

**In The Matter Of:**  
*Arkansas Department of Education*  
*State Board of Education*

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*September 13, 2018*

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*Susan B. Whitson, CCR, Inc.*

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**Min-U-Script® with Word Index**

BEFORE THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

September 13, 2018  
10:00 a.m.

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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 Member

ADE LEGAL COUNSEL:

Ms. Lori Freno	ADE General Counsel
Ms. Courtney Salas-Ford	ADE Deputy General Counsel
Ms. Mary Claire Hyatt	ADE Attorney

ALSO PRESENT:

Ms. Staci Smith	ADE Learning Services
Dr. Alexandra Boyd	ADE Charter Unit

LOCATION:

Arkansas Department of Education  
#1 Capitol Mall - Auditorium  
Little Rock, Arkansas

## 1   ALSO PRESENT:

2   Ms. Susan Underwood

ADE Division of Early  
Childcare and Education

3   Ms. Joan Luneau

ADE Ed Prep

4   Dr. Jeremy Owoh

ADE Educator Effectiveness

5   Greg Rogers

ADE Fiscal Services

6   Cindy Smith

ADE Fiscal Services

7   Dr. Robin Bowman

Arkansas Tech University

8   Dr. Jeff Woods

Arkansas Tech University

9   Senator Jason Rapert

10   Senator Breane Davis

11   Dr. Mark Gotcher

Superintendent Russellville  
School District

12   Jason McCann

13   Melissa Sawyer

14   Davis Hendricks

15   April Gentry Sutterfield

16   Randy Horton

Russellville Mayor

17   Justin Gunderman

18   Delton Gordon

19   Dr. Mark Elrod

20   Lacey Thacker

21   Debbie Hibbs

22   Tonya Williams

23   Dr. Richard Wilde

Superintendent Earle School  
District

24   Barbara Warren

Superintendent Dollarway  
School District

25   Mr. Mike Poore

Superintendent Little Rock  
School District

26   Shirley Washington

Pine Bluff Mayor

27   Ryan Whatley

28   Dexter Lee

29   Ken Moore

30   Silas Ford

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

2 V. ACTION AGENDA A:

3 A-1: ARKANSAS GOVERNOR SCHOOL SITE COMMITTEE

4 RECOMMENDATION

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. We are now  
6 down to our first Action Item. I -- because  
7 I'm an employee with Hendrix College, I will be  
8 recusing on that item and I will therefore be  
9 departing.

10 I will turn things over to Vice Chair  
11 Dean, she will run this item. And then after  
12 this item I know there are some folks who will  
13 need to leave at that point, we'll take a ten  
14 minute break and I'll get back for the rest of  
15 the meeting.

16 So I wish y'all the best of luck.

17 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Thank you.

18 (Chairman Barth left the room.)

19 VICE CHAIR DEAN: All right.

20 Staci Smith. All right. Staci Smith is  
21 going to represent the item.

22 MS. STACI SMITH: And I have a  
23 presentation, Dan, do we have that presentation  
24 up?

25 So Staci Smith, Arkansas Department of Ed

1 Learning Services.

2 Today we're here to make a recommendation  
3 for site selection for Arkansas Governor  
4 School.

5 I'm going to kind of walk you through  
6 the -- the what has actually happened and why  
7 we came to the recommendation that we did  
8 today.

9 First I want to draw you specifically to  
10 some specific rules and the purpose for  
11 Arkansas Governor School. It's a residential  
12 summer program for approximately 400 rising  
13 high school seniors, so students in their  
14 junior years in school send out their  
15 applications to be a part of this program.

16 Rule 13.07 actually gives guidelines for a  
17 site selection committee for a competitive  
18 process. 13.08 actually establishes the  
19 criteria for the site selection committee.  
20 13.09 says the committee shall recommend based  
21 on a majority vote. 13.11, the site selection  
22 will be for a period of three years, contingent  
23 upon successful and annual evaluations.

24 So again, rules for determining how the  
25 committee is selected. The committee is

1 appointed by the Commissioner of Education and  
 2 it has to have a minimum of at least seven  
 3 committee members on the committee. Our  
 4 committee had 13 committee members that were  
 5 from across the state and had various  
 6 backgrounds in education, including members who  
 7 had experience with previous Arkansas Governor  
 8 School as students and as faculty members. We  
 9 had members on the staff who had experience as  
 10 G.T. teachers in schools, we had experienced  
 11 and current superintendents on the committee,  
 12 so we tried to have a diverse -- we have high  
 13 school principals -- a diverse committee that  
 14 would represent the state.

15 This is the Site Visit Evaluation Sheet  
 16 that was used. All the criteria that is on  
 17 this sheet is specific to the rules and the  
 18 areas of emphasis. The rules state that you  
 19 will have a site selection rubric that has 100  
 20 points. This has 100 points. This form right  
 21 here was a form that was created for the  
 22 individual members to be able to rank their  
 23 committee members. This probably is the form  
 24 that has caused the confusion and the  
 25 conversation around the actual site selection



1 committee. The ranking was the intent to try  
2 to determine what the majority vote was instead  
3 of taking a vote. The rules are very clear  
4 that there is a majority vote.

5 So this form right here, this grid,  
6 actually walks you through the points and the  
7 rankings and then I'm going to talk to you  
8 about the actual vote that did occur.

9 So when you look at the cumulative  
10 points -- and there is nothing in the rules  
11 that state that the cumulative points determine  
12 the Governor School site. Okay. However, when  
13 you look at total points for the three  
14 different colleges who applied, which was  
15 Arkansas Tech University, Hendrix, and UCA, you  
16 will see that total points you have Arkansas  
17 Tech with 1,178, Hendrix with 1,203, UCA with  
18 987.

19 The day that the site committee met on  
20 campus, they were told that day that Hendrix  
21 had the most points. The committee was told.  
22 Okay. Not Hendrix, the committee.

23 When the ranking sheets and scoring sheets  
24 were brought to the department, it was my job  
25 to review those scoring sheets. When I

1 reviewed the scoring sheets, I recognized that  
 2 we had a discrepancy between ranking and  
 3 between the cumulative points. On ranking, if  
 4 you will notice, of the 13 committee members,  
 5 nine of the committee members ranked Arkansas  
 6 Tech as their first choice to four at Hendrix  
 7 and nine at UCA. At that point I looked at  
 8 individual scoring sheets and recognized that  
 9 one committee member scored with a point  
 10 differential of 39 points whereas most of the  
 11 committee members scored within ten points of  
 12 Arkansas Tech and Hendrix. At that point on  
 13 this timeline, site visits were made to Hendrix  
 14 and UCA on Monday with the committee, on  
 15 Tuesday they visited Arkansas Tech, on  
 16 Wednesday the sheets were brought to me and I  
 17 reviewed them, Thursday I spoke with leadership  
 18 here at the department and told the leadership  
 19 that I was not confident in making a  
 20 recommendation because I did not feel like  
 21 there was a clear recommendation from the  
 22 committee. At that point I emailed the  
 23 committee members on Friday, May 11, and told  
 24 them that we would have a webinar meeting on  
 25 Monday because there was a discrepancy between

1 cumulative points and between rankings and that  
2 we would have a meeting on Monday to determine  
3 who the final recommendation should be.

4 On Monday we did a Zoom meeting. On the  
5 Zoom meeting I shared this chart that you see  
6 here. I went over the total points and total  
7 rankings, I went over specifically the rules in  
8 Section 13 of the rules governing this. And  
9 Rule 13.9 -- 09 says majority vote. At that  
10 point I told the committee that I did not feel  
11 like there had been a majority vote and that we  
12 would actually cast votes. Individuals cast  
13 their votes through a Google document  
14 individually. It was not done online live with  
15 everyone so there was no discussion on how  
16 individual members would vote. Individual  
17 members voted on this site, and you can see  
18 that nine of the committee members voted  
19 Arkansas Tech University, four voted for  
20 Hendrix.

21 At that time I gave the recommendation to  
22 Commissioner Key with the rubric sheets that  
23 are -- the committee's recommendation was for  
24 Arkansas Tech University.

25 The rules align -- the rules allow for

1           this to be a competitive process. Nowhere in  
2           the rules does it state a university or a  
3           four-year college that Governor School is to be  
4           held there. It sets up for a competitive site  
5           selection process.

6           The committee was objective. We had 13  
7           people from across the state who I believe did  
8           their job fairly. They reviewed the  
9           applications, they visited each site, heard  
10          presentations by each of the four-year  
11          institutions that had submitted applications,  
12          scored their own individual rubric sheets, and  
13          then they cast votes after that. The committee  
14          followed the rules that were established.

15          The sheet about the rankings, that's on  
16          the department, and it was an erroneous sheet  
17          in the directions, and that was my job when I  
18          reviewed the final scores to determine whether  
19          or not rules and procedures had been followed.  
20          The recommendation that is given to you today  
21          is based on the majority vote of the committee,  
22          specific to the rules. It will be a three  
23          year, based on -- contingent upon a successful  
24          and annual evaluations of the program.

25          So at this time I ask that the Board

1 consider Arkansas Tech University as the site  
2 selection. We do have members from Arkansas  
3 Tech here if you have specific questions about  
4 their application or anything about Governor  
5 School moving forward.

6 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Thank you, Ms. Smith. I  
7 appreciate you.

8 MS. ZOOK: Madam Chairman, before we  
9 proceed, may I ask legal, is our vote we can  
10 vote one way or the other or we just -- is our  
11 discussion going to be perfunctory? I mean is  
12 there -- I notice -- I know it's on the action  
13 addenda and I know that it requires a vote, but  
14 not having had an opportunity to talk  
15 individually with the people about the  
16 reasoning about how they scored and why they  
17 scored the way they did --

18 MS. FRENO: Yes, ma'am.

19 MS. ZOOK: -- I just want to know where we  
20 are.

21 MS. FRENO: Yes. This is Lori Freno,  
22 Department of Education.

23 If I understand your question, what you  
24 will be voting on today is whether to  
25 approve -- whether to accept the recommendation

1 and approve ATU as the -- as the site.

2 Does -- does that answer your question,  
3 ma'am?

4 MS. ZOOK: Yeah. So we won't be voting  
5 if -- if everybody decided they would rather  
6 have it at UCA, then that's not what we're  
7 voting on, we're voting on whether or not to  
8 accept the current recommendation?

9 MS. FRENO: The -- what you are going to  
10 be voting on first is whether -- I mean what  
11 the point of this vote is is whether you are  
12 going to be accepting the recommendation. Yes.

13 MS. ZOOK: Thank you.

14 VICE CHAIR DEAN: I understand that we  
15 have -- any questions? We'll start on this  
16 end.

17 MS. CHAMBERS: Just a process question.  
18 Will we hear from any of the committee or the  
19 panel? Are they here today or is that part of  
20 the process?

21 MS. STACI SMITH: I did not invite  
22 committee members here today so, no, there are  
23 no committee members here to speak.

24 COMMISSIONER KEY: There is one.

25 MS. STACI SMITH: Oh, there is one?

1 COMMISSIONER KEY: Yes. One that I see  
2 anyway.

3 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Any more questions on  
4 this side? Mr. Williamson?

5 MR. WILLIAMSON: Not quite yet.

6 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Ms. Zook, do you have a  
7 question?

8 MS. ZOOK: I guess the -- the meat of my  
9 questions is is there room in the law, in the  
10 statute, for us to pick something other than  
11 what's recommended?

12 It's my impression, from the emails I have  
13 received and from the information I studied,  
14 that Tech is changing the generalized  
15 curriculum to more of a STEM curriculum as  
16 opposed to a liberal arts curriculum; that they  
17 changed to four weeks from six weeks; and --  
18 anyway, do -- not being able to talk with the  
19 people who reasoned through all of that, then I  
20 don't know how valid some of these points are.

21 A lot of the emails that we received  
22 pointed out inconsistencies between Tech and  
23 UCA and Hendrix as far as the intent of the  
24 Governor School to begin with. We all know --  
25 well, probably people in this room don't

1           because they are way younger, but I remember  
2           when Governor School was started and the --  
3           they started in North Carolina. They looked  
4           across the nation at successful places, and  
5           that has been the pattern of the Governor  
6           School subsequent to that, irrelevant as to  
7           where it was held. This would appear, and I'm  
8           just judging on the information I was provided,  
9           that that original design is being shifted as  
10          well as the recommended site as well as having  
11          students on a campus where there is no summer  
12          school going on versus one that is.

13                 So I have lots of questions, and they may  
14                 or may not be appropriate to be asked at -- in  
15                 this venue, I don't know, you know. That --  
16                 but if they are, then I would like to see if we  
17                 could get some answers, and if they are not  
18                 then I totally understand that as well.

19                 MS. STACI SMITH: So we do have staff and  
20                 Dr. Bowman here from Arkansas Tech University  
21                 if you want to ask specific questions about  
22                 their proposal.

23                 I will say that the request for proposal  
24                 that went out to all universities was based on  
25                 the rules. In reviewing the application, I --



1           and the committee that reviewed the  
2           application, because that is part of their  
3           scoring and their requirement, they had to look  
4           for the areas of curriculum that are specific  
5           in the rule. So the intent of having Area One,  
6           Area Two, and Area Three covered in the  
7           curriculum is there.

8                     Their theme overall, they had a technology  
9           theme kind of incorporating it, but it was  
10          not -- I did not read the application to intend  
11          that we're taking Governor School and turning  
12          it into a STEM camp.

13                    So the committee, though, that was part of  
14          their task is to review the applications and to  
15          do the site visits and to make that  
16          determination, and they did do that.

17                   MS. ZOOK: Thank you.

18                   COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Zook, would you all  
19          like to hear from Dr. Bowman?

20                   MS. ZOOK: I'm happy to hear from anyone.

21                   COMMISSIONER KEY: Okay.

22                   MS. ZOOK: I've read 3,000 emails and I'm  
23          ready to listen.

24                   VICE CHAIR DEAN: Good morning. If you  
25          will state your name for the record, please.

1 DR. ROBIN BOWMAN: Good morning. I'm  
2 Robin Bowman, I'm the President of Arkansas  
3 Tech University. Thank you for allowing us to  
4 be here today.

5 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Thank you.

6 DR. ROBIN BOWMAN: Did you have a specific  
7 question or do you want me to --

8 MS. ZOOK: Did you -- when you were  
9 writing or applying, did you intentionally move  
10 away from a more liberal arts into a more STEM  
11 type approach?

12 I understand the adding the computer  
13 science, I get that; but it -- it seems from  
14 the -- my reading and from the emails that I've  
15 had that it appears that it got away from the  
16 original intent and what has been held for the  
17 last 30-something years at Hendrix.

18 DR. ROBIN BOWMAN: I'm happy to address  
19 that.

20 The Arkansas Tech University faculty, led  
21 by our Dean of Arts and Humanities, Jeff Woods,  
22 who can speak specifically to items in the  
23 curriculum so I've asked him to come up with  
24 me, they developed a curriculum that I believe  
25 maintained the historical influence on arts and

1 humanities.

2 If you read through the proposal, there  
3 are still sections on things like instrumental  
4 music, theater, literature -- I could go on and  
5 on -- but the areas that are specified that  
6 have been historically included continue to be  
7 included.

8 They did take a critical look at emerging  
9 technologies, and want students to think about  
10 critical thinking in relation to emerging  
11 technologies.

12 I anticipate that every person who walked  
13 into this room today carried a piece of  
14 technology with them. It is pervasive in our  
15 society. And I also believe that it's very  
16 important for individuals, especially our young  
17 people, to analyze the personal and  
18 sociological implications as well as the ethics  
19 associated with the use of technology.

20 I would like to invite Dr. Woods to the  
21 podium to speak a little bit more specifically  
22 to the curriculum.

23 DR. JEFF WOODS: Good morning.

24 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Good morning. If you  
25 would, state your name for the record, please.

1 DR. JEFF WOODS: Yes. My name is Jeff  
2 Woods. I am Dean of the College of Arts and  
3 Humanities at Arkansas Tech University. I  
4 helped to organize the ATU application for  
5 Governor School, most specifically in the  
6 curriculum area.

7 I would really like to address two issues  
8 that I think are coming up from the emails that  
9 you are getting. One is the context of our  
10 approach to the curriculum proposal and the  
11 other is really a hope of continuity with  
12 Governor Schools in the past.

13 Tech's approach was to add a tech twist to  
14 the liberal arts core of Governor School, not  
15 to replace it with technical education or move  
16 even into STEM areas. ATU has been adding this  
17 twist to our curriculum, to our college  
18 curriculum for years, and especially since I've  
19 been dean. Things like our game design  
20 program, our cultural and geo-spatial programs,  
21 they are traditional liberal arts programs but  
22 we add some technology into it.

23 It's also -- I think our approach has been  
24 to reject a false dichotomy between the arts  
25 and humanities and the sciences in

1 professionally track programs. We see those as  
2 integrated and necessarily integrated.

3 In my college we believe that an  
4 educated -- education routed in research and  
5 communication, creativity, ethical  
6 contemplation, economic literacy, critical  
7 thinking skills should be matched with an  
8 understanding of modern technology and the  
9 influence that technology has as a tool,  
10 template, and context for the liberal arts.

11 The curriculum we proposed follow the  
12 rules set forth by the state for Governor  
13 School. It is focused entirely in the  
14 traditional liberal arts, English language,  
15 social sciences, drama, music, visual arts,  
16 mathematics, and natural sciences.

17 Our curriculum was formed entirely by Tech  
18 professors who are experts in these  
19 disciplines, and we took for granted under the  
20 rules that we would have an open, experiential,  
21 and test-free learning environment. But as  
22 other Governor Schools have done in other  
23 states, we chose to take a themed approach.  
24 The natural fit for us was to incorporate  
25 technology into each area.

1           In English and drama, we want to talk  
2           about writing for the Internet, screen plays  
3           for the small screen. That's how most people  
4           consume those things now. In music we want to  
5           debate the pros and cons of digital editing.  
6           In social sciences we want to talk about cyber  
7           community and cyber crime. In math we want to  
8           talk about cryptography. That's just a few  
9           examples. There are many more in there.

10           In Area Two, which basically involves  
11           epistemology, the knowledge of nature -- or the  
12           nature of knowledge and truth, we want to talk  
13           about knowledge and truth in a world where  
14           realtime international communication, where  
15           multi-media or multiple sensory expression and  
16           the world's vast stores of knowledge and  
17           disinformation are in the palm of your hand.  
18           And we want speakers, say, in science fiction  
19           that help us explore the moral and  
20           philosophical implications of a human future  
21           where virtual reality, cybernetics, artificial  
22           intelligence, even replicants are not just  
23           possible but probable.

24           In Area Three we want students to confront  
25           real world challenges arising from a connected

1 world and have opportunities for civic  
2 engagement and community development. Who  
3 knows, they might even study the social  
4 media-based mass debate and protest that has  
5 accompanied this decision on where to locate  
6 Arkansas' Governor School. I hope they do.

7 As for the question of continuity, it's  
8 never been ATU's intention to place change  
9 above continuity in Arkansas' Governor School.  
10 We understand that Governor School has a long  
11 and proud tradition at Hendrix and that we need  
12 help from faculty and student alumni of the  
13 program to maintain the best traditions of  
14 Governor School.

15 Even our tech twist actually just draws on  
16 traditions found at other Governor Schools  
17 nationwide. Themed and interdisciplinary  
18 programs are delivered in Governor Schools in  
19 Delaware, Mississippi, Missouri, Dakotas,  
20 Virginia, Wyoming, many other states.

21 Also please understand that Arkansas Tech  
22 is not new to working with Arkansas students.  
23 94 percent of our college students are from  
24 Arkansas. And we are not new to working with  
25 gifted high school students. Our band camps is

1 just one example, have accommodated hundreds of  
2 middle to high school students each year for  
3 decades, and we have one of the safest  
4 communities and campuses in the state.

5 No public university can entirely cut off  
6 activity during the summer, but the rules put  
7 us -- put to us only ask that other activities  
8 do not interfere -- interfere with the Governor  
9 School. We're committed to that, we've made  
10 that promise, and we will live up to it.

11 Basically in closing I just want to add  
12 that -- that I'm real -- I'm extremely proud to  
13 be a part of this ATU application and I thank  
14 you so much for your careful consideration in  
15 this.

16 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Thank you, Dr. Woods.

17 MS. ZOOK: One other question I had is why  
18 you chose to apply for four weeks instead of  
19 six.

20 DR. ROBIN BOWMAN: Go ahead.

21 DR. JEFF WOODS: Yeah. We could -- we  
22 debated this. We -- we've looked at some -- we  
23 tried to seek out some past comments on this,  
24 what are the issues with timing, things like  
25 that.



1 I know for one, when I was a high school  
 2 student and was asked to think about doing  
 3 Governor School, I couldn't do the six weeks.  
 4 I had too much going on. And so we had to make  
 5 a -- we had to make a decision, and we thought  
 6 four weeks would work extremely well. It would  
 7 be -- it would give the students what they  
 8 need, it wouldn't over burden them in terms of  
 9 their time. It's -- you know, that's a -- the  
 10 difference between four and six weeks is, you  
 11 know, it depends on what you do in the time  
 12 that you have, and we thought we could do a  
 13 great job for those students in the four weeks.

14 VICE CHAIR DEAN: All right.  
 15 Mr. Williamson, any questions?

16 MR. WILLIAMSON: Not right now.

17 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Okay.

18 DR. MOORE: I did want to make a comment  
 19 on that four-week calendar.

20 DR. JEFF WOODS: Uh-huh.

21 DR. MOORE: I saw that it is later in the  
 22 summer, and I know there are concerns that it  
 23 might interfere. Is there any ability that  
 24 might change or is that set in stone?

25 DR. JEFF WOODS: I don't think it's set in

1 stone, necessarily. July seemed to work. We  
2 knew that we had a -- that students have a lot  
3 of events in June, we know they have them in  
4 early August, it's hard to sort of fit that in.

5 Obviously, you know, you could go a week  
6 earlier, but then it passes over the July 4th  
7 holidays, so we just kind of made a judgment  
8 call on what the best fit was in in the summer.

9 DR. MOORE: Okay.

10 DR. ROBIN BOWMAN: We also timed it to be  
11 during our second summer session, which is our  
12 lighter summer session on the campus. Our  
13 second summer session last year was  
14 predominantly online, and I anticipate that  
15 that will continue to be so. For example,  
16 during that period last year, we had 11  
17 students residing on the entire campus. That  
18 was it for the -- the college age student.

19 I believe there were only 170-some-odd  
20 that were actually taking classes on campus.  
21 And again we're a university of over 12,000  
22 students, so that's a very small number for us.

23 DR. MOORE: Uh-huh. Thank you.

24 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Thank you, Dr. Bowman.

25 DR. ROBIN BOWMAN: Thank you.

1                   VICE CHAIR DEAN: At this time, if there  
2 is no more questions, I think we have a lot of  
3 people signed up for public comments, but we  
4 have --

5                   COMMISSIONER KEY: And I think you --  
6 y'all need to vote to -- oh, Dr. Moore may  
7 still have another question.

8                   VICE CHAIR DEAN: I'm sorry. Go ahead,  
9 Dr. Moore.

10                  DR. MOORE: I think this is probably a  
11 legal question.

12                  Governor School is not set up in statute;  
13 is that correct?

14                  MS. FRENO: Lori Freno again.

15                  Dr. Moore, that's correct.

16                  DR. MOORE: Okay. That's --

17                  MS. FRENO: Governor School is governed by  
18 rule.

19                  DR. MOORE: And those rules that were  
20 established in 2004, do you have any background  
21 as to what happened in 2004 to create these  
22 rules?

23                  MS. FRENO: I do not have a -- I do not  
24 personally because I was not here. I don't  
25 know if we -- no, we do not. We do not.

1 DR. MOORE: Were there rules prior to 2004  
2 that were different? Do you know?

3 MS. FRENO: I do not know that answer.

4 DR. MOORE: Okay. Okay.

5 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Right now, if there is  
6 no more questions, we need to take a majority  
7 vote from the Board to accept --

8 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Hyatt, could you  
9 come and address the public comment portion?

10 MS. HYATT: Absolutely. Mary Claire  
11 Hyatt, attorney, Arkansas Department of  
12 Education.

13 Those that notified the Commissioner's  
14 office and are on the list can speak without a  
15 majority vote. If there are additional people  
16 that have signed up to speak that didn't  
17 notify, a majority vote would be necessary to  
18 allow those to give their comments. And then  
19 these would be heard before a vote on the  
20 matter; so --

21 COMMISSIONER KEY: Correct.

22 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Right. So we have -- so  
23 let's go ahead and take the vote now. Is there  
24 another question?

25 MS. CHAMBERS: So does that mean nobody

1 signed up?

2 VICE CHAIR DEAN: No. There are people  
3 signed up.

4 COMMISSIONER KEY: Yes. Ms. Chambers,  
5 there is a list of folks who have signed up  
6 ahead of time. But if there are others who  
7 have come in, and if you all want to hear their  
8 comments you have to vote to accept their  
9 comments outside of those who have previously  
10 called.

11 MS. CHAMBERS: So is the vote to hear the  
12 public comments?

13 VICE CHAIR DEAN: The ones that have --  
14 that have not previously signed up. The ones  
15 that have previously signed up will be heard.

16 COMMISSIONER KEY: And it's a preference  
17 for the Board if you want to take that vote now  
18 or if you want to take it later, just if there  
19 are folks who came in that you want to hear  
20 from that aren't signed up, you will have to  
21 make that vote.

22 MS. CHAMBERS: Okay. I just wanted to  
23 make sure we were clear on what we're voting  
24 on. I heard a reaction of folks thinking we  
25 were going to go ahead and vote on the

1 location.

2 MS. ZOOK: And I think that I'm reminded  
3 of what my friend and former chair of this  
4 board Toyce Newton always said, when you speak,  
5 if you have something new to add, then that's  
6 great, but to say the same thing over and over  
7 using different words is, you know, not  
8 necessarily good use of your time.

9 So I -- I'll move that we hear public  
10 comment beyond the list of those who signed up  
11 early.

12 MS. CHAMBERS: Second.

13 VICE CHAIR DEAN: All right. That motion  
14 passes --

15 COMMISSIONER KEY: Not yet.

16 VICE CHAIR DEAN: I'm sorry. We have to  
17 vote. Sorry.

18 Let's go ahead and take a vote. Sorry.

19 COMMISSIONER KEY: All in favor?

20 VICE CHAIR DEAN: All in favor?

21 BOARD MEMBERS: Aye.

22 VICE CHAIR DEAN: All right. Any opposed?

23 Okay. All right. So we've -- I see we  
24 have two legislators on the list and we're  
25 going to allow them to speak first, Senator

1 Davis and Senator Jason Rapert.

2 Okay. So Senator Rapert.

3 SENATOR JASON RAPERT: Thank you very  
4 much.

5 I appreciate you for having me here, Madam  
6 Chair.

7 VICE CHAIR DEAN: You're welcome.

8 SENATOR JASON RAPERT: I appreciate the  
9 opportunity to see all of you, and I appreciate  
10 the service that you do. And these are days  
11 when you really earn your keep, when you have  
12 an issue that you have to decide that's very  
13 important, one as important as dealing with  
14 Governor School.

15 I do want to point out, Madam Chair, it  
16 would have been nice if Hendrix had been asked  
17 some questions as well. We heard well over ten  
18 minutes of conversation from one side of this  
19 particular issue and didn't have the other, so  
20 hopefully there will be plenty of time to  
21 recapture that in the future.

22 I believe you-all know where I stand on  
23 this issue. I'm here not today necessarily  
24 about one college or the other. I'm actually a  
25 UCA alumnus, I didn't graduate from Hendrix, so

1 I'm actually an alum of UCA but I'm here today  
2 about the process and about the -- the  
3 character of the school itself.

4 The process, as you saw here -- and I  
5 appreciate the explanation of -- of how it was  
6 a bit -- a bit clunky, if you will. The bottom  
7 line is when you have a process that includes  
8 scoring as a part of that process, generally  
9 high score translates to victor or to winner.  
10 The fact of the matter is, regardless of the  
11 vote that was taken at the end of the process,  
12 the people as they were visiting these  
13 particular institutions and were scoring those  
14 institutions actually scored as they saw fit.  
15 And I would like to ask you and all of the  
16 members here, when have you ever been asked to  
17 be a judge or to score something and told you  
18 can only score within ten points of one or the  
19 other? That's just the way the old ball  
20 bounces, people score. Maybe Mr. Hill was a  
21 little tougher than Mrs. Zook might be, but  
22 that's just how it is.

23 And what happened is you had Hendrix came  
24 out as high scorer when they were looked at  
25 individually. I don't think that's a surprise,



1           given 38 years of their experience with  
2           Governor School and their performance and what  
3           they have been able to accomplish. Again, it's  
4           not about one school or the other. In this  
5           particular issue, I think the process was  
6           indeed flawed.

7           The first thing that I was advised, when  
8           the ADE brought me in to talk to me about this,  
9           was the fact that -- excuse me -- that the  
10          rules needed to be changed. And so when you  
11          approach me and tell me that there was a  
12          problem here and this is why we're having a  
13          conversation, I feel that that should have been  
14          addressed before the process went forward, so  
15          when it came to you at the Board you didn't  
16          have a bit of a controversy.

17          So one of my arguments here is that the  
18          process itself indeed has a problem. But if  
19          you're going to look at process and you're  
20          going to look at what actually brought them to  
21          a decision, go back to the root of the matter.  
22          Go back to the facts, and the facts are that  
23          when they scored those individual areas, they  
24          scored Hendrix higher on this.

25          The second part of this that's come to

1           fore is that this is indeed not just a site  
2           selection decision. You're actually about to  
3           decide -- and you, by the way, look at the  
4           rules very carefully. This is a recommendation  
5           to your board. It does not say this is what  
6           you must do. The decision actually lies with  
7           each one of you individually and you are the  
8           ones that will actually be responsible for the  
9           decision at the end of the day, not the  
10          committee that made this recommendation.

11                 So think about that. The recommendation  
12          was a bit clunky, it was a bit flawed. Now  
13          you've got more information than they've had.  
14          You've got over 2,800 signatures that have been  
15          accumulated besides all of the emails. And I  
16          will tell you, there is not one parent that's  
17          contacted me or one participant that's  
18          contacted me and said that we think there was a  
19          problem with the Governor School program and it  
20          needs to be changed, and what's happening is  
21          that there is a change. And you know what, I  
22          support STEM. I support Work Force Education,  
23          that's wonderful, but guess what, we're doing  
24          that all over the state. But what about those  
25          high performing students that need to have

1 intellectual curiosity explored? We do need to  
2 have those kind of programs in place and what's  
3 happening is you're taking away from the state  
4 of Arkansas that sort of a program, which has  
5 worked very, very well over the last 38 years.

6 So when I think about this, and I'll end  
7 my comments because I know that they were  
8 timed, I wish I could claim, Mr. Commissioner  
9 and Chair Lady, I wish I could claim back some  
10 time here today because there is a lot to talk  
11 about, but one thing I think is important to me  
12 that sticks out, and it is actually one of the  
13 teachers of the Governor School program -- you  
14 received this email but I know you received  
15 many, this is Mr. Trawick, and he says just a  
16 couple of things. He's pointed out is, "The  
17 problem I see with the ATU proposal is that it  
18 changes AGS into a STEM initiative rather than  
19 a colloquium on the broad problems of the world  
20 and the theories that undergird modern thought.  
21 The ATU proposal is too narrow in focus with  
22 its embedment in technology. The Hendrix  
23 experience is developed to promote thoughtful  
24 dialogue, foster creative expression, and  
25 investigation into beliefs and theories.

1           Ironically one of the greatest successes of the  
2           Hendrix AGS experience has been the elimination  
3           of cell phones from the students for most of  
4           the time that they are involved in the  
5           curriculum. Students actually learn to carry  
6           on face-to-face conversations, interact  
7           socially with each other, and carry on  
8           thoughtful conversations with each other."

9           And the last thing that he stated is  
10          probably most important, and he argued in his  
11          statement to you, he is a science teacher. He  
12          is all for STEM programming, but he sees that  
13          this program, which has provided unique  
14          opportunities to Arkansas students, is being  
15          fundamentally changed.

16          Here is what I will close with. According  
17          to the ADE rules for AGS site selection, the  
18          curriculum will be designed to, No. 1, focus on  
19          contemporary and futuristic topics and issues;  
20          and, No. 2, provoke curiosity and inquiry from  
21          the students, but the laser focused ATU  
22          proposal zooms in on technology too strongly.  
23          That may hold a student's interest for a week,  
24          but four weeks or maybe even six weeks?

25          According to the ATU proposal, quote, the

1           benefits of technology will be discussed along  
2           with the challenges and ethical dilemmas.  
3           Discussions on the use, benefits, and harms of  
4           using technology are good, but there are so  
5           many other problems in the world today.

6                     And please listen to what I'm about to say  
7           to you and quote from him. I'm all for  
8           technology. I used my phone when I  
9           communicated with you and sent my comments to  
10          you. We all use them, but you know what, this  
11          is not smart. It can't make your decisions for  
12          you. It is a tool. Just like a pen is a tool  
13          and a piece of paper is a tool, this is a tool.  
14          But what we need are students that can  
15          thought -- can think, excuse me, and explore  
16          thought and on how to make the best decision.  
17          You can't get that from clicking a mouse or  
18          punching a button, that requires thoughtful  
19          interaction and intellectual stimulation of  
20          which Hendrix's AGS school has always provided.

21                     And here is what he ends with. He says,  
22          discussions on the use, benefits and harms --  
23          excuse me -- he says, discussions on the use,  
24          benefits, and harms of using technology are  
25          good, but there are many other problems. And

1           this is what I wanted you to hear. What about  
2           world hunger, strife in the Middle East,  
3           democracy versus other forms of government,  
4           religious ideas, the development of modern  
5           scientific theory, dealing with personal issues  
6           of relationships, social problems, face-to-face  
7           communication, logistics, humanities, art,  
8           sport, leisure, competing values in a world of  
9           limited resources, the haves and have nots,  
10          space exploration, etc. Where are these  
11          opportunities when you change the fundamental  
12          core of Governor School?

13                 Listen, I actually am a supporter and  
14          advocate for ATU on their funding issues. They  
15          know this, I'm a co-chair of higher education,  
16          I support them, and I'm sorry that we're here  
17          today with a bit of a controversy. But what I  
18          support most of all is the fact that the  
19          process was not exactly like it should be.  
20          They should have restarted and gone back and  
21          come back to you with a solid recommendation,  
22          that would have been helpful.

23                 But No. 2 and, actually, probably my most  
24          passionate plea to you today is this. The  
25          problems that we face in this world right now

1 are not about technology. We're getting new  
 2 technology every day and we're learning to use  
 3 it. But the problems we face in this world  
 4 right now are how to get along with each other,  
 5 how to be civil with each other, how to  
 6 actually handle problems that technology cannot  
 7 fix for us. And therefore I hope that as you  
 8 weigh all of the comments that you have here  
 9 today, you realize that it's your decision. A  
 10 recommendation is a recommendation is a  
 11 recommendation, but that doesn't mean that I  
 12 have to agree with that. And so I ask you to  
 13 please consider not changing the core  
 14 programming of Arkansas Governor School. Think  
 15 hard about that before you make that decision.

16 I appreciate the time. I would answer a  
 17 question if you have any.

18 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Thank you, Senator  
 19 Rapert.

20 Does anyone have questions for Senator  
 21 Rapert?

22 All right. Thank you.

23 Senator Breane Davis.

24 COURT REPORTER: Could you speak up,  
 25 ma'am? I can't hear you.

1 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Okay.

2 SENATOR BREANE DAVIS: Good morning. I'm  
3 State Senator Breane Davis and I have the  
4 privilege of representing Arkansas Tech  
5 University, they are one of the greatest assets  
6 in my district.

7 I also want to take this time to thank all  
8 of you, the State Board of Education, for your  
9 time and commitment to bettering education to  
10 students across the state of Arkansas.

11 I served on the Russellville School Board  
12 for nine years, and so I can relate in a very  
13 small way to the hard work that you all do and  
14 I just wanted to thank you and let you know  
15 that it does not go unnoticed.

16 I'm here today, of course, to speak not  
17 only in support of Arkansas Tech University,  
18 but in support of upholding the recommendation  
19 of the site selection committee.

20 A set of rules were put into place in  
21 2004. These rules guide the site selection  
22 committee through the process of choosing a  
23 site for Arkansas Governor School. The  
24 committee did their job in reviewing the  
25 proposals and following the process that has



1           been in place for 14 years without any  
2           complaints.

3                   If we have a set of rules but are willing  
4           to throw out the results simply because we do  
5           not change, then what is the point of rules and  
6           a process? I understand that change is hard  
7           and it's not something to be taken lightly,  
8           especially with a program like Arkansas  
9           Governor School that has a strong history and  
10          so many people that are proud of its tradition,  
11          but that's also why I'm so proud of Arkansas  
12          Tech University and their competitive proposal  
13          and why I appreciate the diligence of the site  
14          collection committee in choosing what they  
15          thought was the strongest proposal even if it  
16          meant change.

17                   If this recommendation is not upheld, then  
18          we are sending a message that rules do not  
19          matter and that we don't trust the 13 members  
20          of the site selection committee and their  
21          commitment and their due diligence to pick  
22          through this process. It's my hope that this  
23          board honors the rules and the process set in  
24          place years ago and approves and upholds the  
25          recommendation of the site selection committee

1           for Arkansas Tech University to be the home of  
2           Arkansas Governor School for the next three  
3           years.

4           Thank you.

5           VICE CHAIR DEAN: Thank you, Senator  
6           Davis.

7           Any questions for Senator Davis?

8           All right. And then we'll get to our  
9           list. And comment time is usually -- it's held  
10          to three minutes, so we're going to start with  
11          the first -- first name on the list, which is  
12          Nick Langston.

13          All right. Dr. Mark Gotcher.

14          DR. MARK GOTCHER: Good morning, Madam  
15          Chair. Dr. Mark Gotcher, Superintendent of  
16          Schools, Russellville School District.

17          First of all, thank you for allowing me to  
18          speak to you this morning.

19          Just a few thoughts in support of Arkansas  
20          Tech being chosen as the site for Arkansas  
21          Governor School. Several facts have been  
22          established, and I won't repeat those, but I do  
23          want to repeat this one. That A majority vote  
24          is required by Rule 13.09. Which again, as  
25          stated before, were adopted in January 2004;

1                   therefore, according to the rule, will be  
2                   presented to the Board for approval.

3                   On a personal note, I'm a graduate of  
4                   Arkansas Tech University three times. 50  
5                   percent of the Gotcher siblings or Gotcher  
6                   offspring have graduated from Arkansas Tech  
7                   University. As an amateur runner I'm running  
8                   on the campus of Arkansas Tech two to three  
9                   days a week, and I can personally testify to  
10                  the safety and security of this institution, as  
11                  I see its campus police quite often in the  
12                  early morning days.

13                  Next, and most importantly, I trust the  
14                  leadership of Dr. Robin Bowman and Dr. Mary  
15                  Gunter, her Chief of Staff -- I trust their  
16                  decisions. I trust that the application that  
17                  they presented before the committee is a sound  
18                  application.

19                  ATU is an institution that my district  
20                  that I represent as superintendent, we're very  
21                  proud partners. Very proud partners. And  
22                  lastly, my encouragement to you, the State  
23                  Board of Education, is to simply trust the  
24                  process. The process has been established, and  
25                  my encouragement for you is for you to trust

1 the process.

2 Thank you for the time. Thank you, Madam  
3 Chair. Appreciate it.

4 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Thank you.

5 All right. Next on the list we have Jason  
6 McCann.

7 MR. JASON McCANN: Good morning.

8 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Good morning.

9 MR. JASON McCANN: My name is Jason  
10 McCann, I am one of the visual arts  
11 instructors, I have been for the last 12 years  
12 at AGS. I also teach AP Drawing and Advanced  
13 Drawing at Central High School.

14 To start, my concerns aren't much about  
15 the move to ATU, it's more about the program  
16 they are proposing. The problems the program  
17 has are both curricular and logistical but I'm  
18 going to speak to my areas of expertise, which  
19 is visual arts, and it's an example of the  
20 systemic problems I think in the entire  
21 proposal.

22 It is in that area that I can best speak  
23 to some detail and some authority. Each summer  
24 my co-teachers and I have strived to create a  
25 visual and conceptual -- visual and conceptual

1           overarching goals. We call this the big idea  
2           and we've never done one twice in 12 years.  
3           Things like site-specific installation  
4           sculpture, monumental collaborative drawings  
5           and interactive artworks are some of the ideas  
6           we've covered. Outside of those yearly big  
7           ideas we explore a variety of traditional  
8           media, as well as mixed media techniques and  
9           application to be used on small pieces and on  
10          larger pieces.

11                   Excuse me.

12                   The things we cover in class put an  
13           emphasis on problem solving, team work, as well  
14           as analysis and synthesis of issues that are  
15           presented to them, traits that will serve them  
16           well as they transition to college and beyond,  
17           and that are integral to any art career they  
18           may pursue, whether it's technical or  
19           traditional.

20                   The visual arts laid out by ATU, the focus  
21           seems much, much more narrow. The proposal  
22           seems to draw back to art as it applies only to  
23           the digital world. While careers in the field  
24           of digital art and graphic design are certainly  
25           legitimate, it's a very limited path on which

1 to focus the entirety a session.

2 3D printing is -- 3D printing sculpture is  
3 fun and video game character development is  
4 great, but the people that practice those  
5 professionally have worked for years in  
6 traditional forms before they get to that  
7 point.

8 Also the lesson planning appears to be a  
9 proposal structured more like that for  
10 something of a middle school group,  
11 week-to-week assignments, no personal  
12 development of ideas or technical skill. It's  
13 a -- it supports a finite technical skill set  
14 and it seems to permeate the curriculum of all  
15 disciplines in the program proposal.

16 So I ask you if it was your money, if you  
17 were investing money in a program for young  
18 people, would you rather invest in training our  
19 students in today's technology that will allow  
20 them to handle digital and technology  
21 platforms, platforms we have available in the  
22 given field right now, or a program that allows  
23 students to gain an understanding of who they  
24 and what they are capable of doing in all  
25 fields, that teaches them the value of the type

1 of life long learning that enables them to  
2 adjust, adapt, reconceive and rebuild the world  
3 around us, technological or otherwise. Both  
4 are good, however one is temporary and it will  
5 be quickly outdated, the other is life long.

6 To put it in different terms, in the '80s  
7 my parents made two large investments. They  
8 bought a little house in North Little Rock and  
9 a Chevy Citation with an air conditioner and a  
10 cassette player. At the time it was thought to  
11 be a nice car. We know differently now. The  
12 cassette player was new tech, it was a big  
13 deal.

14 In the years that followed they remodeled  
15 that house, they added on when more kids came  
16 along. The house had good bones, it was easily  
17 adaptable if circumstances changed. I still  
18 drive by it from time to time, it's on  
19 47th Street.

20 The curriculum that we've used at AGS for  
21 the last 39 summers builds those good bones and  
22 a strong foundation in our young people. On  
23 the other hand, I fear that curriculum proposed  
24 by ATU will soon be as relevant as a cassette  
25 player in an '81 Citation.

1 Thank you for your time.

2 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Thank you.

3 Next on the list is Melissa Sawyer.

4 DR. MOORE: Ms. Dean, may we ask questions  
5 or must it just be a comment?

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

8 There is nothing in the that prohibits it  
9 in the operating procedures, so if you had a  
10 question, I think that's fine.

11 DR. MOORE: I did want to ask a question,  
12 if that's okay.

13 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Go ahead.

14 DR. MOORE: So in the -- where ever the  
15 Arkansas Governor School will be next year,  
16 would you be interested in reapplying to teach  
17 at the school if it's at a different location?

18 MR. JASON McCANN: If it followed the  
19 rules that we've been using for 39 years, I  
20 would work where ever. I have no problem going  
21 to Arkansas Tech. It's 40 minutes more up the  
22 road for me. The location means very little.  
23 Buildings are buildings. The soul of the  
24 program is what we're talking about today.

25 DR. MOORE: Do you feel that you will --



1           you have the autonomy to create the program  
2           that is best for your students?

3                   MR. JASON McCANN: Absolutely. Our  
4           program -- our students that have gone through  
5           Arkansas Governor School over the past 12 years  
6           that I've been a part of it, and Kim Kwee who  
7           is here in the audience, she's been here with  
8           me five years as my co-teacher, we have  
9           students that are graphic designers all over  
10          the country, we have students that are  
11          professional painters, we have students that  
12          are creating websites.

13                   I have a friend that works for Google in  
14          New York that was one of our former students at  
15          Governor School. The program that we put in  
16          place teaches them a wealth of different  
17          esthetical or esthetic knowledge that can be  
18          put towards anything that deals with the  
19          elements and principles of art design that can  
20          go towards any field, graphic design,  
21          traditional arts. It doesn't matter. At the  
22          base of it we build off of those -- that basic  
23          structure, the basic bones of art design to  
24          build it from there. So yes.

25                   DR. MOORE: That's great that they have

1           your expertise and where ever it may be might  
2           do so in the future.

3                   MR. JASON McCANN:   Thank you.   I  
4           appreciate your time.

5                   VICE CHAIR DEAN:   All right.   Melissa  
6           Sawyer.

7                   MS. MELISSA SAWYER:   Good morning.

8                   VICE CHAIR DEAN:   Good morning.   You have  
9           three minutes.

10                  MS. MELISSA SAWYER:   Three minutes.

11                   My name is Melissa Sawyer, and I am a 1990  
12           graduate of Arkansas Governor School.   I'm also  
13           a graduate of Monticello High School, Hendrix  
14           College, and the George Washington University  
15           School of Law, and for today's purposes, I am  
16           also the current President of the Arkansas  
17           Governor School Alumni Association.

18                   Earlier I had sent an email with a copy of  
19           a petition for each of you to read, and as of  
20           this morning it had 2,858 signatures and  
21           comments by alumni and friends of alumni.   And  
22           so I am -- Mr. -- commissioner Key, I would  
23           like to present you a copy.

24                   It is separated.   The top form is the ones  
25           with comments; the bottom stack -- the top

1 stack is the ones with comments, the bottom  
2 stack is just signatures, they are separated  
3 for you.

4 And as part of our petition we have  
5 outlined some concerns about the process and  
6 the curriculum that the Arkansas Tech proposal  
7 has implemented, is implementing.

8 To put it bluntly, this process in which  
9 Tech was selected is a mess. One of the papers  
10 that the site selection committee did, gave to  
11 those members, seems in direct contradiction to  
12 the rules that they are citing today. They  
13 were given an evaluation form and then they  
14 were given the last page, and Ms. -- and she  
15 focused on that -- the last three picking the  
16 forms, but there was a -- instructions, and  
17 those instructions specifically stated who gets  
18 the highest cumulative score shall be  
19 recommended to the Board as the next Governor  
20 School site. It specifically says that. Now  
21 they are quoting the rules that says majority  
22 vote. It's a conflict.

23 The Department of Education has, for  
24 whatever reason, created a mess because they  
25 have given us two conflicting forms and are

1           quoting rules that conflict each other.

2           In law, when you have two statutes that  
3           conflict each other, you choose to interpret  
4           them in a way that both can coincide if  
5           possible, and in this case it just merely says  
6           a majority vote, and majority vote can be  
7           interpreted by highest cumulative score.  
8           That's a majority. It's a majority of points,  
9           it's still a majority vote. It doesn't say  
10          majority by members.

11          VICE CHAIR DEAN: Can you bring --

12          MS. MELISSA SAWYER: It is not clear --

13          VICE CHAIR DEAN: Can you bring your  
14          comments to a close and make your final  
15          statement? You've gone past your three  
16          minutes.

17          MS. MELISSA SAWYER: Okay. Also this  
18          curriculum that Ms. Zook did allude to was  
19          designed by educators in North Carolina who had  
20          been teaching gifted students for decades  
21          before it even came to Arkansas. This was --  
22          this current curriculum by Hendrix College has  
23          been designed by people who understand the  
24          needs of gifted students.

25          VICE CHAIR DEAN: Thank you.

1 MS. MELISSA SAWYER: And we are not sure  
2 that the Tech proposal -- from what we read of  
3 the Tech proposal that they fully understand  
4 the needs of gifted students.

5 And I will be sending a FOIA request to  
6 ask --

7 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Ms. Sawyer, thank you.  
8 We appreciate your comments. Thank you.

9 MS. MELISSA SAWYER: Thank you.

10 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Davis Hendricks is next  
11 on the list.

12 MR. DAVIS HENDRICKS: Davis Hendricks.

13 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Good morning.

14 MR. DAVIS HENDRICKS: Representing --  
15 today I'm representing Arkansans for Gifted and  
16 Talented Education and Arkansas Association of  
17 Gifted Education Administrators, and -- and  
18 this is an awkward situation because we're --  
19 we're usually for everything, and certainly any  
20 program that's going to provide an opportunity  
21 for gifted kids in Arkansas we're 100 percent  
22 behind. And we also want to say that  
23 regardless of what you decide to do today, you  
24 can count on our support to make sure that  
25 whatever program Arkansas Governor School is,

1           where ever it's operating, that we're going to  
2           do everything we can to make sure it's  
3           successful for our students.

4           We got on this several days ago and have  
5           done some background work on it, and it's  
6           produced the information -- we have --  
7           fortunately in our organization we have got a  
8           number of folks who have a lot of experience in  
9           gifted ed, so we got them to look at the two  
10          proposals and make sure that -- that our  
11          position -- that got lots of calls, naturally,  
12          from the folks around the state who were  
13          concerned about it, a lot of them alumni from  
14          Arkansas Governor School at Hendrix, so that  
15          was an aside, but we have heard from some other  
16          folks too. And so we wanted to look at both  
17          programs as objectively as we possibly could,  
18          although honestly a program that's run for 38  
19          years and had the kind of success that that  
20          program has, it has an edge over any other  
21          program that tries.

22          We have lots of faith in Arkansas Tech  
23          University, we have a lot of friends at  
24          Arkansas Tech University, and don't doubt their  
25          capacity to deliver a quality program. But I

1 do want to read the prepared statement, and  
 2 there will be a slight bit of repetition, I  
 3 apologize for that, but this is what my  
 4 organization has charged me to report, and it  
 5 does reflect the consensus of both of our  
 6 organizations and -- and our folks who have  
 7 called in. And we did circulate it to our  
 8 board and they have read it and they have all  
 9 unanimously signed off on it, so I do want to  
 10 share that with you. And I sent that to you,  
 11 but it was late last night, so I doubt that  
 12 you've had time to read it, so if you will just  
 13 let me share it.

14 For the past 38 years Arkansas Governor  
 15 School has served over 15,000 students of high  
 16 potential in our state. The model for AGS,  
 17 which was developed in North Carolina in '63,  
 18 is research based; it's specifically designed  
 19 to provide high school gifted and talented  
 20 students the opportunity to explore ideas and  
 21 develop thinking, social, and communication  
 22 skills in a stimulating but emotionally and  
 23 physically safe environment.

24 The decision of the selection committee to  
 25 fundamentally change both the program and the

1 location of Governor School was of serious  
2 concern to us. In short, our issues are with  
3 the selection process, the program, and  
4 logistics.

5 As educators and parents of gifted  
6 students we value processes as much as we do  
7 the products they manifest. Upon close  
8 examination, the process that the site  
9 selection committee used to make this selection  
10 was inconclusive to the extent that the  
11 official report of the committee stated Hendrix  
12 had the highest cumulative points but was not  
13 ranked as first choice by the majority  
14 committee members. This was due in part to one  
15 committee member's score sheet that reflected a  
16 difference of 39 points between Hendrix and  
17 Arkansas Tech. The other committee members  
18 score differential was ten or less between the  
19 two schools.

20 That's a quote from the -- from the  
21 guidelines.

22 VICE CHAIR DEAN: If you would make a  
23 closing statement, so that we can stay to our  
24 three minutes. We have your statement here  
25 though.



1                   MR. DAVIS HENDRICKS: Okay. So to resolve  
2                   the inconsistency, the selection committee  
3                   reduced a relatively complex process to a  
4                   simple vote. That was our concern.

5                   The secondary concern was rooted in our  
6                   awareness that the Governor School program  
7                   model wasn't deeply reflected by the Arkansas  
8                   Tech model.

9                   We fully appreciate the desire of some to  
10                  open the opportunity for other colleges and  
11                  universities, but we believe that our focus  
12                  should always be on what is in the best  
13                  interest of the students who will attend. Our  
14                  issue with the decision of the site selection  
15                  committee is -- is both philosophical and  
16                  practical. It was placed originally at Hendrix  
17                  College for specific reasons that are  
18                  specifically student centered.

19                 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Mr. Hendricks, thank  
20                 you. Appreciate your time.

21                 MR. DAVIS HENDRICKS: Okay.

22                 VICE CHAIR DEAN: It was past our three  
23                 minutes.

24                 Let me just make a statement. If you  
25                 would, please respect the three-minute limit.

1 We have several people who have signed up and  
2 we want to hear everyone, but we cannot belabor  
3 this -- this issue. We have several other  
4 issues that we have to get to today.

5 So next on the list is April  
6 Gentry-Sutterfield.

7 Good morning. You have three minutes.

8 MS. APRIL GENTRY SUTTERFIELD: My name is  
9 April Gentry-Sutterfield and I have taught at  
10 AGS for 17 summers. Thank you so much for this  
11 opportunity.

12 Had prepared statements but I'm going to  
13 scrap them because I think I need to address  
14 something else with you all.

15 What I heard from Tech is I think a  
16 problem in understanding what a G.T. student  
17 is, because there are students who are  
18 interested in STEM, and then are students who  
19 are identified as gifted and talented students.  
20 There is some overlap but they are also  
21 separate things.

22 I want to read two quotes from some STEM  
23 professionals who were identified as gifted and  
24 talented students and went through our program  
25 at Governor School. I want you to hear their

1 experience.

2 So my friend Robert Sproul, who is a --  
 3 literally a rocket scientist, he says about his  
 4 experience, "My high school and college  
 5 education provided the technical background  
 6 that has allowed me to join a start-up company  
 7 that has built the second largest commercial  
 8 satellite constellation ever put into space. I  
 9 am proud of my technical background, yet  
 10 throughout my career that has not been the  
 11 cause of my success. My success has come from  
 12 self awareness and emotional intelligence that  
 13 was kindled during the summer of '94 at AGS."

14 A former student of mine, Dr. Heather  
 15 Oswald, who is synthetic chemist working on a  
 16 vaccination for malaria, says, "As a STEM  
 17 professional, I got way more out of AGS than I  
 18 would have had it been STEM focused. STEM is  
 19 horrifically bad at fostering many of the  
 20 personal transformations I and others have  
 21 benefited from AGS."

22 I am not a STEM hater. Right now I have a  
 23 grant to write a STEM-based theater curriculum,  
 24 I am a theater artist. My kids go to Forrest  
 25 Heights Academy, it's a STEM academy here in

1 Little Rock. I love STEM education. But STEM  
2 and G.T. are different things. I'm concerned  
3 that Arkansas Tech doesn't have an idea of what  
4 a G.T. student is.

5 Our example of understanding G.T. students  
6 and high school students was that Arkansas Tech  
7 has a band camp for high school students. Not  
8 all band students are gifted and talented.

9 I wrote in your email that an idle mind is  
10 the devil's playground. With 400 students who  
11 don't have ample activities and unmonitored  
12 spaces, so much unmonitored space, I'm  
13 concerned that their proposal shows you they  
14 have no idea what to do with these kids after  
15 hours. We have four-tens, we have six-tens  
16 where the kids engage in continual intellectual  
17 activity. Our director has worked out field  
18 trips for Arkansas Shakespeare theater, Crystal  
19 Bridges, Arkansas Arts Center. Our students  
20 never stop the learning. It continues nonstop  
21 at Governor School.

22 If you looked at their proposal, one of  
23 their examples was paintball for an after-hours  
24 activity. When you have 400 of the most gifted  
25 and talented students in the state of Arkansas,

1 are you going to spend your time doing  
2 paintball? I hope not.

3 Thank you for your time.

4 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Thank you.

5 Next we have Randy Horton, Mayor of  
6 Russellville.

7 MAYOR RANDY HORTON: Good morning. Thank  
8 you.

9 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Good morning.

10 MAYOR RANDY HORTON: I'm kind of excited  
11 to be here. I thought I was brought down as an  
12 example of what happens to you when you don't  
13 get enough education but I found out after I  
14 got here that I was asked to talk about our  
15 collaborative efforts that the university  
16 displays in the city of Russellville.

17 We're a town of 28,000 people, give or  
18 take based on the latest population. By  
19 Municipal League Standards, that places us as a  
20 large first class city in the state. Our  
21 daytime population is 126 or 27, we were told  
22 last night.

23 We collaborate with Tech on all kinds of  
24 stuff and also with other partners.

25 About three weeks ago I was down here for

1 the Highway Commission Meeting. They were very  
2 generous in approving a partnership between the  
3 University, the City of Russellville, and a --  
4 and the Highway Department.

5 I could tell you more stories, I could go  
6 into that one for an hour, but three minutes is  
7 pretty close. So they have those collaborative  
8 efforts with the hospital, with all of our  
9 industries, setting up workforce training, they  
10 have those collaborative efforts with the Lake  
11 Dardanelle State Parks, with the Russellville  
12 School District -- you heard from Dr. Gotcher.  
13 They collaborate with everybody putting their  
14 students in real world application of what they  
15 are learning at the university.

16 I can't tell you -- the last speaker was  
17 talking about what they are going to do with  
18 these students after hours. By the time  
19 Governor School rolls around, there will be  
20 more than enough for them to do in a tourism  
21 based town like Russellville, Arkansas. The --  
22 the -- their collaboration, what they give to  
23 all of us the community pays back with  
24 opportunities for the university, for their  
25 students.

1                   The 126,000 daytime population, that's  
2                   because we are a regional hub. This is not a  
3                   Russellville specific recommended --  
4                   recommendation, this is at least three counties  
5                   that our daytime population comes from.

6                   I'm going to yield the rest of my time  
7                   back. If you've got questions I'll be happy to  
8                   stick around and answer them later, but I  
9                   strongly support the idea that maybe it's time  
10                  to leave the comfortable nest and try to do  
11                  something different, and I support Arkansas  
12                  Tech as that option.

13                  I don't think there was -- I haven't heard  
14                  anything that makes me believe that the process  
15                  in this was flawed or that the committee made a  
16                  mistake. So thank you very much.

17                  VICE CHAIR DEAN: Thank you, Mr. Horton.

18                  Any questions? Okay.

19                  Okay. And we have Justin Gunderman,  
20                  Student Government Association.

21                  MR. JUSTIN GUNDERMAN: Good morning.

22                  VICE CHAIR DEAN: Good morning.

23                  MR. JUSTIN GUNDERMAN: I'm going to keep  
24                  this very brief.

25                  My name is Justin Gunderman. I'm a senior

1 political science student at Arkansas Tech  
 2 University. I'm originally from Plummerville,  
 3 Arkansas, and I'm speaking this morning on  
 4 behalf of the Student Government Association,  
 5 where I serve as the Secretary of Community  
 6 Outreach, and in addition I'm speaking on  
 7 behalf of the student body of ATU.

8 What I'm going to talk about is just  
 9 basically the excitement that we have at  
 10 Arkansas Tech about the possibility of AGS  
 11 coming next summer. As a student of ATU, I'm  
 12 beyond thrilled that ATU has been recommended  
 13 to be the next host of AGS. We're one of the  
 14 fastest growing four-year universities in the  
 15 state with an annual record number of student  
 16 enrollment over the last several years. AGS is  
 17 an extraordinary opportunity for high school  
 18 students across the state to expand their  
 19 critical thinking skills in a way that many of  
 20 them never thought they would be asked to do.  
 21 I speak for a great majority of ATU students  
 22 when I say that I am honored that ATU has been  
 23 recommended to host such a unique program.

24 As the spokesperson for SGA, the ATU  
 25 student body supports this recommendation as a



1           proposal to host AGS at ATU -- that the  
2           proposal to host AGS at ATU is a true testament  
3           to the exemplary great experience that ATU can  
4           and does provide.

5           Thank you.

6           VICE CHAIR DEAN: Thank you.

7           And we have Delton Gordon from the  
8           Association -- the Associate Dean for Residence  
9           Life.

10          Good morning.

11          MR. DELTON GORDON: Good morning. Thank  
12          you.

13          VICE CHAIR DEAN: You have three minutes.

14          MR. DELTON GORDON: I will keep it brief.

15          I was hired on May 14th as the Associate  
16          Dean for Residence Life.

17          One of the biggest reasons my wife and I  
18          decided to come to Arkansas is, being from a  
19          border state, the education in Arkansas was --  
20          had a much higher standard than where we are  
21          from and so we're excited to be here as we have  
22          a nice young gifted and talented three year  
23          old.

24          One of the reasons why I was hired was to  
25          take a look at our residence halls and where

1           they are -- where our curriculum intersects  
2           with the academic curriculum. And so I just  
3           want to talk about how we plan to train our  
4           student staff and our professional staff who  
5           work in the residence halls.

6                     We will focus on mattering, which was by  
7           Rosenberg, and that talks about significance,  
8           care, and appreciation, so a lot of the things  
9           that we've talked about earlier for the liberal  
10          arts education.

11                    I stand in support of Arkansas Tech  
12          University. We plan to have a very dedicated  
13          and trained staff in the housing area to make  
14          sure that our students are engaged outside of  
15          the classroom just as they -- as our students  
16          are engaged outside of the classroom right now.

17                    So thank you.

18                    VICE CHAIR DEAN: Thank you.

19                    All right. Dr. Mark Elrod.

20                    DR. MARK ELROD: Good morning.

21                    VICE CHAIR DEAN: Good morning. You have  
22          three minutes.

23                    DR. MARK ELROD: My name is Mark Elrod and  
24          I've been an Area One and Area Two instructor  
25          at the Arkansas Governor School since 1995 and

1 I've also served as an academic coordinator at  
2 AGS.

3 When I'm not teaching at AGS I'm a  
4 lecturer in the Department of Political Science  
5 at University of Central Arkansas.

6 Like most of my AGS colleagues, when I  
7 first learned that AGS would be moving to  
8 Russellville I was not all that concerned with  
9 the possible change of location. It would  
10 increase my commute from five minutes to 20  
11 minutes. However, upon further review, I feel  
12 the site selection process as well as the  
13 program proposed by ATU fails to meet the  
14 criteria established by the 2004 AGS site  
15 selection requirements of the Arkansas  
16 Department of Education. I believe that the  
17 AGS -- the AGS site proposal put forward by  
18 Arkansas Tech threatens the original intent of  
19 this nationally respected program.

20 I'm sure all of you are familiar with the  
21 ADE's requirements for the AGS program. By  
22 now, unfortunately, it would appear that  
23 several members of the site selection committee  
24 were not.

25 It is important to note that the site

1 selection rules are not suggestions or  
 2 guidelines. The ADE rules governing the site  
 3 selection is a legal document that should be  
 4 followed by any college making a bid to host  
 5 AGS. As such it's hard for me to imagine how a  
 6 reasonable person could look at the AGS site  
 7 selection requirements and conclude that ATU's  
 8 bid for AGS is consistent with the original  
 9 intent of the Arkansas legislature and the ADE.  
 10 There are numerous examples of how ATU's site  
 11 selection proposal violates the ADE rules  
 12 governing site selection, but in the interest  
 13 of my limited time I will only ask you to  
 14 consider these three as you prepare to make  
 15 your decision.

16 First AGS is not intended to be a STEM  
 17 program. As stated in 4.02 of the ADE rules,  
 18 the emphasis of the school will be placed on  
 19 conceptual or abstract intelligence and  
 20 contrast with practical or concrete  
 21 intelligence.

22 ATU's proposal seems to ignore this  
 23 provision and focuses more on product than  
 24 process with an over emphasis on STEM  
 25 education.

Second, Area Two, the heart of the AGS curriculum is being gutted by the ATU proposal. Section 5.06 of the ADE rules state, General Conceptual development will focus on thinking; on the ways we think, the assumptions that underlie our own thinking and the thinking that takes place within various disciplines, on the 20th Century developments that have influenced our thinking about truth and knowledge and on means of thinking more effectively.

ATU's site proposal focuses more on social networking and areas such as Twitter, Facebook, and Snapchat, and virtually ignores the foundation of Area Two, which is critical thinking with the emphasis on effect thinking.

Both the language and intent of ATU's proposal are in no way in keeping with the rules for site selection.

Finally the rules concerning the selection committee's process for making site recommendation, as has been gone over several times, and while confusing, they clearly favor the bid submitted by Hendrix College. Section 13.08 of the rules states that each bid will be evaluated in terms of facilities, curriculum,

1 and other areas.

2 And I should mention in the area of  
3 facilities, the proposal ATU put forward has  
4 faculty living in the same dorms as 17 year  
5 olds, and I think it's -- probably as parents  
6 and as educators, you would find that  
7 unacceptable.

8 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Mr. Elrod, if you will  
9 make a final statement.

10 MR. MARK ELROD: Okay. Clearly the intent  
11 of this rule was to give the members of the  
12 site selection committee an objective method of  
13 making a site decision and evaluating the bid  
14 from Hendrix. As the best qualitative bid,  
15 there is no reason for this board to ignore the  
16 evaluation. Thank you.

17 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Thank you.

18 MR. MARK ELROD: Questions? Thank you.

19 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Thank you.

20 All right. We have Lacey Thacker.

21 MS. LACEY THACKER: Good morning. Lacey  
22 Thacker.

23 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Good morning. You have  
24 three minutes.

25 MS. LACEY THACKER: I'm the current Area

1 Two Coordinator for Arkansas Governor School.  
 2 I actually did not attend Governor School, did  
 3 not attend Hendrix, but I did attend Arkansas  
 4 Tech University. I look back on those years  
 5 with a lot of pride. I really enjoyed my time  
 6 there, I think nothing but good things about  
 7 the institution.

8 My first concern is with the scope of the  
 9 program, but that's been covered extensively,  
 10 so just note my concerns echo a lot of my  
 11 colleagues.

12 My second certain is with the staffing  
 13 needs. So when I was a grad student I was the  
 14 sole person responsible for an entire office  
 15 that ran from 9:00 to 5:00. There was no  
 16 institutional memory, I could not create it, it  
 17 was impossible.

18 We have a -- at Hendrix at least they have  
 19 a full-time person -- sorry, I'm super  
 20 nervous -- they have a full-time person who is  
 21 solely responsible for running Governor School  
 22 from 9:00 to 5:00, Monday through Friday, all  
 23 year long. Tech's proposal indicates that they  
 24 are going to use a grad student, and that is  
 25 really very concerning to me.

1                   Tech after all -- or Governor School,  
2                   after all is not a camp. It's clear from  
3                   Tech's proposal they don't understand the  
4                   logistics needed to launch a self-contained  
5                   school district, which is what it is for four  
6                   to six weeks every summer.

7                   The admissions process, so Tech's AGS  
8                   proposal states that students will apply for  
9                   Governor School through the admissions office.  
10                  While this process is likely very convenient  
11                  and cost efficient, it raises potentially  
12                  disturbing ethical issues. So no student who  
13                  applies for Governor School should have to  
14                  release all of their information to the  
15                  university that happens to be the chosen site.  
16                  If the proposal to do so was made without a  
17                  mind to the consequences, it shows a lack of  
18                  forethought about the ethical issues it raises  
19                  to take applicants' information for one purpose  
20                  and it use it for a targeted campaign.

21                  If the move was made with this end in  
22                  mind, then the ethical concerns become red  
23                  flags for all involved and cast shadows over  
24                  the course offerings Tech mentioned in its  
25                  proposal.



1                   So again, my concerns are not about the  
2                   site selection process, they are about the  
3                   scope, the staffing needs, and the admissions  
4                   process.

5                   In conclusion is to say that Governor  
6                   School is just about exposure to new or  
7                   different ideas underestimates the power of the  
8                   AGS curriculum as it stands, which again is  
9                   evidence based, was set up with a reason. To  
10                  have the brightest minds and best minds from  
11                  high schools around the state on one campus for  
12                  four weeks and then to shoot for nothing more  
13                  than minor skill acquisition, then to surrender  
14                  all of their free time to their computers in  
15                  their dorm room neglects the duty that we  
16                  bestow upon the host institution.

17                  So as you probably know, at Hendrix they  
18                  are not allowed to have their computers at all,  
19                  and they can only have their phones in their  
20                  dorm rooms.

21                  I valued my time at Tech. I think they  
22                  take their role as an institution -- a learning  
23                  institution seriously, but their proposal does  
24                  not reflect the values of AGS nor does it  
25                  appear to have considered several key

1 components necessary to successfully run the  
2 program, and I encourage the Board to vote for  
3 Hendrix as AGS site for the next three years.

4 Thank you.

5 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Thank you.

6 Debbie Hibbs.

7 MS. DEBBIE HIBBS: Hi.

8 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Good morning. You have  
9 three minutes.

10 MS. DEBBIE HIBBS: I'm speaking today as a  
11 gifted educator of 32 years, elementary, middle  
12 school, gifted facilitator, pre-AP, AP teacher,  
13 and 26 years as a faculty member at Arkansas  
14 Governor School. I know gifted students. They  
15 come in all shapes and sizes, different talents  
16 and interests, music, art, athletics,  
17 literature, science, writing, politics, video  
18 games, from many different backgrounds, rural,  
19 urban, suburban, poverty, wealth, public,  
20 private, home schools. They can be awkward,  
21 confident, shy, misunderstand, but what they  
22 all have in common is potential, creativity,  
23 ability, curiosity. And while technology is  
24 certainly important, limiting the focus of the  
25 Governor School program to this narrow scope

1 will not meet the needs of all gifted students.

2 Aside from the core classes, ATU's plan  
 3 provides few enrichment opportunities. When  
 4 comparing programs, this is vital. We had one  
 5 film, three speakers, 17 social or athletic  
 6 events, 19 seminars, and a trip to see the  
 7 Arkansas Shakespeare Theater in the first week  
 8 of Arkansas Governor School last summer. These  
 9 cater to every interest, offering many choices  
 10 for enrichment and engagement. The Natural  
 11 State Brass Band, trips to the Clinton Center,  
 12 Crystal Bridges, Heifer Project, this is how  
 13 community is formed, not just in the classroom,  
 14 but in the after hours beyond the classroom.  
 15 This is why students are still excited to come  
 16 even when they know they won't be allowed to  
 17 have their phones outside their dorm rooms.  
 18 Enrichment in a supervised face-to-face  
 19 learning community is at the heart of Governor  
 20 School, which is neither high school nor  
 21 college, which is in the rules, the intent, an  
 22 engaged community of intellectual peers.

23 I was reading an article about Google's  
 24 Project Oxygen. They gathered data, crunched  
 25 algorithms, ranking the skills that led to the

1 success of top Google employees, and you know  
 2 what they found? STEM expertise was at the  
 3 bottom. At the top were communicating and  
 4 listening well, possessing insight into others,  
 5 including different values and points of view,  
 6 having empathy toward and being supportive of  
 7 colleagues, being a good critical thinker,  
 8 being able to make connections across complex  
 9 ideas. That is what we do at AGS. Even smart  
 10 people aren't always smart emotionally or  
 11 socially. Civil discourse, cognitive empathy,  
 12 these are essential skills developed in the  
 13 Area Two and Three curriculums.

14 When we gave our reports to the Arkansas  
 15 Governor's Advisory Council this past summer,  
 16 one of the members asked if we took student  
 17 teachers. Another comment was that our  
 18 curriculum should be in every high school in  
 19 the state, but it's not, and that is precisely  
 20 why it needs to remain where it is.

21 I know that --

22 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Ms. Hibbs, if you will  
 23 make a final statement. Thank you.

24 MS. DEBBIE HIBBS: Yes.

25 Many former students and parents and

1 faculty and community members have reached out  
2 to you. Please listen to what they are saying.  
3 This decision to -- to accept the proposal  
4 ultimately does rest in each of your individual  
5 hands. You don't have to take the site  
6 selection committee's proposal.

7 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Thank you.

8 MS. DEBBIE HIBBS: Thank you.

9 VICE CHAIR DEAN: And last on the list is  
10 Gavin McCollum.

11 Okay. Will someone check to see if Gavin  
12 McCollum is outside before we move forward?

13 All right. All right. Well, that will  
14 end our public comment period.

15 Are there any other questions from the  
16 board members before we take a motion?

17 MS. NEWTON: I have a question. I don't  
18 know if it's from -- for the department or from  
19 legal.

20 In -- in the rules, in 13.11, it talks  
21 about the site selection will be for a period  
22 of three years contingent upon a successful  
23 annual evaluation.

24 Could you tell me who does that, what the  
25 criteria are, who decides it's a good

1 evaluation or a negative; and if it was a  
2 negative evaluation, what would the process be?

3 MS. STACI SMITH: So that is done by our  
4 Gifted and Talented Unit at the department, and  
5 the criteria used is the same criteria used  
6 within the rules.

7 There is usually an end of the year  
8 summary report by the AGS school. So that's  
9 determined by the department, so Dr. Stein's  
10 unit.

11 MS. NEWTON: Okay. And if it was not a  
12 successful evaluation, what -- what would  
13 happen then?

14 MS. STACI SMITH: We've not been in that  
15 position at this point. So, I mean, if there  
16 was not a successful site -- if it was not a  
17 successful application, I would end up going to  
18 leadership, Commissioner Key, and then we  
19 would -- I'm not sure. I would have to, I  
20 guess, check with legal.

21 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

22 COMMISSIONER KEY: We've never done -- I  
23 mean we've never had that situation before so  
24 that's really a question without an answer at  
25 this point.

1 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

2 MS. CHAMBERS: I have a question that kind  
3 of builds on that.

4 One of the things that seems to have been  
5 consistent in the feedback that we've had,  
6 which I pretty very much appreciate, is success  
7 in the eye of the beholder. And who is the  
8 beholder? Who is it that's determining the  
9 success?

10 And just an observation that I would  
11 offer, I so appreciate when so many things in  
12 life don't seem to be working well, you really  
13 do take note at the fierce loyalty and support  
14 that we've heard from AGS participants and  
15 family members.

16 I think one of the things I'm still  
17 struggling with, yes, the process had noise,  
18 but more to the point, we don't benefit as a  
19 board from hearing why the committee chose the  
20 way it did. We have people that have different  
21 points of view on whether the committee chose.  
22 but it wasn't a close vote that was taken. It  
23 wasn't, like, nine to eight, it was nine to  
24 four, and that says something. I don't think  
25 any of us in this room, unless you're a

1 committee member who I can't identify, I don't  
2 know what it was that they saw.

3 But my question back and it's -- it maybe  
4 is building on a previous question, hopefully  
5 Tech has been listening to what they have  
6 heard, and I hope this will not be like the  
7 U.S. Women's U.S. open, the singles  
8 competition, for those of you that watched it,  
9 which was not a very happy occasion. There  
10 were some conflicts. There was a winner but  
11 much of the crowd was not particularly happy  
12 with -- with how that -- how that particular  
13 tournament ended up, and we ended up  
14 diminishing the experience for the person that  
15 won and it wasn't a very attractive look into  
16 how we address being disappointed by how things  
17 turn out sometimes.

18 So I'm hoping how ever this vote goes that  
19 we will get behind it, because it's for the  
20 students, it's for Arkansas. That regardless  
21 of past practices and experiences which have  
22 been beautiful, I hope we will take the high  
23 road in how ever the vote goes.

24 My last kind of observation or question  
25 is, if Tech were to prevail, is the -- the



1 curriculum early enough in its development that  
2 they can be benefited from the rich experience  
3 that we've heard about from Hendrix?

4 My own experience, I'm the board chair of  
5 a small liberal arts college whose mission is  
6 critical thinking and community, so I'm -- I  
7 find this so frustrating because everything  
8 that I've heard from the folks that are worried  
9 about what we're going to lose, I worry about  
10 too every day; but technology is a very real  
11 presence in our lives. And my son did the  
12 craziest thing. He got a -- he just finished  
13 his undergraduate degree in philosophy with a  
14 minor in computer science. Initially I thought  
15 it was crazy. After all of this I find him  
16 brilliant because I think it's so important  
17 that as we continue to lean into technology  
18 that is in our lives that we are better  
19 prepared for how we deal with it ethically and  
20 otherwise.

21 So I'm curious, if we maintain the theme  
22 of technology, if we could bring to bear this  
23 beautiful experience we have with critical  
24 thinking that we have 38 years of experience  
25 with. That's just a question.

1                   COMMISSIONER KEY: Is that. Ms. Chambers,  
2 do you want to some -- I mean, I don't think  
3 the department can address that question.

4                   MS. CHAMBERS: Maybe the mechanistic  
5 question is are we too far along in curriculum  
6 development that we couldn't take advantage of  
7 a hybrid solution?

8                   MS. STACI SMITH: Can I make a -- so the  
9 faculty selection for AGS is also in the rules,  
10 and faculty has not been selected for next  
11 summer yet. Each year those positions come  
12 available and the faculty selections are made  
13 by a committee of no less than five and no more  
14 than ten members, and faculty who is hired does  
15 play a key role in assisting with the  
16 curriculum. Okay?

17                   I hope that many of the speakers you heard  
18 today who are current or previous Governor  
19 School staff would consider where ever it is to  
20 apply again and let their experience be part of  
21 their resumé that actually influences the  
22 curriculum.

23                   VICE CHAIR DEAN: Are there any more  
24 questions?

25                   Ms. Zook?

1 MS. ZOOK: Just Dr. Moore mentioned that  
2 the rules were written in '04 and people don't  
3 have institutional memory before that. Have we  
4 done an RFP every year or three years?

5 Is it -- it appears that this is the first  
6 time since the inception that we've had people  
7 asking to have it at other places.

8 MS. STACI SMITH: It's my understanding  
9 there has been an RFP every three years, and  
10 the last time that there were more than -- that  
11 there was more than one application was in  
12 2009, and that was SAU and Hendrix, but that's  
13 the last time that there was more than one  
14 application. Other than that, I believe that  
15 Hendrix -- in, like, the last three years it  
16 was Hendrix alone.

17 MS. ZOOK: And was this the same process  
18 used then and now?

19 MS. STACI SMITH: As far as looking at the  
20 rubrics from 2009, yes, following the rules.

21 MS. ZOOK: Thank you.

22 MS. STACI SMITH: Uh-huh. I believe  
23 looking back I think there may have been seven  
24 committee members on that one where this one we  
25 had more.

1 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Mr. Williamson?

2 MR. WILLIAMSON: Yes. Thank you.

3 A couple of just broad comments, I guess,  
4 here. Thirty-eight some-odd years ago when  
5 this AGS began Charles Murphy was very involved  
6 in the process. Mr. Murphy's intent was never  
7 for this to leave Hendrix College. And I've  
8 struggled with why did it all of a sudden --  
9 what happened to have RFPs and consider moving.  
10 And then I heard the January 2004 date, that  
11 that's when these rules were originally  
12 written. And, I mean, that just happened to be  
13 a year and a half or so after Mr. Murphy's  
14 death. So he may not have had a chance --  
15 well, didn't have a chance to really speak up  
16 for this.

17 And I guess what I'm trying to say is I  
18 just, I hate to change things just to change  
19 things. You know, Hendrix has got a wonderful  
20 history with hosting AGS and I just -- I don't  
21 see any point in moving anything, and I want to  
22 support Mr. Murphy's original intent of the  
23 school also.

24 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Okay. Thank you,  
25 Mr. Williamson.

1 Dr. Moore, do you have any questions or  
2 comments?

3 DR. MOORE: I just wanted to make the  
4 comment that it has been credible to hear from  
5 so many phenomenal people who have gone through  
6 the program, both in state and out of state,  
7 and I hope that the program alumni association  
8 continues to harness the power of these people.  
9 It's been just incredible to hear their  
10 stories.

11 I also wanted to point out I saw yesterday  
12 that is a memo that went out for the Aegis  
13 gifted and talented programs for other  
14 institutions, for middle school and high school  
15 students, and want to just point out for both  
16 institutions and others that there are multiple  
17 avenues to provide instruction and supplemental  
18 opportunities to more students across the state  
19 of Arkansas.

20 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Okay. Then if there are  
21 no more questions or comments, I just want to  
22 say one final thing -- or say a few final  
23 things.

24 To address Mr. Williams' --  
25 Mr. Williamson's comment, as Ms. Smith stated,

1           this was an open process where different  
2           colleges and universities were allowed the  
3           opportunity to put an RFP in which allowed for  
4           an opportunity for change.

5                     And Mr. Key -- Commissioner Key appointed  
6           a committee and they did their due diligence  
7           and they visited every site, they scored the  
8           rubric, and in the end, according to the rules,  
9           in the end, after it was all said and done,  
10          they did come to a majority vote.

11                    To address Ms. Chambers' comments about  
12          the concern, and so many people's comments and  
13          concerns about it leaving the original intent  
14          and the original design of Governor School,  
15          which was critical thinking and the liberal  
16          arts and things of that sort, from what I heard  
17          from Dr. Woods and what I've heard from  
18          Dr. Bowman -- excuse me, I had a moment -- from  
19          what I've heard explained, as several other  
20          Governor Schools have done in other states,  
21          they have just chosen to incorporate but not  
22          replace, incorporate technology into the  
23          liberal arts and into those different areas  
24          of -- that Governor School deals -- deals with.

25                    In the end, there were -- the process was

1 fair. This is not something that was just done  
2 for the sake of change. It was something that  
3 was done to make sure that it was an equal and  
4 fair process. And in the end, in my opinion,  
5 it seems as if that process followed the rules  
6 in the end.

7 And this is only three years. I want to  
8 make sure I point that point out. This is  
9 three years. This is something that if it goes  
10 either way, once again, in three years, if it  
11 doesn't go to Tech, Tech has an opportunity to  
12 come back; if it doesn't go to Hendrix, Hendrix  
13 has an opportunity to come back.

14 I want to also state -- say that I  
15 appreciate the vast amount of knowledge and  
16 information that we received about the history  
17 of Governor School. And I appreciate those of  
18 you, so many of you who have advocated, Senator  
19 Rapert, I spoke with you earlier as well, those  
20 of you who have been such advocates for those  
21 constituents of yours, the students, the staff,  
22 and everyone else.

23 So with that statement, I will be open  
24 to --

25 DR. HILL: Can I say one thing?

1 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Yes, sir.

2 DR. HILL: I -- where I -- and I  
 3 appreciate your comments and everybody's  
 4 comments, and I just, I wanted to say this just  
 5 out of a way of objective data. I do struggle  
 6 a little bit to say what a first down is and  
 7 then we move -- and -- and it not speak to that  
 8 total number. So I just hope in the future as  
 9 we move to the total data it will be congruent  
 10 to the count whereas it's a little bit more  
 11 consistent. And I'll just say when I looked --  
 12 when I first looked and saw 12 -- 1,000, 1,200,  
 13 I mean it's like, okay, I make a first down but  
 14 then you say you need to get two more yards. I  
 15 mean, and I just, I mean, the numbers, it's  
 16 like getting, supposed to get 36 on the ACT,  
 17 then you say now it's 37, I mean, the low --  
 18 and how -- and I don't understand a lot of the  
 19 things going on as far as in this, my  
 20 professors and stuff and when we're dealing  
 21 with this, but that's what I struggled with and  
 22 hopefully commissioner, as we move those things  
 23 can be fixed in this process. And I just want  
 24 to state that for the record.

25 COMMISSIONER KEY: Okay.



1                   VICE CHAIR DEAN: As I stated -- thank you  
2                   for those, for those comments.

3                   And as I stated before, because Ms. Smith  
4                   said that she was -- when she reviewed --

5                   DR. HILL: Yeah.

6                   VICE CHAIR DEAN: -- the information, she  
7                   wanted to make sure -- that was my  
8                   understanding, she wanted to make sure that  
9                   that final recommendation was clear and  
10                  crystal. And I'm sure the ADE will -- will go  
11                  back and --

12                  DR. HILL: Absolutely.

13                  VICE CHAIR DEAN: -- and look at the  
14                  process again at some point.

15                  MS. ZOOK: Ms. Dean?

16                  VICE CHAIR DEAN: Yes.

17                  MS. ZOOK: Before we take our vote I want  
18                  to be sure that people understand, I had a  
19                  doctor at the Hendrix -- or a step daughter at  
20                  the Governor School, my husband graduated or  
21                  attended Tech, I have professional friends who  
22                  are both places and on both sides of the issue,  
23                  so my vote will in no way reflect my opinion of  
24                  the institutions or their ability to carry out  
25                  what they in fact said that they would carry

1 out. So I wanted to be sure that I was being  
2 transparent.

3 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Yes. Thank you.  
4 Appreciate that.

5 And I appreciate both -- I appreciate the  
6 committee and the work that they have put in.  
7 I appreciate both -- all three of the  
8 universities that put in the RFP and the work  
9 and -- and all of that that goes into it. They  
10 are all three great universities and we  
11 appreciate all of the work that you do.

12 So with that I am ready for a motion.

13 COMMISSIONER KEY: Madam Chair, I assume  
14 you want a roll call on this one?

15 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Yes. I'm sorry. Yes.  
16 We do want a roll call on this one. Thank you.

17 MS. CHAMBERS: So you need a motion?

18 I move that we accept the site selection  
19 recommendation for Tech.

20 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Do I have a second?

21 MS. NEWTON: Second.

22 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Okay. We're going to do  
23 a roll call.

24 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Zook?

25 MS. ZOOK: No.

1 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Hill?

2 DR. HILL: Yes.

3 COMMISSIONER KEY: Mr. Williamson?

4 MR. WILLIAMSON: No.

5 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Chambers?

6 MS. CHAMBERS: Yes.

7 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. McFetridge?

8 MS. McFETRIDGE: Yes.

9 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Moore?

10 DR. MOORE: Yes.

11 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Newton?

12 MS. NEWTON: Yes.

13 COMMISSIONER KEY: And Dr. Barth is  
14 abstaining. And, Ms. Dean, as Chair, you don't  
15 have to vote.

16 VICE CHAIR DEAN: I won't.

17 COMMISSIONER KEY: Okay. So we have five  
18 votes in favor of the motion, two votes no.

19 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Okay. All right. The  
20 motion passes and we will accept the  
21 recommendations for Governor School to be  
22 relocated to Arkansas Tech.

23 DR. ROBIN BOWMAN: Thank you.

24 VICE CHAIR DEAN: You're welcome. Thank  
25 you. Congratulations.

1 We're going to take a ten-minute break.

2 Thank you for the opportunity to chair  
3 this portion of the -- the meeting.

4 (WHEREUPON, a break was held from  
5 11:55 a.m. to 12:07 p.m.)

6 (Chairman Barth rejoined the proceedings.)

7 A-2: CONSIDERATION OF FOURTH ROUND FOR ARKANSAS BETTER  
8 CHANCE 2018-2019 RENEWAL GRANTS

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. We will come  
10 back to order.

11 And our next items are two -- actually,  
12 yeah, two items related to the Arkansas Better  
13 Chance Program.

14 And so I think I'll turn things over to  
15 Ms. Underwood.

16 Thank you. Good to see you.

17 MS. TONYA WILLIAMS: I am not Susan  
18 Underwood.

19 MS. ZOOK: I started to say, you're not --

20 MS. TONYA WILLIAMS: And I'm certain some  
21 of you know that.

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Well, I do know that but,  
23 I'm sorry, I was --

24 MS. TONYA WILLIAMS: Looking at the  
25 agenda.

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: I'm sorry.

2 MS. TONYA WILLIAMS: I'm Tonya Williams.  
3 I'm the Director of the Division of Childcare  
4 and Early Childhood education.

5 I want to take one quick liberty and  
6 introduce Audrey Freshwater. Audrey will be  
7 coming in, this is her first week, so I will be  
8 handling the Board items today but Audrey will  
9 be our new Pre-K administrator.

10 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Great.

11 MS. TONYA WILLIAMS: So I wanted you all  
12 to get a chance to see her face. We will be  
13 coming with her for the next few months if we  
14 have anything to help her transition but we're  
15 excited about having Audrey.

16 She is from Forrest City originally. Her  
17 mom is a fourth grade teacher in Wynne and  
18 she's been in Nashville for the past nine years  
19 working in early childhood work around trauma  
20 so we're really excited about having her here  
21 in Arkansas.

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Well, welcome home. And  
23 we look forward to working with you in the  
24 years ahead.

25 MS. AUDREY FRESHWATER: Thank you. Very

1 glad to be here. Thank you.

2 MS. TONYA WILLIAMS: I have two items.

3 The first one is with regard to a school  
4 district that was struggling with enrollment.

5 Gurdon had had 50 ABC slots for the past  
6 several years, and in the previous two years  
7 their enrollment had dropped, and so we watched  
8 that pretty closely and made the determination  
9 that we needed to reduce that to 40 in order to  
10 meet the enrollment, but their enrollment is  
11 back up. And so I had staff go -- I said,  
12 "Please go down. I believe it but we need to  
13 go down and make sure," and so we went down and  
14 they have 50 children enrolled this year, and  
15 we just wanted to add those ten slots back. We  
16 know that rural district needs those and so I  
17 wanted to make sure that that got in front of  
18 you all for approval. So that's the first  
19 item.

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Why don't we go  
21 ahead and deal with that one and then move on.

22 Any questions on that item?

23 Okay. I would entertain a motion on those  
24 ten additional slots and the renewal grants for  
25 next year.

1 MS. MCFETRIDGE: So moved.

2 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

3 DR. HILL: Second.

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Motion by  
5 Ms. McFetridge and a second by Dr. Hill.

6 All in favor, say, "Aye."

7 BOARD MEMBERS: Aye.

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Opposed, same sign.

9 All right. Great.

10 A-3: PROVISION OF ARKANSAS BETTER CHANCE (ABC) 2018-2019  
11 FUNDING TARGETING FOSTER CARE

12 MS. TONYA WILLIAMS: The next item is  
13 something that we worked with you all on last  
14 year, and that is with some remaining funding  
15 that doesn't make sense to push out into a  
16 classroom anywhere, we were able to serve 46  
17 additional children that were in the foster  
18 care system.

19 We served over 300 total, they just got  
20 enrolled in the normal enrollment. But we have  
21 children coming in and out and we have school  
22 districts that will say, I only have 20 slots  
23 and so when those children come in, being able  
24 to put them in a high quality space is very  
25 critical to their development.

1                   We so we had 46 children that benefited  
2                   last year, we wanted to be able to do that  
3                   again, we wanted to make sure that was approved  
4                   by the Board.

5                   CHAIRMAN BARTH:   Ms. Zook?

6                   MS. ZOOK:   Yes.   So is -- is one of the  
7                   secondary benefits of this is if a child is put  
8                   in a foster home, that they don't have to move  
9                   if they -- if they go to a different foster  
10                  home or they -- or it gives the classroom the  
11                  permission to go over by one child?   Which of  
12                  those or both?

13                 MS. TONYA WILLIAMS:   Yeah.   It can be  
14                 both.   Frankly it's -- it's the second probably  
15                 more than the first, but we want them to be  
16                 maintained in that classroom and have that  
17                 continuum if possible, but sometimes those  
18                 programs are already at their capacity and this  
19                 gives them permission to go over by one and we  
20                 can pay them for that.   If they -- if their  
21                 enrollment drops, then it may not become a  
22                 problem if they lose a child.   But we have a  
23                 lot of families that are not going to pull  
24                 their children out of Pre-K, so that's probably  
25                 the benefit mostly.



1 MS. ZOOK: Okay. Well, I appreciate you  
2 doing this. As a CASA worker with my other hat  
3 on, having children who are in the system,  
4 whose parent through no fault of their own  
5 having to change schools a lot of time is -- is  
6 just an added trauma that I'm glad we are  
7 trying to take care of.

8 Thank you.

9 MS. TONYA WILLIAMS: Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Any other  
11 questions over here?

12 Over here?

13 I'll entertain a motion on this issue.

14 MS. NEWTON: I move to approve the ABC  
15 funding for the foster children term.

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you.

17 MS. CHAMBERS: Second.

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Motion by  
19 ms. Newton, second by Ms. Chambers.

20 All in favor, say, "Aye."

21 BOARD MEMBERS: Aye.

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Opposed, same sign.

23 Great.

24 Welcome to you.

25 Great to see you, Ms. Williams.

1 MS. TONYA WILLIAMS: One last item.

2 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Oh, okay.

3 MS. TONYA WILLIAMS: We are putting the  
4 outcomes of ABC children -- I continue to see  
5 articles about children in Pre-K programs in  
6 the country that do not do well, that there is  
7 something happened. You all need to know that  
8 that is not what's happening in this state. So  
9 we're working with the department, I think  
10 Linda Jenkins is putting that on the website.  
11 We'll put a link at the Department of Ed's  
12 website and we'll have one on ours. But I  
13 wanted to make sure that Board knew, this talks  
14 about late elementary, not fade out at third  
15 grade but what's happening when they get in  
16 sixth grade, so I wanted to make sure that you  
17 all know that that is not the case here in  
18 Arkansas.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you for that. And  
20 when that gets posted, if you will be sure that  
21 we get a link to that and let us -- let us know  
22 it's up, that would be very helpful.

23 So thank you for that.

24 MS. TONYA WILLIAMS: Will do. So thank  
25 you so much, board members.

1                   CHAIRMAN BARTH: That you so much for  
2                   doing that.

3       A-4: CONSIDERATION OF CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL  
4       DECISIONS-SUMMARY INFORMATION.

5                   CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Great.

6                   Okay. Next up Dr. Boyd has a flurry of  
7       Charter Panel Authorizing decisions, so she  
8       will walk us through the process.

9                   DR. ALEXANDRA BOYD: Thank you, Dr. Barth.

10                  On your agenda you have seven decisions  
11       made by the Charter Authorizing Panel on new  
12       Open-Enrollment Charter School applications.  
13       Of those seven only one was approved.

14                  Today your decision is to decide if you  
15       want to review any of those seven decisions  
16       made by the panel. So any clarifying questions  
17       you have should be towards you reaching the  
18       decision to review or not review.

19                  Do you have any questions before I get  
20       started?

21                  CHAIRMAN BARTH: And just for  
22       clarification, the only recommended approval  
23       was Item C; correct?

24                  DR. ALEXANDRA BOYD: That is correct.

25                  CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Thank you.

1 DR. ALEXANDRA BOYD: Okay. So for Item  
2 4 a. the panel voted to deny the application of  
3 Focus Academy of Arts and Science that would  
4 have been located in Bentonville.

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Any questions or comments  
6 on this side? Any over here?

7 Okay. Then I'll entertain a motion on  
8 this item.

9 And the proper motion is to review or not  
10 to review.

11 DR. ALEXANDRA BOYD: That's correct.

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

13 VICE CHAIR DEAN: I move to not review.

14 MR. WILLIAMSON: Second.

15 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Motion by Ms. Dean,  
16 second by Mr. Williamson.

17 All in favor, say, "Aye."

18 BOARD MEMBERS: Aye.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Opposed, same sign.

20 DR. ALEXANDRA BOYD: All right. Item  
21 4 b., the panel voted to deny the application  
22 for the Pioneer School, which would have been  
23 located in North Little Rock.

24 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Any comments  
25 or questions on this side? And over here?

1 All right. Entertain a motion when  
2 someone is ready.

3 MS. NEWTON: Move not to review.

4 MS. CHAMBERS: Second.

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Motion by  
6 Ms. Newton, second by Ms. Chambers.

7 All in favor, say, "Aye."

8 BOARD MEMBERS: Aye.

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Opposed, same sign.  
10 All right. Great.

11 DR. ALEXANDRA BOYD: All right. And item  
12 c, 4 c., the panel voted to approve the  
13 application for Premier High School, which will  
14 be located in North Little Rock.

15 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Any questions?  
16 Over here?

17 I did have a question on this. This -- we  
18 have the existing Premier location, obviously,  
19 in Little Rock.

20 DR. ALEXANDRA BOYD: Uh-huh.

21 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Same mission?

22 DR. ALEXANDRA BOYD: Uh-huh.

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Same -- same goals for  
24 this one, this entity, run by the same folks.

25 Was there much conversation about expansion

1 or -- or additional recruitment to the current  
2 location rather than adding an additional  
3 campus?

4 DR. ALEXANDRA BOYD: There wasn't a lot of  
5 conversation specific to that; however, in the  
6 application presentation, the applicant did  
7 comment a lot about being able to provide and  
8 support the North Little Rock community  
9 specifically by having a location there, and  
10 even spoke to that they met with the  
11 superintendent of North Little Rock and  
12 discussed trying to put a site close to the  
13 high school so that they could work together,  
14 students could go to Premier, possibly catch up  
15 and then go back to the traditional high  
16 school; so those things were discussed about --  
17 in terms of having a new location in North  
18 Little Rock.

19 MS. ZOOK: But they don't have their  
20 location yet; right?

21 DR. ALEXANDRA BOYD: No. It has not been  
22 selected.

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Right.

24 And I appreciate that. I know that the  
25 Premier location in -- on the Little Rock side

1           has had relatively small numbers over time and,  
2           you know, my -- my question would be whether  
3           transportation to that location might achieve  
4           the same goals more efficiently than a whole  
5           structure. So that was just a lingering  
6           question as I looked at what felt like a  
7           very -- a replication of a fairly small program  
8           right now.

9           All right. Any further questions or  
10          comments?

11          Entertain a motion.

12          VICE CHAIR DEAN: I move to not review.

13          DR. HILL: Second.

14          CHAIRMAN BARTH: Motion by Ms. Dean,  
15          second by Dr. Hill.

16          All those in favor, say, "Aye."

17          BOARD MEMBERS: Aye.

18          CHAIRMAN BARTH: Opposed, same sign.

19          MS. ZOOK: No.

20          CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. All right. Thank  
21          you.

22          DR. ALEXANDRA BOYD: Thank you.

23          CHAIRMAN BARTH: So we move to item d.

24          DR. ALEXANDRA BOYD: In 4 d., the Charter  
25          Authorizing Panel voted to deny the application

1           for Prolific Learning Arts Academy, which have  
2           been located in Little Rock.

3           CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Questions  
4           over here? Any questions on this side?

5           I will entertain a motion on this.

6           Ms. Chambers?

7           MS. CHAMBERS: I just have a general  
8           question on the process but not specific to  
9           this.

10          CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. All right. So  
11          Prolific Learning Arts Academy, is there a  
12          motion on it?

13          MS. NEWTON: I move not to review.

14          MS. ZOOK: Second.

15          CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Motion by  
16          Ms. Newton, second by Ms. Zook.

17          All in favor, say, "Aye."

18          BOARD MEMBERS: Aye.

19          CHAIRMAN BARTH: Opposed, same sign.

20          Okay. Ms. Chambers, do you have a -- do  
21          you want to wait until we're --

22          MS. CHAMBERS: I'll wait until we're all  
23          done.

24          CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. All right. On e.,  
25          Seven Arts Lyseum?



1 DR. ALEXANDRA BOYD: Yes. For Item 4 e.  
2 the panel voted to deny the application for the  
3 Seven Arts Lyseum School, which would have been  
4 virtual but operating out of Searcy.

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Any questions over  
6 here? And motions on -- questions on this  
7 side?

8 Entertain a motion.

9 MS. ZOOK: Move to not review.

10 MS. CHAMBERS: Move to not review.

11 CHAIRMAN BARTH: That was a tie. So I'll  
12 go with Ms. Zook.

13 MS. CHAMBERS: Yes, please.

14 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Motion by Ms. Zook and  
15 second by Ms. Chambers. I assume you'll second  
16 your own motion.

17 All in favor, say, "Aye."

18 BOARD MEMBERS: Aye.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Opposed, same sign.  
20 Thank you, all.

21 Okay.

22 DR. ALEXANDRA BOYD: All right. On Item  
23 4 f., the Charter Authorizing Panel voted to  
24 deny the application for the Sims-Fayola  
25 International Academy, which would have been

1 located in Pine Bluff.

2 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Any questions on  
3 that to my left? Questions to my right?

4 Entertain a motion.

5 MS. McFETRIDGE: I move to not review.

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Second?

7 MR. WILLIAMSON: Second.

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Motion by  
9 Ms. McFetridge, second by Mr. Williams.

10 All in favor, say, "Aye."

11 BOARD MEMBERS: Aye.

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Opposed, same sign.

13 All right. And finally --

14 DR. ALEXANDRA BOYD: All right. Item --  
15 Item 4 g. the Charter Authorizing Panel voted  
16 to deny the application for Sugarloaf Valley  
17 Academy, which would have been located in  
18 Hackett, Arkansas.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Any questions  
20 to my right? Any questions over here?

21 Entertain a motion.

22 VICE CHAIR DEAN: I move to not review.

23 MS. CHAMBERS: Second.

24 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Motion by Ms. Dean,  
25 second by Ms. Chambers.

1 All in favor, say, "Aye."

2 BOARD MEMBERS: Aye.

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Opposed, same sign.

4 Great.

5 Ms. Chambers.

6 MS. CHAMBERS: Dr. Boyd?

7 DR. ALEXANDRA BOYD: Yes, ma'am.

8 MS. CHAMBERS: A process question. I may  
9 just not be remembering from the past, but this  
10 seemed -- sorry. Thank you.

11 This seemed to be a significant number  
12 that we had denied, at least comparatively, and  
13 I didn't know if there was anything to be  
14 learned. Is this just a coincidence or is  
15 there something that we're -- we're learning  
16 from this?

17 DR. ALEXANDRA BOYD: I believe in this  
18 allocation cycle, most of the applicants were  
19 single-site applicants. So it was sometimes  
20 called -- referred to as a Mom and Pop kind of  
21 start-up kind of thing, so they didn't have a  
22 ton of support from a charter management  
23 organization.

24 I know you've seen the applications, I  
25 know that you know that they are rigorous, and

1           it can be hard to complete a successful  
2           application without the support of a charter  
3           management organization or someone whose  
4           full-time job is just to prepare for this  
5           application cycle.

6           So it seemed to me that during this  
7           process that we had fewer applicants that had a  
8           lot of support and capacity to complete a  
9           successful application.

10          And that's probably a little bit more of  
11          my opinion than I should have given you, but  
12          that's how I saw it.

13          CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Chambers asked and --

14          MS. CHAMBERS: Thank you.

15          CHAIRMAN BARTH: -- we appreciate your  
16          candor.

17          I do have a quick -- just on numbers. So  
18          where -- where are we in terms of the current  
19          cap moving forward?

20          DR. ALEXANDRA BOYD: Yeah. So right now,  
21          since you chose not to review the decisions  
22          made by the panel, that means we have 27  
23          charter -- charters that are approved. I  
24          believe the cap is at 35.

25          Yes, the cap is at 35, so that means we

1 have eight more slots.

2 So what happened was we got close to the  
3 cap last year, when we had so many existing  
4 charters, we got up to 29 charters, and that  
5 was within two of the 30 cap. So the cap  
6 jumped from 30 to 35. In the meantime, we had  
7 a charter that didn't start, a charter that was  
8 nonrenewed, and then a charter that was  
9 revoked, so that kind of explains why the  
10 number of charters available at this point is  
11 so high.

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Thank you very  
13 much.

14 All right. Thank you, Dr. Boyd.

15 DR. ALEXANDRA BOYD: Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Our next item, we  
17 have a series of three legislative reports and  
18 support -- consideration of support plans for  
19 three districts that are currently at level  
20 five under State authority. And so if we will  
21 take these -- we'll take these one at a time.

22 And so, Dr. Hernandez, first up with the  
23 Earle School District, and I see Dr. Wilde is  
24 here as well.

25 DR. MIKE HERNANDEZ: Mr. Chair, if it

1 would be okay, would it be okay for me to talk  
2 a little bit about the process overall before  
3 we get into that?

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Please. Yes. Yes.

5 DR. MIKE HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: I just wanted to focus  
7 our discussion kind of one at a time, but that  
8 would be perfect.

9 DR. MIKE HERNANDEZ: Yes, sir. I  
10 understand.

11 So Dr. Mike Hernandez, State  
12 Superintendent for Office of Coordinated  
13 Support and Service. Appreciate the  
14 opportunity to be here with you guys today.

15 One of the things that I wanted to  
16 discuss, this is kind of -- it's an exciting  
17 time because this is kind of the first  
18 iteration of us moving out of the old model  
19 where, you know, in the past, when we have  
20 districts that were lower performing, had  
21 schools that were lower performing, what we  
22 would do is give them a -- a list of things  
23 that we would say, okay, we want you to assess  
24 these items, we want you to -- and work with  
25 them to set up goals, and do things that were

1 more of a here's what you have to do and not  
 2 give districts a lot of the autonomy to choose  
 3 and to think through the data and kind of get  
 4 in that culture of really analyzing and self  
 5 reflecting. And so we're kind of now into that  
 6 process, and this is the first iteration of  
 7 where, back in May, schools were to submit a  
 8 school level plan, and those were due to be put  
 9 on their website August 1st.

10 They were also -- the districts were  
 11 required to then analyze these school level  
 12 plans and then develop district plans of  
 13 support. So based on all the things and goals  
 14 that were set by the school districts, what  
 15 were they going to, as a district level, what  
 16 did they see there that needed to be sometimes  
 17 narrowly focused and how were they going to  
 18 support those schools in reaching their goals  
 19 and how were they going to monitor it.

20 So in some cases we would have large,  
 21 large amounts of goals and different things  
 22 that would have to be whittled down and say,  
 23 okay, what are we really going to be focused  
 24 on. And so during this process, you know, I  
 25 myself worked with the districts in trying to,

1 not tell -- we never did say, hey, this is what  
2 we want you to do, we try to help have those  
3 conversations, say, what do you feel like you  
4 need to do, and it gave us a good starting  
5 place with these district support plans to  
6 really think. Okay. So they said they wanted  
7 to monitor this, so how are we going to work  
8 over the next year to kind of refine what they  
9 are monitoring, have those conversations, and  
10 whittle down to where we're really getting good  
11 information and starting to get moving. So  
12 what we're seeing here is kind of that first  
13 part, this is what they are planning on doing,  
14 over the course of the year we'll be working to  
15 refine and report quarterly on those different  
16 items. And, you know, all the districts have  
17 agreed their plans may not be -- in their  
18 school levels may not be as exactly as they  
19 want them to be, but as the school index scores  
20 come out, those plans will be refined. What  
21 they are monitoring and some of their goals may  
22 be refined over the process, and it truly  
23 becomes a working plan as opposed to something  
24 that's a point in time where they say, hey,  
25 this is what we're doing, we're going to put it



1           on the shelf, one person had input on it or two  
2           people had input on it. But I can tell you  
3           with all three districts, you know, being in  
4           those conversations, the superintendents were  
5           involved, district level leadership were  
6           involved, building principals were involved,  
7           and this is, you know, kind of where we're at  
8           in this process right now.

9           All of them have kind of picked through,  
10          with the exception of Earle. You know, Earle,  
11          because they are a district under State  
12          authority for fiscal purposes, they didn't have  
13          a requirement to do this, so most of their  
14          comments will be about the fiscal situation.  
15          So they have an added part with their district  
16          support plan, even though they weren't required  
17          to do that. It's something they did choose  
18          to -- to go ahead do and do that. Only school  
19          districts in level five support are required to  
20          do those things.

21          So any questions about the process before  
22          we go over to Earle?

23                 CHAIRMAN BARTH: No.

24                 And I apologize for misspeaking about the  
25          level five. Earle is not at level five. I

1 apologize.

2 A-5: CONSIDERATION OF LEGISLATIVE REPORTS & APPROVAL OF  
3 DISTRICT SUPPORT PLANS: EARLE SCHOOL DISTRICT

4 DR. MIKE HERNANDEZ: Okay. Well, I  
5 will -- I will then just turn it over to  
6 Dr. Wilde and Ms. Smith that will give us the  
7 financial update as to the status of the  
8 district because you haven't heard one of those  
9 since we have done the state takeover.

10 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Great. Thank you.

11 Dr. Wilde, welcome home.

12 DR. RICHARD WILDE: Richard Wilde, Earle  
13 School District.

14 As Dr. Hernandez says, our classification  
15 is fiscal distress. Ms. Smith would -- is here  
16 and would be answering most of the fiscal  
17 questions.

18 For the most part in our report we just --  
19 hopefully that you can see that what we're  
20 trying to do is balance between our adequate  
21 fiscal and financial procedures at the same  
22 time we're looking to improve student outcomes  
23 and academics. So our focus is equal on both  
24 establishing procedures for finance as well as  
25 establishing systems to support students, and

1 to have high expectations, and then accomplish  
2 and have students attain those high  
3 expectations.

4 Also we are working on the facilities, and  
5 we're in a building project so we have an  
6 elementary school -- while the rain is helpful,  
7 it really isn't helpful for our building  
8 project, but we're about three weeks behind on  
9 the new elementary but we still anticipate that  
10 that will be completed and we will occupy it by  
11 August of next school year.

12 In the report itself, the one area I want  
13 to call attention to would be the goals. And  
14 the goals are a draft at this stage, we're  
15 having conversation with the community about  
16 what the community feels should occur prior to  
17 the district being returned to local control,  
18 what would they like to see. And in the goals  
19 right now, for the most part they were focused  
20 on fiscal and plans, but the conversation, now  
21 that that part has been talked through with the  
22 community, now it's becoming about what do we  
23 want to see from our graduates, where do we see  
24 them going, what do we see them doing, and so  
25 there will be additional parts in the plan

1 related to what we -- what we hope for and what  
2 we're planning for graduates coming from Earle  
3 School District.

4 So the goals right now, there are just  
5 three, basically, financial in nature, but  
6 there will be more added as we go through the  
7 school year.

8 Any questions for me, Dr. Barth?

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Any questions on this, to  
10 the left?

11 Ms. McFettridge?

12 MS. McFETRIDGE: I guess how long have you  
13 been in the district? Are you a new  
14 superintendent?

15 I'm new on the board so I apologize.

16 DR. RICHARD WILDE: This is my first year  
17 in education.

18 No, I'm --

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: That's a great point in  
20 terms of, if you could, just a very quick  
21 timeline of how we got here.

22 DR. RICHARD WILDE: Yes. Okay. The State  
23 assumed the authority over the Earle School  
24 District on November 6, 2017, and I was here at  
25 the department. I went to Earle as the

1 appointed superintendent, so I've been there  
2 for about seven or eight months.

3 MS. McFETRIDGE: Thank you for doing that.  
4 Okay. Thank you.

5 DR. RICHARD WILDE: And it's actually my  
6 42nd year in education. I started at 12.

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Any  
8 additional questions?

9 Ms. Newton?

10 MS. NEWTON: I just want to thank you for  
11 your work and thank you for the -- the report,  
12 it's very clear and honest assessment of what's  
13 going on. And I also want to applaud you  
14 for -- for, you know, the financial part is  
15 important; without that, the district can't  
16 operate; but making sure the focus stays with  
17 student outcomes, because as a -- a district  
18 and as a school, we know that's the most  
19 important thing. And so I applaud your efforts  
20 in that way and involving the community in that  
21 and making sure that that community is proud of  
22 that Earle School District, and I think that's  
23 the direction we're headed. So thank you.

24 DR. RICHARD WILDE: And I must say that  
25 the community is really rallying behind us.

1 Even the alumni association has come forward,  
2 and not solicited by us, we've been out  
3 soliciting a lot of entities, but the alumni  
4 association has approached us about what could  
5 they do, and talking about community tutoring  
6 and -- and sites away from the school for  
7 tutoring. So everyone is beginning to embrace  
8 that concept.

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. All right. Any  
10 other questions? Any questions over here?

11 Ms. Zook, anything?

12 MS. ZOOK: No. Good job.

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Dr. Moore? All  
14 right.

15 DR. RICHARD WILDE: Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. So before us  
17 we need to accept this report; correct? That's  
18 our -- that's our action today.

19 MS. ZOOK: I move to accept the report  
20 from Earle.

21 MS. NEWTON: Second.

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

24 All in favor, say, "Aye."

25 BOARD MEMBERS: Aye.

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Opposed, same sign.

2 Dr. Wilde, thank you so much --

3 DR. RICHARD WILDE: Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: -- for all you're doing.

5 DR. RICHARD WILDE: Appreciate it. Thank  
6 you.

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Thank you.

8 A-6: CONSIDERATION OF LEGISLATIVE REPORTS & APPROVAL OF  
9 DISTRICT SUPPORT PLANS: DOLLARWAY SCHOOL DISTRICT

10 CHAIRMAN BARTH: On to Dollarway School  
11 District.

12 DR. MIKE HERNANDEZ: Okay. We do have  
13 representatives here from the Dollarway School  
14 District if we have questions. They may want  
15 to share a little bit about their -- their  
16 journey through the process. But kind of  
17 their -- if you've read through their district  
18 support plan, their big ticket items that they  
19 are focused on from the district perspective  
20 are around implementation of the PLC process.  
21 We've been working closely with them on that;  
22 also a behavior model and a focus on literacy.  
23 So those are their -- their big three, three  
24 topics there.

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Great.

1                   Good to see you.

2                   Do you have any comments before we turn to  
3 questions?

4                   MS. BARBARA WARREN: I will just say happy  
5 new year to everyone. I'm Barbara Warren, a  
6 very proud Superintendent of the Dollarway  
7 School District. And just in keeping with  
8 Dr. Wilde's comments, because not everybody  
9 knows the journey, so very quickly, December  
10 10th Dollarway became part of ADE in a very  
11 intimate way, State authority, and I was  
12 appointed by the Commissioner, as a life-long  
13 resident and as a person who is deeply, deeply  
14 vested in the -- in the work in that area.

15                   We are fiscal and academic distress in the  
16 old terms, of course, tier five now. And we  
17 have done a great job, I would say, of  
18 stabilizing our district and creating the  
19 systems that's needed to undergird student  
20 outcomes, teaching and learning, and I'm very  
21 proud of our -- of our efforts.

22                   So you see in our report we're  
23 streamlining our focus. We've done a lot of  
24 things and we have realized that we've got to  
25 focus on components that we know will move the



1 needle, but make it where, with our hands so  
2 wrapped around so many things, that we can  
3 literally streamline with laser focus work on  
4 things that we are going to know will make us  
5 the -- make us as proud as we would like to be  
6 of our own efforts and, of course, the efforts  
7 of our children.

8 I'm open for any questions.

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Great. Great.

10 Dr. Moore, anything?

11 DR. MOORE: I do have a question.

12 It's great to see the work that you've  
13 been doing there and I know a lot of your team  
14 as done a lot as well.

15 With these -- this work you're doing,  
16 whether it's PLCs or PBIS, it takes a longevity  
17 of teachers. How many new teachers did you  
18 hire this year, what is y'all's typical  
19 turnover, kind of do you see that you can  
20 create stability moving forward?

21 MS. BARBARA WARREN: Okay. I appreciate  
22 your asking that.

23 We have in the past turned over as much --  
24 and even though we are a staff of 188, and we  
25 have right under 130 certified staff members,

1 we have turned over 25 percent of that staff  
2 in -- in past years. Very excited to say that  
3 we only have in our district right now three  
4 long term subs and one emergency teacher  
5 permit; and the three long term subs are tied  
6 to special education.

7 So we have been able to, with our internal  
8 recruitment efforts, with our Grow Your Own  
9 Programming, we've been able to staff. As a  
10 matter of fact, ten of those long term subs  
11 from last year are Apple candidates this year.  
12 We held onto them, we nurtured them, and they  
13 were of choice.

14 There, of course, were some that didn't  
15 continue with us because, very excited to say,  
16 Ms. Newton, we were able to make some choices  
17 this year. So our turnover this year has been  
18 considerably less. And that's been a part of  
19 the stability issue. You train, you train, you  
20 train, and then people go right out the window.  
21 So we have far more of who we had last year,  
22 people who were at the table, who were having  
23 conversations about what we should do next,  
24 they are here to help us do the next.

25 DR. MOORE: That's good to hear. Okay.

1 Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Great. Mr. Williamson?

3 COMMISSIONER KEY: If I may add just a  
4 little bit to that, I have to give Ms. Warren  
5 credit because -- because of her team's ability  
6 to get a handle, working with Cindy and our  
7 fiscal team getting a handling the fiscal side  
8 of things, we've also been able to increase  
9 base salary for the last two years -- well,  
10 last year and this year.

11 MS. BARBARA WARREN: That's right.

12 COMMISSIONER KEY: And Ms. Warren deserves  
13 the credit for changing the culture where they  
14 are spending money on the right things now,  
15 which is, you know, classroom teachers. So  
16 that I think that has -- is having an impact on  
17 the retention as well.

18 MS. BARBARA WARREN: I definitely agree.  
19 If I can say real quickly, \$1,000 doesn't seem  
20 like a lot to -- to many, but when your salary  
21 at the time was 33,075 at base, and then the  
22 next year to add \$1,500 -- the support of the  
23 Department of Education has been -- it's been  
24 phenomenal. The team and fiscal, they have  
25 been very helpful.

1                   And at first coming in and pretty much  
2                   singing that song from the very beginning,  
3                   we've got to do something about teacher  
4                   salaries, but you've got to stabilize. And so  
5                   I'm really proud of the district. These three  
6                   ends of years that I've been a part of the  
7                   district, we as a team have worked and we have  
8                   not declined in our -- our balances. As a  
9                   matter of fact, each year we've been able to  
10                  move moneys to our building fund. Very, very  
11                  proud; very excited, in that respect we are --  
12                  we are again stable.

13                  CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right.  
14                  Mr. Williamson, anything?

15                  MR. WILLIAMSON: No.

16                  CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Zook?

17                  MS. ZOOK: Good morning.

18                  MS. BARBARA WARREN: Good morning,  
19                  Ms. Zook.

20                  MS. ZOOK: Good morning.

21                  Can you tell me where you are -- because I  
22                  notice the new reports don't reflect student  
23                  absenteeism and teacher absenteeism, and Ds and  
24                  Fs, the things that we were used to seeing.

25                  Can you tell me -- I know you don't have

1 the numbers probably in front of you, you may  
2 have them in your head, how is that going?

3 MS. BARBARA WARREN: In respect to teacher  
4 attendance, we still review that data. We  
5 still consider the data set that talks to us  
6 about culture.

7 We did have improvement. It wasn't as  
8 sizable as we would have liked; however, we  
9 tracked it to see why. And oftentimes, as much  
10 as we've had a lot of change, we still have a  
11 lot of veterans. And so family situations tied  
12 back to medical, huge, huge, huge; we had some  
13 major illnesses, and as small as we are, it  
14 just impacts us greatly.

15 So we did have a positive swing but it was  
16 not a -- a huge increase. And again, a good  
17 amount of it was tied to major medical issues.

18 MS. ZOOK: Okay. Because I know the new  
19 research is saying that it impacts children in  
20 the low socioeconomic group the most, and I  
21 know that you had a great many of those  
22 children in your district.

23 MS. BARBARA WARREN: Yes, ma'am.

24 MS. ZOOK: So I appreciate you continuing  
25 to look at that.

1                   What about your special education and your  
2                   dyslexia?

3                   MS. BARBARA WARREN: In respect to  
4                   dyslexia, we are trying to improve our  
5                   screening processes. We work with the Arkansas  
6                   River Education Services Cooperative who  
7                   provide support, but we also have staff members  
8                   who are well acclimated to dyslexia.

9                   And in respect to numbers, I apologize, I  
10                  don't have numbers for you, but we are --

11                 MS. ZOOK: I'm not interested in numbers.

12                 MS. BARBARA WARREN: Yeah. But we are  
13                 focused on outcomes.

14                 We've had a learning curve as it relates  
15                 to our teachers understanding learning, so we  
16                 are doing professional development and again  
17                 supporting more.

18                 Special education, we in the past have  
19                 been a district known as over identified. I'm  
20                 very proud, I don't mind saying this in a  
21                 public setting, my student -- my son is a  
22                 student, he's a special needs student, and he  
23                 receives excellent care, but I'm happy to say  
24                 that's not just my baby. We are very personal  
25                 in our care and our concern. Our Special

1 Services Director, Ms. Barbara Boyce, does a  
2 phenomenal job and she can call them all by  
3 name.

4 We are still over identified a little bit  
5 and we have -- and we have found some -- some  
6 ways to intervene earlier, and so dyslexia  
7 screening and supports definitely is a big  
8 help, RTI happening in a more effective way  
9 definitely is a huge point, so we're moving in  
10 the right direction in that respect.

11 MS. ZOOK: Okay. Thank you.

12 MS. BARBARA WARREN: Yes, ma'am.

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Zook, okay.

14 Ms. Dean?

15 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Nothing.

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. McFetridge?

17 MS. MCFETRIDGE: I have a question about  
18 community engagement and how are you --

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Microphone.

20 MS. MCFETRIDGE: I'm sorry. How are you  
21 doing with your community engagement?

22 MS. BARBARA WARREN: We, of course, could  
23 always do more. I'm proud again of our efforts  
24 to -- to reach out to our families.

25 Our principals are taking a very hands-on

1 approach. Our PTOs are up and running. I  
2 would say we have made major strides in that  
3 respect.

4 When I first got to the district, PTO was  
5 just kind of something that was written down,  
6 but we have active PTOs and active efforts  
7 associated with them. We engage stakeholder  
8 groups. I've not had a community stakeholder  
9 meeting this -- this school year yet, but we  
10 are trying to engage all of our stakeholder  
11 groups with -- last year our effort was tied to  
12 our mission of collaborating, educating,  
13 graduating the whole child. And so we are  
14 trying to engage families, we are trying to  
15 engage our students and their voices as well as  
16 our teacher voices and our community voices.

17 We -- we have work to do in that area but  
18 we have come a long way. It's very important.

19 MS. MCFETRIDGE: Yes, it is.

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Newton?

21 MS. NEWTON: Thank you for your efforts to  
22 support teachers and to the progress that  
23 you've made in that area, because that -- to  
24 me, that's a great indicator of the culture  
25 changing.



1 MS. BARBARA WARREN: Yes.

2 MS. NEWTON: So -- so I appreciate your  
3 efforts in that area.

4 I had a couple of questions. One of the  
5 things that you said was your long term subs  
6 were in the area of special ed, you had three.

7 How many special ed teachers are in the  
8 district?

9 MS. BARBARA WARREN: There are -- this is  
10 going to be an estimate. There are probably 15  
11 special ed staff members.

12 MS. NEWTON: Okay. So it's not just a  
13 high percentage?

14 MS. BARBARA WARREN: It's not huge.

15 What happens, though, is two of them are  
16 in the middle school, so of course there are  
17 four teachers in that -- on that campus, so  
18 it's high for that. But yes.

19 MS. NEWTON: Yeah. So what are you doing  
20 to support those -- those classrooms?

21 MS. BARBARA WARREN: We are -- we are  
22 developing a -- a program that our Grow Your  
23 Own Program developed.

24 We have a group called Tools For  
25 Leadership, and those are aspiring -- aspiring

1 administrators, and their project at the end of  
2 last year, Dr. Melvin Bryant, my deputy, and I,  
3 we literally worked intimately with this group  
4 basically every month talking about leadership  
5 issues, and their project for the year was to  
6 support teacher support. And they came up with  
7 some phenomenal ideas that led us to a place  
8 where, what we will have is a program called  
9 personal -- Personal Allies for Learning  
10 Success. And we are planning a mentor program  
11 for our novice teachers; we're looking at first  
12 and second year teachers; so, of course, these  
13 persons would be a part of that. And there is  
14 a handbook that's written just for that.  
15 Matter of fact, it will be for everybody, of  
16 course, but we will acclimate persons to our  
17 district and our processes through the  
18 handbook; there is a Google classroom where  
19 conversations will be able to take place  
20 literally, you know, throwing out a question  
21 tied to, of course, all the big issues,  
22 assessment, behavior management, classroom  
23 management, just teaching and learning topics  
24 and the like.

25 But we are going to take a very personal

1 approach and we are going to meet on a monthly  
2 basis with all of our novice teachers. We will  
3 do that in a very organized fashion that will  
4 be kind of pull out. We're working with our  
5 community, I will comment, Go Forward Pine  
6 Bluff, I'm a part of the educational alliance,  
7 and retention and recruitment of teachers is  
8 one of our major thrusts. And so we are  
9 working with them and there are some neat  
10 things that are coming down the pike working in  
11 respect to them.

12 Our principals are having individualized  
13 conversations and we're just providing kind of  
14 grass roots support. I mean, what do you need?  
15 And -- and of course all the -- the things that  
16 are just tied to -- to Ed Reflect and  
17 responsive -- responsive feedback to teaching  
18 behaviors as they go.

19 But we want to connect our novice teachers  
20 to a buddy and someone who holds their hand.  
21 But we need to organize that effort so that it  
22 doesn't fall by the way side and that's what  
23 PALS is going to do. We're very, very proud of  
24 that effort.

25 MS. NEWTON: And that's wonderful because

1           those teachers need that. And I would  
2           encourage you to -- to closely look at these  
3           teachers that are in special ed because special  
4           ed students have a lot -- you understand they  
5           have lots of needs --

6           MS. BARBARA WARREN: Absolutely.

7           MS. NEWTON: -- and not everyone is  
8           equipped to deal with those, and -- and even  
9           just on the paperwork side, you know, it can be  
10          overwhelming so I encourage you to make sure  
11          that those teachers have the supports that they  
12          need.

13          My other question had to do with the Rural  
14          Alliance through Forward. Are you getting any  
15          supports that way?

16          MS. BARBARA WARREN: We are. We have a  
17          meeting coming up soon to -- to discuss some  
18          pieces.

19          I don't want to say that we're at a  
20          standstill. We have a community plan, we are  
21          working with, again, Rural Ed. We have  
22          selected someone who's the community re -- the  
23          community liaison between our district and  
24          Arkansas Rural Ed. So we are getting some -- I  
25          wouldn't say as much traction as we can. We

1           have got to embrace more community partners and  
2           that's what the -- the next conversations  
3           about.

4                     It's a very good design, very wonderful  
5           opportunity; but quite honestly, when it was  
6           first introduced, the district really needed to  
7           have stability to engage. And so having found  
8           that, the conversations over this past year  
9           have been much more rich, and we're poised  
10          to -- to really move forward.

11                    And there has been a lot of talk that  
12          includes our cooperative and other -- other  
13          support persons and stakeholders that is really  
14          going to help.

15                    When it comes to having a streamlined  
16          focus, it's real easy as a school to just focus  
17          on that stuff and not make the connections, so  
18          you need other people to help you do that. So  
19          I have -- I have very high hopes for what the  
20          community initiative is going to be able to do  
21          and our next steps, and we're better positioned  
22          to engage there.

23                    MS. NEWTON: Okay. Thank you.

24                    CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. House, anything?

25                    MS. HOUSE: No, thank you.

1                   CHAIRMAN BARTH:   Okay.   I know Ms. Zook  
2                   has a question.

3                   I just want to build on that a little bit,  
4                   what Ms. McFetridge made and in that last  
5                   comment.

6                   In terms of a Community Advisory Board  
7                   process, where are y'all?

8                   First off I was trying to find statutorily  
9                   but where we are in terms of the timeline  
10                  for -- for creation of a CAB, but where are you  
11                  personally in terms of readiness for a  
12                  Community Advisory Board?

13                  MS. BARBARA WARREN:   So the Commissioner  
14                  and I have had a conversation, along with  
15                  Dr. Hernandez about this.   I think it's  
16                  important that the community has a voice.   I  
17                  think it's important that anybody that touches  
18                  the learning community has a voice.   In respect  
19                  to readiness -- and you did say personally?

20                  CHAIRMAN BARTH:   Uh-huh.   Well, from your  
21                  position.

22                  MS. BARBARA WARREN:   One of the things  
23                  from my perspective and position, one of the  
24                  things that I think sometimes is a challenge is  
25                  when we -- we don't know exactly how to govern.

1           And I don't mean that as negatively as that  
2           might -- that some may make it sound. But when  
3           we just don't really know what the role is and  
4           how to provide the support, then it's really  
5           easy to start doing other things or to maybe  
6           distract from the work. So I think it's time,  
7           I think this is a good time, and we are working  
8           and we have been talking about the processes.  
9           I think that it needs to -- to happen in a  
10          fashion where everybody is -- it's a  
11          transparent process. I welcome it and I think  
12          it's a great thing; however, I think it's  
13          really important that the education side of it  
14          for everybody involved is at the forefront.

15                 And then the Commissioner, of course,  
16          could speak to other steps, of course.

17                 COMMISSIONER KEY: And we have -- of  
18          course, if you remember, we have two situations  
19          with Dollarway; one is academic --

20                 MS. BARBARA WARREN: Yes, sir.

21                 COMMISSIONER KEY: -- and then second was  
22          fiscal distress.

23                 So in the statute, the fiscal distress  
24          statute still has the Community Advisory Board  
25          the -- the old way, and now under the Act 930

1           it's the concept of a Limited Authority  
2           Board --

3                   CHAIRMAN BARTH:   Yeah.

4                   COMMISSIONER KEY:   -- that's there.

5                   So under the fiscal distress statute, that  
6           Community Advisory Board option is -- is  
7           available and we -- the timing wise, it can  
8           happen any time at -- you know, we can open up  
9           the portal for the applications and Ms. Warren  
10          would have the communication with the  
11          community, talking about who's eligible and who  
12          might be interested in the zones and all those  
13          things --

14                   MS. BARBARA WARREN:   Yes, sir.

15                   COMMISSIONER KEY:   -- that we would be  
16          then bringing to the table.

17                   CHAIRMAN BARTH:   Okay.   And I can't  
18          remember in Dollarway, were y'all -- were  
19          y'all -- did you elect school board members by  
20          zone or at large?

21                   MS. BARBARA WARREN:   Yes, I understand by  
22          zone.   Yes, sir.

23                   CHAIRMAN BARTH:   Okay.   All right.

24          Ms. Zook, I know you had a question.

25                   MS. ZOOK:   The secondary students, is



1           there a way -- are you -- that you could  
2           incorporate to teach those children how to read  
3           that are getting to the secondary level and so  
4           many years behind to, one, assist them in  
5           performing better in the classes they are  
6           taking; and, two, to keep them or increase the  
7           probability that they won't drop out?

8                     I don't know if you want to -- I know  
9           after school and before school, because so many  
10          students in your district have to work, so that  
11          may not be an option, but, you know, if you  
12          have a seven or eight period day, it seems like  
13          one of those periods devoted to someone who  
14          knows how to teach reading teaching them to  
15          read in an environment so they don't feel badly  
16          or embarrassed, maybe working with a Literacy  
17          Council, you know. I don't know, you -- you  
18          have great ideas so I trust that, but I still  
19          am concerned about how many of your  
20          secondary -- or anybody's secondary students  
21          are three and four grade levels behind in  
22          reading for a variety of reasons.

23                    MS. BARBARA WARREN: Absolutely.

24                    It's urgent. And our conversations -- I'm  
25          really enjoying our Professional Learning

1 Communities at Work work. What we have honed  
 2 in on, you see one of our goals is tied to the  
 3 literacy, I mean, literally just literacy. And  
 4 each of our buildings, as we talked with our  
 5 coaches -- our project director for this work  
 6 is Dr. Sharon Kramer, and as we talked with our  
 7 coaches and our district team and we were  
 8 sitting down looking at the development of our  
 9 30, 60, and 90-day plans, all the buildings --  
 10 and I try not to have my voice be so big, I  
 11 want to hear what they are thinking, I think  
 12 all of our voices should matter. And what our  
 13 buildings were discussing was how do we catch  
 14 them up.

15 And so one of the efforts -- and I've  
 16 actually not talked to Dr. Hernandez and  
 17 Mr. Key about it yet, we're trying to get our  
 18 30, 60, 90-day plan be really cute so we could  
 19 get a good nod. But literacy and math  
 20 enhancements where we literacy -- it's not  
 21 exactly double blocking but while, of course,  
 22 they still have to move forward with their  
 23 other content for grade level, we are building  
 24 now literacy enhancement period that is tied to  
 25 their deficits and the foundation issues. It

1 will be very targeted and very specific to --  
 2 to those skill sets, and we're doing the -- the  
 3 very same, we're building the very same with  
 4 math.

5 It's actually meant a major master  
 6 schedule overhaul, and so we are looking at  
 7 some of those pieces.

8 To say that we need to do something and --  
 9 wait to do it, that's not the way our work is  
 10 going. There is a part of our plan that is --  
 11 that is huge.

12 I will say, of the 68 sweeties that came  
 13 to us at the start of last year as seniors, all  
 14 68 of them finished and graduated.

15 Now, I know that's not what graduation  
 16 rate is made up of, but when you're looking at  
 17 seniors, you've got to look at holding onto  
 18 every one of them. We know that our graduation  
 19 rate is going to increase. There are so many  
 20 efforts to hold onto our children, but we do  
 21 need to turn out a product that can be  
 22 productive and that can actually benefit  
 23 themselves and -- and go out to be ready for  
 24 college and for a career.

25 So we are working to individualize and to

1           personalize our supports for them.

2                       Coming up -- as a matter of fact I think  
3           the department is doing on the 25th, we're  
4           doing work related to success plans, and we are  
5           working with our cooperative tied to -- as a  
6           matter of fact, Team Digital is going to be  
7           coming and helping us with some pieces very  
8           soon, tied to supporting our secondary students  
9           in how we connect them to what their needs are.  
10          It's -- it's not a perfect plan at this -- at  
11          this point, because they -- there is so much  
12          work that has to do, they have so far to go,  
13          but we know that we've not targeted their  
14          specific support -- supporting need, and that's  
15          what we plan to do in this year, I mean,  
16          literally starting within days. It's -- it's  
17          very important.

18                      We're really proud that -- and some may  
19          have seen -- seen that tweeted out, but we're  
20          very proud that The Office of Education Policy  
21          recognized our high school for -- for their  
22          math growth. And some might say, well, they  
23          had a lot of growth to -- to -- to make. Well,  
24          yeah, that's true, but the growth was made, and  
25          to the point that we were acknowledged in,

1           like, top numbers here in our state for that  
2           growth.

3                   I will say to you as well that last year  
4           was the first time that I would say we had  
5           quality math instruction because of the number  
6           of persons who were not certified or that were  
7           long term subs. There is just so much you can  
8           do -- and it's not an excuse -- there is just  
9           so much you can do when you don't have a  
10          quality teacher, and anyone who thinks that you  
11          can just walk somebody in and, poof, they can  
12          make it happen, that is just not so.

13                   We expect, though, because of staffing  
14          benefits that we -- that we have now, with the  
15          stability there, and highly qualified persons  
16          in front of our children, that we're going to  
17          be able to make great gains, but we've got to  
18          do something in addition and that's one of the  
19          things, literacy and math enhancements, that we  
20          are moving forward to.

21                   MS. ZOOK: Because I find that the Science  
22          of Reading --

23                   MS. BARBARA WARREN: Yes.

24                   MS. ZOOK: -- in the secondary students  
25          especially, because they don't think they are

1 going to have to do site words and read, you  
2 know, children's book, but if they approach it  
3 they can see it as an analytical thing and  
4 stepping and so they don't feel like you're,  
5 quote, dumbing down the instruction.

6 MS. BARBARA WARREN: Right. Right. Yes,  
7 ma'am.

8 MS. ZOOK: But I feel like, gosh, I mean,  
9 because I doubt if any of your students have  
10 been taught to read using the Science of  
11 Reading --

12 MS. BARBARA WARREN: Well, I can't -

13 MS. ZOOK: -- I mean at the secondary  
14 level.

15 MS. BARBARA WARREN: Yeah. Let me say, I  
16 can't say that so much, but you will be really  
17 excited to know, during our Cardinal Academy  
18 this year, that was -- we literally stopped and  
19 changed how we handled professional development  
20 at the start of the year, and one of the most  
21 exciting sessions was one tied to the Science  
22 of Reading among our secondary teachers.

23 Really it was among the entire district, but  
24 they were walking away saying, "We've got to  
25 have more of this, we understand it's better."

1           And in every classroom every day everyone is  
2           reading and writing. That's a culture shift  
3           for us.

4                   And there is a -- and I won't belabor  
5           the -- the point, but really funny story was  
6           told to me yesterday about some of our P.E.  
7           coaches. And so I don't mean any harm, and  
8           they will hear this and they will laugh. But  
9           we've got some interesting coaches, so I'll  
10          just say that. But they were talking about  
11          word walls and they were talking about how in  
12          P.E. they will be able to impact academic  
13          vocabulary, and that was tied back to a  
14          conversation associated with lesson planning,  
15          and that's tied to conversations about  
16          standards. We're having the right  
17          conversations. We're having the right  
18          conversations about learning. We're having the  
19          right conversations about what it is children  
20          should learn and what we're going to do about  
21          it when they do and, of course, when they  
22          don't. I'm excited. I'm excited. I'm  
23          excited.

24                   CHAIRMAN BARTH: Any additional questions?

25                   All right. I will entertain a motion to

1 accept the report from Dollarway.

2 MS. McFETRIDGE: So moved.

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

4 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Second.

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Motion by

6 Ms. McFetridge, second by Ms. Dean.

7 All those in favor, say, "Aye."

8 BOARD MEMBERS: Aye.

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Opposed, same sign.

10 Thank you so much.

11 MS. BARBARA WARREN: Okay. Thank you all.

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: And good luck with  
13 everything, Ms. Warren.

14 MS. BARBARA WARREN: Yes, sir.

15 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. It is -- it  
16 is 12:55. I can tell people are getting tired,  
17 and I apologize to the folks from Little Rock,  
18 but I think we do need a little break. And so  
19 if we could just reconvene at 1:30.

20 And for folks who are from Pine Bluff --  
21 is that where Ms. -- or is that --

22 MR. MIKE POORE: We'll lose about half our  
23 team but we will adjust though. We understand  
24 you guys have been at it for a while.

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. I think we do -- I



1 apologize, but I think we do -- I'll read the  
2 Board. I'm sensing --

3 MS. CHAMBERS: I can stay. I hate to miss  
4 content.

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Are y'all --

6 MS. ZOOK: I'm happy to stay.

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. All right. So I  
8 will tell the folks from Pine Bluff who are  
9 here, however, that we will not start your item  
10 before 2 p.m. So if you guys want to go  
11 take -- get lunch and come back at two o'clock,  
12 so -- so we'll, we're going to be respectful  
13 of -- of -- of y'all's lunch plans as well.

14 A-7: CONSIDERATION OF LEGISLATIVE REPORTS & APPROVAL OF  
15 DISTRICT SUPPORT PLANS: LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Therefore  
17 Mr. Hernandez, next up, Little Rock School  
18 District.

19 DR. MIKE HERNANDEZ: Yes, sir. Thank you.

20 I'll be quick, just -- you know, the big  
21 thing to know here about, as we worked with the  
22 Little Rock School District in the past  
23 process, you know, we had certain schools that  
24 they were working with to perform -- to do  
25 information and think about plans that were

1           presented to the Board along with that. The  
2           big difference with this year, because of the  
3           way we've changed, is they are now looking at  
4           all schools, so all schools have their school  
5           level plan when they -- you know, this was  
6           tough. We had a lot of conversations, I know  
7           the Commissioner was part of those meetings  
8           when we talked to some of the school principals  
9           about how they were doing things is, you know,  
10          how do we look at multiple schools in a school  
11          district, and then from those plans glean down  
12          to what are the things that we're really going  
13          to focus on.

14                 So some of the four main topics that  
15          Little Rock had were, again, trying to work  
16          through the implementation of the PLC process  
17          with a focus on reading instruction, a goal  
18          around database decision making, and then  
19          finally just some operational goals in regards  
20          to policies, procedures, human capital, those  
21          types of things.

22                 And so with that I will let Mr. Poore come  
23          up and answer questions or give additional  
24          information.

25                 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Welcome Mr. Poore.

1 MR. MIKE POORE: Thank you. And I  
2 appreciate the Board hanging in there just for  
3 a little longer.

4 I do have my team here today and my  
5 deputies, Marvin Burton and Dr. Sadie Mitchell,  
6 Dr. Cummings, Dr. McKisick, Dr. Perkins, if  
7 they will all raise their hands, I'm sure you  
8 all know them, but I appreciate them all being  
9 here because I really do feel positive about  
10 the plan that's in front of you in terms of  
11 a -- kind of a change in terms of a delivery  
12 and a change of expectations.

13 You know when you move to this new thing  
14 with ESSA, it's interesting, you know, the  
15 dynamics of just us as humans. We're so used  
16 to templates, we're so used to being told what  
17 to do, we're so used to a form that we fill out  
18 and we almost do it in a mindless way and we  
19 talk about it in a -- in a sense of saying, oh,  
20 yeah, this is our plan and it's a living  
21 document, but then how often do they get stuck  
22 on a shelf and -- and sit?

23 And I can tell you, if nothing else,  
24 that -- that what's happened with us on both  
25 the district improvement plan and then our

1 school improvement plans, that the district  
2 improvement plan is probably at least its third  
3 variation that I'm aware, they can probably  
4 tell you that there's another three variations  
5 that I never even saw that they worked on, and  
6 it will continue to evolve.

7 Our sites, we've had multiple meetings  
8 with our sites in a PLC feeder pattern format  
9 to have them work together so that they can  
10 learn from each other. Sometimes you had  
11 feeders of elementary, middle, and high school  
12 talking about their plans; other times you had  
13 elementary colleagues working together, and  
14 then you had this staff that's behind me all  
15 integrated in, including your superintendent,  
16 being every -- every time we did one of those  
17 meetings I was in those meetings as well.

18 It also is probably of note that the State  
19 is evolving on this. And we -- the  
20 Commissioner and I have talked about, as have  
21 Mike and Ivy, that, you know this is different  
22 for the State to even think about within the  
23 ranks of their folks of looking at something  
24 beyond a template, something that becomes alive  
25 for a building and that's what you want. You

1 want to have something that makes people have  
2 ownership and that really reflects where they  
3 are at at this given time.

4 I wouldn't be me if I didn't do three  
5 quick celebrations. And I will just rattle  
6 them off, you can choose to come back to them  
7 or not. But we've had a really good start with  
8 our hiring this -- this year. We've hired some  
9 excellent principals to come in that I'm very,  
10 very excited about. I'm extremely excited  
11 about our professional development plans that  
12 occurred over the course of the summer,  
13 everything from our leadership institute to our  
14 new staff training to the professional  
15 development that occurred for all of our staff.

16 If you looked at the professional  
17 development, I was so excited to bring that  
18 into the Commissioner and -- and Assistant  
19 Commissioner Ivy, and then Mike, to be able to  
20 show this plan. And it -- it was as rich of  
21 professional development as you would find at  
22 any conference that this state has ever had and  
23 it was guided by both outside folks as well as  
24 our own internal people. And the Commissioner  
25 right away looked down and goes, look, I didn't

1 know, you have this person doing this, and it  
2 was, it was really a great delivery.

3 The four components of our plan, I won't  
4 go into a ton of depth on them, but I will say  
5 that, you know, a professional learning  
6 community, that's kind of almost like  
7 foundational piece, that if you don't have the  
8 ability for people to talk and work together  
9 and think out loud, then things aren't going to  
10 work well. That professional learning  
11 community approach is trying to be extended not  
12 only within our principal cadre and leadership  
13 groups but then down into the site level.

14 It would be unfair to say that the  
15 district hasn't looked at professional learning  
16 community, hasn't received training. Some of  
17 you know that that's been going on for 15 to 20  
18 years, but the level of, I guess, how we're  
19 trying to stick to that and kind of a  
20 monitoring piece that we're trying to put in  
21 place and a level of support, I do think we're  
22 in a different spot. It fits into our overall  
23 theme of a Power Of Us that we've used for the  
24 last three years.

25 And so we've got those feeder patterns now

1 in professional learning communities, we're  
2 making sure that the buildings are doing that,  
3 and then of course there is training that's  
4 involved.

5 On the reading level, of course, nothing  
6 matters unless we go move forward on reading.  
7 There is a lot of wonderful things that have  
8 occurred in this district that are  
9 transformational that often now almost get  
10 forgot of what's happened in just two year  
11 span, but a lot of those things that's happened  
12 in the last two years, they are foundations to  
13 now make the reading scores jump. If they  
14 don't jump, then you all ought to just come  
15 after me harder because I don't know what  
16 else -- we got -- we are doing -- it is the  
17 most important thing we do in terms of our  
18 work.

19 We have been diligent and I hope that the  
20 staff of ADE would -- would share this about  
21 our efforts to be trained in R.I.S.E. We had  
22 11 schools initially trained last year, this  
23 year all of our elementaries are involved now,  
24 you know, so they are all at different stages.  
25 Because the first 11, that was a K-2 effort,

1           that group now moves on in getting three, four,  
2           five trained and then the new group getting  
3           trained in terms of K-2.

4                 We have 6th grade getting trained as well  
5           within the R.I.S.E. Group, so that's -- that's  
6           a very positive and exciting thing.

7                 We also are -- have got totally new  
8           resources for our secondary teachers. And the  
9           most powerful thing about that is that it  
10          creates relevancy for learning so that the  
11          materials there are more engaging for students  
12          as well as allowing a differentiation in terms  
13          of, you know, the type of material so it fits  
14          their reading levels to then move them up in a  
15          quicker fashion. So I'm -- I'm excited about  
16          that.

17                Also I would want to point out that we are  
18          moving forward with a new position with  
19          dyslexia. If -- if you follow social media,  
20          that's the one place that -- that the district  
21          probably gets beat up more on than any other  
22          and we are moving forward with a position to  
23          help us on that. That person especially will  
24          coordinate our efforts at the secondary level,  
25          and both Dr. Perkins and Mr. Burton and



1 Dr. Mitchell have been involved in -- in that  
2 selection.

3 The data piece, because you've got to have  
4 that and, obviously, that's one of our -- the  
5 third goal. We -- we've evolved, as has the  
6 State in terms of, you know, last year the K-2,  
7 and we selected math. This year we will have  
8 math available for K-10. And most of you are  
9 aware of that tool in terms of its richness of  
10 offering a much better tool for, obviously,  
11 teaching staff, but also for students and also  
12 for parents in terms of monitoring growth and  
13 seeing where student strengths and weaknesses  
14 are.

15 And we've provided PD. Dr. Cummings has  
16 lead that effort in terms of the MAPP work, and  
17 so we're very, very excited about that.

18 Ms. McFetridge, we have followed the  
19 Springdale model as a part of our data with the  
20 grade level reading campaign, and so we are  
21 diligent behind that and hoping you're seeing a  
22 social media explosion on that over the last  
23 month of chronic absenteeism and how that can  
24 impact your reading scores.

25 Our district has about an 18 percent

1 chronic absentee rate at the -- with our  
2 student body. If you go compare Springdale,  
3 Springdale is at 9 percent. Interestingly  
4 enough, and I'm not going to call on Cynthia  
5 Howell, who did that, but there is other  
6 districts that you would expect to have a much  
7 higher rate. It's a problem within our state  
8 and we are taking it very seriously within our  
9 district to impact grade level reading.

10 Same kind of data of just suspension and  
11 expulsions and kids missing class in terms of  
12 restorative justice models as well as CPI  
13 training, crisis prevention intervention, to  
14 help de-escalate behaviors before they ever  
15 come forward.

16 And then finally, just under the operation  
17 side and just real fast, most of you are  
18 probably aware that we're working on a  
19 long-range facility plan. We're looking at as  
20 more of an idea to re-purpose and create more  
21 opportunities for students. We have three key  
22 goals, can we enhance learning environments,  
23 can we create greater choice opportunities for  
24 parents within our district, and third can we,  
25 through this process, actually create funds

1           that will help us impact our salary schedule in  
2           the district.

3           One of our key things that came to you  
4           last year, and there is multiple things that  
5           weave in and out of here of work that we did  
6           with the State on a needs assessment. If you  
7           remember, that was a part of a discussion that  
8           we had sometime, I think, early last spring,  
9           the needs that we have identified with ADE, one  
10          of them is with our HR Department and what we  
11          do to serve all stakeholders in a more  
12          efficient way. We have a recommendation that  
13          will come forward to the Commissioner, I  
14          believe, the end of this month for new tools on  
15          that, and we also are tied in with the State in  
16          terms of a human capital look overall within  
17          our district to try to enhance our training for  
18          our team.

19          You will see in our plan that under  
20          operations we also need to look at how we  
21          operate and work on master scheduling. That's  
22          everything from trying to be more efficient  
23          with staffing but also to create more  
24          opportunities for professional learning  
25          communities as well as some of the things that

1 Ms. Warren was talking about at even of just  
2 support for students that meet Tier 2 and Tier  
3 3. And then we're support from the State in  
4 terms of funding as we transition away from the  
5 1003 ADE funding elements we're going to ask  
6 for help from the ADE on that.

7 So I tried to go very fast and when you go  
8 fast then you kind of almost feel like you  
9 maybe didn't get to cover things, but I'll let  
10 you all dictate on what you might want to come  
11 back to, and I appreciate this time.

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yeah, you've covered a  
13 lot of turf there.

14 I'll start with Ms. House, any questions?

15 MS. HOUSE: Huh-uh.

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Newton?

17 MS. NEWTON: You covered most of my  
18 questions when you were talking, but I had one  
19 question. You mentioned the 18 percent chronic  
20 absences for the students and how you're  
21 addressing that and I appreciate that.

22 Are you looking at anything on the teacher  
23 side?

24 MR. MIKE POORE: Yeah. You know, that --  
25 the first thing, and there may be additional

1 notes from either Dr. Mitchell or Mr. Burton on  
2 this, if there are, you can start to work your  
3 way up here. But, you know, we had --  
4 Cloverdale, which is one of schools that was  
5 initially labeled as a school that was in the  
6 sixth that got us on academic distress. For  
7 the first time in, I believe, well over a  
8 decade, Mr. Burton, we actually have that  
9 school staffed without any substitute teachers.  
10 And -- and so that -- you know, it's almost  
11 hurtful to say that out loud that it's been ten  
12 years, but there was a reality that we do have  
13 that in place.

14 We had to make some adjustments. Our  
15 enrollment did drop. It's going to be a drop  
16 of over 500 students, and as we fit -- as we  
17 worked that we had to move some especially  
18 elementary classrooms around over this last  
19 week, and that -- any openings that we had at  
20 the elementary level were filled with our own  
21 people. So in some ways we're probably in a  
22 better shape than we've ever been in terms of  
23 certified staff members starting this school  
24 year at the elementary and then at the  
25 secondary staffing.

1                   So I hope that answers at least partial a  
2                   part of your question.

3                   MS. NEWTON: Uh-huh, yeah.

4                   And I appreciate it. And I didn't say  
5                   this in the opening but I appreciate your work.  
6                   I mean it's making a difference. And more than  
7                   that, I appreciate you looking at it in a broad  
8                   view, not just looking at individual schools  
9                   but starting to look at those feeders, because  
10                  I think that's really where you're going to  
11                  start seeing a big difference.

12                  Thank you.

13                  CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. McFetridge?

14                  MS. McFETRIDGE: I appreciate your report  
15                  as well.

16                  I think my concern -- and, Mr. Key, this  
17                  may be addressed more to you. But in all three  
18                  reports, quite honestly, it talks about how the  
19                  department is supporting all three of these  
20                  schools. But when you look under stakeholder  
21                  communication, family, and community  
22                  engagement, "The department has no supports at  
23                  this time" is what it says on all three  
24                  reports; so --

25                  DR. MIKE HERNANDEZ: So -- so in a lot of

1           those, you know, the way those things are --  
 2           are -- are developed is in consultation with  
 3           the district. It's not that they are not doing  
 4           those efforts, it's just whether or not they  
 5           want in that -- support in that system. And so  
 6           family and community engagement is a relatively  
 7           newer support for the department, and so it's,  
 8           as I know Ms. Dean can attest to, the Board --  
 9           several of the board members have been involved  
 10          over the past year, and probably longer than  
 11          that, I know that I've been involved in  
 12          developing kind of family and community  
 13          engagement as kind of a support tool kit for  
 14          districts.

15                 And so as that's been under developed --  
 16          being developed, you know, we've been talking  
 17          to districts about that's an upcoming support  
 18          that we will provide to them in terms of tool  
 19          kits that has kind of best practices, but they  
 20          are working along at a national level with  
 21          other states in trying to develop this work.

22                 And so it's not that we don't want to  
 23          support them, it's just that -- there has not  
 24          been specific requests in some cases to do  
 25          that. But in terms of actually some support to

1 give them as a -- as a tool kit or anything  
2 around best practices, that's still under  
3 development, so that's probably why, a reason  
4 that you might see that. But that doesn't mean  
5 that they are not really going out there and  
6 doing lots of those things in places, it's just  
7 that's an under developed system for us right  
8 now.

9 MR. MIKE POORE: Can I answer --

10 MS. McFETRIDGE: I mean, I would like you  
11 to answer on that. I mean it's just so huge.

12 MR. MIKE POORE: Yeah. So, you know, I  
13 think that actually that's one of our strengths  
14 in terms of a district in terms of that we do.

15 So I anticipated you asking this. Right  
16 now we are in the facility planning and we are  
17 going out into the communities, we have five  
18 different community meetings, two have already  
19 taken place, we have had really great  
20 participation of students, parents, and just  
21 general community showing up to participate in  
22 those. There will be online surveys tied to  
23 that plan as well and there will be more than  
24 one that will be delivered so people can give  
25 us direct feedback so that we're hitting the



1 social media. Every one of those meetings are  
2 done through Facebook Live.

3 We also have a Literacy Task Force that  
4 Dr. Mitchell leads that brings in a variety of  
5 different community leaders to help us think  
6 through our approaches on reading.

7 Community walks from not only your  
8 superintendent out doing those community walks  
9 that we do on a month-to-month basis, we  
10 actually have kids doing those community walks.  
11 This week we will have Victory Over Violence  
12 where all five high schools will participate,  
13 they will be at the Capitol on Saturday.

14 The following week will be doing the grade  
15 level reading campaign, giving Springdale,  
16 Dr. Rollins a shout out on that, that we will  
17 be actually going to homes and knocking on  
18 neighborhoods with 22 schools being identified  
19 initially as the ones that have the most severe  
20 issues, to go and knock on those family's homes  
21 and giving them information about the impact of  
22 chronic absenteeism.

23 We have parent training that Dr. McKisick  
24 leads. It's the most amazing thing. We have a  
25 graduation at the end of that parent training.

1           They go during basically a first semester and a  
2           second semester. They wear robes. It's a mix  
3           of everything from a banker's wife to a parent  
4           that probably is just scratching to get ends to  
5           meet all mixed together learning parenting  
6           techniques.

7           We have feeder parent meetings that are  
8           being set up where the feeder school, typically  
9           is the middle school and they are bringing in  
10          elementary parents, to all work together and  
11          think of how we can have a bigger impact on  
12          students.

13          And then the last thing that's a part of  
14          our -- our engagement is just the social media  
15          push. We have really worked hard to have a  
16          greater branding effect on the district and  
17          sharing out the positively that's taking place  
18          in our district, and we think that's having  
19          some pretty good community outreach as well.

20          MS. McFETRIDGE: Well, you need to put  
21          these in your reports. I mean, that's  
22          outstanding, your efforts.

23          MR. MIKE POORE: Well, you know, we --  
24          sometimes I agree, like you think of how do you  
25          package these things, and so we would welcome

1 thoughts of what we need to do better in our  
2 delivery next time.

3 MS. McFETRIDGE: And if I go on Facebook  
4 and look up what Little Rock School District  
5 and like you, then I get to see some of this  
6 activity?

7 MR. MIKE POORE: Yes, ma'am. On Facebook  
8 and then Twitter as well, those two.

9 MS. McFETRIDGE: I'm not on Twitter but I  
10 need to be, I guess.

11 DR. HILL: He's a tweet king. Doing a  
12 good job. Appreciate it.

13 MR. MIKE POORE: I mentioned -- I failed  
14 to mention one thing that impacts Dr. Hill.  
15 Our 6th & Goal Program is another form of a  
16 community outreach that the district is not  
17 paying one cent for the things that are taking  
18 place there. And we have community aid members  
19 that are leading the effort to mentor and  
20 support young people through coaching a sport.  
21 It's football, but then it went to volleyball,  
22 and now there is a push to go wrestling and  
23 track and basketball. And so this thing has  
24 kind of blown up on us thanks to Dr. Hill's  
25 efforts, and it's all community members all

1 engaged.

2 And the final piece that I also maybe  
3 slowing me down just a little bit, we moved  
4 last year from \$19 million worth of volunteer  
5 hours to \$27 million worth of volunteer hours  
6 last year in terms of people supporting us, and  
7 that's faith-based organizations, businesses,  
8 and obviously parents.

9 MS. McFETRIDGE: Great job.

10 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Great. Ms. Chambers?

11 MS. CHAMBERS: Thank you. It's exciting  
12 to hear all those good things that are going  
13 on.

14 Do you know much yet about the -- you  
15 talked about the drop in enrollment -- where  
16 those students went?

17 MR. MIKE POORE: Well, and I had a -- I  
18 tied to get a hold of Ms. Boyd earlier this  
19 week and -- and she said that she had a phone  
20 issue, so her and I did get to talk one-on-one  
21 today. And I don't know, there might be a  
22 positive story behind this, and now Ms. Howell  
23 will probably bird-dog it before I get to it,  
24 but is that if you look at the number of seats  
25 that became available this year in our

1 community in terms of there is the new school  
 2 that opened up at the Mitchell Building, and  
 3 then -- ScholarMade, and then you had  
 4 additional seats provided for eStem and for  
 5 Lisa, and so what I'm trying to find out is, if  
 6 you add up to that total number, okay, then how  
 7 does that offset against the number that we  
 8 lost. And so I -- I don't know if I can tell  
 9 you precisely, but I know that probably a  
 10 fairly large chunk.

11 The ScholarMade, from what my  
 12 understanding is, that they are at a capacity  
 13 of the seats that they requested, and but there  
 14 may be a little bit of a silver lining in is  
 15 that maybe we could have even lost more given  
 16 the seats that were out there. And, obviously,  
 17 we want -- we don't want to lose anyone. So  
 18 we're -- and a part of this facility plan is  
 19 trying to use some of the things that we're  
 20 generating and creating to bring people back  
 21 into the district as well as hold onto folks.

22 MS. CHAMBERS: Well done.

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Dean?

24 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Mr. Poore, thank you so  
 25 much for all that you do for the Little Rock

1 School District. And I also just wanted to  
2 also reiterate what you were saying about the  
3 community of family engagement.

4 Ms. Pamela Smith is actually part of  
5 our -- a team that we put together. And,  
6 Ms. McFetridge, you will actually probably hear  
7 more about that tomorrow, I think everyone will  
8 hear more about that tomorrow. But Little Rock  
9 School District has been a huge part of helping  
10 us develop the things that we need to get the  
11 community involved, so appreciate your -- your  
12 involvement and Pamela Smith's involvement as  
13 well. So thank you for all you do.

14 MR. MIKE POORE: Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Ms. Zook?

16 MS. ZOOK: Good morning.

17 MR. MIKE POORE: Good morning.

18 MS. ZOOK: Afternoon.

19 I appreciate the -- the work in -- and  
20 that you're doing as far as getting the  
21 elementaries involved. You know I've been  
22 preaching that from the beginning and I  
23 appreciate -- appreciate the fact that you are  
24 focusing and have hired someone on the  
25 dyslexia.

1 I think only because Dr. Wilde is in the  
2 line of me looking at you, when he first  
3 started with the team working in the Little  
4 Rock School District -- this was before your  
5 time -- one of the things that he brought to  
6 our attention was the fact that maybe too many  
7 things -- I know it's hard when you are a  
8 school person and you see 50 things that need  
9 to be done, that it's hard not to do; but  
10 sometimes the capacity of your principal or the  
11 capacity of your new teacher, it may seem a bit  
12 overwhelming. So I would encourage you all,  
13 Ms. -- Dr. Mitchell, to look, sort of task  
14 analyze that and say, you know, what leads to  
15 what, what leads to what, what do they need to  
16 master here in order to be able to move and do  
17 this more and, you know, what is my end goal,  
18 which is -- obviously my end goal is for  
19 everybody to graduate with the ability to read  
20 at least the ninth grade level and to be able  
21 to calculate using that as well.

22 I noticed the links that you had. You had  
23 A and B elementaries, and -- and how -- what  
24 got me into an A category and what got me into  
25 a B category, because I couldn't seem to

1           ascertain on the report that you gave us for  
2           the links. Am I making myself clear?

3           MR. MIKE POORE: Dr. McKisick, do you want  
4           to come up?

5           DR. SHEKETA McKISICK: Good afternoon.

6           That is such a simple, simple answer.

7           CHAIRMAN BARTH: If I could just identify  
8           yourself for the record.

9           DR. SHEKETA McKISICK: I'm sorry. My name  
10          is Sheketa McKisick.

11          Some of the plans were in landscape form  
12          and some of the plans were in portrait form,  
13          and in order to make sure that the documents  
14          were seamless, we just ordered them A and B, A  
15          for those that were portrait, B for those that  
16          were in landscape. So it was just a  
17          formatting.

18          MS. ZOOK: Image? Okay.

19          DR. SHEKETA McKISICK: Yes.

20          MS. ZOOK: So nothing --

21          DR. SHEKETA McKISICK: Nothing special  
22          about A or B, just a formatting issue.

23          MS. ZOOK: Okay. And I know y'all said  
24          that you had some new principals? Probably  
25          elementary and secondary?



1 MR. MIKE POORE: Right.

2 MS. ZOOK: Okay. One of the things I  
3 suggested sort of through someone else to one  
4 of your principals is when you come in as the  
5 principal of a school, to look at your -- the  
6 make up of your students and teachers, and then  
7 because my school info is so easy to look at,  
8 then see if you can find a mentor or two out in  
9 the state who also has a similar population,  
10 and then they can become your mentor, they  
11 can -- you can Skype with them, you -- and, you  
12 know, that kind of thing. Because you and  
13 Dr. Mitchell and Dr. -- and Mr. Burton can't  
14 all be everywhere all the time. But if they  
15 have someone they can -- even if it's just to  
16 vent, like, "hey, I had a great day" or, "boy,  
17 I had a crummy day," but just, you know, little  
18 things like that so that they have someone  
19 maybe like Baseline, for example, who has a new  
20 principal. If they picked the principal in  
21 Springdale and a principal in De Queen, both of  
22 who are doing really well with that type  
23 population, that might be helpful as well.

24 I know you have a campaign, because I've  
25 read about it in the paper for your teacher

1 absent -- I mean your student absenteeism, and  
 2 I notice that Henderson has really improved as  
 3 far as not having as many absentee as they did  
 4 in the early years, and if you happen to talk  
 5 to Mr. Williams, please compliment him on that  
 6 because he was brand new when this all started  
 7 and if -- if you will do that as well.

8 You haven't mentioned about your special  
 9 ed section, and I wonder, is -- are -- I don't  
 10 know how many special ed supervisors you have,  
 11 but are those supervisors sitting down with the  
 12 new special ed teacher and teaching them how to  
 13 do an IEP conference? Because I know any  
 14 district doesn't want to have hearings and  
 15 complaints and all that --

16 MR. MIKE POORE: Uh-huh.

17 MS. ZOOK: -- which it distracts from, you  
 18 know, what's going on with kids. But sometimes  
 19 if you will have your special ed supervisor  
 20 attend those IEP and sort of model what needs  
 21 to be done --

22 MR. MIKE POORE: Do you want to say  
 23 something?

24 MS. ZOOK: -- then I think that would be  
 25 helpful. Dr. Mitchell?

1 DR. SADIE MITCHELL: Yes. Thank you.

2 I'm Sadie Mitchell, Deputy Superintendent  
3 Little Rock School District.

4 If you will look at our professional  
5 development plan, you will see outlined a  
6 series of training sessions for our new special  
7 education teachers. And also we do have  
8 sessions coming up on our professional  
9 development day, October 15th, where the  
10 special ed teams are all together and they are  
11 doing the exact things that you are -- you've  
12 shared with us.

13 So we are trying to reach out to those,  
14 not just the new special ed teachers but all  
15 new teachers to the district and all new  
16 administrators to the district.

17 And we did assign a mentor to each one of  
18 our new principals. Perhaps they were not  
19 principals out in the state, but principals we  
20 aligned with similarities within the district.

21 MS. ZOOK: Uh-huh.

22 DR. SADIE MITCHELL: And they also have  
23 what is called an executive coach who is a  
24 mentor, that we don't want to know any  
25 conversations they are having with each other

1 as long as they are talking to each other.  
 2 Some of those coaches may be teachers at UALR  
 3 or out in the district or in another district;  
 4 so --

5 MS. ZOOK: And have you completely done  
 6 away with Reading Recovering?

7 DR. SADIE MITCHELL: We have completely  
 8 done away with Reading Recovery. Yes.

9 MS. ZOOK: Thank you. Thank you. Not  
 10 even in RTI?

11 DR. SADIE MITCHELL: No, ma'am.

12 MS. ZOOK: Okay. Great. Thank you, very  
 13 much.

14 Mr. Burton is behind you. He may have --

15 MR. MARVIN BURTON: Yes. Marvin Burton.

16 I just want to add some things in regards  
 17 to the special ed training. I work really  
 18 closely with Ms. Cassandra Steele, Director of  
 19 Special Education, as far as the training that  
 20 is provided to the special ed teachers in  
 21 regards to their ability to articulate various  
 22 types of meetings to proactively train our  
 23 teachers on how to actually address the needs  
 24 of those students, and especially the parents.  
 25 Because how that -- how those conversations

1           actually are brought forth will make a huge  
2           difference on how receptive the parents are in  
3           regards to what you're trying to provide to  
4           them, so that's extremely important that you  
5           really see it from the eyes and the lens of  
6           that parent what they really need to know --

7           MS. ZOOK: Right.

8           MR. MARVIN BURTON: -- and how you are  
9           being very intentional about providing the  
10          support to those students.

11          And -- and something that -- something  
12          that we've done also, we mentioned dyslexia a  
13          little bit earlier. We are very inclusive as  
14          far as providing training for our special ed  
15          teachers along dyslexia.

16          Actually this week approximately 32 of our  
17          teachers are being trained with dyslexia  
18          characteristic identification and also being  
19          able to address those particular  
20          characteristics, and some of those teachers are  
21          special needs teachers K-12. So those are some  
22          intentional things that we are actually doing  
23          in Little Rock School District.

24          MS. ZOOK: And also if you could get the  
25          dyslexia specialist that's been hired to sit

1 down with Ms. King and take the resource guide  
2 that Little Rock chose to develop and compare  
3 it and with the one that the State already had  
4 compiled and be sure that everything is lined  
5 up so that you don't do all this hard work and  
6 then find out you're -- you know, you're  
7 playing on the wrong field.

8 MR. MARVIN BURTON: Absolutely. Yes,  
9 ma'am.

10 A lot of the components, a large  
11 percentage of the components in our actual  
12 guide we extracted directly from the State's  
13 plan, so -- and we -- excellent idea, we  
14 certainly will do that.

15 MS. ZOOK: Thank you so much.

16 MR. MIKE POORE: And just a point, we did  
17 send that guide to the State to get their help  
18 when we were putting it together.

19 MS. ZOOK: Oh, good.

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Mr. Williamson?

21 MR. WILLIAMSON: No.

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Ms. Moore?

23 Just a couple of things.

24 I do really want to praise the  
25 professional development work this summer.

1 I've talked to a number of teachers, many of  
2 them who had been in the district for a long  
3 time and said that it was a total game changer  
4 in terms of, A, being treated like  
5 professionals; and B, just the high quality of  
6 the content. So I wanted to -- I really do  
7 want to raise that up, because I think it was  
8 an important piece.

9 I do have a -- it's a legal question,  
10 probably, and it's to some degree, because we  
11 have new members on the board, but it's also  
12 because we -- we've got -- we've got a ticking  
13 clock here in terms of it -- the State takeover  
14 occurred on January 28, 2015, and I know under  
15 6-15-2917 we do have a five-year deadline,  
16 which is -- still sounds like it's a ways off  
17 but, especially when we think about school  
18 board elections, may be a little closer than  
19 that.

20 MS. SALAS-FORD: Yes. Courtney Salas-Ford  
21 for the department.

22 As you stated, the takeover of Little Rock  
23 School District did happen in December 2015,  
24 and so under --

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: January of 2015.

1 MS. SALAS-FORD: I'm sorry. You're right.  
2 January of 2015.

3 I was thinking of Dollarway.

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Zook -- Ms. Zook and  
5 I remember it well.

6 MS. SALAS-FORD: I'm sorry. January of  
7 2015. And so under 6-15-2917 action would need  
8 to occur no later than January 2020; and, of  
9 course, the State Board has numerous options to  
10 do by that date. One is returning the district  
11 to local control through either the appointment  
12 or election of a newly elected board, upon  
13 recommendation of the Commissioner. Other  
14 actions include or would be required, if the  
15 Board did not return local control, annexation,  
16 consolidation, or reconstitution of the school  
17 district.

18 In terms of electing a new school board,  
19 as you know, under the new law, the school  
20 district can elect either for a May or November  
21 election. That does have to be decided no  
22 later than February of the year preceding the  
23 election. And so in terms of Little Rock, we  
24 could be looking at either a November 2019  
25 election or a May 2020 election.



1                   And I can go through all the specific  
2                   dates, but bottom line would be some sort of  
3                   decision would need to be made around or before  
4                   June of 2019.

5                   CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. So -- so -- so  
6                   probably our June 2019 meeting would be the  
7                   time when we would need to have that  
8                   conversation about -- about when --

9                   MS. SALAS-FORD: Yes.

10                  CHAIRMAN BARTH: -- the election would  
11                  occur? Okay.

12                  MS. SALAS-FORD: Yes.

13                  CHAIRMAN BARTH: I think the other thing  
14                  to think about, obviously, under the -- under  
15                  the changes to 6-15-2917, there is a  
16                  possibility of a Limited Authority Board in  
17                  advance of that. And one thing that I will  
18                  plant as a seed for the Board, we may need  
19                  probably fuller conversation later, you know,  
20                  is the possibility of getting some board  
21                  members with limited authority in place in  
22                  advance of that school board because I -- I  
23                  think we don't want -- I have concerns about a  
24                  new team on the school board getting full  
25                  authority immediately.

1 MS. SALAS-FORD: Uh-huh.

2 CHAIRMAN BARTH: There certainly has been  
3 a Community Advisory Board that is active  
4 and -- and but we have no idea if any of those  
5 individuals would want to convert over to a  
6 board.

7 So I just would raise that as, you know,  
8 the -- it does -- it sounds like a long time  
9 off. It's not a long time off when we're  
10 thinking about these deadlines about -- about  
11 school board elections.

12 MS. CHAMBERS: I so appreciate the  
13 question, and wonder if at some point in a  
14 future discussion, sometime very soon, we could  
15 really start to look at a more fulsome back off  
16 schedule from that. What else would we need to  
17 be thinking about and looking at or the school  
18 prepared to provide or the district prepared to  
19 provide so that we -- that we're mindful of the  
20 timeline and making decisions in the right time  
21 frame.

22 MS. SALAS-FORD: Uh-huh.

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Great. Are you good with  
24 that?

25 COMMISSIONER KEY: Uh-huh.

1                   CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Now, I think this  
2                   is not a work session, it's definitely time for  
3                   our business, it probably would not be an  
4                   action item at that point, it would probably be  
5                   more informatory for the Board.

6                   So why, if -- if the -- if the department  
7                   was in a position maybe as -- as a part of the  
8                   Friday morning, it would be a Friday morning  
9                   session, because to make clear that it's not  
10                  action. So is next month too early? Do you  
11                  want to suggest --

12                 COMMISSIONER KEY: Too early.

13                 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Because we're  
14                 starting to move towards legislative, so I want  
15                 to be -- so --

16                 COMMISSIONER KEY: We'll have to look at  
17                 it.

18                 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. So one of the next  
19                 few months, a Friday, because I do want us to,  
20                 you know, be ready for us to make those  
21                 decisions well. Okay?

22                 All right.

23                 MS. SALAS-FORD: Okay. All right.

24                 CHAIRMAN BARTH: On the Little Rock item,  
25                 Dr. Anica Whitfield was on the sign-up. I

1 believe she had left, I just want to be clear  
2 that she had asked for public comment. We  
3 don't have anyone else for public comment on  
4 this item.

5 And I will entertain a motion on the  
6 report from the Little Rock School District.

7 MS. CHAMBERS: I move to accept the  
8 report.

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

10 DR. HILL: Second.

11 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Thanks.  
12 Motion by Ms. Chambers, second by Dr. Hill.

13 All in favor --

14 MS. CHAMBERS: Wait. Wait.

15 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Oh, something coming up?

16 MS. SALAS-FORD: I just wanted to note for  
17 the record that Ms. Whitfield did state she  
18 would be emailing in her public comments. We  
19 have not received them yet, but we'll let the  
20 Board know once they have received them.

21 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Thank you.  
22 And just reassure her that they will be  
23 distributed to the full board for their  
24 consideration. So thank you very much.

25 All right. So we do have a motion and a

1 second.

2 COMMISSIONER KEY: Who seconded?

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Second was Dr. Hill. So  
4 Ms. Chambers, Dr. Hill.

5 All those in favor, say, "Aye."

6 BOARD MEMBERS: Aye.

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Opposed, same sign.

8 I want to thank you everybody from the  
9 Little Rock team for all of your hard working  
10 and your -- your efforts to better this --  
11 district and get it on the right track. Thank  
12 you very much.

13 We are taking a break and we will return  
14 at, let's say, 2:10. And we'll have one item  
15 on this afternoon's in advance of our work  
16 session.

17 (WHEREUPON, a lunch break was held from  
18 1:35 p.m. to 2:12 p.m.)

19 VI. ACTION AGENDA B

20 B-1: CONSIDERATION OF PINE BLUFF SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR  
21 FISCAL DISTRESS

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Apologies to  
23 folks for our delay but we had a long, long  
24 morning. And we have two items this afternoon  
25 in advance of a work session.

1                   And the first up is consideration of Pine  
2                   Bluff School District for fiscal distress; and  
3                   Ms. Freno will talk us through our process  
4                   here.

5                   MS. FRENO: Good afternoon.

6                   Under the Arkansas Fiscal Assessment and  
7                   Accountability Program, the Arkansas Department  
8                   of Education can identify a school district as  
9                   being in fiscal distress if it meets certain  
10                  criteria set forth under the fiscal distress  
11                  law.

12                  A school district identified as being in  
13                  fiscal distress may appeal the designation to  
14                  the State Board. The department had submitted  
15                  a letter in a timely manner to the Pine Bluff  
16                  School District, they did not appeal, and  
17                  consequently at this point it's up to the Board  
18                  to determine whether or not it's going to  
19                  classify the school district as being in fiscal  
20                  distress.

21                  Following any classification of fiscal  
22                  distress you might make, the State Board or the  
23                  Commissioner of Education has very -- quite a  
24                  few options that are available to them and  
25                  those are set forth in § 6-20-1909 and

1           6-20-1019, to address the district's facilities  
2           distress -- or 19 -- I'm sorry -- 1909 and  
3           1910, to address the facilities distress.

4           And if you have any questions I'll be  
5           happy to answer those.

6           CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Can I -- so since  
7           there was not an appeal --

8           MS. FRENO: Uh-huh.

9           CHAIRMAN BARTH: -- in terms of any kind  
10          of hearing, we really are moving just straight  
11          to consideration, there is no --

12          MS. FRENO: Is that correct, Dr. Barth.  
13          And --

14          CHAIRMAN BARTH: If there had been an  
15          appeal, then we would have had a --

16          MS. FRENO: There would have been a  
17          procedure and there would have been times  
18          and -- yes.

19          CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Great.

20          So -- so is there going to be any other --  
21          other presentation or --

22          MS. FRENO: Yes. Yes. Dr. Barth, at this  
23          point the Department of Education will be  
24          presenting.

25          CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Great. Thank you.

1                   MR. GREG ROGERS: Hi. Greg Rogers, Fiscal  
2 Admin.

3                   In June of 2016 Pine Bluff was put in  
4 Early Intervention, and since that time we've  
5 been monitoring, giving support to them as well  
6 as we can. But over the past two fiscal years  
7 we've seen their fund balance decline from a  
8 fund balance of 6 million to a fund balance of  
9 3 million. And the latest projections that we  
10 have right now are showing that if they do end  
11 with a fund balance, it's going to be somewhere  
12 around the \$600,000 range to maybe even in the  
13 red in that.

14                  Some of the other issues that we've come  
15 across are IRS penalties of \$130,000, late  
16 submissions with teacher retirement, two  
17 quarterly reports in 2017 with the IRS 941  
18 withholding reports which were not filed; also  
19 they are having a decreased enrollment and  
20 there were a little over \$500,000 worth of  
21 expenses from last fiscal year that were not  
22 keyed in until this fiscal year, so that  
23 3 million-dollar fund balance that I just  
24 mentioned actually was down a little bit less  
25 than that, because of the APs not keyed in



1           until the new fiscal year.

2                       So those were just some of the things that  
3           we found for the classification of fiscal  
4           distress, and Cindy and I will be happy to  
5           answer any questions if you have them.

6                       CHAIRMAN BARTH:   Okay.   Anything else,  
7           Ms. Smith, to add?

8                       MS. CINDY SMITH:   No.

9                       CHAIRMAN BARTH:   Okay.   So I'll start over  
10          here to see if Dr. Moore has any questions for  
11          the department.   Mr. Williamson?   Ms. Zook?

12                      MS. ZOOK:   Yes.   When you all look at the  
13          fiscal, do you also go back and look at their  
14          school board and their superintendent and who  
15          is recommending what and if it's a bookkeeper  
16          or all -- do you look at all of those things in  
17          the process --

18                      MS. CINDY SMITH:   (Nodding head up and  
19          down.)

20                      MS. ZOOK:   -- of realizing how maybe they  
21          got there?

22                      MR. GREG ROGERS:   Do you want to talk  
23          about that?

24                      MS. CINDY SMITH:   Cindy Smith with Fiscal  
25          Services.

1                   Yes, we look at all of those things. When  
2                   they are in Early Intervention we require a  
3                   monthly report, it's a projection of what they  
4                   are doing in actuals and where they're  
5                   projecting they are going to end. We require  
6                   the Board reports and then we require the bank  
7                   reconciliation so we can see what is happening.

8                   In Early Intervention you have -- are  
9                   limited to how much you can make them do. You  
10                  can make suggestions.

11                  When Dr. Robinson was there, when he first  
12                  started, that's when we did the Early  
13                  Intervention Program, and he started working  
14                  with me. In that one year we did increase the  
15                  fund balance by about 400,000. And then, you  
16                  know, there were some changes and now we're to  
17                  the over 2 million drop in fund balance.

18                  MS. ZOOK: So some of your recommendations  
19                  were followed and others were not?

20                  MS. CINDY SMITH: Correct.

21                  MS. ZOOK: Thank you.

22                  CHAIRMAN BARTH: Great.

23                  Could you help me a little bit in terms of  
24                  how much of the challenges here, very striking  
25                  challenges, are driven by loss in -- in student

1 enrollment and how much are kind of other,  
2 other issues?

3 And I know those things get pretty  
4 interconnected but what are we talking about in  
5 terms of the impact of the loss?

6 MS. CINDY SMITH: So with the student  
7 loss, that's well over 300 students that they  
8 lost so you're looking at, you know, well over  
9 a million and a half dollars that they are  
10 losing in foundation. But then when you add  
11 positions and you increase salaries and you  
12 have a lot of expenditures that you probably  
13 could do without, being in that position, that  
14 just -- it compounds it.

15 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Uh-huh. So --

16 MS. CINDY SMITH: And then their  
17 facilities are not in the best shape so they do  
18 have a lot of expenses trying to keep the  
19 facilities, you know, in the safe, warm, and  
20 dry for the kids.

21 CHAIRMAN BARTH: And so it was a district  
22 that -- that even if everything had stayed  
23 stable over here, just the shear loss in number  
24 of students was -- was -- was bringing this --  
25 this balance down pretty quickly?

1 MS. CINDY SMITH: It would have, but we  
2 could determine things that could have been cut  
3 that would have stopped it from being quite as  
4 serious as what it is.

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: And instead expenditures  
6 went up --

7 MS. CINDY SMITH: Correct.

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: -- rather than coming  
9 down in reaction?

10 MS. CINDY SMITH: Yes, correct.

11 MS. CHAMBERS: I missed it. Was that year  
12 over year loss in, students, was that one year  
13 or was it multi years?

14 MS. CINDY SMITH: One year.

15 MS. CHAMBERS: That was one year?

16 MS. CINDY SMITH: Yeah. I think it was  
17 around 300-and -- it was between 335 and 350  
18 for one year.

19 MS. CHAMBERS: Okay. And while there  
20 hasn't been a formal appeal, has there been any  
21 specific -- yeah, I don't know what a typical  
22 response is. But does -- has the district said  
23 anything, does it have a point of view or  
24 perspective that you can share on its behalf  
25 relative to this distress contemplation?

1 MR. GREG ROGERS: No. But they have  
2 continued to work with Cindy's office and  
3 trying to implement some of the things that  
4 Cindy has suggested, but there hasn't been any  
5 notification to us that they were looking at  
6 any kind of appeal.

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Dr. Hill?

8 DR. HILL: No.

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Ms. McFetridge?  
10 Ms. Newton?

11 MS. NEWTON: Just a follow up to what  
12 Ms. Zook had asked just a minute ago.

13 When you were making suggestions and you  
14 were saying the suggestions weren't received  
15 and -- and followed, were those actions that  
16 were contrary to what you were recommending,  
17 were they coming from administration or were  
18 they coming from the board?

19 MS. CINDY SMITH: We met with the  
20 superintendent and the board and made  
21 suggestions on cuts, and then we just left that  
22 option up to them. I'm not sure who made the  
23 decisions not to go with that. But like I  
24 said, in Early Intervention we make suggestions  
25 and then we have to kind of step back and --

1           because they are still in control of their  
2           school and they have to make those  
3           determinations.

4           MS. NEWTON: If those suggestions had been  
5           followed, would they have maybe not been in  
6           this position?

7           MS. CINDY SMITH: I think it would not be  
8           this serious. We had looked at between two and  
9           \$3 million in cuts that we could identify.

10          MS. NEWTON: Okay. Thank you.

11          CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. House, then I'll come  
12          back over.

13          MS. HOUSE: No.

14          CHAIRMAN BARTH: Mr. Williamson?

15          MR. WILLIAMSON: Just help me understand a  
16          little bit.

17                 You mentioned projection of fund balance  
18          of 600,000 at best or negative?

19          MS. CINDY SMITH: Uh-huh.

20          MR. WILLIAMSON: What -- is that if the  
21          State comes in and takes over now or is that  
22          you guys really taking over and doing things  
23          right?

24                 My concern is about the kids. I want the  
25          community to be --

1                   MR. GREG ROGERS: So with the fiscal  
2                   distress classification, if y'all approve that,  
3                   then that begins a direct support where we --  
4                   they can't do any debt requests, their budget  
5                   has to be approved by us, so there is a direct  
6                   line that we will be working with them on where  
7                   they can't have a debt -- incur any more debt  
8                   unless we know about it.

9                   As far as that, there is, you know, the  
10                  tools that y'all have to go further once a  
11                  classification has been in there for anything  
12                  that needs to be done once -- to get that fund  
13                  balance where it needs to be.

14                 MR. WILLIAMSON: Okay. My concern more  
15                 is, you know, in actual real cash flow, and  
16                 you've got to continue to pay the teachers and  
17                 everybody like that, you know, keep lights on,  
18                 keep the water flowing. Will there be enough  
19                 cash available to the district to take care of  
20                 those items?

21                 And if not, how will that handle --

22                 MR. GREG ROGERS: It will be close.

23                 MR. WILLIAMSON: Okay.

24                 MR. GREG ROGERS: It's -- it's going to be  
25                 close.

1           The -- like I said, the best projection we  
2           worked with trying to be conservative is right  
3           around \$600,000 ending this year. More  
4           realistically, it's probably looking at about  
5           \$2 million in the red.

6           There is a lot of, mostly -- most of it is  
7           going to be on the salaries, but just looking  
8           at how the cash flows is going to go, with  
9           their tax receipts coming in in November, then  
10          that will probably push them a little further.  
11          But right now April is probably when they would  
12          go in the red without some significant changes  
13          to the budget and what their expenditures are.

14          MR. WILLIAMSON: Okay. So --

15          COMMISSIONER KEY: Let me --

16          MR. WILLIAMSON: Commissioner?

17          COMMISSIONER KEY: -- make sure I clarify.  
18          But that's in the red, not deficit spending and  
19          drawing, that is in the red total balance.

20          MR. GREG ROGERS: Correct. Right now  
21          every projection that we have -- every  
22          projection we have has a deficit spending.  
23          They are spending into their fund balance each  
24          month right now just to make their expenditures  
25          meet. And by, when I say being in the red in



1 April, that means they are flat broke, there is  
2 nothing else.

3 MR. WILLIAMSON: I mean there is -- let me  
4 be correct, fund balance aside, that means  
5 there is zero balance or a negative in the  
6 accounts?

7 MR. GREG ROGERS: Yes. Correct.

8 Yes, in the unrestricted. Yeah, I need to  
9 clarify that too. Not in the Title I funds but  
10 in the unrestricted funds that they use to  
11 operate, their operating funds, they will be in  
12 the negative.

13 MR. WILLIAMSON: Okay. What I'm trying to  
14 do is help those understand a little better. I  
15 mean, fund balance accounting is pretty screwy.

16 So people -- most people just understand,  
17 all right, look, I'm -- those of us that still  
18 reconcile our checking account, I look at my  
19 account and I see small numbers, well I start  
20 getting worried. And you're talking about  
21 negative balances --

22 MS. CINDY SMITH: Right.

23 MR. WILLIAMSON: -- so if I'm a parent  
24 that lives in that district, I'm going to be  
25 concerned about what's going to happen to my

1 kid's school.

2 MS. CINDY SMITH: Right. And what we have  
3 to understand whenever I'm talking about the  
4 negative in the unrestricted fund, on your  
5 title money, any of your federal funds, those  
6 are reimbursable so you still have to have that  
7 cash to pay for those expenditures because  
8 you're not going to be reimbursed until the  
9 following month, so we have to think about that  
10 too.

11 MR. WILLIAMSON: Right.

12 Well, how do you get cash in your account?  
13 I mean does the State offer a line of credit  
14 for the district and you slowly work out of it  
15 or -- I mean, because you can't create money.

16 MR. GREG ROGERS: No. We've never done  
17 that. That's never anything that we've had.  
18 And when we're talking about the unrestricted,  
19 you know, that is the operating fund. That's  
20 where most of that would go, so that -- it  
21 would -- it would have to have a change in the  
22 expenditures to fix that, not a line of credit  
23 with us.

24 MR. WILLIAMSON: Okay. So if the changes  
25 are made, there is at least a decent chance

1           that the district can make it through the  
2           school year with enough cash to keep the lights  
3           on, keep the teachers in there, and keep  
4           everybody --

5           MR. GREG ROGERS:   Yes.

6           MR. WILLIAMSON:   -- relatively happy?

7           MR. GREG ROGERS:   Yes.   Because like I  
8           said, right now, although they are deficit  
9           spending each month, they will get their tax  
10          receipts in November there from the local, and  
11          then that -- our projections show that they're  
12          running negative in April.   So there is some  
13          time there to -- to work on the expenditures,  
14          to reduce those expenditures down so we could  
15          finish in the black for the fiscal year end.

16          MR. WILLIAMSON:   I got you.   Just most  
17          people think, you know, checking accounts  
18          instead of fund balances, so I just wanted to  
19          clarify that.

20          Thank you.

21          CHAIRMAN BARTH:   Ms. Zook, did you have  
22          something else?

23          MS. ZOOK:   Yes.

24          The -- the loss of students, was that  
25          between '16-'17, between '17-'18, or a

1 combination of the two? Because I know after  
2 you lose a student you get money for that  
3 student for another, is it 18 months or 12  
4 months?

5 MR. GREG ROGERS: Well, so that would --  
6 the loss that she was talking about was the  
7 last fiscal year, I think what we're projecting  
8 now is they are down about another 260  
9 additional students this year. But you're  
10 talking about declining enrollment funding. So  
11 for the year after that you do get the  
12 declining enrollment funding, but that is only  
13 half the money that would have been for the  
14 6,781 that you got for that student. So that  
15 allows you the opportunity to try to make some  
16 changes for that discount -- for that going  
17 down, but we haven't seen those changes made  
18 based off the declining enrollment.

19 DR. MIKE HERNANDEZ: Hi, I'm Dr. Mike  
20 Hernandez again.

21 I've been working closely with the  
22 district again with our team and then also with  
23 Dr. Robinson, who was formerly the  
24 superintendent, and now currently Ms. McMurray.

25 I think it's also important to look at

1           some of the historical context and look at how  
2           we got here. And so if you go back several  
3           years you start to see this trend. There was a  
4           large fund balance, I think, to the tune of  
5           around 13 million-dollar fund balance several  
6           years ago, and over time that balance has  
7           started to drop, where we, you know, have been  
8           trying to work with the district and have plans  
9           put in place.

10           And where I really got involved with it  
11           was this year, or this past school year. You  
12           know, we were working with Cindy's office  
13           starting to see this trend continuing, that  
14           cuts and things were not being made to budgets,  
15           and so we had -- the district -- we're working  
16           with the district and their attorneys and folks  
17           and we put on a training where we talked about,  
18           hey, based on first quarter enrollment, we're  
19           projecting you might have a 325 student loss.  
20           And so not only that but we're also looking at  
21           academics. There is some action that needs to  
22           be taken.

23           So Dr. Robinson went back and worked with  
24           their board.

25           We then had a subsequent meeting in

1           January to say, hey, okay, let's talk about  
2           this plan. Those many things were outlined as  
3           things that were on the table to be cut to be  
4           in line and be solvent. None of those actions  
5           were taken towards the end of the year to -- to  
6           kind of right the ship or right size the  
7           district, if you will. As a matter of fact,  
8           actions were taken in the opposite direction,  
9           sometimes increasing staff salaries and not  
10          fully doing all the things that need to be  
11          done.

12                     And so it's not been a lack of a plan,  
13                     it's been a lack of execution of that plan.  
14                     And I think that's why the -- the overall  
15                     concern about why this recommendation is coming  
16                     up is because, you know, we're struggling with  
17                     that. Because we, you know, we can talk about  
18                     a plan, we can train, we can do those things  
19                     all day long, but if we can't have a -- an  
20                     execution of those plans, that's where it  
21                     becomes -- becomes an issue.

22                     And so I just thought that was important  
23                     information for you.

24                     CHAIRMAN BARTH: Anybody else over here?  
25                     Good down here? Ms. Newton?

1 MS. NEWTON: Just a question.

2 Would -- if they are classified as fiscal  
3 distress, would that give you enough authority  
4 to make the changes that you need so that we're  
5 not in the red by April?

6 MR. GREG ROGERS: Yes. Having them under  
7 fiscal distress, like I said, that they have  
8 to -- they can't incur any more debt unless  
9 it's approved by our Fiscal Services Support.  
10 They have to develop a budget through us, so  
11 that's -- that's bringing them under -- under  
12 us to work on all their fiscal services to help  
13 get the budget where it needs to be and  
14 expenses where they need to be because as they  
15 are tracking right now they won't get there.

16 MS. NEWTON: I guess my question is there  
17 were recommendations made before and they  
18 weren't followed that would have helped them.

19 MR. GREG ROGERS: Yeah. Under fiscal  
20 distress -- under Early Intervention that's all  
21 we can do is make recommendations. Under  
22 fiscal distress we get to tell them this is the  
23 way it's going to be.

24 MS. NEWTON: Okay. All right. Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Commissioner?

1 COMMISSIONER KEY: But we still can't  
2 unwind the things that have been -- under just  
3 straight fiscal distress, the department can't  
4 unwind the -- the decisions that have  
5 previously been made --

6 MR. GREG ROGERS: Correct.

7 COMMISSIONER KEY: -- that have created  
8 this.

9 MR. GREG ROGERS: Correct.

10 COMMISSIONER KEY: I mean, so, you know,  
11 the reason of a potential \$2 million in -- in  
12 the hole by the time April rolls around is  
13 because of decisions that have compounded.

14 MR. GREG ROGERS: Uh-huh.

15 COMMISSIONER KEY: And those decisions  
16 can't be undone under just the process of  
17 fiscal -- fiscal services --

18 MR. GREG ROGERS: Right, looking at  
19 contracts and --

20 COMMISSIONER KEY: -- fiscal distress and  
21 reviewing and the debt requests.

22 MR. GREG ROGERS: Right.

23 COMMISSIONER KEY: I mean that's just --  
24 that's prospective spending that that impacts,  
25 so I want to make sure that's clear.



1                   MR. GREG ROGERS: Yes. Like contracts  
2                   that they've already signed, teacher contracts,  
3                   any of those kind of things, we can't do  
4                   anything with that under fiscal distress  
5                   because those have already been set.

6                   The only thing we can do is look forward  
7                   now to see how they might be spending  
8                   different, things to take on debt requests and  
9                   see if they really need to do that right now or  
10                  if that's something we can hold off and try to  
11                  get their balances back to where they need to  
12                  be.

13                  So while we can have a lot more authority  
14                  we still are limited in some of the things that  
15                  we can do.

16                  CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Chambers?

17                  MS. CHAMBERS: So two questions. The  
18                  first back to the history. I was thinking --  
19                  trying to think back as well. Has -- has Pine  
20                  Bluff been before us for a fiscal distress  
21                  consideration review in recent history or is  
22                  this the first time, formally?

23                  MR. GREG ROGERS: For fiscal distress?

24                  MS. CHAMBERS: Yes. Have we -- have we  
25                  looked at them with consideration of putting

1                   them under fiscal distress before?

2                   MR. GREG ROGERS:   No, ma'am.

3                   MS. CHAMBERS:   No.   Okay.   And then the  
4                   second question is -- is -- see if I could word  
5                   differently what I was trying to ask earlier.

6                   Is there any explanation from the district  
7                   for this spending that they would want us to be  
8                   thinking about or know about?   I know they  
9                   didn't file a formal appeal, but is there any  
10                  explanation for that spending approach over the  
11                  past few years?

12                  MR. GREG ROGERS:   Not that I know of.  
13                  It's just their operations of how they have  
14                  their school right now.

15                  MS. CHAMBERS:   And how they chose to make  
16                  decisions?

17                  MR. GREG ROGERS:   (Nodding head up and  
18                  down.)

19                  MS. CHAMBERS:   Okay.   Thank you.

20                  CHAIRMAN BARTH:   And there are -- there  
21                  are individuals from the district here, just  
22                  for folks' knowledge in case there are  
23                  questions about decisions that have been made  
24                  regarding advice that they have received from  
25                  the -- from the department, just to let you

1           guys know that.

2                       So I think we need to think about this in  
3           something of a two-stage process. There is  
4           the -- the initial -- the question before us is  
5           the question of whether to deem the district in  
6           fiscal distress. There could be -- that would,  
7           of course, give broad authority to the  
8           Commissioner. But I think there is a second  
9           question of whether this board would want to  
10          take any form of action today in response to  
11          the details as they are; correct?

12                   MR. GREG ROGERS: Yes.

13                   CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. So and we also do  
14          have -- so we do have public comment. We have  
15          some folks signed up for public comment. And I  
16          guess I think probably before we do any action  
17          at all on this item we do want to hear any  
18          public comment. And there may be additional  
19          folks who have signed up, I just have the  
20          initial list. I just want to give the Board a  
21          heads up where we -- where we need to go here.

22                   MS. ZOOK: Do we need to take a vote to --

23                   CHAIRMAN BARTH: They are -- they are  
24          signed up.

25                   MS. ZOOK: Ahead of time?

1                   CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yeah, ahead of time, so  
2 we're on there.

3                   Ms. Freno is checking to see if there are  
4 additional folks who have signed up.

5                   Okay. Are there any other questions for  
6 the department on this issue or do you feel  
7 like they you the facts, as problematic as they  
8 are?

9                   Okay. Ms. Freno, is there anyone?

10                  MS. FRENO: No.

11                  CHAIRMAN BARTH: No other names?

12                  Okay. Then we do have a number of folks  
13 signed up for public comment, if y'all are  
14 ready to move to the point of public comment.

15                  And I would ask folks to limit their  
16 comments to three minutes and we will -- we  
17 will have a timer.

18                  Mayor Washington from Pine Bluff is first  
19 on the list.

20                  Mayor Shirley Washington.

21                  All right. Any -- okay. Oh, are you -- I  
22 know she's here.

23                  MS. FRENO: Dr. Barth, Dr. Washington did  
24 not mean to sign in.

25                  CHAIRMAN BARTH: Oh, okay. Well --

1 MS. FRENO: She just wanted to sign in as  
2 present.

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. All right.

4 And so, yes, if you just signed in and  
5 don't plan to comment, just pass.

6 Ryan Whatley is on the list. Mr. Whatley.

7 MR. RYAN WHATLEY: Good afternoon, Board.

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you. Three  
9 minutes, sir.

10 MR. RYAN WHATLEY: Yes. To Commissioner  
11 Key and the rest of the Board, good afternoon.  
12 We have before you today representation from  
13 the Pine Bluff community. Representing our  
14 city government we have Mayor Washington;  
15 representing the business community, Mr. Tommy  
16 May; representing the Pine Bluff branch of the  
17 NAACP we have Ms. Mary O'Dell; and we also have  
18 among us educational stakeholders and citizens  
19 of our community.

20 I am Ryan Whatley, the Chief Executive  
21 Officer of Go Forward Pine Bluff. Go Forward  
22 Pine Bluff is a nonprofit organization in  
23 partnership with the City of Pine Bluff. The  
24 mission of this public private partnership is  
25 to increase the revenues of the city. The

partnership has 27 initiatives within four pillar areas, quality of life, economic development, government infrastructure, and education.

Education is the most important pillar to the Pine Bluff community. We aim to improve education in the areas of leadership, curriculum, accountability, recruitment -- and recruitment of certified teachers. To this effect we have established an educational alliance that is composed of the three superintendents of Pine Bluff, the school board presidents from each district, the Provost of the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, the Vice President of Academics at Southeast Arkansas College. The educational alliance also consists of a representative from the Retired Teachers Association, the Director of the Education Services Cooperative, and two other educational stakeholders.

The educational has met once a month, twice a month during the summers, for one year. The results have been positive as efforts are currently under way to start improving each district.

1                   While we're working to address the public  
2                   education, the public education challenges, the  
3                   fundamental structure and operation of a  
4                   district cannot be addressed by this plan.  
5                   Today we speak specifically to the challenges  
6                   in the Pine Bluff School District. The recent  
7                   financial report highlights the collective  
8                   leadership over the past seven to nine years  
9                   has mismanaged taxpayer dollars to the demise  
10                  of the district. The district is projected to  
11                  lose an additional \$1 million in state aid, and  
12                  the cash balance for cash is insufficient to  
13                  operate in 2019.

14                 As a result of the overall state of fiscal  
15                 and academic affairs, the community has  
16                 expressed interest in completing a study that  
17                 will evaluate consolidation of the three  
18                 districts. We support the appointment of the  
19                 current superintendent in the Pine Bluff School  
20                 District with Mr. Frank Anthony as her  
21                 consultant, yet we have no confidence in the  
22                 current school board's collective capacity to  
23                 navigate these challenges. Pine Bluff does not  
24                 have -- does have strong financial and academic  
25                 leaders readily available to assist with

1 solving these challenges; however, the district  
2 is in such disrepair that awaiting years to  
3 democratically assemble a board would be far  
4 too late.

5 State control of the district finances  
6 does not address these systematic challenges.  
7 Everyone assembled here is a product of the  
8 immeasurable opportunity to succeed. Our  
9 children are not currently being afforded this  
10 opportunity. The vibrant future of our  
11 community is depending upon providing a  
12 competitive public education.

13 All factors considered, a state of  
14 emergency must be declared. We request the  
15 State Board of Education exercise its full --  
16 full and rightful powers for complete  
17 intervention of the district.

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you, sir.

19 Next up we have Dexter Lee. Mr. Lee?

20 And you have three minutes.

21 MR. DEXTER LEE: Thank you. Good morning,  
22 everyone.

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Good morning --  
24 afternoon.

25 MR. DEXTER LEE: Oh, I'm sorry. Boy, it's



1                   been a long day --

2                   CHAIRMAN BARTH:   Evening.

3                   MR. DEXTER LEE:   -- for all of us then.  
4                   I've been here for a while.

5                   Until recently I served as the Human  
6                   Capital Officer for the Pine Bluff School  
7                   District, and my goal when I first approached  
8                   public comment was to talk about some of the  
9                   concerns that I have from being on the front  
10                  lines of the district work. But during the  
11                  week senior class president Taylor Johnson  
12                  needed to talk to me about some of her concerns  
13                  and their need to try to build energy with her  
14                  peers. And then later on Christiana came to  
15                  talk to me because they are planning a senior  
16                  trip but they don't know how those Title I  
17                  kids, those poor kids in their class, are going  
18                  to be able to afford to go to Destin, buy food,  
19                  and go shopping with their friends, and she  
20                  wanted help from me and Mrs. Lee on what can we  
21                  do with that.

22                  And then something happened at the  
23                  football game Friday and one of our kids, Za,  
24                  who is in his Air Force ROTC uniform, did the  
25                  best he could to avoid confrontation, but it

1 still got out of hand. So Monday I had an  
2 office full of people who wanted to talk to me  
3 about all of those different negatives that  
4 occurred, and all throughout the week while at  
5 Pine Bluff High School we've been trying to  
6 meet and talk about tardies and -- and  
7 attendance. With a short staff of  
8 administrators due to -- to these fiscal  
9 issues, we've struggled to maintain order  
10 because. As you know we're not facing merely  
11 fiscal issues, we're also facing academic  
12 issues in the Pine Bluff School District.

13 The last time I stood in front of you I  
14 said that it's not just business for me, it's  
15 personal, and that's when we requested the  
16 waiver for teacher licensure. And it still is  
17 personal because my nephew John John is at Pine  
18 Bluff High, and I'm concerned about John John  
19 because he's learning 21st Century street  
20 survival skills, trying to survive the streets  
21 of Pine Bluff, but he's not learning those  
22 skills that will get him off of the streets in  
23 Pine Bluff.

24 Now, if I could petition you, I would love  
25 in private to talk to you more about some of

1           those specifics that I've witnessed that I  
2           believe will be a continued hindrance to the  
3           progress of our district, but what I want you  
4           to know is that there is quality work going on  
5           in Pine Bluff. What I want those to know who  
6           are watching is that not all of us were part of  
7           the problem.

8                       As a matter of fact, I would endeavor to  
9           say that those who are suffering and paying the  
10          price for the problem are those who had no part  
11          in making the decisions that created the  
12          problems.

13                      The kids don't get a bus to go to Cabot to  
14          support the football team because the top made  
15          decisions that says, we can't afford to do that  
16          for you.

17                      So in preparing, I wanted to bring you  
18          this big color coded packet of stuff that I was  
19          going to show you, and I knew I only had three  
20          minutes, but you would be able to read it later  
21          in your personal time as you look at what  
22          you're going to do, but the thought occurred to  
23          me that out of all the voices you are  
24          hearing -- you will hear today, the voices you  
25          won't hear are Taylor's and Michael Riggle's.

1 I just need you to remember, as you look at all  
2 that data, because you have to look at it,  
3 don't just think about the data; think about  
4 our Pre-K kids at Forrest Park and the district  
5 that you're going to create for them.

6 Thank you, sir.

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you, Mr. Lee.

8 And our final person signed up is Ken  
9 Moore. Mr. Moore, three minutes.

10 MR. KEN MOORE: Good afternoon. Ken  
11 Moore, former principal of Pine Bluff High  
12 School. A job that I enjoyed. Due to  
13 mismanagement of funds, as Mr. Dexter Lee has  
14 said, had nothing to do with me or to those men  
15 and women that have lost their jobs as well.

16 The drastic, I say, decrease in  
17 enrollment, we have a great program at Pine  
18 Bluff High School. We have a cosmetology shop,  
19 we have an automotive shop, woodworking shop,  
20 plumbing shop. We have everything there that  
21 we could do.

22 While I was there I was making  
23 commercials, partnering with UAPB, because I'm  
24 a UAPB graduate. We are blessed to have a  
25 four-year institution and a two-year

1 institution, but due to the fact of decisions  
2 that were made, and like Mr. Hernandez said,  
3 this just -- just didn't happen today.

4 I've read over some things, \$2,300 a day  
5 to a company to come in and provide, what, just  
6 as Mr. Lee said, the students, I sat here to  
7 hear about a college arguing about what are we  
8 going to do or debating about what are we going  
9 to do with some GT students. We have gifted  
10 and talented students too, but all we get to  
11 hear about is money, money, money, because  
12 these are the things that happened.

13 Now, as Mr. Lee said, Mr. Key, I can't  
14 stand here in three minutes to tell you  
15 everything, but if you will grant me just a  
16 couple of minutes of your time, then I could,  
17 but I want to leave you with this, being an old  
18 country boy, if you put a mule in the Kentucky  
19 derby and the fastest mule cannot beat the  
20 slowest thoroughbred, why are you concerned  
21 about that mule? Why aren't you angry about  
22 the governing body that put the mule there to  
23 begin with? That's what we have had in Pine  
24 Bluff, mules telling thoroughbreds what to do  
25 and now here we are.

1 Thank you for your time.

2 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you, sir.

3 All right. If there is not any additional  
4 public comment -- okay -- Ms. Freno? We're --  
5 we're ready?

6 MS. FRENO: I'll check one last time.

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. So -- so the first  
8 issue before us is a fairly discrete one, which  
9 is really accepting the recommendation of  
10 the -- of the department that fiscal distress  
11 be declared in the Pine Bluff School District.  
12 That's our -- that's our first question.

13 And then we could take action in addition  
14 to that today, as laid out the statute, but I  
15 will turn it over to Ms. Freno for -- if this  
16 motion goes forward, to explain the breathe of  
17 possible actions today. Sound good?

18 MS. FRENO: Yes, sir.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

20 MR. WILLIAMSON: I have a motion,  
21 Mr. Chairman.

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right.  
23 Mr. Williamson.

24 MR. WILLIAMSON: I move that the Pine  
25 Bluff School District be classified as a school

1 district in fiscal distress.

2 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right.

3 MR. WILLIAMSON: I actually had a little  
4 bit more but I may be jumping the gun so I'll  
5 stop right there.

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yes. Let's deal with  
7 this as a two-stage process.

8 MR. WILLIAMSON: Sure.

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Because I think this is  
10 an easier question in some ways.

11 MR. WILLIAMSON: Sure.

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Is there a second to --  
13 to that -- to that motion?

14 MS. NEWTON: Second.

15 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. So motion by  
16 Mr. Williamson and a second by Ms. Newton.  
17 Further discussion on -- on that motion?

18 All right. Do you want to do a roll call  
19 vote?

20 COMMISSIONER KEY: That's your choice.

21 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Let's -- let's go ahead  
22 and do a roll call. I think anything this --  
23 this major I think we need to have a roll call.

24 COMMISSIONER KEY: Okay. Ms. Zook?

25 MS. ZOOK: Yes.

1 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Hill?

2 DR. HILL: Yes.

3 COMMISSIONER KEY: Mr. Williamson?

4 MR. WILLIAMSON: Yes.

5 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Chambers?

6 MS. CHAMBERS: Yes.

7 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. McFetridge?

8 MS. McFETRIDGE: Yes.

9 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Moore?

10 DR. MOORE: Yes.

11 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Newton?

12 MS. NEWTON: Yes.

13 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Dean?

14 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Yes.

15 COMMISSIONER KEY: Eight yes, zero no  
16 votes.

17 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Thank you.

18 Then I'll turn it over to Ms. Freno to lay  
19 out what -- what's next.

20 MS. FRENO: Lori Freno, Department of  
21 Education.

22 As I said earlier, there are a variety of  
23 steps that can be taken under § 6-21-919 or  
24 6-21-910. These steps can be taken by the  
25 State Board today or can be taken by the



1 Commissioner of Education, either. But  
 2 those -- they are very broad and they include  
 3 removing permanently, resigning or suspending  
 4 on a temporary basis the superintendent of the  
 5 school district and appointing an individual in  
 6 the place of the superintendent to  
 7 administratively operate the district under the  
 8 supervisor and approval of the Commissioner,  
 9 compensate -- and to compensate nondepartmental  
 10 agents operating the school district from  
 11 school district funding.

12 Second, they can -- the bodies -- this  
 13 body or the Commissioner can suspend or remove  
 14 some or all of the current Board of Directors  
 15 and call for the election of a new board for  
 16 the school district. They can require the  
 17 school district to operate without a Board of  
 18 Directors under the supervision of the local  
 19 superintendent or an individual panel, or  
 20 person appointed by the Commissioner; waive  
 21 Arkansas law, with the exception of the Teacher  
 22 Fair Dismissal Act and the Public School  
 23 Employee Fair Hearing Act. Petition the State  
 24 or the State Board can annex, consolidate, or  
 25 reconstitute the school district.

1                   If there is -- if the Board of Directors  
2                   is removed, in the absence of the Board of  
3                   Directors, the board can direct that the  
4                   Commissioner assume all authority of the Board  
5                   of Directors; or the Commissioner or this board  
6                   can take any other actions allowed by law that  
7                   are deemed necessary to assist the school  
8                   district in removing the classification of  
9                   fiscal distress.

10                  CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Thank you,  
11                  Ms. Freno.

12                  Are there questions for Ms. Freno before  
13                  she goes back? Okay.

14                  MS. FRENO: Thank you.

15                  CHAIRMAN BARTH: I do have a question  
16                  for -- and it may be for Ms. Coffman, may be  
17                  for the Commissioner. I'm trying to -- there  
18                  were a couple of speakers who commented on --  
19                  on the academic condition of the district.

20                  And what -- what is our timeline for  
21                  recommendations related to tiers, kind of Tier  
22                  One through Five status for districts?

23                  COMMISSIONER KEY: Yeah. I can answer  
24                  that.

25                  We are anticipating an early October date

1           for releasing the next round of ESSA School  
2           Index Reports, and at which time that will give  
3           us some of the data to make whatever  
4           determinations of levels of support under our  
5           new Act 930 and under ESSA.

6                   CHAIRMAN BARTH: And I ask that because,  
7           obviously, our new kind of actions under the  
8           different, under the Act 930 level -- levels  
9           and then, of course, fiscal distress and  
10          facilities, other things, they kind of vary a  
11          little bit, and we have seen, as we saw this  
12          morning, some districts that are in more than  
13          one kind of identification as well. I just  
14          wanted us to kind of get it in our heads that  
15          that conversation will -- will happen later and  
16          totally separately from -- from this. But I  
17          just wanted us to get -- get on that, since it  
18          was referenced earlier.

19                   Okay. Are there any -- I will -- you  
20          heard the breadth of the power. Obviously the  
21          Commissioner as of this moment has tremendous  
22          breadth of power as well without action by this  
23          board but the Board can choose to take  
24          additional action under -- under fiscal  
25          distress, if there is that -- that choice

1 today.

2 MR. WILLIAMSON: Mr. Chairman?

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Mr. Williamson.

4 MR. WILLIAMSON: Motion.

5 Mr. Chairman, I move that all members of  
6 the district's Board of Directors be removed  
7 and the Commissioner of Education assume the  
8 authority of the Board for the governance of  
9 the district; further, that the superintendent  
10 of the district be removed, and the  
11 Commissioner of Education appoint a  
12 superintendent to act under the Commissioner's  
13 supervision; and finally, that the Commissioner  
14 be directed to take other actions he deems  
15 appropriate to assist the district in removing  
16 the classification of fiscal distress.

17 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right.

18 MS. ZOOK: Second.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. We have a  
20 motion by Mr. Williamson, a second by Ms. Zook.  
21 I'll invite questions or conversation. I'll  
22 start with Ms. House, any comment?

23 Ms. Newton?

24 Ms. McFetridge?

25 MS. MCFETRIDGE: Nothing.

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Dr. Hill?

2 Ms. Chambers.

3 MS. CHAMBERS: When we receive additional  
4 information in October, would you still have  
5 the latitude to come back if there was  
6 something additional that you needed if there  
7 were to be an academic issue as well?

8 COMMISSIONER KEY: Absolutely. Yeah. And  
9 that's similar to the action we took at  
10 Dollarway when we -- I think it started with  
11 fiscal and then we added academic a few months  
12 later.

13 MS. CHAMBERS: Okay.

14 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Ms. Zook, any  
15 comment?

16 MS. ZOOK: No. I was just asking him  
17 if -- if Earle is also one of those like  
18 Dollarway, and he said no it is not.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: It's just fiscal. Just  
20 fiscal.

21 All right. Dr. Moore? All right. Any  
22 further conversation?

23 All right. Then you have heard the  
24 motion, you've heard the second. And I think  
25 we definitely need a roll call on this issue.

1 COMMISSIONER KEY: All right. Ms. Zook?

2 MS. ZOOK: Yes.

3 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Hill?

4 DR. HILL: Yes.

5 COMMISSIONER KEY: Mr. Williamson?

6 MR. WILLIAMSON: Yes.

7 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Chambers?

8 MS. CHAMBERS: Yes.

9 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. McFetridge?

10 MS. McFETRIDGE: Yes.

11 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Moore?

12 DR. MOORE: Yes.

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Newton?

14 MS. NEWTON: Yes.

15 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Dean?

16 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Yes.

17 COMMISSIONER KEY: Eight votes in favor.

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. So that  
19 action has been taken.

20 I want to say something to the -- the  
21 people of Pine Bluff and the -- and the folks  
22 who work very hard at Pine Bluff Public Schools  
23 every day is how important your work is, as  
24 citizens, as business leaders, as political  
25 leaders, and as folks who are in there working

1 with those students whom Mr. Lee identified.  
 2 That's -- that's the -- that is very important  
 3 work. And the department is now in a position  
 4 to partner with you-all and are very eager  
 5 partners in continuing that progress in Pine  
 6 Bluff so that -- so that things begin to turn  
 7 around in the Pine Bluff School District and  
 8 the City of Pine Bluff. Okay.

9 COMMISSIONER KEY: Can I add something to  
 10 that?

11 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yeah, sure.

12 COMMISSIONER KEY: Mr. Lee, you mentioned  
 13 some of the students. I may have met some of  
 14 those students a few weeks ago when a group of  
 15 young men were brought up to my conference  
 16 room. They were mostly from Pine Bluff, I  
 17 think we had a young man from Watson Chapel, a  
 18 young man from Dollarway, but they were in a  
 19 mentorship program. And I'm sorry I cannot  
 20 recall the name of it, Dr. Owoh, you could  
 21 probably help me remember the name of that.

22 DR. JEREMY OWOH: It's the Repair --  
 23 Project Pipeline Repair at UAPB.

24 COMMISSIONER KEY: Thank you. Thank you.

25 What I saw in those young men is great

1 potential and it is -- it is my belief that  
 2 with what we have shown we can do in Dollarway,  
 3 in partnership with that team there, we --  
 4 we'll make every effort to do the same thing  
 5 with the team in Pine Bluff. And I know  
 6 Dr. Hernandez has been working closely and I'm  
 7 going to -- I'm going to make sure he stays  
 8 working closely with -- with that team. And we  
 9 will determine a school leader, a district  
 10 leader. And but I want you to know, community  
 11 members, you have our commitment to turn things  
 12 around. Not just -- not just fiscally but we  
 13 want to make sure that those students have  
 14 the -- the opportunities for education that you  
 15 want, wanted for yourself, you want for your  
 16 kids, and we want for all kids in Arkansas. So  
 17 I'll make that commitment to you today.

18 Thank you.

19 MS. ZOOK: Mr. Chair?

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you.

21 Ms. Zook?

22 MS. ZOOK: I want to ask, I don't know  
 23 whether it would be Dr. Hernandez or you,  
 24 Commissioner, but there is at least one of the  
 25 school board members that has constantly been



1 an issue coming on the campus, doing all sorts  
2 of things like that. So could we please  
3 communicate to the principals that, should that  
4 continue, that they can contact you all or --  
5 to make sure that an end is put to that,  
6 whether it's a restraining order or whatever it  
7 is. But we don't want them having to deal with  
8 people who want to negatively impact the good  
9 that we hope will come from this.

10 COMMISSIONER KEY: Well, ms. Zook, I'll  
11 tell you that we are going to take into account  
12 every -- all the conditions and all the  
13 interactions, and if there is anything of a  
14 negative nature, we're going to do our very  
15 best to address it in a timely manner so that  
16 students are not in any way -- there is no  
17 detriment to the students or to the staff or to  
18 the teachers.

19 MS. ZOOK: Thank you very much.

20 COMMISSIONER KEY: Okay.

21 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. So we are --  
22 that item, do you --

23 COMMISSIONER KEY: Yeah.

24 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. All right. So  
25 thank you all so much, folks from Pine Bluff

1           who are here today; we wish you safe travels,  
2           and not just literally but figuratively in the  
3           years ahead.

4           We have one additional item this  
5           afternoon, and that is -- I'll turn it over to  
6           Ms. Salas-Ford. This is a Succeed Scholarship  
7           issue.

8           MS. SALAS-FORD: Now I know what a salmon  
9           going upstream feels like.

10          CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Salas-Ford, why don't  
11          we wait for about a minute. We've got a lot of  
12          transition going on in the room.

13          I think we're -- are we waiting so we can  
14          get them on the phone?

15          All right. Why don't we wait until we get  
16          them on the phone so we don't keep getting  
17          interrupted.

18          Okay. All right. So they may or may not  
19          join but we'll go ahead and move forward on  
20          this item.

21          Ms. Salas-Ford?

22          B-2: REQUEST FOR REINSTATEMENT OF SUCCEED SCHOLARSHIP

23          MS. SALAS-FORD: Thank you, Courtney  
24          Salas-Ford from the department.

25          This is a request from the Vicks to

1 transfer their son's Succeed Scholarship from  
2 Compass Academy to St. Joseph School.

3 If you're familiar with previous requests,  
4 this does require Board approval just to move  
5 their scholarship from one school to another  
6 approved school.

7 And I do believe they are supposed to be  
8 calling in if you have any questions.

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. So we're sure they  
10 are not there. So I will see if folks on this  
11 side of the room have questions or comments?  
12 Over here?

13 I do have -- I do have a concern on this  
14 one. It is a -- it's a request from a movement  
15 from a school that does have a specialization  
16 in -- in special needs students to a school  
17 that does not have that same specialization. I  
18 think that is a concern. I think it is a -- a  
19 move away from the original mission of this  
20 public policy, and so I do have very deep  
21 concerns about this.

22 MS. ZOOK: Same here.

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Zook?

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

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. So but that's

1                   where things are.

2                   And I will -- I will entertain a motion.

3                   VICE CHAIR DEAN: I move to grant the  
4                   transfer.

5                   DR. MOORE: Second.

6                   CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Motion by  
7                   Ms. Dean, second by Dr. Moore.

8                   All those in favor, say, "Aye."

9                   BOARD MEMBERS: Aye.

10                  CHAIRMAN BARTH: Opposed, same sign.

11                  Ms. Zook? No?

12                  MS. ZOOK: Oh, yeah. It says "shall" not  
13                  "may"; so --

14                  CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. You follow  
15                  orders well.

16                  MS. ZOOK: I do.

17                  CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. All right.

18                  MS. ZOOK: Kicking and screaming.

19                  CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. I think  
20                  Ms. Zook and I dissent in spirit.

21                  All right. Okay. So thank you very much.

22                  MS. SALAS-FORD: Thank you.

23                  CHAIRMAN BARTH: We have come to the end  
24                  of our agenda and we are going to move to a  
25                  work session. We need some transition time in

1 the room. So why don't -- Ms. Wendell, you  
2 think we're probably good to go? After --

3 DR. JEREMY OWOH: I'll need, probably, 30  
4 minutes to set up.

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Okay. So let's  
6 reconvene at 3:30. That will give folks a  
7 chance to walk around and check their emails  
8 and then we will be back in this room. We will  
9 not be live streaming the work session. It  
10 will just be us working in the room. It will  
11 be a lot of individual.

12 Yes, we do need a motion to adjourn for  
13 the day.

14 MR. WILLIAMSON: Move to adjourn

15 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Second?

16 VICE CHAIR DEAN: Second.

17 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. So all those in  
18 favor, say, "Aye."

19 BOARD MEMBERS: Aye.

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Opposed, same sign.

21 (WHEREUPON, at 3:01 p.m., the  
22 above-entitled proceedings were concluded.)

23 ---o---

24

25

## 1 CERTIFICATE

2 STATE OF ARKANSAS )

3 COUNTY OF PULASKI )

4 I, SUSAN B. WHITSON, Certified Court Reporter  
5 and notary public in and for Pulaski County, State of  
6 Arkansas, do hereby certify that the proceedings before  
7 the Arkansas State Department of Education, State Board  
8 of Education, in Little Rock, Arkansas, September 13,  
9 2018, was taken by me in Stenotype and was reduced to  
10 computer-generated typewritten form by me or under my  
11 direction and supervision; and that the same is a true  
12 and correct reflection of the proceedings that occurred,  
13 to the best of my knowledge and ability.

14 I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am neither counsel  
15 for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to  
16 the action in which these proceedings were taken; and,  
17 further that I am not a relative or employee of any  
18 attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor  
19 financially interested, or otherwise, in the outcome of  
20 this action; and that I have no contract with the  
21 parties, attorneys, or persons with an interest in the  
22 action that affects or has a substantial tendency to  
23 affect impartiality, that requires me to relinquish  
24 control of an original transcript or copies of the  
25 transcript before it is certified and delivered to the  
attorney, or that requires me to provide any service not  
made available to all parties to the action.

SIGNED AND SWORN this 21st day of September  
2018.

---

SUSAN B. WHITSON, CCR, #158  
NOTARY COMMISSION #12388076  
NOTARY PUBLIC IN AND FOR  
PULASKI COUNTY, ARKANSAS

My Commission Expires: June 4, 2022.

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	<b>217:2</b>	<b>139:25</b>	<b>addition (3)</b>	<b>134:24;135:6;177:3</b>
<b>\$</b>	<b>absences (1)</b>	<b>acquisition (1)</b>	63:6;140:18;213:13	<b>advocate (1)</b>
	155:20	72:13	<b>additional (20)</b>	37:14
<b>\$1 (1)</b>	<b>absent (1)</b>	<b>across (8)</b>	27:15;93:24;94:17;	<b>advocated (1)</b>
206:11	169:1	7:5;11:7;15:4;	101:1,2;114:25;	86:18
<b>\$1,000 (1)</b>	<b>absentee (2)</b>	39:10;63:18;75:8;	116:8;142:24;145:23;	<b>advocates (1)</b>
122:19	153:1;169:3	84:18;183:15	155:25;164:4;195:9;	86:20
<b>\$1,500 (1)</b>	<b>absenteeism (5)</b>	<b>ACT (7)</b>	202:18;203:4;206:11;	<b>Aegis (1)</b>
122:22	123:23,23;152:23;	87:16;134:25;	213:3;218:24;220:3,	84:12
<b>\$130,000 (1)</b>	160:22;169:1	216:22,23;218:5,8;	6;225:4	<b>affairs (1)</b>
183:15	<b>Absolutely (7)</b>	219:12	<b>address (15)</b>	206:15
<b>\$19 (1)</b>	27:10;48:3;88:12;	<b>ACTION (16)</b>	17:18;19:7;27:9;	<b>afford (2)</b>
163:4	131:6;136:23;173:8;	5:2,6;12:12;117:18;	57:13;79:16;81:3;	208:18;210:15
<b>\$2 (2)</b>	220:8	175:7;178:4,10;	84:24;85:11;171:23;	<b>afforded (1)</b>
191:5;199:11	<b>abstaining (1)</b>	180:19;196:21;	172:19;182:1,3;	207:9
<b>\$2,300 (1)</b>	90:14	202:10,16;213:13;	206:1;207:6;224:15	<b>after-hours (1)</b>
212:4	<b>abstract (1)</b>	218:22,24;220:9;	<b>addressed (3)</b>	59:23
<b>\$27 (1)</b>	67:19	221:19	32:14;157:17;206:4	<b>Afternoon (9)</b>
163:5	<b>academic (12)</b>	<b>actions (8)</b>	<b>addressing (1)</b>	165:18;167:5;
<b>\$3 (1)</b>	65:2;66:1;119:15;	175:14;188:15;	155:21	180:24;181:5;204:7,
189:9	134:19;142:12;156:6;	197:4,8;213:17;	<b>ADE (13)</b>	11;207:24;211:10;
<b>\$500,000 (1)</b>	206:15,24;209:11;	217:6;218:7;219:14	32:8;35:17;67:2,9,	225:5
183:20	217:19;220:7,11	<b>active (3)</b>	11,17;68:3;88:10;	<b>afternoon's (1)</b>
<b>\$600,000 (2)</b>	<b>academics (3)</b>	127:6,6;177:3	119:10;150:20;154:9;	180:15
183:12;191:3	113:23;196:21;	<b>activities (2)</b>	155:5,6	<b>again (19)</b>
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