

BEFORE THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

SPECIAL MEETING

FEBRUARY 15, 2019
10:10 A.M.

A P P E A R A N C E S

BOARD MEMBERS:

MR. JOHNNY KEY	Commissioner (Non-Voting)
DR. JAY BARTH	Chairman
MS. CHARISSE DEAN	Vice Chairman
MS. DIANE ZOOK	Board Member
MS. SUSAN CHAMBERS	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. RANDI HOUSE	Teacher of the Year (Non-Voting)

ADE LEGAL COUNSEL:

MS. LORI FRENO	ADE General Counsel
MS. MARY CLAIRE HYATT	ADE Attorney

LOCATION:

Arkansas Department of Education
#4 Capitol Mall - Auditorium
Little Rock, AR 72201

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E X H I B I T S

A-1: COVENANT KEEPERS RENEWAL HEARING

EXHIBIT ONE (1)

Communications re: Dissolution of Charter School;
Voluntary Non-Renewal

A-2: COVENANT KEEPERS AMENDMENT REQUEST

EXHIBIT ONE (1)

Friendship Aspire Academy-Middle School
- School Transition Plan

EXHIBIT TWO (2)

Petition of Support of Friendship Aspire Academy
Opening a Middle School in Southwest Little Rock
at the Current Covenant Keepers Location

P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIRMAN BARTH: Good morning again. We're now at the special State Board of Education meeting that was called yesterday.

A-1: HEARING ON OPEN ENROLLMENT CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL:

COVENANT KEEPERS

CHAIRMAN BARTH: The action items -- the first up is, of course, a hearing on the Covenant Keeper renewal, and this emanates out of a vote yesterday by the State Board of Education to review the decision made by the Charter Authorizing Panel in January.

So I'll turn it over to Mr. Ballard.

MR. BALLARD: All right. Reginald Ballard,
Public School Accountability.

So the first action item is just -- it's a Hearing on the Open Enrollment Charter School Renewal for Covenant Keepers.

On January 25, 2019, the Charter Authorizing Panel met and accepted the Covenant Keepers Charter School's voluntary nonrenewal. On February 14, 2019, the State Board of Education voted to review the decision made by the panel.

MS. HYATT: Mary Claire Hyatt, Arkansas
Department of Education.

1 So first I'm going to go through the procedure
2 of how the hearing will go, and then I'll move into
3 more the dealing with the actual hearing.

4 So typically how these hearings would work is
5 not with a voluntary nonrenewal; so this is a really
6 unique situation. Typically how it happens is the
7 person requesting the review would receive 20
8 minutes, followed by 20 minutes of any opposition,
9 with 5 minutes for rebuttal, and the questions
10 following. So we'll kind of follow that as much as
11 we can, considering the uniqueness of this situation.

12 That being said, I'll present the facts that the
13 Department has and then allow you to ask questions.

14 On January 15, 2019, as Reggie just said, the
15 Charter Authorizing Panel accepted the voluntary
16 nonrenewal of Covenant Keepers' charter. A decision
17 letter reviewing the charter authorizer's decision
18 and notifying the school that ADE approval was
19 necessary to pay outstanding debt was sent on January
20 16, 2019. Between January 16, 2019, and January 25,
21 2019, three counter withdrawals totaling \$176,472.93
22 were withdrawn from the Covenant Keepers operating
23 account without the approval of the current operator
24 or the local board. These withdrawals were not
25 discovered until the business manager attempted to

1 reconcile January's bank statement on Friday,
2 February 8, 2019. Subsequently, the Department
3 placed a hold on the Covenant Keepers operating
4 account on Monday the 11th. That same day, Covenant
5 Keepers notified the local board of the unauthorized
6 -- or unapproved -- excuse me -- withdrawals and
7 asked for a special board meeting. Immediately, the
8 Department received emails of resignation from all of
9 the board members, except for one.

10 While Friendship, the current charter operator,
11 was attempting to put together documentation to help
12 the Department of Education release the funds to meet
13 payroll that's due today, it was discovered that on
14 the afternoon of Friday, February 8th, prior to the
15 freeze on the bank account, another counter
16 withdrawal in the amount of \$12,433 was made from the
17 operating account without approval of the current
18 operator or the local board.

19 With all of the withdrawals, Covenant Keepers
20 was left with \$15,461.41 in the operating account.

21 Additionally, on January 14th -- in between
22 February 2nd and February 3rd, an unknown amount of
23 inventory was removed from the Covenant Keepers
24 campus without the knowledge of the charter operator.
25 The Charter Unit began an onsite inventory of the

1 Covenant Keepers campus on Thursday, February 7th
2 after receiving notice of the missing items.

3 There's an ongoing concern from the Department
4 about state and federal purchased inventory items
5 being removed from the school without proper
6 approval. There's also a financial concern because
7 the Covenant Keepers operating account has just over
8 \$15,000, which is enough to pay most of the payroll
9 that's due today; however, in the next week an
10 additional will -- in addition to the payroll -- so
11 all together, within the next week there's \$44,328.22
12 due, including the payroll, teacher retirement,
13 taxes, food service, afterschool program, and a
14 couple of other things. The school doesn't have
15 enough money to operate really through the end of
16 today.

17 Additionally, the Covenant Keepers local board
18 only has one remaining board member. So they have no
19 local governing structure.

20 We are happy to answer questions -- the Charter
21 Unit, myself. Also the current charter operator,
22 Friendship, is here and can answer questions. We
23 also have members of the Charter Authorizing Panel,
24 should you have any questions to them.

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Thank you so much, Ms.

1 Hyatt.

2 Commissioner.

3 COMMISSIONER KEY: Yes. Dr. Barth, and let me
4 just add to that to say it is our recommendation and
5 request that you all would revoke the charter today.
6 That action will then allow us to approach or to
7 request the Arkansas Legislative Audit to then begin
8 working on investigating the situation there as it
9 relates to the Covenant Keepers funds.

10 I know you all have questions about what happens
11 next with the students and that's something that is
12 part of the item number two on the agenda today.

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

14 MS. HYATT: And I also have little packets I'll
15 hand out to you that just has copies of the letters
16 the Department has sent to the school and the board,
17 as well as a breakdown of what that \$44,000 is that's
18 coming due in the next couple of days, and the
19 letters of resignation from the local board.

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you, Ms. Hyatt.

21 After you distribute those, then I'll start down
22 with Ms. McFetridge and just come around and see who
23 has what questions.

24 (WHEREUPON, A-1 Exhibit One (1) was marked for
25 identification and entered into the record.)

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: I see folks reading. Let's
2 just give just a couple of minutes and then I'll see
3 what questions people have.

4 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Are folks ready to
6 start asking questions?

7 All right. Any -- starting -- I'll just start
8 with Ms. McFetridge and just see if there are any
9 questions.

10 MS. McFETRIDGE: Do we have any kind of
11 inventory before we asked for this on January 29th?
12 Is there any record of inventory that was already
13 available?

14 MR. BALLARD: There was a record of inventory
15 that was available that was given to the school.
16 That was kind of a starting point for us before we
17 went in to do the state inventory.

18 MS. McFETRIDGE: Okay.

19 MR. BALLARD: And so right now what we have
20 done, we've gone in to complete our inventory and
21 we've reconciled what they had with the items that we
22 also notated.

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Newton, anything?

24 MS. NEWTON: Just a question on the funds. With
25 the bills that are coming up and the funds that are

1 short, what will happen when you don't have enough
2 money to pay the bills?

3 MS. HYATT: Mary Claire Hyatt.

4 So, fortunately, we do have enough money to
5 cover most of the payroll that's due today; so I'm in
6 the process of working with the bank to get those
7 funds released. That leaves money for food service,
8 taxes, teacher retirement, and afterschool program --
9 I think one other thing.

10 So typically how this works is once a charter
11 gets revoked we become in receivership of all of the
12 funds and the state property and can sell assets, if
13 there are any to be sold, to pay debts. If they have
14 any additional money coming to the school, we would
15 be in receivership of that. I do think, after I
16 talked with ADE Finance, that they have a tax refund
17 coming back and that they might have another federal
18 disbursement -- but I don't believe it's enough to
19 cover all of the items on that list. So what happens
20 is then, you know, we will accept notification from
21 vendors letting us know that they have outstanding
22 debt, try and pay as much of that as we can from the
23 remaining debts of the school -- and if there's not
24 enough money, then those invoices don't get paid,
25 unless we can figure out a way to; so assets of the

1 school or if they have any additional funds coming
2 in.

3 MS. NEWTON: And my next question will have to
4 do with the students, so we'll wait on that.

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

6 Dr. Hill, anything? Ms. Chambers?

7 Okay. Ms. Zook, anything?

8 MS. ZOOK: When will the next payment of state
9 funds be -- the --

10 MR. ROGERS: Greg Rogers, Department of
11 Education.

12 The normal distribution of state funds is
13 supposed to not be till next week, next Friday.

14 MS. ZOOK: And that is number of students
15 divided by the number of months, and that's what
16 comes --

17 MR. ROGERS: Well, it would be based off the ADM
18 that they have, because they've been in -- so we know
19 what that would be because it's based off last year's
20 three-quarter ADM. But -- so we know what it will
21 be, but it wouldn't hit till next Friday.

22 MS. ZOOK: And do you, off the top of your head,
23 know if it's enough money to cover some of these
24 expenses?

25 MR. ROGERS: Based off the request -- the debts

1 that we have right now, it would be. But I don't
2 know that we know for sure how much is still out
3 there.

4 MS. ZOOK: Okay. Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: So, Mr. Rogers, if there is a
6 revocation, can that money still flow to --

7 MR. ROGERS: So the way the law works right now
8 is that if there's an amendment to someone's charter
9 request then they are current-year funded. So we'd
10 have to work that out with -- obviously with Mary
11 Claire to see how we'd want to proceed on that. But
12 we could work something out.

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Thank you.

14 MS. HYATT: And, Ms. Zook, I would say I have
15 received notice from one additional vendor yesterday
16 of an outstanding amount. I'm not sure of the amount
17 right now. They were going to send me an invoice and
18 let me know what it was. So that's at least one
19 additional cost of the school.

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Mr. Williamson? Dr. Moore?
21 Ms. House, anything?

22 Okay. Are there any additional questions about
23 where things stand on this piece?

24 And, Ms. Newton, on your question about
25 students, do you need that answered before we make a

1 decision on this?

2 MS. NEWTON: No.

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Great.

4 Okay. Is there further discussion on what you
5 know about this issue?

6 If not, then you have heard the recommendation
7 from the Department and I would entertain a motion,
8 if folks are ready to move in that direction.

9 MS. NEWTON: Move to revoke.

10 MS. CHAMBERS: Second.

11 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Motion to revoke
12 the charter.

13 MS. HYATT: Can you please clarify revoke either
14 immediately or revoke at a --

15 MS. NEWTON: Immediately.

16 MS. HYATT: -- specific date? Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN BARTH: So the motion is to revoke
18 immediately -- Ms. Newton with the motion, Ms.
19 Chambers was the second.

20 We'll do a roll-call on this one.

21 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Zook.

22 MS. ZOOK: Yes.

23 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Hill.

24 DR. HILL: Yes.

25 COMMISSIONER KEY: Mr. Williamson.

1 MR. WILLIAMSON: Yes.

2 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Chambers.

3 MS. CHAMBERS: Yes.

4 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. McFetridge.

5 MS. McFETRIDGE: Yes.

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: Yes.

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. That vote is
13 unanimous.

14 **A-2: CONSIDERATION OF CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL DECISION ON**
15 **OPEN ENROLLMENT CHARTER SCHOOL AMENDMENT - COVENANT KEEPERS**

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: And so we'll now move to the
17 second action item which is an amendment request from
18 Friendship.

19 MR. BALLARD: All right. So the second item is
20 the Consideration for the -- of the Charter
21 Authorizing Panel Decision on Open Enrollment Charter
22 -- Public Charter School Amendment with Covenant
23 Keepers.

24 On February 14, 2019, representatives of
25 Friendship Aspire Academy appeared before the Charter

1 Authorizing Panel to request an amendment to their
2 charter. The panel approved the request. The State
3 Board may exercise a right to -- of review and
4 conduct a hearing on the determination at the State
5 Board's next meeting.

6 MS. HYATT: Just a little information on
7 process.

8 So it is appropriate for you to ask questions
9 either of the Department or of the person seeking the
10 amendment request, but the motion would be to review
11 or not review. So this isn't a full hearing but it
12 is appropriate for you to ask questions.

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Does that sound good?

14 So I'll start over here to my right. Ms. House,
15 anything? Dr. Moore? Mr. Williamson?

16 Okay. Ms. Zook.

17 MS. ZOOK: And to be sure that I understand, the
18 original charter for Friendship starting next year
19 was K-5; they would now become K-8. And are they
20 asking to increase their maximum number of students?

21 MR. BALLARD: Yes, ma'am. That's correct.

22 MS. ZOOK: Okay.

23 MR. BALLARD: The original request was for K-5.
24 This would expand that to allow them to accommodate
25 the students that were at Covenant Keepers by going

1 up to K-8.

2 MS. ZOOK: And it's my -- if I'm remembering
3 correctly, this is one of the charters that does
4 provide transportation?

5 MR. BALLARD: Yes, ma'am. They have
6 transportation.

7 MS. ZOOK: So this would not be a hardship if
8 any of those students chose to go to the different
9 site than where they are now?

10 MR. BALLARD: Friendship had stated, yes, they
11 have two buses that they would designate to provide
12 transportation for those students.

13 MS. ZOOK: Great. Thanks.

14 COMMISSIONER KEY: And, Dr. Barth, if I may add
15 -- Ms. Zook too -- just so you know, you know, when
16 we talk about choice I want the Board to know there
17 are choices with respect to if these students want to
18 opt for something else. I've talked to Mr. Poore;
19 the district is certainly open to those students
20 coming back into their zoned area. So I think he
21 said Cloverdale, Mabelvale, and possibly Dunbar could
22 be options, depending on where these students live.
23 We had also checked, as we were working through
24 trying to determine possible contingency plans for
25 the students -- Exalt Academy has some seats and

1 Little Rock Prep has some seats, so --

2 And I appreciate the work that Friendship has
3 done, hoops they've jumped through. I just want
4 everybody to know this isn't Friendship-only and that
5 the students will still have a choice if they want to
6 go to one of these other schools.

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: And that actually goes to my
8 question, which was the logistics of this -- of the
9 transfer process for students. What will this be
10 like? And how will we insure true choice related to
11 these other options?

12 MS. HYATT: Mary Claire Hyatt.

13 I'll pass this out to you. This is a proposed
14 transition plan from Friendship. I think in addition
15 to this transition plan, which goes through a meeting
16 with parents and staff to explain options, that the
17 Charter Unit would work with families to make sure
18 that if Friendship was not the choice that they
19 wanted to make that we could help them get enrolled
20 either into their local school in the Little Rock
21 School District or one of the other local charters.

22 I'll pass this out to you now, which is the
23 detailed action plan from Friendship that the Panel
24 saw yesterday.

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Great.

1 MS. ZOOK: And that includes the transition
2 plans for any students who are receiving special
3 education service?

4 MS. HYATT: Yes.

5 MS. ZOOK: Thanks.

6 (WHEREUPON, A-2 Exhibit One (1) was marked for
7 identification and entered into the record.)

8 MS. NEWTON: Dr. Barth, could someone explain
9 for me -- and I'm sure parents that are concerned --
10 exactly what's going to happen to kids that are in
11 the classroom today and what's going to happen
12 Monday? So we can get a little bit of feelings of
13 security that these kids are not going to get lost
14 over the next few days and weeks.

15 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Great.

16 COMMISSIONER KEY: Yeah. I think that's
17 something that the Friendship team could probably
18 answer for you. Thankfully, Monday is a holiday,
19 scheduled --

20 MS. NEWTON: So, Tuesday. Yeah.

21 COMMISSIONER KEY: -- scheduled already --

22 MS. NEWTON: Yeah.

23 COMMISSIONER KEY: -- which is helpful in that
24 it gives more -- a little more time for the charter
25 team, the Friendship team, everybody to work with

1 these families to make sure they understand what
2 their options are.

3 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

4 MR. HARRIS: Good morning. My name is Joe
5 Harris. I'm the Chief Operating Officer for
6 Friendship Education Foundation. We're the CMO
7 that's currently operating and managing the school.

8 To answer your question directly, our goal is to
9 insure that there's as least disruption to the
10 school's education and the kids' normal day of
11 operations; so it's our goal during this transition
12 to continue operating the school.

13 The staff, students, and parents will be
14 notified at least at three different communication
15 points about the transition, which will begin today.

16 The staff -- both the instructional and
17 administrative staff will be coming to see the new
18 school and we will begin the efforts to set up the
19 classrooms. Our goal is by not this Monday coming,
20 but the following Monday to have the school open and
21 the kids report to the new school building.

22 We will notify parents beginning today; we will
23 have school tours for the kids on next Tuesday; then
24 we will have a parent night and parent event at the
25 new location for the parents to see the new school.

1 Part of our approach is that we want the parents and
2 student to feel as though they are involved in this
3 process and they have input.

4 MS. NEWTON: So will the kids be in school today
5 and next week?

6 MR. HARRIS: Yeah. Yes. Kids are half-day --

7 MS. CHAPMAN: No, kids are not in school today;
8 it's a parent conference day.

9 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

10 MS. CHAPMAN: They will resume --

11 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Microphone -- could you come to
12 the microphone and identify your name for the record?

13 MS. CHAPMAN: I'm sorry. My name is Lauren
14 Chapman. I'm the principal.

15 School students are not on campus today because
16 it's parent conference day, and then Monday is a
17 holiday; so they will resume school on Tuesday.

18 MS. NEWTON: Okay. And if I remember right,
19 there are parents that are not English language. Are
20 you making efforts to --

21 MS. CHAPMAN: Correct.

22 MS. NEWTON: -- contact them also?

23 MS. CHAPMAN: We have three staff members that
24 are Spanish speaking that are translating all of our
25 communications, both in person and in writing, so

1 that we can make sure that they are also made fully
2 aware of all that's going on.

3 MS. NEWTON: Okay. And children need extra -- I
4 don't know how to phrase it correctly -- but extra
5 feelings of security when there's change. And are
6 you going to make efforts in that way also?

7 MS. CHAPMAN: Sure. We're very much aware of
8 the social/emotional component --

9 MS. NEWTON: Yeah.

10 MS. CHAPMAN: -- that change causes. And we've
11 been very proactive on the front-end through this
12 process and had communications with them before, as
13 we have looked at potentially having a new school for
14 next year if we were able to assume the charter when
15 this all began. So they've been involved with the
16 conversation. And so we will continue to keep them
17 involved and continue by bringing them to the school
18 ahead of time and having those conversations with
19 them. We'll prevent any of that as much as -- or to
20 the extent that we can prevent anxiety about the
21 change.

22 MS. NEWTON: Right. If you can make it an
23 exciting process for kids --

24 MS. CHAPMAN: Most of them are very much excited
25 about it and I think -- right -- we really -- that's

1 what we're going for is to really make it an exciting
2 time. And I know a lot of our 8th graders originally
3 were hearing the information as a change potentially
4 happening for next year and they were feeling a
5 little left out because --

6 MS. NEWTON: Right.

7 MS. CHAPMAN: -- they were going to be going on
8 to high school. And so I think they will very much
9 embrace and be excited about the opportunity to
10 participate in a school change before they leave and
11 go to high school.

12 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

13 MS. CHAPMAN: So that is -- that's been the
14 pulse of the student body to date.

15 MS. NEWTON: We have a lot of adult problems,
16 but we don't want our adult problems to affect our
17 kids.

18 MS. CHAPMAN: I totally agree.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: I do want to -- and you asked
20 several questions I wanted to ask. But in terms of
21 this issue of true choice, is the Department going to
22 be onsite for those families for whom this travel or
23 this transition might not make sense because of
24 siblings or some other reason neighborhood schools
25 may make more sense? Is there going to be -- is the

1 Department going to be there to aid in terms of this
2 issue of the array of options that are open to
3 parents?

4 COMMISSIONER KEY: Well, I'll let Reggie address
5 that. I mean, I'm going to say yes, but to the
6 details of that I'll let Mr. Ballard --

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yeah.

8 COMMISSIONER KEY: -- address it.

9 MR. BALLARD: Yeah. So when we were looking to
10 -- because we do want it to be a seamless process for
11 the students and the families that are there and also
12 let them know that, you know, we are dedicated to
13 their student's success. And so we've looked into
14 those options, as Commissioner Key said, and so we'll
15 be there onsite to communicate as well to the parents
16 and let them know that they have support from the
17 Department of Education.

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Great. Thank you.

19 MS. ZOOK: And I think it's key to remember too
20 is that these people and this staff have been serving
21 these kids; it will primarily just be a different
22 building.

23 MS. NEWTON: Right.

24 MS. ZOOK: So it won't be like -- it will be
25 change but, you know, sometimes we like moving into

1 something new.

2 I wonder if you go to K-8 will you have enough
3 space in the building that you're moving to?

4 MR. HARRIS: To answer that question, yes. The
5 Garland School was fully renovated. It has two --
6 I'm sorry -- 20 very large classrooms. It is on two
7 floors. We've developed a co-education model where
8 the middle school will occupy the entire top floor;
9 they will have their own separate entrance. This for
10 us -- moving the middle school here is -- our plan is
11 for this to be a short-term effort. We are looking
12 for a new facility that will be located in or near
13 the current school. It will be in south/southwest.

14 So we believe long-term we'll make a commitment
15 to the community, but this is a -- not just a stop-
16 gap measure for the immediate issues we're concerned
17 with, but it's our plan to put our kids in an
18 appropriate space at every juncture of this process.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Doctor -- oh.

20 DR. MOORE: Just --

21 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Commissioner --

22 COMMISSIONER KEY: Well, if I may follow-up, Dr.
23 Barth -- your question. My team has texted me, and
24 actually your question was a question or request by
25 the Charter Panel yesterday for ADE folks to be on-

1 hand. And we even have some of our team members --
2 in addition to their Spanish translation, we have ADE
3 team members that will be there doing that same thing
4 as well, so --

5 MS. NEWTON: Good.

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you.

7 Dr. Moore.

8 DR. MOORE: Yes. Just logistically, how far
9 apart are the two campuses?

10 MR. TRAN: Phong Tran, superintendent.

11 So they're about seven minutes apart, so it's
12 not too far.

13 And I also want to say that I have petitions
14 here that we did from the parents in the community to
15 support us in opening a school under Friendship. So
16 if you want to see this I can pass it along. And at
17 the same time -- so, it's about 500 signatures here
18 of support from the community.

19 And at the same time we're going to retain our
20 teachers to move to the new building. So nothing is
21 going to be disruptive because it's the same faces,
22 the same teachers, same students, so-on and so-forth.

23 So if you want to see this I can pass this along
24 to you all.

25 DR. MOORE: Okay. Thank you.

1 And just as a refresher, what grades will you-
2 all open next year?

3 MR. TRAN: Sure. So next year we're opening K
4 and 1, and then the year after that we're going to
5 add on the 2nd grade, the year after that we're going
6 to add 3rd grade, and so-on and so-forth.

7 DR. MOORE: Okay. So will this -- the 6th
8 through 8th grade, will that remain open and then --

9 MR. TRAN: Yes.

10 DR. MOORE: Okay.

11 MR. TRAN: Yes, that is correct.

12 DR. MOORE: So you'll have K-1 --

13 MR. TRAN: Yes, ma'am.

14 DR. MOORE: -- next year?

15 MR. TRAN: Yes, that is correct.

16 DR. MOORE: Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. All right. Any -- I
18 can't remember where I stopped. Ms. Dean, any
19 questions? Any other questions this direction? All
20 right. Ms. McFetridge, you're good?

21 Okay. All right. Ms. Hyatt.

22 MS. HYATT: I just want to clarify one thing
23 about the petition just so that we all know. So the
24 petition I believe was garnered between the time that
25 they were going to try and open a 6-8 this upcoming

1 school year. So these -- this isn't necessarily just
2 from the past week.

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Sure.

4 MS. HYATT: And I just wanted to make sure that
5 we're being transparent in that.

6 CHIARMAN BARTH: Thank you.

7 MS. McFETRIDGE: I do have one question.

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Uh-huh, Ms. McFetridge.

9 MS. McFETRIDGE: How are you managing your
10 support services? Because 105 of these students is
11 quite a bit -- counseling or --

12 MS. CHAPMAN: Hi. Lauren Chapman, principal.

13 Our support services currently are servicing 105
14 students and both through ELL and our special ed.
15 services. And then as new students come in we will
16 -- we can adequately support, you know, those new
17 IEPs or new ELL learners as they come in and we'll
18 adjust our staffing as we need to, if we need to grow
19 our department or contract our department.

20 MS. McFETRIDGE: So you've looked at that?
21 You're comfortable --

22 MS. CHAPMAN: We have looked at that, yes, and
23 what that potential growth may do in terms of
24 services.

25 MS. McFETRIDGE: Okay. Good.

1 MR. TRAN: Also -- Phong Tran.

2 Also just to answer your question as well -- so
3 before, they didn't have an ESL department. So we
4 went in there, we created an ESL department, and we
5 actually had hired two ESL teachers, because the
6 population there was approximately 76% Hispanic. So
7 Friendship came in there, created an ESL program,
8 created an ESL department, hired ESL teachers, as
9 well as we hired a bilingual disciplinarian; and so
10 we've seen our discipline rate drop dramatically. So
11 at the beginning of the year we had 44 suspensions,
12 to the point now where we are, in December, we only
13 have 4. So it's working because we have the
14 necessary staff in place that is representative of
15 the demographics of that community at that school.

16 MS. McFETRIDGE: Okay. Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Zook.

18 MS. ZOOK: Yes. And have you been screening for
19 dyslexia markers?

20 MS. CHAPMAN: Yes, we have. Our special ed.
21 teacher has been to all of those trainings and is
22 screening as, you know, appropriate through the
23 school year. So he is up-to-date on all of those
24 screenings.

25 MS. ZOOK: Because I know that can be tricky

1 with the students with a second language; so I trust
2 that --

3 MS. CHAPMAN: We are working through that. But,
4 yes, he is on top of that and has been doing all of
5 the screenings that need to be done.

6 MS. ZOOK: And I do apologize for all the
7 different kinds of things y'all have had to deal with
8 since you got to Arkansas. And we're typically --
9 this is unique and we appreciate -- or I appreciate
10 your patience and your understanding and your focus
11 on students.

12 MS. NEWTON: Yes. Thank you.

13 MS. CHAPMAN: Well, we are happy to be here. We
14 are enjoying every minute of it.

15 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. If there are no
16 other questions -- thank y'all very much -- then, as
17 Ms. Hyatt said, the proper motion is either to review
18 the decision of the Charter Authorizing Panel for the
19 amendment or to not review that.

20 MS. DEAN: I move to not review.

21 MS. ZOOK: Second.

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Motion by Ms. Dean,
23 second by Ms. Zook.

24 Why don't we do a quick roll-call?

25 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Zook.

1 MS. ZOOK: Yes.

2 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Hill.

3 DR. HILL: Yes.

4 COMMISSIONER KEY: Mr. Williamson.

5 MR. WILLIAMSON: Yes.

6 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Chambers.

7 MS. CHAMBERS: Yes.

8 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. McFetridge.

9 MS. McFETRIDGE: Yes.

10 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Moore.

11 DR. MOORE: Yes.

12 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Newton.

13 MS. NEWTON: Yes.

14 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Dean.

15 MS. DEAN: Yes.

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. So that decision
17 was unanimous; so that is approved.

18 And so that's our only action that we need to
19 carry out this morning.

20 We, I don't think, had any public comment on
21 this item. Is that correct, Ms. Freno?

22 MS. FENO: Yes.

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. So I would entertain a
24 motion to adjourn this special meeting.

25 MS. DEAN: So moved.

1 MS. CHAMBERS: Second.

2 MR. WILLIAMSON: Second.

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: So motion by Ms. Dean, second
4 by Ms. Chambers.

5 All in favor say "aye."

6 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Opposed, same sign.

8 We'll reconvene up at 201A in about -- let's say
9 just a few minutes before 11:00.

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12 (The meeting was concluded at 10:40 a.m.)

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