you
24 want to wait or go ahead now?

25 Three minutes is yours. Thanks for being here.

1 SENATOR-ELECT MARK JOHNSON: Thank you, Chairman
2 Barth, Members of the Board, and Commissioner Key.

3 I'm Mark Johnson. I'm Senator-elect in District
4 15, which is part of five counties that does include
5 part of West Little Rock, Little Rock School
6 District.

7 And as I finish, if I could, I have a text from
8 Senator-elect Kim Hammer who had to leave for another
9 meeting and I'd like to be able to read his
10 statement.

11 I simply want to thank all of you, and really
12 everyone in this room. The one thing I think we have
13 a consensus on, I think to use Dr. Hill's term One
14 Rock, is that we're for our kids; we want our kids to
15 be successful. And then it breaks down into those of
16 us that have different opinions on how to get from
17 here to there. And I want to commend Ms. Zook for
18 her initiative because I believe that we've got to
19 try some new things.

20 But I want to talk simply about one issue and
21 that's the constitution of the State of Arkansas, as
22 Commissioner Key mentioned in his opening remarks.
23 The Constitution says that the State of Arkansas is
24 responsible for the education of the children in our
25 state. In the Lake View decision, the Supreme Court

1 said that means you, the State of Arkansas, state
2 government, me, as a soon-to-be legislator and a
3 member of the Education Committee, and for those that
4 are on the legislature today, both the experienced
5 ones, like my friend Senator Elliott, and those that
6 are very inexperienced, such as me. We have to do
7 that, and certainly you as a Board have to rise to
8 that responsibility. So there's a lot of things
9 that's the way it ought to be, but the Supreme Court
10 says this is where the buck stops. So I commend you
11 for taking a chance at doing something about this.

12 Now I don't know that this is the answer, but it
13 is, to use a term we use in the legislature,
14 permissive and will give a new tool -- some tools to
15 administrators that, as we heard in the discussion
16 with the Pine Bluff situation, superintendents may or
17 may not use at their discretion -- and I encourage
18 giving them that flexibility. You cannot send people
19 to do a job and not give them the authority to carry
20 it out.

21 And if I could, I'd like to read a very brief
22 statement that Senator Hammer did send me and he
23 asked that I say:

24 "I only ask that the Board be consistent in
25 their decision today. And that all issues being

1 equal between the two districts, Little Rock and Pine
2 Bluff, the decision should be the same under the
3 pretense that what you do for one you do for all."

4 And I told him that I would pass that on, his
5 statement.

6 And thank you all for everything you do, the
7 time you spend on these issues. And I also want to
8 thank the participants, the teachers, everyone that
9 came today to voice their opinion. This makes me
10 proud to be an Arkansan, regardless of the opinions
11 that are stated. Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. I'm going to --
13 we're going to hear -- is Liz Branch in the room?

14 Okay. I'm going to -- it's 1:38. I think we
15 need a little break, and so why don't we return at
16 2:00 p.m. We're going to take a 20-minute break.
17 We'll return at 2:00 p.m. and we'll pick up with the
18 names that are on the list then. Thank y'all.

19 (BREAK: 1:38 - 2:03 P.M.)

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thanks, everybody.

21 Okay. I just want to be sure -- I'm still not
22 seeing Herb Rule, so I think he had to leave.

23 Marsha Spears?

24 REP. TUCKER: (inaudible)

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thanks, Representative Tucker.

1 And then next Liz Branch. Is Liz here?

2 Okay, Ms. Zook.

3 Anika Whitfield -- Dr. Whitfield, you're next.

4 Three minutes. Thanks.

5 DR. ANIKA WHITFIELD: Thank you. Continuing in
6 line with the opening statement that Commissioner Key
7 made about moral urgency, there is a moral urgency
8 for you to admit publicly that under your leadership
9 you have failed to show any moral urgency in the ways
10 in which you have taken over the Little Rock School
11 District. Under your leadership and leadership of
12 the Little Rock School District, with which you have
13 appointed, the Little Rock School District parents,
14 guardians, students, and community have been
15 constantly silenced of our voices and our vote, while
16 being trampled on without any apology. You have a
17 moral obligation, not only to serve but also to
18 represent the Little Rock School District community,
19 and yet you have not. In fact, Commissioner Key, you
20 have refused to hold community gatherings with which
21 you could hear information and gain information from
22 us so that you can truly be in a position to
23 represent us. We have no confidence in the way that
24 you have been leading to date.

25 In the spirit of giving and the season of

1 reflection, and as well as the spirit that focuses on
2 cultural and ethnic beliefs such as unity, self-
3 determination, collective works and responsibility,
4 cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and
5 faith, there is a moral urgency to start acting in
6 good faith by returning the Little Rock School
7 District back to the Little Rock School District
8 community. Big state, big government, state control,
9 and disenfranchising local voices and the votes of
10 the people are immoral and dishonest practices that
11 demonstrate evidence of greed, corruption, fear,
12 insecurity, and it makes its gains by deceptive
13 actions.

14 We expect to witness your moral urgency to act
15 with transparency and honesty.

16 We expect you to stop evoking violence on our
17 students by threatening their educational foundation,
18 disrupting their institutions, their instructors,
19 administrative teams, schools, neighborhoods, and
20 community, which all negatively affect their academic
21 and social growth. And to add insult to injury, you
22 have continued to make critical decisions without any
23 known efforts to engage students in processes that
24 directly affect them; yet, you keep saying you care
25 about the students.

1 We expect you to move with moral urgency, to
2 stop bullying the City of Little Rock by continuously
3 attacking, wounding, and weakening the Little Rock
4 School District. It is destroying our city as well.

5 We expect you to bring forth a motion today to
6 immediately restore a democratically elected local
7 board with a May 2019 election and to withdraw the
8 motions to waive the Teacher Fair Dismissal and Fair
9 Hearing Act.

10 We expect that after you represent the will of
11 the Little Rock School District community, who have
12 resoundingly and repeatedly demanded restoration of a
13 democratically elected local board that, Dr. --
14 Director Zook, you will withdraw your suggestions to
15 decide to work with the Little Rock School District
16 --

17 (THE TIMER RINGS)

18 DR. WHITFIELD: -- and rather, decide to work
19 with the Little Rock School District team, with an ad
20 hoc ADE team, and not limit any parents, teachers,
21 students, alumni, or school community who are
22 interested in participating in those works together.

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you.

24 DR. WHITFIELD: We are the stakeholders and we
25 do want our school district back.

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you, Dr. Whitfield.

2 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Stephen Colby. Is
4 Stephen here?

5 Okay. Patrick Foley. Is Patrick here? Is
6 Patrick still here?

7 Okay. It's Patrick Foley, Lisa Sabir -- oh, is
8 it Sabir? -- and Nicolas Williams are the next three
9 names. Any of those folks here?

10 Okay. Then next up, Sam Ledbetter.

11 SAM LEDBETTER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Members
12 of the Board, Commissioner Key.

13 When this Board considered state takeover in the
14 fall of 2014 and early January of 2015, I was its
15 Chair. A major factor in my decision to vote in
16 favor of state takeover in January of 2015 was my
17 belief that the locally elected board would not
18 support the superintendent, particularly on decisions
19 regarding personnel and staffing. Instead, I was
20 left with the impression that the board micromanaged
21 the district and second-guessed the superintendent's
22 decisions -- at least that's what the superintendent
23 told us at the time and what the evidence appeared to
24 support. In voting like I did, my hope was that a
25 new superintendent, working with the Commissioner in

1 lieu of a locally elected board, would be given the
2 freedom to make decisions that would result in
3 improved academic performance and student
4 achievement, particularly in those schools that were
5 labeled as failing.

6 Thus, if Mr. Poore were standing before you
7 today arguing that these waivers and other actions
8 proposed by Ms. Zook are necessary to improve
9 academic performance I would not be here opposing
10 this request. He is not.

11 If you decide to take the actions proposed, you
12 are repeating what I believe to be the mistakes of
13 the past, undermining the goodwill of Superintendent
14 Poore that he has sought to foster with the teachers
15 and the staff, micromanaging the District, and
16 forcing your will on Mr. Poore instead of giving him
17 the support he needs to manage the district in the
18 manner that he believes is best.

19 I do not believe that any of these proposals
20 will improve academic performance in the district but
21 instead, will have the opposite effect. You are not
22 going to attract high-quality teachers to this
23 district by stripping protections of the teachers we
24 have and dumping on them. It's not going to happen.
25 Taking this action will harm teacher morale,

1 disincentivize families who are considering the
2 Little Rock School District, and further divide our
3 community which has been divided by this enough.

4 If, in January of 2015, I had any notion that
5 this Board would act in this manner I assure you my
6 vote on state takeover would have been against it. I
7 never imagined that things could get worse, but I
8 think you are about to prove me wrong. If your goal
9 is to inflict irreparable harm on the school
10 district, then you should support these proposals.
11 But if your goal is to return the district to local
12 control in better shape than when you took it over, I
13 strongly urge you to oppose them. Thank you.

14 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

15 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you, Mr. Ledbetter.

16 Is Director Hines here? Director Lance Hines,
17 is he still here?

18 Okay. LaTonya Webb, you spoke on Pine Bluff.
19 Do you want to speak on this issue as well?

20 LaTONYA WEBB: Hello.

21 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Hello.

22 MS. WEBB: One has the moral responsibility to
23 disobey unjust and unfair laws. Unfair systems do
24 not work for everyone.

25 I am a parent of two children. We came from

1 Pine Bluff to Little Rock. Unfortunately, we were
2 escaping domestic violence. My daughter currently
3 now is at Hall. She is an AP student and she has a
4 3.7 GPA. She is thriving there and continuing to
5 thrive.

6 I wish to agree with you today; there should be
7 a motion today that should be voted on by local
8 community, parents, teachers, and stakeholders to
9 return local control back to us, to waive the
10 positions of members like Mrs. Zook, Mr. Key -- in
11 other words, the removal of them without Fair
12 Dismissal or due process.

13 Don't waive the standards for qualified and
14 certified teachers and staff, as such standards and
15 qualications [sic] -- I'm sorry -- and qualifications
16 that have seemingly been waived or omitted in regards
17 to Mr. Key. You are the failure that should be
18 fired.

19 Safety at Hall meets and, in addition, exceeds
20 my expectation as a parent. My teachers at Hall, as
21 well as McClellan -- because my daughter has dual --
22 a teacher that teaches dually -- they advocate and
23 teach with integrity. Your bullying has limited and
24 even prevented the voices of those teachers, some
25 that are too scared to even address their current

1 principal Mr. Roberts who has threatened them
2 directly -- even indirectly threatening students.
3 They are nervous to even entertain the idea of
4 striking because of the message that will possibly
5 send to our babies, these students who depend on them
6 and our school. They are not limited to the fact
7 that this is the only place that these children can
8 seek refuge, that they may even have a meal on that
9 day, irregardless of how horrible and unnutritious
10 the food is -- FYI, bugs are not nutritious.

11 The place to review stability -- I'm sorry -- to
12 receive stability, hope, help, mentoring, counseling,
13 nurturing is in their schools and is in the hands of
14 their teachers and educators.

15 (THE TIMER RINGS)

16 MS. WEBB: Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you, Ma'am.

18 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. I think Antwan
20 Phillips had to leave.

21 Brenda Wilson. Thank you.

22 BRENDA WILSON: Thank you. My name is Brenda
23 Wilson. And, quite frankly, I don't know why I'm
24 here today, other than when I woke up this morning
25 and through the night it was to come to this meeting.

1 And when I found out my sister was going to be here
2 and speak, I came.

3 My mother raised us to -- if we had something
4 that we didn't understand, to ask and we would get an
5 answer to help us understand it. And I guess that's
6 my main reason here today is to ask why. Why is --
7 why are we here? Why are we fighting this issue that
8 we're fighting about, a takeover? Why was the Little
9 Rock School District taken over when we had a lower
10 failing rate than we have right now? What has taken
11 over our district? What has it done? What does this
12 board, this educational board plan to do to help our
13 students? Because that's what I'm about: I'm an
14 educator. I've been educating for 34 years -- 17 in
15 New York, 17 here. What are you doing to help our
16 students? What do you plan to do? What have you
17 done?

18 What I have heard is that you want to fire us;
19 you want to have a quick route to fire us, when
20 there's an avenue that has been in place -- that is
21 in place for you to fire any teacher that is not
22 performing up to par.

23 For the most part we as teachers -- we're there
24 early and we're there late, and I'm one of them, and
25 there are many others in this school district that do

1 the same. We're doctors, we're lawyers; we're more
2 than educators. We have students that come in
3 abused; they come in hungry. We're the ones that's
4 giving them food; we're the ones that's listening and
5 sometimes pondering for how can we help them. But
6 all we're hearing now from you since you've taken
7 over is that you want to get rid of us, and that
8 causes me to ask you: are your minds already made-up?

9 I'm a part of Pine Bluff, too. I came from Pine
10 Bluff, UAPB. That's my alma mater. That's a good
11 school. Pine Bluff is a good place. Like any other
12 place, it has good people and it has bad people. But
13 I want to know from you are your minds made-up for
14 our district the way they were made up for the Pine
15 Bluff District? Because we are here as concerned
16 parents, teachers -- and I don't know if we have any
17 students here or not. But we are concerned about
18 what is happening in our district.

19 And your positions are appointed. Someone --
20 the Governor appointed you to sit here. We are
21 teaching because that is what we love to do. And all
22 we're asking you is help us do our job, and we're
23 asking you if you can do a better job. Because we
24 have gone down since you have taken over as opposed
25 to coming up, and we have felt the brunt of that. We

1 have been blamed for that. Many of us, we work --
2 and we're not working because it's money, money,
3 money, because you know that's not in teaching.
4 We're working because we love our students and we
5 want to see the best for our students. I taught
6 special ed. for seven years, and since then seven
7 more years I've been teaching --

8 (THE TIMER RINGS)

9 MS. WILSON: Bottom-line is this: please don't
10 have minds already set to do what you told us you're
11 going to do. Allow time to take this vote.

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you very much.

13 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

14 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. So the next three
15 names that I have that -- I know a couple of people
16 have told me they have to leave -- Michelle Davis,
17 Gwen Porter Cole, and Jennifer Buckner are the three
18 -- next three names. So if you could prepare --

19 Welcome. If you'll just state your name for the
20 record.

21 MICHELLE DAVIS: Yes. Hi, I'm Michelle Davis.
22 I'm a parent and I'm also the PTA president at my
23 school, Little Rock School District. My kids have
24 been with me here; we left home at 9:30 a.m. So we
25 have students here -- a 3rd grader and a

1 kindergartner. And, you know, the voice of the
2 future always comes up and has new ideas that are
3 good. My 3rd grader said, "So we can either sit here
4 in these long boring meetings or we could do a vote;
5 it would take us all five minutes and everyone's
6 voice could be heard." So I was like, all right,
7 there's hope for our future.

8 But let me start here. So as was mentioned
9 earlier, I think transparency is a top concern here.
10 It's only through individual teachers reaching out to
11 us that our PTA even became aware of the proposition
12 to remove the Teacher Fair Dismissal Act, and
13 ultimately of this meeting also.

14 But with that in mind, before addressing the
15 waiver the first plea that I would make is that our
16 school is returned to local control with a
17 democratically elected school board that truly
18 listens to and represents the voices of our entire
19 diverse community. Also, please listen to our voices
20 today and don't just treat public comment as a
21 charade.

22 Since the state takeover, many actions that feel
23 both unhelpful and unfair have taken place -- for
24 example, closure of schools in already struggling
25 areas and scattering those students, making already

1 cumbersome and inconvenient lives more so, and
2 sending messages to those families and their -- that
3 their communities and schools are dispensable. Now
4 you are going after teachers and making them feel
5 dispensable. Teachers are not just the heartbeat of
6 our schools, but the heart of our future as a nation.
7 Quality public schools rest on teachers, and our
8 nation's future rests on quality public education.

9 If this waiver passes, we'll lose quality
10 educators. We will struggle to recruit the best
11 teachers in our district. And if you are concerned
12 about teacher morale affecting students, this will
13 certainly be negative in that regard.

14 Teachers also may feel like they cannot advocate
15 against administrators on behalf of their students
16 and speak out on research and ideas for implementing
17 new curriculum because of the fear for job security.
18 That ultimately hurts our children.

19 I'm an ICU RN. When a nurse error is reported,
20 we do a root cause analysis -- what failed in our
21 system to lead to the circumstances that allowed us
22 to make that mistake, what education piece was
23 missing for that staff member. It's almost never a
24 person problem but a problem of support, resources,
25 and systems. Rather than waiving a law that protects

1 teachers' jobs, let's look at support, resources, and
2 system change.

3 I stand with our teachers, our students, and the
4 future of our state and our country. Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you.

6 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Welcome.

8 GWEN PORTER COLE: Hello. Good afternoon. I
9 almost want to say Praise the Lord because this is
10 the kind of group I'm used to, being a minister.

11 So I come to give a --

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Please state your name for the
13 record.

14 MS. PORTER COLE: Gwen Porter Cole. I come to
15 just kind of give a synopsis to all of this -- and I
16 want to look at you guys, look in your faces, look in
17 your eyes.

18 I'm a product of Little Rock School District
19 also. I have three adult children who have all
20 attended college and they started at Hall High.
21 There's a lot of things that go on in that interior,
22 but you're trying to deal with from the outside. As
23 some have already said, if you really want to know
24 what goes on in the school you should try visiting
25 them, Mr. Key.

1 I've been in the district over 30 years and I
2 make less than \$25,000 a year; so I'm not there
3 because of the money, as these teachers aren't. We
4 have a love for what we do. I now work in the
5 special education department, and most of the things
6 the children need we can't give it to them because
7 our hands are tied. You won't listen to the teachers
8 who actually knows what's best for them. I work with
9 a teacher that's been a special ed. teacher for over
10 40 years. She's teaching our students how to read.
11 So that's a tool that you could use. If reading is a
12 problem, find out what the problems are and fix the
13 problems. The teachers are our solutions. They work
14 hard daily, you've already heard, sun-up to sun-down.
15 It's no need to take from them what they have worked
16 for, what they have gone to school for. Why would
17 you take certified, qualified, bonafied people and
18 take them and put them under your pressure and your
19 ideas of what would make it work, as opposed to going
20 to those people and asking them, "What can make our
21 district better? What could work better in our
22 schools?" And I'm looking at some people that have
23 been some places.

24 And the Bible says that God ordained promotions;
25 He puts people up and He takes people down. There's

1 a word that says you reap what you sow. While you're
2 digging one ditch you better dig two.

3 It's some things going on internally,
4 externally. It's racism; it's discriminatory; it's
5 coming in here to take -- bring up charter schools.
6 And Mr. Poore said earlier it's some things you can't
7 do for the schools. Oh yes, you can. It's schools
8 that you pour money into; it's schools that you make
9 work because of the color of people's skin. Let's be
10 real, y'all. Let's deal with stuff with the way it
11 is. And you need to know that there's some things
12 you really can do, but you got to want to do them.

13 And, sir, I was told you can't be terminated
14 because there's a contract between you and our
15 Governor. Well, maybe not physically, but I serve a
16 God who sees everybody and He knows our hearts. And
17 sometimes you have to pray before you make a
18 decision, and I pray y'all do that.

19 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Jennifer Buckner.

21 Okay. So the next three names -- Jason Bailey,
22 and then Ali Noland and Vicki Hatter will be the next
23 two after that.

24 Welcome.

25 JASON BAILEY: Hi. This will be really brief.

1 I don't have anything really prepared. I'm not used
2 to this.

3 My name is Jason Bailey and I'm a classroom
4 teacher. I've been teaching for seven years. I
5 teach at STEM, where the Lieutenant Governor just
6 decided to yell about us. I'm a 29-year old. I
7 currently make about \$45,000 a year, and I'm not in
8 this because of money. I'm a single male. I don't
9 have mouths to feed, so when I go to my job I'm not
10 worried about whether my daughter or my son is going
11 to be able to eat the next day.

12 Mr. Key, I have a dream. I want to retire in
13 the classroom. I would like to disrupt today, but my
14 mom didn't raise me that way. And I deliver every
15 day I go into the classroom. I am so passionate
16 about science education that when I was licensed as a
17 life science educator after two years of teaching it
18 -- I was so in love with it I decided to become a
19 physical science licensed educator so that I could
20 teach whatever science I wanted to teach.

21 But I would like to look each and every one of
22 you in the eye and let you know that your actions and
23 the way that you would ignore people that came up
24 here and talked or rolled your eyes when they said
25 some things, you do not make me want to continue in

1 this profession. I'm here because of my kids. I'm
2 here because I'm a Patriot -- I teach at Parkview.
3 And I don't think that there's anything more
4 patriotic than doing something that is very scary,
5 and you all scare me.

6 As an educator, as someone who is at a
7 crossroads in his life trying to determine if this is
8 a path that is going to be something that will be
9 able to put food on my table or if this is something
10 that is going to end up costing me a lot of health
11 problems -- because currently, as a 29-year old male,
12 I actually do take quite a few medications.

13 Why should we believe that you're here to listen
14 to us when you won't look at us or when you'll drink
15 from the mug of a charter school? I asked you, Ms.
16 Zook, if your mind was already made-up, in the
17 hallway, and you said, "No, it's not. You're not
18 wasting your breath." But as a teacher my number one
19 skill is being able to read the room, and I have read
20 the room. Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you, Mr. Bailey.

22 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Ali Noland, Vicki
24 Hatter, and then Vincent Tolliver.

25 ALI NOLAND: And Jamie Dempsey was on the list

1 and she sent me a message --

2 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Right. And she -- right.

3 Jamie Dempsey was -- I skipped over her because she
4 said she had to leave.

5 ALI NOLAND: Okay. Would you mind if I read her
6 statement quickly --

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: That's fine.

8 MS. NOLAND: -- and then do my own?

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: That's great. That's fine.

10 MS. NOLAND: So this is from Jamie Dempsey. She
11 says, "My name is Jamie Dempsey, and my son and
12 daughter attend Pulaski Heights Elementary. I am a
13 proud graduate of LRSD, and I attended Forest Park,
14 Gibbs Magnet, Pulaski Heights Junior High, and
15 Parkview Magnet, where my mother was a teacher.
16 After I graduated from Georgetown University I taught
17 2nd grade in Ruleville, Mississippi, through Teach
18 for America. And after that, I worked here at the
19 Department of Education in partnership with the new
20 teacher project to recruit and retain teachers in
21 Arkansas.

22 "These experiences have shown me the importance
23 of teachers in our students' lives. They have also
24 shown me how hard it is to attract and keep teachers,
25 especially in schools where they are needed most.

1 Teachers are vital to student success and they
2 deserve protection. A waiver of the Teacher Fair
3 Dismissal Act would unnecessarily create uncertainty
4 for those teachers in the district who are the
5 lifeline to student success. Additionally, there is
6 no indication to me that waiving protections for our
7 teachers will lead to improvements in this district
8 for our students.

9 "In light of Ms. Zook's various proposals for
10 the district, I also want to say that these are
11 proposals that impact the future of the community of
12 Little Rock. And I feel strongly that it is time to
13 start the process to return the control of the
14 district to Little Rock. The State has controlled
15 LRSD for four years and there is not evidence of
16 improvement in the schools that were in distress. In
17 fact, more schools have been added to the list.
18 Therefore, I request that the Board start the process
19 to return local control of the school district back
20 to the community of Little Rock."

21 And that was from Jamie Dempsey.

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Great. All right. And we'll
23 start your clock now.

24 ALI NOLAND: Thank you very much. I was here
25 last Thursday. I appreciate you giving me the time

1 to speak again. I'm just going to briefly touch on a
2 couple of things that I would like to respond to.

3 The first is on the Teacher Dismissal proposal.
4 I want to illustrate a connection on two proposals
5 that are before you today: the dyslexia initiative
6 and Teacher Dismissal. I tutor -- I do literacy
7 tutoring at Wakefield. I have seen a teacher go to
8 bat for her student to get dyslexia testing, to get
9 interventions, and she went essentially up against
10 administrators to do that. So the teacher protection
11 allows teachers to do that type of advocating on
12 issues like that.

13 I would also say that I stood here last week and
14 I said, "We don't understand why the dismissal
15 procedures are linked to the problems that you've
16 illustrated in LRSD. If the dismissal works for
17 every other district, why doesn't it work for Little
18 Rock? What's the barrier that makes it different for
19 Little Rock?" I still haven't heard anything -- any
20 explanation for why it's not working in Little Rock.
21 And so I'm just asking for more information about
22 what the problem is that the procedures aren't
23 apparently working in Little Rock, because they work
24 everywhere else.

25 And, finally, there was a statement that because

1 you approved it for Pine Bluff you have to treat
2 Little Rock the same. I would say that under our
3 constitution -- under Lake View, we have a
4 requirement to provide adequate and equitable
5 education. Educational equity is about achievement,
6 fairness, and opportunity in education. It's the
7 principle that a child's personal conditions should
8 not pose an obstacle to his or her academic success.
9 What it's really about is about meeting kids where
10 they are and meeting needs that differ from schools
11 to schools and districts to districts. We have to
12 provide equitable education, and that may mean voting
13 differently for Little Rock than you did for Pine
14 Bluff. And it will also mean that you have to show
15 that this is needed for Little Rock to be able to do
16 it.

17 As to the return to local control, a lot of
18 people have advocated for that today. I would say
19 that I've heard so many times the sentiment "that's
20 what happens when you can't manage your district and
21 you get taken over by the State." I'm going to
22 respectfully but very forcefully ask you to stop
23 defining Little Rock School District based on what
24 was happening in 2015. Look around you. This room
25 is full, the overflow room is full, the hallway is

1 full, a second overflow room is full; there are so
2 many people here that care about our district and who
3 want to be involved and want to help make decisions
4 for our district. And so I am saying if there are
5 parts of these proposals that can and should be put
6 off to allow a locally elected school board to make
7 those decisions, please consider that.

8 (THE TIMER RINGS)

9 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

10 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you, Ms. Noland.

11 All right. Vicki Hatter, Vincent Tolliver, and
12 Mr. McAdoo.

13 VICKI HATTER: Good afternoon, everyone. First,
14 I would like to thank Mr. Sam Ledbetter for taking
15 the initiative in taking the leadership role and
16 saying that his vote was not the right vote, even
17 though he may have thought so at the time.

18 So you guys sit in more of a moral role, because
19 none of us elects you guys. You guys are supposed to
20 be the moral compass. You guys are supposed to be
21 the "buck stops here." And for the last four years
22 that I've been out with my fellow parents and
23 community members or elected officials and other
24 advocates I have watched my children's district go
25 down under state control, under state rule. And if a

1 parent was to have so many infractions and to lie so
2 much we would be held accountable; our children would
3 be taken and the state would come in to create a
4 creative action plan on how we could do better as
5 parents. But yet, in school, you guys sit with
6 autonomy and the power to do whatever you want to do.
7 My child -- thank God, I was able to get one out of
8 school, that he wasn't an educational casualty. I
9 have a daughter -- I typically don't get emotional.
10 Well, when I'm passionate I do, I guess. She's at
11 Parkview. She will not be an educational casualty.
12 None of her classmates, none of her district-mates
13 will be an educational casualty. Even if you guys
14 may not care, even if (inaudible, sobbing) everybody
15 else is lining your pockets and giving you all kind
16 of incentives, all kind of contracts -- if you do not
17 have the decency, the moral compass to educate our
18 children, then what are we supposed to do?

19 You're waiving our teachers' rights, the ones
20 who craft and educate our children, the ones who
21 probably even educated some of you. But yet, you do
22 want to extend this human rights indignity for our
23 kids to be properly educated by certified, licensed,
24 high-qualified teachers and educators, custodial
25 staff, lunchroom ladies, everyone. You guys are

1 morally bankrupt.

2 (THE TIMER RINGS)

3 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

4 MS. HATTER: And I want to leave you with this.
5 How much -- how many lives -- we're either going to
6 deal with them now and educate them to be our next
7 Senators, our next SBE members, our next teachers, or
8 else we're going to put them in the line to be
9 prisoners, to be slaves, and we will have to deal
10 with them then. Either way it goes, y'all, we're
11 still going to pay the price. The question is, how
12 much? And, Miss Diane, look as you're staring me in
13 my eyes --

14 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Hatter --

15 MS. HATTER: -- I want you to think about how
16 much --

17 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Hatter --

18 MS. HATTER: -- you're proposing does not make
19 sense. And I'm done. Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you, Ms. Hatter.

21 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Vincent Tolliver,
23 is he here?

24 Okay. Vincent had to leave.

25 Mr. McAdoo. And Tim Jackson is next.

1 LERON McADOO: Good morning. Oh, it's not
2 morning anymore. I can tell by the grumbling of the
3 stomachs. All right. My name is Leron McAdoo, and
4 I'm talking as a parent. And I want to thank you all
5 for this opportunity to have this privilege. All
6 right.

7 So I want to first say the opposite of fair is
8 unfair. Okay. Okay. Well, I fought for the school
9 district. I have fought many times on the
10 battlefield for the district because it points --
11 it's the only place where all children in Little Rock
12 can go. Some can't go to charter schools because of
13 transportation and other limitations, but the Little
14 Rock School District is a place that every kid has
15 the opportunity to go. That's why I fought for it.
16 I fought against it because it's not as good as it
17 needs to be. The opposite of fair is unfair.

18 Now where does teaching happen? Teaching
19 happens and solutions happen in the classroom. If I
20 could just use my poetic license to use alliteration,
21 some B words, it doesn't happen on a bus, it doesn't
22 happen because of a book, and it doesn't happen
23 because of a board. You yourselves even said that
24 you're here to set policy; you're not in the
25 classroom with the kids; you're not at a point where

1 teaching happens; you're not at a point where
2 solutions actually happen. They happen tangibly in
3 the classroom. You know, you have examples like a
4 priest and a monk, a craftsman and apprentice, a
5 sensei and a grasshopper -- yes, grasshopper --
6 because the opposite of fair is unfair.

7 All right. So I'm not here for any of you with
8 closed minds and cold hearts; I'm here for the ones
9 with open minds and warm hearts. Because as so many
10 people have said, this is a moral issue for me.
11 Somebody said it wasn't personal. Yeah, it's
12 personal. It's personal. It's a moral issue. So
13 this is for the Board specifically, but for the
14 filled rooms and for the media and for all the
15 citizens here because someone already alluded to the
16 fact that this forum right here, this comment place
17 is not necessarily a place where things may change
18 any minds or hearts.

19 All right. So where is morality's place in all
20 this? I don't know. There's a book though -- I
21 don't know if it's an approved text, but it says "Do
22 unto others as you would have them do unto you." And
23 I know I'm a preacher's son, so that can come
24 through.

25 So I'm not trying to appeal to the cold hearts

1 and the closed minds. All I want to say is that
2 shame or guilt or joy or praise that you feel -- I
3 hope my face doesn't burn in your brain after this
4 decision is made. But I do have a solution: locally
5 elected school board. Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you, Mr. Adoo.

7 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. So, Tim Jackson.
9 And just to let you know, Barbara Hall, Robert
10 Nunn -- if he's still here, and then Jeff Wood.

11 TIM JACKSON: Hi. I'm Tim Jackson. I am the
12 product of the Little Rock School District. I am a
13 parent in the Little Rock School District. And
14 because I'm a citizen and a business owner, I'm also
15 a patron of Little Rock School District. I intend to
16 be a patron of Little Rock School District until the
17 day I die. I love this district, I love the city,
18 and I'm committed to it.

19 As a business owner -- I'm a film maker by trade
20 -- I work all over the country. I actually have on
21 the corporate side of my business some educational
22 clients, so I've been in school districts in
23 Baltimore, Maryland, and Lubbock, Texas, and my own
24 experience coming up in the Little Rock School
25 District. I've been in districts all over. And

1 there's one thing that I have never heard anybody
2 associated with education ever say; I've never heard
3 them say, "With us it's students last." Everybody
4 says it's students first. It's a reflex; it's a
5 reaction. So everybody says, "Kids come first around
6 here," but that is cheap talk. That's table stakes.
7 You don't get in the room, that's the ante; it's got
8 to be "students first." What we have to look at is
9 who that's saying it's students first has the
10 character that we want, who has the competence that
11 we need, and who has the commitment. And I would
12 stack up the people sitting behind me on the
13 character, competence, and character -- and
14 commitment test more than anybody else that I hear
15 talking about students first that are sitting in the
16 cheap seats. So everybody says "students first," but
17 it's only the people who really have the character
18 and the competence and the commitment that we want to
19 be here.

20 This board is not demonstrating good leadership.
21 You have put Michael Poore who -- I just want to say
22 right now I've never had a conversation with Mr.
23 Poore in my life; never in my life. But I've watched
24 today. You've put him in an untenable position.
25 This superintendent from Pine Bluff, you put him in

1 an untenable position. These men are accountable to
2 their communities but they are beholden to you. That
3 is an untenable position. They come back to a
4 parent, like me, and I say, "Why are we doing this?
5 Why are we doing this?" He says, "Well, I agree" or
6 "I think that we should, but these people have the
7 power to tell me no." "This man has the power to say
8 'I don't care if you negotiated a contract; I'm not
9 going to approve it.'" That's not -- that's not
10 leadership, Ladies and Gentlemen. That is not
11 leadership, and you are not demonstrating leadership.

12 And I'm standing here today appealing to you to
13 do what Chairman Barth did a few minutes ago, to say
14 we've got to re-think this thing.

15 Ms. Zook, I wish that you'd run for the Little
16 Rock school board because you have a lot of ideas for
17 our school board. I wish we had a school board for
18 you to run for. But you've come with a whole list
19 today of things that this man and his team and
20 teachers -- because decisions should be made closest
21 to the point of implementation. They shouldn't be
22 made in back rooms and then people informed who have
23 a stake in them. And that's what you're doing and
24 that's what you have done and that's your track
25 record, and it's got to stop.

1 I've heard all day today that this is just
2 another tool; we just want to give these --

3 (THE TIMER RINGS)

4 MR. JACKSON: -- men another tool. But this is
5 not a tool that they've asked for. So why are you
6 providing it? You've got to provide helpful help.

7 And let me just very quickly -- 30 seconds -- if
8 Mr. Poore -- and, again, we've never talked. If he
9 asks for this tool and then he asks you to give him
10 cover, then I think you need to be transparent and
11 say, "Hey, in a back room he asked for this tool and
12 we're just trying to give him cover." If he didn't
13 ask for this tool, then I think you need to be
14 transparent and say, "We're trying to give this man a
15 tool he didn't ask for, because we want it."

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Thank you.

17 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: So Barbara Hall, Robert Nunn,
19 and then Jeff Wood.

20 Welcome.

21 BARBARA HALL: I'm Barbara Hall. I'm a Little
22 Rock School District teacher, and I've taught in
23 failing schools and currently in a more successful
24 school. And I feel like I've seen firsthand the
25 complex problems that schools face and work really

1 hard to address, and I have for 15 years.

2 When talking about educational issues, everyone
3 talks about urgency, wrings their hands and exclaims,
4 "We just can't afford to wait." Those same people
5 want what's best for children and they imply that
6 anyone who isn't acting quickly doesn't care about
7 students as deeply as they do. It seems to me,
8 however, that rushing into complex problems,
9 especially ones with a complex history, with a list
10 generated on someone's notepad is not the best way to
11 make sustainable change, no matter the urgency or how
12 much a person cares about children. Planning and
13 research and input from all parts of a local school
14 system is a way to approach a complex local problem.

15 Superintendent Poore laid out the systems
16 development approach he has put in place, and I
17 appreciate his purposeful investment of time and
18 planning and talking to the whole system. He's
19 talked to teachers, he's talked to community members;
20 he's looking at the whole system.

21 Schools are living, breathing, complex systems,
22 and it's impossible to look to one part of that
23 system and lay blame on that one part for the whole
24 systems problem. What you all propose to do by
25 getting rid of the Teacher Fair Dismissal Act

1 communicates to me as a teacher that you lay blame on
2 teachers and school staff for complex systems
3 problems. I believe that that's an easy way to
4 escape accountability of the whole system, including
5 your own. It's an easy way to claim you're doing
6 something, even if there's absolutely no evidence
7 that it will work. It's not well thought out or
8 researched or a systems-based approach, and I urge
9 you to reconsider.

10 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thanks, Ms. Hall.

11 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Mr. Nunn.

13 ROBERT NUNN: Can you hear me okay?

14 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Great.

15 ROBERT NUNN: Commissioner, Members of the
16 Board, thank you for this opportunity to speak today.
17 I am a product -- my name is Robert Nunn. I am a
18 product of the Little Rock School District, as is my
19 sister Amy who went on to get her Ph.D. from Harvard
20 and has been widely recognized for her work combating
21 HIV AIDS. My late father was the product of Crossett
22 School District at a time when their teachers were
23 the highest paid in the state. That fostered an
24 environment which allowed for a highly intelligent,
25 nearly deaf kid from south Arkansas to prosper. I

1 have no doubt that his life and my own would be
2 vastly different had he been allowed to fall through
3 the cracks.

4 My father was a passionate believer both in the
5 power of education and the importance of democracy.
6 He spent his final years fighting for both here in
7 Little Rock. He saw from day-one the state takeover
8 of the schools was not done with the best interest of
9 our children at heart. The last time I went out to
10 eat with him was last year --

11 (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: Mr. Nunn knocks over a
12 recording device on the podium and sets it back to
13 rights.)

14 MR. NUNN: Excuse me -- at Tokyo House, of all
15 places, and there -- it was there I saw something
16 both mundane and extraordinary: tables of black folks
17 and white folks eating together, simply enjoying each
18 other's company and good food. I have no doubt that
19 integrated schools played no small role in that, and
20 I have no doubt that those -- there are those in
21 power who view such interactions as a threat.

22 The only just decision that could come out of
23 today's meeting is restoration of local control to
24 the citizens of Little Rock. The flimsy arguments
25 about school test scores hold even less water three

1 years later. I want those who have made up their
2 minds to gut teacher protection to know that the true
3 reasons behind this are crystal clear: they are
4 racism, they are classism, and sheer profit motives.
5 Privatization of all education is the ultimate goal
6 of the dismantling of protection for students and
7 teachers.

8 (THE TIMER RINGS)

9 MR. NUNN: To paraphrase Frederick Douglass, it
10 is easier to build strong children than to repair
11 broken adults. Treating children as livestock to be
12 squeezed for profit is wholly incompatible with the
13 goal of strong children, a strong community, and a
14 strong state.

15 I only ask the Board today to treat the parents,
16 the children, and the teachers of Little Rock as
17 human-beings. Thank you for your time.

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you, Mr. Nunn.

19 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Is Jeff Wood still here?

21 Oh, I'm sorry, Jeff.

22 JEFF WOOD: That's okay. I appreciate it.

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: I apologize.

24 MR. WOOD: That's okay.

25 Thank you, Members of the Board, for today's

1 meeting. My name is Jeff Wood and I am here as a
2 parent of three Little Rock School District children
3 at Roberts Elementary. I also represent West Little
4 Rock on the Community Advisory Board. But I'm not
5 here today in that role on the Community Advisory
6 Board, though I will talk about it from time to time.

7 I'm here because I appreciate the boldness of
8 the initiatives that are being talked about. Some of
9 them have not been talked about by the crowd so much,
10 but I want to highlight those.

11 First of all, the big changes that are needed at
12 Hall High School -- our board this week voted to send
13 back the recommendations from Superintendent Poore,
14 to ask him to redevelop, to think deeper about the
15 changes that are needed at Hall to move the needle
16 there. And I appreciate that part of the discussion
17 today. Part of -- one of the motions is going to be
18 an aggressive -- aggressive moves at Hall to make a
19 significant difference, with more than just a
20 curriculum tweak, more than just a boundary line
21 move, but something big and something bold.

22 West Little Rock needs proximate high school
23 education opportunities yesterday. Nine years ago,
24 Roberts Elementary School opened and put this
25 district on notice that a high school was needed out

1 there. Three years ago, Pinnacle View Middle School
2 opened and put the district on notice that a high
3 school was needed out there. And here we are, those
4 8th graders are ready to go to the 9th grade. I
5 appreciate that one of the motions is to start the
6 9th grade and to aggressively study what those 10th
7 through 12th grade options will be over the next few
8 years. Plans are coming soon that you will hear
9 about for high school opportunity for West Little
10 Rock. I'm involved in some of those discussions, and
11 I hope that you all in the next few months will be
12 open and receptive to out-of-the-box ideas -- ideas
13 that promote efficiencies, save large amounts of
14 money, and provide almost immediate opportunities for
15 students on the western side of the city.

16 I also agree that our reading programs in Little
17 Rock need extensive review, thorough review, and to
18 be critiqued. Over the last few meetings that our
19 board has done, we have begun to dig into that. I
20 fear that we are only scratching the surface, but we
21 are committed to digging deep on what's going on in
22 the reading programs. I appreciate the support on
23 that.

24 The accountability that's being talked about,
25 whether it's teacher accountability or administrator

1 accountability, I appreciate that it goes both ways.
2 If we're going to hold administrators accountable,
3 they need the opportunity to choose their teams. If
4 we're going to choose -- if we're going to hold the
5 teams accountable, then the people who picked them,
6 the people who lead them and prepare them need to be
7 held accountable as well.

8 (THE TIMER RINGS)

9 MR. WOOD: I'll leave it to your wisdom though
10 on those particular items. But I do promise that
11 there will be due process. A few times today it's
12 been mentioned that this will be a removal of that.
13 Well, I do represent that our board does provide the
14 due process for those teachers -- for every employee
15 that their termination gets recommended. Oftentimes,
16 Mr. Poore disagrees with our decisions or we overturn
17 him. Sometimes Commissioner Key reinstates people
18 that we terminate.

19 In the end, there's a lot that needs to be done.
20 One of the criticisms is that under the four years of
21 state control not enough has been done to move the
22 needle, and that very well may be true. We might be
23 four years late on some of these plans, but I
24 appreciate that big plans are happening. Please
25 don't punt just because it's a lot and they're big

1 ideas. Thanks.

2 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you, Mr. Wood.

3 Okay. Last two names I have before we go back
4 to the elected officials -- I have Candrice Jones --
5 all right, great -- and then Denise Emmett is the
6 last name I have on the list.

7 Welcome.

8 CANDRICE JONES: Hello. Like many, I came not
9 thinking that I was going to speak today, but here I
10 am and here we are. So my name is Candrice Jones. I
11 am a teacher of 14 years. I teach at Little Rock
12 Central High. I teach senior English, all senior
13 regular English and creative writing. I am
14 originally from rural Arkansas -- Dermott, Arkansas
15 -- and I've taught at a few places before Central
16 High. I taught at Jack Robey. So the decision that
17 was made today -- I'm a proud former teacher at Jack
18 Robey in Pine Bluff, so the decision that was made
19 earlier today really -- yeah, it scared me. And I
20 also taught in Mills High School here, and I found a
21 home at Central High. I have an MA in Teaching. I'm
22 a nontraditional teaching -- teacher. And I have an
23 MFA in Critical Studies from California Institute of
24 the Arts. And I am a strong disciplinarian in the
25 classroom.

1 None of that matters though, as far as my
2 background in education. None of that matters if
3 when I walk into the classroom I'm not properly
4 trained to teach. Okay. None of that matters if I'm
5 not given the tools to properly communicate the
6 skills that I apply in my everyday writing practices
7 and things like that to my students.

8 Previously, quite a few people -- quite a few
9 teachers have talked about how we have given up days
10 of professional development. We have given up, as
11 you guys know, AEA days. And those are opportunities
12 that we as teachers need, whether it's from state or
13 -- district-wide professional development or
14 statewide professional development, to communicate
15 with each other regarding best practices and
16 regarding, you know, things that we do in our
17 classrooms to help our students succeed. There are a
18 couple of programs at Central and at other schools in
19 the Little Rock School District that are in place
20 that have existed for years, and those programs have
21 been extremely successful. Those are the Advanced
22 Placement program, as well as (inaudible). Neither
23 one of those programs would have the success rates
24 that they have if the roadmaps to success for those
25 programs were constantly changed every year. Those

1 programs would not be successful if the teachers who
2 --

3 (THE TIMER RINGS)

4 MS. JONES: -- are at the helm of those programs
5 don't know what they should do or know where they
6 should go to make their students successful.

7 Just like everyone else today, I'm imploring to
8 you not to waive the Fair Teacher Dismissal Act
9 because we already have a program in place to get rid
10 of teachers or get rid of staff that's -- that can
11 work if the process is carried through. So I really
12 haven't heard a good reasoning for proposing another
13 program to replace the program that we have in place.

14 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you.

15 MS. JONES: I haven't heard of a good reason. I
16 haven't heard of a reasoning behind replacing the
17 program that's in place that, as far as I know, has
18 not been put into action enough to even say that it
19 will work. And once we are --

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thanks, Ms. Jackson. Final
21 sentence.

22 MS. JONES: Jones. But once we are gotten rid
23 of, who are we going to be replaced with? Bubbly
24 teachers who will run away just as soon as they find
25 out that discipline is not as -- you know, all

1 sunshine and rainbows? I can honestly say as a young
2 teacher I would not have gotten through my first year
3 of teaching had not a teacher who had been forced out
4 of teaching, had been forced to retire, come into my
5 classroom on a volunteer basis and showed me what to
6 do. Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you.

8 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Denise Emmett. And
10 then I had overlooked Jeremy Lusk, and I apologize
11 for that. So he will be the -- you first, Denise,
12 and then Jeremy will be next, and then we'll turn to
13 our members of the legislature.

14 DENISE EMMETT: Good afternoon to Commissioner
15 Key and Dr. Barth and the rest of the committee.

16 My name is Denise Emmett. My three children are
17 enrolled at Carver Magnet Elementary. I have been
18 advocating for our school since 2014, when the school
19 board at the time wanted to close Carver and other
20 schools. And since then I have advocated against the
21 State takeover, I've advocated against school
22 closures, and I've advocated against the millage.

23 Before the State took over in 2015, there were
24 six failing schools and now there are 22 failing
25 schools. Where are all the improvements that were

1 promised to us from the state? The State has done
2 things to undermine our kids, teachers, schools, and
3 community. Instead of making it easier to fire
4 teachers, the State should make it easier to support
5 our teachers so all of our schools can flourish.

6 I'm asking the State not to move forward with
7 the waiver. And I'm also asking the State to give us
8 back our school board. Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you, Ms. Emmett

10 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

11 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Mr. Lusk.

12 DR. JEREMY LUSK: Thank you very much. I'm
13 Jeremy Lusk, and I think my mom would probably want
14 me to say that I'm Dr. Jeremy Lusk. I am a
15 scientist, I'm an educator, and I'm a parent. And
16 the most important question that I ask myself in my
17 role as a scientist is what if I'm wrong. I want you
18 to ask yourselves that question. If you're wrong,
19 how do you expect to attract great teachers to fill
20 these vacancies that you seem so eager to create?

21 I have seen firsthand how much work it takes to
22 be an exceptional teacher. I'm here because I am
23 Jennifer Lusk's son. I'm here because I'm Lauren
24 Lusk's husband. I'm here because growing up I
25 watched my mother spend hours outside the classroom

1 planning and grading and supporting her students. I
2 watched her give comfort and counsel to devastated
3 students who had no one else in their lives to turn
4 to. I watched her feed her students. And all of
5 this was above and beyond the exceptional work she
6 did in the classroom. And now I watch as my wife, a
7 brand-new Little Rock School District teacher does
8 the same. She wakes up early, she works late,
9 because she is an exceptional and dedicated LRSD
10 teacher.

11 I want you to listen to these teachers. I want
12 you to listen to their colleagues. I want you to
13 listen to the people of Little Rock who want their
14 school district back.

15 As a scientist I'm trained to seek out evidence.
16 What evidence is there that your actions are
17 appropriate and effective? Right now, currently
18 there are 22 schools in this district that are graded
19 D or F. By the same metric, in 2015, when the school
20 district was taken over there were 22 schools graded
21 D or F. Now you might look at that and say that
22 nothing has happened -- and that in itself would be a
23 condemnation of the actions of this board. But they
24 weren't the same 22 schools. So if you're going to
25 use these school report cards to make your decisions,

1 you need to ask yourself what evidence is there that
2 this is the correct course of action. The schools
3 whose scores improved, did they improve because it
4 was easier to fire teachers? The schools whose
5 scores declined, did they decline for lack of the
6 ability to easily fire teachers? I think you'll find
7 the answer to those questions is no. And ask
8 yourself what if you're wrong. Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you, sir.

10 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

11 CHAIRMAN BARTH: First off, before we move to
12 the elected officials, I want to -- we talk a lot
13 about community engagement on this board and I want
14 to celebrate the passionate, heartfelt, incredibly
15 well-spoken and well thought-out comments that have
16 been made today. And so I just want to voice that on
17 behalf of the Board.

18 First up, Representative-elect Tippi McCullough.

19 REPRESENTATIVE-ELECT TIPPI McCULLOUGH: Thank
20 you, Commissioner Key, Dr. Barth, and the Board for
21 hearing us today. Three minutes is not enough time
22 for a politician or a teacher but I'll do my best, I
23 promise.

24 My name is Tippi McCullough. I'm the Arkansas
25 House of Representatives-elect for District 33, which

1 runs between I-30 and Reservoir Road, kind of down
2 the middle of Little Rock, and has a part of the 12th
3 Street corridor in it also. I'm also a Little Rock
4 Education Association building rep at Little Rock
5 Central High School, an Arkansas Education
6 Legislative Committee member, and a National
7 Education Association Women's Issues Committee
8 member, and, most importantly, I've been teaching our
9 young people for 34 years. I've taught English and
10 coached basketball in the hills of northwest
11 Arkansas, at Kingston, the eastern plains of Newport,
12 the timberlands of Mountain Pine, Mount St. Mary
13 Academy in Little Rock, and have been at Central in
14 the Little Rock School District for the last five
15 years.

16 Today I want to speak on behalf of my
17 constituents, union, colleagues, and, most
18 importantly, our students in the Little Rock School
19 District. I believe we have to focus on three
20 things:

21 Number One, waiving Teacher Fair Dismissal will
22 drive top talent out of our district. Little has
23 been done in the district since the takeover.
24 Teachers and parents are determined to see the day
25 that the district regains local control.

1 Number Two, the community and parents do not
2 support this move. After a year of knocking on doors
3 and speaking one-on-one with parents, this is crystal
4 clear.

5 Number Three, most importantly, the impact will
6 hit the children who have the most need when they
7 lose the best teachers. If it was as simple as
8 teaching content, all our students would be
9 successful -- but, unfortunately, they come to us
10 underfed, homeless, lacking medical and dental care,
11 with trauma-filled lives based on their home-life or
12 neighborhood. They need the community to provide the
13 basic learning tools, such as pencil and paper. The
14 one constant that many students have in their lives
15 is the caring individuals, the teachers who are daily
16 and consistently invested in their success. My
17 colleagues feel this pressure daily -- and to add the
18 pressure of shifting teachers around when there's no
19 evidence of need is wrong-minded.

20 While I campaigned I knocked on approximately
21 14,000 doors. My district includes many Little Rock
22 School District schools. Every door I knocked on
23 said education was the most important issue to them
24 in Little Rock, especially gaining local control of
25 the Little Rock School District and to continue the

1 work -- to continue to work with Superintendent Poore
2 and to do the good work -- no, the exceptional work
3 that happens daily in classrooms across this
4 district.

5 It is my wish that you not move on the issue of
6 the Teacher Fair Dismissal waiver. It is my
7 experience that tells me it is wrong and will do more
8 harm to an already fractured district that is not
9 improved while under State control. And it is my
10 prayer that you see the worth and beauty --

11 (THE TIMER RINGS)

12 REP.-ELECT McCULLOUGH: -- of what nine brave
13 young people started in 1957.

14 It is our duty to see the day through to when we
15 have the best, more diverse, most talented, most
16 successful public school district in Arkansas and the
17 United States. We can be the shining example of a
18 city that's progressing economically and academically
19 by building up our schools, teachers, and students,
20 not tearing them down. Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you.

22 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you.

24 Senator Will Bond. Welcome.

25 SENATOR WILL BOND: I'll rush up here because I

1 know we've all been here a long time. I appreciate
2 everyone's patience.

3 I think I agree -- we all agree with
4 Commissioner Key that there is a moral urgency for
5 kids. They don't get to go back through the system.
6 That is not a new thing; we have always had a moral
7 urgency to provide a world-class education for our
8 kids. It really is a commonsense belief that we all
9 have.

10 But so the question is, and it seems to be where
11 the difference is, is: how do we deliver that world
12 class opportunity to every kid? And commonsense and
13 moral urgency tells us it begins with giving world-
14 class support, training, evaluation, and pay to our
15 teachers. That's where we start. That's where the
16 moral urgency begins. There is a moral urgency to
17 remember that every time we walk an industry titan or
18 millionaire out onto a football field to give them an
19 award or that we pat a state senator or state
20 representative or a state board member on the back
21 that every one of those people have been lifted up by
22 a teacher.

23 There is a moral urgency to make sure our
24 teachers know teachers are the most -- the most --
25 I'm going to say it again -- the most important

1 public servants in our entire society -- the most
2 important. There are no police officers or preachers
3 without teachers; there are no soldiers or senators
4 without teachers; there are no lawyers or lieutenant
5 governors without teachers; and there are no doctors,
6 and inevitably there will be no democracy without
7 teachers.

8 There is a moral urgency to turn away from the
9 idea that teachers should be called to the
10 profession, like preachers or priests. There is a
11 moral urgency that we say that we will pay them,
12 support them, evaluate them, and train them like the
13 world-class professionals and superheroes that most
14 of them are. And the problem that I see here today
15 with the Board's action is that you are declaring
16 essentially war on the people that you need to solve
17 these problems. The superintendent has not asked for
18 it, it's my understanding. There's no list of
19 teachers in the Little Rock School District that's
20 been provided that need to be fired. I went and had
21 a meeting and requested that.

22 And so the moral urgency, like it was in --
23 there's been moral urgency and commonsense urgency
24 before. In 2003, we had to fund adequate education.
25 Mr. Key remembers that. There were 54 House members

1 who voted to increase taxes to give an adequate and
2 equitable funding mechanism. And so the urgency is
3 now.

4 I ask that you please, please walk away from
5 this waiver of Teacher Fair Dismissal, plan for
6 transition back to local control, and let each of us
7 -- each of us in our heart pledge to push our
8 lawmakers to support, train, evaluate, and pay our
9 superhero teachers in a world-class manner. Thank
10 you.

11 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you.

12 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Senator Joyce Elliott.

14 SENATOR JOYCE ELLIOTT: I was talking, sorry.

15 CHAIRMAN BARTH: I'm sorry.

16 SENATOR ELLIOTT: Mr. Chairman, may I give this
17 to you to pass these out so that -- and not let it
18 count against my three minutes?

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Oh, sure.

20 SENATOR ELLIOTT: And please don't read it now.
21 It's something I want to tell you about.

22 Thank you for your time, Board Members. What's
23 been passed out to you is something I think could
24 inform you when you have this notion that the only
25 thing you need to do to make sure kids are successful

1 is look at just what happens in the school, and when
2 you look at what happens in the school the only
3 person to whom you look will be the teachers.

4 So somehow we've gotten -- we have forgotten the
5 notion of what it means to teach a whole child in a
6 whole community and how everything matters, like
7 health and safety and some of the other items that
8 are on that graph. I just want you to see that
9 because sometimes people who -- particularly who are
10 not in education have the sense that we can put an F
11 on a school or an A on a school and say the school
12 was successful or that the school failed. You look
13 at that and help yourself understand. If you put an
14 F on a school and say your school failed, it is not
15 just that school. We need to do some mirror looking
16 -- "mirror looking," as I call it -- because it's not
17 just that; it's not to say the teachers aren't
18 important.

19 But people have said up here today time and time
20 again you are considering doing something for which
21 you have no evidence; not one iota of evidence that
22 this is the thing, the super bullet that caused these
23 schools to either do well or to fail, because there's
24 so many other issues that will affect whether or not
25 a child does well or whether or not a child fails.

1 I've talked to you several times about what
2 these countries do that are world-class -- that have
3 world-class education systems. I wish we would take
4 up and do what they're doing. This would never, ever
5 -- they would never consider doing this to teachers.
6 They do not engage in what they call "perverse
7 incentives." That means if I punish you I can punish
8 you into success. It's the other way around. So
9 that's what I want us to think about. It is not so
10 simple as we'll do this one magical thing. And while
11 I've heard many of you say today we will do this and
12 we'll evaluate it and see what it looks like, we
13 already know what it looks like. We have, at least
14 from 2000, had charter schools who have hired
15 predominantly teachers who are not certified -- but
16 if they're certified, the other thing they have been
17 able to do predominantly is to fire them at will. We
18 already know. So if we can point out all the charter
19 schools that have been -- kind of done so well
20 because they can just dismiss teachers, you ought to
21 tell us who they are and then there would be some
22 reason to believe we are following something that
23 makes sense. Because otherwise, we are --

24 (THE TIMER RINGS)

25 SENATOR ELLIOTT: -- using our kids as guinea

1 pigs.

2 And that last little thing you get to do, Mr.
3 Chair, before you sit down -- I'm going to do it real
4 quickly, because I don't have time to talk about
5 everything that's proposed here. But this is what
6 bothers me more than anything else: we are piece-
7 milling our district to death. We are not
8 systematically planning for this district to be
9 successful. We are not systematically planning, so
10 we do this, we do that. And we are -- we have a
11 blueprint for about half of the district; that's not
12 the whole district. We have some other proposals for
13 some other things to happen to Hall or wherever;
14 that's not the whole district. If we are really
15 going to be world-class we need to stop everything
16 we're doing, put this -- give this school district
17 back to the patrons, and let's create a systematic,
18 coherent, aligned plan for the entire district -- the
19 entire district. Otherwise, we just keep doing
20 things because we have a hankering and that's it. I
21 don't think we should judge by hankering. It needs
22 to be the entire district or nothing at all because
23 that's the only way we're going to be successful. It
24 is about systems. It's not because Joyce Elliott
25 just had one great idea not connected to anything

1 else.

2 And the major thing here today, you might vote
3 for a proposal for Fair Dismissal. But I want to be
4 clear about this: you will absolutely be voting with
5 no evidence, not one shred, for what you're doing
6 that makes sense for kids, for teachers, or our
7 communities. Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you, Senator Elliott.

9 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

10 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you.

11 Finally, Representative Clark Tucker.

12 REPRESENTATIVE CLARK TUCKER: Thank you, Mr.
13 Chairman, and thank you, Board Members and Mr. Key
14 for having us here today. For the next 12 days I'm a
15 state representative of Little Rock. Y'all aren't
16 quite rid of me yet, but maybe you'll have a
17 Christmas party afterward.

18 But I want to -- I'm going to do my best not to
19 echo what some of my colleagues and fellow community
20 members have said. So I just want to make a few
21 points on Teacher Fair Dismissal, and I want to make
22 a larger point about the relationship between this
23 board and the community in Little Rock.

24 First, as to Teacher Fair Dismissal, I don't
25 want it to be lost why Teacher Fair Dismissal is part

1 of the law to begin with. It's not only for due
2 process for teachers, but it's partly what Ms. Noland
3 talked about earlier -- it's to give teachers the
4 space to be advocates for their students, whether
5 it's dyslexia or whatever the case might be. We
6 heard a prominent example recently in Springdale
7 where a student publication published something
8 controversial and that journalism teacher did not
9 hesitate to stand up for her students, as she should
10 have -- and she might not have been willing to do
11 that if she didn't have these protections in place.

12 Another point is that, you know, Dr. Moore
13 raised the point earlier that there still will be due
14 process protections in place if you were to vote for
15 this. The flipside of that coin is that teachers can
16 be terminated under the system as it exists now if
17 they're not doing their jobs. And as a State
18 Representative in Little Rock I have communicated
19 with administrators, both inside and outside my
20 district, who feel as though they can make the
21 changes they need to make in their schools with the
22 system as it exists right now.

23 And then, finally, a point that has been raised
24 -- but I really want you to wrestle over the question
25 of do you actually believe you will improve the

1 quality of teaching in the Little Rock School
2 District by making this move? Who do you think is
3 going to come to the district? First of all, we have
4 no evidence that any teacher will be let-go as a
5 result. But who's going to come to a district not
6 only where they have less due process protections
7 than other districts but where we have already seen
8 evidence that teachers are targeted for things that
9 are outside of their control?

10 And then, finally, with the lack of evidence --
11 I know there's an ideology in state government right
12 now about Teacher Fair Dismissal. And when we make
13 decisions based not on the reality on the ground, not
14 facts or evidence or people but ideology, then people
15 suffer. And in this circumstance those people are
16 our superheroes that are teachers -- and when
17 teachers suffer, inevitably students suffer as well.

18 And the larger point I want to make is not only
19 -- people show up to this with so much fervor and
20 enthusiasm, not only because they feel so strongly
21 about the issues on the table right now but, quite
22 frankly, to put it directly, this community does not
23 trust this Board or this Department, and the reason
24 is because the State has not put in the work. And
25 I'm not talking about the District and I'm not

1 discounting the work that y'all do. I know y'all put
2 in a lot of time. Here's what I mean: last week Dr.
3 Barth did an incredible job of raising the issue that
4 the public had not been put on notice for these
5 proposals, and we had a few days notice for a few
6 people to show up. But a State Board meeting is not
7 the first step in proposals of this magnitude; it is
8 the last step. We have a Community Advisory Board in
9 place, we have community members, PTAs, students and
10 teachers. There should be conversations with all of
11 these people, with education experts at the state
12 level, local level, and national level, before any of
13 these decisions are made. And the fact that we --

14 (THE TIMER RINGS)

15 REP. TUCKER: -- have all these proposals --
16 I'll wrap up very quickly. The fact that we have all
17 these proposals on the board today, right now, is the
18 best evidence for the fact that after four years --
19 four years there has never been a systematic plan in
20 place for the future of this district or a plan to
21 return the district to local control or a plan to
22 proactively reach out to the community members.
23 Instead, we have press conferences where members of
24 the public are shielded by security officials.

25 Now I just want to make one point to follow-up

1 on something the Lieutenant Governor said earlier.
2 He talked about accountability. And if local boards
3 aren't going to be -- do the job, they need to be
4 held accountable. So my follow-up question to that
5 is: who holds this board accountable? Who holds the
6 State Department of Education accountable? Now the
7 legal and political reality today is no one, so the
8 answer to that question has to be y'all. Y'all are
9 the ones that have to hold yourselves accountable,
10 and the way you can do that is by doing the work that
11 I'm talking about. Put in the work with the
12 community and make sure that the proposals we talk
13 about are not capricious and arbitrary. It's the
14 ones -- every idea should be on the table, whether I
15 personally like them or not. Every single one should
16 be on the table, because we do have that sense of
17 urgency. But we need to make sure that we don't just
18 move forward in a capricious and arbitrary manner
19 because we have that urgency; we have to make sure
20 that what we're doing is in the best interest of our
21 students. And that's what the taxpayers of Little
22 Rock deserve, that's what the parents and teachers
23 deserve -- but most important, that is what our
24 students deserve. They are worth it. Thank you for
25 your time.

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you.

2 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Why don't -- y'all
4 want a quick break before we move into motions?

5 So we're going to take a 5-minute break. We'll
6 return at 3:25 and then we'll pick up with business.

7 (BREAK: 3:20 - 3:29 P.M.)

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Thanks, everyone.

9 So now, as we've said, we've heard public
10 comment, we've heard presentations from the
11 Department and Superintendent. And so now I am
12 willing to hear any motion. And, you know, I know
13 that Ms. Zook in particular had a long list and, you
14 know, it's your -- it's anyone's judgment of how to
15 present their motion, whether in a clump or whether
16 you want to, you know, break it up.

17 So I will entertain a motion of any sort.

18 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Newton also spoke.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Either one.

20 MS. ZOOK: I think -- as I listened carefully
21 today to the different points of view, I think my
22 thoughts primarily are in these three-plus years we
23 as a State Board have had hands-on and have not
24 exercised the things that we -- the legislature says
25 that we may do and the Supreme Court says that we are

1 to do. And as you listen to people on both sides of
2 the issue, I'm just wondering if -- what I was
3 hearing is that the administration and the processes
4 have failed people on both sides, and I think that
5 will play into any motions that are made.

6 And I also think -- I taught in Little Rock
7 schools when you had local control. I was an
8 administrator in North Little Rock when you had local
9 control. I was on the State Board when the state
10 intervened. And all I can say is that I hope once
11 local control is returned then you will bring this
12 same level of involvement and concern and care and
13 passion from so many different points of view.
14 Because the perception of a lot of your community and
15 a lot of your teachers and a lot of us is that the
16 local control wasn't local control; it was a few
17 people and the courts. And I think as a result of
18 that, the District allowed itself to get to the point
19 that the State Board felt compelled to intervene.
20 So, just a point of reference.

21 LITERACY CURRICULUM MOTION

22 MS. ZOOK: So I will start with a motion. I
23 want to direct the Little Rock School District to
24 adopt and implement a literacy curriculum based on
25 the Science of Reading. And then ADE Division of

1 Learning Services develop an implementation process
2 to insure alignment with the academic standards,
3 Arkansas academic standards, the Science of Reading,
4 and the RISE initiative, kindergarten through 12th
5 grade.

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Motion from Ms. Zook.

7 Is there a second?

8 DR. MOORE: Second.

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Motion -- second by Dr.
10 Moore.

11 I'll start -- Ms. Chambers, do you have any
12 comments?

13 MS. CHAMBERS: Just I guess a procedural
14 question to an earlier comment that was made during
15 public comment. Are these discreet and individual
16 recommendations that we should assume will fit
17 together into some more comprehensive plan? Or are
18 we just voting on them individually and not going to
19 entertain questions or discussion about how they fit
20 together?

21 MS. ZOOK: It's my hope, Ms. Chambers, that as a
22 result, as all or part of these are developed, that
23 it will be a systematic process that has -- that
24 builds the framework for a plan for the district and,
25 Lord willing, the return to local control.

1 MS. CHAMBERS: Thank you.

2 And, Dr. Barth, just two more questions.

3 One is how will we engage or entertain a
4 discussion about -- I know Ms. Zook is recommending
5 these. I'd like to know how the Superintendent feels
6 about it, if he's still there, one. And two --

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Oh, sure.

8 MS. CHAMBERS: -- even though under statute we
9 know that we can do these things, I would like to
10 hear the Department of Ed. and Superintendent's
11 reflection on should we do these things. Back to
12 even if you can do them all, which ones, if any,
13 should we do?

14 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. So the Superintendent is
15 here. And then I'll let the Commissioner take the
16 lead on the second part of the question.

17 SUPT. POORE: One of the things that the
18 Commissioner and I have talked about is our next
19 adoption phase for resources to support literacy is
20 at the elementary level. We did make an adoption on
21 the secondary literacy resource and materials last
22 year. One of the things that's important that many
23 of the speakers brought up is that there are also
24 supplementary materials that typically get tied with
25 providing the best support for students.

1 Mr. Key -- or Commissioner Key and I have talked
2 about having the Associate Commissioner Stacy Smith
3 involved in the process. And I have shared before
4 Ms. Zook ever brought this up my willingness to allow
5 her to participate in the process. Obviously, the
6 Commissioner does receive the proposal for materials
7 already, to him, in order to approve as a part of
8 being the person that acts on behalf of the board for
9 Little Rock.

10 So I don't know whether, Ms. Zook, that helps
11 either shape your motion or not. But you may not
12 have been aware of the deliberate work that we're
13 already doing with the Commissioner and his staff to
14 make sure that we are moving forward on a literacy
15 program that will impact all of our children.

16 MS. ZOOK: Yes, I am aware of the work you've
17 been doing.

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Commissioner.

19 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Chambers, I'm personally
20 supportive of this because of the urgency, because of
21 the need in early literacy, and the fact that Ms.
22 Smith and her team, they know -- they have reviewed
23 many of the curricula that are out there, that the
24 vendors are selling around the state. So I think
25 they would be very helpful in assisting the District

1 in this, in directing how this goes, just the -- what
2 they have learned with the Science of Reading. And
3 what's been in place, in effect here in the
4 Department can only benefit the work that's in the
5 district, in my opinion. So we definitely are
6 onboard with this idea.

7 MS. CHAMBERS: Thank you. That's just what I
8 needed.

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Ms. McFetridge,
10 anything?

11 MS. McFETRIDGE: I'm good. Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Ms. Newton, any
13 questions?

14 MS. NEWTON: (Shaking head from side to side.)

15 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Dr. Hill?

16 DR. HILL: So how would that work? I mean,
17 what's the process for that -- Commissioner, for us
18 to pull those?

19 COMMISSIONER KEY: I don't know if I could --
20 and Mr. Poore could probably describe the process,
21 because it's already -- I think they've already
22 initiated it. And the difference is usually that
23 process just happens within the District, with
24 district teams. But with the support of the
25 Department experts, the in-resident experts, then my

1 view is it would enhance the work.

2 DR. HILL: So it's already happening; that's
3 what you're saying?

4 SUPT. POORE: That's my opinion. I don't -- and
5 I'm not trying to diminish your request. It's just
6 that I feel like we're already partnered with them
7 and the Commissioner's hands and staff are already
8 there. So --

9 COMMISSIONER KEY: What we're talking about
10 though, just to make sure we're clear, there is an
11 adoption cycle that takes place. The adoption cycle
12 for secondary I think occurred last year?

13 SUPT. POORE: Last year. Yes, sir.

14 COMMISSIONER KEY: And the adoption cycle for
15 elementary is happening currently. And that's a
16 routine thing that happens with the cycle of adopting
17 curriculum and purchasing it.

18 MS. ZOOK: And I do know that members of the
19 Learning Services staff have been on the ground
20 observing, and even those teachers who are trained,
21 they're not implementing or implementing with
22 fidelity, some of them. So that's why I felt like
23 that Learning Services working as a partner would be
24 helpful.

25 DR. HILL: I mean, you're -- everything rolling

1 out, you're just adding to what she would say?

2 SUPT. POORE: Yeah. I guess in my mind I'm not
3 saying that I don't agree with her idea, because I
4 actually think we actually have already engineered it
5 and already have it in place. So I feel like we're
6 already executing that with the Commissioner's help.
7 And Ms. Zook is correct; we also proactively or
8 collaboratively work to try to have Ms. Smith be in
9 some of the classrooms. And that's not a surprise to
10 me, what she just said, that there's some teachers
11 doing a better job with the RISE than others. And
12 that's a part of continued training that we need to
13 have for both administrators and for staff.

14 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Dean?

15 Okay. Mr. Williamson, anything? Dr. Moore?

16 So my -- I certainly don't have a principled
17 objection to the content here. What I do have
18 concerns about kind of goes back to both something
19 Mr. Ledbetter talked about earlier and then Ms.
20 Chambers' question. It is this language of
21 directive. I think that it is unnecessary, based on
22 the comments we've heard about the fact this
23 implementation is happening in partnership with the
24 leadership of the Department. I think it sets a
25 problematic precedent for what begins to turn into

1 micromanagement of the District's activities. I
2 think this is the Superintendent's job to get reading
3 right. We know the importance of it. And as I, you
4 know, think back to -- Ms. Zook and I are obviously
5 the only two folks who were here when takeover
6 occurred, and while I ended up on the other side from
7 Mr. Ledbetter on that decision I was thoroughly
8 concerned about that local school board getting out
9 of its lane into the work of the Superintendent. And
10 I think this is different than that, but feels quite
11 similar to that, and I think it's problematic.

12 I think also, to go back to Ms. Chambers' point,
13 we need to be thinking in terms of a holistic vision
14 for this district, rather than these piece-mill
15 approaches. Yes, is reading work a fundamental part
16 of any holistic vision? Of course. But I just have
17 that concern and I think that's worrisome because I
18 don't want -- I think it would not be good for -- if
19 this becomes a regular occurrence of micromanagement
20 of the District in this way by State Board actions.

21 MS. ZOOK: I think what you're calling
22 micromanagement might apply if it was a local board
23 because they deal more with policy, hiring the
24 superintendent, and letting go. But under 6-15-2916
25 we are directed by statute and law that if districts

1 are not demonstrating what needs to be done, if
2 they're a Level 5, that we are to do these things. A
3 local board has not got that same kind of directive.

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Any further
5 comments?

6 Why don't we do a roll-call on all these.

7 COMMISSIONER KEY: Okay.

8 Ms. Zook.

9 MS. ZOOK: Yes.

10 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Hill.

11 DR. HILL: No.

12 COMMISSIONER KEY: Mr. Williamson.

13 MR. WILLIAMSON: No.

14 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Chambers.

15 MS. CHAMBERS: No.

16 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. McFetridge.

17 MS. McFETRIDGE: No.

18 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Moore.

19 DR. MOORE: Yes.

20 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Newton.

21 MS. NEWTON: Yes.

22 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Dean.

23 MS. DEAN: No.

24 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Barth.

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Is it a tie?

1 COMMISSIONER KEY: No, 5-to-3.

2 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. It fails on a 5-to-3
3 vote.

4 MS. ZOOK: So we do not want any accountability
5 for making sure the District has a K-12 literacy
6 program? Is that --

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Is there --

8 MS. ZOOK: Is that what I'm hearing that my
9 board -- I'm talking to my board members.

10 CHAIRMAN BARTH: No. I think what you're
11 hearing is -- what I said -- I didn't vote, but what
12 I said was this is a basis of education and we expect
13 it to be happening. And I heard that it is happening
14 at this point in the way that your motion described.
15 That was my -- that was what I said with my comment.
16 But I'll let others speak to that.

17 MS. McFETRIDGE: Ms. Zook, I just feel very
18 confident in Mr. Poore. And they're already started
19 this process and this program, and I think we're
20 covered.

21 MS. ZOOK: Okay. I guess my point is if I'm
22 already doing something and somebody says you need to
23 do that, I'm going, "Yea, I'm halfway there because
24 I'm already doing it."

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. So I think --

1 MS. ZOOK: Anyway --

2 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Are there any other motions?

3 DR. HILL: Well, I don't know if there's a
4 motion, Mr. Chair, but I think the process for teams
5 and working with the Superintendent is for -- to
6 collaboratively see exactly -- for this board working
7 with him and the Commissioner to meet the goals and
8 objectives of what Ms. Zook and Ms. Newton, our
9 educators up here, have outlined as that. And let's
10 sit down and come together and see how we can make
11 sure that we're hitting those metrics based off the
12 goals and objectives that the Superintendent has set.
13 And if that is not taking place, then we give him
14 those directives in that sense and let him take that
15 back to his team and -- as they've been doing it;
16 then we come back and we support that. I just think
17 -- I'm not disagreeing that that needs to take place,
18 what you're saying, not at all, because we all know
19 the basic concept of reading is the foundation to
20 learning. I just don't want -- if this is his job
21 and this is what we're holding him accountable to do,
22 I think it's very important that we empower him with
23 the goals and objectives that have to be set, and he
24 follows. That's us, because -- to tell him these
25 three points of pressure around the ball and that he

1 maintains everything he needs to move these goals
2 down the field. That's just my belief as a board
3 member. And I think we should do this more
4 collaboratively, rather than directly.

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: I don't know what you just
6 said, but I think I agree with it.

7 DR. HILL: Hold the ball.

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: I got that.

9 All right. Are there other motions?

10 FUNDING MOTION

11 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Are there other
12 motions?

13 MS. ZOOK: Yes.

14 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Zook.

15 MS. ZOOK: And this again may or may not have
16 been done about reviewing the funding. And if it's
17 true that equal programs and equal teachers are not
18 being equally funded, or buildings -- if that's not
19 accurate, then there needs to be something done to
20 dissuade that from public opinion, whether that's a
21 PR kind of thing or whatever, if that would be
22 helpful for ADE Financial to work with -- where is
23 he? He disappeared. Oh, there you are. You changed
24 seats on me. No, huh-uh -- I was just -- would it be
25 helpful to you if ADE Financial worked with you to

1 dispel the notion that the finances are not being --
2 that there -- the perception by many is that it is a
3 subjective thing, not an objective thing.

4 SUPT. POORE: Well, first off, again, the work
5 that we do have -- I want to honor the work that's
6 already being done with the Commissioner and his
7 staff, and we had to work a lot with the Financial
8 Service group as we moved to eFinance. So when we
9 changed our system, you know, it took a lot of time
10 to collaborate. I'm very proud of our CFO, Kelsey
11 Bailey, and the work that he does, and I think the
12 Commissioner has a high degree of confidence in his
13 work as well. We bring in Mr. Bailey -- he's
14 probably the one employee that comes into the
15 Commissioner and I's one-on-one meetings the most
16 frequently, to be able to help address some of the
17 financial things or to share projections of where
18 we're going to go.

19 I think you're talking very specific though
20 about schools --

21 MS. ZOOK: PR.

22 SUPT. POORE: -- and the PR part. And to me,
23 I'm not sure -- to tell you -- I don't want to tell
24 you how to do this, but I don't think that
25 necessarily needs to be a motion. I hear what you're

1 saying and we can do -- I think we can work with ADE
2 to try to, you know, push that out more. And, again,
3 we just did push it out pretty hard within the
4 facility blueprint, but we will do it again to try to
5 make sure. And then we also need, when there's
6 questions like that that come to you as State Board
7 members, to get those to us. Because this one caught
8 me a little bit off-guard because I haven't had that
9 particular question. We'd love to try to address
10 that with individuals or with groups to try to better
11 tackle that problem.

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Commissioner.

13 COMMISSIONER KEY: We would be happy to bring
14 that -- to include that. Now the next quarterly
15 report would be due in March, but we're going to be
16 on the road I think in March with the State Board
17 meeting. So, you know, we'll have to determine if
18 y'all want to hear that when you're on the road or if
19 we want to bring it in April. But that can be
20 something we include in the next quarterly report,
21 that distribution or analysis of the distribution of
22 funds.

23 MS. ZOOK: Yeah. I'm not as concerned about us
24 being informed as the teachers and parents being
25 aware.

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Dr. Moore.

2 DR. MOORE: Just to second that, I don't think
3 it's known that Little Rock is in the top 25 in the
4 state of highest spending per student. And so how
5 are they communicating. Second to that, how are they
6 allowing their principals and teachers to understand
7 that as well, so when they do face challenges they
8 can determine whether it's a fiscal challenge or a
9 leadership challenge. And that's, I guess, personal,
10 but those are two things that often go hand-in-hand
11 when, in reality, they need to be separated.

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: So, Ms. Zook, are you
13 comfortable with that coming in the report?

14 MS. ZOOK: Yes.

15 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

16 MS. ZOOK: If the rest of the Board is.

17 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right.

18 SPECIAL EDUCATION AND DYSLEXIA MOTION

19 MS. ZOOK: Okay. I would like to move that we
20 have an analysis of the District's systems with
21 regard to special education and dyslexia, that the
22 Department's procedures from child find to referral
23 to evaluation to placement and the IEP development,
24 and that the -- that it's in full compliance with
25 IDEA and the Civil Rights laws. These laws'

1 initiatives were passed in 1978, and the dyslexia
2 laws complimented that. In the state they were
3 started in '13, updated in '15, and finalized with,
4 as the Senator calls it, with teeth in '17.

5 So I would love for the time to come when I'm
6 not getting several calls a week -- and not from the
7 advocates; they are there to advocate and work with,
8 they cannot discuss those children with me. But this
9 is coming directly from parents. There were parents
10 and teachers out in the hallway at the break, almost
11 a dozen, that came up and said, you know, "How can we
12 do this, and who do we need to turn to?" And that's
13 not okay; you know, it's just not okay.

14 And I guess as I make these motions then I'm
15 speaking from a district administrator point of view,
16 combined with a responsibility on this board, and all
17 I can do is make suggestions and make the motions.
18 And if I can't persuade or can't convince the Board
19 that that's important then, you know, I have done all
20 I can do. So that is my motion --

21 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

22 MS. ZOOK: And I --

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: So just get precise on the
24 motion.

25 MS. ZOOK: By the February board meeting that

1 I'd like an analysis of the implementation of the
2 special education laws and the dyslexia laws and the
3 compliance; the analysis of the different staff
4 members that have to do with that; and come to --
5 back to us with a report about where things need to
6 be shored up and where things are working fine. We
7 have terrific special ed. partners here that I'm sure
8 would work with you. And it likely won't be a
9 typical compliance because, you know, the law
10 changed; they're now looking for results, not
11 compliance, at the federal level. And the state I'm
12 sure would be happy --

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Zook, I'm not interrupting
14 you, but I just want to get clear on the motion
15 before -- I think you're starting to move into
16 argument, which is fine, but -- so the analysis
17 carried out by the Department?

18 MS. ZOOK: Yes.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Right, in the -- by -- and
20 reported back to us at our February State Board
21 meeting?

22 MS. ZOOK: Looking at people and processes.

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. So that's the motion.
24 Is there a second to that motion?

25 MS. McFETRIDGE: I'll second that.

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. So motion by Ms. Zook,
2 second by Ms. McFetridge.

3 Now I'll -- I think the question was to you in
4 terms of response on this item, and then we'll open
5 it up for other questions.

6 SUPT. POORE: You may want to consider -- and
7 Ms. Zook may not want to, but I will throw it out
8 that you may want to separate these two. And the
9 Commissioner may or may not have an opinion about
10 that in terms of two different types of review. And
11 the reason I bring that up is that I would welcome
12 the dyslexia review immediately and have no issues
13 with that. But the SPED review, we just completed
14 that in 2016, and now we have another one coming up
15 again in the next school year, 2019. So it is
16 already on-track to have -- and we were in a good
17 place on that. So that -- but you may be asking for
18 something different and I'm not necessarily totally
19 getting that possibly.

20 So, one, is I'd like to see if you'd be willing
21 to consider breaking them up. And the SPED to me
22 happens naturally with what the process is by ADE.

23 The final thing is when we do these reviews I
24 think it's probably a little unfair actually to the
25 Commissioner's staff and to the Little Rock staff to

1 think that everything -- all this can be done by
2 February. So, you know, the time that that takes to
3 do it thoroughly and do it right, with everything
4 else that people are also trying to do, you may need
5 to give a little bit more couch time or lead time to
6 let that study happen. Maybe it's a report to you in
7 February and then a full complete report two months
8 later. I don't know. I know there needs to be a
9 sense of urgency. I hope you're hearing me say "go
10 ahead, we'd love to see someone come in to do the
11 dyslexia group review right away." And so I'd just
12 throw that out for your consideration.

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Zook, any alterations to
14 the motion based on that?

15 MS. ZOOK: No. Having been a director of
16 special education and working with dyslexia and
17 implementation of that, and all the public law, the
18 people who work there should know this like off the
19 back of their hand. And I have a feeling that our
20 new special education director here, if he's coming
21 to the podium --

22 COMMISSIONER KEY: I asked him to come up so --
23 for the Board's sake and response to Mr. Poore.

24 Matt, if you could describe what a typical
25 review is. And then see if that is what, Ms. Zook,

1 you are speaking to. And if it's not, then how
2 deeper would you like for them to go?

3 MR. SEWELL: Matt Sewell, Department -- Arkansas
4 Department of Education.

5 Typically a review is going to consist of IEP
6 folder reviews, classroom observations, we'll meet
7 with the district special education leadership.
8 We'll also have the District perform an interim
9 program checklist that documents district-wide
10 compliance on specific areas, such as child find,
11 process for students who transfer to the district,
12 and licensed contract personnel or providers. We'll
13 also do a teacher information sheet that documents
14 current LEA employees, special education providers,
15 as well as reviewing their caseloads, and teacher
16 surveys to gain quantitative data on district
17 practices related to IEP implementation.

18 For us to -- it would take us a little while to
19 perform this process in the Little Rock School
20 District because it is such a large school district.

21 MS. ZOOK: And do you also look at the examiners
22 and the tests that they give and make sure that those
23 are in compliance with what you need for each of the
24 diagnoses?

25 MR. SEWELL: I'm not sure of the answer to that

1 question, but I could get that information to you.

2 MS. ZOOK: If we pass this, I would like that to
3 be a part of it.

4 MR. SEWELL: Okay.

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Dr. Moore?

6 DR. MOORE: Yes. And so your -- I know you
7 weren't there, but your division did that audit of
8 Little Rock School District last school year. Is
9 that correct?

10 MR. SEWELL: Yes. That was performed -- what
11 Dr. Poore shared with you guys is correct. That was
12 performed in 2016. We're on a four-year monitoring
13 cycle, and it would be done again in the 19-20 school
14 year, is when they're up for monitoring again.

15 DR. MOORE: Okay. And now is that in compliance
16 -- is it done by pieces or as a whole? They were
17 found in compliance in every area or --

18 MR. SEWELL: Are you asking me their past
19 results?

20 DR. MOORE: Yes.

21 MR. SEWELL: In their 2016 monitoring, they had
22 -- they were found in not compliance in three
23 different areas. They were provided with a
24 compliance action plan, and completed that.

25 DR. MOORE: Okay. And you followed up with

1 that?

2 MR. SEWELL: Yes. And a letter was sent to them
3 in May of '17, sharing with Dr. Poore that they had
4 completed those areas of noncompliance.

5 DR. MOORE: Okay. Thank you.

6 MS. ZOOK: So what do you think from the --
7 because you've been in a district as well as at the
8 state, what do you think the disconnect is between
9 the perceptions of regular classroom teachers,
10 parents, and y'all saying everything is okay, and
11 they're saying it's not?

12 MR. SEWELL: Ask me that question again. What
13 do I think the disconnect is?

14 MS. ZOOK: Yeah, the disconnect. Because it's
15 -- all of the children and their parents -- there may
16 be some that are perfectly happy. I think we had one
17 here today.

18 MR. SEWELL: Sure.

19 MS. ZOOK: But every child and every parent and
20 many of the teachers do not feel that the process and
21 the leadership from Central Office is there to help
22 them know what it is they need to do.

23 MR. SEWELL: I'm not sure I have enough
24 background information --

25 MS. ZOOK: I see Ms. Tyler in the back of the

1 room. She might can help you.

2 MR. SEWELL: Okay.

3 MS. ZOOK: He is new. I will, you know, give
4 him a break. So I don't know if she was in charge of
5 the department when the review of Little Rock School
6 District was done. What I'm hearing and what the
7 compliance report said was -- I'm hearing from
8 teachers, parents, and the older students, you know,
9 "I'm not getting what I need; they don't give me the
10 right test; they're not giving my students a test;
11 the IEP doesn't address." You know, and I hear it
12 often enough that I don't think it's a small minority
13 of people who are just not going to be happy period,
14 but I think it's pervasive. And if I'm mistaken,
15 great, I would love to be mistaken. But if I'm not,
16 I think we need to do something to assist Little Rock
17 School District in making sure that it's done
18 correctly.

19 As you know, both of you, it's been many, many
20 years that this law has been in effect with that.
21 And I don't think it's limited to dyslexia, but I
22 think the pushback is on special ed.

23 MS. TYLER: So did you have a specific question,
24 Ms. Zook, that you had asked?

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: If you could just identify

1 yourself for the record.

2 MS. ZOOK: I didn't know that you -- I thought
3 you came down to answer the question.

4 MS. TYLER: No, I'm sorry. Lisa Tyler, Learning
5 Services. And I didn't hear the question.

6 MS. ZOOK: Okay. When you go in to do the
7 compliance and results monitoring, and then you get
8 -- you ding them in three places, and then they fix
9 that, but then we still have hearings -- you know,
10 people bringing hearings -- a really disastrous one
11 this past year -- what is it that can be done to help
12 a district? Is it a personnel problem? Is it a
13 problem within each isolated building? Wherein lies
14 the problem that we can assist in getting this taken
15 care of?

16 MS. TYLER: And are you asking specifically not
17 like -- not providing appropriate assessments and
18 that sort of thing?

19 MS. ZOOK: That would be the beginning.

20 MS. TYLER: Okay. So when we would do a
21 compliance monitoring, we would look at like each
22 individual eligibility category a student might be
23 determined as a student needing an IEP under IDEA,
24 and they're all different in terms of the evaluation
25 components that are required.

1 MS. ZOOK: Right.

2 MS. TYLER: So when we go in we do check to make
3 sure that all of those components were there and that
4 they addressed all the eligibility criteria. If they
5 did not, then they would receive a finding and have
6 to complete a corrective action plan. I don't know
7 specifically, in terms of Little Rock's monitoring,
8 that those evaluation components were an issue or
9 they were not. But we're not looking at the detail
10 like the assessment, like if it was the most up-to-
11 date achievement test or that kind of things, if
12 that's what you're asking. So I'm not sure -- we'd
13 have to do a little bit more digging, Ms. Zook, to
14 see if there were -- if that was an issue with Little
15 Rock. I don't know if it was or not.

16 MS. ZOOK: Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Any other questions or
18 comments on this side, or Ms. Chambers?

19 Ms. McFetridge.

20 MS. McFETRIDGE: Mr. Poore, when is that SPED
21 report due? We heard 19-20 school year, but what --
22 in what month?

23 SUPT. POORE: That actually can be dictated by
24 the Department staff, as I understand it.

25 I will share that my experience in both Little

1 Rock and Bentonville is that staffs prepare for
2 months to get ready for those reviews to make sure
3 that they have -- they have boxes, so that they could
4 be easily accessed for the ADE staff. Now much of
5 that's now becoming more online type things. But, I
6 mean, staff really goes all out. It's a very intense
7 process when there's a review by the Department. And
8 if you ask folks in Springdale, they would tell you
9 the same thing; that they really gear up for when they
10 know that ADE is coming so that they can have all the
11 materials provided. There still are things, just
12 like there was in 2016, that -- they found three
13 areas. We did go to work to address those areas.
14 But it's a very thorough process.

15 And we're amenable -- if this were to start in
16 the beginning of the year or however you want to do
17 it, it just makes sense to do it in the calendar year
18 that it's already scheduled to be.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Chambers, anything?

20 MS. CHAMBERS: Dr. Barth, one last question for
21 Superintendent Poore on this issue. So reflecting on
22 my esteemed colleague Dr. Hill's response earlier,
23 which I understood perfectly -- he was really
24 commenting on I think the Board's role. We try so
25 hard to clarify our role in this entire process,

1 offering support, insuring accountability for the
2 institution we're reviewing, and our-self, but trying
3 really hard not to over-reach. And so on that last
4 point, is what -- Superintendent Poore, is what we
5 were planning to do anyway and the timeline we were
6 doing it on, was the gap between that and what Ms.
7 Zook is asking for -- I'm just trying to make sure I
8 understand the difference or the gap between the two.

9 SUPT. POORE: In theory, it would probably be at
10 a minimum of probably a seven-month gap. If the
11 Department chose to push it back for an entire year,
12 it could be a year gap. But the Commissioner could
13 dictate that to be earlier in the year, I'm positive.

14 COMMISSIONER KEY: Well, and that's why I was
15 trying to ascertain if the normal review is what
16 we're asking for or, you know, additional layers.
17 And, you know, that -- so that's why --

18 MS. ZOOK: It would be more of an audit than the
19 typical four-year review.

20 COMMISSIONER KEY: So deeper -- a deeper dive.
21 Okay. In that case we would have to look to see if
22 the cycle started over, if all the elements of the
23 routine review were met --

24 MS. ZOOK: But this would be in addition to, not
25 in place of.

1 COMMISSIONER KEY: In place of, okay. So in
2 that case then this is something that -- you know,
3 you're not really directing -- the Board is not
4 directing the District to do. I mean, it impacts the
5 District, but you're directing us to update the
6 systems analysis with a deeper dive. That's how I
7 understand it.

8 MS. ZOOK: Yeah. And I think it might be
9 helpful for Ms. Chambers and perhaps others -- in
10 your law book, under 6-15-2916 and 6-15-2917, the
11 things that are being proposed are not outside the
12 purview of the State Board members or the State Board
13 as an entirety. So I think looking into these -- you
14 know, from a District's point of view, the worst
15 thing that can happen is if we don't do these and
16 then you have to annex or consolidate or reconstitute
17 the entire district. So I think the things I'm
18 proposing are in an effort to be able to return the
19 district in whole to a locally elected school board
20 without having to go and find out none of this is
21 being taken care of, and so then we're at five years
22 and we have to do something drastic -- because I
23 certainly don't want to do anything drastic.

24 MS. NEWTON: Dr. Barth --

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yes, ma'am.

1 MS. NEWTON: And this might be a Commissioner
2 question. And I didn't pull my law book up, and I
3 should have. But is it part of our duty whenever we
4 have a Level 5 is to do a thorough systems analysis?
5 Is that part of what we're -- we are required to do?

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: (Nodding head up and down.)

7 MS. NEWTON: And so this would just be adding to
8 or making sure that we have done a thorough systems
9 analysis?

10 COMMISSIONER KEY: I would say that's correct,
11 Ms. Newton. And keep in mind, the law that's in
12 place now wasn't in place at the time --

13 MS. NEWTON: Sure.

14 COMMISSIONER KEY: -- the Board took the action.
15 So there are things that would be in place, like we
16 did with Pine Bluff; you know, the law is in place,
17 so a systems analysis was performed. So really
18 you're augmenting what -- you would be augmenting
19 what we do in the regular quarterly report with this
20 deep dive into special ed., into dyslexia services.

21 MS. NEWTON: So this would be making sure that
22 we are doing what we're required to do?

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: In that one area.

24 COMMISSIONER KEY: Yes.

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Is there further

1 comment or questions?

2 All right. Then we'll do a roll-call here.

3 Oh, Dr. -- oh, I'm sorry. Ms. Dean.

4 MS. DEAN: I just want to make sure I voice this
5 -- that it's not that I don't see the need for this,
6 for some of the things that you've brought up. My
7 concerns are along the same line as Dr. Hill and Ms.
8 Chambers have brought up, is the process. And I want
9 to make sure that we are going about doing what's
10 best for the children in the best way possible, and I
11 want to make sure that we are not overstepping
12 bounds, making sure that we're working together with
13 you, Mr. Poore. I think the term that was used,
14 which I liked, was the collaborative effort, and
15 that's what I think is going to be most productive is
16 a collaborative effort. And I understand the urgency
17 because we are dealing with children. Children don't
18 get do-overs. They're in their grade that year and
19 they move on. It just gives me pause about the
20 process. And in the process, community -- this is
21 about community and it's about what's best for our
22 children, what's best for our parents, what's best
23 for our stakeholders as a whole. And this is
24 something that I've learned in my almost 40 years of
25 life is it's about relationship. And as we take care

1 of our responsibilities on the Board, I just want to
2 make sure that we do it in a way that honors and
3 respects the relationships that are already in place.

4 So I'm very, very cautious about the decisions
5 that I make, to make sure that relationships aren't
6 damaged in the process. But in the end, as I'll
7 restate, we are all here for -- what I think we're
8 all here for is to make sure that the students and
9 the children of the state of Arkansas get the best
10 education that they possibly can. So I just want to
11 keep that in mind as we go on.

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. All right. Ready for a
13 roll-call? Okay.

14 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Zook.

15 MS. ZOOK: Yes.

16 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Hill.

17 DR. HILL: Yes.

18 COMMISSIONER KEY: Mr. Williamson.

19 MR. WILLIAMSON: Yes.

20 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Chambers.

21 MS. CHAMBERS: Yes.

22 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. McFetridge.

23 MS. McFETRIDGE: Yes.

24 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Moore.

25 DR. MOORE: Yes.

1 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Newton.

2 MS. NEWTON: Yes.

3 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Dean.

4 MS. DEAN: Yes.

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. I think that's 8-0.

6 Okay. Okay. Any more motions before us?

7 REORGANIZATION OF CENTRAL OFFICE MOTION

8 MS. ZOOK: My next motion is to -- this is for
9 the Board's benefit: it does say on 6-15-2916(f),
10 require reassignment of some or all of the
11 administrative, instructional, or support staff of
12 the public school. And that is part of our
13 responsibility as a State Board member when a
14 district is not moving as quickly and as efficiently
15 in that direction. And as you've heard today, the
16 perception is that we have not done anything. And
17 whether we should've done this sooner or whether we
18 want to do it now, that will be up to a vote of the
19 -- obviously the vote of the majority.

20 But I move to compel the Superintendent and the
21 ADE staff to develop a plan to reorganize or
22 reconstitute the Central Office administration,
23 including the elimination of the two Deputy
24 Superintendent positions, and then advertising and
25 hiring an Assistant to the Superintendent for

1 Instruction to oversee the K-12 view of, in
2 particular, the reading and the math. In my opinion,
3 this is needed to downsize or right-size and to make
4 clear the lines of authority. I get the impression
5 from --

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Zook, again, I'm not
7 cutting you off, but I just want to make clear on the
8 motion before --

9 MS. ZOOK: Okay. I want to make sure that the
10 Central Office gets reorganized and reconstituted,
11 including the elimination of the two Deputy
12 Superintendent positions, and that the Superintendent
13 work with ADE staff in making this decision.

14 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Is there a second?

15 DR. MOORE: May we discuss?

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Well, we need a second before
17 we discuss. If we don't, it dies for lack of a
18 second.

19 DR. MOORE: I'll second.

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. All right. So the
21 motion has a second. I want to give Ms. Zook -- do
22 you have anything else to add on?

23 MS. ZOOK: Yes. I would refer you back to, you
24 know, it's been almost four years. And as you've
25 heard from all of these people today, regardless of

1 whether they were teachers or parents or advocates or
2 community members, that they don't think that
3 anything has happened in a positive way; they don't
4 think they're as far along --

5 [AUDIENCE OUTBURSTS]

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Go ahead, Ms. -- excuse me.
7 Please, everybody has been very respectful on both
8 sides. So let's move forward.

9 MS. ZOOK: But they're saying that they are not
10 in as good shape since the State intervened as they
11 were before and they don't think that we've done
12 enough. And I heard them also say a lot of that is
13 unclear lines of communication, maybe a teacher who
14 needs some instructional leadership that she's not
15 getting at the building -- or he's not getting at the
16 building. And I think that we need to take a look at
17 that from the top down. And so that's the impetus of
18 my motion and it comes from 6-15-2916(f).

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Ms. -- Dr. Moore.
20 Excuse me.

21 DR. MOORE: Yes. I do want to ask a couple of
22 questions of Superintendent Poore, if that's okay.

23 I know you have very hardworking staff. How
24 many people do you have in your Central Office?

25 SUPT. POORE: I couldn't give you a number

1 specifically on that. I have -- on my cabinet group
2 -- I have a cabinet group that shrunk this year by
3 two. We have a total of seven cabinet members; that
4 includes my secretary/assistant. We do an executive
5 cabinet as well, and that then brings in an
6 additional five other individuals that are a part of
7 it. We have shrunk the Central Office as a part of
8 shrinking the District overall in terms of its
9 budget. Again, we've gotten over a \$50,000,000
10 budget reduction between the three superintendents.
11 Central Office encompasses more than just what you
12 see on 810 West Markham. We have an instructional
13 resource center; we also have a procurement office, a
14 facilities department, transportation. So there are
15 multiple units that make up Central Office.

16 DR. MOORE: Have you been able to compare your
17 Central Office structure to other districts
18 comparable in size? I know we often hear that the
19 district might be bloated in administration --
20 certified staff that aren't in the classroom.

21 SUPT. POORE: Yeah, we tried to look at that
22 kind of in -- and I don't have that available to you
23 because, you know, I really wasn't aware of how this
24 argument was going to go, I guess. So we could
25 always come back to you with that. But, you know,

1 there's -- Springdale is always brought up as a model
2 that is much slimmer and trimmer, and they are the
3 district that's close to us in terms of size. And I
4 can say that that's just a reality when you go look
5 at it on paper. But you go look at it in terms of
6 other urban metro areas, then I think we're pretty
7 comparable and we can always provide that data for
8 you.

9 DR. MOORE: Okay. Do you think if you were
10 starting from nothing you would build the same
11 structure that you have now, or would you like the
12 opportunity to restructure?

13 SUPT. POORE: Well, the -- you know, the very
14 few times in my career where I've gotten to just kind
15 of build as I want to -- and my moniker has always
16 been to come in and work with the people that are a
17 part of the district and then go escalate -- elevate
18 and escalate performance -- and I think we're doing
19 that. And I hope that the work that you're seeing in
20 what I shared earlier has meaning in terms of the
21 systems, and that's being done by these people. So
22 our Central Office crew, I'm -- you know, I'm not
23 saying that we're perfect; I'm not saying that
24 there's not an individual or two that may need to go.
25 But to me that is my call as the superintendent.

1 DR. MOORE: Thank you. And then -- I'm sorry, a
2 couple more just for the Board itself. I don't know,
3 Ms. Zook, if you want to put a timeline on this? If
4 they were to restructure, if they were to first
5 present a plan to the Commissioner and to the Board
6 or what that would look like and what kind of
7 accountability would you need?

8 MS. ZOOK: What I was thinking is that they
9 would then come back to us with that and -- because
10 any of these people would need to be notified before
11 May 1st, so I think it would only make sense that it
12 would be like February or March. I know we're not
13 going to be in Little Rock meeting as a State Board
14 in March; we will be in Pea Ridge and Decatur. But
15 -- so I hesitate to ask you to travel up there, even
16 though many times they travel down here. But so I
17 don't -- I know February is quick, but April seems
18 pretty late.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Any -- I'll start on
20 this end. I'll start with Ms. McFetridge and then
21 I'll go to the phone. Yeah.

22 MS. McFETRIDGE: I'm just a -- I'm a little
23 confused. Is this a study or is this a "we're going
24 to do this," we are going to rearrange everything?

25 MS. ZOOK: I want them to bring to us their

1 recommendation of a reorganized, reconstituted
2 Central Office.

3 MS. McFETRIDGE: And if they find there's no
4 need for that?

5 MS. ZOOK: That might happen.

6 MS. McFETRIDGE: Okay. All right. Gotcha.

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: So, well, just to clarify that.
8 If they bring back a reorganization that you don't
9 like, what -- but it would be a separate -- it would
10 be a vote on whether to approve or disapprove that?

11 MS. ZOOK: Yes.

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. I just wanted to
13 clarify.

14 MS. McFETRIDGE: Yeah. Thank you. That's where
15 I was confused.

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yeah. Thank you.

17 Ms. Chambers, anything?

18 MS. CHAMBERS: Based on that, by what measure
19 will we know if the recommendation that comes back is
20 right or successful?

21 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Was that a -- what was the
22 nature of that question? Was it directed to somebody
23 or to the Board?

24 MS. CHAMBERS: It just gets back to -- I
25 personally am not in possession of half of the

1 information that it sounds like Ms. Zook is, that
2 would give rise to the question which is if the
3 Central Office is organized the way it should be. It
4 feels, at least on the surface, over-reaching on the
5 part of the Board, unless we have a specific reason
6 or specific yardstick by which we're going to come
7 back and say, "Okay, this is working now." I don't
8 -- I didn't know that it wasn't working, so I'm
9 trying to figure out how we'll know if it is working
10 differently in the future. So I guess I'd direct
11 that to maybe Ms. Zook or Commissioner Key or
12 Superintendent Poore, if he wants to speak to it.

13 MS. ZOOK: Okay. I'll address it first. I
14 think in part my reason for this is there are people
15 at Central Office now who have been there since
16 before the State intervened, and they have presided
17 over schools that are still floundering, schools
18 where students are not making the same progress that
19 they should based on their own needs; the fact that
20 we still have secondary and elementary schools that
21 are D and F schools. And it would seem to be that
22 either those people are not effective at their jobs
23 or they -- it needs to be a different kind of line
24 report.

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Ms. Chambers, did that

1 answer your question?

2 MS. CHAMBERS: Well, not exactly. But I do
3 think it gets at the broader conversation we've been
4 having all day, which is, you know, what's the role
5 of the State Board right now in this situation in
6 terms of state control and what's the broader
7 strategy or plan for Little Rock. If we had a
8 blueprint or a plan, I think we'd have a better sense
9 what the Central Office should look like and how it
10 should operate. So we're contemplating that
11 apparently an interim Central Office should bridge
12 between now and when there is local control. I think
13 I'm just talking out-loud or thinking out-loud. But
14 if anybody has any additional insight on why that
15 would be the right thing for us to do right now, I'd
16 sure appreciate hearing it.

17 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Ms. Newton, any
18 comments or questions?

19 MS. NEWTON: I have a question, probably
20 somebody from the Department. If the Teacher Fair
21 Dismissal were to pass later, would that not cover
22 the people in the Central Office if changes need to
23 be made?

24 COMMISSIONER KEY: It would cover -- my
25 understanding of -- yeah, those who -- because Little

1 Rock, you have the PNA. You have members who are
2 supervisory -- administrators who are supervisory in
3 nature -- the PNA does not cover them as defined by
4 the most recent changes -- that are responsible for
5 evaluating others. So there -- I'm not sure exactly
6 without having, you know, the HR org chart, I guess,
7 knowing who would be affected by what. But I will
8 say what, you know, Mr. Poore and I have talked
9 about. And what I've asked him to at least
10 conceptualize is as we look at the calendar for
11 moving back to local control -- you know, one of the
12 things that has been an element in past control --
13 state control situations is what creates the best
14 foundation for future success moving forward. And if
15 a restructuring were -- you know, what would a
16 Central Office organization look like that would best
17 meet the needs of a -- of students in a district of
18 this size in this setting. That is a conversation
19 that we've had of, you know, what this -- what could
20 that look like -- nothing on paper, just kind of
21 conversations that we've had. So, you know, that --
22 if that's what this is, then I think it's an
23 appropriate conversation. I hesitate on getting into
24 certain people. That's where my hesitation comes in,
25 understanding though that -- you know, the concerns

1 that Ms. Zook brings, from 2014, and the
2 conversations that were going on then.

3 But I would just say that, you know, if Mr.
4 Poore has an idea of what that 21st century Central
5 Office organization looks like, and he has a chance
6 to maybe create that and look at it -- and maybe this
7 board adopts it, maybe it's adopted in the future --
8 but I think that's something -- that is something
9 that I trust him to create. And if we want to review
10 that -- I would review it anyway just in my role. If
11 the Board wanted to review that, then y'all would
12 have the -- y'all have the authority to request that.

13 MS. NEWTON: So could this be something that you
14 and Mr. Poore work out and take it that way, or does
15 it need Board action?

16 COMMISSIONER KEY: You have the authority, I
17 mean, to do that.

18 MS. NEWTON: I understand we have the authority.
19 I'm just asking do we --

20 COMMISSIONER KEY: And I guess it means do --
21 you know, do you feel like that you need to compel it
22 to happen. And that's the factor that really y'all
23 are going to weigh here with this action.

24 CHAIRMAN BARTH: But just to follow-up, if I
25 may, Ms. Newton. If we don't take action, and he

1 brings you a reorganization plan and you approve it,
2 we don't need to act for that to have happened;
3 correct?

4 COMMISSIONER KEY: That would be the case. Yes.

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

6 MS. NEWTON: Mr. Poore, is a reorganization plan
7 even on your radar?

8 SUPT. POORE: We have been exploring two
9 different things that we have to give consideration
10 to -- and I'm not going to go into those things
11 because I'm very uncomfortable with how this is being
12 discussed. Because there's individuals in here that
13 didn't know this was going to happen and it's just
14 unfair and it's wrong -- and they're two really good
15 people. So I -- we are always looking to how to
16 improve our delivery. And we've worked even with
17 another foundation to assist us because as we do
18 budget reduction how can we do some support --
19 because we've got a heck of a thing to try to go
20 deliver on our blueprint, the community blueprint.
21 And so we've looked at that to get maybe support from
22 a foundation. That's -- had good conversation. That
23 could lend itself to some restructuring. But, you
24 know, the people that I have working with me right
25 now -- if you had me go evaluate my cabinet right

1 now, there would be a high level of satisfaction of
2 the people that I have working with me and that are
3 doing the work day-in and day-out, and I can't say
4 that strong enough.

5 MS. NEWTON: Okay. Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Mr. Hill? Ms. Dean?

7 Okay. Dr. Moore?

8 DR. MOORE: Yeah. I just wanted just to further
9 elaborate. I'm hearing two conversations. One is
10 about personnel, and that's one issue. The other
11 about -- is about how the Central Office is
12 structured: what jobs need to be there and what jobs
13 don't -- not the people of the jobs, but the actual
14 job itself; and is that job impacting student
15 achievement; is that job pushing the District forward
16 -- and if not, does Mr. Poore have the flexibility to
17 rearrange that job and let it go -- not necessarily
18 even that person, but that job.

19 And I think these are two different things that
20 we can -- we separate and -- if we would, like, give
21 him the -- not the mandate, but the move-along to
22 figure out what jobs need to be in place in that
23 Central Office to effectively run the district.

24 SUPT. POORE: Well, I will say that the
25 Commissioner has been extremely supportive of being

1 able to have conversations and talk about, you know,
2 whatever we're trying to do, whether it's in
3 principal selection or with intermediary positions,
4 of talking about it. And those things all get hashed
5 out just like I would if it was a Board of Education;
6 I call him, like I did when I was in Bentonville or
7 Colorado Springs or Denver, to be able to say,
8 "Here's people that we're considering, here are the
9 candidates for these positions on the selection
10 process." But then there's also been discussions and
11 conversations, as he shared, about, you know, what do
12 we do in terms of some of our future actions. And I
13 believe that's my role, my job.

14 CHAIRMAN BARTH: And you feel like you have the
15 flexibility to do your job right now in this regard?

16 SUPT. POORE: I do.

17 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Thanks.

18 All right. We have a motion and a second.

19 Any further discussion?

20 If not, we'll --

21 Ms. McFetridge.

22 MS. McFETRIDGE: Can I hear that motion again?
23 It's been a few minutes.

24 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yeah.

25 DR. HILL: Yeah, it's two different things.

1 MS. McFETRIDGE: Yeah.

2 CHAIRMAN BARTH: What's that?

3 DR. HILL: She was saying it's two different --

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Well, I believe the motion is
5 on the floor.

6 DR. HILL: Okay. What was that?

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: And, Ms. Zook, if you'll
8 correct me -- this is what I believe it to be -- that
9 by I think the April meeting is what you ended up
10 saying, the April meeting?

11 MS. ZOOK: February, if possible; April, if not.

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Before May 1st, is that
13 -- I believe you emphasized that date.

14 MS. ZOOK: Six weeks before May 1st.

15 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. So a report on the
16 reorganization of the -- a vision for reorganization
17 of the Central staff would come to this board for its
18 consideration. Is that the -- is that a summation of
19 that?

20 MS. ZOOK: Right. And the basis is that the
21 State Board is -- may require reassignment of some or
22 all of the administrative, instructional, and support
23 staff. You know, I think the concern here is we are
24 not that long in a child's life from having to either
25 return the district, annex the district, consolidate

1 the district, or reconfigure the entire district.
2 And Mr. Poore has been there over two years; there
3 was a superintendent before him; we've had two
4 different Commissioners. And I personally want to be
5 at the point where in the exit plan that we can
6 return the District to locally elected board members
7 and local control. I don't see that we have moved in
8 that direction quickly enough and therefore, that is
9 why I made these motions today, is to speed that
10 along. You know, it's like I say, all I can do is
11 make the motion.

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. I'll just -- you know,
13 if Mr. Poore's answer to my last question had been
14 no, he doesn't have the flexibility, then I would've
15 -- I think I'd have a different consideration. But
16 at this moment I don't think Mr. Poore is perfect,
17 but I think Mr. Poore still has my confidence and I
18 do want to reiterate my confidence in his leadership
19 in this district to the greatest degree possible.

20 DR. HILL: Can I --

21 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yes.

22 DR. HILL: But did I understand that Mr. Poore
23 said that he works with the Commissioner and that
24 they could bring us a plan to the Board? Is that --
25 did I not understand that right? Is that right,

1 Commissioner, that he could submit a plan to you and
2 you could share it with the Board -- is that right --
3 the reorganization?

4 COMMISSIONER KEY: Without the motion?

5 DR. HILL: Yes. Yes, uh-huh.

6 COMMISSIONER KEY: At your request, yeah, I
7 mean, that can be done. But that's assuming there
8 was -- there would be a plan, I guess, and at what
9 point. I don't know when that -- when he would be
10 ready to make steps towards that, because, as I said,
11 we had conceptual conversations about it but nothing
12 firm. If that's something you-all wanted to get when
13 it was available, yes, we'd bring it and show it to
14 you.

15 DR. HILL: Could he answer that?

16 COMMISSIONER KEY: I'd be happy for him to.

17 SUPT. POORE: Coach Hill, Dr. Hill, yes, sir.
18 You know, when you do anything that changes a little
19 bit of the dynamics, first you do -- involve your
20 superior, the person that supervises you, and try to
21 get them to -- make sure that they're going to be
22 agreeable to the plan. And then, secondly, you know,
23 it's typical that a superintendent, especially on the
24 highest level positions -- sometimes those positions
25 are just selected by the superintendent and they're

1 very hand-picked, and say, "Hey, I want to come in,"
2 or they go through a process where they're vetted.
3 So that kind of depends a little bit.

4 I don't have a problem that -- you know,
5 whatever we do in terms of reorganization to make
6 that public to all of you. I think that may be a
7 question. So that's almost like a local board would
8 too, that you would receive it at the same time the
9 Commissioner -- after he vets it with me and he looks
10 at it and says, "Okay, now I'm going to go share this
11 with the seven or the nine of you before it becomes
12 public." I don't have a problem with that. I don't.
13 I don't -- I do have a problem with telling me who
14 and when to hire/fire.

15 DR. HILL: So, Superintendent -- sorry. So it
16 was just -- you could bring us an infrastructure, an
17 organizational chart back to him saying this is based
18 on the review of research saying other districts this
19 size, this is what -- you know, what she'd asked for,
20 and we'd have that information. And how long would
21 it take for you to produce that document --

22 SUPT. POORE: Well --

23 DR. HILL: -- based on everything else you have
24 going?

25 SUPT. POORE: Well, you know, we have some

1 things that we're doing that we're looking at in
2 terms of some restructure. We have a budget
3 reduction to do as well. So, you know, some of those
4 things are just in -- very much in concept.

5 And the other thing that I want to share again
6 is I don't look at our current delivery as being
7 broken. We've had to make some adjustments. Mr.
8 Burton is a good example of having to double-up and
9 he does now all secondary schools because we
10 eliminated a position through a resignation and
11 didn't rehire for a deputy superintendent. So we
12 shrunk our central administration. And that's not
13 atypical of a district our size to have just two
14 people, one running the elementary and one running
15 the 6-12. So some of this will come through budget
16 reductions, some will come through things that we
17 know we want to do to improve our performance, and a
18 little bit of it will be based on budget reductions.
19 Another piece might be based on requested support
20 that we're trying to get from some outside groups.

21 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Are you good?

22 DR. HILL: Yes.

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. All right. Let's move
24 to a roll-call on this motion.

25 Is everybody clear on the motion?

1 Okay.

2 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Zook.

3 MS. ZOOK: Yes.

4 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Hill.

5 DR. HILL: No.

6 COMMISSIONER KEY: Mr. Williamson.

7 MR. WILLIAMSON: No.

8 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Chambers.

9 MS. CHAMBERS: No.

10 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. McFetridge.

11 MS. McFETRIDGE: No.

12 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Moore.

13 DR. MOORE: Yes.

14 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Newton.

15 MS. NEWTON: No.

16 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Dean.

17 MS. DEAN: No.

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. The vote is 2 in favor,
19 6 opposed. And so that motion fails.

20 ATTENDANCE ZONE MOTION

21 CHAIRMAN BARTH: I'd invite any other motions.

22 MS. ZOOK: I have another motion to act
23 specifically in redrawing the attendance zones and
24 establishing feeder patterns, which I think will help
25 with the blueprint that they have drawn, and which

1 will also be advantageous to the proposed Little Rock
2 blueprint, and in compliance with the Covington-Key
3 settlement.

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Is there a second?

5 [MOMENT OF SILENCE]

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: That motion fails for lack of a
7 second.

8 MS. ZOOK: Okay.

9 PINNACLE VIEW MOTION

10 MS. ZOOK: And I move that the Pinnacle View
11 include a 9th grade starting in the 19-20 school
12 year, and to assure those families that they will
13 have high school opportunities whether it's through
14 the creative things that the CAB is discussing or
15 whether it's through action of this board.

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Motion is to create 9th grade
17 at Pinnacle View in the 19-20 school year. Correct?

18 MS. ZOOK: Yes. And that actually passed the
19 CAB last night.

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Is there a second?

21 MS. NEWTON: Can I ask a question?

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: We need a second if we're going
23 to have any discussion on this. You can ask a
24 clarifying question, point-of-order.

25 MS. NEWTON: Can I ask a clarifying question

1 then?

2 CHAIRMAN BARTH: You can. I think you're trying
3 to figure out if you want to second it or not maybe.

4 MS. NEWTON: Yeah. If the CAB approved it, is
5 there any need in us --

6 MS. ZOOK: I think just to reinforce with them
7 because they are not elected; they are appointed.
8 And I think that to have the impetus of the State
9 Board saying "yes, we think this is a good idea for
10 this district."

11 MS. NEWTON: So we would just be affirming what
12 the community asked for?

13 MS. ZOOK: Right.

14 MS. NEWTON: I'll second it.

15 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. We have a motion and a
16 second.

17 Mr. Poore, would you like to speak to it?

18 SUPT. POORE: Thank you. You know, the
19 recommendation was sent and it is in a public format,
20 I believe as of 3:00 today; so 3:00, the board packet
21 to the Commissioner. It's our normal December board
22 packet was sent to the Commissioner. It does include
23 the community blueprint recommendation and it
24 includes every recommendation and motion that the
25 Community Advisory Board worked through. It also

1 provides all the supplementary documents that
2 occurred to lead up to the decision, which included,
3 you know, everything from the five community meetings
4 to the capturing of all those meetings on video,
5 having all the notes captured there, to then having a
6 survey at the end of those five meetings, then the
7 new proposal -- the way that the CAB voted on that.
8 And then the last piece will be the survey, which
9 won't be linked in until, we hope, this weekend for
10 the Commissioner to review as well.

11 So this has been a very thorough community
12 process. But I can tell you also that there are
13 community members that don't think it was thorough
14 enough. Okay.

15 So if you look at it in terms of now adding this
16 in into your mix of saying "we're going to get
17 involved in it," without having been a part of all
18 this, I'm not sure. We already have it down for
19 Pinnacle View to -- the recommendation from the
20 administration and accepted by the CAB was to open up
21 with a 9th grade group next year, 2019-20, to have a
22 taskforce that will -- it could be a taskforce that
23 extends its time, or two separate taskforces where
24 one taskforce will work just on how you market to get
25 kids in there, because we're behind -- okay; second

1 thing is how do you create the programming that would
2 come in for the school in 2019. A second part of
3 that taskforce, or a different taskforce, would be
4 what do you go do on out to create options for the
5 students in the northwest. And Mr. Pickering sent
6 that out to his community on Monday of, you know,
7 where this looks like it's headed and that we're
8 going to need to have people involved in the
9 taskforce. There will be parents that will be
10 involved with that, our own staff, and I don't know
11 whether the Commissioner will have personnel in that
12 group or not. But we've done that legwork already
13 and had it approved, and it's now on the desk of the
14 Commissioner, which I think is the appropriate way
15 for something like this to move forward.

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. McFetridge?

17 MS. McFETRIDGE: I'm good.

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Any further comments or
19 questions on this side? Ms. Chambers, on the phone?

20 MS. CHAMBERS: No. No questions. Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

22 COMMISSIONER KEY: If I may, Dr. Barth --

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Commissioner.

24 COMMISSIONER KEY: The only thing I would -- how
25 did you phrase that, Ms. Zook?

1 MS. ZOOK: I move that the Pinnacle View include
2 a 9th grade in the facility and insure those families
3 of some process of adding a grade per year, whether
4 it's a written agreement or creating an agreement
5 that the taskforce will come up with or -- at that
6 facility itself.

7 COMMISSIONER KEY: Okay. So given the process,
8 I would just ask if it might be appropriate, rather
9 than it being a directive that it be a resolution of
10 support for the work of the Community Advisory Board
11 with regard to their direction on Pinnacle View.

12 MS. ZOOK: I can do that.

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. So important -- and this
14 is an important distinction. You are pulling back
15 the directive and instead, it is a resolution of
16 support for this process finish that is underway at
17 the moment?

18 MS. ZOOK: Yes.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: And that's a second -- that is
20 seconded?

21 MS. NEWTON: Yes.

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Mr. Poore.

23 SUPT. POORE: The only thing that I would ask,
24 because I see where you're going, is that -- you
25 know, if you just look at Pinnacle and you don't look

1 at the rest of the district -- now the second part of
2 it is that if you're going to look at the rest of the
3 district -- have you looked at the rest of the
4 district, have you reviewed the plan. So that may
5 also weigh-in on how you look at this. Because if
6 you haven't been engaged in it, you know, then that
7 makes it a more challenging vote for you on this.

8 And so I like the resolution idea. I think that
9 you need to -- if you're going to go there though,
10 you've got to go the big district, and then have you
11 looked at the big district in terms of the plan that
12 is coming forward.

13 MS. ZOOK: I think the courts ordered you to --
14 in the agreement, in the Covington-Key, to do the
15 redrawing in all of the district. So I think that
16 was covered there.

17 SUPT. POORE: Not true, really. The boundary
18 adjustment is only for the high school as a part of
19 the lawsuit settlement. But we will have multiple
20 other boundary adjustments that need to take place --

21 MS. ZOOK: Because of your K-8 schools.

22 SUPT. POORE: -- because of the K-8 schools.
23 And that's not atypical. But those things would all
24 begin with a community process again that would start
25 in the summer, this coming summer, to have it

1 completed by -- before Christmas, because that's when
2 parents start to make choices. And you also have to
3 have all those things set-up because high school
4 registration falls next, in February. So we do have
5 a timing piece on this, and we shared that within our
6 community meetings that boundary adjustments will
7 need to take place, not just because of the lawsuit
8 but because of other elements that will impact some
9 of our elementary schools.

10 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. You've heard
11 comments from --

12 Dr. Moore.

13 DR. MOORE: Yes, just to clarify. So are we
14 affirming the whole report or just this segment of
15 it?

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: The motion only speaks to the
17 --

18 MS. ZOOK: Pinnacle View.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Pinnacle View. I think Mr.
20 Poore's comment is that we're not -- we haven't
21 looked at the whole report. And that's where I would
22 end up, is that I think there's nothing problematic
23 about this; it's clear that the process is working.
24 And I hearken back to my initial comment about us
25 getting involved in the governance of a district in

1 the way that I think is an over-reach and sets some
2 problematic precedence. I'm not -- because it is a
3 resolution, it's certainly not as troubling as the
4 first motion, in my view. But it -- but I still
5 think we should veer away from this, personally.

6 Dr. Moore, anything?

7 DR. MOORE: No.

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Ms. Dean.

9 MS. DEAN: I echo that sentiment. This feels --
10 it feels premature.

11 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Oh, Ms. Hyatt is here. I
12 haven't been chastised all day.

13 MS. HYATT: No. I hate these "uh-oh, wait till
14 you see me."

15 Mary Claire Hyatt, Arkansas Department of
16 Education.

17 If you're going to go the resolution way, which
18 I think we're there, we need Ms. Zook to withdraw her
19 motion since there was a motion and a second. So I
20 may be a little confused of exactly where you are.
21 But if you are talking about the resolution and
22 that's been decided, Ms. Zook needs to withdraw her
23 motion.

24 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Because it's an --
25 that's an action item and a resolution is not an

1 action item; correct?

2 MS. HYATT: Yes. And because there was a
3 second, and so it's on the floor.

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

5 MS. HYATT: Thanks.

6 COMMISSIONER KEY: Just -- Mary Claire, I
7 understood her to amend -- to amend the motion to be
8 a resolution rather than a directive.

9 MS. HYATT: And she can do that. It just --
10 from where I was it was a little bit unclear. And so
11 --

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

13 MS. HYATT: -- if you want to amend, that's
14 fine. Or if you're -- so --

15 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

16 MS. HYATT: Just be clear.

17 CHAIRMAN BARTH: So maybe my -- the fault is
18 with me. I just want to be really clear that it is
19 now, as amended, a resolution, seconded
20 appropriately, no longer the directive that was the
21 initial motion. Okay?

22 MS. HYATT: Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. I think we're ready
24 to move to a roll-call.

25 Oh, Ms. Zook?

1 MS. ZOOK: I didn't know -- I thought she said
2 we didn't have to take a vote on it as a resolution?
3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: We do have to take -- yes, we
4 have to take a vote.
5 MS. ZOOK: Okay.
6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yeah.
7 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Zook.
8 MS. ZOOK: Yes.
9 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Hill.
10 DR. HILL: Yes.
11 COMMISSIONER KEY: Mr. Williamson.
12 MR. WILLIAMSON: No.
13 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Chambers.
14 MS. CHAMBERS: No.
15 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. McFetridge.
16 MS. McFETRIDGE: No.
17 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Moore.
18 DR. MOORE: No.
19 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Newton.
20 MS. NEWTON: Yes.
21 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Dean.
22 MS. DEAN: No.
23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. That motion fails,
24 3 votes for, 5 votes against.
25 MS. ZOOK: So we don't support what the CAB is

1 trying to do in the district?

2 HALL HIGH SCHOOL MOTION

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Let's move to the final motion,
4 if there is a final motion.

5 MS. ZOOK: Okay. It has to do with Hall High
6 School reconstitution and reorganization.

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. So that was a
8 directive that Hall High be -- and you were not clear
9 about the scope, the shape of that, but there would
10 be a full reconstitution of Hall High?

11 MS. ZOOK: Yes.

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Did you have a date certain on
13 that just to --

14 MS. ZOOK: I would like all of this back in
15 February, but if March is better --

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. All right.

17 MS. ZOOK: And to think broadly. Don't think,
18 gosh, we've got Forest Heights, so let's go to Hall.
19 Think of things that would make people want to come
20 to Hall like people used to love to come to Hall.

21 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. So is everybody clear on
22 the motion?

23 Is there a second?

24 DR. HILL: Can I hear the motion again?

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yeah. So I'll restate it and

1 see if I get it right, just for the record. The
2 motion is to return to this Board with a plan for
3 reconstitution of Hall High by no later than --

4 MS. ZOOK: I think for the benefit of parents it
5 has to be February, because they're going to make
6 decisions about where their children go to school.

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. So that it would return
8 to us by February. And it would go into effect in
9 the 19-20 school year?

10 MS. ZOOK: Uh-huh.

11 CHAIRMAN BARTH: That's the motion.

12 Everybody clear on it?

13 Is there a second?

14 MS. NEWTON: You have to second to ask
15 questions; right?

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Unless it's a clarifying
17 question to get you to decide whether you want to
18 make the second or not.

19 MS. NEWTON: Yeah. Can the process of how --
20 how are we going to -- how are we going to get there,
21 I guess is my question on that.

22 MS. ZOOK: Well, my suggestion --

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: I think I'm not clear on your
24 --

25 MS. NEWTON: How -- who and how and -- how is

1 the process --

2 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Who is it directed --

3 MS NEWTON: -- going to be figured it out?

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Who is it directed at.

5 MS. NEWTON: The Commissioner or --

6 MS. ZOOK: Yeah. My -- yes, I had mentioned
7 that this morning. But I thought it would work best
8 with the Superintendent, the Commissioner, the
9 current principals at Forest Heights, Henderson and
10 Hall, because both of those -- if the kids stayed in
11 the public school, both of those feed Hall. And so,
12 you know, that's all. Plus we have a very successful
13 principal at Forest Heights, we have a brand-new
14 principal at Henderson, and we have a -- just two
15 years in the district principal. So they have
16 outside experience that they can come in and work to
17 make suggestions or brainstorm. And I'm sure those
18 communities -- those principals are in touch with
19 their communities, so they can find out what is it
20 that would make Hall a place where people wanted to
21 go to high school. We have a lady here who did send
22 her child to Hall and they're -- and she's very
23 pleased, you know. So what can she and we do to make
24 that happen for more families.

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Is there a second to

1 this motion?

2 MS. NEWTON: I'm going to second so we can
3 discuss. How about that?

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: That's totally great. Okay.

5 So there is a motion, there's a second.

6 Do you have a question or comment to get it
7 started?

8 MS. NEWTON: Yes. Mr. Poore, would you talk
9 about what's -- what's in the works with the CAB and
10 you've kind of got ideas of and --

11 SUPT. POORE: Sure. I want to take you back out
12 just a little bit. So we're down on probably ground
13 level on this issue and I'm going to take you out
14 quite a ways. And so one of the things that you have
15 to consider when you're doing transition -- so we
16 have in this plan moving the K-8s, we have opening up
17 of Southwest High School -- Little Rock Southwest
18 High. And all those things take transitions and they
19 take thoughtful transitions and they take time where
20 people need to work together to make those
21 transitions as seamless as possible. Hall High
22 School, one of its trigger points that ties with
23 Little Rock Southwest High is that it will lose
24 approximately 300 students in the 2020 school year
25 and they'll go -- because they're getting transported

1 up right now into Hall. So they'll now have their
2 home school where their home is, at Southwest High.
3 That trigger -- and that's one of the reasons why in
4 the lawsuit we said we were amenable to making a
5 boundary adjustment but to do it at the same time
6 that you have this student shift.

7 The CAB -- now kind of I'm going to start to
8 just go a little bit -- now drop down in my
9 elevation. The Community Advisory Board did ask the
10 administration to come back and explore other
11 possibilities with Hall and enhance the current
12 administration recommendation. The current
13 administration recommendation is to do the following:

14 One is to make sure that we adjust our boundary
15 for the high school, because that was a part of our
16 legal settlement. So we know we want to do that.
17 And that would not take place until 2020, because you
18 want to do those boundary adjustments all at one
19 time. You don't want to move them over and over and
20 over, because that's really tough.

21 Second thing is as a part of the recommendation
22 was to continue to elevate and move forward on the
23 innovation plan that is a part of Hall High. The
24 innovation plan really has impacted our 9th and 10th
25 graders at Hall. And if you look at it, Hall was one

1 place out of all of our high schools that got a
2 year's worth of growth that fits into that innovation
3 plan. But we need to work in more depth on the next
4 level of the innovation plan, and that's what we know
5 we're going to want to work on over the transition
6 time.

7 The third thing that's a part of the
8 recommendation is that we need a real PR campaign to
9 assist and help with Hall being able to share that
10 its graduation rate is going up, its discipline
11 actions and issues are dropping, facilities have been
12 upgraded and improved there. We need to do that PR
13 campaign and it was going to need to be very directed
14 at some of those feeder patterns. That would start
15 immediately, the PR communication thing.

16 But all the movement about Hall or moving
17 towards it would really be set up for the 2020 year
18 as it loses students and we change the boundary.
19 And, again, the CAB asked for more time. It's the
20 one item that did not get formally approved at our
21 meeting that occurred on Tuesday.

22 MS. NEWTON: So what was the -- what was their
23 ask?

24 SUPT. POORE: Their ask is to try to do more to
25 make Hall even more attractive, that they asked the

1 administration to come back with recommendations to
2 make it even more attractive than what we -- those
3 three things that I shared.

4 MS. NEWTON: So what are you thinking, I mean,
5 and when do you have to have that recommendation
6 back?

7 SUPT. POORE: Well, they were pretty aggressive
8 too, so they said they wanted it by our meeting in
9 January that occurs in the latter part of January.
10 So that's when that recommendation will come back. I
11 have not had any time to think about it because --

12 MS. NEWTON: I understand that. Yeah.

13 SUPT. POORE: -- as soon as we finished that,
14 then I started to get ready for this. And so I
15 haven't put any thought to that at this point, to be
16 real honest with you.

17 MS. NEWTON: But it is on your radar to look at
18 what needs to change this next school year at Hall?

19 SUPT. POORE: Well, some of those things could
20 happen immediately. The innovation plan had already
21 been approved to be a 9 through 12, but we need to go
22 in more depth on that. So, yes, that can happen.
23 The PR campaign can happen quickly. The boundary
24 adjustment, wait till 2020. What else might develop
25 based on what we come up with or what the CAB, you

1 know, ultimately suggests -- and then that all has to
2 come back to the Commissioner too as one final
3 component of approval. So we still have some
4 legwork.

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Y'all ready to
6 move?

7 Ms. Chambers, anything before we move to a vote?

8 MS. CHAMBERS: No. No questions. Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Let's do a roll-
10 call.

11 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Zook.

12 MS. ZOOK: Yes.

13 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Hill.

14 DR. HILL: Yes.

15 COMMISSIONER KEY: Mr. Williamson.

16 MR. WILLIAMSON: Yes.

17 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Chambers.

18 MS. CHAMBERS: No.

19 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. McFetridge.

20 MS. McFETRIDGE: No.

21 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Moore.

22 DR. MOORE: Yes.

23 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Newton.

24 MS. NEWTON: Yes.

25 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Dean.

1 MS. DEAN: Yes.

2 COMMISSIONER KEY: Six yeses.

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. That motion passes by a
4 vote of 6-to-2.

5 Mr. Poore.

6 SUPT. POORE: Well, I guess I'm going to ask
7 because the word "reconstitute" was used. And
8 reconstitute means to me that we're saying that we're
9 -- do you understand what you all just did on that?
10 Because the "reconstitute" means that you're ready to
11 totally get rid of all the staff. Okay. That's what
12 reconstitute means in the school world. And I didn't
13 -- since I didn't come up I didn't think you guys
14 were even thinking about that. So reconstitute means
15 that the entire staff gets replaced and then they
16 have a chance to reapply for their position and
17 choose -- the administration chooses that or not. So
18 --

19 MS. ZOOK: Which is what turned Forest Heights
20 from an academic distress school to an A school this
21 year is reconstitution.

22 [AUDIENCE UPROAR]

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. So any -- obviously, any
24 change in the vote now would require a motion to -- I
25 will need Ms. Hyatt here -- would be a motion to --

1 is everybody comfortable with the vote as passed?

2 COMMISSIONER KEY: Let me go back to -- and, Ms.
3 Freno, you may need to come up on this because we've
4 had a lot of conversation about what "reconstitution"
5 means and what it doesn't mean under Act 930.

6 MS. FRENO: Under Act 930, "reconstitution" --
7 Lori Freno. Under Act 930, "reconstitution" does not
8 have a specific definition. It does not necessarily
9 mean getting rid of all the employees and having them
10 have to reapply for their job. It might just mean an
11 administrative organizational reconstitution; it
12 could mean having all employees let-go and then
13 having to reapply for their job. But, no, it does
14 not mean -- a reconstitution does not mean that every
15 employee is going to be out and they're going to have
16 to reapply for their job. There's nothing in Act 930
17 or in the rules accompanying Act 930 that would
18 suggest that.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: So a reconstitution could be
20 simply a thematic re-envisioning as was described by
21 Mr. Poore?

22 MS. FRENO: Yes. Yes. I mean -- you mean like
23 a -- you know, zones of -- it's a reorganization
24 basically. Yes.

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

1 MR. WILLIAMSON: That's what I voted yes on.

2 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Well, I think --

3 MR. WILLIAMSON: If it's something different
4 than that, I'm changing it.

5 MS. NEWTON: Yeah.

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

7 COMMISSIONER KEY: Well, re -- okay. So there
8 are -- there were provisions under No Child Left
9 Behind that were very specific on what reconstitution
10 meant. Okay. We're not under No Child Left Behind.
11 Okay. So that is -- that word is used in the
12 statute, along with reorganization. It does not mean
13 the same thing in state law that it meant in federal
14 law.

15 MS. FRENO: Correct.

16 DR. HILL: I can ask Mr. Poore a question?

17 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Dr. Hill.

18 DR. HILL: Can we ask Mr. Poore?

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Sure.

20 DR. HILL: So based on what you're saying with
21 the new Southwest High School and what you're going
22 to have to do with Hall, isn't that part of what
23 you're doing anyway as far as realigning how the
24 change is going to be with -- because, I mean, you're
25 telling me you're going to lose so many students to

1 Southwest. Is that part of what you're doing right
2 now -- I mean, as you will be doing in 20-21?

3 SUPT. POORE: It is. It's just when the word
4 "reconstitute" -- in educators' mindset -- what we --
5 what just happened right here, we will have -- we're
6 going to have a heck of a problem because of where --

7 DR. HILL: What adjective would you prefer as an
8 educator? And I'm just saying this to understand
9 what we were trying to --

10 SUPT. POORE: I think what you're trying to do
11 is what the CAB was trying to do. And it seems like
12 -- and maybe that's unfair because you all voted for
13 this. But the CAB is trying to say "we want more."
14 And in my opinion you should allow the process to
15 work through that way, allowing the CAB to see this
16 and hear it and come up to the Superintendent. You
17 do have the right obviously to direct this, but it is
18 -- when you think of "reconstitute," I think it has a
19 whole different level of meaning for educators. And
20 I understand what the Commissioner just said about
21 the law, but that's not how anyone will look at it in
22 Little Rock.

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. So I want to lay out the
24 options to the Board. Obviously, the Board -- the
25 vote can stand as-is, although Ms. Hyatt -- if you

1 could give us some other options if there were
2 members who wanted -- who were unclear and wanted to
3 have a re-clarified motion and another vote.

4 MS. HYATT: Sure. Mary Claire Hyatt, Arkansas
5 Department of Education.

6 So you do have a couple of options. If you just
7 wanted to amend the thing that you just previously
8 adopted to clarify what exactly you meant, you may do
9 that by a majority vote. If you wish to rescind it
10 all together, you would have to have a majority vote
11 -- a motion to rescind, a second, a majority vote,
12 and then a new motion to do that.

13 And you can also reconsider the action but since
14 usually that's used at like a different board
15 meeting, really I think right now either let it stand
16 as it is, you could amend to clarify what you meant
17 by the word "reconstitute," or if you're thinking of
18 changing it all together you can move to rescind and
19 then place a new motion on the floor.

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: And can -- does it matter if
21 you were in the majority or minority in terms of
22 whether you make that motion?

23 MS. HYATT: No. The operating procedures don't
24 specify.

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Thank you.

1 MS. ZOOK: I think since we were talking about
2 them bringing to us a plan, they have the opportunity
3 to either use the word "reconstitute," which does not
4 necessarily mean what Mr. Poore was saying, or
5 "reorganize." They may come to us and say "we want
6 to reorganize, not reconstitute" -- or they may say
7 "we want to reconstitute and get rid of staff and re-
8 hire." You know, we don't know. We're giving them
9 the freedom, which is what you all have been voting
10 for consistently this afternoon, to give them the
11 freedom to come to us with what they think is best
12 for that school.

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Mr. Williamson.

14 MR. WILLIAMSON: Well, I think the perception of
15 that word to everyone staring back at me right now is
16 completely different. And I think that there is a
17 contentious relationship, I think, with Little Rock
18 in general and this board and I don't intend to make
19 it worse. My idea in getting behind that was to
20 support what Mr. Poore was outlining and what Lori
21 had mentioned. That's what I thought "reconstitute"
22 meant in this context. But if you-all think it's
23 something different -- and you're all still nodding
24 your heads that you do think it's something different
25 -- I move to rescind it.

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. There's a motion to
2 rescind that last vote.

3 Is there a second?

4 MS. CHAMBERS: Second.

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Motion by Mr.
6 Williamson, second by Ms. Chambers.

7 So this is a majority vote to rescind. I see
8 Dr. Moore -- were you going to make a comment?

9 DR. MOORE: Yes.

10 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. It's yours; the floor is
11 yours.

12 DR. MOORE: I just want to frame this for a
13 second and possibly ask a question for Mr. Poore.

14 So you have five high schools in your district
15 and three of them are very low performing,
16 unfortunately. Two of them will be closed and the
17 new high school is going to be created. Is that
18 correct?

19 SUPT. POORE: Correct.

20 DR. MOORE: And that will be done in which year?

21 SUPT. POORE: 2020.

22 DR. MOORE: Okay. And so we're talking about
23 the other high school that is lowest performing, Hall
24 High School?

25 SUPT. POORE: Correct. And one of the things

1 that's a part of our blueprint -- again, there's no
2 way I can adequately describe all the depth of the
3 blueprint. The blueprint goes through a human
4 resource process to make sure that we end up having
5 staff that can be strong staff at all three schools.
6 So, you know, if you look at social studies, my area,
7 you know, if -- we need to have a strong social
8 studies department chair. If there's not, someone
9 that emerges -- we've got to make that a move
10 ourselves to say we're going to make sure that we get
11 a strong social studies person. So we've got to do
12 some things to make sure that all these buildings are
13 strong in nature -- and that's been a part of, you
14 know, what we've shared of doing some things in that
15 2020 year to make that happen.

16 DR. MOORE: Okay. Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

18 MS. CHAMBERS: Dr. Barth?

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yes, Ms. Chambers.

20 MS. CHAMBERS: Can I say something?

21 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yes.

22 MS. CHAMBERS: I so appreciate the rigor and the
23 energy that's brought to this entire discussion right
24 now. But I feel like on this particular item that
25 we're voting on -- and actually some of the others --

1 we're a bit over our skis in that these are noble
2 initiative decisions but they tend to not live in
3 isolation; you have to look at how the outcomes play
4 collectively. And I do think that we need to move
5 more aggressively toward a bigger plan that we've
6 engaged the community in, and that has a transitional
7 element, of course. But that we understand as we
8 move hard and fast on any one topic to a thoughtful
9 outcome that we have shared agreement on.

10 So I would just suggest that we need to rescind
11 this and wait until we have some additional
12 information before we vote on this particular issue.

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Okay. Everybody
14 ready to vote? The motion is to rescind.

15 Another roll-call.

16 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Zook.

17 MS. ZOOK: No.

18 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Hill.

19 DR. HILL: Yes.

20 COMMISSIONER KEY: Mr. Williamson.

21 MR. WILLIAMSON: Yes.

22 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Chambers.

23 MS. CHAMBERS: Yes.

24 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. McFetridge.

25 MS. MCFETRIDGE: Yes.

1 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Moore.

2 DR. MOORE: Yes.

3 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Newton.

4 MS. NEWTON: Yes.

5 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Dean.

6 MS. DEAN: Yes.

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. That motion was by
8 a motion of 7-to-1.

9 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

10 CHAIRMAN BARTH: So there's no motion on the
11 Hall High issue on the floor. But another motion is
12 in order, either on that issue or on another topic.

13 MS. ZOOK: You know, I guess before another
14 motion is made I just -- I want those of us in
15 attendance and those of us on this board to think of
16 all the time that we've spent today what exactly have
17 we done or has the current administration done in the
18 past almost four years to make sure that students are
19 ready and not making anticipated growth. I know when
20 the special ed. law was passed, if you had asked
21 anyone other -- like any school person that wasn't a
22 special ed. teacher, or you had asked any parent who
23 didn't have a handicapped child, or you had asked any
24 administrator "do you think we ought to have this
25 law, do you think we ought to do that," the answer

1 would've been no. So sometimes doing the hard work
2 and really studying what our responsibilities are as
3 a State Board means that it may not be or appear to
4 be the most popular decision based on the people in
5 the room. But at the same time, I really don't see
6 that we've done anything this afternoon other than
7 listen -- and I appreciate the people who have
8 attended and the passion that they have. But I don't
9 see that we've done anything that will make sure two-
10 thirds of the students in this district are ready,
11 they're making anticipated growth in the coming 14
12 months. Because, you know, it's been almost four
13 years, and what I've heard today is you're no better
14 off -- your idea is you're no better off than you
15 were four years ago. So just ponder that.

16 TEACHER FAIR DISMISSAL ACT &
17 PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYEE FAIR HEARING ACT MOTION

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Are there any other
19 motions to come before us?

20 Ms. Newton.

21 MS. NEWTON: I move to waive the application of
22 both the Teacher Fair Dismissal Act and the Public
23 School Employee Fair Hearing Act pursuant to Arkansas
24 Code 6-15-2916. These waivers will be applicable to
25 all schools within the District and all certified and

1 classified employees, effective immediately and
2 through the 2019-2020 school year.

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: You've heard the motion. Is
4 there a second?

5 DR. MOORE: Second.

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Motion by Ms.
7 Newton, second by Dr. Moore.

8 I'll go to Ms. Chambers on the phone to see if
9 she has comments or questions.

10 MS. CHAMBERS: Two things. I'd like to hear
11 what Superintendent Poore thinks, does he need this.
12 We talked about discretion, as I think back to the
13 conversation earlier today with Pine Bluff. I'm
14 assuming this is something that would be used with
15 discretion and that there would be reporting
16 associated with it that would help us understand the
17 implications, the reach. But I'd like to hear from
18 Superintendent Poore first, please.

19 SUPT. POORE: Thanks, Ms. Chambers. You know,
20 what we've prepared for is to work with the D and F
21 schools on this very topic, and, you know, we -- that
22 encompasses those 22 schools. And, you know, it is
23 what I felt like we were charged with and tasked
24 with. I know you have the right to amend. I feel
25 like we've developed a good process to try to handle

1 this. I do think that we are as administrators,
2 whether it's superintendent, deputy superintendents,
3 principals, and then go down into the teacher level,
4 all working in terms of within the TESS system, and
5 we're doing that -- you know, that's still relatively
6 new in terms of its full implementation for us. This
7 is really the first year of us having -- we're really
8 engaged, everybody, all the way across the board on
9 it. Are we perfect at that? No, we really aren't.
10 You know, we're still learning a lot related to the
11 TESS and LEADS evaluations.

12 I guess I'm going to have to be real with you of
13 just how I look at this. Those D and F schools,
14 those 22, when we have an issue in Little Rock and
15 there's a person that gets written up for something
16 that they did that was inappropriate, our environment
17 is one that people do their due process all the way
18 to the end; I mean, it is a lengthy process. And I
19 know that this does shorten some timelines but even
20 with shortened timelines, and then with 22 schools --
21 and even if we were just to do, you know, a
22 precision, you know, reduction -- let's just say it
23 was one teacher from each of those schools, if that's
24 what somebody recommended -- the time that we would
25 be putting in to do the due process that's in the

1 PNA, I'm telling you, we will have our -- our buckets
2 will be plenty full just trying to do that that first
3 year. So this is -- would be a real, real challenge.

4 And then the other thing -- and I'll go back to
5 what I said earlier -- is that I felt like, you know,
6 as a part of the process and the negotiation that we
7 were very clear that it was just D and F. And so
8 that's what's hard for me, Ms. Chambers. I hope that
9 answered your question.

10 MS. CHAMBERS: So D and F is all that you were
11 thinking about or wanted from us?

12 SUPT. POORE: Well, I guess it's what I felt
13 like was the thing that we needed to do. And, you
14 know, I think that through the negotiation process,
15 you know, we got to a place as a team, as both the
16 Teacher Association and administration, that we felt
17 like we got to a place, said, "Well, we've got to go
18 -- we've got this, we can make this work; let's go
19 see how that -- how it's going to work now." I mean,
20 I can tell you the teachers weren't in favor of it.
21 Okay. But they got to a place where they said,
22 "Okay, we're okay with what this agreement stands for
23 and we know that it may come forward and we know that
24 the State Board has the right to go forward." But it
25 was negotiated and it was done in a way that we were

1 all very together in terms of trying -- and this is a
2 significant step. As Mr. Owoh said, there's things
3 here that we don't know yet and we have no idea
4 what's going to come our way, and there's not any
5 precedent. And as stated earlier, I'm not aware of
6 anything that shows that, you know, this actually
7 just dramatically changes things. Do I think that we
8 have teachers that are poor performers? I do. And a
9 poor performer in a classroom -- and I shared this in
10 negotiation, a poor performer, they have five things
11 that they're probably not doing well, not just one
12 thing. They may not be strong in terms of their
13 instructional delivery; they may not set their
14 classroom up in terms of the culture and the
15 environment so that it's conducive to learning; they
16 may not do that extra step that you do away from the
17 classroom to interact with kids and to interact with
18 peers; and then they may do some things that are just
19 flat-out unprofessional, not showing up at work on
20 time or being available for meeting with their
21 colleagues and their peers. But I can escalate that
22 up into great teachers, and a great teacher completes
23 all those buckets as well.

24 And so when you look at dismissing a teacher,
25 you know, you've got a challenge, in my mind, of how

1 you set this up so that you make sure that everyone
2 has a due process. Right? We've established that
3 through the PNA and we're ready to deal with it.
4 It's just that now you make this become a much, much
5 bigger deal and that scares me, to be honest with
6 you, Ms. Newton.

7 MS. NEWTON: Mr. Poore, let me explain my focus.
8 My focus is not on the teachers. My focus is on the
9 administrators, the instructional support staff, and
10 all of those people. Those D and F schools did not
11 get there by themselves. They -- at some point
12 teachers were not getting the support they needed,
13 teachers were not getting the PD they needed,
14 teachers were not getting what they needed to be
15 effective in those classrooms. And the reason I'm
16 looking at district-wide, the support staff is not
17 going to be just for that one D or F school; the
18 support staff is district-wide, and that's the
19 reasoning behind my focus. I want -- I want everyone
20 to be responsible for giving those kids the best
21 chance that they can ever have of having a quality
22 education. And it has to -- our focus can't be on
23 the teachers; our focus has to be up here, and that's
24 why that I'm looking at this. Okay? I know that
25 there's teachers in that -- in those classrooms that

1 are working hard every day. I wanted to stand up
2 today when y'all were standing up because I've done
3 those same things. Okay? But we've got to make some
4 -- change is hard, okay, and adult problems are
5 difficult. And I promise you, it's not been any fun
6 sitting up here today. Okay.

7 SUPT. POORE: No, ma'am.

8 MS. NEWTON: And I've had a lot of prayer and
9 things that have gone into making a very difficult
10 stand, okay, but the reason I'm doing this is for
11 students. And people say that that's the common way
12 to say this. I'm sorry; that's still why I'm doing
13 this. I'm doing this for those kids, and I'm
14 actually doing it for teachers to get what they need.
15 And it's got to be that everyone is held accountable,
16 not just the teachers. Everybody has got to be held
17 accountable. That's why I'm looking at district-
18 wide.

19 SUPT. POORE: And, Ms. Newton, that's why --
20 remember in the beginning of my presentation I did
21 share that if there was a way to create a motion that
22 geared it towards saying the administrative staff
23 would be a part of the -- separating it along with D
24 and F -- but those two -- that makes sense to me.
25 It's just when you go do teachers across -- all over

1 -- because that's really what this establishes is it
2 does mean every teacher. And I think that, you know,
3 if we look at it from some of the administrative
4 things -- it's also important to understand, Board
5 Members, that in administrative positions many people
6 aren't protected under the Fair Dismissal anyway
7 because of their certification or their role. So,
8 some of those are, in other words, at-will employees.

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Ms. McFetridge, any
10 questions?

11 MS. McFETRIDGE: No.

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Dr. Hill?

13 DR. HILL: No.

14 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Ms. Dean?

15 MS. DEAN: No.

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Ms. Zook?

17 MS. ZOOK: No.

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Mr. Williamson?

19 MR. WILLIAMSON: No.

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Dr. Moore?

21 DR. MOORE: I think we asked these questions
22 hours ago, this morning. But just to be clear, we
23 are -- there's still going to be a due process in
24 place if this waiver goes through. A teacher has to
25 be fired for just cause as outlined in the contract?

1 SUPT. POORE: That's correct.

2 DR. MOORE: And if a teacher was fired for just
3 cause they still have the ability to appeal?

4 SUPT. POORE: That's also correct.

5 DR. MOORE: Okay. And that is true for
6 administrators who hold a license, a teaching
7 license?

8 SUPT. POORE: If the motion stood as it stands
9 right now, yes, that would be true for those
10 administrators too.

11 DR. MOORE: Okay. Thank you.

12 DR. HILL: I do have a question too.

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

14 DR. HILL: So do you see -- and I'm just trying
15 to get help to understand the process. Is there a
16 major difference in the Teachers Dismissal Act versus
17 what's currently in place for what you have? What's
18 the difference, in your position? I mean, because I
19 don't understand. Can you help me understand what
20 you're saying you would do under this situation
21 versus what you would do if we passed this?

22 SUPT. POORE: The process under Fair Dismissal
23 really sets up -- you know, it's designed, Fair
24 Dismissal, to create teacher growth. That's the
25 mindset, is, you know, to work with teachers to make

1 them and help them become the very best educators
2 that they can be. And so there is discussions that
3 go back and forth between the person doing that
4 supervision and evaluation of, you know, trying to
5 enhance support to that teacher. If there is a
6 problem, then there has to be documentation. That
7 would occur no matter what, both sides. You'd have
8 to have documentation to say, hey, something is not
9 right. Under the Teacher Fair Dismissal law there's
10 built-in mechanisms that that level of support
11 extends out for longer periods of time. That's --
12 and I'm probably not doing justice to it, but I'm
13 trying to do a 30,000-foot quick view.

14 With the way that we've tried to design it in
15 the professional negotiated agreement, there is
16 responsibility for an administrator to share that
17 they think that there is an issue or a problem. And
18 if there's an issue or problem, to be specific about
19 what those issues and problems are so that behavior
20 can change. There has to be a period of time then
21 where the administrator monitors what's going on
22 within that classroom. Ultimately, they can make a
23 recommendation to say that there is a recommendation
24 for a termination; that then comes to my office to
25 review. I have to look at that bank of information

1 to see if there is in fact enough information. And
2 then if I uphold the termination, then there's the
3 opportunity for that teacher to seek a hearing, which
4 would be through our Community Advisory Board, who
5 then make the recommendation to the Superintendent --
6 or to the Commissioner.

7 So the difference is it shortens the timeline
8 and it moves away from the possibility of trying to
9 do more proactive things to try to engage and improve
10 what the performance is.

11 So in my mind, you know, if we get to -- these
12 22 schools, you know, what should be coming is that
13 there should be a history of things being said that
14 "this is not going well, you're not performing well."
15 And, you know, there should be a bank of information
16 for me to accept the recommendation.

17 DR. HILL: And then, on the last, you still have
18 to approve all terminations; correct?

19 SUPT. POORE: I do, as the --

20 DR. HILL: Regardless of if we stay with the old
21 or we come in with the new, you still are the final?

22 SUPT. POORE: I have to make the recommendation
23 to the Board and say that I'm going to recommend for
24 termination. But then there is an appeal right. The
25 teacher could either accept the termination or appeal

1 it.

2 DR. HILL: And this is through 19-20?

3 SUPT. POORE: That's correct.

4 DR. HILL: Does that help you for that -- do you
5 see this being an asset to you -- and I mean Mr.

6 Poore?

7 SUPT. POORE: Well --

8 DR. HILL: In order for your goals and
9 objectives, for your blueprint plan that you have as
10 far as your restructuring or whatever, the best way
11 for you to come in with your vision and mission, does
12 this help you expedite your plan?

13 SUPT. POORE: You know, the -- when you look at
14 it and go back into the language that was used by the
15 Commissioner right off the bat of this is not a
16 hatchet job -- and it can't be -- and, of course,
17 that's a part of my job. But, you know, there are
18 teachers that I think inhibit other educators. But,
19 you know, I believe that -- you know, of course, I'm
20 on the side of -- I'm kind of a little bit Pollyanna-
21 ish of thinking that we can develop and build
22 teachers as well. But if there's a person that is
23 doing, like I said, five things that aren't right,
24 they don't belong in our teaching profession. And
25 whether that's through this process or through TESS

1 or through -- you know, there's real sometimes direct
2 conversations that occur between an administrator and
3 a teacher. That happens a lot that a teacher says,
4 "I'm -- you're right, I'm just not getting it."
5 We've probably had at least five resignations this
6 year where teachers are saying, "You're right, this
7 isn't for me; this isn't my calling. I see that this
8 -- that I'm not interacting and doing, you know,
9 right by the kids, and I don't feel good about it."
10 And those direct conversations oftentimes lead to a
11 person resigning before you have to do those kind of
12 things. I don't know if I'm answering your question,
13 Dr. Hill.

14 DR. HILL: Yes. The last thing, because Dr.
15 Barth had mentioned this, the scalpel and a hatchet,
16 and you're doing -- so the reference to doing
17 surgery. Do you want this tool or -- I mean, does it
18 help you? Because we're not giving it to you to be a
19 hatchet; but if you need a hatchet --

20 SUPT. POORE: Well, I know I don't want a
21 hatchet, you know. I know that to be a fact.

22 DR. HILL: But you understand, you actually
23 decide which one to use.

24 SUPT. POORE: Yeah. Well, yeah. I just don't
25 want a hatchet in my tool belt at all when you're

1 dealing with teachers.

2 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

3 SUPT. POORE: On the other side, that's why I
4 think that, you know, that D and F, that's where I
5 gain maybe some peace with it to say -- because I
6 wasn't sure, to be honest, when this first came out
7 of how to deal with it. But when I -- the D and F,
8 it made sense to me because I thought, well, I'm
9 going to learn some things about this, of how to do
10 this and what it means, and we're going to be able to
11 make sure that we do all these things right. Because
12 if we don't do it right in Little Rock we're going to
13 have lawsuits, you know, here, there, and everywhere.
14 And so being able to execute this with -- certainly
15 in my framework -- and I think that, you know, where
16 we were with my team and then the LREA team, you
17 know, we feel like we've created a process and I
18 don't want that to be used against us right now.
19 Because I felt like us having this tool in our belt,
20 it's a good thing, but we've got to get -- learn from
21 this, and the right way to go is the D and F. But I
22 also appreciate what Ms. Newton is saying. I don't
23 -- because I think our teachers felt that too. It
24 sounds like we're just doing teachers; what about
25 administrators. And so that's why I tried to say

1 initially that I don't mind if we do D and F and then
2 some form of an administrator recommendation. That
3 might make sense to me.

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right.

5 DR. MOORE: Can I ask? Sorry.

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Dr. Moore.

7 DR. MOORE: Dr. Poore -- Mr. Poore, I have
8 another question for you on this item. You will
9 continue to use TESS and LEADS to evaluate and
10 support teachers. Is that correct?

11 SUPT. POORE: Correct.

12 DR. MOORE: No matter this waiver. And so if we
13 have -- if you are granted this waiver, there's
14 nothing to stop you from -- and your principals from
15 building up a teacher before you recommend
16 termination?

17 SUPT. POORE: Certainly, you're going to try to
18 do that. Absolutely, we want to do that when we can.

19 DR. MOORE: And I think -- and that's your
20 leadership style is to coach a person into who they
21 need to be. And this is not saying you can't do
22 that; it's just shortening the process -- is that
23 correct -- if you come to that decision that they are
24 no longer a fit?

25 SUPT. POORE: No doubt with the way that the PNA

1 was structured it would shorten the process. Yes.

2 DR. MOORE: Thank you.

3 MS. ZOOK: Because right now, am I correct that
4 when you come up with an improvement plan that the
5 teacher may be advised to not sign that plan under
6 the current process?

7 SUPT. POORE: I personally haven't seen that.
8 So if it did occur I'm not aware of that, Ms. Zook.

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Ms. Newton, did you have
10 --

11 MS. NEWTON: No questions.

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. I guess we're leaning
13 towards a vote. I just want to say that, you know,
14 all schools are complex institutions and urban
15 schools are incredibly complex institutions, and
16 those institutions have a lot of systems involved, as
17 had been said earlier. And teachers are one part of
18 that system, a crucially important part of the
19 system. And the problem with the motion as-is is
20 that it really says to teachers, I think as we've
21 seen here, seen today, that they are -- they're the
22 ones under attack; they're getting the blame --

23 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

24 CHAIRMAN BARTH: -- for the problems for the
25 system as a whole. And I think that we've seen in

1 today's comments the fracturing impact on the
2 district if -- when teachers feel that they are under
3 assault in that way. And this district, having lived
4 with it very closely for now nearly four years, it
5 needs unity if it's going to move forward. And this
6 is not --

7 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: -- this is not a move -- as the
9 motion is laid out, is not a move towards unity.
10 Moreover, we all know, as we talk about in every
11 meeting, how the most challenged districts and most
12 challenged schools need the best teachers, and this
13 is not a mechanism to recruit and retain teachers,
14 the best teachers. And I can speak with -- you know,
15 I have some analogy here: I do have tenure; I am a
16 pretty good teacher; I would -- and I have confidence
17 in my teaching ability, but I would not voluntarily
18 give that up to go to an institution -- another
19 institution where that was not -- for the same job
20 where that was not available. And it's just -- it's
21 -- even folks who have very real confidence and a
22 real calling to work with students who are especially
23 challenged, I think it's just not a way to get those
24 folks to come into those challenged schools and stay
25 in those challenged schools. And I --

1 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

2 CHAIRMAN BARTH: -- I think -- and I just -- so,
3 you know, I think we have voiced a lot of support for
4 Mr. Poore today and it's clear from his negotiations,
5 that were very tough, in recent months this really --
6 I think whether it's intended or not really just
7 knocks a hole in that trust that he has worked hard
8 to build. And so I think this is -- the motion as it
9 is is a particularly big mistake and does some
10 disservice and, to go back to Mr. Williamson's point
11 earlier, only reinforces that notion of this board
12 and its position as opposed to the Little Rock School
13 District.

14 MS. NEWTON: Can I ask a question of my fellow
15 board members?

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: (Nodding head up and down.)

17 MS. NEWTON: What are your thoughts on what Mr.
18 Poore suggested to do, the district-wide as far as
19 administrative staff, support staff, that sort of
20 thing?

21 MS. ZOOK: I don't think it's fair for teachers
22 who -- many of whom volunteer to teach in a lower
23 performing, more challenging environment. I do not
24 believe that it would be fair to target them and not
25 have something that was applicable to everyone from

1 the top to the newest hire.

2 DR. HILL: However, I can -- with him being a
3 foot soldier and there every day, based on what he
4 recommended, would allow him in 19-20 to continue to
5 do what he's been charged to do. I can see that to
6 support him, to bring that back to us with those --
7 you know, what happens from a leadership perspective.
8 I think that's a collaborative effort that -- all the
9 way across here -- all the way across, what we see,
10 and then ask him -- that was him who said he could
11 see that being utilized in his district.

12 MS. DEAN: I agree, as we stated earlier today,
13 and as I said, and I think to echo what Mr.
14 Williamson said, and all the board members. And from
15 my perspective and my goal it's to assist you in your
16 position to do what you deem is necessary in your
17 position and also to fulfill our responsibility as
18 responsible for all students. But as I said before,
19 it goes back to relationship -- and if we do
20 something that undercuts the relationships that
21 you've taken time to build, and in the meantime
22 further damage relationships, is that going to help?

23 So what I'm leaning toward is what you feel is
24 necessary, and trusting your discretion and the
25 things that you said that you could see, and it's got

1 to be a collaborative effort. I keep saying that
2 word. But I think that's the only -- that's the only
3 way I can see it working, is it's got to be a
4 collaborative effort on all our parts.

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. If there are no
6 more comments or questions --

7 MS. CHAMBERS: Dr. Barth, can I make one
8 comment?

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yes, Ms. Chambers.

10 MS. CHAMBERS: I think it's a comment but it may
11 also be a question for Mr. Poore. Whenever an
12 institution tolerates poor performance it actually
13 ends up discouraging and disenfranchising your best
14 people. And so I think it's really important however
15 we should go about it -- I think it's really
16 important to insure that we're not tolerating poor
17 performance. But the corollary to that is you can't
18 do enough to support and pay your best people; right?
19 They're the ones that are going to make a real
20 difference for the children of the District.

21 And so you've talked a lot about what it means
22 to kind of lift the overall performance of the
23 District, and I think that's important. But I don't
24 want us to lose sight of what we need to do to
25 actually increase and encourage and innovate within

1 the district. And we didn't talk about that a lot
2 today, but I hope it's part of this larger plan that
3 we have going forward.

4 But my -- so not to put you on the spot -- I
5 think somebody earlier today correctly called the
6 Board on we don't want to put superintendents in an
7 untenable position, even if we seek to support. So I
8 don't want to put you in a bad spot, but I think
9 you're hearing everyone from the Board say they want
10 to support you and feel you need some element of this
11 based on where you're at right now. I would
12 encourage you to continue to get really, really good
13 at using the Fair Dismissal Act, as it's written, so
14 that we don't have to have these interim solutions.

15 But do you need an interim solution today?
16 That's what I'm asking because we're about to vote on
17 it. Is that what you want?

18 SUPT. POORE: Well, the thing that I go back to
19 is, you know, when we negotiated the PNA and then
20 that got approved by the Commissioner and then it got
21 approved by the Teacher Association, you know,
22 everyone knew that the waivers were -- potential to
23 come in, because that was out there and it was all
24 known that it would be the D and F. So in terms of a
25 trust factor, you know, if you choose to go forward

1 with that, you know, that's been there; it's always
2 been out there and stated that that's kind of where
3 we were going to head. Is that a perfect model? I
4 know it's not, you know. And just like Jeremy said
5 earlier -- Jeremy Owoh -- that, you know, this is
6 uncharted territory for these districts to look at
7 and we're not sure how it's going to go. We're not
8 sure how it's going to go, but we do know that
9 through our PNA we negotiated out how it might look,
10 and that's a positive. So I don't know if that
11 answers your question or not, Ms. Chambers.

12 MS. CHAMBERS: Close enough. I mean, you've
13 said it earlier, if you have discretion, which is
14 what we spoke to earlier today with Pine Bluff, and
15 don't get it right, you'll be the first to know. I
16 mean, if it's not done judiciously, fairly,
17 transparently you'll be the first to know. So will
18 we. So we will trust your judgment, if waivers are
19 passed, that's it's used not as a hatchet but as a
20 specific tool for a specific moment in time.

21 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Newton? Dr. Hill?

22 MS. NEWTON: I think the best thing for us to do
23 today is for me to amend my -- and I'm probably going
24 to need some help from Legal to get the terminology
25 right -- to amend what I said to the D and F schools

1 plus the leadership for the whole district,
2 administrators, instructional specialists, those
3 people who hold -- who are in charge of making sure
4 that these programs that we've talked about all day
5 today are implemented and implemented with fidelity.

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

7 MS. NEWTON: I mean, I don't know who the -- I
8 don't know what the language needs to be. So I need
9 some help, I guess.

10 MS. HYATT: Mary Claire Hyatt, Arkansas
11 Department of Education.

12 You actually used the perfect language. So
13 since you made a motion, it was seconded, but you
14 haven't voted on the motion yet, you are able to
15 amend your motion by yourself and change -- as long
16 as it's related to the original motion, which it
17 sounds like it is. And then as long as Dr. Barth,
18 who will clarify the motion after she amends it, get
19 a second, and then you can go on to a vote.

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. And does the second on
21 the original motion need to agree to it or could we
22 have a completely separate second?

23 MS. HYATT: Since you haven't voted she can
24 unilaterally amend her motion, but you will need a
25 new second.

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Gotcha. Okay.

2 Is everybody clear?

3 MS. ZOOK: Would you restate the motion?

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yeah. The -- I believe the
5 motion now is that the waiver request -- the Teacher
6 Fair Dismissal and Fair Hearing laws would be waived
7 as for the D and F schools, the schools most
8 currently deemed D and F schools in the latest
9 scores, and also the administrative staff across the
10 district through the 19-20 school year.

11 Is that the amendment? But I need my language
12 on administrative --

13 MS. NEWTON: Yeah.

14 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Because that gets confusing in
15 terms of -- I think you're wanting to narrow it to a
16 subset of individuals, but I don't know how those --
17 how that needs to be phrased.

18 SUPT. POORE: And I don't know if I have the
19 legal background to give on the administrative one or
20 how to structure that. But I think one of the things
21 to consider as you frame the motion is that D and F
22 could change, and hopefully would change, at the
23 start of next year, so maybe that number shrinks. So
24 I don't know if we want to say the current D and F.

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: I think that's the way I put it

1 was that -- as in the most recent demarcation --

2 SUPT. POORE: Okay.

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: -- which is the 22 schools.

4 SUPT. POORE: Well, no, I think what -- I think
5 what I'm trying to suggest is that it would be from
6 the results of the 2019 that would establish the D
7 and F schools that this would be used for.

8 MS. NEWTON: No.

9 MS. ZOOK: I think they're talking about
10 applying it currently and notifying people before May
11 1st for the 19-20 school year.

12 MS. NEWTON: Yes. So, the whole -- I had
13 envisioned that it would use the D and F schools, if
14 we went that way, the current D and F as the latest
15 results. That was what I had envisioned, so --

16 SUPT. POORE: But it would take place then for
17 the contract for the next school year, or you're
18 saying it goes in --

19 MS. NEWTON: It would start into effect -- if it
20 passes today, it would go into effect today.

21 SUPT. POORE: It becomes immediate --

22 MS. NEWTON: Yeah.

23 SUPT. POORE: -- is what you're suggesting?

24 MS. NEWTON: Yeah.

25 SUPT. POORE: Okay. I didn't understand that.

1 I thought it was all for 19-20 school year. I
2 thought that's how the motion read.

3 MS. ZOOK: So that happens for staffing.

4 MS. NEWTON: Yeah. As you staff for the next
5 year, yeah.

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. So, Mr. Poore, do you
7 want to speak to that motion, as we've got your
8 opinion on other motions?

9 SUPT. POORE: I apologize. You'll have to
10 restate it for me.

11 CHAIRMAN BARTH: I think the motion -- the
12 motion is that there would be a waiver of Teacher
13 Fair Dismissal and Fair Hearing laws for teaching
14 personnel in the current D and F schools --

15 MS. NEWTON: Any educators in the D and F
16 schools and then educators -- I'm sorry; it's really
17 hard to hear when --

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yeah. Let's be respectful.

19 MS. NEWTON: Sorry; that's the teacher coming
20 out in me, but I don't let my students do that, so --

21 Let me start over. The waiver that I had
22 envisioned was that the educators in the D and F
23 schools -- all educators in the D and F schools and
24 then at the district level the ones in the leadership
25 positions that are making sure that programs are

1 implemented, that are doing oversight of different
2 programs to making sure that everything is
3 implemented with fidelity.

4 SUPT. POORE: I understand the motion. And the
5 only thing that I'd bring for your consideration --
6 and, again, not realizing it would be for this year
7 -- I think you probably ought to seek some sort of
8 legal guidance just to what that does with the
9 teacher -- current teacher contracts. So that's just
10 one thing.

11 COMMISSIONER KEY: I think that's covered in the
12 incorporation language in the PNA. It covers "the
13 individual contracts between the board and individual
14 employee shall be subject to consistent terms of this
15 or subsequent agreements executed by the parties. If
16 an individual contract contains any language
17 inconsistent with this agreement, the agreement
18 during its duration shall be controlling." This
19 agreement was the -- what set forth the grievance
20 process that was negotiated given the possibility of
21 a waiver in the D and F schools.

22 MS. NEWTON: So it's in the PNA?

23 COMMISSIONER KEY: That's how I read it.

24 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

25 COMMISSIONER KEY: And I think that's how our

1 attorneys read it.

2 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Dr. Moore.

3 DR. MOORE: But the PNA doesn't say anything
4 about D through F schools?

5 COMMISSIONER KEY: No.

6 DR. MOORE: Okay.

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Is everybody clear on --
8 Dr. Hill.

9 DR. HILL: Would you state that again?

10 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. So the current motion is
11 that there would be a waiver of Teacher Fair
12 Dismissal and Fair Hearing laws for the -- for
13 educators in the D and F schools, as currently
14 demarcated, and that also Teacher Fair Dismissal/Fair
15 Hearing would be waived for administrators who are in
16 decision-making roles district-wide.

17 SENATOR ELLIOTT: I know I'm out of order but
18 there is nothing you could do that would be more
19 unjust than this.

20 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

21 SENATOR ELLIOTT: How do you create two classes
22 of teachers in one school district? "I will be
23 punished" -- most of these schools you're talking
24 about are in my district; that's why I'm willing to
25 be out of order and take what goes with it. You're

1 going to create -- you're going to create teachers
2 who have taught in these schools, some of them who
3 maybe went just last year because they were committed
4 to making a difference. And now you are saying to
5 them "you don't matter; we're going to give you
6 different rights from the rights that people have at
7 Central or Roberts." This is the most unjust thing
8 you could possibly do to teachers. We just talked
9 about unity. There is no way you create unity when
10 you are dividing teachers with this motion. You're
11 creating two groups and that is not what the PN
12 agreement says that is anticipated. The PN agreement
13 says there is anticipation there may be waivers. It
14 doesn't say there may be waivers for some schools and
15 not others. That is not what it says. And some of
16 these teachers already have contracts.

17 I think it's wise to get some counsel on this.
18 And I don't think you even need counsel because just
19 the morality of -- the morality of this dictate --
20 you should not say -- think about what this harkens
21 back to. Some folks will have rights, others will
22 have these rights.

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you.

24 SENATOR ELLIOTT: I hope you won't do this.

25 MS. ZOOK: I think this is the first time since

1 Senator Elliott and I worked together on dyslexia
2 that I fully agree with her.

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Well, and my concern is --
4 really goes back to the fact that we want to recruit
5 the absolute best talent into these most challenged
6 school, and especially those educators who are in,
7 you know, some of the best schools who know that it
8 will be challenging to go to those schools, then to
9 also say that they may actually lose their jobs as a
10 result of taking that personal risk, that doesn't --
11 that -- so I had problems with the overarching one
12 for the reasons I stated. But I also still have
13 problems with this because of the impact on the need
14 to get the most talented teachers into these most
15 vulnerable schools.

16 Are there any other comments or questions?

17 Yeah.

18 DR. MOORE: Yeah, I will point out that while I
19 do support the district-wide for all teachers to be
20 the same, there is no mandate from the Board or from
21 me personally on number of teachers that need to be
22 let-go, if any. And I think we would agree.

23 [AUDIENCE OUTBURSTS]

24 DR. MOORE: But it is -- but I think we can
25 agree there might be people that are not fit for

1 teaching and Mr. Poore can work with them to whatever
2 point, and the principals can work with them. And
3 then as outlined by the union contract --

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: So I -- let's -- we've heard
5 public comment and I think we are clear on the
6 issues. In all due respect to the public who has
7 been patient today -- and I appreciate it very much
8 -- I think my -- you know, my response is -- you
9 know, symbolism really matters. And this is what --
10 this -- even if it would be never applied, the
11 symbolism is really powerful and --

12 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: -- and that's what this issue
14 is ultimately about in my eyes.

15 All right. I think we are ready for a roll-
16 call.

17 MS. ZOOK: Did we get a second?

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: We did -- oh, after all that we
19 didn't get a second. I apologize.

20 So we have the new motion. Is there a second?

21 [MOMENT OF SILENCE]

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Is there a second?

23 [MOMENT OF SILENCE]

24 CHAIRMAN BARTH: If there is no second, that
25 motion fails for lack of a second.

1 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE AND CHEERS]

2 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Any other motions to come
3 before us?

4 MS. NEWTON: Is the original motion still on the
5 floor?

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: It is not -- no longer on the
7 floor. It could be re- -- put back on the floor
8 because it was not voted on.

9 MS. NEWTON: Okay. I was just unclear if it was
10 still on the floor or not.

11 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. So it is no longer on
12 the floor because that was -- you amended it and it
13 killed that original -- yeah.

14 MS. NEWTON: Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Are there any other
16 motions?

17 DR. MOORE: I move to make the original motion.

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Dr. Moore moves to
19 make the original motion.

20 Everybody is clear on that original motion?

21 DR. HILL: What was -- can you restate it?

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: The original motion -- thank
23 you, Dr. Hill. The original motion was to waive
24 Teacher Fair Dismissal and Fair Hearing for all
25 educators in the District, starting now through the

1 19-20 school year.

2 Is that correct?

3 DR. MOORE: Uh-huh.

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Is there a second?

5 MS. NEWTON: Second.

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. So we have a motion, we
7 have a second.

8 Unless there is further discussion, I think it's
9 time we move for a roll-call.

10 COMMISSIONER KEY: Okay. Dr. Moore.

11 DR. HILL: Oh --

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Dr. Hill?

13 DR. HILL: I was just going to --

14 CHAIRMAN BARTH: You want to --

15 DR. HILL: Yeah, I wanted to ask --

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yeah, of course. Yes.

17 DR. HILL: Last time. Okay. Once again, I just
18 need clarification. You're currently doing under the
19 current act that you would do if this passes, I mean,
20 as far as -- it just -- this expedites the process;
21 that's what you're telling me?

22 SUPT. POORE: You mean how --

23 DR. HILL: Yes.

24 SUPT. POORE: -- the new negotiation is?

25 DR. HILL: Uh-huh.

1 SUPT. POORE: That's the change. Yes, we did
2 tighten that so it's a quicker timeline.

3 DR. HILL: Okay.

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. We'll go to a roll-
5 call.

6 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Moore.

7 DR. MOORE: Yes.

8 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Newton.

9 MS. NEWTON: Yes.

10 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Dean.

11 MS. DEAN: No.

12 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Zook.

13 MS. ZOOK: Yes.

14 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Hill.

15 DR. HILL: Yes.

16 COMMISSIONER KEY: Mr. Williamson.

17 MR. WILLIAMSON: No.

18 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Chambers.

19 MS. CHAMBERS: Yes.

20 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. McFetridge.

21 MS. McFETRIDGE: Yes.

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. No. I vote no.

23 COMMISSIONER KEY: Okay. 5 yeses, 3 --

24 CHAIRMAN BARTH: 6. 6 yeses, 5-3 -- 6-3.

25 COMMISSIONER KEY: Yes. Correct, 6.

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. So that motion does
2 pass.

3 Okay. Are there any further motions to come
4 before us?

5 MR. WILLIAMSON: Move to adjourn.

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Motion to adjourn.

7 Is there a second?

8 MS. NEWTON: Second.

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Is there a second?

10 MS. NEWTON: Second.

11 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Motion by Mr. Williamson,
12 second by Ms. Newton.

13 All in favor say "aye."

14 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

15 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Opposed, same sign.

16 [NO OPPOSITION]

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20 (The meeting was adjourned at 5:52 p.m.)

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A-2: LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT

EXHIBIT ONE (1)

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A-2: LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT

EXHIBIT TWO (2)

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A-2: LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT

EXHIBIT THREE (3)

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A-2: LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT

EXHIBIT FOUR (4)

C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF ARKANSAS)
) ss.
COUNTY OF SALINE)

I, SHARON K. HILL, CCR, a Certified Stenomask Reporter and Notary Public before whom the foregoing proceedings was taken, do hereby certify that the same is a true and correct transcription before the Arkansas State Department of Education, State Board of Education, in Little Rock, Arkansas, on December 20, 2018, that the said proceedings was reduced to typewritten form by me or under my direction and supervision; and that the foregoing pages constitute a true and correct transcription of all proceedings had in said matter.

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

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

WITNESS, MY HAND AND SEAL, THIS DATE: January 6, 2019.

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

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| | 339:24 | accordance (1) | 263:15,23,25;273:15; | 87:14;114:8;168:25; |
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