

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

October 13, 2016

*Sharon Hill Court Reporting
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BEFORE THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

October 13, 2016
10:00 A.M.

APPEARANCES:

Mr. Johnny Key	Commissioner
Ms. Mireya Reith	Chairman
Dr. Jay Barth	Vice Chairman
Ms. Diane Zook	Board Member
Mr. Joe Black	Board Member
Ms. Susan Chambers	Board Member
Ms. Charisse Dean	Board Member
Mr. R. Brett Williamson	Board Member
Ms. Ouida Newton	Board Member
Dr. Fitzgerald Hill	Board Member
Ms. Meghan Ables	Teacher of the Year/ Non-Voting Member

LEGAL COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD:

Ms. Lori Freno	ADE General Counsel
Ms. Courtney Salas-Ford	ADE Deputy General Counsel

LOCATION: ADE Auditorium
#4 Capitol Mall
Little Rock, AR

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E X H I B I T S

A-3: STRONG-HUTTIG SCHOOL DISTRICT

EXHIBIT ONE (1)

Resolution of Approval to Apply for Waiver
Authorized by Act 377 of 2015

EXHIBIT TWO (2)

PowerPoint Presentation

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P R O C E E D I N G S

A-1: CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION FOR ARKANSAS SCHOOL BUS SAFETY WEEK, OCTOBER 17-21, 2016

CHAIRPERSON REITH: We will now move into formally the action agenda, item number one, Consideration of Resolution for the Arkansas School Bus Safety Week. Mr. Simmons, you are recognized.

MR. SIMMONS: Thank you, Madam Chair, Commissioner Key, Members of the Board. I'm Mike Simmons; I'm Senior Transportation Manager for the Division of Public School Academic Facilities and Transportation. We have a few guests that I'd like to recognize today. As many of you know, we do a public awareness campaign in the fall, at the beginning of school, called Flashing Red. Kids Ahead., and that's about illegal passing which is a serious issue for all of us with the safety of our kids. And with that, I'd like to recognize first Ms. Susie Everett from Everett Buick-Pontiac-GMC. Ms. Everett and her husband Dwight put up -- put their money where their mouth is, I guess you could say; they do a commercial and donate all of the primetime airtime for that commercial for public awareness. Also, Mr. Tom Farmer from Bryant -- he's their Transportation Director -- was very instrumental in

1 this public awareness campaign. And over the past
2 year the Arkansas PTA has really jumped onboard and
3 I'd like to recognize Trina Kuklaw and Michelle
4 Caudle with the Arkansas PTA.

5 And with that, I would like to read a resolution
6 from the Board:

7 Arkansas State Board of Education Resolution

8 WHEREAS, The Arkansas State Board of Education
9 recognizes that providing Arkansas
10 students with safe school bus
11 transportation is a vital part of the
12 educational system; and

13 WHEREAS, In Arkansas, approximately 5,500 buses
14 transport more than 250,000 students
15 to and from school and school-related
16 events each day; and

17 WHEREAS, Arkansas school bus drivers travel
18 more than 240,000 route miles each
19 school day; and

20 WHEREAS, The Arkansas Department of Education,
21 the Arkansas Division of Public School
22 Academic Facilities and

23 Transportation, and Arkansas PTA are
24 committed to raising public awareness
25 about the importance of school bus

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safety; and

WHEREAS, The Everett family is dedicated to promoting school bus safety each year; and

WHEREAS, This effort is greatly dependent upon the school district partnerships with local business and community leaders; and

WHEREAS, School bus drivers, mechanics, and transportation directors across the state are to be commended for their unwavering commitment to school bus safety; and

WHEREAS, Concerned citizens and leaders are to be commended for devoting their time, talent, and resources to promoting school bus safety;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT

We, the members of the Arkansas State Board of Education, recognize the week of October 17 through 21, 2016, as Arkansas School Bus Safety Week.

CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much, Mr. Simmons, for bringing this wonderful resolution before us. It is tremendously important and we can't

1 recognize this enough. So, thank you for that
2 opportunity and for all the guests that you brought
3 here today.

4 With that, I'll entertain any discussion or
5 questions from my colleagues on the Board or a motion
6 in regards to accepting this resolution.

7 MS. ZOOK: I move that we accept the resolution
8 and also encourage people to drive the speed limit.
9 I'm from a rural area and many times those posted
10 speed limit signs are there for a reason when it gets
11 around a school. So I would be pleased to recommend
12 that we do the resolution and with that little added
13 bonus.

14 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Do I have a second?

15 DR. HILL: Second.

16 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Motion made by Ms.
17 Zook, seconded by Dr. Hill. All in favor?

18 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

19 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? Motion carries
20 unanimously. Thank you so much --

21 MR. SIMMONS: Thank you, Madam Chair.

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: -- for this opportunity and
23 I look forward to signing this here. Thank you.

24 [APPLAUSE]

25 MR. SIMMONS: We've got to get a photo,

1 Commissioner Key.

2 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yeah. If you'll remain
3 there, I think the Commissioner and I will come down
4 and hand this to you personally.

5 MS. ZOOK: Your jacket matches --

6 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yeah, I wore the right color
7 today, I guess. Thank you -- thank you for letting
8 me know. I did that very intentionally, I promise.

9 (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: Commissioner Key and
10 Chairperson Reith went down front to present the
11 signed Resolution; photos were then taken.)

12 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, All.

13 A-2: CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION FOR ARKANSAS SAFE SCHOOL
14 WEEK, OCTOBER 16-22, 2016

15 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Now moving on to action
16 agenda item A-2, Consideration of Resolution for the
17 Arkansas Safe School Week. Dr. May, you are
18 recognized.

19 DR. MAY: Good morning, Madam Chair; good
20 morning, Members of the Board. I'm Cheryl May. I'm
21 the director of the Criminal Justice Institute and
22 also very proud to serve as the chair of the
23 Department's Safe Schools Committee. I want to thank
24 you all for the opportunity to be before you this
25 morning. But I also want to particularly thank

1 Commissioner Key and his great staff -- Deb Coffman,
2 Kimberly Friedman, John Kaminar -- and the members of
3 the Safe Schools Committee for all the great work
4 that they do and their dedication and commitment to
5 keeping our schools safe.

6 I would like to recognize several members of the
7 committee who are here this morning: Sergeant Bubba
8 Jones with Mountain Home Police Department -- he's a
9 School Resource Officer there -- and Otistene Smith,
10 who is also a member of the Department of Education
11 staff.

12 I'm here before you to request your approval for
13 the following resolution:

14 ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION RESOLUTION

15 WHEREAS, More than 476,000 students attend
16 public schools in Arkansas; and

17 WHEREAS, A safe and secure environment enhances
18 student learning; and

19 WHEREAS, Approximately 69,000 administrative,
20 faculty, and staff at Arkansas' public
21 schools are committed to providing a
22 safe and secure learning environment
23 for all students; and

24 WHEREAS, More than 290 school resource officers
25 assist in ensuring students remain

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safe at public schools; and

WHEREAS, The Arkansas Department of Education, Arkansas Safe Schools Association and Criminal Justice Institute's Safe Schools Program promote a safe educational environment; and

WHEREAS, The Safe Schools Committee is charged with developing model policies and procedures that may ensure a safe and productive learning environment for students and school employees, for recommending to the State Board of Education any necessary rules and regulations for ensuring a safe school environment, and for recommending to the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education any necessary legislation for ensuring a safe school environment; and

WHEREAS, Local and state law enforcement agencies and organizations provide support to school districts;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT

We, the members of the Arkansas State Board of Education, recognize the week

1 of October 16 through 22, 2016, as
2 Arkansas Safe Schools Week.

3 I would greatly appreciate your approval of this
4 resolution.

5 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much, Dr. May,
6 for all of your work, for -- again, for the guests
7 that you've brought here. Thank you so much for the
8 long-distances, especially with the weather out
9 there. Thank you so much for being safe in getting
10 here. We wish you safe journeys back. But we
11 frequently talk about here on the State Board "whole
12 child, whole community" and this is a huge part of
13 that. And so --

14 DR. MAY: Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON REITH: -- we appreciate you
16 bringing this before us.

17 With that, any discussion from my colleagues
18 and/or I will entertain a motion in regards to this
19 resolution. Yes, Mr. Williamson.

20 MR. WILLIAMSON: I have a motion to approve the
21 resolution.

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Thank you. Do I have
23 a second?

24 MR. BLACK: Second.

25 MS. ZOOK: Second.

1 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Motion made by Mr.
2 Williamson and I heard Mr. Black as our second. All
3 in favor?

4 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

5 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? The motion
6 carries unanimously. Congratulations, Dr. May.

7 DR. MAY: Great. Thank you all very, very much.

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: And, similarly, I'm afraid
9 you'll have to let us come down there and take a
10 photo with you. I'm so sorry.

11 DR. MAY: Okay.

12 CHAIRPERSON REITH: But thank you.

13 DR. MAY: Thank you.

14 MS. CHAMBERS: I just want to express our
15 appreciation, in addition to the resolution. So many
16 good things get done on a daily basis that we don't
17 know about to take care of our students and to
18 provide for them, and I wish we knew everyone by name
19 and could thank them by name.

20 DR. MAY: Yes, ma'am.

21 MS. CHAMBERS: But we do so appreciate all the
22 good things and just want to make sure that you know
23 how much we appreciate it.

24 DR. MAY: Thank you, Ma'am, and I most certainly
25 will pass that on to all those dedicated committee

1 members, and it's greatly appreciated. Thank you.

2 (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: Commissioner Key and
3 Chairperson Reith went down front to present the
4 signed Resolution; photos were then taken.)

5 CHAIRPERSON REITH: I'm getting a little bit of
6 a workout in this morning. Thank you; I appreciate
7 that after all the sitting we do.

8 A-3: CONSIDERATION OF PETITION FOR MINIMUM SCHOOL DISTRICT
9 SIZE WAIVER FILED BY THE STRONG-HUTTIG SCHOOL DISTRICT

10 CHAIRPERSON REITH: So now moving on to action
11 agenda item A-3, Consideration for Petition for
12 Minimum School District Size Waiver Filed by the
13 Strong-Huttig School District. And to my colleagues,
14 I do believe we have a few documents here that have
15 been put in front of you for reference.

16 Now I have asked Ms. Freno to say a few words at
17 the beginning of this. This is the first time we've
18 gotten one of these waivers. For colleagues who have
19 been on the Board as long as myself, or shortly
20 thereafter, the first few years I know of my service
21 here on the Board we had quite a few conversations
22 around districts in regards to consolidation,
23 annexation. And this is now a new process that's
24 been put in place with our legislature, some points
25 that I've asked Ms. Freno to help clarify as we

1 consider this petition today. So, Ms. Freno, you're
2 recognized.

3 MS. FRENO: Thank you, Madam Chair. Lori Freno,
4 General Counsel, Arkansas Department of Education.
5 The Strong-Huttig School District had fewer than 350
6 students in the two years immediately preceding the
7 current school year. Consequently, under Arkansas
8 Code Annotated 6-13-1603 the school district must be
9 administratively consolidated or annexed to another
10 school district unless the school district requests a
11 minimum school district size waiver in accordance
12 with a new law, a law that was passed in the most
13 recent session, which is Arkansas Code Annotated 6-
14 13-1613.

15 If the Board grants a waiver, the school
16 district must annually request a renewal of that
17 waiver -- well, obviously, if they fall below --
18 continue to fall below 350 students, but that waiver
19 would only be effective for one year. The school
20 district -- under the law the school district must
21 submit a petition for the waiver, which you have in
22 your package.

23 On September 1, 2016, the Strong-Huttig School
24 District did submit a timely petition for a minimum
25 school size waiver and the petition contained all the

1 necessary documentation that is required under the
2 statute. Under the waiver law, the State Board shall
3 grant a petition for waiver if the school district
4 demonstrates certain things. And what the school
5 district has to demonstrate is that it is currently
6 not classified in academic distress, fiscal distress,
7 or facilities distress; that it currently is not on
8 probationary status for a violation of the Standards
9 for Accreditation; that its academic facilities are
10 owned and -- that its academic facilities are
11 adequate, as evidenced by the school district's
12 facilities master plan; and, finally, that it is in
13 the best interest of the students in the school
14 district to keep the school district open due to the
15 length of potential time spent on the bus by a
16 student traveling to and from schools should the
17 school district be administratively reorganized, as
18 assured by the school board of directors of the
19 school district requesting the waiver. Now the law
20 does state that -- the Strong-Huttig High School is
21 in academic distress, but the law does not allow us
22 to consider that. The law only requires -- allows us
23 to consider whether the school district itself is in
24 academic distress, which it is not. And the
25 Department of Education agrees that the district

1 currently is not classified in academic distress,
2 that it is not classified in fiscal distress,
3 facilities distress, or that it is in violation of
4 any of the Standards for Accreditation.

5 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much.

6 MS. FRENO: And if there are no other questions,
7 I'd like to present the hearing procedures.

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Actually, I am going to ask
9 one --

10 MS. FRENO: Okay.

11 CHAIRPERSON REITH: -- one last favor, whether
12 it's for you, Ms. Freno, or actually you,
13 Commissioner, as a former State Senator. But it's
14 been awhile since we've had one of these cases and
15 for our new colleagues, and that we have so many new
16 colleagues, I don't know if it would be helpful to
17 just quickly reference Lakeview and the adequacy
18 studies that got us to the 350 number. It's actually
19 being picked up again right now, as we know, by our
20 legislature, and so there's a timeliness to this.
21 And maybe if one of you might be willing to say a few
22 words just to make sure there's a little bit of
23 context. And I see you all fighting to speak.

24 MS. FRENO: I think either of us could do it,
25 but I will leave it to the Commissioner because he

1 was there.

2 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yes.

3 COMMISSIONER KEY: Striving to avoid, yeah.
4 Well, in a nutshell, after Lakeview the General
5 Assembly and the Governor's office embarked on
6 establishing a funding formula that was -- would meet
7 the constitutional muster of adequate and equitable
8 and efficient. A lot of history that I could go into
9 but in a nutshell, the formula was determined to be
10 established around a prototypical school of 500
11 students, K through 12. As the issue of at what
12 point is a school too small to be viable, that number
13 was determined to be 350. Act 60, which did a lot of
14 other things -- but one of the main things that Act
15 60 did was establish that number at 350 students, but
16 if you went below that for two consecutive years then
17 you would be subject to consolidation or annexation.
18 The -- even at that time there was the debate of --
19 you know -- there were some schools that could
20 function below that number effectively and
21 efficiently. And the debate went on until the 2015
22 session when the General Assembly decided that a
23 waiver -- so that rather than having a blanket
24 approach a district that could demonstrate that they
25 were meeting criteria, meeting standards could

1 continue to operate under 350; thus, this waiver now
2 that is before you today.

3 There are fewer districts -- the frequency of
4 districts falling below 350 has diminished greatly
5 over the last few years there, so you may see one or
6 two; maybe some years there are zero schools that
7 actually go below that number.

8 So we're in a situation now where it truly is --
9 the Board looks at it on an individual basis,
10 according to the criteria set forth in the statute,
11 and a determination is made, and can be made each
12 year following, as long as that school district
13 remains under 350 students.

14 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Commissioner.
15 And thank you, Ms. Freno.

16 I think Dr. Barth -- yes.

17 DR. BARTH: Yes. So, Ms. Freno, in the law,
18 Section C of that list, "the academic facilities
19 owned and operated by the school district are
20 adequate as evidenced by the school district's
21 facilities master plan," how -- could you talk a
22 little bit about how we might grapple with that
23 issue?

24 MS. FRENO: Yes. It is my understanding that
25 the school district today is going to be presenting

1 to you on the state of its facilities in accordance
2 with the master plan.

3 DR. BARTH: All right. Thanks.

4 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. And --

5 DR. BARTH: But that would be -- I'm sorry; that
6 would be a judgment call for us in terms of whether
7 -- the others seem much less of a judgment call;
8 right? There are bright lines. This is one where it
9 would be a judgment call?

10 MS. FRENO: You are correct; that would be a
11 judgment call.

12 DR. BARTH: Okay.

13 MS. FRENO: Yes.

14 DR. BARTH: Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Ms. Freno. Any
16 additional questions about the law or the context,
17 the historical context of this before we get into the
18 procedure?

19 And just to say this is once again one of those
20 times where the law has not indicated a process for
21 us, and what we've previously discussed is 20 minutes
22 for the Department and 20 minutes for the Strong-
23 Huttig School District in terms of time allotment, as
24 a starter point of getting both sides presented. Am
25 I -- did I understand that correctly, Ms. Freno, in

1 terms of --

2 MS. FRENO: Yes, ma'am. That's correct.

3 CHAIRPERSON REITH: -- the recommendation of the
4 Department of how we proceed with this? But I did
5 want to see if there was any remnant questions from
6 colleagues?

7 Seeing none, then, Ms. Freno, you're recognized
8 with the Department's position.

9 MS. FRENO: Okay. Thank you. And just if I can
10 go over a few additional procedures?

11 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yes.

12 MS. FRENO: All persons wishing to testify, with
13 the exception of attorneys, shall be placed under
14 oath. The Department could have up to 20 minutes to
15 present information that it has, but basically the
16 Department has nothing to present other than what
17 I've already spoke to this morning. The school
18 district then will have up to 20 minutes to present,
19 as you mentioned, Madam Chair, and you do have the
20 discretion to allow additional time for the school
21 district, as you deem fit. The Board may ask any
22 questions to anyone at any time during the
23 proceedings and then, of course, the Board will
24 discuss, deliberate and vote upon the matter.

25 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much, Ms.

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Freno.

So with that, anyone planning to offer testimony, if you could please rise and raise your right hand so we can swear you in. Thank you. Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you're about to give shall be the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

(ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. And so with that, Ms. Freno, do you have any additional comments? Otherwise, I'll recognize the Strong-Huttig School District.

MS. FRENO: No, I do not, Madam Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much, Ms. Freno.

With that then, to the district, you now have your 20 minutes, however you choose to break that up.

SUPT. ALPHIN: Good morning, Madam Chairman, Members of the Board, Dr. Key. We --

CHAIRPERSON REITH: I'm sorry; if you could kindly state your name for the record.

SUPT. ALPHIN: Oh, sorry. Jeff Alphin, Superintendent for the Strong-Huttig School District. I have my team with me this morning: principal, Dr.

1 Wendell Colen; school improvement specialist, Shirley
2 Kyle; literacy specialist, Barbara Goldsby; our
3 mayors from Strong and Huttig are here this morning,
4 Mayor Darryl Howell from Strong, Mayor Tony Cole from
5 Huttig; and our board president Ms. Cindy Smith is
6 with us this morning in support. And we have a brief
7 PowerPoint to address the issues and the law and, of
8 course, we'll be prepared to answer any questions.

9 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you.

10 SUPT. ALPHIN: And our PowerPoint, we've titled
11 it Still Going Strong, Good Things Come From Small
12 Packages. And we're planning on continuing to be
13 going strong.

14 The second slide goes exactly to the law. We
15 are not in academic, fiscal, or facilities distress;
16 we did not have a violation from the Office of
17 Standards Review when they came with us last year;
18 adequate facilities as presented by the facilities
19 plan that you have in your package; and our board has
20 a resolution that passed that they believe the length
21 of time that students would be potentially bused will
22 not be in the best interest of the students (and we
23 included that this morning with our PowerPoint).

24 Moving to the third slide, we're talking about
25 facilities. Our buildings are safe and secure. We

1 are insured through the Arkansas School Board
2 insurance recommendations. We complete our tornado
3 drills; fire drills; we have our crisis management
4 plan in place, and we have these on a timely manner
5 conducted and they are entered into e-school so that
6 you have evidence.

7 Our mandated maintenance -- we are following the
8 -- I call it the superintendent's list of everything
9 that we have to make sure is inspected every year.
10 We have all those inspectors on our campus. We take
11 them to where they request to be and show them that
12 information, and they have signed off that we are
13 sufficient on everything that is in the areas to be
14 expected. We are aware that we have in our plan a
15 long-range goal for some things that we're going to
16 upgrade, but we are meeting standards; we just want
17 to continue to improve. Just like with academics, we
18 want to continue to improve facilities.

19 The Huttig campus has been leased to the Huttig
20 city. The City of Huttig has taken it over as a
21 community center because we were not using the Huttig
22 campus anymore. However, the lease does state if we
23 ever need it again for educational purposes it will
24 revert to the Strong-Huttig School District. So if
25 we need the building, it would come back to us, but

1 right now we just wanted to see it in use. And we
2 are making efforts to improve the elementary campus
3 and the high school campus. We've got some older
4 buildings that we're going to get rid of. We've got
5 some portable buildings that we're going to arrange
6 or get better use out of, and we want to take pride
7 in our campuses and do what we need to do to help
8 make them more attractive and inviting to students
9 and parents and community.

10 We have one new bus that we consider the travel
11 bus. We send it out on all the basketball and
12 football trips. We have our eight route buses, which
13 are also available if we need another bus in support
14 of the travel bus. And all of our buses passed
15 inspection this past year when we had the gentleman
16 -- when the bus inspector came down. All passed.
17 The only one that they had to do anything to was the
18 new bus; it came without a fan for the airbrakes and
19 we sent it right back to the company and got that put
20 on there. We have eight rentable houses that school
21 employees have available to them and they meet
22 current housing standards. And those employees, once
23 they're in those houses, most of them have went ahead
24 and started to improve on them with their painting
25 and cleaning and fixing of the yards, however they

1 want to, and they're adjacent to the high school
2 campus.

3 Our finance -- we submitted budgets in your
4 package with a projected budget from this year.
5 Myself and my bookkeepers have sat down with Ms.
6 Casey from the State Department and talked about our
7 projected budget, and we just wanted to submit these
8 budgets to you and let you know that we have
9 projected; we know we have a declining enrollment,
10 but we have prepared. We've been savers, our former
11 administration. We have money and we can continue to
12 operate and our budgets will continue to be submitted
13 in a timely manner.

14 The state auditor comes and checks all of our
15 books. In fact, they started this week; they were
16 there yesterday. And we have all of our books
17 audited by a state auditor. We answer all
18 exceptions, if there are any, and we also have a
19 district financial consultant when we prepare the
20 budget. And what we were thinking, in the spring we
21 would call that district financial consultant and we
22 would sit down and discuss what areas we needed to
23 address to keep the district financially solvent.

24 We are in good shape. We have all our title and
25 categorical deadlines met. We've got our monies

1 appropriated to the appropriate places, and those
2 reports have been entered into Indistar for the 16-17
3 school year.

4 Our last area to discuss is with the documents
5 that you have in your package: that we are not in
6 district academic distress. We have attempted to
7 improve academics and we're going to continue to do
8 that, and I know we were just here a month ago and we
9 talked about that. We have our lesson plan formats
10 that all teachers are required to turn in so that we
11 can be consistent. And we can look at those lesson
12 plans and when we go to the classrooms we know what
13 we're looking for or what we need to make comments
14 about. Lesson plans are reviewed on a weekly basis
15 and then we go out on our classroom walk-thru's. We
16 have grouped everything: the professional
17 development, the lesson plans, the classroom
18 instruction, the materials that we've ordered. We
19 know that we need to continuously improve; we cannot
20 stand still and we want to keep pushing.

21 Our supplemental program, the PLATO Study Island
22 program, we are going for consistency there. That
23 program is going to address all grades 3 through 12
24 and, of course, that's your tested grades, your ACT
25 Aspire, and then your seniors are getting out and

1 getting ready to go to college. We want this program
2 to help push our students. We were talking about
3 yesterday at our PLC how to make these students
4 accountable. When they're in the remediation module,
5 you know, some of them, they want to, "Well, we don't
6 need this," and want to move right through it. Our
7 teachers are going to be up monitoring. We want to
8 tie it to grades. We're going to make it useful in
9 the classroom.

10 K-2, they're using DIBELS, the DRA, DSA, and the
11 QUALLS assessment in those grades. And 3 through 10,
12 again, we will continue to take the ACT Aspire.
13 We've already signed up for the interim assessments
14 and the ACT will be given to the 11th grade. And
15 then our seniors have been working with the career
16 coach on campus and most of them have taken it at
17 least once, and some of them three to four. We had a
18 young lady, she got a 30 on her third time -- and, of
19 course, that's the high that's setting the bar but
20 we've got a handful of folks with some 19s and 21s
21 and we want to continue to push that.

22 We are a vital part of our community. We're a
23 small school and everybody knows our alumni that
24 plays for the Baltimore Ravens. But we've got
25 doctors in El Dorado, we've got lawyers, we've got

1 young men that have come through. We've got one
2 that's got an excavation company; we've got logging
3 companies; young ladies that have become teachers. A
4 lot of folks from Strong have come out and
5 contributed to society, and Huttig, and we want to
6 make sure that that continues. When I went to El
7 Dorado some of the first people I met were other
8 teachers and they had graduated from Huttig and
9 somebody I'd played basketball against. So our small
10 community wants to continue to contribute.

11 And if it is the pleasure of the Board to grant
12 us this waiver, we would certainly appreciate it.
13 And we will know that we have to come back in one
14 year and we will strive to improve in that one year
15 that you have given us. And, of course, we would
16 love to be back above 350. We're on 311 as of this
17 morning, but we did have three students come in
18 yesterday. So hopefully the word is getting out.

19 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much, Mr.
20 Alphin. Is there anyone else speaking on behalf of
21 the district? You do have 10 minutes left. I know
22 Representative Baine, you don't have to be included
23 as part of the 20 minutes but I did want to see if
24 anyone else from the district --

25 SUPT. ALPHIN: Unless the mayors have something

1 to say, we were just going to go to Representative
2 Baine.

3 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Mr. Mayor? Then I
4 would say, Representative Baine, you are recognized.

5 REPRESENTATIVE BAIN: Thank you to the Board.
6 I appreciate your time this morning to discuss --
7 mainly, the reason I was here was to talk more even
8 in broad terms. This is, my understanding, the first
9 time a Act 377 waiver has been brought to this board.
10 This came out of the 2015 General Assembly, 95-to-
11 nothing in the House, 27-to-nothing in the Senate.
12 The general feeling among General Assembly today, and
13 I think into the future, is that we've got to
14 radically re-look at how we do this. In other words,
15 we've had a generation since we initiated the 350
16 rule and that was a generation back when futuristic
17 things like video conferencing and broadband was only
18 in action movies out of Hollywood; it was not a real
19 reality in the schools, especially rural Arkansas.
20 About two years ago, the Arkansas legislative council
21 initiated an adequacy study and a cost study to try
22 to figure out where schools were, how much they were
23 paying, by unit of measures on what they were buying
24 on broadband, and also what speeds. And we found
25 that wildly disproportionate; some districts had

1 phenomenal levels of broadband. They could sit there
2 and play Netflix all day long if they wanted to and
3 other ones were happy to have a 56k, you know,
4 connection. And that's one thing the General
5 Assembly has been working on very hard these last few
6 years and will continue to equalize and levelize it
7 so that it doesn't matter if you're a student in an
8 urban area or a rural area -- and I can say that as a
9 member who represents a rural part of Arkansas, that
10 we have seen -- our concern is what we also see south
11 of the border, in Louisiana, where they've gone to
12 parish-wide school districts in recent years, where
13 we've seen a lot of the local investment go away
14 because they see people from faraway communities
15 realigning and moving their students around, busing
16 their students all over their parish. And I think a
17 lot of us fear countywide school districts where we
18 would lose that local buy-in. We've got that local
19 buy-in in this specific district. When I go down
20 there I see all the businesses and industry in the
21 eastern part of Union County, where this district is
22 located, actively involved in the school district;
23 they want to see it survive; they want to see it
24 thrive. And one reason they're afraid is because
25 right now we're going through some algorithmizations,

1 economic downturns in certain sectors, but other
2 sectors are picking up. And we're also -- and as the
3 superintendent had mentioned, he's picking up new
4 students. That's one thing this district works on
5 actively is they're actively trying to recruit
6 students. I've watched them do this first-hand on my
7 multiple visits to their district. And I would,
8 again, encourage you to look at all the criteria that
9 we put into this waiver. We didn't want to just give
10 a blanket waiver for districts that were willfully
11 negligent or willful in not doing their job; we
12 wanted to give waivers for districts who were putting
13 a good faith effort into educating the children of
14 Arkansas. And just because they are in an area and
15 they're not near another district -- because it would
16 be a real hardship. The sad stories I've heard over
17 the last 20 years have been about all the stories
18 about all these insane bus drives through rural
19 Arkansas, and I just did not want to visit that upon
20 my constituents if there was a good strong, viable
21 district willing to work. And they've worked through
22 multiple issues since I first came into office and I
23 know -- I am convinced that their school board -- and
24 I know many of them personally -- are committed to
25 this district. And I would be very, very concerned

1 if they were consolidated into another district, what
2 local buy-in, what local involvement, and what
3 negative consequences that would further do to those
4 children that live in the existing school district.

5 And with that, I appreciate it. If there's any
6 comments or questions, I'll be happy to try -- but
7 the bottom line is, the Arkansas General Assembly
8 believes that broadband is going to become one of the
9 great equalizers as we go forward. I can say 20
10 some-odd years ago I was in Higher Ed.; we had this
11 novel idea of a video -- compressed videoconference
12 and it was a totally weird idea to all of us 20
13 something years ago. But nowadays, we do
14 videoconferencing in the job place daily. And so
15 that is actually technology we not only need to get
16 comfortable with as a student, they're going to have
17 to get comfortable with it in the workplace as they
18 go to work. So we're trying to offer as many
19 innovative ideas as possible and I would hope that as
20 long as all the conditions and criteria are met, as
21 Commissioner Barth brought up earlier -- if all the
22 conditions and criteria are met that we can allow
23 these districts that have the local buy-in, the local
24 focus to continue. Thank you so much.

25 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Representative.

1 So with that, we now open it up for questions
2 and discussion from the Board. I'll entertain
3 questions. Yes, Dr. Barth.

4 DR. BARTH: So, thank you. Thanks for your
5 presentation. A couple of things: on the HVAC issue,
6 which looks like it's about three years away in terms
7 of y'all's budget from having the funds to do that,
8 is that correct?

9 SUPT. ALPHIN: That is correct. But if we --
10 like this past year we had a couple of units that
11 just went ahead and went out before they waited their
12 three years, we are replacing those as we go. If we
13 -- like if we have a unit go out and there's just --
14 we're not going to go into the whole system, but
15 we're going to take care of that new unit at the
16 time.

17 DR. BARTH: So it is part of your master plan to
18 have that done. You aren't able at this time to meet
19 that part of the plan; is that right?

20 SUPT. ALPHIN: Yes, sir. All of our materials
21 are functional. If we have an air conditioner go
22 out, if we have a heater go out, if our maintenance
23 man cannot take care of it, we have someone there
24 usually within half-a-day and it's taken care of.

25 DR. BARTH: Okay. Thanks.

1 SUPT. ALPHIN: And we do have it in the long-
2 term plan. Yes, sir.

3 DR. BARTH: Thank you. Representative Baine
4 talked about broadband. Where are y'all in terms of
5 broadband?

6 SUPT. ALPHIN: I'm glad he mentioned that
7 because that is one thing I did not tell you. We
8 have used our E-Rate money and we have a tower
9 onsite, so we have broadband for days. We have the
10 tower there, we have went through the Nexus company.
11 And our E-Rate money, we have devoted all of that to
12 this tower and they pay all but 10%, so we can make
13 our 10% payment; they take care of that. Our
14 students have access, teachers have access, and we
15 are in good shape. And that arrangement is -- we
16 have it contracted through the end of this school
17 year and then we'll see where we are and renegotiate.

18 DR. BARTH: And on the other end of that, how
19 are y'all in terms of technological hardware in the
20 school?

21 SUPT. ALPHIN: We are in the process of adding
22 to it. In fact, we just had our motion at the last
23 school board meeting to use our NSLA money and get
24 some more laptops in for the students. We had almost
25 half of the classrooms covered and when we bring in

1 this shipment of computers we will have every
2 classroom; have a laptop for every student. They can
3 take the ACT Aspire in the room, if necessary, but we
4 do have a computer lab devoted to that. And they
5 will be able to work on the supplementary program in
6 the room with the teacher right there, so if there's
7 something in that program that is not addressed the
8 teacher can address it.

9 DR. BARTH: Okay. And I think my last question
10 is about school choice. What are your school choice
11 patterns, both in terms of where students may be
12 coming in from but where are students who live in the
13 district -- where are they choicing to? What are
14 those patterns looking like?

15 SUPT. ALPHIN: The school choice pattern has
16 been -- many of our students have went to Parkers
17 Chapel. We have legal transfers to El Dorado, but we
18 also have some legal transfers from El Dorado. And
19 the students that I had mentioned coming into the
20 district, we had one move from Crossett and one
21 actually moved from El Dorado into the district, and
22 then the other was a legal transfer that was
23 released. We wanted to continue our positive public
24 relations and try to get even more of those students
25 that have school-choiced to come back. We had about

1 three or four come back this year and we wanted to
2 continue the campaign to show them that we do have
3 good things going in our district and that they
4 should return.

5 DR. BARTH: And so what are we talking about in
6 terms of numbers of students who have choiced out or
7 have transferred out?

8 SUPT. ALPHIN: Thirty to thirty-five at least.

9 DR. BARTH: Okay. Thanks.

10 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Yes, Ms.
11 Chambers.

12 MS. CHAMBERS: My first question is for the
13 Commissioner, and then if I might come back to you.

14 So the 350 threshold, is that considered to be a
15 viability numbers in terms of you need to have at
16 least 350 from a financial perspective and otherwise?
17 Because as I think about the 10-year forecast this is
18 not a temporary blip; this is a projected -- that
19 number -- the numbers will continue to come down.
20 Technology plays into it, but it's not the only
21 thing. So back to where the 350 came from and where
22 might that number change over time with some of these
23 other considerations?

24 COMMISSIONER KEY: There were a number of
25 considerations to the 350. The viability was one;

1 the other was -- you know -- there were questions of
2 when you had to get a certain number of votes, so,
3 you know, what number generated the votes to get the
4 bill out. The other was there was some historical
5 perspective. Back in the 30s or 40s, in a previous
6 round of consolidations, 350 was a number that had
7 been established in the statute. So there was a
8 historical foundation to that number, as well. So I
9 think though the main component was that you had
10 districts that were saying, "Okay, at 350 we believe
11 we can demonstrate viability, even with the funding
12 model that was established around a prototype 500-
13 student school."

14 MS. CHAMBERS: Well, I was just curious. This
15 is a question born out of absolute respect. I'm from
16 a very small town; had 36 in my graduating class in
17 Kansas. They just consolidated; they didn't want to,
18 but they consolidated about 10 years ago. And
19 sometimes when -- even if you can craft enough
20 creative solutions, sometimes the bigger question is:
21 should you? Is that the right thing to do, not just
22 for the community but the going forward? Because I
23 come from a very proud place that didn't want to give
24 up the name Wathena Wildcats. So if you are facing
25 multiple years of decline with some -- you know --

1 it'll fluctuate some but the numbers are going to
2 stay below 350, is your current strategy that you
3 want to -- you want to be able to craft a plan that
4 can survive kind of whatever that number is? That
5 may be around 250; that's what you think with
6 facilities and technology you could and would want to
7 do?

8 SUPT. ALPHIN: Well, we're optimistic that we're
9 going to -- we may not get back to 350 immediately,
10 but we understand that we need to show growth and we
11 also need to show academic improvement. If the
12 projections continue, we would certainly want to sit
13 down and evaluate what we would want to do, whether
14 it would be better for the students to go somewhere
15 else or whether we need to continue at the school.
16 The maps I provided in the package for you, we're --
17 basically, we would be adding 30 minutes to any bus
18 route, whether we went to El Dorado, whether we went
19 to Hermitage, whether we went to Crossett. But those
20 maps were included in there, along with our
21 presentation. We have the best interest of the
22 students at heart. I certainly understand that you
23 have the best interest of the students at heart.

24 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Dr. Barth.

25 DR. BARTH: Unless somebody else --

1 MS. ZOOK: I will eventually, but I'm not in any
2 hurry.

3 DR. BARTH: Just a quick question on that. So
4 this -- what we're talking about now is, of course,
5 administrative consolidation which does not
6 automatically mean the closing of schools. And so I
7 just want to maybe pushback a little bit -- and it
8 may be inevitable, especially with the high school.
9 But I do want to point that out, that we start
10 talking about enhanced bus travel but that presumes a
11 closing of a school. An administrative consolidation
12 does not automatically insure that; correct?

13 SUPT. ALPHIN: Yes, sir, that's absolutely
14 correct.

15 DR. BARTH: All right. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Ms. Zook.

17 MS. ZOOK: Okay. As I looked at your report --
18 and I do appreciate the thoroughness with which you
19 did your presentation -- I think the good news is
20 your graduation rate is above state average and your
21 student attendance rate is above state average. So
22 now those are very positive things. As I look at --
23 and I know you're not -- your district isn't in
24 academic distress, but as I look it seems there may
25 be a pattern toward that because in 12-13 you had one

1 achieving school and one needs improvement; in 13-14,
2 you had one needs improvement and one priority; and
3 in 14-15 you had one focus and priority. So -- and
4 as I look at your 3rd grade scores, your 4th grade,
5 your 5th, as you get into high school, it seems like
6 there is a decline there. Now I know we've been in a
7 state of flux with the standards, with the different
8 tests; you know, I understand all of that. But do
9 you believe that the commitment of the teachers and
10 the staff and the parents and the business community
11 in your area have an understanding that whether you
12 are 350 or 600 or 200 the achievement of the
13 individual child is what actually matters when you
14 get right down to it? So, do you have the
15 extracurricular activities? Do you have the
16 opportunity for concurrent credit for your more
17 capable student? Do you have the ability to work
18 with and get that -- those focus -- the TAGG number
19 with the upper number -- you know -- do you have a
20 plan for the individual child?

21 SUPT. ALPHIN: We do have a plan for each
22 individual child. Let me answer the parent question
23 first. Our parents are concerned about the school;
24 they're concerned about their child. They're
25 probably not as well-versed on test scores as

1 anything else. They do support our efforts; whatever
2 we have asked the parents to do, whatever we have
3 needed, they have gotten their students the supplies.
4 We understand that it is our obligation with all of
5 those new teachers that I told you about the last
6 time I stood here -- we understand that we're going
7 to have to have results. As Mr. Black said, we were
8 -- our backs are against the wall, and we have a
9 plan. We have put all this technology into place and
10 we are going to push these students.

11 Community could not be any more supportive. The
12 bank, the hardware store, all of these people have
13 done everything that they can do for us. They have
14 made financial donations; they have come and
15 supported our events.

16 We do have extracurricular -- and, Ms. Zook,
17 that's one of our concerns is we want to -- and I
18 know the sports is the last thing to worry about, but
19 we do want our students to participate. We have
20 football, we have basketball, we have track, we have
21 softball, and we want to continue to be able to offer
22 that opportunity, but we do realize that education is
23 first.

24 MS. ZOOK: Have you worked with or considered --
25 because you do have a small number there are

1 advantages in what I call mastery learning where the
2 children can progress at their own rate but not like
3 everybody in 3rd grade learning the same thing at the
4 same time; but taking and doing mastery learning and
5 going -- similar to maybe the way Warren has been
6 doing it or investigating some of those other
7 creative ways, in addition to the technology?

8 SUPT. ALPHIN: That is tied -- what we have
9 tried to tie to the technology. We have tried to
10 make it understandable to the teachers that they can
11 have like the old-time stations; that they have one
12 group needs to work on one thing, they need to work
13 with that group on one thing; if we have a floating
14 para-pro that day, she can come in and work with
15 another group on another thing. And that technology
16 would be part of it but it would not be the total.

17 MS. ZOOK: Okay. And to sort of defend the
18 extracurricular, there is some pretty good research
19 that says the more involved a child is in
20 extracurricular -- might not be sports, might be
21 chess, might be library, whatever -- that the -- that
22 they do better long-term. So don't give up on your
23 extracurricular.

24 SUPT. ALPHIN: Yes, ma'am. Thank you. And I
25 signed the constitution for the math club yesterday.

1 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Mr. Williamson.

2 MR. WILLIAMSON: Thank you. Mr. Alphin, the
3 school choice thing, do you recall how many -- I know
4 you had some legal transfers to El Dorado. Do you
5 know if you had any just opportunity or just
6 straight-out school choice transfers to El Dorado?
7 The reason I'm asking is they've told us that, you
8 know, they are not participating in school choice,
9 but I hear this and it sounds like they get to pick
10 and choose when they participate in school choice.

11 SUPT. ALPHIN: No, sir. Everything with El
12 Dorado is a legal transfer. And I mentioned at the
13 last meeting that we have had a couple of families
14 actually move to El Dorado. But everything else has
15 been a legal transfer.

16 MR. WILLIAMSON: I'm just trying to get your
17 numbers up, so --

18 SUPT. ALPHIN: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Mr. Williamson.
20 Additional questions or discussion from the Board?
21 Ms. Newton.

22 MS. NEWTON: I have a couple of questions on the
23 issues that we are looking at, I think are the
24 adequate facilities and the best interest of the
25 students. What are your concerns with the facilities

1 right now?

2 SUPT. ALPHIN: Our concerns are our facilities
3 are older, but they are in good shape; they are
4 clean, they're safe, they're secure. We don't have
5 any problems with anyone coming on campus
6 unauthorized; all of our doors are unlocked and
7 everybody comes in and checks in the office with us.
8 The only concern we do have is what Dr. Barth
9 mentioned about the air and heat systems. And we
10 also have fire alarms that meet standards but they do
11 need to be updated, and we have estimates and we have
12 plans to do that. But the buildings are safe.

13 MS. NEWTON: Okay. On your numbers, what are
14 you doing to try to get your numbers maybe to turn
15 around and go the opposite direction?

16 SUPT. ALPHIN: We have Facebook campaigned; we
17 have promoted through our sporting events different
18 things; we have tried an alumni reunion; we have sent
19 newsletters; we have posted notices. And I
20 understand a lot of it is going to be word of mouth,
21 so we have tried to get our people in Strong to make
22 sure they're talking at the drugstore about the good
23 things that we're doing.

24 MS. NEWTON: Okay. So let's talk about that for
25 just a second. Talk to me a little bit about culture

1 change in your schools. Are you seeing any of that
2 going on?

3 SUPT. ALPHIN: We're not to the point we want to
4 be, but we are seeing improvement. The last time I
5 was here we talked about the handbook and the
6 suspensions. Our suspensions are down tremendously
7 this year. Our attendance is up. Even though we're
8 above the state average, our attendance is up because
9 of our requirement that the parent must come in the
10 office; we have to have the signed form, have to have
11 proper authorization. We have had improvement in
12 attendance also. So the culture is gradually
13 changing, but we are beginning to -- we're beginning
14 to get with the students and the students are selling
15 it to the parents, because if they want to come to
16 school and they want to learn that's steps ahead.

17 MS. NEWTON: Okay. One last question: you just
18 mentioned just a little bit your length of your bus
19 routes. What is the average bus route length right
20 now?

21 SUPT. ALPHIN: The first bus leaves at 6:00 and
22 picks up at 6:30, and he is back at the school by
23 7:30, so basically an hour for the furthest child --
24 and that would be going out towards Morro Bay. And
25 then the students in Huttig and Felsenthal, theirs

1 start a little later, like 15 minutes later, and they
2 -- you'd be adding 30 minutes if you came to the
3 school and switched buses and went on to one of the
4 other schools.

5 MS. NEWTON: So your bus routes would add
6 another 30 minutes to the hour or whatever it happens
7 to be?

8 SUPT. ALPHIN: Yes, ma'am.

9 CHAIRPERSON REITH: If I could just ask a
10 question about -- follow-up to the culture change.
11 Mr. Alphin, you're in your first year; correct --

12 SUPT. ALPHIN: Correct.

13 CHAIRPERSON REITH: -- as superintendent? So
14 just as a reminder to our colleagues, I'm assuming
15 you are part of the culture change as well, is the
16 aspiration here.

17 SUPT. ALPHIN: One would hope so.

18 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. And with that,
19 Ms. Zook. Thank you for allowing me to put my
20 question in there.

21 MS. ZOOK: Your per-pupil expenditure is
22 considerably higher than state average. And what
23 kinds of things in addition to teachers' salary --
24 what kinds of things are in your non-capital
25 improvement budget but in your operations budget?

1 SUPT. ALPHIN: I did look at that number before
2 I came here and I knew that was going to be a
3 question -- and a good question.

4 MS. ZOOK: Yeah.

5 SUPT. ALPHIN: We have devoted the money into
6 technology and into keeping those facilities
7 adequate. We -- our teachers' salaries are right in
8 line with the state minimum and we have our stipends
9 for our club sponsors. But we try to pour everything
10 we can pour back into the students. And this year,
11 the principal came to me and said, "We need X-amount
12 of basal readers for the 2nd grade." I went and
13 looked in the money and we got them ordered.

14 MS. ZOOK: And what about Smart Core and AP
15 offerings, do you have a full range of those? Do you
16 offer everything that's required? And do you have AP
17 classes with more than one or two per class?

18 SUPT. ALPHIN: We do offer all the AP that is
19 required. Probably our largest AP class is 12 to 14
20 students. We do offer concurrent credits with South
21 Ark., the community college that is available to us.
22 We share the career coach that they have provided; we
23 have two days a week with her and she helps our
24 students on their ACT prep. We also use Edmentum as
25 a virtual provider and the gentleman from Edmentum,

1 he's told me -- when we were talking, he said, "You
2 tell me what class that you need a teacher for and I
3 will get someone certified in Arkansas to teach that
4 class online."

5 MS. ZOOK: Okay. And as an experienced
6 administrator, I know sometimes the Board has
7 consolidated a district with another district, and
8 sometimes -- I think the one that we did two years
9 ago, the students went to three different districts
10 so as to cut down on busing time. I guess there's
11 always the look five years down the row, is it better
12 to allow a student to have a shorter bus ride or to
13 stay with the kids they've been going to school with
14 a long time. So would that be -- put you in too big
15 of a bind to say if you've had the experience and if
16 you have, what you found to be the better choice?

17 SUPT. ALPHIN: As long as the school is viable,
18 I want to keep it open. And I told the board when
19 they hired me if I didn't do what they were
20 expecting, they weren't going to have to fire me; I
21 would resign, because we want -- we want what is good
22 for the community, good for the kids. And if we have
23 to look five years down the road, we'll look.

24 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Dr. Barth.

25 DR. BARTH: Since we're actually on this topic

1 -- this is for Ms. Freno -- if this were denied on
2 grounds that are laid out in the statute, how long
3 would there be until the closure occurs or the
4 administrative consolidation occurs to -- so that the
5 district would have time to figure out their path
6 forward?

7 MS. FRENO: Dr. Barth, any administrative
8 consolidation would have to be effective July 1st.

9 DR. BARTH: Of 2017?

10 MS. FRENO: Of 2017. Yes.

11 DR. BARTH: So it's a fairly short timeline to
12 get there.

13 MS. FRENO: Yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Ms. Chambers. Yes.

15 MS. CHAMBERS: I just -- I think this is a
16 process question but -- so let's assume -- I guess I
17 want to make a statement to just get a reaction so
18 that we -- because we have the opportunity to be on
19 the front-side of what -- it doesn't sound like we
20 have a lot of these schools or these districts coming
21 forward, thankfully. But as they come forward, so
22 that there is some rooted consistency in the way we
23 hear them or think about it, so if for right now we
24 suspended the belief that 350 was a going-forward
25 viable threshold -- because other things have changed

1 in the world, technology and otherwise -- but 350
2 prompts school districts to come here to be reviewed,
3 if they are not in -- if they are in compliance with
4 the things that are on this first page, they're not
5 in academic distress, they're not -- they don't have
6 a probationary status -- so all the things there are
7 good -- is it safe to say that we would strongly
8 entertain a strong community that's working very hard
9 to keep their district local to the community until
10 they are in violation? There were probably three
11 not's in that but -- so -- but my point is, if 350 is
12 not a hard number, other than it prompts the school
13 to have to come -- or the district to have to come
14 talk to us, and if they are not in any probationary
15 difficulty, is our general reaction going to be if
16 they have a strong plan that we will give -- we will
17 grant the waiver? I just don't want to -- we have --
18 we have found ourselves down the path with some of
19 these other waiver consideration -- and then I wish
20 we could've gone back to the beginning and go, Could
21 we have a do-over on this now that we know more? So
22 I just want to try to prompt that thinking and that
23 discussion now before we make this decision.

24 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Commissioner.

25 COMMISSIONER KEY: I don't think it's really an

1 "if." I mean, it's a when these things happen you
2 will grant the waiver.

3 MS. CHAMBERS: Yeah.

4 COMMISSIONER KEY: That's how we interpret the
5 statute, that when item A, B, C and D are met the
6 Board shall grant the waiver. And then the next
7 sentence says that any time that A, B and C -- A, B,
8 C or D are no longer met then the Board may revoke
9 the waiver. So you have a "shall grant" and then you
10 have a "may revoke." Okay? So I think that's -- and
11 Lori can help if there's any -- if I got any of that
12 wrong.

13 MS. FRENO: No. Commissioner, you're correct.
14 And I think because the law affords so little
15 discretion to the Board it is important when voting
16 on the waiver, if anyone votes against it, that they
17 state their reasons just to insure, you know, if
18 there would be an appeal, we would have a solid order
19 to make sure that we knew why; you know, I mean, to
20 make sure that it's one of the reasons that are
21 allowed --

22 COMMISSIONER KEY: Yeah.

23 MS. FRENO: -- that are within the Board's
24 discretion.

25 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Chambers, I think when

1 you -- the scenario you paint becomes relevant when
2 you get down to the "may revoke" -- okay -- because
3 if we have to come back and we have to say, okay,
4 Strong-Huttig now has -- you know -- now is in fiscal
5 distress, just as an example, then that thinking that
6 you just described comes into play on your option,
7 whether you may revoke that or not.

8 MS. CHAMBERS: That explanation is very helpful.
9 But my personal belief is you're best off with local
10 community staying in control of their school; that's
11 what you always want. And I was concerned about our
12 responsibility relative to that threshold or
13 viability number, 350; if you looked into the future
14 and you didn't see really that that number was going
15 to come back right away, did that affect the way we
16 thought about this. So what you said was very
17 helpful.

18 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Although if I could say, Ms.
19 Chambers, I think the goal is that every child has
20 access to a quality education, and we acknowledge the
21 importance of local control and community involvement
22 as part of that quality education. And the only
23 reason I offer that is I remember in the first couple
24 of years on the Board we did have to tackle some very
25 difficult consolidation/annexation issues where the

1 community was very much asking for that opportunity,
2 but the plan and the fiscal liability and quality of
3 education -- so where I would just -- again, for the
4 purposes of not taking a stance here on this, in this
5 moment, but for along your line of reasoning of
6 thinking for the future, I thought Ms. Newton said it
7 best in terms of the places with discretion. There
8 is some discretion here and it's around the master
9 plan of the facilities and it's around the quality
10 education to the kids. There's some -- it seems some
11 conversational purposes that, you know, merit this
12 discussion and such. It's not quite the whole -- I
13 mean, with academic distress, fiscal distress; it's a
14 lot more clear-line, but there's at least a couple of
15 points for conversation. Now what's the threshold
16 for those is part of what I think we're discussing
17 and trying to flesh-out here. But it seems like
18 there's at least a couple of places for us around
19 which to have a conversation, even in the "shall"
20 aspect.

21 Yes, Dr. Barth.

22 DR. BARTH: So I'm just -- there seems to be a
23 contradiction in the law between this statute and our
24 academic distress statute, because as long as there's
25 a single school in academic distress, as we know in

1 the Little Rock case, the state can take over the
2 district and the state could then move towards
3 consolidation of the district -- right?

4 MS. FRENO: That is correct.

5 DR. BARTH: Under academic distress. So this
6 school -- and, certainly, we're not there in terms of
7 the scope of this -- but this Board actually could
8 under academic distress take this action. Yet, this
9 law seems to say we can't do it if the entire
10 district is not in academic distress. Can you
11 explain that apparent contradiction?

12 MS. FRENO: Well, I think this law only
13 addresses the Board granting a waiver. Even if the
14 Board grants a waiver, I don't think that changes the
15 academic distress law. So, in other words, I think
16 that if the Board would grant the waiver today, for
17 example, and then after notice and hearing to the
18 school district found that it wanted to place the
19 district in academic distress, it still would be able
20 to do that under the academic distress law.

21 DR. BARTH: But that would automatically -- if
22 the district were placed in academic distress that
23 would automatically target the closing of this
24 district because it had failed to meet one of those
25 criteria. But it just seems to be a -- these things

1 don't quite fit together, unless I'm missing
2 something.

3 MS. FRENO: No. I think -- I mean, I think
4 there is attention; it's -- you know -- the academic
5 distress law came first, you know, followed by this.
6 But today, even though there's attention, today the
7 only issue is whether to grant a waiver. But that
8 does not foreclose the Board from following other
9 laws that would allow for placing the school
10 district, for example, in academic distress after --

11 DR. BARTH: Right.

12 MS. FRENO: -- notice and hearing.

13 MS. ZOOK: And I think, along that same line,
14 too, is that Strong-Huttig, even if they get the
15 waiver today, or whether they get it or not, they
16 will continue to be coming before the Academic
17 Distress Committee because they have their high
18 school in academic distress. So there will be some
19 monitoring, some explanation on their part of their
20 plans, reporting on their feeders, the elementary
21 coming into, and we'll be able to anticipate and then
22 report back to the Board on that.

23 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Dr. Barth.

24 DR. BARTH: I think Ms. Newton --

25 MS. NEWTON: I just want to make a comment. You

1 know, just looking at it from -- you know -- the
2 responsibility that I feel is I have to go back to
3 what this law says. And the first thing it says, it
4 shall -- that we shall. You know, if they meet the
5 -- you know -- they're not under the distress or they
6 don't have the probation, and if they have shown us
7 that their facilities are adequate, and if it's in
8 the best interest of the students, you know -- you
9 know, I don't know that we have much leeway. I mean,
10 it says we shall.

11 MS. ZOOK: Right.

12 MS. NEWTON: And then, later on, if we see with
13 the academics or things are not -- then we can come
14 back and do something else. But, you know, I think
15 that's fairly clear. I mean --

16 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Commissioner.

17 COMMISSIONER KEY: Yeah. Well, I think this
18 conversation around discretion rests with item C, and
19 that's the academic facilities issue. So you read
20 the full statement, "Academic facilities owned and
21 operated by the school district are adequate, as
22 evidenced by the school district's master --
23 facilities master plan." And that's something that
24 this Board does not -- you know -- you don't see the
25 master plan. It's submitted to -- Mr. Montgomery is

1 here; it's submitted to the Division of Facilities,
2 and the Division accepts or rejects the master plan.
3 And so I'm not sure that there's really -- I'm
4 agreeing with you. I don't know that there's really
5 a lot of flexibility in that conversation because
6 it's tied to the facilities master plan and that was
7 a component that I should've jumped in a few minutes
8 ago when we were talking about that. But, Lori, you
9 know, you work with Facilities on the rules and regs
10 and all those things; what are your thoughts on that
11 particular segment? Because the facilities master
12 plan issues rest with the Division of Facilities,
13 that approval process is different. So I think I'm
14 understanding this to mean if they've accepted it
15 it's evidenced that they have adequate facilities and
16 I --

17 MS. FRENO: I think that is correct. And I have
18 been discussing this with the director of the
19 Division of Facilities, Brad Montgomery, just to
20 confirm that there is nothing in the master plan that
21 causes him concern. And he is here, but he's assured
22 me that there is nothing that causes any concern to
23 the Facilities Division. They're not in facilities
24 distress, nor are they in early intervention, so
25 there is no concern. And that -- approving the

1 master plan is something that is done strictly by the
2 Division. And I will agree with everyone who says
3 this law I think provides very little discretion to
4 the Board.

5 MS. ZOOK: Okay. I have a question on the
6 accreditation. In 14-15, it said that they had one
7 citation and one probation, but I don't have the 15-
8 16 information. Do we have that? And did that
9 citing and probation come off?

10 MS. FRENO: I don't -- Ms. Barnes or Mr. Harvey
11 might be able to speak to that. But in looking into
12 this case, before I made the representations this
13 morning that there are no standards violations, I did
14 check with Ms. Barnes' department and her staff
15 notified me that, no, there are no -- it's
16 probationary; I believe the law says probationary.

17 MS. ZOOK: Right.

18 MS. FRENO: And they meet that requirement;
19 there are no probationary violations.

20 MS. ZOOK: Okay. Thank you for the
21 clarification.

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Any final questions
23 or discussion on behalf of the Board? Otherwise,
24 I'll entertain a motion.

25 MS. ZOOK: I move that we grant the waiver to

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Strong-Huttig.

DR. HILL: Second.

CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Motion made by Ms. Zook and I heard Dr. Hill as the second. So, all in favor?

DR. BARTH: Quick comment.

CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yes. Discussion.

DR. BARTH: You know, I'm convinced that the lack of discretion -- I think it's -- I mean, we're not lawmakers, so the law was made for us; I get that. I do really think though that unless there is a magical, you know, re-entry of a significant number of students into this district this is a very precarious picture. And I think it would be in the best interest of Strong-Huttig, of the district, of the community, to figure out their future and voluntarily move towards an administrative consolidation that allows them to maintain as much of their community as possible moving forward, especially -- and this is something I have supported, the persistence of small schools, but I -- in rural areas. But that's a different thing than small districts, because I think that whether it's facilities or fiscal or academic, some -- keeping that juggling alive is really difficult for a small

1 district. I don't think it's sustainable and, you
2 know, obviously we'll be back here again, and I don't
3 want us to be back here with being forced to close
4 this district with a very short timeframe without the
5 district having figured out what the path forward is.
6 And so that's what I just want to say about what I
7 think would be in the best interest of the community
8 moving forward.

9 MS. ZOOK: And I think, in addition to that, on
10 the part of the law that talks about best interest of
11 students, which is a very subjective thing to have in
12 law -- but if I were living in Strong-Huttig I think
13 I would be able to argue the best interest of the
14 students in -- you know -- in the different areas:
15 transportation, academics, one-on-one, and those
16 things. But if I'm outside the district and looking
17 as it compares to other districts and opportunities
18 for kids in a bigger setting, then -- you know -- so,
19 therefore, that is where the subjectivity comes in is
20 it always depends on in what town you're sitting.

21 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Any final
22 discussion? Otherwise, we'll go for a vote. All in
23 favor?

24 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

25 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? Okay. Motion

1 carries unanimously.

2 And to Strong-Huttig, congratulations on today,
3 surviving another day, I guess, is said. But I hope
4 that you're able to take this feedback back to your
5 community. I know that communities that previously
6 have come and done the administrative consolidation,
7 as Dr. Barth said, many times took six months to a
8 year in conversation with the surrounding districts.
9 And so if there's an opportunity there and/or best of
10 luck to you in outreach. I know some of the other
11 districts that did, did so with international
12 students. I think that was one of the few where we
13 did see an extension and they never came back before
14 us; they were able to get a huge influx of
15 international students that kept them over 350. So,
16 there may be some opportunities there of discerning
17 with other districts as well. But we wish you the
18 best of luck. You've come into leadership at a --
19 with an intersecting of a lot of different issues,
20 and so we wish you the best of luck as you move
21 forward. Thank you.

22 SUPT. ALPHIN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

23 CHAIRPERSON REITH: With that, we will take a
24 break until 10-to-noon. We do need to try and get
25 through a few more agenda items before lunch. So,

1 thank you.

2 (BREAK: 11:42 - 11:50 A.M.)

3 CHAIRPERSON REITH: I do think we will reconvene
4 here. There's a few more agenda items and we would
5 like to try and get through the action agenda before
6 lunch. After lunch there's still a few matters
7 before the Board and, most importantly, Dr. Poore has
8 asked for an opportunity for a longer conversation
9 with us as a board, and so we want to be able to not
10 rush that and give adequate time.

11 A-4: DISTRICT REQUEST FOR WAIVERS GRANTED TO OPEN-ENROLLMENT
12 CHARTERS: HOPE SCHOOL DISTRICT

13 CHAIRPERSON REITH: So with that, we are now
14 moving on to action agenda item A-5 -- or, apologies
15 -- A-4, the District Request for Waivers Granted to
16 Open-Enrollment Charters for the Hope School
17 District. Ms. Perry, you're recognized.

18 MS. PERRY: Madam Chair, Mary Perry; I am the
19 Coordinator with the Division of Learning Services.
20 Would you like me to discuss the procedures before we
21 --

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yes.

23 MS. PERRY: -- go on this morning? As we --
24 well, you have two hearings, items A-4 and A-5, that
25 are district waiver requests. All persons, with the

1 exception of attorneys, will be sworn in by the Chair
2 for their testimony. Then the district will have 20
3 minutes to present its petition for waivers, any
4 opposition will have 20 minutes to present, and then
5 there will be 5 minutes for the district to close.
6 And, of course, the Chair at her discretion may
7 provide more time if she wishes to do so. Then there
8 will be questions and answers, and then the State
9 Board shall grant in whole or in part or deny in
10 whole or in part the proposed waivers and issue a
11 final decision or take the matter under advisement.
12 And, again, you must make the decision within 90
13 minutes -- not 90 minutes -- 90 days. You can take
14 longer than 90 minutes should you choose. That would
15 be a good one, wouldn't it? Ninety minutes, where
16 did that come from? So the first one on the agenda -
17 - and I should go back and say that these are the
18 procedures you have followed. They are not adopted
19 by statute or rule.

20 The first group this morning is Hope and they're
21 coming here to present their waiver request. Their
22 topic is educator licensure. The 90 days would
23 expire on December the 16th. They have requested the
24 waiver for a period of three years, and
25 Superintendent Bobby Hart is here to discuss the

1 request.

2 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. All planning to
3 offer testimony for this action item, if you could
4 please rise and raise your right hand? Mr. Hart, do
5 you swear or affirm that the testimony you're about
6 to give shall be the truth, the whole truth and
7 nothing but the truth?

8 SUPT. HART: I do.

9 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. With that, Mr.
10 Hart, you are recognized.

11 SUPT. HART: Thank you, Madam Chair. And I
12 promise I will not stand between this board and lunch
13 any longer than I absolutely have to. You've got a
14 number of documents that have been provided for you,
15 and I'm not going to take the time to read all those
16 to you but I do want to tell you our story as it
17 applies to this waiver request. We were notified in
18 March of 2016 that our longtime media specialist at
19 our middle school would be retiring. We immediately
20 began a search, advertised; had no applicants
21 whatsoever for the library media specialist, not in-
22 house, not out-of-house, nowhere. We called and
23 visited with several universities that had students
24 who may be graduating. We tried to turn over all
25 stones. Fortunately for us, or unfortunately for us,

1 however you want to look at it, we did have an
2 applicant in August of this month -- of this year who
3 applied. This person has -- holds a masters degree
4 in library media specialist. I have a limited
5 knowledge of library media specialist because I
6 happen to be married to one, so -- and we did -- I
7 did the background checks and did everything I could
8 to find out everything. Also, at the time that she
9 came to us -- matter of fact, we hired her as a long-
10 term substitute just to have a position -- have the
11 position filled so we could service our kids. We
12 hired her on the night of the board meeting, the
13 night of the first day of school, August 15th, as a
14 matter of fact. Long story short, she had to do some
15 -- she had to give her current employer some notice
16 and so it was a couple of weeks before she could
17 actually start; in that meantime, we were
18 investigating how to get her certified. As a library
19 media specialist, the way that -- and I'm learning a
20 lot as I've investigated -- both the programs in the
21 state of Arkansas, currently you go through the
22 masters program in library media science and become
23 certified as a certified teacher. This lady already
24 holds that degree, but was not involved in one of
25 those two programs. She was from Clarion University,

1 where she holds her masters from. We know that we
2 need that position filled; it's an important position
3 to us. It's even doubly important to me because I
4 live with one, and so I hear quite frequently how
5 important that job is.

6 What we're asking to do is to waive that
7 requirement for teacher certification for library
8 media specialist for a period of three years to give
9 us time and to give our applicant time to get
10 enrolled in an alternative certification program or
11 an MAT program, something of that nature. The
12 timelines didn't flesh out where MAT could accept --
13 she couldn't enroll in an MAT program. She also
14 couldn't enroll in -- forgive me, Ms. Pfeffer --
15 APPLES program because she didn't hold a current
16 standard teaching license.

17 So what we're asking for, plain and simple, is
18 to allow us to serve our students but to give us some
19 time to make that certification just so we can be in
20 compliance throughout that time plan.

21 With that, I'll be happy to answer any questions
22 that anyone on the Board has.

23 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Mr. Hart. Is
24 there anyone here in opposition?

25 And then with that, any closing remarks?

1 Otherwise, we'll proceed to the questions.

2 SUPT. HART: I appreciate your time and
3 consideration on the request. Regardless, our
4 students -- the outcome of this waiver request, our
5 students are going to have to be serviced. We think
6 we've got a plan in place to do that in the short-
7 term, but we'd like to be able to do that in the
8 long-term. So I'd appreciate your consideration and
9 thank you again for your time.

10 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much, Mr. Hart.

11 Well, with that I will go ahead and pose a
12 question, whether it's for yourself or Ms. Pfeffer.
13 Because this is so tied to an individual and the
14 library media specialist, is this the only way to be
15 in compliance? I mean, you can request a waiver, am
16 I understanding correctly, as an individual versus
17 going through this route of Act 1240? I guess I'm
18 just trying to understand a little bit more the
19 motivations around this specific --

20 MS. PFEFFER: Yes.

21 CHAIRPERSON REITH: -- going through this
22 avenue.

23 MS. PFEFFER: And I would say this is a very
24 appropriate avenue for this position. Mr. Hart did
25 call and talk to our office.

1 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay.

2 MS. PFEFFER: When the task force, licensure
3 task force met in 2011, there was a lot of talk and
4 consideration around those who were library media
5 specialists but do not have the educator license. We
6 kind of had to look at that and deal with that. You
7 know, this is a person who would be a good fit for a
8 school district, has the background, has the skills,
9 and it is a position that he's required to have. So
10 we have no concerns with this. I wish we could
11 license the person that has these qualifications and
12 credentials and just insure that they have some
13 professional development and things like that. It's
14 just -- it's an area right now -- it's an endorsement
15 area to a standard license, so this person -- you
16 know -- it's not something we could do an ALP for.
17 So really this would be the most appropriate avenue.

18 MS. ZOOK: Is that because if you do it this
19 route they can be on the teacher pay scale and if you
20 do it the other route they're paid as a long-term or
21 an assigned sub?

22 MS. PFEFFER: Yes. This would be -- I mean,
23 hiring this individual, they would be hired as the
24 teacher. Now as far as the salary schedule, things
25 like that --

1 SUPT. HART: I'll attest to that.

2 MS. PFEFFER: Okay. I'm going to let him talk
3 about the specifics there. But library media is an
4 add-on license; it's not a first-time license, so
5 this is not something that could be added in any
6 other way.

7 SUPT. HART: The way our policy is set up, Ms.
8 Zook, is a long-term sub is paid as a substitute
9 teacher for the first 30 days of their contract and
10 then they revert back to first-year teacher's salary,
11 which, in this case, that would -- it's not going to
12 be a difference because this person would hold a
13 master's degree and we would pay at that same rate of
14 a first-year teacher. Does that answer your
15 question?

16 MS. ZOOK: Yes. Even if you get the 1240
17 waiver?

18 SUPT. HART: Yes, ma'am. And our -- yes, the
19 request is not simply just to make sure that we meet
20 payroll obligation, but, more importantly, to make
21 sure we meet the accreditation standard that requires
22 that we hold this position.

23 MS. ZOOK: Okay.

24 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Dr. Barth, I saw
25 you raise your hand before.

1 DR. BARTH: Yeah. I'm still grappling actually
2 with the question. This is for Ms. Pfeffer. So on
3 the -- what we approved up in the Consent Agenda,
4 number four, that whole list of waivers -- and some
5 of those were long-term subs, but some of them were
6 teaching out of area. So this is -- you're -- this
7 is -- because this is someone who isn't licensed at
8 all they're not teaching out of area?

9 MS. PFEFFER: Correct.

10 DR. BARTH: It -- okay.

11 MS. PFEFFER: Yes.

12 DR. BARTH: That's something --

13 MS. PFEFFER: This would in a sense -- although
14 library media doesn't fall under AQT, if it did this
15 person would have all of the qualifications in terms
16 of the work experience, the background in the -- in
17 being a library media person. But, yes, this person
18 could not be -- they're not going to be able to add
19 anything on to a license --

20 DR. BARTH: Okay.

21 MS. PFEFFER: -- which is what the library media
22 specialist is.

23 DR. BARTH: Okay. So that's why it's -- so we
24 shouldn't -- if -- let's imagine a slightly different
25 scenario in this. If it was targeted at a single

1 individual, but somebody that actually could be
2 granted an individual waiver to teach out of area,
3 then that would be different than the case that we're
4 looking now because we can't -- we simply can't allow
5 that to happen under our current --

6 MS. PFEFFER: Right.

7 DR. BARTH: -- individual waiver laws. Okay.
8 That actually finally makes sense after five years.

9 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Dr. Barth and Ms.
10 Pfeffer. Any additional -- I think Dr. Hill -- did I
11 --

12 DR. HILL: No, I'm good now.

13 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Now you're good. Okay.
14 Wonderful. And anyone else, any final questions?
15 Otherwise, I'll entertain a motion.

16 DR. HILL: So moved.

17 CHAIRPERSON REITH: So if we could frame that
18 the motion is to grant the waiver to the Hope School
19 District?

20 DR. HILL: So moved to grant the waiver to the
21 Hope School District for the media -- library media
22 specialist instructor.

23 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much. And do I
24 have a second?

25 MS. NEWTON: Second.

1 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Motion made by Dr. Hill,
2 seconded by Ms. Newton. All in favor?

3 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

4 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? Motion carries
5 unanimously.

6 Mr. Hart, good luck with that. Thank you so
7 much.

8 SUPT. HART: Thank you all. Thank you all for
9 your time.

10 A-5: DISTRICT REQUEST FOR WAIVERS GRANTED TO OPEN-ENROLLMENT
11 CHARTERS: KIRBY SCHOOL DISTRICT

12 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Moving on now to action
13 agenda item number 5, District Request for Waivers
14 Granted to Open-Enrollment Charters, the Kirby School
15 District. Ms. Perry, you're recognized again.

16 MS. PERRY: Yes. Mary Perry, Division of
17 Learning Services. Kirby is coming before you today;
18 they have two topics that they've requested waivers
19 for: class size pertaining to grades kindergarten
20 through grade 6 and educator licensure. Their 90
21 days would expire on December 7th and they have
22 requested this waiver for a period of three years,
23 through June 10, 2019.

24 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Fantastic.

25 MS. PERRY: Excuse me. Mr. Mike Palmer --

1 Superintendent Mike Palmer is here to discuss the
2 waiver.

3 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Wonderful. Mr. Palmer, I'll
4 need to swear you in. Is anyone else going to offer
5 testimony on behalf of your district?

6 SUPT. PALMER: Just in case, my elementary
7 principal Dolores Cowart.

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Wonderful. If you could
9 both raise your right hand, please. Do you swear or
10 affirm that the testimony you're about to give shall
11 be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
12 truth?

13 (BOTH WITNESSES ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

14 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much. Proceed
15 with your testimony. You have 20 minutes.

16 SUPT. PALMER: Okay. All right. Thank you,
17 Madam Chair, Commissioner Key, and Members of the
18 Board. I come before you today, we received a letter
19 in August that we were -- last year, previous year,
20 we were under 350; this year we're under 350. We're
21 about 340 right now. We looked at trying to get some
22 of these waivers when we applied for Schools of
23 Innovation for the elementary last spring and we were
24 denied because of insufficient information. And so
25 when I filled out these waivers we were close to

1 maximum in a couple of grade levels and we were over
2 in kindergarten and over in 6th grade. And so what
3 I'm asking is for waiver for kindergarten to increase
4 five students, to 25; 1st through 3rd grade to 28;
5 and 4th through 6th grade with 30. And the reason
6 I'm asking this is because just trying to maximize
7 our resources. We have four licensed trained
8 paraprofessionals in our elementary, already working
9 in our elementary with the classes that are maximized
10 with 25 or 26, or 20 in kindergarten, and so I'm just
11 trying to utilize the resources that I have. And
12 because we are under the ADE fiscal support and
13 services we have to get everything approved for them
14 and anything over \$500 debt service, you know, and so
15 I'm just trying to insure that, you know, we are
16 utilizing all of our resources. With the Schools of
17 Innovation in the spring that we applied for we had
18 surveys with our parents, with our teachers, with our
19 school board, and there was 100% agreement that we --
20 when we tried to the Schools of Innovation that
21 everybody was in agreement and okay to do this. So
22 now that we have had some classes over and some
23 classes are at the max, you know, I'm trying to go
24 forth before you and asking for those waivers. As of
25 today, the 6th grade is 28, so we're at maximum; 5th

1 grade -- or, I'm sorry -- 3rd grade we're at 25,
2 which is the maximum; and kindergarten, we were at
3 26. In the meantime, I had hired another
4 kindergarten teacher. We have actually dropped down
5 to 24. So, you know, in future preparations, because
6 we are under 350, you know, if I was to grant -- have
7 granted -- got the waiver granted, then I would have
8 been able to save forty-something thousand dollars
9 for our school district and put that towards other,
10 you know, necessities.

11 The other waiver that I'm asking for is the
12 teacher licensure. I have one licensed trained PE
13 teacher; also serves as 7-12 boys' basketball coach;
14 is also the drivers' ed. teacher; is also the health
15 teacher. This year we -- in the high school we were
16 Schools of Innovation. We went a new initiative flex
17 mod., and so our high school is a lot different from
18 our elementary in regards to bell schedules, in
19 regards to classes' length of time. And if we are
20 able to grant this waiver for the elementary PE,
21 having a paraprofessional that's already under him,
22 working with him for the last couple of years, then
23 it would allow us to free up him to teach more
24 classes. Currently, our 9th graders are taking
25 health and PE through Virtual Arkansas and we want to

1 get a lot -- as many classes as we can on our home
2 court, so-to-speak. So if this waiver is granted,
3 like I mentioned before, we have four or five
4 licensed trained paraprofessionals. I have also
5 included in documentation that if granted I would
6 have my paraprofessional that's already working under
7 him take some courses through Arkansas IDEAS in the
8 areas that I feel is important, like, you know,
9 instruction and assessment and incorporating reading
10 and literacy into the PE curriculum.

11 So those are the waivers that I'm asking for
12 today: class size and teaching load in K-6 and then
13 also the teaching licensure for our PE -- I guess
14 waiver for our paraprofessional to teach PE without
15 being licensed.

16 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Mr. Palmer. Is
17 there any opposition?

18 Okay. Any final comments, and then we'll open
19 up to questions from the Board?

20 SUPT. PALMER: No. Like I just mentioned, I'm
21 just trying to utilize all the resources. And,
22 unfortunately, I will probably be up here in the
23 fall, you know, same as Strong-Huttig was, you know,
24 and I'm just trying to, you know, have a good healthy
25 legal ending balance with the amount of students that

1 we have, and just utilizing all of our resources.
2 That's something that we did this year, just putting
3 people in places that is going to be the best
4 interest of our kids, our teachers, our parents, and
5 our school district. So if granted the waiver it
6 will be three years, and after the three years, if
7 granted, I will come before you, if that is still a
8 necessity to grant -- to ask for the waivers, and I
9 will provide documentation, looking at the
10 kindergarten QUALLS and the ACT Aspire data compared
11 to maybe a maximum size class or over, compared to
12 our class sizes before. So that way, there is
13 documentation that you can look at to say this is
14 where we were before, this is where we were after
15 with the possibility of overload classes, you know,
16 contingent on the waivers.

17 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much, Mr.
18 Palmer. And so if I may start off here with some of
19 the questions, since you're up there as well -- with
20 the larger numbers in the lower classes, do you feel
21 that this is potentially an upward swing in the
22 number of your students? Do we see potentially
23 growth in your student population down the road?

24 SUPT. PALMER: Yes, ma'am, I do. I alluded to
25 the Schools of Innovation. We are -- we've pushed a

1 huge media presence out there. We've put boundary
2 signs in all five areas of our boundaries. We've put
3 Facebook; we're going to do ads in the newspaper and
4 radio, just explaining everything we're doing,
5 because we are doing an exciting new initiative at
6 the high school. We are also doing a lot of
7 interesting things at the elementary with more
8 flexible scheduling and more STEM stuff on Thursdays
9 and Fridays where we have a lot of kids come together
10 and work with hands-on science experiments and
11 technology and things like that, robotics. And so I
12 do foresee possible increase in student numbers, but
13 I'm just trying to be proactive just in case. As of
14 right now, we don't have any classes that are
15 maximized, besides our kindergarten, and I've already
16 hired a kindergarten teacher, so we're all -- we all
17 meet standards of accreditation. But like I
18 mentioned before, one day we may be over and the next
19 day we may not be because we are an area that we have
20 a lot of highly mobile kids in and out. And so --
21 but I do, with school choice and legal transfer, in
22 the foreseeable future hope that, you know, we're
23 over 350 and, you know, and things like that. It's
24 just financially hiring a teacher because you're one
25 over or two over -- you know -- with us being under

1 350 and being under the ADE watch, you know, I don't
2 see that as feasible at this point.

3 CHAIRPERSON REITH: And when you reference the
4 fiscal team, is that because you're in fiscal
5 distress?

6 SUPT. PALMER: No. It's because we are under
7 350.

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: I gotcha.

9 SUPT. PALMER: And so we have to get everything
10 approved through the ADE Services and Support
11 anything over \$500 spent.

12 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. But you're not
13 currently in fiscal distress?

14 SUPT. PALMER: No, ma'am.

15 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. And then I have
16 a question for Ms. Pfeffer.

17 SUPT. PALMER: Okay.

18 CHAIRPERSON REITH: We put you in the corner
19 just to make you walk more. Thank you, Ms. Pfeffer.

20 MS. PFEFFER: No, I apologize; I wasn't paying
21 enough attention. I'm sorry.

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: No, it's all right. No.
23 Again, trying to wrap my head around all of the
24 different options here -- again, is this one of those
25 cases, 1240, what Dr. Barth alluded for -- alluded to

1 before? Although these -- I guess I'm trying to get
2 to the teacher license waiver, not so much the
3 classroom size but the teacher license waiver. Is
4 this the correct format or is it an out-of-area
5 waiver? I guess I ask because the individual on the
6 right up here talks about the individuals having a
7 license.

8 MS. PFEFFER: And could you go back over what
9 are you requesting the waiver for with the teacher?

10 SUPT. PALMER: We have a certified PE/Health
11 teacher teaching a lot of different areas, but he
12 also has a certified trained paraprofessional --

13 MS. PFEFFER: Paraprofessional.

14 SUPT. PALMER: -- under him --

15 MS. PFEFFER: Okay.

16 SUPT. PALMER: -- that's working with him with
17 the elementary kids in case the Coach is out and
18 things like that. And so what we're asking is --

19 MS. PFEFFER: For that paraprofessional to be
20 able to do that. So in terms of any other avenue --
21 I mean, this person could not be obviously on an
22 additional licensure plan if they don't have a
23 license. In terms of being a long-term sub, the
24 current rules require that a long-term sub have at
25 least a bachelor's degree or that would have to be

1 waived; in extreme circumstances that could be done.
2 I think under the Act 1240 waiver you're looking more
3 at a larger picture in terms of what waivers were
4 granted to a charter, and if they were granted the
5 waiver that -- and I'm just thinking off the top of
6 my head -- the area of PE would not be considered a
7 core content area; therefore, the old HQT rules would
8 not have applied and having a four-year degree
9 would've been part of that; nor would our new AQT
10 rules. So under this --

11 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Does that mean this 1240 is
12 the only option available to them?

13 MS. PFEFFER: As I'm thinking out loud, I think
14 it would be the option by which you could waiver the
15 requirement for that person to have a license and
16 possibly the four-year degree. And Legal may want to
17 weigh in on that, as well, to make sure I'm not
18 crossing my bounds in that, but --

19 CHAIRPERSON REITH: And I appreciate the due-
20 diligence.

21 MS. PFEFFER: Yeah.

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: I get it because of what you
23 said. It's these waivers that are tied to a specific
24 individual. It feels like if there's an alternative
25 route that isn't these broader blanket waivers that

1 have broader implications, those are the things I
2 think that sometimes make at least myself a little
3 bit nervous versus, you know, an individual going in
4 for -- but if this is the only option -- I guess
5 that's why I've come now with both of these cases,
6 because they're just so tied to specific individuals;
7 just making sure that this was the only option
8 available to them. And, Dr. Barth.

9 DR. BARTH: So do you personally have concerns
10 about, you know, granting this waiver to someone
11 without a four-year degree?

12 MS. PFEFFER: I think in the case that he has
13 described -- you have a paraprofessional who has
14 already been in that position now working with this
15 teacher for a couple of years -- long-term what we
16 would like to see is more a paraprofessional even
17 becoming more like a teacher in training and having
18 those opportunities to develop and grow with the
19 support there. I would say that if this district
20 were going to put support pieces in place so that
21 this paraprofessional could continue to have someone
22 there, you know, to help with oversight and
23 mentoring, you know, that's definitely something.
24 And, you know, when you have people who are in the
25 position of a teacher and they are new, then I would

1 think they fall under the criteria of being a novice
2 teacher. And as a novice teacher, they would be
3 getting mentoring. It is a little different because
4 in the past someone who does not have a four-year
5 degree -- and I'm not sure if this person does; they
6 may or may not have one -- you know -- it would be a
7 little bit different than what we've done in the past
8 potentially. But, again, in an area like physical
9 education, if this person has been there and has --
10 is going to continue to have that oversight, I think
11 I'd be less concerned in this area than in other
12 academic areas.

13 DR. BARTH: Yeah. It just does start to worry
14 -- I mean, I think we need to be conscious of what
15 precedents we're setting and not setting in terms of,
16 you know, you know, the importance of having -- you
17 know -- in this case it probably makes sense, but
18 it's not -- I think it's not just this case, because
19 we're seeing these so often, and we're probably
20 setting some precedent. So that makes me nervous.

21 MS. PFEFFER: Yes.

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Ms. Zook.

23 MS. ZOOK: Will the paraprofessional be assigned
24 to a teacher in a grade or will they be floating?

25 SUPT. PALMER: They will be assigned to our

1 basketball coach but --

2 MS. ZOOK: No, I'm talking about your
3 elementary.

4 SUPT. PALMER: Elementary teachers?

5 MS. ZOOK: Yes. The para -- you said you had
6 four at the elementary level?

7 SUPT. PALMER: Yes.

8 MS. ZOOK: You were wanting them to -- in
9 kindergarten, 3rd and 6th?

10 SUPT. PALMER: Oh, for the class size?

11 MS. ZOOK: Yes.

12 SUPT. PALMER: Yes. Yes, they are. And they
13 are currently -- like I have one right now with our
14 1st grade who -- at the maximum of 25. I also have
15 one in the 6th grade that's at 28 right now; it was
16 29. I did have one in kindergarten but when we hired
17 two teachers, she's currently working with
18 remediation with the elementary. It's at our
19 disposal, if -- you know -- and 3rd grade right now
20 we have -- we're over, so we've got it split, and 5th
21 grade we've got it split. And what we do at the
22 elementary, we departmentalize 4th through 6th grade,
23 so we take our content specialized teacher and
24 they'll teach 4th grade math, 5th grade math, 6th
25 grade math, and just kind of rotate. So at one point

1 four different teachers will have 29 students or 30
2 students; it won't be the same teacher all day long
3 that has the 30 kids, so they will rotate among the
4 four specialized teachers. But the parapro will go
5 with the classes that are maximized and things like
6 that.

7 MS. ZOOK: Okay. So the same parapro will be
8 with the same teacher and the same kids?

9 SUPT. PALMER: Yes.

10 MS. ZOOK: Okay.

11 SUPT. PALMER: At the lower level --

12 MS. ZOOK: At the lower level.

13 SUPT. PALMER: Yes, ma'am. At the upper level
14 there's just --

15 MS. ZOOK: Okay. I guess the concern that I
16 have with that is that even though there will be an
17 additional person in the room the teacher will have
18 the responsibility for the lesson planning for those
19 number of children. So, you know -- and the age of
20 RTI and individualized instruction and everything
21 that would -- it's not going to relieve the teacher's
22 preparation for the students; it would only relieve
23 her within the classroom that day after everything is
24 already planned. So have you spoken with your
25 teachers and what are their reactions to this?

1 SUPT. PALMER: I've spoken with the teachers.
2 And like I mentioned before, when we did Schools of
3 Innovation, tried to get it for the elementary, they
4 were all onboard with it; they are still all onboard
5 with it. And I think a lot of it is just the
6 support. Not only do they have the paraprofessional
7 but we also have one of the only dyslexia therapists
8 in our area. She also sees and services a lot of
9 kids within our elementary on a daily basis. We also
10 have a special ed. teacher that sees a lot of
11 different kids. So a lot of times throughout the day
12 they're not going to have the full maximum class
13 because of the services that are being provided to
14 them in other areas, whether it be RTI or dyslexia or
15 special ed. So like I mentioned, I think everybody
16 is onboard, just talking to them, and especially
17 since we've already been doing it for the last couple
18 of years with 22 or with 25 or 28. The paraprofessionals have
19 already been in there, so they're well acclimated
20 with the teacher, with the students, and with the
21 community. All of the paraprofessionals that we have
22 are community residents, so I don't foresee them
23 going anywhere; I see them for staying as long as the
24 school is around. And so that just makes it more --
25 you know -- more fluid with the kids and the teachers

1 and the families.

2 MS. ZOOK: Okay. And I think the other concern
3 I have is that your elementary scores are not
4 exemplary and you went from an A and a C school to a
5 C and a D school, and I guess in part because of
6 that. So, you know, these are just things that I
7 have to look at as -- you know -- looking at the data
8 as well as you're on the ground and you giving, you
9 know, a good explanation. Thank you.

10 SUPT. PALMER: Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Ms. Zook. Dr.
12 Barth.

13 DR. BARTH: On the -- I'm a little confused on
14 the kindergarten. So you've hired a second teacher
15 for kindergarten?

16 SUPT. PALMER: Yes, sir. We were at 26, and at
17 this time when I applied for the waivers we were at
18 26. And so even if I had asked for the waiver and
19 was granted I would've still had to hire a teacher,
20 so I went and was proactive and hired one.

21 DR. BARTH: Okay. So do you still need that
22 waiver?

23 SUPT. PALMER: Yes, just for future, because
24 next year we may only be at 22. And if -- you know
25 -- and that's just the resources; I may have an extra

1 teacher that I don't need, especially being in ADE
2 preliminary fiscal distress; then, you know, that
3 position -- and when we hired that teacher we told
4 her it may just be a one year basis because of our --
5 you know -- our highly mobile kids coming in and out.
6 So next year I may not need her, whether it be for
7 the waiver or kids leaving the school district.

8 DR. BARTH: Well, you know, we've faced these
9 before and I voted against these class size issues,
10 especially at the lower grades. I mean, there's
11 about -- the best research in, you know, education is
12 that in the lower grades small class sizes pay off,
13 especially in situations where you do have some
14 achievement gaps and other things. And so I've got
15 real concerns there. First off, it doesn't seem
16 necessary right now for your immediate needs, and
17 I've got problems with the broader concept. You
18 know, 4th through 6th grade it starts to get a little
19 more, you know, acceptable, but in those earliest
20 four grades, as we're trying to get kids, you know,
21 ready to read, it's just so important to have small
22 classes. So I've got concerns on those.

23 And just a broader observation is it really does
24 come back to that -- to our previous item. You know,
25 these sub-350 issues, it all fits together; right? I

1 mean, the teachers' availability and the fiscal
2 matters, it all ties together. And there is -- it
3 may not be a magic number but there is something
4 about getting close to that number it really becomes
5 difficult for a district to sustain itself. So the
6 challenges you face, you're doing the best in a very
7 challenging circumstance, but I think that number is
8 causing you some problems obviously.

9 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Dr. Barth. Any
10 additional questions? Yes, Ms. Newton.

11 MS. NEWTON: I had a couple of questions. One
12 of the questions had to do with your 3rd grade. You
13 said your 5th and 6th grade were departmentalized;
14 3rd grade are with the same teacher all day?

15 SUPT. PALMER: In 3rd grade, yes, ma'am. And we
16 have two teachers in 3rd grade.

17 MS. NEWTON: Okay. And so your maximum class
18 size in 3rd grade right now, is it 25?

19 SUPT. PALMER: No, ma'am. It's 14.

20 MS. NEWTON: So 3rd grade is not --

21 SUPT. PALMER: No, ma'am.

22 MS. NEWTON: Okay. So you're concerned about
23 1st grade and 6th grade; those were the two that
24 you're concerned about right now?

25 SUPT. PALMER: Yes. But, you know, the broad

1 spectrum of 1st through 3rd grade --

2 MS. NEWTON: Right.

3 SUPT. PALMER: -- is the same --

4 MS. NEWTON: Right.

5 SUPT. PALMER: -- teacher-to-student ratio.

6 MS. NEWTON: Okay. Your paras, are they half-
7 time in those classrooms or are they full-time?

8 SUPT. PALMER: Full-time.

9 MS. NEWTON: They're full-time in those
10 classrooms. And so you're committed to keeping the
11 kindergarten teacher this year; they're not going to
12 go back, even if you were to get the waivers?

13 SUPT. PALMER: To go back to?

14 MS. NEWTON: To having one kindergarten teacher.

15 SUPT. PALMER: Right now, I am keeping the two.
16 It just depends on our numbers next year. If I -- if
17 our first grade goes up, that teacher -- if we have
18 -- don't have a need for the kindergarten, a teacher
19 will move up just because of the numbers. It just
20 depends. I can't honestly answer that. Like I said,
21 we talked to the teacher; she was not employed at
22 another school district; she was staying home. And
23 then when we had that position open she was the only
24 certified qualified teacher applicant. She knows
25 that it could be a one-year thing or it could be

1 multiple years. It just depends on our student
2 population within the grade level.

3 MS. NEWTON: I just have -- the 4th through 6th,
4 going from 28 to 30, you know, I can understand where
5 that would be workable, especially if you're
6 departmentalized. But the kindergarten, jumping from
7 20 to 25 and then the 1st through 3rd going to 28,
8 you know, those early grades -- again, it's so
9 important to develop those reading skills so we can
10 get them reading by -- on grade level by 3rd grade.
11 And that's where the -- you know -- get down -- you
12 know -- you mentioned a while ago the necessities.
13 You know, this would free up money for some
14 necessities. You know, I kind of look at those
15 teachers being that necessity, you know. And so, you
16 know, I understand where you're coming from. I'm a
17 small school person too, okay, and I understand how
18 you have to really work on the budget. But, you
19 know, we've got to think about those kids too, so I
20 do have some concerns about those lower grades.

21 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Ms. Newton. Any
22 final questions or comments? Otherwise, I'll
23 entertain a motion from the Board. Yes.

24 MS. ABLES: I just have a quick comment. Is
25 there something your school could come up with to

1 maybe get all of these dedicated paraprofessionals
2 certified so then you'd have a full staff and you
3 don't have to worry about issues like this? I don't
4 know if maybe y'all have sat down and said, "Hey,
5 what can we do to get you guys your license where you
6 can be full members of our staff."

7 SUPT. PALMER: Are you talking about like a full
8 four-year teaching license?

9 MS. ABLES: Uh-huh. Yeah, or however you need
10 to do it to get -- I mean, it sounds like you have
11 dedicated paras and that's great. But, again, the
12 one doing PE -- I mean, maybe there's some kind of
13 school incentive you could do to say, "We want you to
14 be here as a certified teacher; so how can we help
15 you reach that goal where you can teach PE as a
16 certified teacher?" So I'm just curious if y'all
17 have any plans for that or if you've considered that.

18 SUPT. PALMER: I haven't really considered that.
19 This is my first year as superintendent --

20 MS. ABLES: Right.

21 SUPT. PALMER: -- at Kirby, and so I'm just, you
22 know, trying to utilize the resources that I have.
23 Like I said, they're already in the classrooms; they
24 have been. It's just asking, you know, for a couple
25 of kids over. I don't know if y'all have had

1 discussions in the past about that, but a lot of them
2 already have -- they have kids in the school district
3 and things like that. It would just be a matter of,
4 you know, them going to college and, you know, paying
5 the money for the tuition and things like that, you
6 know, and things -- so, I mean, I will have
7 discussions with them, if that's what -- yeah.

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. That was an
9 excellent idea. Thank you for that.

10 Additional questions or comments? Otherwise,
11 again, I'll entertain a motion from the Board.

12 Yes, Dr. Barth.

13 DR. BARTH: Could I ask that we -- for the
14 reasons Ms. Newton mentioned, could -- on the class
15 size issues, could we vote on these three separately?
16 That would be my request.

17 CHAIRPERSON REITH: I see two waiver topics.
18 Usually we do it by waiver topic.

19 DR. BARTH: Right.

20 CHAIRPERSON REITH: And so your preference would
21 be --

22 DR. BARTH: My preference would be on the class
23 size that we actually do walk through the three
24 different --

25 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Each of the three different

1 --

2 DR. BARTH: -- waivers there.

3 CHAIRPERSON REITH: The kindergarten, so --

4 DR. BARTH: Kindergarten, 1 through 3 --

5 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay.

6 DR. BARTH: -- and 4 through 6. That would be
7 my preference.

8 MS. ZOOK: Can you tell us -- before we start
9 voting, can you tell me -- I'm going to write this
10 down -- how many kindergarten classes do you have in
11 1st and 2nd and 3rd and 4th and 5th, and the numbers
12 -- and you may have to get your elementary principal
13 to help you with that.

14 SUPT. PALMER: Okay. Currently, we have two
15 teachers in kindergarten. There's 24 kids total.

16 MS. ZOOK: Total?

17 SUPT. PALMER: Yes, ma'am.

18 MS. ZOOK: Oh. So 12 --

19 SUPT. PALMER: 12 and 12.

20 MS. ZOOK: Okay. Oh, that's right, because you
21 hired one. Okay. 1st grade?

22 SUPT. PALMER: 1st grade we have 25 with one
23 teacher.

24 MS. ZOOK: Okay.

25 SUPT. PALMER: 2nd grade we have 30. Okay. We

1 got a new 2nd grader yesterday, so we've got 30 with
2 -- okay, 2nd grade -- 2nd grade I think we have 25;
3 3rd grade we have 30 with two teachers; 4th grade,
4 23; 5th grade --

5 MS. ZOOK: Okay, back-up; I'm on 4th grade.

6 SUPT. PALMER: 4th grade we have one teacher.

7 MS. ZOOK: Okay. And how many students?

8 SUPT. PALMER: 23.

9 MS. ZOOK: Okay.

10 SUPT. PALMER: 5th grade we have two teachers,
11 31; and 6th grade we have one teacher with 28.

12 MS. ZOOK: Okay. So the 5th grade, two
13 teachers, 31 in each class or --

14 SUPT. PALMER: All together.

15 MS. ZOOK: -- 15 and one is 16 in the other?

16 SUPT. PALMER: I really don't know how it's
17 separated right now; 31 total in 5th grade.

18 MS. ZOOK: Okay.

19 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Thank you, Mr.
20 Palmer. Additional questions, Ms. Zook? Otherwise,
21 we will go ahead and -- yes, Ms. Newton.

22 MS. NEWTON: 1st and 2nd grade have -- both have
23 one teacher?

24 SUPT. PALMER: Yes.

25 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. So I will go

1 ahead and entertain a motion. At the request of Dr.
2 Barth, we will take four votes in regards to this
3 application, addressing the class size for each of
4 the groupings separately, and then a last vote in
5 regards to teacher licensure.

6 So with that, I'll entertain a motion regards to
7 the waiver for class size for kindergarten.

8 MS. NEWTON: I move not to grant the waiver for
9 kindergarten.

10 DR. BARTH: Second.

11 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Motion made by Ms.
12 Newton, seconded by Dr. Barth. All in favor?

13 (MAJORITY CHORUS OF AYES)

14 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed?

15 MS. ZOOK: No.

16 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Motion carries.

17 I will entertain a waiver -- or a motion now in
18 regards to the waiver for 1st through 3rd grade class
19 size.

20 DR. BARTH: I move to deny the waiver.

21 MS. ZOOK: Let me ask a question before we --

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Sorry --

23 MS. ZOOK: -- get a second or -- oh, do we have
24 to get a second first?

25 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yes, we have to get a second

1 first --

2 MS. ZOOK: Okay.

3 CHAIRPERSON REITH: -- and then we can have
4 discussion.

5 MS. ZOOK: Okay.

6 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Is there a second?

7 MS. NEWTON: Second.

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Motion made by Dr.
9 Barth, seconded by Ms. Newton. Yes, now discussion,
10 Ms. Zook.

11 MS. ZOOK: Okay. Okay. You have a total of 20,
12 40, 60, 75 kids and three teachers.

13 SUPT. PALMER: In what grade levels

14 MS. ZOOK: 2nd and 3rd. Is that correct?

15 SUPT. PALMER: 2nd and 3rd, we should --

16 MS. ZOOK: 2nd grade has one teacher with 20
17 kids; is that right?

18 SUPT. PALMER: Uh-huh.

19 MS. ZOOK: And 3rd grade has two teachers with
20 30 kids?

21 SUPT. PALMER: Yes. That would be --

22 MS. ZOOK: Okay. Is there not a way that you
23 can have split grades? I mean, we've done that in
24 the past and that's acceptable in the ADE and all the
25 laws that the legislators made. So is that not an

1 equally viable alternative? Maybe the elementary
2 principal needs to --

3 MS. COWART: (inaudible)

4 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Ma'am, I'm sorry; if you can
5 come to the mic and -- she was sworn in. She was
6 sworn in, so -- but if you could identify yourself
7 for the record and come to the mic. Thank you.

8 MS. COWART: I'm Dolores Cowart; I'm the
9 elementary principal, and other duties. We have --
10 we are almost maximized in every class and that's why
11 we didn't opt to split out classes. And we do have a
12 highly mobile population. We have three sets of
13 twins in kindergarten right now and some of them are
14 kind of homeless. I mean, we just don't know; we --
15 you know -- we have very little housing, no industry
16 in our district, but we have people wanting to come
17 in because of our School of Innovation. And it's
18 just so highly mobile we don't know how to plan and
19 he thought maybe we should be proactive to just get
20 ready for -- to see what happens next year. But we
21 have people all the time wanting to come into our
22 district; there's just no housing. And when they do
23 come in they're kind of living with somebody else,
24 you know, and kind of homeless or could be that
25 designation. But most of our classes are full and

1 that's why we didn't opt to split, because if we
2 split and somebody else comes in then we're going to
3 be over in that class, so --

4 MS. ZOOK: Okay. Good. That helps. Thanks.

5 MS. COWART: Yeah. And we have two -- we have a
6 certified Orton-Gillingham teacher that does
7 pullouts; we have a certified math -- we have a math
8 pullout certified teacher. We're a Title 1 school-
9 wide and that's why we have so many aids that we
10 shift around. We have a one-to-one initiative in 4
11 through 6, and we're getting that way in K through 2
12 with Chromebooks. And so we have MobyMax; we have
13 several different differentiated things that we're
14 doing with our students, so --

15 MS. ZOOK: Okay. Thanks. Orton-Gillingham, by
16 the way, is the program that's very successful with
17 kids who are dyslexic.

18 MS. COWART: And we have Saxon phonics in K
19 through 2 and we have Lindamood-Bell for those kids
20 that can call words but can't comprehend.

21 MS. ZOOK: Right.

22 MS. COWART: So we're trying to fill in all the
23 gaps of all the reading, so --

24 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you for that
25 information and for your efforts.

1 So we do have a vote on the floor and that was,
2 again, a motion to deny the waiver for class size for
3 1st through 3rd grade; it was again made by Dr.
4 Barth, seconded by Ms. Newton. All in favor?

5 (MAJORITY CHORUS OF AYES)

6 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed?

7 MS. ZOOK: Aye.

8 MS. CHAMBERS: Aye.

9 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. So two oppositions,
10 Ms. Coffman -- Ms. Zook and Ms. Chambers. So motion
11 carries, which means motion was denied.

12 And then a final one, a waiver in regards to
13 class size for 4th through 6th grade.

14 MS. NEWTON: I move to grant the waiver for 4th
15 through 6th grade for maximum class size of 30.

16 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Do I have a second?

17 DR. BARTH: Second.

18 MS. CHAMBERS: Second.

19 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Motion made by Ms.
20 Newton; I heard Dr. Barth first, so second by Dr.
21 Barth. All in favor?

22 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

23 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? That motion
24 carries unanimously.

25 MS. ZOOK: Okay. What are --

1 CHAIRPERSON REITH: So for clarity, we granted
2 the class size waiver only for 4th through 6th grade.

3 MS. ZOOK: So what is he going to do?

4 SUPT. PALMER: Right.

5 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Well, let's -- we still have
6 one more vote and then we can --

7 MS. ZOOK: Discuss that.

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: -- have a discussion. But
9 if we could get through one -- the final vote on the
10 waiver for teacher licensure. I'm willing to
11 entertain a motion.

12 MS. ZOOK: So moved.

13 CHAIRPERSON REITH: To grant --

14 MS. ZOOK: The waiver.

15 CHAIRPERSON REITH: -- grant the waiver for
16 teacher licensure. Do I have a second?

17 MS. NEWTON: Second.

18 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Seconded -- so motion made
19 by Ms. Zook, seconded by Ms. Newton. All in favor?

20 DR. BARTH: Just a --

21 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Oh, sorry. Sorry.
22 Discussion. My apologies. Did you want discussion?

23 DR. BARTH: Well, I just think we have to be
24 super careful about heading down this path and all.

25 MS. ZOOK: On this PE?

1 DR. BARTH: No, just in terms of individuals
2 without four-year degrees being provided waivers of
3 this sort. So in this single case it doesn't bother
4 me, but I just want to be on the record on how we've
5 got to be really careful about this not becoming a
6 precedent for broader intrusions into this pretty
7 fundamental component of teacher credentialing.

8 MS. ZOOK: Right. And to use the old term,
9 circumstances alter cases often. I think that would
10 be my view of this vote.

11 DR. BARTH: Right. I just want the Board -- I
12 just want to make that statement.

13 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. And I'll echo
14 that when we make decisions in regards to individuals
15 when there's broader implications. And I know, Ms.
16 Pfeffer, you're working very closely right now in
17 preparation around licensure issues for the
18 legislature, and I saw you taking notes and
19 discussing with -- and for everyone's purposes,
20 taking notes and discussing with Legal. If there's
21 some opportunities here where this may be -- this
22 issue of paraprofessionals, especially -- right --
23 might be something that we could reflect on on a
24 broader scale so that there's different alternatives
25 so we don't have to make these broad blanket

1 implications when there could be an individual
2 pathway to seek resolutions.

3 So with that, concluding discussion, motion
4 again that was made on the table in regards to
5 granting the waiver for teacher licensure, made by
6 Ms. Zook, seconded by Ms. Newton. So all in favor?

7 (MAJORITY CHORUS OF AYES)

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed?

9 DR. BARTH: Nay.

10 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. One opposition. May
11 the record show Dr. Barth voted no.

12 So with that, the question now that Ms. Zook
13 posed in discussion for --

14 MS. ZOOK: Yes. Yes. Can he --

15 CHAIRPERSON REITH: -- for Mr. Palmer.

16 MS. ZOOK: Yeah. Can he -- Ms. Pfeffer, I'll
17 rely on your expertise. Can he get a waiver for --
18 or through the assigned sub or long-term sub, or do
19 these paraprofessionals meet the qualifications for
20 the things that you all look at when you grant or
21 deny?

22 MS. PFEFFER: Okay. I was -- I was not paying
23 attention again.

24 MS. ZOOK: That's okay.

25 MS. PFEFFER: It's an unusual day for me because

1 I'm normally very attentive here. I was sharing the
2 information about the paraprofessional route.

3 MS. ZOOK: All right. Okay.

4 MS. PFEFFER: Would you ask again?

5 MS. ZOOK: We approved the -- using a
6 paraprofessional in combination with the licensed
7 teacher for 4th, 5th and 6th. We as a board did not
8 on the kindergarten, 1st and 2nd -- or 1st and 2nd
9 and 3rd -- no -- yeah, 1st, 2nd and 3rd we did not
10 and kindergarten we did not. There are
11 paraprofessionals, and do they meet the
12 qualifications that you all look at when you either
13 grant or deny either an assigned sign, a long-term
14 sub? I mean, we have kids down there who are going
15 to have to go to school. So does he have an
16 alternative since we denied his waiver request?

17 MS. PFEFFER: Well, the criteria to be approved
18 as a long-term sub would be that they have a four-
19 year degree and that's what has always been done in
20 the past.

21 MS. ZOOK: Okay.

22 MS. PFEFFER: I do think that there is some
23 flexibility in extreme circumstances, but I would
24 want Legal to check me on that in terms of what can
25 be done. So your -- but your question is what could

1 they do because of not having the --

2 MS. ZOOK: I jumped out of policy into weeds;
3 I'm sorry. But --

4 MS. PFEFFER: Yes.

5 MS. ZOOK: -- we have a district who's trying --
6 they're working with ADE, they're getting permission
7 on the things they need to get permission on, and we
8 have kids who need to be taught.

9 MS. PFEFFER: Uh-huh. And your question is
10 could those long-term subs be used --

11 MS. ZOOK: Could those paraprofessionals be used
12 as long-term?

13 MS. PFEFFER: As long-term subs.

14 CHAIRPERSON REITH: I think the Commissioner may
15 have some comments.

16 COMMISSIONER KEY: Well, I would just say I'm
17 not sure that the Department is in the best place at
18 this point to make any recommendations unless we've
19 been there to see and -- I mean, I certainly make
20 that available to you and your team to have some of
21 our team go down there and see what's happening on
22 the ground and try to come up with some solutions and
23 work with you to do that. So I'm not sure that we
24 can create those solutions here in this room today.
25 I would prefer to see our folks go down there and try

1 to help you craft those solutions, if you're open to
2 that.

3 SUPT. PALMER: Yes, I am. But the reason -- you
4 know -- the reason why I was up here is -- as
5 elementary principal I did a split classroom. But
6 when you're looking at a class of 25 in 1st grade
7 you're either having those kids go down to a split
8 classroom with a kindergarten teacher-slash-1st grade
9 or 1st grade-slash-2nd grade. And with our numbers
10 being high in 2nd grade and, you know, and already
11 having two teachers with kindergarten, you know,
12 you're talking about putting those kids based off of,
13 you know, not only scores but intellectual and things
14 like that. And so I was just trying to be proactive
15 because either way, whether you're having a sub come
16 in or a paraprofessional be a long-term sub, I was
17 just trying to be proactive in finding ways to have a
18 healthy legal balance, because at some point -- next
19 year it's going to -- we'll be up here doing the same
20 thing. And so if I can try to find ways, since we
21 already have a lot of resources within our elementary
22 school with paraprofessionals, it's just adding a
23 couple more kids. Because kindergarten you can have
24 an aid with 22, so I was just trying to get an
25 increase in students, you know, freed for there --

1 MS. ZOOK: I know.

2 SUPT. PALMER: -- and a couple more for the 1st
3 through 3rd grade and so-on. So I was just trying to
4 maximize resources and not have to go hire a -- you
5 know -- another teacher for one over or two over when
6 we already have somebody there in the classroom with
7 that teacher. But I will explore possibilities of
8 getting with ADE and having some people come down or
9 entertaining the split classroom option, if that
10 comes available. But at this point we don't have a
11 class that is over maximum, besides kindergarten, and
12 that's why I was just trying to be proactive, because
13 we are highly mobile, as I mentioned. One day we're
14 at 29, the next day we're at 28. And so that would
15 give me a lot more flexibility instead of trying to
16 go out and try to find a certified teacher at this
17 point in the year, when we had one and we posted two
18 or three different times for our kindergarten. So I
19 was just trying to be proactive; that's all.

20 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you.

21 MS. ZOOK: And I would ask the Commissioner,
22 does he stand the chance of getting cited if he goes
23 ahead and has school until y'all get there to come up
24 with options?

25 COMMISSIONER KEY: You're having school today;

1 right?

2 SUPT. PALMER: Do what?

3 COMMISSIONER KEY: You're having school today;
4 right?

5 SUPT. PALMER: Yes. But we're not going to have
6 any kind of standards accreditation or anything
7 because every class size right now is at the maximum
8 or lower; kindergarten, we've got two teachers. So
9 we are -- we're not going to be cited for anything at
10 this point.

11 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yeah. This is more forward.

12 SUPT. PALMER: Yes. And it's based off October
13 1. And like I mentioned, the only class I was
14 worried about was 6th grade with 29, but yesterday we
15 dropped down to 28. So the documentation is there to
16 explain things like that.

17 COMMISSIONER KEY: And I don't know where they
18 are on the schedule, on the --

19 SUPT. PALMER: For accreditation, two years.

20 COMMISSIONER KEY: Okay.

21 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Well, thank you so much, Mr.
22 Palmer, and thank you for stepping into a leadership
23 position, obviously at a needed time. Best of luck.
24 We appreciate your innovation and hope that you can
25 avail yourself of the resources of the ADE and this

1 can be an ongoing conversation. But best of luck
2 with that and -- yes.

3 MS. ABLES: And I wanted to let the Board know
4 that I'm actually going to go to Kirby and be a
5 student for a day in their flex mod schedule. And I
6 would be more than happy if any of you would like to
7 go with me and experience that. I'll let you know
8 the date.

9 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Wonderful. Well, that's
10 very exciting, so -- and as well, our Teacher of the
11 Year here is a resource and somebody obviously with
12 wonderful ideas and innovation. So I hope you will
13 avail yourself of her too while she's there, not just
14 as a student but garner what she's learned and what
15 she's trying to share statewide.

16 So with -- yes, Dr. Hill.

17 DR. HILL: I just want to commend you for being
18 forward-thinking rather than waiting till the crisis
19 and, you know, trying to think ahead of the curve
20 because you know you're going to get there and that's
21 -- rather than waiting till it happens and bringing
22 it to us. So keep up that visionary thinking.

23 SUPT. PALMER: I appreciate it. Thank you, sir.

24 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much.

25 So with that, we'll leave the action agenda here

1 for now and resume after lunch. Lunch has been
2 waiting on us for about 20 minutes or so, so I
3 apologize if it's a little cold, to our colleagues.
4 But thank you for giving the due attention that Kirby
5 deserves. So thank you, Mr. Palmer.

6 With that, we're going to convene for lunch. We
7 will reconvene -- can we do 1:15? We are a little
8 bit behind schedule -- 1:15, is that doable, 30
9 minutes? So 1:15. Thank you so much.

10 (LUNCH BREAK: 12:45 - 1:23 p.m.)

11 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Quickly, just an update.
12 We're going to -- we're continuing to experience
13 problems with the live-feed. We're going to give it
14 until 1:30, so approximately six or seven more
15 minutes to see if the issue can be resolved quickly.
16 If it's not, then we are going to proceed with a
17 couple items, action agenda items and reporting
18 items, that we feel can be proceeded with without
19 livestream. However, the Little Rock -- the two
20 Little Rock matters will be on hold until we can get
21 the livestream back. So for anyone adjusting
22 schedules or wondering if they can hold out in eating
23 or getting lunch or something, we'd advise you to
24 partake of this opportunity. It will be a few more
25 minutes before we get to the Little Rock matter. So

1 we apologize to all gravely for the inconvenience.
2 This is one of those times where you hope technology
3 makes life easier; it's supposed to, and then doesn't
4 always fulfill its promises. So we greatly
5 appreciate everyone and their patience. We'll give
6 you another update here in about five minutes.
7 Something will commence; it may or may not be the
8 Little Rock item. So, just wanted to give that
9 forewarning to everybody. Thank you.

10 (BREAK: 1:25 - 1:34 P.M.)

11 CHAIRPERSON REITH: I'm calling us back to
12 order, and, first and foremost, an update on the
13 logistics. We all regret and apologize, the
14 livestream is still not up working as of yet. So we
15 are going to proceed with a couple of the action
16 items and reports and I want to thank very much the
17 ADE team and staff. As you see here, they are
18 hustling to get us back online and to make some
19 alternative arrangements, so you see our educators in
20 action, showing off their multi-tasking skills and
21 abilities to work quickly on their toes. So we thank
22 you all for that. We do hope that this won't
23 inconvenience much the Little Rock items. We will
24 try and get through the other matters efficiently and
25 get the live-stream back on so that we can also

1 address y'all in a timely manner. But thank you,
2 everyone, for your patience.

3 A-6: CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDATION TO ADOPT ART: CONTENT
4 KNOWLEDGE (5134) REPLACING ART: CONTENT AND ANALYSIS (5135) TO
5 ACCOMMODATE TEST TAKERS

6 CHAIRPERSON REITH: So with that, we did end
7 right before lunch with action item number five. So
8 we're going to proceed with action item number six,
9 Consideration of the Recommendation to Adopt Art:
10 Content Knowledge Replacing Art: Content and Analysis
11 to Accommodate Test Takers. And I apologize, is it
12 Luneau?

13 MS. LUNEAU: Luneau. Correct.

14 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Luneau. Miss Luneau, you're
15 recognized.

16 MS. LUNEAU: Good afternoon. I'm Joan Luneau,
17 the ADE Program Coordinator for Educator Preparation.
18 To accommodate the art licensure test being offered
19 more frequently, the Department recommends replacing
20 the current Praxis art content and analysis (5135)
21 with the Praxis art content knowledge (5134) with a
22 cut score of 158, effective upon approval.

23 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Ms. Luneau. With
24 that, any questions or discussion from the Board?
25 Ms. Zook.

1 MS. ZOOK: Is this one of the areas that we have
2 a lot of educators who finish their higher ed.
3 training but then have trouble passing the art Praxis
4 test?

5 MS. LUNEAU: The current pass rate is about 70%
6 on this test, so I would say no.

7 MS. ZOOK: Do you know if there are some who are
8 not passing are coming specifically from one or two
9 institutions, or is it across the board?

10 MS. LUNEAU: I can't answer that question.

11 MS. ZOOK: Well, I mean, you don't know? You
12 could answer --

13 MS. LUNEAU: I could if I -- I could; with a
14 little research I could answer that question for you.

15 MS. ZOOK: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Ms. Zook.

17 Additional questions or discussion from the Board?

18 Otherwise, I'll entertain a motion.

19 MS. ZOOK: I move that we approve this item
20 under -- for the art content.

21 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Do I have a second?

22 MR. WILLIAMSON: Second.

23 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Motion made by Ms. Zook,
24 seconded by Mr. Williamson. All in favor?

25 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

1 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? Motion carries
2 unanimately. Thank you, Ms. Luneau.

3 MS. LUNEAU: Thank you.

4 A-7: CONSIDERATION OF WAIVER REQUEST FOR TEACHING LICENSE -
5 SEAN F. STEIGER

6 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Now moving on to action
7 agenda item number seven, Consideration of the Waiver
8 Request for Teaching License for Sean Steiger. Ms.
9 Liwo, you're recognized -- Liwo, you're recognized.

10 MS. LIWO: Jennifer Liwo, PLSB Staff Attorney.
11 I looked in the lobby for Mr. Steiger; I don't
12 believe he's present today. So with that being said,
13 I'll just remind the Board that I cannot disclose the
14 underlying nature of the disqualification. I'll also
15 go ahead and not go through the hearing procedures.
16 The Board is still required to make a decision.

17 Mr. Steiger is seeking a first-time teaching
18 license. On July 21, 2016, the Department notified
19 Mr. Steiger that he was ineligible for licensure and
20 employment in an Arkansas public school based on a
21 disqualifying offense. Mr. Steiger requested a
22 waiver of this disqualifying offense. The Department
23 recommends that the State Board grant the waiver and
24 that's based on the disqualification occurring 15
25 years ago and there's no other information indicating

1 that Mr. Steiger is a threat to students.

2 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Ms. Liwo. Any
3 questions or discussion from the Board? And if I
4 just might confirm, was Mr. Steiger here earlier or
5 is it -- I just want to make sure it wasn't a matter
6 of confusion around our lunch hour.

7 MS. LIWO: I checked the logs and I didn't see
8 his name on the log. I did send him notice and he is
9 aware of the hearing today.

10 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. I just want to make
11 sure it wasn't a timing thing with our lunch hour
12 that he wasn't here.

13 So with that, again, any questions or discussion
14 from the Board on this issue? Otherwise, I'll
15 entertain a motion.

16 MS. DEAN: I move to grant the waiver.

17 MS. CHAMBERS: Second.

18 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Motion made by Ms.
19 Dean, seconded by Ms. Chambers. All in favor?

20 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

21 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? Motion carries
22 unanimously.

23 So with that, we do have one more action agenda
24 item for today and that is as related to the Little
25 Rock School District Area Public Education

1 Stakeholder Group. Because of our technology -- and
2 I see our folks working really hard there, but I
3 don't think it's quite online -- would it be all
4 right, Commissioner and colleagues, if we proceed to
5 report number two on 2016-2017 Novice Teacher
6 Beginning Administrator Mentoring? Would anyone have
7 concerns with us doing that and going a little out of
8 order? Unless, Ms. Coffman, you have another
9 recommendation?

10 MS. COFFMAN: We have action item nine, the
11 Consideration for Early Start Time.

12 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. I can take that, most
13 definitely. So I'll go ahead and present that one.

14 B-2: CONSIDERATION FOR EARLY START TIME ON NOVEMBER 10, 2016

15 CHAIRPERSON REITH: As stated, early start time
16 for just November 10, 2016. As a reminder to the
17 Board and to the public, November 11th is Veterans
18 Day and a day that we here in Arkansas, and also here
19 at the Department of Education, do recognize. As the
20 daughter of a veteran Marine, I am grateful that this
21 is a holiday that we prioritize and celebrate. And
22 so with that, we do now have the challenge of trying
23 to get through what we would normally do in a single
24 day on November the 10th. And if you might recall,
25 we made the commitment to convene on the 9th for some

1 presentation and we hope maybe some preparatory work
2 in a work session and/or some of that may come into
3 the November 10th, based on the outcome of tomorrow's
4 discussions.

5 Either way, in terms of being sensitive to
6 everyone's time and to what we need to accomplish, we
7 were wanting to propose starting earlier on the 10th.
8 Normally on a Thursday we would start at 10:00 a.m.,
9 but given the fact that everyone here has made a
10 commitment to come the night before we wanted to
11 propose either an 8:30 a.m. or 9:00 a.m. start. Ms.
12 Dean, we know you have to drop off children and if
13 8:30 isn't realistic, then 9:00, but we leave it to
14 your discretion on that. So, with our other
15 colleagues, just thoughts and discussion -- but,
16 actually, Ms. Dean, would you have a preference, 8:30
17 or 9:00?

18 MS. DEAN: 8:30 is fine.

19 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Fantastic. And so with
20 everyone else, a preference on time? Can we start at
21 8:30 in the morning? With all the teachers here, I
22 know they're early risers. So I see them eagerly
23 nodding their heads. So with that, we do actually
24 need a motion in this regard just to make sure that
25 the public is fully aware of our decision to start

1 earlier that day. This will have implications,
2 again, potentially on those that we invite to come
3 that day.

4 MS. CHAMBERS: I move that we change our start
5 time on November 10th to 8:30 a.m.

6 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Do I have a second?

7 MS. ZOOK: Second.

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Motion made by Ms.
9 Chambers, seconded by Ms. Zook. All in favor?

10 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

11 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? Motion carries
12 unanimously. Thank you.

13 MS. ZOOK: And those of us on Academic Distress
14 Committee, I do appreciate the starting early because
15 we'll have to have our meeting at the end of the
16 regular meeting on that day.

17 Can you remind me what time the Wednesday,
18 November 9th meeting is going to start?

19 CHAIRPERSON REITH: If -- I'll defer here to Ms.
20 Coffman. We'll start at 5:00 on Wednesday, but I
21 don't actually think we have any reports scheduled
22 for November. Is that correct, Ms. Coffman --
23 academic distress reports?

24 MS. COFFMAN: We don't have any standing
25 committee reports.

1 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay.

2 MS. COFFMAN: We do have two school districts
3 that will come before the full board.

4 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. But not -- but the
5 committee itself will not have a separate meeting on
6 the 10th?

7 MS. COFFMAN: In November.

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: In November, just in
9 November. Does that align with what you had
10 calendared, Ms. Zook?

11 MS. ZOOK: It's possible I wrote it down
12 incorrectly, so I'm sure Ms. Coffman is correct.

13 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay.

14 MR. WILLIAMSON: So what's the 5:00?

15 CHAIRPERSON REITH: So the 5:00 is going to be
16 the introduction to the --

17 MS. COFFMAN: My School info --

18 CHAIRPERSON REITH: My School.

19 MR. WILLIAMSON: Okay.

20 MS. COFFMAN: -- with Dr. Saunders. It'll be
21 about a two-hour training.

22 MR. WILLIAMSON: Okay.

23 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Fantastic. Thank you. And
24 we'll send more logistics to the Board and to the
25 public as we develop those agendas here in the next

1 couple of weeks. But thank you for agreeing to start
2 earlier so that we can accommodate as many folks as
3 possible for Thursday, the 10th.

4 Just checking here, I'm guessing the livestream
5 is not up yet, not quite? Real close, okay.

6 (OFF THE RECORD - 1:43 P.M.)

7 (BACK ON THE RECORD - 1:55 P.M.)

8 B-1: CONSIDERATION FOR NEXT STEPS FOR THE LITTLE ROCK AREA
9 PUBLIC EDUCATION STAKEHOLDER GROUP

10 CHAIRPERSON REITH: So with that, we'll now go
11 back to the action agenda item number eight or action
12 agenda B-1, the Consideration for Next Steps for the
13 Little Rock Area Public Education Stakeholder Group.
14 My understanding is Mr. McKenzie and Ms. Brown
15 Marshall are here to speak on behalf of the -- he
16 stepped out for a moment?

17 MS. MARSHALL: No, he stepped out permanently,
18 for today anyway.

19 CHAIRPERSON REITH: I see.

20 MS. MARSHALL: He had a conflicting meeting.
21 But Latisha is with us, as well.

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Oh, perfect. I
23 didn't see her. Hi.

24 MS. MARSHALL: I hadn't planned on speaking, but
25 we're at the point where we're needing direction from

1 you all. We earlier brainstormed a number of
2 research questions that we thought were going to be
3 crucial to our being able to move forward in
4 answering the questions the Board had given to us to
5 answer. We got an estimate from one entity that ran
6 the bill up way past we had -- what we had expected
7 and what we think anyone could pay. So at this point
8 we are asking for direction: what is it that we need
9 to do in order to find researchers or the data that
10 may already exist that we don't know about to enable
11 us to answer the questions based on what is what's
12 current and what's real as far as relating to the
13 questions and what we feel is germane to answering
14 those questions in a circumspect way.

15 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much. And I'll
16 just add a little in that I had the opportunity to
17 observe the last meeting of the stakeholders group.
18 I was in town for some other actually commitments
19 tied to this board and had the opportunity to see,
20 one, just the tremendous commitment that each of
21 these individuals have. Even though it was a shorter
22 meeting, you could tell the deep amount of thought
23 and the process and commitment to this, and it was
24 purely out of that commitment that they're coming to
25 us with this question. I think one of the challenges

1 -- if I could just be a little bit more precise at
2 least for our colleagues, the focus of the last
3 couple of conversations, if I could paraphrase, has
4 been around the research entity and what that might
5 look like. And in revealing of the process a much
6 higher budget number than was expected and, as the
7 Commissioner had shared, obviously something that
8 wasn't anticipated for in this process. And then
9 that led to questions of scope and whether the
10 direction was maybe where they could add the greatest
11 value or if there was other places --

12 MS. MARSHALL: Right.

13 CHAIRPERSON REITH: -- within the conversation
14 -- a deep -- no one on that stakeholders group was
15 wanting to walk away. I think it was out of the fact
16 that they felt committed to this conversation, felt
17 the great need for this conversation, and just wanted
18 a little bit more guidance in terms of how to focus
19 their time, acknowledging that it's just not any sort
20 of financially fiscally feasible to talk about a
21 research entity that were quoting, you know, at
22 minimum six figures or close to six figures --

23 MS. MARSHALL: Right.

24 CHAIRPERSON REITH: -- in terms of support for
25 this effort. And so what else could this look like

1 or what additional direction could we give, out of a
2 desire of not abandoning the scope and what was kind
3 of set out as an objective for this group. Did I --
4 I don't know if I --

5 MS. MARSHALL: Absolutely.

6 CHAIRPERSON REITH: -- paraphrased or --

7 MS. MARSHALL: I add a hearty Amen to exactly
8 what you said. Nobody is quitting; nobody is
9 threatening of quitting. We are simply wanting to be
10 able to proceed in concert with what is doable, but
11 in the light of what we feel very strongly about,
12 which is making sure that decisions are based on data
13 that are current, that are as global as they possibly
14 can be. Because otherwise we really don't know how
15 to make good decisions other than what is actually
16 extant in the world that we're serving and our
17 community.

18 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. So with that, I
19 do want to thank you so much for that. And now what
20 I'd like to open it up with with the Board here is a
21 conversation with your group and some feedback. I
22 know I've given some thought on this matter; I've
23 asked Dr. Barth to give some thought on this matter
24 as well, as both the individual that drafted the
25 original resolution and for all practical respects

1 has been our liaison with the group. And then there
2 may be others here in preparation, having seen this
3 on the action agenda, have given some thought to
4 this. So with that, again, I'd like to open up with
5 discussion and see if we can offer some guidance;
6 hence, the reason it's in the action agenda so that
7 we can commit to some actual tangible outcomes here
8 that can give the stakeholder group the guidance that
9 they're seeking.

10 MS. ZOOK: Do you want to go first?

11 DR. BARTH: No.

12 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Ms. Zook.

13 MS. ZOOK: Okay. The way I approached it, I
14 went to the sort of summation of the different points
15 that -- and the questions that were -- came out of
16 the stakeholders group and then they were addressed
17 by this group CRPE, and it is a group of individuals
18 who do research and assist in coming up with
19 objective data that can then be used. And as I
20 looked at them -- and I think you all have them in
21 front of you there under -- and like the initial
22 question, my recommendation to the stakeholder group
23 and to this group to recommend to them is that there
24 has been over time, several different times in the
25 last 40 years, what's called Effective Schools

1 Research, and it goes into what it takes to make an
2 effective school. And the thing that you will find
3 as you go through that research, and you access it
4 without paying anything, is that there are four or
5 five things that are consistent, no matter when the
6 research was done, what decade it was done in,
7 whether we were in No Child Left Behind or in -- what
8 testing program was being used or before testing
9 programs were being used. But the -- so just for
10 them to study that would, I think, be of help in
11 addressing the questions under number one.

12 Number two and three, which get into how schools
13 can best meet the educational needs of a student
14 population markedly diverse, you know, my theory is
15 it's not the kids. And so if you get the teachers
16 and the parents and the administrators, and everybody
17 come up with a way to work together, then it's just a
18 matter of putting the available data and the research
19 together and being sure that the two district
20 superintendents and the public charters in the South
21 of the River area collaborate and work together to
22 make sure this gets done. That's two and three.

23 Number four, there's two or three different ways
24 this could be done. It could be done through a
25 sampling survey, and Dr. Barth is one of the experts

1 because I see him on TV all the time in the political
2 realm, about how you can either do sampling research
3 or you could actually ask all the parents and then
4 take the ones who choose to respond, "Why did you
5 choose to stay in this school? Why did you choose
6 not to go to that school? Why are some of your
7 children here? Why are some of your children not?"
8 And it would -- you know -- there again, it wouldn't
9 be something that was costly or require an expert to
10 go out and then compile the data.

11 As far as number five is concerned, Mr. Poore
12 and Dr. Guess are working on these and enlisting all
13 the available data that they can, and I'm sure that
14 anything that's needing to be done with the leaders
15 at the different charters would work on that as well.

16 And number six, we can use examples that are
17 already in effect. For example, I know KIPP is
18 working with Lee County and Helena-West Helena. And
19 on the to-and-through concept that they came up with,
20 one of the teachers and their schools are visiting
21 back and forth with the Go-to-Meeting kind of things.
22 They can mentor and find places to find mentors.
23 Like if you have a weakness in your district, find a
24 district that that's a strength in, or a charter
25 versus charter, or however it might be, and then do

1 some pairing and mentoring in that way. And just
2 taking the data that's already available and then
3 using the data and applying it to the South of the
4 River districts we could come up, you know, with
5 this.

6 And another thing, Ms. Edwards, who is another
7 very good member of that group, was asking about the
8 ESSA thing. So I think if that group watched the
9 September 28th meeting, when there were several
10 people that gave some -- Airola, who's -- Denise is
11 working with the stakeholder group and the ESSA
12 group; the stakeholders group and the -- what do
13 y'all call your ESA committee?

14 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Steering committee.

15 MS. ZOOK: Steering committee. Sorry. And, you
16 know, if -- because the kind of information you all
17 are gathering that will be used to go forward is the
18 kind of thing that Ms. Edwards -- I mean, she was
19 sort of, I think, wondering if they had been left out
20 of that mix in some way, not knowing maybe that they
21 were live-streamed. And, you know, we do the best we
22 can, we think, to make sure everybody knows who we're
23 talking to, when we're talking, when the meetings
24 are, et cetera, but Ms. Edwards has a day job so she
25 may not can stop and look at that; but teaching them

1 or making sure they are aware that these are archived
2 and they can go back and look at them. But that
3 meeting in particular -- because I'm watching all of
4 the stakeholders meetings, as well as your steering
5 committee, and so many of the things she was asking
6 were the things you addressed two days later at that
7 steering committee meeting. So I think it's just a
8 matter of the stakeholders have, you know, felt like,
9 I'm sure, they're drinking out of the water hose
10 instead -- or a fire hydrant instead of a water hose.
11 But they're trying to get up-to-speed as quickly as
12 possible.

13 And for those of us who are on the Board, as
14 well as those of us who are educators -- and Ms.
15 Newton and I have been in it a long time -- we can
16 point them in the direction of the research that's
17 being done that effective schools are using now. And
18 then I'm sure both superintendents and the charter
19 school people are familiar with this research,
20 whether or not the stakeholders group are or not.
21 So, you know, the good news is everybody wants all
22 the kids in the state of Arkansas, and that includes
23 the kids South of the River, to be successful and
24 have good access to good quality schools. And, you
25 know, I can speak for myself as an educator, I don't

1 care if you come to my school or go to that other
2 school; I just want you having a good education
3 wherever your parents choose and however they choose
4 for you to be educated.

5 So if that's of any help, in addition to
6 anything that Dr. Barth may have to say -- he and I,
7 you know, obviously couldn't collaborate and we can't
8 talk in between, but just trying to be of help to
9 them and give them direction. Sometimes we think we
10 are but we're talking inside baseball kind of terms
11 and it may be hard for them to see what our point was
12 or the direction we're wanting to go. But we
13 certainly had not planned on spending \$250,000 of
14 money that could go to children.

15 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Ms. Zook.

16 MR. WILLIAMSON: And that was the low number.

17 MS. ZOOK: Yeah, that was the low number.

18 That's right.

19 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yes, Dr. Barth.

20 DR. BARTH: Well, again, I've been thinking
21 about this too, and I think some of my thoughts do
22 overlap with Ms. Zook's. I mean, I think that, you
23 know, the expense here comes a lot from new data
24 collection. And so I think, you know, we need to
25 really focus on those areas in which there is data

1 already accessible and available, and we know we have
2 lots of data on students at all schools in Arkansas.
3 And, indeed, Dr. Airola, at the second meeting, I
4 believe, of the stakeholders, where I was, I mean,
5 did present a lot of that data in a pretty compelling
6 way. And so I think that that should be the first
7 priority because that's where a lot of the expense is
8 and a lot of the expertise is, in the collection and
9 analysis of new data.

10 I also, you know, in looking -- I think all
11 these questions are important. I will stand by the
12 notion that for a holistic view all of these
13 questions are important, but I was really thinking in
14 terms of, well, which of these questions are most
15 important. And it feels to me that in many ways it
16 really is maybe a slightly tweaked version of
17 question six -- or the sixth issue is really where
18 it's at, and that's, you know, collaboration between
19 traditional public schools and open-enrollment
20 charter schools can maximize the achievement of
21 students and fiscal efficiency of the system South of
22 the River. And so what I would argue is that the
23 stakeholders might focus their energies around the
24 question of how that traditional public schools and
25 charter schools can both coexist in a healthy way and

1 be healthy, vibrant achieving schools but also then
2 look for opportunities to collaborate. And I think a
3 lot of that probably is there is probably some new
4 data collection there, but I think it probably is a
5 combination of analyzing existing achievement data
6 that we already have at the individual student level
7 and then thinking -- beginning to think about best
8 practices from other metropolitan areas around those
9 issues of collaboration. That feels like the -- you
10 know -- if I had to pick out one part of this, that
11 feels like the most important things. I think we --
12 you know -- I'm committed to the reality that we have
13 a charter system, an array of charter schools; we
14 have a traditional public education system; we've got
15 strong performing elements on both sides of that
16 line, and we've got weak performing elements on both
17 sides of that line. We need them to all be healthy
18 and we also need to look for some opportunities in
19 which they could actually work together to improve
20 the ecosystem as a whole. So that's kind of where I
21 come down.

22 I do agree on the ESSA issue I think because
23 that is going to drive so much of the future of
24 education in this state. Generally, I think the fact
25 that at least at this point there's not a listening

1 tour scheduled for Little Rock. Correct?

2 MS. MARSHALL: That's correct.

3 MS. NEWTON: There was one in North Little Rock
4 last week, I think.

5 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Conway, I thought.

6 MS. NEWTON: There was one last -- was it last
7 week in North Little Rock?

8 MS. ZOOK: Pine Bluff last week. Who else,
9 ESSA?

10 MS. NEWTON: Week before last in North Little
11 Rock, I guess. I'd have to --

12 COMMISSIONER KEY: I think -- I mean, the idea
13 is others that are ambassadors have sessions. I
14 think Senator English was working on one but I think
15 there was a conflict. I'm not sure --

16 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

17 COMMISSIONER KEY: -- if that one happened or
18 not.

19 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

20 COMMISSIONER KEY: But there are others who are
21 talking about setting those up. And then they have
22 the 10 --

23 MS. NEWTON: Yeah.

24 COMMISSIONER KEY: -- listening sessions around
25 the state that we the Department is leading.

1 MS. NEWTON: And there's one next week, I think,
2 in Conway maybe.

3 DR. BARTH: Yeah. But I do think that, you
4 know, maybe this group taking ownership of one of
5 those sessions could be a very important piece
6 because so much is going to be defined by how we end
7 up defining accountability.

8 MS. ZOOK: Well, and I think too because we have
9 co-ops and renewal zones. And Little Rock School
10 District and Pulaski County School District, unless
11 they have joined this year, were not a part of a co-
12 op.

13 DR. BARTH: Right.

14 MS. ZOOK: And so we could have that sort of
15 mentality where we could have the charters and Little
16 Rock and North Little Rock and sort of work -- you
17 know -- representatives that meet regularly to say,
18 "What are you doing about this? What are you doing
19 about this? Can we share this? Can we share that,"
20 ideas as well as people or, you know, whatever works,
21 because we already have that model and we know it
22 works in other parts of the state. And I have not
23 met anyone in any of those groups that don't want to
24 work together and work to find out, "Oh, gosh, you're
25 doing this and that work; well, I hadn't even thought

1 of that; thanks. Can you send that teacher over here
2 and give us a PD," or, you know, that kind of concept
3 and, you know, work with it that way.

4 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Now, and, actually, Ms.
5 Zook, my thinking on this is actually very well
6 aligned with your last point there and piggybacks off
7 I think Dr. Barth's. We spend so much time -- in the
8 conversations we've had around Little Rock we've been
9 spending so much time on the worst performing
10 schools, right, and our challenges. And one of the
11 things we've always talked about with charter schools
12 is it was supposed to be an opportunity of incubators
13 of excellence that then could feed into the
14 traditional public school or at least have that
15 dialogue with the traditional public school system.
16 And so I wonder if in the search for number six --
17 because I agree with Dr. Barth around I think that
18 there's -- when I walk away and think about my vote
19 from back in March in regards to this, it was largely
20 tied to that number six: how do we create a system of
21 collaboration between traditional public schools and
22 charter schools; how do they coexist to the equal
23 benefit of all students so that some students aren't
24 necessarily benefitted more than others or some are
25 hurt as a result of decisions that are made. And one

1 thing that we've talked about that hasn't been fully
2 documented is what are the best practices in the
3 public schools and in the charters. What if we
4 looked at the top tier charter -- ask the
5 stakeholders to look at the top tier charter schools
6 and public schools, have them come in before them and
7 talk about what they're doing well; and that we
8 document that and then we ask them the question,
9 "Well, how can we share this moving forward?"
10 Because part of collaboration is communication;
11 right? I mean, we have to -- there's always going to
12 be and we'll never completely, I think, get rid of
13 sort of this competitive nature, and maybe in some
14 ways we don't want to. When I hear some of the folks
15 from LRSD, even those that are here in the audience
16 today, say to me, "We're trying to win back those
17 charter school kids" -- right -- I mean, is that
18 necessarily a negative thing that they're saying
19 this? I don't know if competition is negative or if
20 that's even the right question into this. What I do
21 know is communication is what works well, right, and
22 it's happening with their subpopulations and with
23 groups. And especially when we know that, you know,
24 kids are coming from different areas and we can see
25 what somebody -- really honing in on what they do

1 well and be able to share that in a more systematic
2 way that lends to this collaborative nature. And,
3 again, I think the outcomes and recommendations that
4 they make to the stakeholders group -- but I wonder
5 and offer a part of process in prioritizing again
6 these orders if there's consensus here that number
7 six is where they prioritize. And, again, this may
8 be too specific; maybe it's just more food for
9 thought for the stakeholders as they move forward in
10 the process. But maybe there's a place here to bring
11 forward those best performing charters and public
12 schools and have a conversation about why do you
13 think you're having the success. It's, again, food
14 for thought for all of us as we continue this.

15 I see Ms. Newton with a question/comments.

16 MS. NEWTON: When I looked at this I kind of
17 looked at it through the lens of a teacher and
18 looking at curriculum and planning. And one of the
19 things that we do, if you look at the big picture you
20 get overwhelmed and that's kind of how I felt when I
21 read this. But when we look at teaching sometimes we
22 think about, well, what results do I want, okay, and
23 what's the essential question that's going to get me
24 to that result. And I think from listening to y'all
25 last year in March and then listening today I think

1 that what we want is we want to provide opportunities
2 for teachers and schools and districts to be able to
3 collaborate with one another, and what can we do to
4 make those opportunities. That was one of the
5 reasons Meghan and I got so excited a while ago; you
6 know, we heard about the chat room, you know, and we
7 got excited, you know. And that was an opportunity
8 for a teacher in a small district to be able to
9 collaborate with another 7th grade math teacher. You
10 know, what can we do to create those opportunities
11 for collaboration and sharing those good ideas, those
12 good things that are happening in the public school,
13 in the charter school, wherever it might be, and just
14 creating that atmosphere that we're all in this
15 together and our common goal is for every child to
16 have an opportunity for a good education.

17 CHAIRPERSON REITH: I couldn't agree with you
18 more. And I wonder if that's something the
19 stakeholders group could help hone in on without
20 having to contract an outside research entity. It
21 feels that that might be a role. And, again, it's
22 for them to converse around that; we're here not to
23 micromanage you but to give guidance, is my
24 understanding, out of this and you all from there
25 will define the process based on the guidance. But I

1 wonder if, again, there is an opportunity here, if
2 that even sounds in the right direction of being able
3 to convenient.

4 MS. MARSHALL: Yeah, absolutely. This is very
5 helpful. We're quite grateful to you. We recognize
6 that a lot of information is out there. Our big
7 challenge has been, well, how do we get the "out
8 there" in here.

9 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yeah.

10 MS. MARSHALL: What are the mechanisms that we
11 can use. And we're very interested in what works. I
12 remember being so excited initially when I heard the
13 concept of charter schools; oh, laboratories, we can
14 figure out what it is that works in kind of a
15 microcosm and begin to migrate that out a lot
16 further.

17 So your direction has been helpful. We'll be
18 continuing to work with the excellent staff at the
19 Department of Education to take advantage of those
20 resources that you have identified. So we thank you
21 and I think we're very much encouraged. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you.

23 MS. ZOOK: One thing I can share is when the
24 public law for educating handicapped children was
25 passed those of us in special ed. in the central

1 Arkansas area worked together. And, you know, maybe
2 you had a certain handicapping condition that you
3 only had like seven students in the whole county but
4 there wasn't any point in all three districts
5 duplicating that. So, you know, one would have -- we
6 would contract back and forth, make the arrangements
7 for transportation, and I can see this kind of thing
8 being helpful. And I also know that our two
9 superintendents and the leaders of the charters are
10 all very capable and they want the kids to succeed
11 too. And down to the teacher level, each 3rd grade
12 teacher wants to be the best 3rd grade teacher there.
13 And if all of those have that very similar goal, then
14 no matter how -- what school or charter school or
15 which county, district you're in you're going to be
16 in a terrific 3rd grade classroom with a terrific
17 teacher who will get the best out of you. So I think
18 that ultimately is our goal.

19 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Dr. Barth.

20 DR. BARTH: You know, and I'm really sensing in
21 this community, in particular, just a tremendous
22 interest in these conversations. I know at least two
23 churches that are having, you know, major investments
24 of time this fall on exactly these conversations
25 regarding public education in Little Rock and South

1 of the River and with an eye to, you know, both what
2 does a healthy traditional education -- public
3 education system look like, what is the role of and
4 what does a healthy charter system look like, and how
5 do they work together. I mean, I know of two
6 churches that are having that conversation right now.
7 So that says that this isn't just something that is a
8 kind of educator level conversation, but really out
9 in the community as a whole as a result of events of
10 the last couple of years.

11 MS. ZOOK: Right. And churches are even
12 adopting different schools, and if they needed
13 painting or if they needed a little extra this or
14 they need the Dolly Parton Imagination program, you
15 know, whatever it is, then, you know, that way you're
16 getting adults into there. And I was listening to an
17 interview of an actor yesterday and he was saying
18 when he was in college he went back because he grew
19 up in a home with no male grandfather, father, any
20 figure. So when he was in college he went and
21 volunteered in the elementary school so those kids
22 could see, you know, a positive male influence. And
23 so I think, you know, there's just so many ideas.
24 You get people in a room and just start brainstorming
25 and coming up with ideas, and I think that a lot of

1 that would be of great benefit too. And we do
2 appreciate the work you're doing. I watch every
3 second of it on the livestream.

4 MS. MARSHALL: Thank you very much. We do
5 believe that the power is in communication and
6 collaboration and we intend to model that for our
7 community. I was at one of those churches Sunday. I
8 played hooky from my own church and had other things
9 that were really pressing, but I thought it was
10 really important to hear the community conversation.
11 Thank you so much for your direction and for the work
12 that you do.

13 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Don't go away though. I'm
14 going to try and summarize this to make sure we're on
15 the same page, if that's all right, with some of the
16 key points that I heard here. And, please, anyone
17 chime in if you've heard something different or
18 understood differently.

19 So, first and foremost, it's to prioritize what
20 you all can have easy access to in terms of data and
21 do. So we're not prioritizing your time on an
22 outside research entity, but what you all can
23 actually control. And within prioritization of time
24 on the six issues, at least to get started, it seems
25 that there was some consensus around question six and

1 the idea of collaboration. And within that --

2 DR. BARTH: And coexistence.

3 CHAIRPERSON REITH: And coexistence. And
4 coexistence; thank you. And that within that the two
5 questions to consider, at least from what I was
6 hearing, is ways to get at what's working, how do we
7 get to those best practices, what's working both in
8 public schools and in charter schools; and then how
9 do we get to collaboration, because those are two
10 different questions. Right?

11 MS. MARSHALL: Yeah.

12 CHAIRPERSON REITH: It's finding out what's
13 working and then how -- and then being able to ask
14 those that you all speak with how do we get to
15 collaboration and getting some opinions. It would be
16 great to hear from I think the traditional public
17 schools and the charters, "How do you think we get to
18 collaboration to help inform?"

19 The third piece I heard here was connecting what
20 you learn to ESSA because what you're learning
21 doesn't just have relevance for LRSD; it has
22 relevance to our statewide plans. And so with that,
23 we'd strongly love seeing you all host or collaborate
24 on an ESSA listening forum is something I seem to
25 hear here.

1 And then the last thing I'm going to offer that
2 hasn't been said, but I said it to Dr. Barth
3 separately, I do want to make sure with everything
4 that we've created in terms of committees, liaisons,
5 and such, that we hold them all in equal value. And
6 something that we've done for other committees,
7 standing or temporary, is assign a board member to be
8 that point person and to give monthly updates. And
9 so I asked Dr. Barth, since he was the one that
10 offered the resolution, if he would be the liaison
11 and to attend those meetings and report back to us
12 monthly, so this way you all have more direct
13 communication with us on a monthly basis and as part
14 of our own ongoing reporting process; if additional
15 bumps or questions arise you don't have to ask for a
16 special meeting to be on the action agenda item; you
17 will know that as part of Dr. Barth's reports monthly
18 as part of our ADE -- or our SBE committee reports
19 he'll be reporting on this and asking those
20 questions. If I didn't offer you something --

21 DR. BARTH: But I also -- you know -- others can
22 --

23 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yes. Oh, no, and it doesn't
24 limit; we just want to make sure that there's at
25 least a liaison or one point-person.

1 DR. BARTH: And if somebody else is interested
2 in playing that role, I mean, just because I made the
3 -- we all voted for it, so --

4 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Was there anyone that wanted
5 to accompany or to -- with Dr. Barth, or anyone else
6 that would -- and, again, that isn't prohibitive.
7 Ms. Zook, I know you said you've been livestreaming.
8 I made a commitment when I went to their meeting to
9 attend more of them as I'm able to. So, for all of
10 us, a broader commitment but at least to make sure
11 it's on the monthly agenda and that we have a
12 liaison. Dr. Barth, you're deemed voluntoid too.
13 Okay. Thank you. I appreciate that.

14 MS. ZOOK: I'll be glad to help you.

15 CHAIRPERSON REITH: And we appreciate that. Did
16 I capture the conversation -- does that sound -- how
17 does that make you feel? And then, Ms. Chambers, it
18 looks like you were about to ask a question.

19 MS. CHAMBERS: I was just going to ask her the
20 same thing, how she felt about it.

21 MS. MARSHALL: It parallels my notes exactly, as
22 a former English teacher and as a visual learner --

23 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Me too.

24 MS. MARSHALL: -- except for the one that you
25 added at the end, and we'd be glad to have any of

1 you. Certainly, Dr. Barth, you're very welcome. And
2 thank you so much for listening and for your good
3 suggestions. I think that we are very much on the
4 same page as far as moving forward together, that we
5 gain more as we work together, and it's not always a
6 straight path to getting there but I think that
7 certainly with your guidance and your support we're
8 going to be well on our way again. Thank you so
9 much.

10 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. And with that,
11 Ms. Coffman, I know as our liaison with them, is
12 there anything else? And I don't know how to frame
13 this in terms of -- it's on our action agenda, so I
14 don't know what an appropriate motion would be.

15 MS. COFFMAN: I'm not sure that you have to take
16 a -- make a motion.

17 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Even if it's on our
18 action agenda?

19 MS. COFFMAN: No.

20 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay.

21 MS. COFFMAN: I think you've given -- unless Ms.
22 Marshall needs additional guidance, I think you've
23 probably given the guidance we need. And I'll just
24 copy these notes and send it to them --

25 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Fantastic.

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MS. COFFMAN: -- and let them set up the next meeting.

CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Thank you so much, and thank you to all of our colleagues.

So with that, that concludes our action agenda.

(The action agenda was concluded 2:26 p.m.)

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A-3: STRONG-HUTTIG
EXHIBIT NUMBER ONE (1)

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A-3: STRONG-HUTTIG
EXHIBIT NUMBER TWO (2)

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