

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

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*July 15, 2016*

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*Sharon Hill Court Reporting  
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Original File BOE - 7-15-16.prn

**Min-U-Script® with Word Index**

BEFORE THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

July 15, 2016  
9:00 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  |

LEGAL COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD:

|                         |                         |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Ms. Lori Freno          | ADE General Counsel     |
| Ms. Courtney Salas-Ford | ADE Attorney Supervisor |
| Ms. Jennifer Davis      | ADE Attorney            |

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

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## E X H I B I T S

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## EXHIBIT ONE (1)

Commissioner's List of Recommended Appointments

## A-4: BARTON LEXA SCHOOL DISTRICT

## EXHIBIT ONE (1)

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and Rules

## A-8: WAIVERS - SOUTHEAST COOPERATIVE DISTRICTS

## EXHIBIT ONE (1)

SE Arkansas Education Service Cooperative Waivers  
Request Packet

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P R O C E E D I N G S

A-1: CONSIDERATION OF REALLOCATION OF ABC GRANTS

CHAIRPERSON REITH: If we could kindly reconvene the room, we would like to proceed with our action agenda this morning, as yesterday, a lengthy one, and Deb is holding me to being done by no later than 3:00 p.m. today. So in that spirit if we could get started with Action Agenda Item A-1, Consideration of Reallocation of the ABC Grants, Ms. McKinney, you are recognized.

MS. MCKINNEY: Thank you, and good morning. I am -- we had programs that had relinquished their slots and I brought to you last month details about our first round. But this is, I guess, a moment of clarity because in presenting the information I shared how much the new grant awards would be for the reallocation of the Round 1 but I failed to include the \$15,000 that we are providing to Our House, First Baptist Church, and Ozark Opportunities of \$15,000. So I need to make sure that the Board understands that that will be included in the total amount. So the grant award plus the startup funding would be \$1,317,480, and I just needed to do that for clarity for our budget financial issues, our audit potential, so we have documentation that the Board has seen that

1 and approved it.

2 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any questions from the  
3 Board?

4 MS. MCKINNEY: For Round 2, again, after we  
5 brought this to you in June we have since had some  
6 programs relinquish some slots, and in some cases  
7 they have actually closed their program, and so  
8 that's why we were able to offer some additional  
9 sites funding for the approving of expanding their  
10 programs. We had a total of 63 grants when we put it  
11 out there for reallocating these slots. And so what  
12 we did was instead of reopening the application  
13 process we just went on down the list, and so the  
14 second round we're asking for approval. There will  
15 be no new startup funding, so it's just really an  
16 expansion. So what I've done is we've given you the  
17 award amount, the additional slots that they will be  
18 adding to their program, and then the new amount, and  
19 then the total grant award. And that's because when  
20 I came to you in May I brought the renewal grant  
21 applications, and so this is some of the expansion in  
22 the final dollar figure for the total grant award.

23 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Any questions  
24 from my colleagues on the Board about Round 2?

25 DR. BARTH: Just a quick question. So are the

1 programs that are closing, are they listed here or --

2 MS. MCKINNEY: Yes.

3 DR. BARTH: I'm having trouble finding them.

4 MS. MCKINNEY: Yes, down at the bottom.

5 DR. BARTH: On the -- which document?

6 MS. MCKINNEY: Where it says Southwest -- I'm  
7 sorry; on the sheet that says Round 1 and Round 2.

8 DR. BARTH: Oh, okay. Got it. At the very --

9 MS. MCKINNEY: It was an attachment.

10 DR. BARTH: Down in the footnote down below.

11 MS. MCKINNEY: Yes. Yes.

12 DR. BARTH: Okay. Okay.

13 MS. MCKINNEY: It was Southwest Arkansas  
14 Development Council and Jefferson Comprehensive  
15 Center.

16 DR. BARTH: Okay. And are there other ABC  
17 programs in those communities that are left?

18 MS. MCKINNEY: Yes, there are.

19 DR. BARTH: Okay.

20 MS. MCKINNEY: Because --

21 DR. BARTH: Because I remember a couple of years  
22 ago we almost left a community -- there was a late  
23 closure and we had a community that was really  
24 challenged. I just wanted to be sure that we weren't  
25 in that situation.

1 MS. MCKINNEY: And we try to keep watch on that.  
2 The Southwest Arkansas Development Council is in  
3 Texarkana.

4 DR. BARTH: Yeah.

5 MS. MCKINNEY: And then the Jefferson  
6 Comprehensive Center -- easy for me to say -- is Pine  
7 Bluff.

8 DR. BARTH: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Any additional  
10 questions from the Board? Otherwise, I will  
11 entertain a motion.

12 DR. BARTH: I'll move approval of the  
13 reallocation of ABC grants.

14 MS. ZOOK: Second.

15 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Motion made by Dr. Barth,  
16 seconded by Ms. Zook. All in favor?

17 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

18 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? Motion  
19 carries. Thank you so much, Ms. McKinney. We truly  
20 appreciate your thoroughness.

21 MS. MCKINNEY: Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: You always put it all out  
23 there. Thank you so much. We appreciate it.

24 MS. MCKINNEY: Thank you.

25 A-2: CONSIDERATION OF ABC PAYMENT TO THE SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY -



1 SUMMER SERVICES

2 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Moving on with our action  
3 agenda -- I guess, Ms. McKinney, you can stay in  
4 place -- the Consideration of ABC Payment to the  
5 Scholastic Academy Summer Services.

6 MS. MCKINNEY: Okay. This was a program that we  
7 brought to you asking for an enhancement grant for  
8 summer services. And when we made payment to them,  
9 there was -- we made a -- they were intended to get  
10 \$21,840 for serving 40 children. But unfortunately  
11 the data management system did not capture their  
12 enrollment in attendance, so we only paid them  
13 \$8,190; so we owe them a balance of \$13,650. So I'm  
14 coming back to you to ask to take this out of the new  
15 funding for this year to amend that situation.

16 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Ms. McKinney.  
17 Any questions from the Board? Then again I would  
18 entertain a motion.

19 MS. ZOOK: So moved.

20 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Do I have a second?

21 MS. CHAMBERS: Second.

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

24 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

25 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? Motion

1 carries. Thank you so much, Ms. McKinney. Now  
2 you're free of us for the day. Thank you so much.

3 A-3: CONSIDERATION OF LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMUNITY  
4 ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERSHIP

5 CHAIRPERSON REITH: To Action Item A-3,  
6 Consideration of the Little Rock School District  
7 Community Advisory Board Membership, Commissioner,  
8 you are recognized. Thank you.

9 COMMISSIONER KEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm  
10 distributing the list to you, but I have for your  
11 consideration -- these are my recommended  
12 appointments to the Little Rock School District  
13 Community Advisory Board. Make sure everyone has  
14 one; Ms. Coffman, would you pass those down, I think,  
15 to the press row? I'm not sure if they have copies  
16 down there.

17 (WHEREUPON, A-3 Exhibit One (1) was marked for  
18 identification and entered into the record.)

19 COMMISSIONER KEY: For Zone 1, Chauncey  
20 Holloman; Zone 2, Maria Chavarria-Garcia -- I think  
21 she actually goes by Lupeta [ps], correct? Okay.  
22 Zone 3, Melanie Fox; Zone 4, Jeff Wood; Zone 5, Larry  
23 Clark; Zone 6, Anthony Hampton; and Zone 7, Freddie  
24 Scott.

25 And as you can imagine, you that were here the

1 night that the applicants made their presentations,  
2 we had a very strong pool of applicants and a very  
3 difficult decision, certainly in some districts where  
4 there were a lot of applicants. But it is  
5 encouraging because that shows there's a lot of  
6 renewed hope, I think, and wanting to be involved in  
7 the Little Rock School District and moving it  
8 forward.

9 So for those that were selected, we look forward  
10 to working with them and building the capacity, as  
11 the statute says, for returning the district to local  
12 governance and solving the issues that created the  
13 academic distress. And for those who were not  
14 selected this time we encourage their continued  
15 involvement for future possibilities of running for a  
16 school board when that time comes.

17 So, Madam Chair, I present to you this list and  
18 ask for your approval.

19 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Commissioner.  
20 Any questions or comments from the Board?

21 DR. BARTH: I'll just make one brief comment.

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yes, Dr. Barth.

23 DR. BARTH: And this is awkward because of  
24 individual names. And, first off, I just want to  
25 voice my admiration for anyone who wants to volunteer

1 for improving their community schools. I had -- and  
2 I've told the Commissioner this separately, but --  
3 and this speaks nothing about any individuals but I  
4 had really hoped, especially after we saw how deep  
5 the talent pool was, that it would've been ideal if  
6 we could've really not had former board members on  
7 this new rebirth of the district. And there were  
8 folks there that I, you know, had varying types of  
9 relationships with and had seen in different settings  
10 -- but that was my only wish, but I understand that  
11 and respect the Commissioner's choice here. But I  
12 just wanted to voice that statement, that I fear a  
13 little bit we may have missed a slight opportunity to  
14 have a truly fresh start for this new district, as we  
15 hope this new Community Advisory Board actually does  
16 within a fairly short order kind of begin to morph  
17 into the new school board. So I just wanted to make  
18 that comment.

19 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Dr. Barth. Any  
20 other comments or questions from my colleagues? Then  
21 I'll entertain a motion.

22 MS. CHAMBERS: I move that we accept the  
23 recommended list.

24 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Do I have a  
25 second?

1 MR. BLACK: Second.

2 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. So motion made by Ms.  
3 Chambers, seconded by Mr. Black. All in favor say  
4 "aye."

5 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

6 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? Then the  
7 motion carries.

8 DR. BARTH: Just a --

9 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yes.

10 DR. BARTH: I do want to say I think the process  
11 that we used of bringing folks in for three-minute  
12 statements was incredibly helpful because this was  
13 very different than in the past where we'd just  
14 gotten a list of folks from -- that we often didn't  
15 know, have any idea who they were. And so I really  
16 -- I think this should be a good precedent for how we  
17 create Community Advisory Boards in the future.

18 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Most definitely.

19 COMMISSIONER KEY: And that would be -- you know  
20 -- the uniqueness of this was that it's Little Rock.

21 DR. BARTH: Right.

22 COMMISSIONER KEY: And, you know, at some point  
23 soon there will be the consideration of a Community  
24 Advisory Board in Dollarway because that's the next  
25 -- most recent state takeover, and certainly we'll

1 have conversations then about how we want to do that.  
2 I think our trip to Helena-West Helena in our efforts  
3 to prepare them to go back to local control was  
4 helpful. I know Ms. Warren would be delighted to  
5 have the State Board -- and hopes the State Board at  
6 Dollarway at some point in the future -- so we'll  
7 certainly take that under advisement as part of our  
8 procedures moving forward.

9 DR. BARTH: Yeah, I agree.

10 CHAIRPERSON REITH: And just to echo that as  
11 well from Dr. Barth, a tremendous opportunity here  
12 for us to be more engaged with the community. I  
13 really appreciate all the staff effort, including  
14 your own, that went into this process. We know it  
15 was additional hours; it was an additional evening  
16 that we asked. But we appreciated the process, given  
17 how important this is, both in terms of what we do in  
18 designating takeover and then from there really to  
19 demonstrate our full commitment to returning back to  
20 local control, and I think that's one of the most  
21 visible ways in which we can do it. So we appreciate  
22 your efforts, Commissioner, and those of all.

23 And then I -- and to echo as well Dr. Barth's  
24 comments, I think there's an opportunity here through  
25 this lesson-learned to help communities as they get

1 ready for Civic Advisory Boards to look beyond the  
2 pool of folks that they had already worked with. And  
3 maybe as we start -- and we know that these  
4 communities are coming forth, this is maybe a call to  
5 action as well to the superintendents in those  
6 communities and other community members to start  
7 thinking about speaking with working with community  
8 members that may bring that fresh lens, so that when  
9 it comes time, whether it's -- we do determine as a  
10 board to go down to have this conversation or how we  
11 hope to support you, Commissioner, in those decisions  
12 that are made, that we can have as invigorating list  
13 as we saw here, and maybe even some additions as  
14 well, right, and to bring that perspective. So --  
15 but thank you for your efforts and, again, to your  
16 entire team around those efforts.

17 GENERAL DISCUSSION RE: ACT 1240 WAIVERS

18 CHAIRPERSON REITH: As we switch now to Action  
19 Item A-4, we are about to go into a block of  
20 considerations in regards to Act 1240 waivers. And  
21 given that we have two new board members -- and just  
22 in general, we were going to have a work session on  
23 this because of all the questions and layers of  
24 questions that have come up -- please now we're about  
25 to enter into a conversation here that actually is

1 quite complex and has taken up quite a bit of our  
2 time as a board. I have asked the staff, Ms. Davis,  
3 to give us a little context about the 1240s and then  
4 from that to offer the relationship, right, of how  
5 this relates to the other charters that come before  
6 us and that we consider as this entity. So, Ms.  
7 Davis, thank you.

8 MS. DAVIS: All right. Good morning. Jennifer  
9 Davis, Staff Attorney for the Department. I'm  
10 passing around a chart that will kind of show the  
11 differences between how districts can get waivers,  
12 and I'll start with that.

13 (WHEREUPON, A-4 Exhibit One (1) was marked for  
14 identification and entered into the record.)

15 MS. DAVIS: There are three ways in which school  
16 districts can get waivers. One is by becoming a  
17 district conversion charter school; one is by  
18 becoming a School of Innovation; and then the last  
19 one is through the Act 1240. Like I say, the chart  
20 kind of outlines the approval process, the  
21 restrictions, how long they're granted. If you have  
22 any questions about that, we can go into it, but we  
23 will have a more detailed work session on that later.  
24 But there are three different ways.

25 For Act 1240, those waivers -- under Act 1240, a



1 school district can request all or some of the  
2 waivers that are granted to an open-enrollment  
3 charter school that pulls kids from its district.  
4 All they have to do is petition to the Board, you  
5 guys, to get this; they have to tell you why; they  
6 have to include a copy of the waivers from the open-  
7 enrollment charter school, and a list of the waivers  
8 that they want to have granted. Any waiver that they  
9 request is valid, and this is important to know: it's  
10 valid for the duration that the waivers are valid for  
11 the open-enrollment charter school, unless the  
12 district has requested their own time limit.  
13 Unfortunately, Act 1240 does not provide any criteria  
14 on what you should use to consider whether or not to  
15 grant these waivers and it doesn't really provide any  
16 guidance outside of review the petition, grant in  
17 whole or in part, or deny in whole or in part. We  
18 did cover, I think, last year, when these started, a  
19 list of possible considerations that we had suggested  
20 might be helpful, and, if you want, I'll go over  
21 those.

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yes, please, Ms. Davis.

23 MS. DAVIS: Okay. Some of the considerations  
24 that are helpful when determining whether you should  
25 grant these district waivers -- and keep in mind,

1 these aren't required, nor are they exhaustive. Some  
2 of them include: how does the waiver support or  
3 complement the district's vision and/or strategic  
4 vision; what are the specific benefits to students if  
5 the waivers are granted, and the expected academic  
6 gains to the students; what are the specific plans to  
7 implement the waiver -- like if you're requesting for  
8 a larger class size, you know, what's the largest  
9 class size you would use or are you going to limit it  
10 to certain classes; if the waiver is consistent with  
11 district policy -- and it's important to recognize  
12 that the Board may allow a waiver for flexibility,  
13 but it's up to whether the district can exercise,  
14 that will depend on their policy. So in the end the  
15 district may have to update their own policy to  
16 effectuate any waiver; what is the fiscal impact of  
17 the waiver -- will there be any additional costs  
18 associated and if so, what's the source of that  
19 funding; what effects the waiver will have on current  
20 academic, fiscal or facilities distress status; how  
21 it will help the district to alleviate any of these  
22 issues, and will the implementation of the waiver  
23 cause any of these issues; will the use of the waiver  
24 assist the district in resolving any accreditation  
25 issues or will it cause the district any difficulty

1 in complying with those standards; how has the  
2 charter school effectively applied the waiver and how  
3 will the district insure its own effectiveness in  
4 applying its waiver; has the district school board  
5 supported the waiver request and did they sign a  
6 resolution; have school employees been notified that  
7 the district intends to request and implement these  
8 waivers and if so, what methods of notification were  
9 used; and have parents or other members of the  
10 community been notified when the district intends  
11 these requests.

12 And a few other things that have come about over  
13 the course of the last year of these being in effect,  
14 there has been some caution about granting the  
15 waivers for "just in case" with no plan, because, you  
16 know, through the 1240 process it's a pretty short  
17 process to grant these waivers. It can be granted in  
18 as little as four to six weeks, so it's not that, you  
19 know, granting them "just in case" provides a  
20 cumbersome process. Also, the 1240 waivers are not  
21 like the charters or the district conversions or  
22 school of innovations, and they're not held to the  
23 reasons stated. So it's important that, you know,  
24 there's no oversight over 1240 waivers like you have  
25 over charter schools. So it's important when

1 granting these that the only requirements at this  
2 time and the only limitations is that they have them  
3 for as long as the charter school has them, which,  
4 you know, could be five years, could be ten years, or  
5 up to the rules; you know, if a charter is granted  
6 for 20 years they could have them for 20.

7 Another consideration was granting a full waiver  
8 list versus maybe, you know, going a district  
9 conversion route. And another thing that is  
10 important is that a lot of districts get waivers from  
11 ARVA, but they don't necessarily use them the same  
12 because just by nature ARVA is, you know, different  
13 than your traditional school. So it's important to  
14 see how do they plan to implement those waivers.

15 Do y'all have any questions?

16 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Oh, if you could --

17 DR. BARTH: Just an acronym, ARVA --

18 MS. DAVIS: Arkansas Virtual Academy.

19 DR. BARTH: Yeah.

20 MS. DAVIS: Sorry.

21 MR. WILLIAMSON: I was headed that way, too.

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: And if you could speak, Ms.  
23 Davis, a little bit to the monitoring, or the fact  
24 that with this lack of monitoring -- and then as a  
25 result, some of the conversations we've had about

1 stipulations of five years or things like this --

2 MS. DAVIS: Sure.

3 CHAIRPERSON REITH: -- that obviously aren't in  
4 law. Just context for my new colleagues especially  
5 on where we've come in those conversations.

6 MS. DAVIS: Sure. Unfortunately, under 1240 you  
7 have no monitoring capabilities under this. So if a  
8 district says that they're going to use a waiver in a  
9 particular manner and they don't, or you find that  
10 the waiver is not effective, you cannot revoke it; at  
11 this point there is no way for you to do so. And  
12 because the waivers can be granted for such a length  
13 of time, you also haven't had any ways to limit like  
14 you can on the charter schools -- you know, request  
15 additional information or limit it. However, the  
16 districts can self-limit to say that they're only  
17 going to use it for certain courses; they're only  
18 going to use it for three years or five years or a  
19 year and then come back and report to you on how it's  
20 going and re-request. Some districts have used them  
21 while they're going through the district conversion  
22 application process, so once that, you know, process  
23 is ever granted then those waivers are no longer in  
24 effect. But at that point it's up to the district to  
25 limit because the Board, unfortunately, does not have

1 much oversight. So if they're granted without any  
2 limitations, then just be aware that they will be  
3 granted as long as the charter school has that  
4 waiver.

5 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. I think Mr. --

6 MR. WILLIAMSON: Traditional public schools and  
7 charters are -- I mean, they're both public schools.

8 MS. DAVIS: Correct.

9 MR. WILLIAMSON: And every time we start in on  
10 all these waivers -- you know -- when a charter  
11 school is created they must notify the districts that  
12 it will be reviving again, I'll say. And the  
13 schools, the traditional public schools, when they  
14 ask for these waivers, I mean, they can get the  
15 waivers that any charter school in that area has or I  
16 guess any charter school that they have kids from  
17 their district that are attending.

18 MS. DAVIS: That's correct.

19 MR. WILLIAMSON: But they don't have to notify  
20 or speak to or communicate at all with any charter  
21 schools to get -- right?

22 MS. DAVIS: That's correct.

23 MR. WILLIAMSON: So, okay.

24 MS. DAVIS: And that would --

25 MR. WILLIAMSON: I mean, they're both public and

1 that seems a little one-sided to me.

2 MS. DAVIS: Right. And that's why I think maybe  
3 one of the original 1240 waiver requests -- that one  
4 of the first ones that came up, once that went into  
5 effect -- I think there was some question that the  
6 Board had about, you know, have you talked to your  
7 teachers, have you talked to your board, have you  
8 talked to your -- and at that time I believe that  
9 there was one that hadn't. And so there was a lot of  
10 concerns and that's why that's a consideration that,  
11 you know, we encourage applicants, when they submit  
12 their petitions, to, you know, answer these questions  
13 before coming to you. You know, we can't force them  
14 to, but we encourage them to because we know that  
15 you're going to have those questions.

16 MR. WILLIAMSON: Okay.

17 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. And if you could  
18 speak a little bit just because I know over the years  
19 we've had quite a few conversations with the teachers  
20 association, the Arkansas Education Association,  
21 concerns around the waivers as related to teaching  
22 licenses and such, and implications especially when  
23 it's maybe even beyond just a single school. Right?

24 MS. DAVIS: Right.

25 CHAIRPERSON REITH: As is the case with a

1 charter.

2 MS. DAVIS: Okay. And one of the things -- and  
3 this may confuse probably -- I know it's going to  
4 confuse me, so -- you have previously approved for  
5 emergency approval the new Arkansas Highly Qualified  
6 rules.

7 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yes.

8 MS. DAVIS: And they'll be coming before you  
9 later today for final approval. One thing that --  
10 because the highly qualified as part of ESSA is no  
11 longer; these rules still require that districts, as  
12 well as, you know, even our charter schools, they  
13 apply for core courses. So even for licensure  
14 waivers, because there are a lot of districts that  
15 have requested licensure waivers -- and I think  
16 there's even some up today that are requesting that  
17 -- they still have to comply with the AQT rules,  
18 which the AQT rules, just to kind of summarize it,  
19 you either have to have a valid teaching license --  
20 these are for core areas too; that's another thing,  
21 for core areas. You either have to have a valid  
22 teaching license or there are other ways that, if you  
23 have a bachelor's degree and, you know, certain  
24 experience, there's a list of those. So they would  
25 still have to comply with that, which I think helps



1 to kind of alleviate in those core courses, still  
2 maintaining the standards. And the one other thing  
3 to note is that when the districts get waivers for  
4 licensure that applies to the districts. Teachers  
5 that are still, say, like -- I think one of the  
6 waivers today is for people who have not yet passed  
7 their Praxis; they will still need to continue with  
8 the licensure route in order for them to become  
9 licensed. It's just for the district to have  
10 teachers of record that aren't licensed yet. So  
11 there are still kind of two paths: teachers are still  
12 required, if they want to maintain licensure and go  
13 that path.

14 Did that make anything more confusing?

15 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Dr. Barth.

16 DR. BARTH: Could you just remind us what  
17 separates core areas from non-core areas? What are  
18 the core areas? And not the full list but kind of  
19 what's our -- is it --

20 MS. DAVIS: I think Ms. Pfeffer is going to come  
21 up, just so I don't confuse you any more.

22 MS. PFEFFER: Well, as we define the core areas  
23 in the AQT rules, we kept the same core areas that  
24 had previously been designated core content -- and  
25 really it's probably good to say core content areas

1 -- under No Child Left Behind. That was in an  
2 attempt to not just go too far away too quickly from  
3 what requirements had been in the past. So those  
4 core areas are the -- what you would consider  
5 English, math, science, social studies; and then  
6 music, art, foreign language -- well, and early  
7 childhood falling in there because of the reading,  
8 writing -- the reading and the math -- I may have  
9 left off math -- I should have stopped with the list.  
10 But, yes, they are the same core areas that had been  
11 established under No Child Left Behind.

12 DR. BARTH: And how does special education fit  
13 in there?

14 MS. PFEFFER: Special education is a unique  
15 situation. First of all, special education must have  
16 a licensed special education teacher or a teacher who  
17 is on an ALP to get that certification. So that  
18 requirement is there. The content piece comes in  
19 because Arkansas cannot guarantee the Office of  
20 Special Education Programs, OSEP. We, in order to  
21 receive funding, had to sign an assurance with OSEP  
22 that because we could not guarantee all Arkansas  
23 teachers would be 100% certified without any  
24 provisional, any emergency certifications, that not  
25 only would they be licensed but qualified in that

1 content area. So that's why right now they are still  
2 under that. Our goal is to work through this school  
3 year with those provisions in place and hopefully, as  
4 we get into legislative session and into our ESSA  
5 plan, that we'll have drafted kind of a comprehensive  
6 policy for special education that would take care of  
7 all of that where we're not having to separate out  
8 license and AQT for any special ed.

9 DR. BARTH: And then gifted and talented, could  
10 you kind of go through that?

11 MS. PFEFFER: Gifted and talented is not part of  
12 this area here; it's just the separate certification  
13 for gifted and talented.

14 DR. BARTH: Okay. And I guess this is for Ms.  
15 Davis. And under Act 1240, gifted and talented can  
16 be -- could be -- there could be a request for  
17 waiver; correct?

18 MS. DAVIS: Right. That is correct.

19 DR. BARTH: Okay. Thanks.

20 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Additional  
21 questions from my colleagues? Yes, Commissioner.

22 COMMISSIONER KEY: Just want to add another  
23 piece to this to not -- not to make it more  
24 confusing, but I think it's important for you to  
25 know. In Act 1240 waivers, you all have approved

1           waivers that affect career and technical education,  
2           which really falls outside of ADE and falls under  
3           Career Ed. With district conversation charters, with  
4           charters, with schools of innovation, any of those  
5           waivers, our process has been very clear, that we  
6           have pulled someone from ACE -- in ACE, Arkansas  
7           Career Education -- have pulled them in, consulted,  
8           and they've been at the table. Because Act 1240  
9           didn't give us an opportunity to create a system that  
10          had been falling through the cracks. So we'd been --  
11          I think there have been a couple of months now or a  
12          couple of times through the last six months that we  
13          approved something here and then Dr. Childers would  
14          say, "Hey, we didn't know anything about this." So  
15          we have -- it's not reflected here, but we have  
16          changed our process now to notify -- when we get  
17          notification that a district is asking for waivers  
18          under Act 1240 that impact career and technical  
19          education, we notify the team over at Career Ed. And  
20          really it's left to Career Ed. to contact the school  
21          to have any conversation with the school, or we said  
22          they are welcome to come here and if they have issues  
23          or concerns they can present those to you as the Act  
24          1240 waivers are debated. So I just wanted to give  
25          you that little bit of extra information that has

1           become apparent over the last six months or so that  
2           -- of a gap in the system that we've attempted to  
3           close.

4           DR. BARTH: And on that, in terms of the waivers  
5           that we have passed so far related to career tech, I  
6           mean, is it -- have any of them caused them, the  
7           career tech folks -- Career Ed. folks, particular  
8           heartburn or is it just a lack of good communication?

9           COMMISSIONER KEY: It wasn't anything they  
10          couldn't overcome. But, I mean, there was some  
11          heartburn, yes, but I think it's more of knowing  
12          ahead of time so that if there were any issues that  
13          were truly of concern they could work those out with  
14          the districts.

15          DR. BARTH: Gotcha.

16          CHAIRPERSON REITH: But you do feel,  
17          Commissioner, that for those that we are considering  
18          today, all of those related to and have a career  
19          element, ACE has been notified?

20          MS. DAVIS: Yes.

21          COMMISSIONER KEY: Yes.

22          CHAIRPERSON REITH: So we can say that for at  
23          least for what we're considering today?

24          MS. DAVIS: Yes.

25          COMMISSIONER KEY: For what -- yes, for today's

1 -- really, this is the first set --

2 CHAIRPERSON REITH: First time that we've --

3 COMMISSIONER KEY: -- that this process has been  
4 followed.

5 MS. DAVIS: That's correct.

6 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Yes, I see Ms.  
7 Chambers. Another question?

8 MS. CHAMBERS: Commissioner, this may already be  
9 an existing report but the volume of the waiver  
10 requests that we're about to contemplate remind me of  
11 the importance of kind of stepping back periodically,  
12 because we're way -- we bring our heart and souls to  
13 each one of these individual decisions, but sometimes  
14 you don't realize collectively what you've done until  
15 you step back and you look at the waterfront. So as  
16 we go forward will it be possible to periodically  
17 look at where we have these waivers and kind of the  
18 collected nature of them, whether it's career ed. or  
19 otherwise, so that we can see from a state  
20 perspective what it looks like.

21 CHAIRPERSON REITH: And that's actually the work  
22 session that we're having next month. We would've  
23 had it this month if our agenda hadn't been so long.  
24 But out of -- and with the need to prioritize to  
25 allow school to get started for a lot of these, these

1 decisions obviously affect families and such -- that  
2 was the decision to then postpone it till next month.  
3 But we will be dedicating our work session to this,  
4 not just hearing this but actually doing the  
5 reflection that you've discussed. And it is my hope,  
6 aspirationally, as I've shared with Ms. Coffman as  
7 well, that we can look at the intersectionality of  
8 these three processes and maybe because the  
9 application -- it is up to us to put together the  
10 application; maybe we have an opportunity there in  
11 the application, right, to -- if there's any lessons  
12 learned or maybe put in there "please talk to ACE if  
13 you -- if there's a career element" or there's things  
14 that we're hoping to help improve the process, so not  
15 just a conversation but actually to get into some of  
16 the process.

17 MS. CHAMBERS: Well, and if we could -- and this  
18 may be exactly what you were saying -- I hate to  
19 create yet another report, but something that gives  
20 us -- it's almost a report card on us over a period  
21 of time what we've done, what we've approved or maybe  
22 what we've denied, and to your point the success or  
23 the performance of those decisions.

24 CHAIRPERSON REITH: And so, Ms. Davis, I think  
25 the request there is if we could have a list of all

1 the ones that we've approved thus far by the time of  
2 the work session.

3 MS. DAVIS: Right. There's actually a list on  
4 the website right now that has a list of all the  
5 waivers that have been approved for the open-  
6 enrollment charter schools, the district conversions,  
7 and it does include Act 1240. It has the school  
8 district and the waiver that was approved.

9 CHAIRPERSON REITH: And if we could get any  
10 analysis from you-all about the process thus far?  
11 Although it's -- my guess is most of it was for this  
12 coming school year that we've approved thus far,  
13 although we've had a few that have already applied.  
14 So I guess any analysis of those that have been done  
15 thus far, any feedback or generalities. We know how  
16 much is on y'all's plate and this follow-up is one  
17 that would be time-consuming but if there is any way  
18 where we can garner at least some impression,  
19 something to inform this so that, again, it's not  
20 just a presentation but an actual conversation for  
21 our work session in August --

22 MS. DAVIS: Okay.

23 CHAIRPERSON REITH: -- I would appreciate that.  
24 And I think Ms. Chambers' comments echo that, as  
25 well. So, thank you. And thank you, Commissioner.



1           Any additional questions from my colleagues,  
2 especially our new colleagues here? Although Ms.  
3 Newton has joined us on several of these over the  
4 last year. Okay. Wonderful. Any final --

5           MS. DAVIS: No, but when you're ready I'll go  
6 ahead and go over the procedures for you.

7           CHAIRPERSON REITH: Wonderful. We are ready.

8           MS. DAVIS: Okay. So the procedures that you're  
9 going to follow -- although you don't have any  
10 official procedures, what you have done in the past  
11 is that all persons wishing to provide testimony  
12 today, outside the attorneys, will need to be sworn  
13 in; the district is going to have -- I promise I  
14 didn't move that earlier -- the district is going to  
15 have 20 minutes to present its case to you guys for  
16 approval; any parties opposed to these waivers will  
17 have 20 minutes to present their argument; the  
18 district will have 5 minutes to respond to any  
19 argument in opposition. You can follow that  
20 presentation and discussion with any questions; you  
21 can also ask questions of anyone else during the  
22 presentation or at that time. You can then grant in  
23 whole or in part or deny in whole or in part the  
24 proposed waivers and issue a final decision today.  
25 You can also take the matter under advisement, but

1           you must make a decision within 90 days of receiving  
2           the petition.

3                   CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Any questions  
4           about the process?

5                   DR. BARTH: Just to clarify for new folks. But  
6           if there is a time limitation on the waiver that has  
7           to be voluntary on behalf of the district?

8                   MS. DAVIS: Right.

9                   CHAIRPERSON REITH: But they can offer it -- if  
10          they haven't done so in writing, they can offer it  
11          today, verbally --

12                   MS. DAVIS: Absolutely.

13                   CHAIRPERSON REITH: -- and it would -- as we do  
14          with our charters, as well. Thank you. Thank you  
15          for the clarification of that process, Ms. Davis.

16   A-4: DISTRICT REQUEST FOR WAIVERS GRANTED TO OPEN-ENROLLMENT  
17   CHARTERS: BARTON LEXA SCHOOL DISTRICT

18                   CHAIRPERSON REITH: And with that, Ms. Perry,  
19          you are recognized for Action Item A-4, the District  
20          Request for Waivers Granted to Open-Enrollment  
21          Charters for the Barton Lexa School District.

22                   MS. PERRY: Yes. I know that you've all looked  
23          at the materials that are in the agenda book for you.  
24          I would like to advise you that these waivers have  
25          been requested from July 20, 2016 through July 20,

1           2021. And you will also note that this is the first  
2           district to come back to you that you've already  
3           granted some waivers previously. And Superintendent  
4           David Tollett is here to speak to you.

5           CHAIRPERSON REITH: Fantastic. Anyone -- any  
6           non-attorneys planning to testify on this, if you  
7           could please stand -- any you, as well, if you could  
8           kindly -- and raise your right hands, I do need to  
9           swear you in. Do you swear and affirm to tell the  
10          truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

11          (ALL WITNESSES ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

12          CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. And if you could  
13          please state your name for the record.

14          SUPT. TOLLETT: I'm David Tollett; I'm the  
15          superintendent at Barton Lexa School District.

16          CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. You have 20  
17          minutes.

18          SUPT. TOLLETT: Okay. I don't think I'll take  
19          20 minutes. But, first of all, I would like to say I  
20          appreciate the waivers from last time; I appreciate  
21          the opportunity to come back again as my team has  
22          worked through this process. I took over as  
23          superintendent of Barton Lexa School District July  
24          1st of last year, so I've only been there for a year,  
25          and my team has really come together and done some

1           amazing work and we have made a lot of progress,  
2           especially putting into practice the waivers that  
3           have already been granted to us. I just want to say  
4           when I came in in July of last year we sat down  
5           together as a K-12 staff and looked at our school  
6           district, looked at our vision and mission  
7           statements, and we didn't really like what we saw,  
8           and so we scrapped pretty much everything we had and  
9           started over. And together through a process my  
10          staff has worked together to put together a vision --  
11          a new vision and mission for our district.

12                 Our vision statement is: Preparing today's  
13          learners for life by personalizing their educational  
14          needs. This represents us because what we are  
15          wanting to do in the Delta is to service all  
16          students, no matter where they are and what path they  
17          want to choose in life.

18                 Through this process my high school has  
19          developed basically four education paths for our  
20          students to choose from:

21                         One is an advanced college track. If you're the  
22          kind of kid that, you know, you want the best of the  
23          best, you want the hardest classes, you want AP, you  
24          want concurrent credit, you want the rigor, we've got  
25          it. We have a college track for students who want

1           some rigor but they want some other classes in there.  
2           They want to go a four-year college, we've got it.  
3           We have a college and career track for those students  
4           wanting to go to a two-year college. We're going to  
5           prepare them to go to a four-year college and we're  
6           also going to prepare them to enter the technical  
7           field and get them involved in all of those before  
8           they leave our high school

9                   And then we have our career ready. If you're a  
10           student who just wants a high school diploma and  
11           maybe you're the first out of your family to ever  
12           even get a high school diploma and go into the career  
13           workforce, we want to prepare you for that, prepare  
14           soft skills, and then put you in an apprenticeship,  
15           internship or work program with some of our  
16           corporations that are around. And we have been  
17           working tirelessly to be able to form and forge those  
18           partnerships with our corporations in our community,  
19           not only the community of Helena-West Helena but also  
20           Marianna and Marvel that are residing right around  
21           us. We're not just targeting one location; we want  
22           several locations. And Barton Lexa, if you don't  
23           know the geographic location, we are pretty much  
24           about 10 minutes away from each one of those  
25           communities, even though Barton is just a community

1 and basically we have a school, a place that sells  
2 tractors, a credit union, and a gas station, and  
3 that's pretty much all of Barton.

4 I wanted to say that our school is not like some  
5 of the other schools that are in the Delta. We  
6 perform well academically, not as well as we would  
7 like to but we are above the curve, if you'd like to  
8 use that term, than our surrounding schools. The  
9 Office of Educational Policy just recognized us to be  
10 one of the highest performing schools in both math  
11 and literacy, and we don't want to stop there. I  
12 mean, that's a great milestone but we don't want to  
13 just be recognized as one of the higher performing  
14 schools of poverty; we want to be recognized as one  
15 of the highest performing schools in the state and  
16 then move on to the national level. We have high  
17 aspirations and, like I said, my staff has bought  
18 into that.

19 Just talking about the waivers for a moment, we  
20 have requested and received our waivers from last  
21 time. The first one is a licensure waiver for core  
22 subject areas. I know that this has been a sticking  
23 point. The reason that we are bringing this back to  
24 you is KIPP Delta, which is one of our competing  
25 schools for staff members, has this waiver. Helena-

1 West Helena was just recently granted this waiver.  
2 As the neighboring school district to that, that puts  
3 me in an awkward position for being able to recruit  
4 and hire staff members. It is always our first  
5 priority to seek out certified staff members, but in  
6 the Delta and with the teacher shortage this is  
7 getting more difficult. And I just want to elaborate  
8 on this: I had a 7th and 8th grade English position  
9 come open this last year in May. We have beat down  
10 every door in this state, out of this state. I have  
11 been through over 100 applicants, not applicants to  
12 our district but 100 people who could possibly do  
13 this job. And after offering it a half-dozen times  
14 and being turned down a half-dozen times, finding  
15 people to actually take the job, we finally found a  
16 good qualified certified staff. But it took us 100  
17 tries to be able to find one teacher and we were  
18 fortunate to do that because a lot of our schools  
19 around have not been able to do that. For the first  
20 year ever in the history of me being in this field we  
21 are having problems finding coaches. I had two  
22 coaching openings that took two months to fill and,  
23 finally, we filled one with a bright young gentleman  
24 who's coming straight out of college who we got into  
25 the APPLE program. And this is not for, you know,

1           some, you know, teaching math or history; this is for  
2           elementary PE and coaching. So recruitment of staff  
3           is very difficult. And the reason I'm asking for  
4           this waiver for core subjects areas is it allows me  
5           the flexibility, if and when we need this in the next  
6           five years, to be able to put a quality person in  
7           that classroom for our students. The last thing I  
8           want to do is put a substitute in a classroom for  
9           kids and have them all year long. So if there's a  
10          way around it, you know, to put a quality person  
11          who's going to be able to educate my children, that's  
12          what I want to do. But I'm going to -- I need this  
13          waiver to be able to do that.

14                 One of the things that has been a barrier for us  
15                 is some of our cut scores for our Praxis scores are  
16                 higher than other states that are around. I mean,  
17                 I'm right there sitting on the Mississippi border.  
18                 Mississippi, Tennessee, there's -- I mean, there's  
19                 other states that are competing for the same teachers  
20                 in my area, just like I'm competing for their  
21                 teachers. And so TFA, which has been an option in  
22                 the past, is no longer an option. When the Governor  
23                 made his announcement, the next day the head of TFA  
24                 for the state of Arkansas was in my office saying,  
25                 "Well, congratulations, but you're not getting any



1 teachers this year; they're all going to Little Rock  
2 public schools because we don't have enough to supply  
3 them and you at the same time." So we have had to  
4 get creative and really go after and work hard to  
5 find staff members. And just moving forward, as this  
6 teacher shortage thing becomes more of a concern,  
7 we're going to have to have some flexibility and  
8 that's why we're asking for that one for the first  
9 five years.

10 The second one is to remove the restrictions on  
11 class size and teacher loads. The waiver to remove  
12 class size restrictions are only on two different  
13 things: number one, vocational programs. As I said,  
14 we're trying to do apprenticeship/internship  
15 programs. We want to be able to utilize that where  
16 our students go and get on-the-job training, but also  
17 are able to work with us and us work with them, you  
18 know, a day or two a week of developing soft skills.  
19 And while we don't need this presently, as we  
20 continue to grow this program we may have a need for  
21 that. Also, my counselor this year is taking on my  
22 seniors and she has requested to have all the seniors  
23 in one period to be able to work with them to do book  
24 studies, to do soft skills, to bring in speakers, to  
25 work on ACT stuff, college scholarships, and be able

1 to do that. Well, we really need a waiver for that  
2 to be able for her to do that for us.

3 The student/teacher loads for 7-12 we're asking  
4 to be waived for all classes. The 150 number is kind  
5 of troubling, and I serve on the state standards  
6 review committee and we've talked about the 150  
7 number. This number -- and I don't know if you know  
8 where it came from, but back in the 80s it was set  
9 when high schools were doing five- and six-period  
10 days. It's not research-based. It's not -- there's  
11 no basis for 150; it's just an arbitrary number. And  
12 so we're asking that that be waived so we can use it  
13 if we need to at certain times. Currently, there's  
14 no need for us to have that but, like I said, you  
15 know, maybe in the future there will be.

16 Also, the flexible classroom time -- this was  
17 recommended to us by the Arkansas Public School  
18 Resource Center. They recommend the flexible  
19 classroom time as we move forward. It's not about  
20 how many minutes you're sitting in a class; it's  
21 about the quality of instruction that you're  
22 receiving. Arkansas Virtual is even developing, I  
23 believe, classes that have flex time options there.  
24 We also need it for internship/apprenticeship work  
25 programs, civic education. We want to look at

1 possibly bringing in home-school students, back into  
2 the public school fold.

3 And I want to make a push real quick -- and  
4 Cathy Swann and Arkansas Virtual has been the  
5 greatest equalizing force for small schools, and  
6 especially schools in the Delta, and it's a very  
7 affordable, realistic option. Without it, I could  
8 not offer what we offer. I couldn't offer the same  
9 thing that a kid in western Arkansas would get, and  
10 really, truly, it is one of the greatest things that  
11 we could ever participate in. Through the waivers  
12 that we received this year we were able to add an  
13 additional 18 electives that are taught by my  
14 teachers, open up an additional lab for Arkansas  
15 Virtual and expand our offerings through Arkansas  
16 Virtual for the college and career clusters, as well  
17 as foreign language offerings, things that they would  
18 not have an opportunity to take otherwise. And, like  
19 I said, these would be good, the same as our other  
20 waivers, for five years. We do have, like I said, a  
21 plan but we also want to plan for the future and not  
22 be restricted. And like I said, we want to be able  
23 to provide a quality education to meet the needs of  
24 all of our students, not just the few.

25 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Mr. Tollett. You

1 still have eight minutes. I don't know if there's  
2 anyone accompanying you from the district?

3 SUPT. TOLLETT: No, there's not.

4 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Ms. Perry, is there any  
5 opposition? I know I have the public comment list  
6 here; I don't have anyone speaking specifically to  
7 this item?

8 MS. PERRY: No, ma'am. I'm not aware of any.

9 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Then with that, Mr.  
10 Tollett, any closing remarks? You still --

11 SUPT. TOLLETT: I'll take any questions y'all  
12 will have.

13 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Well, I will start off with  
14 one question and then open it up to my colleagues.  
15 Have you spoken with teachers in your district or  
16 your school board --

17 SUPT. TOLLETT: Yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON REITH: -- about your intentions to  
19 come here?

20 SUPT. TOLLETT: Yes. All of this is run through  
21 them. And we actually -- our school board approved a  
22 resolution for these waivers.

23 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. And teachers?

24 SUPT. TOLLETT: Yes.

25 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Thank you. So with

1 that, questions from my colleagues on the Board?

2 Yes, of course, Ms. Newton, you're recognized.

3 MS. NEWTON: Going back to the teacher question,  
4 I know you told them but what was their response?

5 SUPT. TOLLETT: Well, the response from the  
6 majority of the staff -- they were real hesitant when  
7 we first came up to do waivers. But as they're  
8 seeing it unfold and what we're able to do for kids,  
9 they've bought in. There's really no opposition to  
10 this at all.

11 MS. NEWTON: To these specific waivers?

12 SUPT. TOLLETT: Correct.

13 MS. NEWTON: Okay. You are aware that the  
14 licensure for core areas you will still have to abide  
15 by AQT?

16 SUPT. TOLLETT: Yes.

17 MS. NEWTON: Okay. The teacher load, one --  
18 that you are requesting, one of your comments in  
19 there was technology makes grading easier for  
20 teachers?

21 SUPT. TOLLETT: Well, technology -- well, yes.  
22 Technology has actually made it easier for teachers  
23 to conduct their duties. If you set it up and  
24 there's a whole host of things that -- I mean, of  
25 technology solutions that can be implemented in a

1 classroom, especially for grading purposes where  
2 students -- you can go in and do your test online,  
3 have the students take it online, and we have just  
4 become a one-to-one school this year to be able to  
5 automatically get the feedback on the majority of  
6 that; where in the past, you know, teachers would  
7 have to sit at home or sit during their conference  
8 period and sit there and grade paper after paper  
9 after paper. So, technology does make it a lot more  
10 time efficient.

11 MS. NEWTON: Have you ever graded 150  
12 constructed responses --

13 SUPT. TOLLETT: I have.

14 MS. NEWTON: -- or essays?

15 SUPT. TOLLETT: I have.

16 MS. NEWTON: I don't know of any technology that  
17 will help that, you know.

18 SUPT. TOLLETT: Well, that's true. But the  
19 thing about it is, when I was grading those 150  
20 responses I was also grading 100 to 200 multiple  
21 choice questions on each one of those exams as well.  
22 So it actually frees up the multiple choice part of  
23 it to be able to have more time to focus on the  
24 writing part.

25 MS. NEWTON: What would be a limit? I mean,

1           you're saying 150 is not enough. Is there an upper  
2           limit?

3           SUPT. TOLLETT: I would say no more than 180.  
4           That would be tops. But you have to understand we  
5           are on an eight-period day.

6           MS. NEWTON: I've been on an eight-period day.  
7           I understand that.

8           SUPT. TOLLETT: Which means our teachers will  
9           teach seven periods.

10          MS. NEWTON: Right.

11          SUPT. TOLLETT: So I would say 180, max. And  
12          that would be -- I mean, this is not something that,  
13          as administration, we take lightly; we just dump it  
14          on a teacher. This would be an agreement. The  
15          waiver also, I mean, does not include the pay  
16          portion. I mean, once you exceed 150, I mean, we  
17          still have to pay them for that. It has to -- I  
18          mean, it's going to be an agreed upon thing.

19          MS. NEWTON: Okay. The flexible classroom time,  
20          you're asking for that for all classes, grades 7  
21          through 12?

22          SUPT. TOLLETT: Correct.

23          MS. NEWTON: What will a flex time look like for  
24          a 7th and 8th grade or even a 9th grade student?

25          SUPT. TOLLETT: Well, currently, we're not going

1 to be utilizing this waiver. This gives us the  
2 ability in the future to be able to start looking at  
3 what kinds of things could be flexed, what we could  
4 do with the flex time waiver. But, currently, for  
5 the current coming-up school year this is not  
6 something that we are equipped to take advantage of.

7 MS. NEWTON: So what grades are you equipped to  
8 take advantage of it with?

9 SUPT. TOLLETT: None right now.

10 MS. NEWTON: So --

11 SUPT. TOLLETT: This would be for future forward  
12 planning within our school district.

13 MS. NEWTON: So you don't have any plans to use  
14 the flex time this next school year?

15 SUPT. TOLLETT: No, not for this next school  
16 year. Now moving forward with Arkansas Virtual  
17 options, to be able to utilize it, to develop, like I  
18 said, the home-schooling options, to be able to  
19 develop -- I don't know -- I mean, maybe some other  
20 options that are not yet known to me -- we plan to  
21 explore this and look at other schools that are using  
22 that and look at what they're doing with it.

23 MS. NEWTON: How do you think these waivers  
24 you're asking for are going to affect student  
25 achievement?



1           SUPT. TOLLETT: Well, I mean, I wouldn't be here  
2 asking for them if I didn't think that they were  
3 going to bring it up. I mean, we're -- you know --  
4 for our area we're a high performing school, but  
5 that's not where we want to stop; we want to, you  
6 know, push on. And if you keep doing the same thing  
7 you're going to get the same result. Well, I don't  
8 want the same results; I want to keep pushing this  
9 forward where we're going to improve, beyond being  
10 one of the highest performing schools in poverty and  
11 being one -- you know -- to being one of the highest  
12 performing schools in the state.

13           MS. NEWTON: What oversight or monitoring are  
14 you doing on your previous waivers and your plans on  
15 monitoring in the future?

16           SUPT. TOLLETT: We have set up systems to be  
17 able to do that. Like I said, I've only been there  
18 since July of last year. Through this entire year of  
19 setting up systems to be able to monitor that, we  
20 have established our baseline data throughout the  
21 entire system and now we are going to be able to  
22 monitor that moving forward. One of the things that  
23 I promised this board when I stood here the last time  
24 is that I would provide -- voluntarily provide  
25 reports to this board on our progress, and I intend

1 to do that. But in order to do that, we had to set  
2 our baseline data.

3 MS. NEWTON: So do you have any results on how  
4 the waivers performed last year?

5 SUPT. TOLLETT: Well, we haven't had a chance to  
6 use them. I went before this board in January, and  
7 our waivers actually started July 1st of this year.

8 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

9 SUPT. TOLLETT: I mean, of 2016. So, I mean, we  
10 haven't even put them into effect yet, other than we  
11 went ahead and re-set our school year to more align  
12 with our college. So, you know, that's the only  
13 waiver we've really taken advantage of so far. But,  
14 I mean, we've set up our system to, you know, utilize  
15 our waivers that we received; we just don't -- I  
16 mean, we haven't had the first day of school in that  
17 yet.

18 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

19 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Ms. Zook.

20 MS. ZOOK: Yes. Have you spoken -- I know you  
21 mentioned Ms. Swann. Have you spoken to the other  
22 charter to see specifically how the waivers you're  
23 requesting have helped their students with  
24 achievement?

25 SUPT. TOLLETT: KIPP, yes.

1 MS. ZOOK: KIPP and Virtual, I think, were the  
2 two you mentioned.

3 SUPT. TOLLETT: Yes. I've seen it actually  
4 first-hand. I've been on onsite visits to KIPP and  
5 they utilize -- I mean, they put their staff in --  
6 they're looking for quality people just the same as  
7 me and they utilize especially the licensure waiver  
8 -- I would say the licensure waiver, maybe some of  
9 the flexible. But the licensure waiver for sure is a  
10 big, big help to them.

11 MS. ZOOK: And what about the overall load?

12 SUPT. TOLLETT: Well, they have very small  
13 classes. They're in modulars. Their classrooms are  
14 not even really equipped to handle a large amount of  
15 students.

16 MS. ZOOK: Okay. You're a Needs Improvement  
17 school; correct? You're not?

18 SUPT. TOLLETT: Well, I mean, we are. Yes.

19 MS. ZOOK: Yeah. And what -- I know under Needs  
20 Improvement it's a big group. Is there a specific --  
21 where are you in that Needs Improvement school?

22 SUPT. TOLLETT: I mean, we're not on academic  
23 distress or anything like that. We're -- I mean,  
24 both our math and literacy we need -- you know --  
25 there's a few tweaks that we need to do to that. Of

1 course, it's dependent on which test score data you  
2 want to look at too, so, you know --

3 MS. ZOOK: Right. True. Well, we're going to  
4 have a concordance for that, so you're going to be --

5 SUPT. TOLLETT: I mean, I just take that with a  
6 grain of salt at this point in time, so --

7 MS. ZOOK: Right. What businesses are you  
8 partnering with?

9 SUPT. TOLLETT: Right now, we are partnering --  
10 we have partnered with the culinary programs, which  
11 are -- well, right now, in our area, of course, we're  
12 limited, but McDonalds, Subway, the casino, which is  
13 actually across the river but -- these little mom-  
14 and-pop restaurants. We actually have received a  
15 grant and we are starting a culinary program this  
16 year. We're in the process of putting our kitchen  
17 in; it's one of the few high school culinary programs  
18 in the state of Arkansas. We are also partnering  
19 with several other corporations, large corporations,  
20 as well as a lot of mom-and-pop kind of stores. We  
21 have just now put in the format to be able to do  
22 that. And so our push this coming year is to get  
23 official partnerships that support the school, as  
24 well as we support them, and be able to bring them in  
25 as speakers, to be able to place our students in

1 apprenticeship programs, and let them kind of develop  
2 what kind of apprenticeships they want to see in  
3 their company. And then bring those in and promote  
4 them to our students and let our students choose kind  
5 of what programs that they want to be a part of.

6 MS. ZOOK: And you're just asking for the three  
7 waivers for which you provided rationale, not any of  
8 the other waivers beyond what you've got?

9 SUPT. TOLLETT: That's correct. I don't need  
10 the blanket waivers. I mean, there are a lot of  
11 things that -- when my team sat down we went through  
12 the majority of these, and a lot of them -- I mean,  
13 if they're not going to help our kids, we don't need  
14 them. We just need -- the ones that we have  
15 specifically selected out have been selected out for  
16 a purpose because we think that we can do something  
17 with it to enhance our education and the educational  
18 opportunities of our students.

19 MS. ZOOK: Okay. Thank you. That's all, Madam  
20 Chair.

21 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Ms. Zook. Dr.  
22 Barth.

23 DR. BARTH: Yeah, this is for Ms. Pfeffer, and  
24 I'm just a little confused on this, on the waiver  
25 request for the core subject areas and how that ties

1 to AQT.

2 MS. PFEFFER: If I understand right, that they  
3 would be asking for a waiver from licensure in the  
4 core areas but they would still be required to hire  
5 teachers who would have at least a bachelor's degree  
6 and a way to evidence that content expertise --

7 DR. BARTH: Okay.

8 MS. PFEFFER: -- in those areas. Am I correct?  
9 That's what --

10 DR. BARTH: Okay.

11 MS. PFEFFER: Yes, that's our understanding.

12 DR. BARTH: Okay. That's -- got it, got it.  
13 Thanks. I was just trying to square those things.  
14 On the class size and teacher load, you know, I've --  
15 in these 1240 waivers, this has been the area where  
16 I've really, I think, been the most agitated because  
17 I think that -- you know -- I've taught and graded  
18 for 23 years, and over that period, a period of great  
19 technological change, grading has not become easier.  
20 And I think there just reaches a point of diminishing  
21 returns in terms of students -- a teacher's ability  
22 to have genuine relationships with students in a  
23 healthy teaching and learning atmosphere. So I think  
24 there is -- I think that number of 150 is not just  
25 pulled out of thin air; I think there is some logic

1 to it. That's an area where I really have some  
2 problems with deviating from the standard, and you're  
3 not the first person I've said that to. But I just  
4 really -- I think it -- you know -- a theme of these  
5 1240s -- and I'm kind of picking on you because  
6 you're standing there, but a theme of these 1240s has  
7 been, I think, some core disrespect for the teaching  
8 profession and how much time and energy that takes  
9 and how high quality contact with students just takes  
10 time. And so anyway, that's -- you're there.

11 The other thing that's been gnawing at me, and  
12 I'd like your response to it, you know, I'm fearing  
13 that increasingly we see these 1240 waivers related  
14 to a senior year that is focused on the world beyond  
15 school. I feel like we're moving increasingly to a  
16 K-11 education with a gap year attached to it. And  
17 I'm all about gap years but I'm also for, you know,  
18 13 years of real education followed by that. And so  
19 I guess I would ask your response to that; why  
20 shouldn't I be worried that we're veering into an  
21 education that is, especially in the senior year,  
22 pretty much watered down to the point of possibly  
23 threatening whether we're providing an adequate  
24 educate across that 13-year period?

25 SUPT. TOLLETT: Well, I would respond to that --

1 and that's a great question. I would respond to it  
2 by saying this: first of all, I don't think it's  
3 watered down. The whole point is to prepare them to  
4 be able to go to college, to be able to enter the  
5 workforce. You're dealing with 16-, 17-year old  
6 kids. There is a drastic reality check that they  
7 have to go through between leaving high school and  
8 going into college, or leaving high school and going  
9 into the workforce. And one of the things that  
10 especially public schools want to be able to do, and  
11 especially at Barton, is to bridge that gap. They  
12 need to have a gap where they are still supported by  
13 us fully to be able to learn and adapt to what it's  
14 going to be like in a college atmosphere; what it's  
15 going to be like in an internship or apprenticeship  
16 or job; what it means to show up for work every day;  
17 what it means to actually have to dig deep and you're  
18 the only person who is handling this job and you  
19 can't just run to somebody and them, you know, do it  
20 for you or show you how to do it; to be able to  
21 think. And to allow the workforce to be able to  
22 communicate with our students what they're looking  
23 for and their expectations and communicate those  
24 successes that these students -- or the qualities for  
25 the successes that these students are going to have.



1           Also, the same thing applies to college. You take a  
2           student, you prepare them for college they get into  
3           college; well, a lot of students the first time they  
4           step foot in a college classroom they don't -- it's  
5           not like high school; they don't understand that, you  
6           know, they may not have a teacher over them saying,  
7           "Okay, you need to do this homework," you know, and  
8           it's a little bit different of an environment. In  
9           those environments we're able to come back and  
10          support them and when they start faltering, when they  
11          run back to us because we're their safe zone, we're  
12          able to say, "This is how it is; this is what we need  
13          to do. Let me help you with this, but eventually  
14          you've got to take the steps to move forward with  
15          this." And when you are looking at -- and this is  
16          what I deal with in the eastern part of the state:  
17          when you are dealing with students of poverty whose  
18          parents may not even have a high school diploma,  
19          college, the career force or workforce -- a lot of  
20          our students come from homes where they've never even  
21          seen their parent work. So, there is a big gap.  
22          Those parents where -- I was brought up in a middle  
23          class family. I was brought up where my dad has an  
24          engineering degree and my mom has a teaching degree;  
25          they knew what college was like. And when I went to

1 college and I struggled I fell back on them and they  
2 were like, "This is just how it is; you've got to do  
3 this and this." They knew how to get me enrolled;  
4 they knew how to go through the process. Well, a lot  
5 of our students don't have that and so they rely on  
6 us. The parents don't even -- they can't advise  
7 them; they don't know. And as much as we try to  
8 educate parents, it doesn't replace -- that education  
9 doesn't replace the experience of actually going  
10 through that. And so we want to be that transition  
11 year; we want to be that support for them as they  
12 transition from the only thing they've ever known,  
13 which is K-12 education, to what their next step is.  
14 And we feel like their senior year they need to have  
15 that wake-up call; they need to be supported while at  
16 the same time moving forward into their next step.  
17 Because they're going to be a lot more successful if  
18 we do that than if we just graduate them, send them  
19 to college, and when they start to flounder -- I  
20 mean, you look at the statistics; when do the  
21 majority of students drop out? Their freshmen year.  
22 Why? Because it's such a drastic difference from  
23 high school that they don't know how to adapt to  
24 that. And it's not even just the -- it's not  
25 necessarily the academics; it's things like study

1 skills, being able to sit down and actually do a  
2 report that nobody is going to sit there and do it  
3 for you or, you know, just walk you through it step  
4 by step; you know, how to deal with free time, social  
5 interactions, those kinds of things. So that would  
6 be my response.

7 DR. BARTH: Yeah. And I think that's a  
8 thoughtful response and I appreciate that. I think  
9 there's another approach that -- and I agree, all  
10 those things are necessary to success and first year  
11 of college. I do think though having as much rigor  
12 in one's academic life before you get to college is  
13 also important. And I'm wondering -- I'm worried  
14 that we're, you know, in some cases allowing students  
15 to take one or two academic courses and then spend a  
16 lot of their time in things that are certainly  
17 valuable but maybe in some ways putting the students  
18 in a bad spot when they do get to college in terms of  
19 whether they're going to make it. So I think -- I  
20 don't think they're mutually exclusive, and I'm  
21 worrying that we're veering a little bit more towards  
22 some of these soft skills when I think good academic  
23 rigor is also an important ingredient for first-year  
24 success in college.

25 SUPT. TOLLETT: Right.

1 DR. BARTH: So, but thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Additional questions or  
3 comments from my colleagues? Ms. Pfeffer, did you  
4 want to address the Board?

5 MS. PFEFFER: Yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Of course.

7 MS. PFEFFER: Thank you, Madam Chair. And I  
8 think this information may help with a little bit of  
9 context throughout the day as y'all are talking about  
10 this. And, Dr. Barth, something you said, I think  
11 two years ago when I took this position I had that  
12 same concern that it just felt like we were throwing  
13 away the value of someone having a teacher  
14 certification. But I think what has helped me is  
15 really looking at data over time. And we are trying  
16 to get as much good data as we can and share it so  
17 that we're making good decisions and you all can make  
18 good decisions, as well. We're hampered somewhat in  
19 the way data is reported. We've relied on Title 2  
20 data that's submitted by institutions of higher ed.  
21 and that data -- the most recent Title 2 data would  
22 actually be from the 13-14 school year. That is what  
23 you consider certified data that's reported to U.S.  
24 Department of Ed. But in the interim, we have been  
25 really trying to communicate with Higher Ed.

1 institutions to get real-time data from them.

2 So for eastern Arkansas, a couple of challenges  
3 that we're facing, and I think we have to know what  
4 those challenges are so that we can look to see what  
5 do we do about that in the future, but also recognize  
6 that right now we may have to be more pragmatic in  
7 some of our solutions. But really I think Arkansas  
8 State University has always been a large producer of  
9 teacher candidates for eastern Arkansas, and even,  
10 you know, extending over into a little bit of the  
11 central areas in Arkansas, north central. But  
12 Arkansas State University is down 51% in the number  
13 of teachers who will be student teaching this year  
14 from where they were two years ago. So they were at  
15 -- I guess they were at -- in 2013-14, they had 334  
16 candidates that were getting ready to go out, that  
17 did go student teach, and they're going to be down to  
18 just over 200 come this year, is what they're  
19 projecting and hoping they will have student  
20 teaching. So that's a drastic decrease there. And I  
21 am really encouraging the school districts in the  
22 Jonesboro area and some of the northeast Arkansas co-  
23 op areas that aren't feeling the crunch of shortages  
24 right now -- that's going to have to impact them  
25 because those student teachers are not coming out.

1 Now I think for a lot of the -- I don't know what  
2 their nontraditional numbers look like, and that's  
3 something else we'll have to get as far as real-time  
4 data. But the nontraditional students aren't so much  
5 in the pipeline, they're already out there in the  
6 field. So those nontraditional teachers, while those  
7 numbers may be up, they're already out there in the  
8 field; they're not the ones we're counting on coming  
9 to us in the future necessarily.

10 Another big producer which is impacting is the  
11 eastern Arkansas area's University of Arkansas at  
12 Monticello, and I've spent a lot of time talking to  
13 Peggy Doss. I don't have those numbers on paper  
14 today but, from Peggy and Ken Level, two years ago  
15 they had about 50 candidates that were in the field  
16 student teaching; that number dropped to about 25  
17 last year; this year they're only going to have 7.  
18 So that gives you an indication of why these school  
19 districts are here telling you "we don't have  
20 people." So with that kind of drop, that's what I  
21 think has me even more concerned because that's where  
22 we're looking in the future.

23 So I just say all that to tell you kind of those  
24 data are giving me kind of a different lens in  
25 looking at how do we insure that our kids have access

1 to excellent teachers. Because regardless of if they  
2 have that license or certification at this time, we  
3 still have to have excellent people in there teaching  
4 and we don't want to diminish that. So it is right  
5 now about helping -- give them the flexibility in  
6 terms of how we do that. And I know that's just one  
7 piece of the bigger concerns, and until we figure out  
8 some ways to mitigate this lack of interest of going  
9 into the field -- and we need to start with our high  
10 school juniors and seniors, survey them to find out  
11 do you want to be an educator and why or why not. I  
12 think what they have to say will be very powerful, so  
13 I'm hoping that we can get -- that we can work with  
14 the Bureau of Legislative Research and get a survey  
15 out there to get some of those answers from those  
16 future prospects.

17 DR. BARTH: And that's -- you know -- I'm  
18 actually comfortable with the licensure waiver piece  
19 because I think it is creativity in terms of trying  
20 to get -- but I get -- that makes me even more  
21 concerned about the class size and teacher loads  
22 because we're asking folks who maybe have not had the  
23 kind of preparation to go in and then deal with up to  
24 180. In fact -- and that's your verbal, but this  
25 really has no limit here in terms of the number of

1 students. That's what makes me really worried about  
2 that area of this proposal.

3 MS. PFEFFER: Yes. But I do think that school  
4 districts are doing a better job of tapping into  
5 their local co-ops for resources. And I think the  
6 co-ops are aware of some of those needs, and I think  
7 that collaboration can be encouraged between support  
8 centers and school districts. Because any educator  
9 coming into the field now is going to need a  
10 completely different type of support than what an  
11 educator had five years ago, ten years ago, and I  
12 think through our mentoring program those are some  
13 things we need to be in tune to and also provide. So  
14 I think we're looking at a very close partnership  
15 between our agency and these schools as we go forward  
16 with this.

17 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Additional  
18 questions? Yes, Ms. Newton.

19 MS. NEWTON: I had one question; I think it's  
20 for Ms. Perry. Ms. Perry, I know in the past people  
21 have asked -- or districts have asked for the  
22 increase in teacher load, and I can't remember if it  
23 was Batesville or -- I can't remember who it was, but  
24 there was a max set. Do you remember what that max  
25 was?



1 MS. PERRY: I don't off the top of my head. I'm  
2 sure I can pull it up very quickly and let you know.

3 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

4 MS. PERRY: It is pretty common that they  
5 actually set a max.

6 MS. NEWTON: Yeah. I think -- I was thinking it  
7 was 160, but would you check?

8 MS. PERRY: That may be. I'll be glad to.

9 MS. ZOOK: 165 is what I was thinking.

10 SUPT. TOLLETT: And I have no problem setting a  
11 max on that as part of our application. That's not  
12 an issue. And I would like to add something to Ms.  
13 Pfeffer's comments. We're also not like a lot of  
14 eastern schools; we actually pay pretty well. We're  
15 the 25th highest paying school district in the state  
16 of Arkansas. I've got the leanest staff of probably  
17 any school district because we're the fourth poorest.  
18 I mean, we put our money into our resources and our  
19 greatest resources and asset to our kids is our  
20 teachers and their development as educators. So this  
21 is not something that we just use haphazardly; this  
22 is something that is very purposely used when it is  
23 executed. And I'll just say this: the teacher  
24 shortage is going to be -- continue to be an issue.  
25 Jeff Dyer and I know Ms. Pfeffer's group over here,

1 they've started the Teacher Cadet program, which is a  
2 wonderful thing. I'm actually teaching that myself  
3 to the five students that we have at Barton who are  
4 interested in entering that profession, and we have  
5 partnered with ASU. I'm actually an adjunct  
6 professor for ASU for the Teacher Cadet program. And  
7 I want to take that on personally to be able to not  
8 only help start the education career of students  
9 coming out of Barton, but also hopefully get them  
10 back into Barton once they graduate. And I think  
11 that's one of the things that will help moving  
12 forward, putting these kind of programs into the  
13 schools. And the students that we have were very  
14 excited when I said I was going to teach it, and I'm  
15 very excited because I'm looking forward to being  
16 able to train the next generation to start their  
17 journey there. And, I mean, it's something that the  
18 state has that's going on that is outstanding.

19 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Yes, Ms. Perry.

20 MS. PERRY: Yes. Batesville said that they have  
21 no more than 165 instead of 150.

22 SUPT. TOLLETT: And I would be willing to amend  
23 my application to march that 165.

24 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Mr. Tollett. Any  
25 additional questions from the Board? Otherwise --

1           yes, Commissioner.

2                   COMMISSIONER KEY: Mr. Tollett, you've heard me,  
3           you've heard Dr. Gotcher; we've talked about the  
4           concept of making the learning constant. Right now,  
5           the time is constant, whether it be the school day,  
6           the school year, the K through 12. And we've talked  
7           about making the learning the constant and the time  
8           the variable. So could you talk about conversations  
9           that y'all have had at your district in making sure  
10          that the learning was the constant for all the kids  
11          despite the flexibility that you're looking to get  
12          here?

13                   SUPT. TOLLETT: Right. So some of the things  
14          that we've looked at -- and like I said, we're  
15          looking at all options. The flex-mod thing that a  
16          lot of school districts are using is -- I mean, it's  
17          a very intriguing idea. We have looked and we have  
18          actually found a program this year that's going to  
19          allow our students math support, not only during the  
20          school day, not only during the class time, but also  
21          when they leave that class, till about 10:00 at  
22          night, where they can actually work through module.  
23          But they can also, when they get stuck on something  
24          or if they need help with some of their homework or  
25          something that they're struggling with after working

1 through part of the module, if they get stuck on part  
2 of the module, actually talk to a live teacher to be  
3 able to support the students, you know, at home more,  
4 you know, and provide, you know, those type of  
5 flexible opportunities.

6 Moving forward, one of the things that we would  
7 like to do is, like I said, bring back into the fold  
8 home-schooling students. A lot of students, for  
9 whatever reason, whether it's a parent or if it's the  
10 student themselves, they struggle in school; they may  
11 have health and medical issues; they may have just a  
12 whole host of different things going on. But I think  
13 in the future even providing an option -- and we  
14 probably won't have very many students take advantage  
15 of it, but it will meet the needs of the ones that  
16 we're providing it for -- but provide kind of a  
17 flexible thing where students may be able to access  
18 -- set them up at home for Arkansas Virtual to take  
19 the rigor classes through that, but also be able to  
20 come back onto our campus and take classes that they  
21 want or go out to the college and take classes there.  
22 We have worked really hard to eliminate all barriers  
23 to our students' success, I mean, to the point of up  
24 until this year -- or, well, till the end of this  
25 year our students had to pay if they wanted to go to

1 the local community college; they had to pay for  
2 their classes, they had to pay for their books.  
3 We've actually secured funding where they don't have  
4 to do that, so we've eliminated that. But moving  
5 forward, I mean, there's a whole host of flexible  
6 options there and we want to explore them all and  
7 kind of make a decision on what's the best for our  
8 students and to be able to provide, especially even  
9 our ALE environments, with -- you know -- continue to  
10 get better and provide better opportunities for those  
11 students as well.

12 COMMISSIONER KEY: And the reason I ask, Mr.  
13 Tollett, is because I think we all have -- we all  
14 share Dr. Barth's concern with the rigor in that last  
15 year or even through the whole entire high school  
16 experience.

17 SUPT. TOLLETT: Right.

18 COMMISSIONER KEY: But -- and I know that you've  
19 had those conversations, because it's not just about  
20 moving the students in the last year to -- you know  
21 -- when I was going to school and probably when you  
22 were going to school --

23 SUPT. TOLLETT: Right.

24 COMMISSIONER KEY: -- half the senior class was  
25 gone, you know, all day on Friday and half the days,

1           you know, many of the other days.

2                   SUPT. TOLLETT: Right.

3                   COMMISSIONER KEY: And they were just gone. I  
4           mean, it was just --

5                   SUPT. TOLLETT: Right.

6                   COMMISSIONER KEY: They were -- there just was  
7           nothing there. So we're not talking about a  
8           situation where there's nothing there and they go  
9           work.

10                  SUPT. TOLLETT: Right.

11                  COMMISSIONER KEY: You're talking about things  
12           that -- whether they get all the rigor that they need  
13           up to a point and then can start mentoring or start  
14           externships, internships.

15                  SUPT. TOLLETT: Right.

16                  COMMISSIONER KEY: But it's not one or the  
17           other.

18                  SUPT. TOLLETT: Right.

19                  COMMISSIONER KEY: It's "and."

20                  SUPT. TOLLETT: Right.

21                  COMMISSIONER KEY: Okay.

22                  SUPT. TOLLETT: And that's the thing, is to put  
23           the rigor with the reality because there's a  
24           difference between what we teach and what students  
25           experience. I mean, all of us who have held a job,

1 especially jobs that -- especially when you got out  
2 of -- I mean, going into the education field, when I  
3 first got my classroom I didn't exactly know what I  
4 was doing. It took me a while to figure that out,  
5 you know, and that's the kind of transition and rigor  
6 and reality we want for our kids is to have the  
7 knowledge base to go out and do the job but also the  
8 experience part. Because I think combining the two  
9 is where we will see the success in our kids, not  
10 just one or the other. And in moving forward,  
11 especially, you know, students who are prone to drop  
12 out -- and I presented all of this to our student  
13 body. When we got the waivers at the end of the year  
14 I met with each class individually. We talked  
15 through all the new options, the things that they can  
16 take advantage of. I mean, I did that myself to  
17 every single group, from 6th grade all the way  
18 through 12th grade, of our students at Barton because  
19 I want to convey that message and let them know what  
20 we are doing for them and what opportunities they're  
21 going to have. And I had a kid who was on the verge  
22 of dropping out and said, "Well, Mr. Tollett, you  
23 made the difference because now I want to take this  
24 and this and this next year, where I was just going  
25 to drop out over the summer." You know, you have to

1 provide opportunities for all kids to reduce that  
2 dropout rate. So the flexibility to do that is key.

3 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yes, Ms. Zook.

4 MS. ZOOK: I want to commend you. If I remember  
5 correctly, you had lost your mentor the last time and  
6 -- to death.

7 SUPT. TOLLETT: That's correct.

8 MS. ZOOK: And I think I can say for him that  
9 you have matured and gotten the poise that you need  
10 and you have taken the lessons he taught you and you  
11 are -- have shown much growth today from when you  
12 were here in January.

13 SUPT. TOLLETT: Well, thank you very much. On-  
14 the-job training really does that for you.

15 MS. ZOOK: Yeah, if you pay attention.

16 SUPT. TOLLETT: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much, Mr.  
18 Tollett. With that, to my colleagues, any final  
19 questions? Otherwise, I'll entertain a motion. Yes,  
20 Dr. Barth.

21 DR. BARTH: Well, I would just ask that we  
22 consider the three --

23 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Separately. Most  
24 definitely. Okay.

25 And so to be clear for all my colleagues, the



1 three waiver request topics: first, licensure waiver  
2 for core subject areas; second, to remove  
3 restrictions on class size and teacher loads; and,  
4 third, flexible classroom time.

5 So I'll entertain a motion on the first topic,  
6 licensure waiver for core subject areas.

7 DR. BARTH: I move approval on that, the  
8 licensure waiver for core subject areas.

9 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Do I have a second?

10 MS. NEWTON: Second.

11 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Motion made by Dr. Barth,  
12 seconded by Ms. Newton. And I will do a roll-call  
13 for these, Commissioner.

14 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Barth.

15 DR. BARTH: Yes.

16 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Black.

17 MR. BLACK: Yes.

18 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Chambers.

19 MS. CHAMBERS: Yes.

20 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Dean.

21 MS. DEAN: Yes.

22 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Hill.

23 DR. HILL: Yes.

24 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Newton.

25 MS. NEWTON: Yes.

1 COMMISSIONER KEY: Mr. Williamson.

2 MR. WILLIAMSON: Yes.

3 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Zook.

4 MS. ZOOK: Yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Motion carries.

6 To the second waiver topic, do I have a motion  
7 regards to restrictions on class size and teacher  
8 loads?

9 MS. NEWTON: I move that the class size be  
10 approved but only for vocational and senior seminar  
11 classes, and the teacher workload be approved with a  
12 maximum of 165 students.

13 MS. ZOOK: Second.

14 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. And just to check  
15 with Ms. Davis, is that an appropriate -- I know we  
16 can approve, grant in part or deny, as well as to  
17 disapprove -- but to make those modifications, if the  
18 district has indicated their willingness?

19 MS. DAVIS: Yeah. The district has to agree  
20 that that's what they want to do, rather than you  
21 putting the stipulations on it. I mean, in the end  
22 it's the same result but the district really needs to  
23 --

24 CHAIRPERSON REITH: So if you could --

25 MS. DAVIS: It needs to be their idea.

1 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Mr. Tollett, if you could  
2 kindly articulate --

3 SUPT. TOLLETT: We agree with the exact way she  
4 put that, so --

5 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Wonderful.

6 SUPT. TOLLETT: Yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON REITH: So then I have a -- and then  
8 are we good, Ms. Coffman? Are we good for the  
9 record?

10 MS. COFFMAN: (Nodding head up and down.)

11 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Wonderful.

12 DR. BARTH: Could I ask her to repeat it? Do  
13 you mind?

14 MS. NEWTON: The class size would only apply to  
15 vocational and senior seminar classes, and the  
16 teacher workload could go to a maximum of 165  
17 students.

18 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Motion made by Ms.  
19 Newton, seconded by Ms. Zook. And again,  
20 Commissioner, roll-call please.

21 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Barth.

22 DR. BARTH: No.

23 COMMISSIONER KEY: Mr. Black.

24 MR. BLACK: Yes.

25 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Chambers.

1 MS. CHAMBERS: Yes.  
2 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Dean.  
3 MS. DEAN: Yes.  
4 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Hill.  
5 DR. HILL: Yes.  
6 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Newton.  
7 MS. NEWTON: Yes.  
8 COMMISSIONER KEY: Mr. Williamson.  
9 MR. WILLIAMSON: Yes.  
10 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Zook.  
11 MS. ZOOK: Yes.  
12 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Motion carries.  
13 And then I will entertain a motion regards to  
14 the last waiver topic, flexible classroom size --  
15 time; apologies.  
16 DR. BARTH: I'll move approval.  
17 MS. DEAN: I second.  
18 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Motion made by Dr.  
19 Barth, seconded by Ms. Dean. And our final roll-  
20 call, Commissioner.  
21 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Barth.  
22 DR. BARTH: Yes.  
23 COMMISSIONER KEY: Mr. Black.  
24 MR. BLACK: Yes.  
25 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Chambers.

1 MS. CHAMBERS: Yes.

2 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Dean.

3 MS. DEAN: Yes.

4 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Hill.

5 DR. HILL: Yes.

6 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Newton.

7 MS. NEWTON: No.

8 COMMISSIONER KEY: Mr. Williamson.

9 MR. WILLIAMSON: Yes.

10 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Zook.

11 MS. ZOOK: No.

12 COMMISSIONER KEY: Six yes, two no.

13 CHAIRPERSON REITH: The motion carries.

14 Congratulations, Mr. Tollett. We look forward to  
15 those promised reports --

16 SUPT. TOLLETT: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON REITH: -- in progress.

18 SUPT. TOLLETT: Thank you so much.

19 CHAIRPERSON REITH: The best of luck, as well.

20 SUPT. TOLLETT: I do appreciate it.

21 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Wonderful.

22 Looking to my colleagues, can we proceed --

23 break? Okay. So we will break for -- can we say

24 until five-after? So 11:05 we'll reconvene.

25 (BREAK: 10:57 - 11:08 A.M.)

1 CHAIRPERSON REITH: I'd like to please re-call  
2 the room to order. Thank you, everyone. I  
3 apologize; we do have a full agenda for today.

4 A-5: DISTRICT REQUEST FOR WAIVERS GRANTED TO OPEN-ENROLLMENT  
5 CHARTERS: BISMARCK SCHOOL DISTRICT

6 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Proceeding now to Action  
7 Item A-5, District Request for Waivers Granted to  
8 Open-Enrollment Charters, the Bismarck School  
9 District. Ms. Perry, you're recognized.

10 MS. PERRY: Thank you. You've read that  
11 request, the Bismarck School District, that you have.  
12 And I just wanted to let you know that they have made  
13 the request for five years, through the 2021 school  
14 year. And Superintendent Susan Stewart is here to  
15 begin the presentation.

16 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Ms. Stewart. And will  
17 anyone else be providing testimony?

18 MS. STEWART: Yes, ma'am.

19 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay.

20 MS. STEWART: I have brought some of my district  
21 and campus team members with me.

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Fantastic. Fantastic. So  
23 anyone planning to provide testimony -- thank you for  
24 anticipating by standing. And if I could also kindly  
25 ask you to raise your right hand, I do need to swear

1           you in. Do you swear or affirm to tell the truth,  
2           the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

3                    (ALL WITNESSES ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

4                    CHAIRPERSON REITH: Wonderful. Thank you so  
5                    much. So, Ms. Stewart, you are recognized. And  
6                    please, as each comes forward to provide testimony,  
7                    if you can just state your name for the record we  
8                    would appreciate it.

9                    SUPT. STEWART: Okay. And I'll have them go  
10                   ahead and just kind of stand behind me, if that's  
11                   okay, to expedite. I know it's getting close to  
12                   lunch and that is not where you want to be on the  
13                   agenda, so --

14                   CHAIRPERSON REITH: I'm sorry; if you could all  
15                   please just get close to the mic. This is live-  
16                   streamed, or as you speak. I apologize --

17                   SUPT. STEWART: Okay.

18                   CHAIRPERSON REITH: -- to say if you can please  
19                   speak into the mic, we are having a hard time  
20                   catching people on the mic today.

21                   SUPT. STEWART: Okay. Susan Stewart.

22                   CHAIRPERSON REITH: Perfect. Thank you, Ms.  
23                   Stewart.

24                   SUPT. STEWART: Okay. As Ms. Perry stated, I am  
25                   the superintendent of Bismarck School District and I

1 have been in the district for eight years. So, good  
2 morning and I just want to thank you all for allowing  
3 us this opportunity to present to you today. We are  
4 requesting one waiver and that is flexibility in the  
5 classroom time for students, for our seniors. But,  
6 first, I'd like to take a moment just to tell you a  
7 little bit about our district.

8 Bismarck is a small rural school district  
9 located between Hot Springs and Arkadelphia. We are  
10 an unincorporated community on Highway 84 in Hot  
11 Springs County, near DeGray Lake. Our school  
12 provides education for just under 1,000 students in  
13 pre-k through 12 and we employ about 84 educators and  
14 70 support staff. I apologize for the not-so-great  
15 quality of the map, but it's really hard to find a  
16 map that has Bismarck on it, so -- Our millage rate  
17 is 41 mills and each mill generates just a little  
18 under \$65,000 for our district. Our free and reduced  
19 percent is 67% and our district extends into areas  
20 where there is literally no cell phone or internet  
21 reception, so -- In spite of competing with the  
22 larger, more affluent districts close by, our  
23 district continues to outrank most across the state  
24 when it comes to academics. Our elementary ranks in  
25 the top 10% in the state and our high school in the



1 top 1%. All three of our campuses have received  
2 either As or Bs in the state letter grading system.  
3 We are extremely proud of our students and our staff  
4 and we feel that by personalizing our learning we can  
5 obtain an even higher level of achievement.

6 I'd like to take just a moment to share just a  
7 little bit about our elementary and middle school  
8 before I pass the presentation on to Mr. Newsom, my  
9 high school principal.

10 Pictured here are some of our elementary  
11 students doing some group work, and they are  
12 utilizing technology to assist in their learning. On  
13 our campuses we are trying to get close to one-to-  
14 one; it's a process, it takes some time, but we're  
15 working toward that. Our elementary serves about 350  
16 students K through 4, in addition to housing a pre-K  
17 classroom of about 20 students who are itching to  
18 become kindergartners. And, of course, we love to  
19 see those smiling faces every day. And here are some  
20 of our middle school students and they are showing  
21 off their technology skills, doing a hands-on  
22 experiment, and a number of our inductees into the  
23 National Junior Beta Club from this past year. Our  
24 middle school serves 300 5th through 8th grade  
25 students, and we have tremendous support from our

1 parents and our community members across the district  
2 and it is evidenced by the success of our students.

3 I'd like to take a moment to introduce our high  
4 school principal, Mr. Larry Newsom, and he is going  
5 to share a few things with you about his campus. Mr.  
6 Newsom.

7 MR. NEWSOM: Hello, my name is Larry Newsom.  
8 I'm honored to be the high school principal at  
9 Bismarck. I want to, first of all, thank each of you  
10 for allowing us to be here today to express our  
11 desire to be granted an attendance waiver for our  
12 students. At Bismarck, we serve approximately 315  
13 students in grades 9-12. And as you can see in the  
14 photos here, our students are very interested, like  
15 most in the state, in the drone technology. They  
16 show their pride as they did the Class of '16, as far  
17 as -- and other areas of technology, in the  
18 Makerspace and those type things.

19 I'm very proud of our students and our teachers.  
20 Our high school ranks, like Ms. Stewart said, in the  
21 top 1% in the state on the PARCC exam and we were  
22 only 1 in 5 high schools in the state to receive an A  
23 in the state rating system. So, very proud of our  
24 students and our teachers for this accomplishment.  
25 We, along with our elementary, also received a reward

1 for student academic growth through the Arkansas  
2 School Recognition Program, so I'm very proud of them  
3 for this.

4 With education -- with the education our  
5 students receive in our district, many have gone on  
6 to medical school, pharmacy school, and other notable  
7 areas of study. We've also had many who have  
8 graduated with a degree in education and have  
9 actually come back to Bismarck to teach school there,  
10 so very proud of this. So, as you can see, our  
11 students really see no boundaries when it comes to  
12 their ability to succeed, and I believe if this  
13 waiver is granted it will benefit many of our  
14 students by providing them with the opportunity to do  
15 internships, job shadow, or volunteer in the  
16 community as they explore the various career choices.

17 Also at Bismarck we strive to educate the whole  
18 child and provide them with opportunities they may  
19 not otherwise get to experience. While our main  
20 focus is on academics, we also believe each child  
21 should have the opportunity to participate in or  
22 attend extracurricular activities we provide. We  
23 have many students who have needs within their family  
24 and work hours that do not afford them this  
25 opportunity. If this waiver is granted, it will give

1 our students who have to work the opportunity to work  
2 hours maybe earlier in the day that will allow them  
3 to be able to attend these activities in the evening.

4 We're also very proud of our relationship --  
5 we're also very proud of our relationship with  
6 College of the Ouachitas. We have several juniors  
7 and seniors who attend both the career center to  
8 learn a trade and those who take college and career  
9 courses to get a head-start on their college  
10 education and future careers. With this being said,  
11 as part of our waiver request students enrolled in  
12 this program would be permitted the flexibility to  
13 attend approximately 10 to 15 additional clock hours  
14 per week of college and career courses, which we  
15 truly believe will benefit many of our students.

16 I'm now going to pass this on to our curriculum  
17 coordinator, Ms. Ellen Coleman, and our school  
18 counselor, Ms. Jane Wilson, who will provide an  
19 outline for the waiver and our plan for  
20 implementation. Again, thank you very much and I  
21 hope you'll sincerely consider our request.

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you.

23 MS. COLEMAN: Hello. I'm Ellen Coleman; I'm the  
24 K-12 curriculum coordinator for Bismarck School  
25 District. And I have the meat and potatoes of the

1 waiver, so if you see them running, stop them.  
2 Bismarck High School is a school that strives for  
3 excellence and it shows in our previous test scores  
4 and our present test scores. Our district provides a  
5 hands-on approach to learning by a group of very well  
6 educated and dedicated educators who are committed to  
7 our students and their success. Our goal is to  
8 prepare each student to reach their individual  
9 potential, which includes becoming lifelong learners  
10 who can become productive members of society, and  
11 hopefully remain in our community. After watching  
12 the June key points, I was encouraged as well as  
13 excited to know that our student focused goals and  
14 plan were right in line with the state's new system.

15 To assist us in reaching our goal we would like  
16 to provide a more personalized learning environment  
17 for our students by allowing our seniors the  
18 opportunity to complete their required coursework in  
19 less than six hours during the school day on our  
20 campus. By granting our district this flexibility,  
21 we will increase student achievement and engagement  
22 by allowing them the opportunity to see their futures  
23 and apply real world skills in the core subjects. We  
24 anticipate seeing an increased attendance as well.

25 I missed the slide change. Excuse me.

1           Based on our student survey, we have already  
2 identified several students as being eligible to  
3 participate in our plan including internships,  
4 enrolling in post-secondary training, participating  
5 in community service projects, job shadowing, or  
6 secure paid employment. Eighty-four percent (84%) of  
7 our seniors will need from one to five credits to  
8 graduate. We currently require 24 credits and that  
9 is above the state minimum requirement. The students  
10 would continue to take their core courses on our  
11 campus, but these waivers would allow us the  
12 flexibility to provide them with the additional  
13 learning opportunities that both Mr. Newsom and I  
14 spoke about earlier.

15           We have already contacted a large number of  
16 employers in our area and have begun compiling a list  
17 of those interested in providing employment  
18 opportunities for our students. As mentioned by Mr.  
19 Newsom, we already have a wonderful and very strong  
20 partnership with College of the Ouachitas in regard  
21 to our concurrent credit and career and technical  
22 courses, as well as the additional apprenticeship  
23 programs they have already begun to offer. We also  
24 have a well-established relationship with local  
25 charities, including Helping Hands, which is already

1 a partner with us as far as offering our students  
2 community service opportunities.

3 Ms. Stewart, Mr. Newsom and my self are all  
4 longstanding members of our Bismarck Lions Club and  
5 we also have agreed to make sure that our students  
6 have the option of participating in community service  
7 opportunities.

8 For those students who are interested in areas  
9 we have available or for those who may not have  
10 transportation we have a list of internship  
11 opportunities, such as a technology assistant and job  
12 shadowing opportunities with elementary teachers for  
13 those desiring a career in education, and I believe  
14 that will help us as far as growing our own.

15 Jane Wilson, our high school counselor, will  
16 meet with qualifying students and parents who are  
17 interested in participating in the program. They  
18 will complete an application outlining their area of  
19 interest. To be eligible to participate in the  
20 program, students must be on-track to graduate, one  
21 factor being the 24 credits we require of them. For  
22 the 2016-17 school year these meetings will take  
23 place in the summer before school starts in August.  
24 For the following school years the counselor will  
25 meet with qualifying students and their parents

1 during the CAP scheduling conferences, which are  
2 typically held in March. Our target is for  
3 qualifying students to clock approximately 10 to 15  
4 hours per week off-campus.

5 To insure students remain on track during the  
6 duration of the program, contracts, monitoring  
7 documentation and a culminating project will be  
8 required. The school counselor and parental  
9 involvement coordinator will maintain the  
10 documentation and follow-up with students. They will  
11 also maintain regular communication with the contact  
12 person for the business, organization or learning  
13 institution that the student is involved with  
14 throughout the year. Students will be required to  
15 complete a culminating project at the end of each  
16 school year utilizing technology. This will give  
17 students the opportunity for reflection that we feel  
18 is necessary to understand what they've learned from  
19 these experiences and how it will help them in their  
20 future career choices.

21 The counselor and parental involvement  
22 facilitator will be the main monitors for this  
23 program, so no additional staffing will be necessary  
24 and no additional funds will be needed as far as the  
25 district is concerned. The curriculum coordinator



1 and superintendent will meet at the end of each  
2 semester and as needed with those responsible for  
3 monitoring the students in order to guide and assist.  
4 At the end of the school year a number of students  
5 will be asked to present their culminating project to  
6 the school board, parents and other key stakeholders.  
7 This will help to keep everyone actively involved,  
8 allow us to be transparent with our program, to  
9 provide public speaking opportunities for our  
10 students, and give our students a chance to showcase  
11 the work that they've done for the year.

12 It wasn't that long ago when we learned about  
13 and began hearing the discussions regarding the  
14 possibility of requesting waivers for districts. We  
15 reached out to Scott Sides at Arkansas Virtual  
16 Academy to ask how they were utilizing their waivers  
17 so that we would know how we could best serve our  
18 students in regards to flexibility and a personalized  
19 learning schedule. We have considered going the  
20 route of a conversion charter but our decision was  
21 that we wanted to move quickly in order to implement  
22 this for our students. The conversion charter is  
23 something we will consider in our future, but we  
24 wanted to take action as soon as possible in order to  
25 provide this wonderful opportunity now rather than

1 down the line.

2 On May 16, 2016, our board approved a resolution  
3 of the waiver request and is prepared to take  
4 whatever action is necessary to support us in this  
5 program. Many have expressed words of support,  
6 including parents, our high school leadership team,  
7 College of the Ouachitas, and teachers during their  
8 PLC times and staff meetings. We conducted a student  
9 survey where 98% of our upcoming seniors stated they  
10 would be interested in signing up for a program like  
11 this, an opportunity that would allow them to  
12 participate in an internship, college classes,  
13 working during the day, or volunteering in our  
14 community. These students also provided statements  
15 of support as to how a program such as this would  
16 greatly benefit them. We've also received a lot of  
17 support from parents and community members who have  
18 seen the public announcements on our website and  
19 Twitter, as well as in the local newspaper. We have  
20 heard only positive feedback when it comes to this  
21 waiver request.

22 In order to remain effective educators we have  
23 to constantly change and evolve just as the world  
24 around us does. Our goal is to see students reach  
25 their full potential. We want to offer them a

1 variety of futures. We ask that you please grant our  
2 waiver request so that we can begin to establish a  
3 new tradition of greatness through more personalized  
4 learning for our amazing students. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Ms. Perry, is  
6 there any opposition to this?

7 MS. PERRY: No.

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Then y'all have a few  
9 minutes, 5 minutes for any closing remarks.

10 MS. COLEMAN: Just do you have any questions for  
11 us?

12 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Then most definitely  
13 we can open up to questions. Ms. Zook.

14 MS. ZOOK: Well, I want to commend you too, Ms.  
15 Perry, in that this is the best, most well put  
16 together, easiest to follow application we have had  
17 to this point.

18 MS. COLEMAN: Thank you.

19 MS. ZOOK: There was never any doubt what your  
20 plan was; there wasn't ever any doubt that you needed  
21 the waiver, why you needed the waiver, the  
22 involvement of your staff, the involvement of your  
23 students, the involvement of the community. I  
24 commend you for including the volunteer and civic  
25 portion of this. And as a result of that, I have no

1 questions of you whatsoever.

2 MS. COLEMAN: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Dr. Barth.

4 DR. BARTH: A quick question. How many years  
5 are you asking?

6 MS. COLEMAN: For the five years.

7 DR. BARTH: It's a five-year. Okay.

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Fantastic. Any additional  
9 questions or comments? Then I would entertain a  
10 motion from the Board. Since there is just one  
11 waiver topic, if I'm understanding correctly --

12 MS. COLEMAN: That is correct.

13 CHAIRPERSON REITH: -- then we could -- but just  
14 to clarify for the purposes of my colleagues, the  
15 waiver topic is the personalized learning for all  
16 students. But I would entertain a motion, if there  
17 are no further questions.

18 MS. ZOOK: I move that we approve Bismarck's  
19 waiver request.

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

21 MS. CHAMBERS: Second.

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Motion made by Ms. Zook,  
23 second by Ms. Chambers. Commissioner, if you could  
24 lead us kindly through a roll-call.

25 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Barth.

1 DR. BARTH: Yes.

2 COMMISSIONER KEY: Mr. Black.

3 MR. BLACK: Yes.

4 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Chambers.

5 MS. CHAMBERS: Yes.

6 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Dean.

7 MS. DEAN: Yes.

8 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Hill.

9 DR. HILL: Yes.

10 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Newton.

11 MS. NEWTON: Yes.

12 COMMISSIONER KEY: Mr. Williamson.

13 MR. WILLIAMSON: Yes.

14 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Zook.

15 MS. ZOOK: Yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Motion unanimously carries.

17 So, Ms. Stewart and Mr. Newsom and everyone, best of

18 luck with your effort. We look forward to hearing

19 about your results, most definitely.

20 SUPT. STEWART: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Thank you for

22 putting together such a thoughtful application.

23 SUPT. STEWART: Thank you very much. Thank you.

24 A-6: DISTRICT REQUEST FOR WAIVERS GRANTED TO OPEN-ENROLLMENT

25 CHARTERS: BRINKLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

1 CHAIRPERSON REITH: So moving on now, so -- to  
2 Action Item 6 actually -- isn't it Brinkley?

3 MS. PERRY: A-6 was withdrawn.

4 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. So A-6 is, for the  
5 record, withdrawn.

6 A-7: DISTRICT REQUEST FOR WAIVERS GRANTED TO OPEN-ENROLLMENT  
7 CHARTERS: GLEN ROSE SCHOOL DISTRICT

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: So moving on now then to  
9 Action Item A-7, the District Request for Waivers  
10 Granted to Open-Enrollment Charters for the Glen Rose  
11 School District. And I would like a point of clarity  
12 because I do have an individual signed up to speak on  
13 this and I didn't know if it was from the opposition  
14 or part of the district, a Susan Blockburger.

15 MS. PERRY: She's actually the high school  
16 principal and --

17 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Fantastic.

18 MS. PERRY: -- will be doing the presentation.

19 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Fantastic. Thank you for  
20 that clarification. Ms. Perry, you're recognized.

21 MS. PERRY: Mary Perry. You've read the request  
22 from the Glen Rose School District. They have also  
23 requested that the waivers that they're petitioning  
24 you for today for five years beginning August 1,  
25 2016, and high school principal Susan Blockburger is

1 here to present to you this morning.

2 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. And, Ms.  
3 Blockburger, will you be the only one speaking?

4 MS. BLOCKBURGER: Yes, ma'am.

5 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. I do need to swear  
6 you in. If you could please raise your right hand;  
7 do you swear and affirm to tell the truth, the whole  
8 truth and nothing but the truth?

9 MS. BLOCKBURGER: I do.

10 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much. If you  
11 could please say your name for the record?

12 MS. BLOCKBURGER: I'm Susan Blockburger, high  
13 school principal at Glen Rose.

14 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Fantastic. Thank you.

15 MS. BLOCKBURGER: Thank you. Our  
16 superintendent, Mr. Tim Holicer, is also here today  
17 with us. I just want to give you some background  
18 information on the Glen Rose School District. We are  
19 located in Hot Springs County and Saline County,  
20 between Malvern and Benton. For the 15-16 school  
21 year we provided education to 1,006 students and  
22 employed approximately 140 employees. The school  
23 district is made up of three schools: Glen Rose  
24 Elementary, which has grades kindergarten through 4th  
25 with approximately 375 students, of which 65% are

1 economically disadvantaged; Glen Rose Middle School  
2 has students in grades 5 through 8 with approximately  
3 310 students, of which 54% are economically  
4 disadvantaged; Glen Rose High School has students in  
5 grades 9 through 12 with approximately 320 students,  
6 of which 49% are economically disadvantaged. Glen  
7 Rose High School provides opportunities for students  
8 to reach their academic goals. Students at Glen Rose  
9 High School can earn up to 18 concurrent credit  
10 college hours while they're in high school. We also  
11 currently offer 11 career pathways in our CTE  
12 program. We strive to provide opportunities for our  
13 students to be successful in college, in the  
14 workforce, and in society.

15 Glen Rose Schools offers a variety of  
16 extracurricular programs for our students to help  
17 develop strong character traits and skills that will  
18 benefit them throughout their lives. We have a  
19 cooperative agreement with College of the Ouachitas  
20 to provide a career coach on our campus. We would  
21 like to build on this program to provide more  
22 opportunities for our students to explore career  
23 options and develop the skills that will help them to  
24 secure employment in the future.

25 Students who are in grades 11th and 12th, we



1 would like to be able to provide them the  
2 opportunity, if they are interested and are on track  
3 to graduate on time, the ability to participate in a  
4 program where they can participate in an internship,  
5 an apprenticeship, or job shadowing experience in our  
6 community. Our target, if a student is accepted into  
7 this program, would be for them to be able to  
8 complete up to 10 hours of service a week off our  
9 campus in these internships or apprenticeships or job  
10 shadowing experiences.

11 Our career coach will help oversee the students  
12 enrolled, along with our high school counselor;  
13 maintain documentation, mentor and contact with  
14 students throughout this timeframe, and be a source  
15 of contact for businesses in our surrounding areas.

16 The waivers we are requesting apply to the hours  
17 of the school day, definition of planned  
18 instructional time, and mandatory attendance. We  
19 feel like we have done a good job in serving our  
20 college-bound students. Our mission is, however, to  
21 teach all students to become responsible citizens and  
22 achieve academic and vocational success. This is the  
23 area we feel we need to move to work harder in is  
24 getting our students prepared for vocational success.

25 We would like to begin a program where our

1 juniors and seniors can complete their required  
2 coursework in high school in less than six hours a  
3 day on our campus. This would give them the  
4 opportunity to enroll in post-secondary training,  
5 participate in community service projects, job  
6 shadowing, internships, or secure paid employment.  
7 The students would continue to take their core  
8 classes on our high school campus. In the 16-17  
9 school year 78% of our seniors need three or fewer  
10 credits to graduate.

11 The mission of Glen Rose High School is to  
12 provide students the opportunities to develop  
13 personal growth and character, helping students to  
14 become responsible citizens, achieving academic and  
15 vocational success, and acquiring skills needed to be  
16 successful in a technology oriented world.

17 By allowing our students opportunities to pursue  
18 educational ventures off of our campus during the  
19 day, we'll be helping our students develop the soft  
20 skills that employers are looking for and we will be  
21 helping to work towards our mission of having our  
22 students successful in vocational areas. We strongly  
23 believe that providing these additional off-campus  
24 opportunities for our students will develop real  
25 world experiences for them that will help them with

1           their career choices in their lives. We expect to  
2           see a number of benefits, such as these, to our  
3           students by this program. The real world experiences  
4           and the career exploration will be the greatest  
5           benefit for our students in developing a plan for  
6           their life after high school. We expect to see a  
7           decrease in the number of upperclassmen who have poor  
8           grades and elective courses that they are placed in  
9           to fill up the time of their school day. We expect  
10          students in this program to be highly engaged in  
11          activities they see as relevant for their future  
12          careers, which will play a role in a decrease in  
13          discipline and an increase in student attendance.

14                 We would like to begin this program this fall.  
15          We actually have a student who has been accepted into  
16          College of the Ouachitas' new apprenticeship program  
17          for electrician. They will be taking classes at  
18          night on the College of the Ouachitas campus. They  
19          also will be paired with an electrician, which they  
20          will have to work alongside of for a number of hours  
21          in this program. This student would greatly benefit  
22          from the flexibility that these waivers would provide  
23          to complete their hours of working alongside of their  
24          assigned electrician. Our career coach will monitor  
25          students throughout the year and students will

1 complete a culminating project in the spring.

2 The waivers we are asking for are the waivers  
3 that have been granted to Arkansas Virtual Academy.  
4 The Arkansas Virtual Academy uses its waivers in part  
5 to allow students to have a personalized schedule  
6 that fits their individual needs. The Glen Rose High  
7 School campus is a traditional campus setting where  
8 students are in classes for six hours a day. The  
9 waiver would allow our students to be able to develop  
10 personalized learning plans for them that would allow  
11 them to have experiences such as these.

12 The Glen Rose School District and our community  
13 want to do what's best for students. We want all  
14 students to be prepared for college and the workforce  
15 when they leave high school. It is our goal to  
16 provide students with the opportunities to help make  
17 them successful. The granting of these waivers, we  
18 believe, will help our district move forward and to  
19 helping prepare our students to be successful for the  
20 vocational fields that they choose.

21 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Ms. Blockburger.  
22 And there's no opposition, correct, Ms. Perry?

23 MS. PERRY: There is not.

24 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Do you have any closing  
25 remarks that you'd like to say before we open to

1 questions?

2 MS. BLOCKBURGER: No, ma'am.

3 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much. So to my  
4 colleagues, questions or comments? Ms. Zook.

5 MS. ZOOK: Another well done application. Thank  
6 you. It was easy to get to know your school and your  
7 time. Am I remembering correctly, isn't Glen Rose  
8 one of the districts that we've had a lot of -- that  
9 y'all have limited connectivity?

10 MS. BLOCKBURGER: Oh, yes, ma'am.

11 MS. ZOOK: Okay. I thought I remembered.

12 MS. BLOCKBURGER: Yes, ma'am. Our community has  
13 --

14 MS. ZOOK: You're in Representative Bragg's  
15 area; right?

16 MS. BLOCKBURGER: Our community has no internet  
17 --

18 MS. ZOOK: Right.

19 MS. BLOCKBURGER: -- providers --

20 MS. ZOOK: Right.

21 MS. BLOCKBURGER: -- to them, but the school --

22 MS. ZOOK: Okay. I thought I remembered --

23 MS. BLOCKBURGER: -- does have internet service.

24 MS. ZOOK: -- Representative Bragg and I have  
25 had conversations about that. Okay. Will all the

1 students be eligible or just those with a certain  
2 grade point and in certain grades?

3 MS. BLOCKBURGER: They would have to have a 2.0  
4 or higher grade point average and have enough credits  
5 to be on track to graduate on time by their senior  
6 year.

7 MS. ZOOK: Okay. And do you have business  
8 partners already lined up?

9 MS. BLOCKBURGER: We have started compiling a  
10 list of business partners and our partnership with  
11 COTO for their apprenticeship program.

12 MS. ZOOK: And how close --

13 MS. BLOCKBURGER: And we're working on adding  
14 more.

15 MS. ZOOK: Yeah. How close to College of the  
16 Ouachitas are you?

17 MS. BLOCKBURGER: Ten to -- probably takes 10 to  
18 15 minutes to get there from our campus.

19 MS. ZOOK: So a student would have to have  
20 transportation or will you all be providing that?

21 MS. BLOCKBURGER: Well, we already have a  
22 partnership with the career center that is located on  
23 College of the Ouachitas campus, which we transport  
24 students to that. But for this, such as our student  
25 that's in the apprenticeship program this fall, those

1 classes are at night; those students have to provide  
2 their own transportation to that.

3 MS. ZOOK: Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Madam  
4 Chairman.

5 CHAIRPERSON REITH: An additional question that  
6 I have, and I'll then defer to my colleagues: have  
7 you spoken with teachers in your district --

8 MS. BLOCKBURGER: Yes, ma'am.

9 CHAIRPERSON REITH: -- about this?

10 MS. BLOCKBURGER: Yes, ma'am.

11 CHAIRPERSON REITH: And what was their response?

12 MS. BLOCKBURGER: At the high school, we had a  
13 faculty meeting to go over it because I did not want  
14 fears of -- because there is a lot of media attention  
15 that's been brought to the waiver process. So I  
16 outlined exactly what waivers we would be applying  
17 for so our high school teachers would know exactly  
18 what we're asking for, and they're very supportive.  
19 Because everyone in our area sees the need -- or we  
20 need to address the need to help address our students  
21 that are wanting to go straight into the workforce.  
22 We're meeting our college student needs and this is  
23 where we want to improve.

24 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Ms. Blockburger.  
25 Additional questions or comments from my colleagues?

1 DR. BARTH: So it's just 11th and 12th?

2 MS. BLOCKBURGER: Yes, sir. Just 11th and 12th  
3 grade only.

4 DR. BARTH: Great.

5 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Additional comments  
6 or questions?

7 Seeing none, Ms. Perry, the waiver topic here I  
8 think was just -- it was written as a broad one,  
9 right, in terms of requesting waivers for five years?  
10 It seems to me that the two blocks are school day  
11 hours and definition of planned instructional time;  
12 is that correct?

13 MS. PERRY: It's really the flexibility.

14 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Just the flexibility?

15 MS. PERRY: Yes, ma'am.

16 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. So we could just have  
17 one motion?

18 MS. PERRY: Yes. This is very similar to the --

19 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yeah.

20 MS. PERRY: -- waiver request you just  
21 considered.

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Perfect. Thank you so much.

23 So with that, to my colleagues, I would  
24 entertain a motion.

25 MS. CHAMBERS: Move to approve this flexibility



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waiver.

CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay.

MS. DEAN: Second.

CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Motion made by Ms. Chambers, seconded by Ms. Dean. Commissioner, roll-call.

COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Barth.

DR. BARTH: Yes.

COMMISSIONER KEY: Mr. Black.

MS. BLACK: Yes.

COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Chambers.

MS. CHAMBERS: Yes.

COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Dean.

MS. DEAN: Yes.

COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Hill.

DR. HILL: Yes.

COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Newton.

MS. NEWTON: Yes.

COMMISSIONER KEY: Mr. Williamson.

MR. WILLIAMSON: Yes.

COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Zook.

MS. ZOOK: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON REITH: Motion unanimously carries.

Thank you so much, Ms. Blockburger. Best of luck to you. We look forward to hearing about your results.

1 MS. BLOCKBURGER: Thank you very much.

2 A-8: DISTRICT REQUEST FOR WAIVERS GRANTED TO OPEN-ENROLLMENT  
3 CHARTERS: SOUTHEAST COOPERATIVE DISTRICTS

4 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Now moving on to Action Item  
5 A-8, District Request for Waivers Granted to Open-  
6 Enrollment Charters for the Southeast Cooperative  
7 Districts. And just as a point of clarity to my  
8 colleagues, we will be considering all of these  
9 together. Is that correct, Ms. Perry?

10 MS. PERRY: You certainly may take them as one  
11 block. Absolutely. They're requesting exactly the  
12 same thing and there will be one presentation that  
13 the director of the Southeast Education -- excuse me  
14 -- Southeast Arkansas Educational Cooperative, Karen  
15 Eoff, is going to lead you through.

16 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay.

17 MS. PERRY: You also have a packet of materials  
18 that's been placed up there for you, some additional  
19 materials that came today that you have not had a  
20 chance to see, some supporting documentation that Ms.  
21 Eoff will discuss with you when she comes forward to  
22 do her presentation.

23 I do want to make you aware, you've got the list  
24 and each district did -- a separate request did come  
25 in for 13 school districts that all are served by the

1 Southeast Arkansas Educational Cooperative. And  
2 these requests have been made for a period of one  
3 year -- one year. And Ms. Eoff is here to begin the  
4 presentation. There are representatives from the  
5 districts present as well today.

6 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Fantastic. I recall when we  
7 did this last time we heard everyone together as a  
8 presentation and voted in the end as a block of all  
9 of them. I do want though to make sure I'm gauging  
10 the pleasure of the Board. Would that be the  
11 pleasure of the Board on this occasion as well? I  
12 just wanted to give opportunity if anyone wanted to  
13 consider any one individually.

14 MS. ZOOK: I don't want to consider them  
15 individually, but I would like for each  
16 representative of the district to make a verbal  
17 commitment that they will do in fact what -- if we  
18 approve this waiver, not just you speaking for them.

19 MS. EOFF: Okay. And I would like for the  
20 representatives from each district to come and stand  
21 behind me while I make this presentation.

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: That would be great. And,  
23 actually, I'd like to be able to swear all of you in  
24 as well.

25 And if I could just ask, Ms. Perry, I do have a

1 Nathan White here from the Star City School District.  
2 Is that one of the participants, correct, not in  
3 opposition? It's just for the public comments.

4 MS. PERRY: He's not in opposition.

5 CHAIRPERSON REITH: That is not in opposition.  
6 Okay. I just wanted to clarify again. Thank you so  
7 much.

8 And apologies to all to make you stand up there  
9 and in an uncomfortable way, but we sure do  
10 appreciate you indulging us this, very much so, and  
11 the opportunity to swear you all in and to put you  
12 all on record. So if I could have all of you raise  
13 your right hand please; do you swear and affirm to  
14 tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the  
15 truth?

16 (ALL WITNESSES ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

17 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much.

18 And so with that, we recognize Ms. Eoff, and if  
19 you could please kindly say your name for the record  
20 and your title we would appreciate it.

21 MS. EOFF: I am Karen Eoff and I'm the director  
22 of the Southeast Arkansas Education Service  
23 Cooperative. And you have a lengthy packet that I  
24 want to refer to because it really tells the story  
25 for our schools. And you have -- first, you have a

1 list of all the representatives. We are asking for  
2 the waivers for one year. You have a list of the  
3 specific waivers that we are asking for. They all  
4 pertain to placing teachers in the classroom. Our  
5 goal and vision in each one of these schools is that  
6 we place the most highly qualified leader in every --  
7 teacher in every classroom in southeast Arkansas,  
8 because we recognize on all of our vision and mission  
9 statements in our school that the greatest impact  
10 upon student achievement is the teacher. And so we  
11 are asking for these waivers because we have a severe  
12 teacher shortage in our area. And I'm going to give  
13 you a little background and some data sheets that  
14 clarify that teacher shortage.

15 We realized this problem was coming; that is how  
16 we arrived here. In September of 2015, we realized  
17 that a teacher shortage was coming when a large  
18 number of seasoned veteran teachers stated to us  
19 publicly that this would be their last year of  
20 teaching; they were retiring. And so if you will  
21 look right after the summary, on page 1A, we have  
22 listed by specific districts the number of teaching  
23 positions that we still have open as of this week --  
24 there are 64; the number of teachers that retired May  
25 2016; and also for further reference the starting

1 teachers' salary for both the bachelors and the  
2 masters. We do know that we have a problem. The  
3 shortage in our area has a number of factors that  
4 have been clarified and you've heard those today. I  
5 will not reiterate all of those that have already  
6 been brought before you, but I will give you some  
7 specific information that is pertinent to our area.

8 We have worked with, since September 2015, ADE;  
9 we have worked with our Workforce Readiness partners;  
10 we have worked with our local colleges; we have  
11 worked with every source that we thought could help  
12 us in this teacher shortage. We have left no stone  
13 unturned and we still have 64 openings as of this  
14 week. In your data packet you also have what tells  
15 the tale, most specifically, is data sheets as of  
16 this Monday from each district profiling. If you  
17 will start on pages 1, and I believe they go through  
18 26 -- 27, they profile each one of our districts that  
19 are asking for these waivers, the certified positions  
20 that are still open in the district, the grade level  
21 or title, the number of applications that applied,  
22 the number of applications interviewed, and some of  
23 them also added if a job was offered and if a job was  
24 refused by someone who turned down that job. Then  
25 the second part of those individual data sheets you

1 will see before you is what measures have you  
2 considered to fill the position. And I would love  
3 for you to turn to page 7 where Dewitt's profile is.  
4 And the superintendent had listed the certified  
5 positions still open as of Monday, and two have been  
6 added since then, two more retirements: an elementary  
7 counselor and another biology teacher. And she's  
8 listed the extensive -- what measures she's  
9 considered to fill these applications, and on page 8  
10 you will see a full detail of all of the measures  
11 that this school district has done. And then you'll  
12 see over the last year, knowing that this shortage  
13 had arrived, what agencies, what organizations, what  
14 partners we have reached out to help us in this. So  
15 the tale that is told from page 1 through 27 is  
16 profiled by district, but the summary is 64 teachers  
17 that we do not have to fill our classrooms with our  
18 goal and vision of being the most -- finding the most  
19 highly qualified that we could find. And then if you  
20 will turn to the report starting on page 28, which is  
21 a research report done by the House Interim and  
22 Senate Committee on Education, dated April 12, 2016,  
23 by the Bureau of Legislative Research -- and if you  
24 will notice, I have the teacher preparation programs  
25 that we have statewide. And if you will note, it

1 covers all of the traditional training programs and  
2 also the nontraditional routes as well. It leaves no  
3 stone unturned. And if you will note that we --  
4 again, statewide, we have a downturn in the number of  
5 teachers that are going through both traditional and  
6 nontraditional, from 8,255 in 2010 to 5,258 in 2015.  
7 This impacts us but we are further impacted by our  
8 local teacher preparation colleges, which Ms. Pfeffer  
9 told you the downturn at UAM which most directly  
10 affects us. In Fall 2016, the numbers that I were  
11 given were nine -- and when we clarified nine student  
12 teachers, two of those have dropped out and now we  
13 only have seven to supply these 64 openings in our  
14 area. We are at a crucial shortage. Also, the data  
15 shows that the teacher turnover rate in high-  
16 minority, high-poverty schools is larger than any  
17 other area and that would cover our Delta region. So  
18 we not only have a teacher turnover rate, we have the  
19 highest teacher turnover rate. The teacher attrition  
20 on page 31 also tells the same data, that an average  
21 -- that we lose 15.29 teachers after one year of  
22 teaching. That also impacts our area of the state.  
23 And then if you look on page 32, it speaks to the  
24 difficulty in high-minority, high-poverty areas of  
25 operating -- offering competitive salaries, and that



1 is the reason for giving you on the first summary  
2 sheet, 1A, our beginning salary at both the bachelors  
3 and the masters degree. So that data speaks to this  
4 problem as well. And then we look at the teacher  
5 survey and a number of our teachers were surveyed for  
6 this research report and it also speaks to response  
7 as to why we have a teacher shortage in our area.  
8 Perhaps one of the most telling informal data things  
9 that we have done is we have placed a large shoebox  
10 in our co-op and as hundreds of teachers come to our  
11 co-op in the summer we ask one simple question: why  
12 do we have a teacher shortage in southeast Arkansas?  
13 The teachers' responses were very frank and honest.  
14 The highest number of responses was teacher pay  
15 scale; two, lack of recreation in rural areas for  
16 single teachers; and, three, the challenges of  
17 teaching in today's society. So the teachers also  
18 recognize this. I will also state that our teachers  
19 are on our interview committees trying to help us  
20 find other teachers. They are our best source of  
21 trying to help us find other teachers to teach  
22 because the burden falls to them when we have  
23 openings and we cannot find qualified teachers. And  
24 then the other data that I think is so telling starts  
25 on page 34 and it's our board resolutions. Our board

1 resolutions are done by the Southeast Co-op, every  
2 member school, and then individually by the schools.  
3 I now have 11 of the 13. You only have 9 in your  
4 packet; two were passed last night, one by Drew  
5 Central and one by the Crossett School District. And  
6 I might note that Drew Central had a board meeting in  
7 the dark because of the weather. But we now have 11  
8 of the 13, and Monticello will have -- it's on their  
9 board agenda on July 26th and on Warren's board  
10 agenda for July 18th. So we all recognize the  
11 seriousness of this problem and we are asking waivers  
12 one year so that we can continue to work on this  
13 problem. Knowing what the factors are does not solve  
14 the problem in our area. We have a serious shortage.  
15 And with these waivers we can put the most qualified  
16 degreed person that we can find in these positions  
17 this year and try to continue them through the route  
18 of getting -- passing their Praxis exams, but it will  
19 also allow them to be teachers of record and receive  
20 teacher pay. That is what we're asking for. And I  
21 will also -- on the last page of your packet, we are  
22 also working with a new partner and we have a July  
23 21st meeting with our new partner, National  
24 Apprenticeship Training Foundation, because when they  
25 reviewed the data of the shortage in our area they

1           said, indeed, that we would be a prime candidate for  
2           a teacher apprenticeship program and that they would  
3           be willing to come and work with us starting on July  
4           21st at our first meeting to apply for a grant in  
5           September or be included in a grant to help us start  
6           an in-depth teacher apprenticeship program.

7           CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Thank you so  
8           much, Ms. Eoff. Y'all still have nine minutes left  
9           on the time. And as Ms. Zook did kindly request, if  
10          each of the superintendents or representatives of the  
11          district could come forward and say a few words in  
12          regards to their districts and their intentions as  
13          regarding this proposal we would appreciate it. And,  
14          again, if you could kindly start off by stating your  
15          name for the record our court reporter would  
16          appreciate that.

17          SUPT. DYSON: My name is Max Dyson; I'm  
18          superintendent of Hamburg School District. I  
19          appreciate the opportunity to be here today. We're  
20          facing a real problem in southeast Arkansas. Thirty-  
21          eight years is how long I've been in this business.  
22          I never envisioned 38 years ago, Coach Hill, when I  
23          started coaching that I would see this type of effort  
24          put forth to try to find not only teachers but  
25          coaches. We have our football coach as -- you know

1 -- I've got an applicant; we want to get him here,  
2 but his wife says, "I'm not moving to southeast  
3 Arkansas." Southeast Arkansas is a great place, but  
4 we truly have to grow our own and we are working on  
5 that tirelessly right now as we speak. And I hope  
6 you support our effort here to make sure that we  
7 continue to educate the students of southeast  
8 Arkansas.

9 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you.

10 SUPT. ACKLIN: Thank you. Bobby Acklin,  
11 superintendent of Warren School District. Really, I  
12 just ditto what our director has said. For seven  
13 years I was principal at Conway Junior High School  
14 and then on to North Little Rock for 24 years as  
15 assistant superintendent, and then my last three  
16 years -- two years at Dollarway and two years at  
17 Warren. But I didn't know that there was a teacher  
18 shortage when I was in Conway, and I didn't know that  
19 there was a teacher shortage my 24 years in North  
20 Little Rock. But when I got to Dollarway and then to  
21 Warren I find out that is almost an epidemic. And so  
22 we ask that you would consider our waiver request for  
23 this year that's been presented to you. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you.

25 SUPT. DARZENNE: Good morning. Thank you for

1 the opportunity to address the Board. My name is Dr.  
2 Lynne Dardenne; I'm the superintendent of the Dewitt  
3 School District. Our goal at Dewitt is to provide  
4 every child with the most highly qualified educator  
5 in every classroom that we possibly can. Our vision  
6 for the district includes providing our students not  
7 only with the social, emotional and academic, but  
8 technological support and guidance that will allow  
9 them to become productive members of society. We  
10 perform on state tests higher than most; our letter  
11 grades are all As, Bs or Cs. Our goal is As for all.  
12 And by approving these waivers you're going to help  
13 us to achieve our vision where we can give the  
14 opportunity to place persons with content knowledge  
15 who are seeking to secure teacher licensures in those  
16 areas in front of our students instead of having to  
17 put a substitute off the street without content  
18 knowledge in those areas. So we would ask that you  
19 consider the problems that we are having in southeast  
20 Arkansas, and know that each and every one of us is  
21 working diligently and knocking -- well, actually  
22 beating down every door that we possibly can. And  
23 there are probably people at the colleges and  
24 universities that when they see my name come up on  
25 their phone they don't want to talk to me anymore

1 because, you know, I'm calling constantly to say,  
2 "Anybody else entered your program?" You know, "Can  
3 you give me telephone numbers?" We cold-call kids  
4 that are graduating to try to get them to come and  
5 interview because I have great kids. I have kids  
6 that score 5s on AP exams. One of the Girls State  
7 delegates from Arkansas to Girls Nation was my  
8 student. One of the two Senate Youth representatives  
9 from Arkansas was my student. So I have great kids  
10 and I want great teachers in those classrooms. And I  
11 appreciate the opportunity to address you.

12 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much.

13 SUPT. ADAMS: Good morning. I brought Ms.  
14 Vaught along with me; she is a loaned educator --

15 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yes. We do remember having  
16 --

17 SUPT. ADAMS: -- this year --

18 CHAIRPERSON REITH: -- the privilege, many of  
19 us, of getting to --

20 SUPT. ADAMS: This year she has 70 years --

21 CHAIRPERSON REITH: -- congratulate her.

22 SUPT. ADAMS: -- 70 years in education. She's  
23 still --

24 MS. VAUGHT: Seventy-one.

25 SUPT. ADAMS: -- 71 years in education, and 15

1 days. We also --

2 CHAIRPERSON REITH: An impressive woman all  
3 around. Welcome back. Welcome back. We are so  
4 thrilled that you're here today.

5 SUPT. ADAMS: We're also facing --

6 CHAIRPERSON REITH: If you could also kindly say  
7 your name though, your name as well for the record.

8 SUPT. ADAMS: Billy Adams, superintendent of  
9 Lakeside School District.

10 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much.

11 SUPT. ADAMS: We're also facing the same problem  
12 that other school districts are facing. I will say  
13 that just recently we partnered with Teach for  
14 America, and then this is the first year that we  
15 didn't give them a list. In the past we've partnered  
16 with Teach for America, in 2001. Prior to that, we  
17 grew our own. We work with Malcolm and William and  
18 Thomas Gathen; they brought Malcolm in one year -- I  
19 mean, Grow Your Own with the Walton Foundation, and  
20 out of that we got about seven teachers. Those  
21 teachers are still there. As I said, 2001 Teach for  
22 America came along and we got a ton of teachers.  
23 This year, we were able to get three from 17. So  
24 Teach for America no longer is able to provide the  
25 supply of teachers that we actually need. So at this

1 point we're asking for a waiver to allow us to have a  
2 Teach for America, which has a provisional license,  
3 in Algebra I and she has 38 kids to be able to teach  
4 geometry. Well, she has a license of 250 -- a 254  
5 license, but she can only teach a 8th grade Algebra I  
6 and 9th grade Algebra I; has a strong background.  
7 She team-taught with a teacher last year in geometry  
8 with 83 kids; so, therefore, she's able -- if we're  
9 able to get this waiver then she can be able to teach  
10 geometry to those 83 kids. And if you divide 127 --  
11 121 kids, it's about 17 kids a period. So,  
12 therefore, you can't get an ALP on a provisional  
13 teacher; you can't ask for a waiver on a provisional  
14 teacher. Now I can have a tenured teacher, which is  
15 a PE coach, that can go in and I can get a waiver for  
16 two years, maybe get cited that second year, and  
17 teach nothing. But this person has a background in  
18 it and that's what we're asking you to do, to grant  
19 us a waiver to be able to do that. And we appreciate  
20 your time. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you.

22 SUPT. WILLIAMS: Hello. I'm Gary Williams,  
23 superintendent at Crossett. This is my first year in  
24 southeast Arkansas; I came from northeast Arkansas,  
25 where my previous district did not experience this



1           problem. Day-one, July 1 last year, I entered into a  
2           situation where we did not have teachers available  
3           and worked throughout the remainder of the summer,  
4           and it wasn't until January of '16 that we were able  
5           to fill all of our positions with teachers.  
6           Currently, we still have seven spots open for  
7           teachers this year. If this waiver is granted, five  
8           of those spots we could fill with degreed individuals  
9           who have some background in the content that we're  
10          asking them to teach. It would give us a lot of  
11          relief pretty quick, and we still have some work to  
12          do. Crossett is a wonderful town, as southeast  
13          Arkansas is a wonderful place. I feel we do have the  
14          talent there to grow our own teachers. We are  
15          starting the Teacher Cadet program at Crossett this  
16          year. We are speaking to our teachers and they've  
17          done a wonderful job recruiting other teachers to our  
18          area. We've had three hires that our teachers  
19          encouraged them to come work at Crossett because they  
20          do find it to be a great place to live and work, and  
21          we just need to get the people into our district to  
22          experience that and retain them. We did have a lot  
23          of turnover this year, mainly because of retirement  
24          or those who we've recruited in the past returned to  
25          other parts of the state, central, northern Arkansas,

1 that they were just looking to get closer to their  
2 family. They all left in a positive way and felt  
3 good about the district; they just wanted to get  
4 closer to home. So we do recognize that growing our  
5 own teachers is essential to solving this problem and  
6 this waiver would grant us some additional time to  
7 work on that solution for this problem. And I thank  
8 you for your consideration.

9 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you.

10 And prior to speaking, just to say that that was  
11 the 20 minutes overall. But with the indulgence of  
12 my colleagues on the Board, I'd like to use my  
13 discretion as Chair in allowing each of our district  
14 representatives to speak, although I will kindly ask  
15 if you could stay brief. But we would still like for  
16 each of you to speak on the record, and, again, if  
17 you could kindly state your name for the record.

18 SUPT. GATHEN: My name is Thomas Gathen; I'm  
19 superintendent of the McGehee School District. I  
20 have been an educator for 43 years and I'll go on the  
21 record as saying this is the most difficult year that  
22 I've ever experienced in the 21 years I've been a  
23 superintendent and recruiting staff. In the McGehee  
24 School District we lost this year 15 teachers,  
25 instructional staff, out of 105 employed district-

1 wide, and in order to replace those individuals we're  
2 having to do some unusual things. I actually had my  
3 high school principal to recruit his brother from  
4 Virginia to teach science for us, and so -- and  
5 that's going to cause a problem for him with his  
6 staff. But that's how difficult it is. This is also  
7 the first year I can remember that I'm experiencing  
8 problems trying to hire elementary teachers. We  
9 normally had a surplus of elementary teachers. At  
10 this particular point, we're short three elementary  
11 teachers because of deficiencies in the Praxis exam.  
12 I'm also having a unique problem that I'm having to  
13 hire a non -- employee a non-certificated person in  
14 Health and PE, and that has to do with the location,  
15 the rural setting of the McGehee School District in  
16 terms of our recruitment. And so I could probably go  
17 on, but I'm going to try to go with what you  
18 requested and not do anything else.

19 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, very much  
20 appreciated. Thank you.

21 SUPT. RIDGELL: Good morning. My name is Kristi  
22 Ridgell and I'm the superintendent at Dermott School  
23 District. As you all know, I made a pitch here on  
24 numerous occasions and you all know I have a hard  
25 time, a challenge in recruiting and retaining

1 teachers. So I just ask that you consider this  
2 waiver so we can kind of get those classrooms filled  
3 with high quality college graduates to commit to  
4 passion for teaching our kids. Thank you so much.

5 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you.

6 MS. STERRETT: Hello. I'm Camille Sterrett, the  
7 director of Special Programs for the Dumas School  
8 District. This is my 20th year, and six of those  
9 years were served as the recruitment and retention  
10 program advisor for the Department of Education where  
11 I actually laid the groundwork for the Teacher Cadet  
12 program. So I am very familiar with all of the  
13 challenges that we face in our state for recruiting,  
14 especially in southeast Arkansas. There in the Dumas  
15 School District we still have approximately over 10  
16 positions that we need to fill and so we are really  
17 -- we're really hoping that you will grant our waiver  
18 request so that we can make sure that we have the  
19 best possible people in our classrooms to educate our  
20 children for academic success. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you.

22 MR. KING: My name is David King, and I'm  
23 principal at Rison High School with the Cleveland  
24 County School District. Over the last three years  
25 we've had an English position, a math, a science and

1 a choir position come open, and during that time we  
2 only had one applicant for each position.  
3 Fortunately, they were licensed individuals. This  
4 year we're facing -- my biggest fear is that we're  
5 looking at one month from opening the doors to our  
6 students and we have a science position open and we  
7 do not have a licensed applicant for that position.  
8 While there are some out there that are qualified, at  
9 this time we're not able to pursue them and that's  
10 why we're here today to ask this -- request for this  
11 waiver to help us put the best candidate in those  
12 positions.

13 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you.

14 MR. WHITE: My name is Nathan White; I'm the  
15 director of Student Services for the Star City School  
16 District. And I'd just like to reiterate what  
17 everyone else has said. We're having a hard time  
18 filling these positions. I'm from the Delta area, I  
19 grew up there, my parents were teachers there, and  
20 it's nothing new getting people to come back to  
21 southeast Arkansas. So we really hope that y'all  
22 will take into consideration the things that have  
23 been said, and that we're saying, and approve these  
24 waivers so that we can go on and fill these spots.  
25 We have four currently that I know of off the top of

1 my head. Last year we had three elementary positions  
2 and we had three elementary teachers apply. We're in  
3 kind of the same boat that they were in that they  
4 were all certified and we snatched them up as we  
5 could. Currently, right now, we're needing a science  
6 teacher and we haven't had any qualified applicants.  
7 So we have somebody in mind that has a science  
8 background; she just doesn't have a science teaching  
9 license. So, once again, we hope that you will  
10 approve these waivers and we appreciate your time and  
11 consideration. Thank y'all.

12 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you.

13 SUPT. WILLIAMS: I'm Billy Williams; I'm  
14 superintendent, Drew Central Schools. And, again,  
15 I'd like to reiterate what my colleagues have shared  
16 today. You can have great leadership in these  
17 buildings, you can have great leadership at the  
18 district level, but there's no doubt the difference-  
19 maker is that person in front of the classroom. I'm  
20 here today to ask your assistance with this waiver.  
21 All of us colleagues, you look at our salaries and,  
22 no, we're not happy with them, but we're competitive  
23 among each other. And even though we swap out  
24 teachers from time to time for different reasons, we  
25 still get along with each other. And we have a

1 wonderful co-op in Southeast Arkansas with great  
2 professional development, training those teachers so  
3 that when they get in front of those kids they can  
4 make a difference. And so I'm honored today to be  
5 here. I'm asking for your serious consideration  
6 concerning this matter because it will make a  
7 difference. And when it's about students I know you  
8 care and we care. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much.

10 SUPT. LANEHART: Hello. My name is Sandra  
11 Lanehart and I'm the superintendent of Monticello  
12 School District. And you've heard from all of our --  
13 my colleagues and we're kind of all in the same boat.  
14 Right now, I'm looking for a middle school English  
15 teacher and a science teacher, a speech pathologist.  
16 I've got some -- a name for a special ed. teacher and  
17 a music teacher that I'm taking before my board and,  
18 hopefully, that will work out. But we would  
19 sincerely appreciate your consideration of this  
20 matter that would enable us to put the best qualified  
21 degreed person in those classes. I think we've all  
22 -- the applicants just aren't there, and it's been  
23 kind of a very mobile year. We've actually -- I've  
24 lost many young teachers because of the economy and  
25 their spouses were having to accept jobs in other

1 parts of the country, so many of my teachers left  
2 because their spouse had to relocate. Then, also, as  
3 my colleagues have said, we're just not getting those  
4 applicants. And with UAM, which is our main source  
5 of teachers, and this year just seven out there, they  
6 just -- you know -- they just aren't there. And just  
7 like for the English position that I have open, I've  
8 got two very promising candidates that lack the  
9 Praxis II exam. So that's kind of where we are, and  
10 I would really appreciate your consideration of this  
11 matter today. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much. And  
13 thank you all for speaking, standing, both literally  
14 but then also obviously metaphorically as well,  
15 behind this.

16 I have been made aware of an opposition to this  
17 proposal, and so since we've passed our 20 minutes I  
18 would like to invite you all to sit down and rest  
19 your legs for a moment. And then, Ms. Tracey Nelson,  
20 I would like to recognize you to speak. And please,  
21 for Ms. Eoff and the districts to know, you will have  
22 5 minutes at the end for closing remarks. Ms. Eoff  
23 -- or, sorry -- Ms. Nelson.

24 MS. NELSON: Good morning. Madam Chair,  
25 Commissioner Key, and Members of the Board, thank you



1 for this opportunity to join you today. My name is  
2 Tracey Ann Nelson; I'm the executive director of the  
3 Arkansas Education Association, and I'm here on  
4 behalf of our president, Brenda Robinson, our board,  
5 and our members across the state of Arkansas. While  
6 this opportunity is reserved for our president, I'm  
7 here in her stead as she is out of the state today.

8 As the State Board reviews the applications for  
9 waivers to our state laws and all that governs  
10 districts' delivery of education to our students, we  
11 at AEA continue to be troubled by the nullification  
12 of the important structures that have been developed  
13 over decades in Arkansas to insure that each and  
14 every child has the best possible chance at a quality  
15 education experience.

16 We understand the need to evolve as a system and  
17 as a delivery mechanism. As you know, AEA vigorously  
18 opposed Act 1240 and we -- and as we march down the  
19 road of waivers we value this Board's deliberation  
20 over their effects and the process by which they go  
21 into effect. AEA has concerns with the process by  
22 which waivers are being sought and approved.

23 I'd like to thank the Board for the important  
24 queries that you posed today that brought forth  
25 questions around core subject certification and

1 licensure, around class size waivers, and class  
2 loads, as well as -- it's not been brought up today  
3 but also waivers of duty-free lunch, because those  
4 three impacts are directly on students and teachers  
5 and they're the ones accountable.

6 Core subject certification and licensure should  
7 be -- waivers should be offended -- should be  
8 considered with great -- with graveness because core  
9 subject certification impacts student outcomes. We  
10 know that certification in any other profession would  
11 not be tolerated, but for some reason it is with  
12 teachers. Class size waivers and loads only impact  
13 students and teachers, and waivers for duty-free  
14 lunch should cause board members to query which  
15 profession would you require people to not have that  
16 time.

17 In reviewing the application before you -- the  
18 applications before you this week, we request that  
19 you take note of the inconsistent procedures utilized  
20 by districts around the state. The Southeast  
21 Education Co-op, made up of the 13 school systems --  
22 we understand the teacher shortage and shortfall that  
23 is significant to them that they face in each  
24 district. But we can't continue to abuse the  
25 profession by denigrating teachers and the need for

1 certification in that profession, not give teachers  
2 support, and expect people to stay in the profession.  
3 There's a direct impact.

4 The State Board's consideration should include  
5 the following: how the waiver application supports or  
6 compliments the district's vision and strategic goal;  
7 what are the specific benefits to students if these  
8 waivers are granted; what are the expected academic  
9 gains to students if these waivers are granted. So  
10 to just eliminate certification to have a warm body  
11 before students does not mean you have good student  
12 outcomes. Whether the waiver is consistent with  
13 district policy -- it is important to recognize that  
14 the State Board may allow a waiver for flexibility  
15 but whether the district can exercise it depends upon  
16 district policy. In the end, it is upon the district  
17 to effectuate the waiver.

18 The fiscal impact of the waiver -- will there be  
19 additional costs associated with the waiver? And if  
20 so, what is the source of the funding? If funds are  
21 saved, what are the planned uses for those savings?  
22 What effects will the waiver have on current  
23 academic, fiscal or facilities status? Will the  
24 waiver help the district to alleviate the distress  
25 issues or hinder the districts progress? Will the

1 waiver cause any district issues? Will the use of  
2 the requested waiver cause any issues with the  
3 district's compliance with the Standards of  
4 Accreditation? Will the use of the requested waiver  
5 assist the district in resolving any accreditation  
6 issues? How has the charter school effectively  
7 applied this waiver, and how do you expect to  
8 implement the effectiveness in your district? Has  
9 the local school board approved the use of the  
10 requested waiver -- and if so, is there a resolution  
11 from that board? Have you notified the staff that  
12 you intend to request and implement these waivers?  
13 If so, what methods of notification did we use and  
14 how often were the notifications sent out or  
15 publicized? If you've not notified the staff, how  
16 and when do you plan on notifying them? Have you  
17 notified the parents and the community that you  
18 intend to request and implement these waivers? If  
19 so, what methods of notification were used and how  
20 often were those notifications publicized?

21 We understand the need for flexibility in school  
22 districts and the challenges of not being able to  
23 find educators to stand in classrooms before  
24 students, but that should not allow certification to  
25 be so easily withdrawn. Certification was developed

1 to improve what mechanism we deliver to students in  
2 terms of their education.

3 At AEA, we help educators execute their success  
4 on the Praxis exam and we look forward to working  
5 with districts to help identify candidates in order  
6 for them to meet the certification requirements, as  
7 that seems to be part of our challenge.

8 The other component that I'd urge us to evaluate  
9 is as we pursue certification waivers what  
10 remediation for students in college now looks like  
11 because remediation is a cost to the student, to the  
12 family, to the school -- to the university system.  
13 As those needs continue to increase, we need to  
14 review the impact of waivers on remediation and  
15 outcomes for students.

16 I don't want to belabor this discussion too  
17 long. You know our position. We are concerned about  
18 Act 1240 and the waivers and the widespread criteria  
19 that's used to put them into place. We urge you as  
20 the Board to protect our students, educators and  
21 public education as we deliver it to our students.  
22 Thank you for careful consideration and for the  
23 opportunity to share our concerns.

24 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Ms. Nelson.

25 And so with that, from Ms. Eoff or anyone from

1 the districts, you all have 5 minutes for closing  
2 remarks.

3 MS. EOFF: Again, our goal and vision for each  
4 one of our school districts that are here today is to  
5 place the highest quality teacher we can find in our  
6 school districts. As we've stated over and over  
7 again by all of our superintendents and our  
8 curriculum people speaking, if we could find them we  
9 would put them in the classroom immediately --  
10 immediately. Nothing is better than a highly  
11 qualified trained teacher in the classroom. It's the  
12 greatest impact on student achievement. It's in all  
13 of our mission and vision statements. If we could  
14 find them, we would put them in the classroom. Our  
15 problem is we cannot find them. If you will look on  
16 our data sheets, it is not because we have not been  
17 trying. We have been out there working. Our college  
18 recognizes the problem, our legislative body  
19 recognizes the problem; if you have an easy fix, we  
20 would back you. If we could find a totally certified  
21 teacher to put in every one of our 64 openings, we  
22 would put them in there. We can't find them. So we  
23 are doing the next best thing that we know to do is  
24 come before you and basically beg for mercy because  
25 we are at that point. We understand and I agree with

1 all that has been said; the teacher is the  
2 difference. The teacher is the difference. We just  
3 cannot find 64 fully certified teachers that have  
4 passed all their tests to place in the classroom and  
5 school is coming August 15th; ready or not, it will  
6 start.

7 So we beg for these waivers so that we can  
8 continue on to find the most highly qualified teacher  
9 we can with a degree in the highest area of content  
10 expertise we can find to place in our classrooms.  
11 Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Thank you, Ms.  
13 Eoff. And, before I turn it over to my colleagues,  
14 to also on a personal note say how much I appreciate  
15 every single one of y'all and your passion obviously  
16 for our students, for our teachers, for the  
17 districts. And please know since joining the Board,  
18 and for many of us who've been here multiple years,  
19 it's sometimes with regret when we get to develop  
20 closer relationships with the superintendents because  
21 it's usually because of a crisis situation. And  
22 where it excites me to see so many faces of folks  
23 we've gotten to know over the years, it's regrettable  
24 that many times it's because of the fires, the house  
25 is burning down, it's a fire, and we're being asked

1 to do something about it. And so to see something at  
2 this proactive level is obviously something that is  
3 encouraging and a testament to how great everyone is  
4 in the Delta and the southeast. And for any of you  
5 that have known me or know my staff and know I run  
6 three immigrant resource centers down in the Delta, I  
7 find myself frequently in Monticello, McGehee and  
8 Jonesboro. And so I do feel very, very passionately  
9 about the region as well and you are doing an amazing  
10 job with your students, who I've been privileged to  
11 hire and work with and benefit from, especially your  
12 Latino students, which is also a testament to the  
13 changes in the Delta and you-all's commitment to  
14 reacting to the population there. And so I wanted to  
15 just say that before we turn it over to the broader  
16 conversation here because, obviously, teachers do  
17 matter so much and there are broad implications for  
18 this. At the same time, I did want to say we see you  
19 in the Delta, we know the challenges, and we're  
20 appreciative that today's conversation is about  
21 trying to find a solution. And so I just wanted to  
22 thank you all for that.

23 And with that, I turn it over now to my  
24 colleagues. I see Ms. Zook -- or, actually, the  
25 Commissioner.



1           COMMISSIONER KEY: Well, I think Ms. Pfeffer has  
2           some information that she'd like to share with the  
3           Board to help your discussion.

4           MS. PFEFFER: Thank you. And really what I want  
5           to do is to try to summarize some of this, but also  
6           acknowledge some of Ms. Nelson's comments because I  
7           agree that we want to value the profession and keep  
8           valuing the profession. And I can't help but think  
9           when I look at the educators who have come here from  
10          the Southeast Co-op, and to also have here with them  
11          Ms. Vaught after 71 years of education she is here  
12          speaking on their behalf, I think that ought to help  
13          you feel more comfortable that this is not a group  
14          coming to you advocating for lesser quality. This is  
15          not a group coming to you advocating for shortcuts or  
16          shortchanging kids.

17          Just three points that I think really help me to  
18          understand when I talked to them. They're willing to  
19          only ask you for this waiver for one year. This is  
20          not -- they do not want this to be their permanent  
21          story. They want their future to turnaround and be  
22          different. So I look at this as possibly an  
23          opportunity for us to step back, reset, look at this  
24          as an opportunity to maybe bring some people to the  
25          profession who would step in this one year and fall

1 in love with the profession, fall in love with the  
2 community. And this time next year I would like to  
3 see any and all of the people who come in who are not  
4 eligible to be hired with a provisional or standard  
5 license to be enrolling in a program or to become  
6 eligible for that provisional or standard license.  
7 So I think that should be a goal and we'll work with  
8 them to help maybe make that a realization. This  
9 really may be an opportunity to start a new Grow Your  
10 Own approach in this area.

11 The other thing, they talk a lot about  
12 partnerships with Higher Ed. So I was looking at a  
13 grant opportunity. I think it's an opportunity for  
14 AEA and the Co-op to really work together, AEA  
15 offering some support in terms of helping those who  
16 maybe have the credentials to meet AQT requirements  
17 and would be eligible to be employed as a teacher-of-  
18 record, working with them so that then they could  
19 become eligible for the provisional license to either  
20 enter a program or to become a candidate who can be  
21 licensed through the PPTL route. So those are the  
22 things that I really looked at.

23 The other thing is this year we are building in  
24 a field into eSchool where we'll be able to track in  
25 every school teachers who are teaching core courses

1 for which they are not licensed and the reason for  
2 which they're not licensed, whether they're teaching  
3 that course and they're on an ALP, a long-term sub,  
4 whether they're teaching that course because of a  
5 charter school waiver, an Act 1240 waiver, or a  
6 school of innovation waiver. That's going to be huge  
7 for us to be able to sit here next year and talk  
8 about and to analyze and look at and also look at  
9 those student outcomes. I think that all these  
10 superintendents realize that regardless of the person  
11 they put in the classroom student academic growth and  
12 achievement can't suffer; and if it does, it's going  
13 to be evident in their school's data and they do not  
14 want to put people in their schools that are going to  
15 negatively impact students. But right now I think  
16 the biggest question is what other option do they  
17 have when they have 64 openings and they have no  
18 people to fill. So those are just my comments and  
19 I'll stop there.

20 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Thank you, Ms.  
21 Pfeffer.

22 I think Ms. Zook --

23 MS. ZOOK: Yes. First of all, I have 40 years  
24 of roots in southeast Arkansas, so I applaud your  
25 schools and I appreciate your circumstance and feel

1 for that. I know that we had the Dumas School  
2 District and UA-Monticello come to us a few months  
3 back; I'm not exactly sure -- was it a year ago? --  
4 and ask for a way to get some teachers in there prior  
5 to passing. And I was wondering if the Dumas  
6 superintendent could speak to if that's working and  
7 are you happy or -- and is that similar to what we're  
8 trying to do here?

9 SUPT. DYSON: Before my colleague from Dumas  
10 gets here, we hired --

11 MS. ZOOK: So you're not from Dumas?

12 SUPT. DYSON: No. No, ma'am.

13 MS. ZOOK: You're confused.

14 SUPT. DYSON: Okay. Max Dyson, Hamburg School  
15 District.

16 MS. ZOOK: Yes.

17 SUPT. DYSON: We hired two people because of the  
18 efforts that Dumas was able to work with y'all and  
19 make that happen. We hired them; then when they  
20 became fully licensed we hired them as teachers  
21 during the year and it's working out great for us.  
22 Thank you.

23 MS. ZOOK: Great. Great. The same thing for  
24 you?

25 SUPT. STERRETT: Yes. We had two interns from

1 UAM that we hired the second semester. And,  
2 actually, with our Pathways to Mentoring program I  
3 actually mentored those two teachers to make sure  
4 that they had the foundation that they needed, as the  
5 project director for the district, and they are still  
6 there. They are at both of our elementary campuses.  
7 So, very successful.

8 MS. ZOOK: I'm happy the program is working.  
9 I'm happy the students are benefitting --

10 SUPT. STERRETT: Yes.

11 MS. ZOOK: -- but I'm also pleased that they're  
12 staying.

13 SUPT. STERRETT: Yes.

14 MS. ZOOK: Because that was one of the concerns  
15 that we had is if we put in all this time and energy  
16 and then some other district outside the southeast.

17 SUPT. STERRETT: Yes. And they are actually  
18 part of the Grow Your Own program, so they were  
19 actually from that area. So we know that they were  
20 going to invest time and energy into the success of  
21 our students, and so, you know, it has worked out  
22 well for us.

23 MS. ZOOK: Okay. Thank you for that  
24 information.

25 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Dr. Barth.

1 DR. BARTH: Yeah, for Ms. Pfeffer. The --

2 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Ms. Pfeffer.

3 DR. BARTH: Yeah, Ms. Pfeffer. A couple of  
4 things -- thank you -- in terms of our equity plan  
5 that's been filed with the federal department, what  
6 are the potential implications of this on that?

7 MS. PFEFFER: The key will be to have the data,  
8 which I think having the additional information in  
9 eSchool is going to be helpful. All of this will be  
10 reported in the equity plan. I think most of the  
11 schools in this co-op area are going to be included  
12 in the high-poverty high-minority schools. And I  
13 think it will further show the equity gaps that we  
14 have in all schools' ability to attract and retain  
15 teachers who are experienced teaching in their field  
16 of -- teaching in their assigned field of licensure.  
17 And so as we have that information, then we go from  
18 there and look at what are the strategies that are  
19 needed. I think that gives us more information that  
20 we use to say: what are the strategies that are  
21 really going to work, what are those strategies to  
22 really focus our efforts. We will be looking at  
23 opportunities, like the expanded uses of Title 2A  
24 funds under ESSA, combining that with the data from  
25 the equity plan. So, you know, these districts are

1 going to have a pretty close relationship with us at  
2 a lot of levels because we're going to be looking at  
3 things like that that they're doing and opportunities  
4 that we can do to help. There will be opportunities  
5 to use Title 2A funds for teacher preparation  
6 academies, and maybe something that will grow out of  
7 this is a partnership with the co-op and local  
8 organizations in terms of preparing teachers, maybe  
9 looking at preparation in a little bit of a new way;  
10 looking at preparation that can include more hands-on  
11 experiences within a school district while they're  
12 also getting their content and pedagogy background.  
13 So I think that there are a lot of opportunities to  
14 bring these two efforts together, but all of this  
15 will be a part of our future data that is reported.

16 DR. BARTH: Thanks. And, you know, one area of  
17 concern, something we've obviously spent a chunk of  
18 yesterday dealing about were PLSB issues --

19 MS. PFEFFER: Yes.

20 DR. BARTH: -- and that is an area I have some  
21 concern in terms of the ethics training, or lack  
22 thereof, I guess, in some of these cases. What kind  
23 of professional development related to ethics will  
24 these individuals get, and -- so I'll let you answer  
25 that and I'll probably have a follow-up question.

1 MS. PFEFFER: Okay. Non-licensed educators are  
2 not held to the Code of Ethics in the same way that a  
3 licensed educator is, okay, because they have no  
4 license for you to take action on should there be a  
5 violation of the Code of Ethics. That could be a  
6 conversation that you have today in terms of a  
7 commitment from these districts as to training for  
8 any employee hired who is non-licensed. We -- but  
9 those are some challenges that have -- that are  
10 questions that have been asked all along the way for  
11 anyone who is a non-licensed educator. And in terms  
12 of training, we have training provided by PLSB. Our  
13 PLSB investigators will go and do on-site training  
14 and will be happy to do that. So one of our goals  
15 long-term is to provide access to training for both  
16 our traditional and nontraditional programs on  
17 ethical decision-making, which will be an important  
18 piece. But I think on -- I think to answer your  
19 question on this and, unless I get a text from one of  
20 my colleagues to tell me different, that may be  
21 something you want to get an agreement from these  
22 districts that they would very seriously -- take very  
23 seriously the training and looking at how a Code of  
24 Ethics violation for a non-licensed employee would  
25 effect them in terms of employment long-term. But,



1 again, this is -- they're only asking for this waiver  
2 for this year and those may be some follow-up things  
3 you would look at.

4 DR. BARTH: Yeah. We know, you know, one ethics  
5 violation could really --

6 MS. PFEFFER: Sure.

7 DR. BARTH: -- harm a student's life.

8 MS. PFEFFER: Sure.

9 DR. BARTH: So, and we had some concerns about  
10 the first round of waivers with internship  
11 instructors and things like that. But this feels a  
12 little different because the individuals really would  
13 be playing the role in the classroom of a traditional  
14 teacher. So that would be a question for the members  
15 of the co-op of whether -- what I would think would  
16 be, you know, maybe requiring a certain number of  
17 hours of ethics professional development, you know,  
18 kind of a little crash course in ethics training, and  
19 then also, you know, a commitment to take those  
20 issues seriously when it comes to, in essence,  
21 abiding by the standards that are laid out.

22 MS. EOFF: That could be easily done because  
23 every school district has ethics training at their  
24 annual meeting, and so they could receive it there --  
25 I mean -- and they could also come to the co-op for a

1 more intensive course.

2 DR. BARTH: Right.

3 MS. EOFF: That would not be a problem.

4 DR. BARTH: How many hours would be the typical  
5 at that start-of-the-year?

6 MS. EOFF: I know that we do at least an hour of  
7 ethics training every year, an annual meeting, which  
8 goes over again the standards and reiterates  
9 scenarios. And many times, we bring in an ADE  
10 investigator that makes it more real. And so that  
11 would not be a problem to schedule that and to  
12 schedule the school -- all of these teachers that we  
13 are requesting come through this method to have them  
14 trained would not be any issue at all.

15 DR. BARTH: Okay.

16 MS. EOFF: We could do that easily.

17 DR. BARTH: Ms. Pfeffer, I mean, an hour doesn't  
18 feel that intense. Is there -- how are the modules  
19 there on ethics --

20 MS. PFEFFER: You know, I'm --

21 DR. BARTH: What number of hours would be  
22 appropriate to kind of ask these schools to  
23 undertake?

24 MS. PFEFFER: I want to say that when -- from my  
25 memory of when we did the training and went through

1 the training, it was about two hours. But, Dr.  
2 Barth, I honestly -- I'd be remiss if I tried to tell  
3 you something exact. I can tell you that a  
4 commitment from the ADE is that we would send one of  
5 our investigators there to go through the online  
6 training plus some additional, you know, training  
7 exercises, and would provide a half-day training in  
8 the co-op for educators. What we might have to do is  
9 schedule one or two times and then make it available  
10 through video or some other means for -- you know --  
11 if not everybody could attend at the same time, but  
12 for anybody who would not have gotten that training.  
13 And now if it's someone who is in a Higher Ed. prep  
14 program --

15 DR. BARTH: Right.

16 MS. PFEFFER: -- they're going to get --

17 DR. BARTH: Sure.

18 MS. PFEFFER: -- some of that training. And  
19 they actually are held to the Code of Ethics because  
20 as interns actions can be taken on their future  
21 license.

22 DR. BARTH: Right. And that's a different --  
23 slightly different case.

24 MS. PFEFFER: There is -- and there is also an  
25 online -- Praxis has developed an online ethics

1 training called Pro-Ethica; it's about \$50.00 per  
2 person. It's a pre and post type assessment and  
3 training in between. We've looked at it; it's  
4 wonderful. We've been looking at it in terms of  
5 just, you know, what is the way this could best be  
6 used, how might we look at it. There are some PLSB  
7 funds available where we could look at opportunities  
8 for a grant to go to a co-op and even looking at  
9 that. So this may be an opportunity for us to kind  
10 of put this out there and provide this training to  
11 some folks who might really need that and that might  
12 be a good way to do it.

13 DR. BARTH: Yeah. Okay.

14 MS. PFEFFER: So I'll agree to help support them  
15 in whatever way you all need us to to make sure. But  
16 I think that is an excellent point.

17 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yes, Mr. Gathen.

18 DR. BARTH: Okay. I have one more thing but I  
19 think --

20 CHAIRPERSON REITH: I think Mr. Gathen wanted to  
21 respond.

22 DR. BARTH: Oh, okay.

23 SUPT. WILLIAMS: Gary Williams, superintendent  
24 at Crossett again.

25 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Sorry.

1           SUPT. WILLIAMS: I've got some additional  
2 information pertaining to the Crossett School  
3 District. Realizing that keeping teachers in  
4 teaching is important to solving this problem, we are  
5 instituting a four-day -- with the flexibility we  
6 have with reduction of required PD, our new teachers,  
7 which if this waiver is granted are new degreed  
8 personnel entering this -- we're going to have four  
9 days, two days before school and then a couple of  
10 days embedded throughout the school year, that's  
11 specific to new teachers where we're going to  
12 address, you know, a lot of issues, including ethics,  
13 not only on the front-end but coming back and  
14 reminding them through our PD, to support them  
15 through that process. So that's some information  
16 that I think would help answer your question.

17           DR. BARTH: Thank you.

18           CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Did you have one  
19 more?

20           MS. ZOOK: I think somebody --

21           DR. BARTH: Okay.

22           CHAIRPERSON REITH: Well, Dr. Barth, you wanted  
23 to --

24           DR. BARTH: I can hold on.

25           CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay.

1 DR. BARTH: I do have something maybe in a  
2 minute.

3 CHAIRPERSON REITH: All right. And then, who  
4 else had -- Ms. Zook. Okay.

5 MS. ZOOK: Now unless things have changed, it's  
6 my understanding, first of all, that these people,  
7 even though they're not licensed, they still have to  
8 have a background check; correct?

9 MS. EOFF: Right. Correct.

10 MS. ZOOK: And there are ways within the way you  
11 write their -- because they will be under contract;  
12 right?

13 MS. EOFF: Right.

14 MS. ZOOK: And there are things in addition to  
15 the training they'll get but that they will -- it's  
16 very clear to them in that contract, you know, if you  
17 do this and this and this that would be immediate  
18 dismissal or reprimand or whatever. So I think with  
19 the training and the contract and the background  
20 check we've covered as many bases as we can to  
21 protect children and your districts. Am I assuming  
22 --

23 MS. EOFF: You're correct.

24 MS. ZOOK: I see a lot of nodding heads.

25 MS. EOFF: Yes.

1 MS. ZOOK: This is good. Ms. Vaught, are you  
2 nodding your head?

3 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Ms. Zook. Mr.  
4 Black.

5 MR. BLACK: Just curious, you wait on the  
6 superintendents to serve you. What do you provide  
7 for direct employees?

8 MS. EOFF: In ethics?

9 MR. BLACK: Yes.

10 MS. EOFF: We -- like at the co-op -- I can only  
11 speak for the co-op -- we provide ethics training  
12 every year, every single year. Ethics training is  
13 part of our annual meeting which every employee must  
14 attend, certified and non-certified. Everyone that  
15 -- from janitors to whatever have ethics training.  
16 Originally I had, like they said, the two-hour in-  
17 depth training when the ethics came out and then we  
18 reiterate every single year. And within PD also that  
19 they attend, our certified staff, our administrators  
20 institute, there are elements of ethics in Tier 1  
21 training every year.

22 MR. BLACK: Just curious, when you have this  
23 type of lesson or whatever, do you have roots with  
24 the people -- forgive me. What I'm trying to say, do  
25 you have people with roots in the community that

1 would show this as well? You're probably missing  
2 what I'm saying. Basically, if you have teachers who  
3 are teaching, your parents who also in a way are  
4 extended teachers, do your parents also show their  
5 mercy with students?

6 MS. ZOOK: I think he's talking about a  
7 wraparound extended -- making sure the culture of the  
8 community is part of what the teachers understand.

9 MS. EOFF: Oh, okay.

10 MS. ZOOK: Is that right, Mr. Black?

11 MR. BLACK: To a degree, yes.

12 MS. EOFF: Do our -- the whole -- you're wanting  
13 to know does the whole community understand the  
14 ethics of which a teacher operates under; yes. Yes,  
15 yes. And we try to make that a part because ethics  
16 is so important. It is discussed at community  
17 meetings; it is -- ethics that all educators must  
18 live by are discussed in community meetings. They  
19 don't have as much in-depth training, but it is  
20 discussed. Yes.

21 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Yes, Dr. Hill.

22 DR. HILL: I guess, as a new board member -- not  
23 for you; it's actually for Ms. Nelson, the  
24 opposition. Is that all right?

25 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yes, of course.



1 DR. HILL: Would you please -- I just -- and I'm  
2 just trying to -- I'm a freshman, I'm in the first  
3 day.

4 MS. NELSON: Me, too.

5 DR. HILL: So I'm just trying to wrap my hand  
6 around it based on what I've heard from the co-op and  
7 then I heard from opposition, from the AEA. And so I  
8 guess if the Board didn't approve this as a solution,  
9 what would you all offer for this to happen? Because  
10 I just heard --you know -- it was kind of like  
11 they're at combat, they're at war, and they've got  
12 people coming at them, and so in 45 days something  
13 has to happen. They have 64 openings. If we say no,  
14 we don't approve -- I just heard them say that  
15 they're going to have to put a substitute teacher in  
16 there, which is the only alternative. And I just  
17 want to make sure I'm grasping this correctly that  
18 you oppose this based on credentials, which I got,  
19 but then I guess my deal is: so what solutions will  
20 we bring back to this organization to help them solve  
21 this problem to be ready for class on August 15th?

22 MS. NELSON: So the challenge of the teacher  
23 shortage is not unique to the 13 schools; it's across  
24 the state and across the country. I'm happy to work  
25 with school districts to identify candidates. I

1 realize that part of this is a culture, so there's no  
2 other mechanism for people to have a life in some of  
3 those communities, and so that is part of the  
4 challenge. But we have to not denigrate the  
5 profession while still insuring our students get the  
6 best academic outcomes. I mean, I understand the  
7 challenge and I'm happy to support it. I don't --  
8 I'm not trying to be disrespectful to the Board, but  
9 there's very few waivers that the Board has denied.  
10 So we're not going to be surprised about the outcome.

11 DR. HILL: This is my first board meeting, so  
12 I'm not privy to that, and that's the reason I was  
13 just trying to look historically on how the  
14 organization would be a supporting organization to  
15 the needs of their constituents.

16 MS. NELSON: So we -- you know -- we -- our  
17 members are made up of educators across the state.

18 DR. HILL: Yes, ma'am.

19 MS. NELSON: And a lot of times we're speaking  
20 on their behalf because they don't feel as empowered  
21 locally as they do by telling us to speak on their  
22 behalf. There's a real challenge with valuing  
23 teachers in their classrooms and in their careers,  
24 and so that is part of why we're here is to help --  
25 have that conversation so that we can partner with

1           superintendents, principals, if necessary, to help  
2           educators be of value and making sure students get  
3           what they need.

4           DR. HILL:   Okay.   Thank you so much.

5           MS. ZOOK:   And I would recommend, whether we  
6           pass this waiver or not, if you all have ideas and  
7           can help them find teachers that -- you know -- go  
8           for it.   I'm sure they'd be thrilled to have that.   I  
9           was in a position in North Little Rock where I had to  
10          hire teachers and I had to constantly resist the urge  
11          to just put a body there; but, fortunately for my  
12          kids, then I did resist that urge.   But you do get to  
13          a point where you're a little bit panicked --

14          MS. NELSON:   Sure.

15          MS. ZOOK:   -- because you have to have people,  
16          and people on the path often make better than just an  
17          assigned sub or a sub that comes and goes and doesn't  
18          take it as seriously because they don't know about  
19          lesson plans and all of those kinds of things.

20                 And I think the points that you brought up, many  
21                 of which have nothing to do with this waiver request,  
22                 are things that have come up before and that we have  
23                 pretty consistently -- I know Brenda watches our  
24                 meetings --

25          MS. NELSON:   Yes, ma'am.   We all do.

1 MS. ZOOK: Yeah -- have pretty consistently  
2 asked those questions, like have you talked to the  
3 charter --

4 MS. NELSON: Sure.

5 MS. ZOOK: -- have you done this, how does it  
6 affect achievement. I know -- you know -- I'm a  
7 birddog about those kind of things. But I do  
8 appreciate the AEA's willingness to help in all  
9 areas, because I know y'all have a heart for children  
10 as do we.

11 MS. NELSON: Thank you, Commissioner.

12 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Oh, Ms. Nelson, before you  
13 step down -- and it's kind of a two-part question I  
14 have --

15 MS. NELSON: Sure.

16 CHAIRPERSON REITH: -- for both you and the  
17 districts. Were teachers consulted on this? I do  
18 know that you -- local boards, correct, and y'all  
19 talked about resolutions passing, with the exception  
20 of two and it's on their agenda. Have teachers been  
21 notified about y'all coming here?

22 MS. EOFF: Yes.

23 (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: Several school district  
24 representatives also said yes.)

25 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. And have you -- any

1 of y'all or the AEA heard any objections? You all  
2 have in regards to this?

3 MS. NELSON: (Nodding head up and down.)

4 CHAIRPERSON REITH: And the districts, have  
5 teachers come to y'all directly in regards --  
6 concerns to this?

7 MS. EOFF: They haven't to me.

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. All right. But the  
9 AEA has concerns specifically about this?

10 MS. NELSON: Well, we get it from our members --

11 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yeah.

12 MS. NELSON: -- in the local districts.

13 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay.

14 MS. NELSON: We do not come before the Board --

15 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Unless --

16 MS. NELSON: -- without any local discussion at  
17 all.

18 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Can you elaborate on what  
19 some of their concerns were?

20 MS. NELSON: I think some of the concerns were,  
21 you know, degrading the certification requirements  
22 but understanding the challenge of the needs. I  
23 mean, it's a balance. What we -- as we spoke to our  
24 members, we said, "This is only a one year waiver,  
25 you know, so there's not just blanket effort to --

1           you know -- to denigrate certification." So I think  
2           that helped alleviate some of the concerns that our  
3           members had. But there's an overall concern in  
4           general about getting rid of certification.

5           CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Ms. Nelson.

6           I think I saw -- actually, Mr. Williamson, at  
7           one point you looked like you might have a question.  
8           Well, and, actually, I -- then, Ms. Newton.

9           MS. NEWTON: I just -- this was for the director  
10          of the co-op. Are there 15 schools in the co-op  
11          region?

12          MS. EOFF: Pardon?

13          MS. NEWTON: Are there 15 schools in your co-op  
14          region, 15?

15          MS. EOFF: There are 14, and Woodlawn, the one  
16          school that did not come, was not eligible because  
17          they didn't have any students in the Arkansas Virtual  
18          Academy.

19          MS. NEWTON: That was my question.

20          MS. EOFF: Yes. That's the reason they're not  
21          here; they were not eligible waivers.

22          CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yes, Dr. Barth.

23          DR. BARTH: And I just want to maybe close  
24          things up, but I really appreciate your passion, Ms.  
25          Eoff, about, you know, this crisis that exists. That

1 is, I think, front and center in southeast Arkansas.  
2 But it's going to be a crisis statewide. I mean, you  
3 know, with those numbers at ASU, the decrease there,  
4 it's going to go to northeast Arkansas. And this is  
5 really, you know, a national crisis and I think I  
6 would disagree with you a little bit that -- I don't  
7 think our political leaders have kind of recognized  
8 what kind of crisis it is, to a degree, to step up  
9 and -- I mean, this is going to require over the next  
10 generation, you know, everybody who has a bully  
11 pulpit using the bully pulpit that this is important  
12 and changing priorities in terms of teacher pay, but  
13 also, even more importantly, how we treat the  
14 profession and how the profession is viewed. It's a  
15 -- this is the crisis, I think, in education in the  
16 next generation, and y'all are on the frontlines but  
17 it's -- and I think -- you know -- I just want to  
18 make a plea with this Board is that I think we have  
19 to be really conscious of doing anything that would  
20 send signals about the way we perceive the  
21 profession. And that's why I really am concerned  
22 about some of these duty-free lunch issues and  
23 student load issues, because I think they do send  
24 some signals about the way we perceive the  
25 profession, just to think -- to sometimes make things

1 a little bit more convenient for some other folks.  
2 Because I think we have to just elevate the  
3 profession non-stop, like we did this morning, which  
4 I think was a great ceremony, but we need to do it  
5 not just in ceremonial ways but through our policy  
6 decisions.

7 MS. EOFF: Well, we couldn't agree with you  
8 more.

9 DR. BARTH: Thanks.

10 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Dr. Barth. Any  
11 final questions? Otherwise, I'll entertain a motion.  
12 Again, a reminder to the Board, there is just one  
13 waiver before us on this of the matter of the teacher  
14 licensures.

15 DR. HILL: And that's for one year, right?

16 CHAIRPERSON REITH: For one year.

17 DR. BARTH: So I'm going to try to craft a --  
18 and I'll look to Ms. Davis. I will move to approve  
19 this waiver with an understanding that appropriate  
20 ethics training with the support of PLSB will be  
21 present in all of these districts for these teachers.

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: And, again, we can't require  
23 that as the Board but they can put into verbal record  
24 if they --

25 MS. DAVIS: Right. And they've already agreed



1 to that.

2 DR. BARTH: Right.

3 MS. DAVIS: So that would be appropriate.

4 DR. BARTH: I just wanted it as part of the  
5 motion.

6 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Do I have a second?

7 MS. ZOOK: Second.

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. So motion made by Dr.  
9 Barth, seconded by Ms. Zook. And roll-call please,  
10 Commissioner.

11 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Barth.

12 DR. BARTH: Yes.

13 COMMISSIONER KEY: Mr. Black.

14 MR. BLACK: Yes.

15 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Chambers.

16 MS. CHAMBERS: Yes.

17 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Dean.

18 MS. DEAN: Yes.

19 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Hill.

20 DR. HILL: Yes.

21 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Newton.

22 MS. NEWTON: Yes.

23 COMMISSIONER KEY: Mr. Williamson.

24 MR. WILLIAMSON: Yes.

25 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Zook.

1 MS. ZOOK: Yes.

2 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Motion carries by unanimous  
3 vote. Best of luck to all of your districts; not  
4 just safe travels back but good luck there in the  
5 challenges ahead. We look forward to hearing from  
6 you all over the course of this year. And we do hope  
7 many of you all will take the opportunity to speak  
8 with the AEA and the representative, Ms. Nelson,  
9 while she's here and to continue to inform us how we  
10 can support this -- obviously this crisis that many  
11 have referenced. So, thank you all so much.

12 Lunch has been waiting for over a half-hour, so  
13 I am going to convene. But we do have several  
14 matters before us. Would it be too ambitious for me  
15 to say 1:20 return to the colleagues, a 25-minute  
16 lunch, or would folks like a little bit longer?  
17 1:30, okay. So we'll reconvene at 1:30. We'll  
18 reconvene at 1:30. Thank you, all.

19 (LUNCH BREAK: 12:55 - 1:30 p.m.)

20 A-9: CONSIDERATION OF ADOPTION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND  
21 DISCIPLINARY LITERACY STANDARDS

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: So Action Item A-9,  
23 Consideration of the Adoption of English Language  
24 Arts and Disciplinary Literacy Standards. Who will  
25 be speaking --

1 MS. SMITH: Good afternoon.

2 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Good afternoon. Thank you.

3 MS. SMITH: Thank you. Stacy Smith, Assistant  
4 Commissioner. And in no way could I stand up here  
5 without this lady next to me. This is Sherri Thorne;  
6 she is our English Language Arts Specialist within  
7 Curriculum and Instruction and she has been the lead  
8 on the revision of the Arkansas literacy standards.

9 So we have uploaded for you the new ELA  
10 standards that we're asking for you to adopt, but I  
11 just wanted to make sure to tell you all the work  
12 that went into this. The same with math that you  
13 previously adopted, we did pre-surveys; we did post-  
14 surveys; we had very large teacher representative  
15 committees across the state; Higher Ed. and preschool  
16 were involved. We had close to 100 people on the ELA  
17 involved at different times when we worked on the  
18 disciplinary literacy standards; we brought in  
19 science, social studies, arts teachers, health  
20 teachers to specifically work on the disciplinary  
21 literacy standards and break it down to what does  
22 that look like in an art classroom, what does that  
23 look like in a social studies classroom, and make  
24 sure that those people are at the tables giving  
25 specific examples. Within this document that we are

1 proposing we also added in the teacher notes, same  
2 thing that we had within the math standards.  
3 Throughout the process one thing we heard over and  
4 over again is we wanted our resources right there; we  
5 wanted explanations right there; we didn't  
6 necessarily want to have to go search for another  
7 document. So they built in through teacher notes  
8 clarification resources and additional information  
9 throughout the standards documents. Those teacher  
10 notes, that's the part about this ongoing kind of  
11 flexible document where we can go in and add support  
12 to teachers as they need it. So when we see that  
13 there's an area of clarification, we can go in with  
14 those teacher notes and support teachers all across  
15 the state. But a lot of work went into this  
16 document; we're very proud of the document, and we  
17 request today that you guys approve the new English  
18 Language Arts and Literacy Frameworks.

19 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much, Ms.  
20 Smith. Any questions or comments from my colleagues  
21 on the Board? Yes, Dr. Barth. Apologies.

22 DR. BARTH: So, thank you. And I agree, it's  
23 really good work. Have we -- have disciplinary  
24 standards ever been approved before or is this brand-  
25 new?

1 MS. SMITH: The disciplinary standards before  
2 were a part of the Common Core state standards.

3 DR. BARTH: So they were just tied together?

4 MS. SMITH: Yes.

5 DR. BARTH: Got it. Okay. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Ms. Dean.

7 MS. DEAN: I just wanted to thank Ms. Smith and  
8 Ms. Thorne for all of the work that they put in. The  
9 work and the time and effort was just awesome. So I  
10 just wanted to thank you for the standards that  
11 you've given to us, and I will be ready with a motion  
12 whenever the time comes. So, just thank you --

13 MS. SMITH: Thank you, Ms. Dean.

14 MS. DEAN: -- to all the teachers and everyone  
15 that puts time and effort into it.

16 MS. SMITH: And just noting that Ms. Dean kind  
17 of had a front row seat at different times when --

18 MS. DEAN: I did. Yes.

19 MS. SMITH: -- she came back and got to hear  
20 when we were trying to have a very transparent  
21 process.

22 MS. DEAN: Yes.

23 MS. SMITH: All of our meetings were live-  
24 streamed, all of our meetings were open to the  
25 public. We tried to make an effort to sit down and

1 talk with those who were unsure about our standards  
2 and the directions we were going all throughout the  
3 process, so --

4 MS. DEAN: You answered questions that we had  
5 when we were there, so you were very helpful. So,  
6 appreciate it.

7 MS. SMITH: Thank you. I appreciate those  
8 comments.

9 MS. DEAN: You're welcome.

10 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Ms. Dean. Any  
11 other -- yes, Ms. Newton.

12 MS. NEWTON: I have just a couple of questions  
13 just so that, I guess, the people who are watching  
14 live-stream will understand. Tell me about the  
15 alignment with the ACT Aspire.

16 MS. SMITH: Okay. I'm going to let Ms. Thorne,  
17 who's our expert ELA person. And, again, I'm hugging  
18 her because this would not be here today without her.  
19 And when we talk about quality people at the Arkansas  
20 Department of Ed. and people that we should promote  
21 and support and celebrate, this is one of those  
22 ladies.

23 MS. THORNE: You're too kind. As far as the ACT  
24 Aspire, we used the ACT benchmarks as we were  
25 developing the anchor standards in particular. And

1 so as far as their connection with the ACT Aspire,  
2 that was really what we looked at -- for the college  
3 and career readiness standards, we really looked at  
4 those benchmarks and we found that there was already  
5 quite a bit of alignment there as we began that work.

6 MS. NEWTON: Okay. One more question: the  
7 writing this year on the ACT Aspire was very low.  
8 How will these standards address that?

9 MS. THORNE: Well, the standards address it in  
10 the same way that they have in the past. I think we  
11 -- you know -- it takes awhile to get implementation  
12 where you want it to be. So we still support  
13 argumentation, informational writing, and narrative  
14 writing, all three, and those three types of writing  
15 are tested in ACT Aspire. So we are still targeting  
16 the types of writing that will be assessed.

17 MS. NEWTON: So if a teacher teaches these  
18 standards their students will be prepared?

19 MS. THORNE: I would like to think so. Yes. I  
20 think that the standards are rigorous and I think  
21 that as far as how that test is set forth, I think  
22 you teach the standards and you don't concentrate so  
23 much on test prep till the end of time just so  
24 they're familiar with formatting and that sort of  
25 thing. But the stress is on the actual standards and

1 preparing them to be good writers in those three  
2 types of writing.

3 MS. NEWTON: I want to congratulate you and your  
4 department on excellent work. You've done a good  
5 job.

6 MS. THORNE: Thank you.

7 MS. SMITH: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Ms. Newton.  
9 Additional questions or comments? Yes -- oh,  
10 Commissioner. Defer to Ms. Zook? Okay. Ms. Zook.

11 MS. ZOOK: Oh, okay. I was just thinking along  
12 with the things that you have done, which I am  
13 thrilled with, and the things that I heard Springdale  
14 talking about a couple of months ago where they have  
15 lessons and curriculums developed for people to use  
16 all over the state; you know, a new teacher  
17 especially will have so much opportunity to benefit  
18 from experienced teachers. And I was thinking how I  
19 wish I had had that at the time, so I'm thrilled that  
20 we have that now.

21 Another thing on the writing, one of the things  
22 that I've seen used that I find effective, and a  
23 teacher that thinks her writing scores when she gets  
24 them back will be really good, is having students  
25 write like a paragraph, to tell something in a



1 paragraph, and then having the other students read it  
2 and say what they thought that paragraph actually  
3 said. And then the student who wrote it going,  
4 "Well, no," or "Why did you think that," or, you know  
5 -- and then they learn about their commas and their  
6 punctuation and their phrasing and their syntax. So  
7 as I see good things out in the schools I like to  
8 share them because you never know if one person who  
9 influences 10 kids might actually try something that  
10 they hadn't thought of before.

11 MS. SMITH: And you better be careful because we  
12 might pull you on our professional development team.

13 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Wonderful. Yes,  
14 Commissioner.

15 COMMISSIONER KEY: I just want to say how much I  
16 appreciate all the team -- of course, Sherri has done  
17 a great job, but all of the team, and even throw Dr.  
18 Debbie Jones in there because this all started when  
19 she was still with us. And just to -- I just want to  
20 say, you know, in the last several years -- in your  
21 lifetime, do you remember a time when educational  
22 standards was such a centerpiece of discussion?

23 Probably not. And, you know, for the negative that  
24 really brought the discussion up, I mean, I think we  
25 have now created a product that is much more positive

1 and it has buy-in from Arkansas educators because  
2 they were at the table. I mean, they did it; they  
3 did the work. So I just -- I as Commissioner, I want  
4 to express my thanks to our team at ADE for leading  
5 this effort, to all those educators that were a part  
6 of this, for our Higher Ed. partners that were a part  
7 of this, and for those folks outside, stakeholders,  
8 that came; you know, they monitored, they were there,  
9 they had opportunity to give feedback, a number of  
10 ways of feedback, surveys and live feedback, emails,  
11 you name it. And we have now -- I think, Stacy, we  
12 had 60-something percent of the standards were  
13 modified or revised or clarified. Is that right?

14 MS. SMITH: 62% of the standards had some type  
15 of clarification, modification or change.

16 COMMISSIONER KEY: Okay. And that was  
17 clarification or modification based on Arkansas  
18 classroom teachers --

19 MS. SMITH: Uh-huh.

20 COMMISSIONER KEY: -- that saw what needed to be  
21 done. So I just -- I think this is a great job and,  
22 you know, as I said, told Ms. Zook a year ago, I  
23 would've expected that this would have been the issue  
24 that brought a room full of people today to have  
25 their, you know, say of whether they were for it or

1           against it. And you look and, you know, we don't  
2           have that. So I don't think that means it's less  
3           important; I think that means we did a good job of  
4           getting everyone's input along the way. So just --  
5           anyway, wanted to express my thanks again to everyone  
6           involved in this process.

7           MS. ZOOK: And another step from adequacy to  
8           excellence.

9           COMMISSIONER KEY: Well put, Ms. Zook. Thank  
10          you.

11          MS. SMITH: One thing I want to clarify, when  
12          we're asking you to make this motion today, is that  
13          the standards would go into -- for school districts  
14          who want to begin early implementation of these  
15          standards as we begin for this -- for them in August,  
16          those. But all school districts would be required to  
17          follow these standards by the following school year.

18          CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay.

19          MS. SMITH: Okay. And that's a practice we put  
20          in place with the last three standards that I believe  
21          we've brought to you. Time is important.

22          CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much. Yes, Dr.  
23          Barth.

24          DR. BARTH: Just a question. You know, I agree,  
25          this process has been different than the previous

1 standards and -- but I don't -- I think when -- I  
2 wasn't on the Board when those were voted on, but I  
3 don't think anybody would've expected the backlash  
4 that grew on those standards. And I think we all  
5 know that communications -- the communication  
6 strategy around those standards had real problems,  
7 the lack of communication. Are we thinking about  
8 communication around these standards, both these and  
9 the math standards, so that we can kind of, you know,  
10 be smarter about staying in touch with folks in the  
11 years ahead?

12 MS. SMITH: Absolutely. And really our  
13 communication plan for these standards -- that -- we  
14 started with communication when we talked about how  
15 are we going to take on this process and it started  
16 with those pre-surveys. And that is also something  
17 that you'll see -- Health and Wellness standards are  
18 our next big thing that we're doing. We're starting  
19 with a pre-survey on the existing standards; we're  
20 starting with external review. So on the existing  
21 ones that we have right now, one thing that we did  
22 differently through this process is we involved all  
23 the different educational cooperatives. On the math  
24 we used -- also brought in the STEM centers. So  
25 their specialists that work directly with teachers

1 were involved in the process; they were facilitators  
2 at tables leading discussions. That was huge as far  
3 as communication. So as we're rolling out these  
4 changes they understand that we have these teacher  
5 notes that can be ongoing and flexible. And the idea  
6 that as we look at our own data -- for example, in  
7 writing, when we start seeing what the trends are in  
8 our writing data, then we need to go back to our ELA  
9 standards and we need to look to make sure are -- as  
10 we hypothesize what we think may be going on in  
11 Arkansas education in that area, is there an area  
12 that we need to clarify or support within our writing  
13 standards and bringing in our teachers and re-looking  
14 at those standards. If it's something that can be  
15 simply enhanced through the teacher notes, then we  
16 would do that. If it's something that we feel like  
17 we need to change, then we would bring that back to  
18 the Board and say, "Hey, this is something that we  
19 feel like we need to add to our standards." So it's  
20 that constant process of looking at our data, seeing  
21 where we are, looking for trends -- not just one  
22 year, but looking for trends, and making changes  
23 where necessary. Also, it needs to be pushing our  
24 professional development and what we're providing to  
25 teachers, and we need to be strategic and specific

1 about that.

2 DR. BARTH: Because teachers are the best  
3 advocates for --

4 MS. SMITH: Absolutely.

5 DR. BARTH: -- communicating the importance of  
6 standards.

7 MS. SMITH: They're the ones in those classrooms  
8 every day, and making sure that they have a clear  
9 understanding of what the expectation is. Standards  
10 are what we expect all teachers to teach in their  
11 classrooms. It is not the ceiling; it is the base.

12 CHAIRPERSON REITH: That's wonderful. Any  
13 additional questions or comments from my colleagues?  
14 Otherwise, I think, Ms. Dean, we may be ready for a  
15 motion.

16 MS. DEAN: I move to adopt the new K-12 ELA and  
17 Disciplinary Literacy Standards to be effective for  
18 those schools who want to begin this year, August of  
19 2016, and for all schools by the following school  
20 year.

21 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Do I have a second?

22 MS. CHAMBERS: Second.

23 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Second. So motion made by  
24 Ms. Dean, seconded by Ms. Chambers. All in favor say  
25 "aye."

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(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? Motion carries. Congratulations, Ms. Smith and Ms. Thorne. Thank y'all.

A-10: CONSIDERATION OF EMBEDDED COURSES

CHAIRPERSON REITH: So, Ms. Smith, if you can stay up there for our next item as well. Now moving on to Action Item A-10, Consideration of Embedded Courses.

MS. SMITH: We've also submitted our embedded courses for your approval. This is in, I guess, law that you have to vote and have an action as far as embedded classes go. So we have actually put forth to you all the embedded courses because we bring them back to you every single year, but you also have the list of new embedded courses. It's kind of been standard practice that traditionally you've seen oral communications and English. In this last proposal, this last year, you've had some others as far as science and CTE courses go. Some more interesting embedded courses put together, but very pleased. We also worked closely with CTE in the approval of these embedded courses. So we ask for an action item to approve the embedded courses for these schools.

CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much, Ms.

1 Smith. Any questions? Yes, I saw Ms. Newton first.

2 MS. NEWTON: I just have a question because of  
3 my ignorance, I guess. How long are these good for?  
4 Do they have to come back every year or --

5 MS. SMITH: We bring them back every year.

6 MS. NEWTON: Every year.

7 MS. SMITH: So you can see on the sheet that we  
8 uploaded, there's an Excel sheet of the different  
9 years, and so we're asking for the past ones to be  
10 approved. And we've contacted those districts to  
11 ask, "Are you still going to do these courses next  
12 year?" And if so, we've left them on the list.

13 MS. NEWTON: So the approval would be for, you  
14 know, even like the 2014-15 and all the way back?

15 MS. SMITH: Yes.

16 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

17 MS. SMITH: When there is a standards change --  
18 okay -- for example, with our math standards, our ELA  
19 standards, they have to show that they're meeting the  
20 new standards.

21 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

22 MS. SMITH: Okay.

23 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Perfect. Dr. Barth.

24 DR. BARTH: Yeah, a couple of questions. First  
25 off, I used my cheat-sheet and figured out what



1 Keystone was.

2 MS. SMITH: Very good.

3 DR. BARTH: But my cheat-sheet to my left. And  
4 my question is, is that being -- that embedded course  
5 being developed by Virtual or has that been developed  
6 at the school level? Because I think Keystone is --

7 MS. SMITH: Keystone is a written course  
8 already. But the embedded course, they took the two  
9 courses and had to show to us how they were going to  
10 do both courses within one period and that they had  
11 the right teachers or teacher who was appropriately  
12 licensed to teach both those courses.

13 DR. BARTH: Okay.

14 MS. SMITH: And so, of course, that was with CTE  
15 and our course; it was a joint effort at that point  
16 to work together.

17 DR. BARTH: Okay. So Keystone is not a Virtual  
18 course; it's a traditional --

19 MS. SMITH: Yes.

20 DR. BARTH: Okay.

21 MS. SMITH: Through CTE. Uh-huh.

22 DR. BARTH: Okay.

23 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Mr. -- oh, sorry;  
24 continue.

25 DR. BARTH: And so -- okay. And I guess with

1           that one and then with the agricultural leadership  
2           and oral communication -- we've approved a lot of  
3           English and oral communication over the years, but  
4           this is the first time I think we've seen  
5           agricultural leadership --

6           MS. SMITH: Right.

7           DR. BARTH: -- and oral communication and then  
8           also the Keystone, which does not have an obvious  
9           communications link. Can you talk through the  
10          comfort level of folks in the oral communication  
11          world with those embedded courses?

12          MS. SMITH: Okay. When we're looking at  
13          combining an oral communications course, we're still  
14          looking for that course to have a teacher that is  
15          licensed to do oral communications -- okay -- or that  
16          they have a mentor of someone with oral  
17          communications built into that. So when you're  
18          looking at the agri leadership course, okay, there  
19          are points in there where those students are actually  
20          going out and making presentations when they're  
21          competing. And so it's naturally kind of built in  
22          for that coursework for those students to practice  
23          their oral delivery within that course. So I  
24          actually -- that was probably one of the more  
25          exciting courses as far as embedding that I saw

1           instead of it being through the traditional English  
2           Language Arts course.  But in all courses, when you  
3           see oral comm., we're still making sure that there is  
4           a licensed teacher that is working with that course.  
5           A lot of times you see it in a mentorship or the  
6           teacher is going in two days a week or three days a  
7           week, or they have split periods where they're  
8           working.  So it's not just that the agri teacher now  
9           is responsible for oral communication; there is still  
10          a licensed teacher who's making sure that the  
11          frameworks for the course of oral comm. are being  
12          taught.

13                 DR. BARTH:  So are some of these actually team  
14                 taught courses with two faculty --

15                 MS. SMITH:  Yeah.

16                 DR. BARTH:  -- working together?

17                 MS. SMITH:  Yes.  Absolutely.

18                 DR. BARTH:  Okay.

19                 MS. SMITH:  In fact, you see that frequently.

20                 CHAIRPERSON REITH:  Ms. Williamson.

21                 MR. WILLIAMSON:  I mean, I know this; I'm a  
22                 recovering banker, so I'm going to bite.  You've got  
23                 --

24                 MS. SMITH:  Financial literacy.

25                 MR. WILLIAMSON:  -- financial literacy

1 highlighted there or in bold.

2 MS. SMITH: With math; right?

3 MR. WILLIAMSON: Math, which I think is great,  
4 you know. There's a lot of kids that don't  
5 understand checking account -- well, let's be frank,  
6 there's a lot of adults that don't understand  
7 checking accounts also. But I think this is critical  
8 to --

9 MS. SMITH: So when they were looking at this  
10 course for approval that was going to be considered a  
11 fourth math course. So, therefore, it had to show  
12 math skills that were post-Algebra II.

13 MR. WILLIAMSON: Okay.

14 MS. SMITH: So within the proposal for that  
15 course they had to submit core standards that were  
16 post-Algebra II or past, and then they took the  
17 financial literacy course from the business CTE and  
18 combined those two courses.

19 MR. WILLIAMSON: Right. Okay.

20 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any additional questions or  
21 comments from the Board? Yes, Dr. Hill.

22 DR. HILL: When we -- and I'm just trying to  
23 wrap -- when we started to do this, and just for  
24 future reference, just from my coaching background  
25 with the NCAA, in a number of core classes --

1 MS. SMITH: Uh-huh.

2 DR. HILL: So oral communication was a -- I know  
3 it was a core class but now you've combined it to one  
4 class?

5 MS. SMITH: They are still receiving their half-  
6 credit for oral communications and then they'll  
7 receive their credit for English also. So when we're  
8 saying it's an embedded course, they are receiving a  
9 half-credit for oral comm. and a full credit for  
10 English.

11 DR. HILL: Okay.

12 MS. SMITH: From math and business, for  
13 financial literacy, they'll get those two credits.  
14 Okay?

15 DR. HILL: Okay.

16 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any additional questions  
17 from the Board? Otherwise, I'll entertain a motion.

18 DR. BARTH: I move to approve this list of new  
19 and returning embedded courses.

20 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Do I have a second?

21 MS. NEWTON: Second.

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Motion made by Dr. Barth,  
23 seconded by Ms. Newton. All in favor say "aye."

24 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

25 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? Motion

1 carries. Thank you so much, Ms. Smith.

2 MS. SMITH: Thank you.

3 A-11: CONSIDERATION FOR FINAL APPROVAL: ADE RULES GOVERNING  
4 HOW TO MEET THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN WITH DYSLEXIA

5 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Moving on now to Action Item  
6 A-11, Consideration of Final Approval, the ADE Rules  
7 Governing How to Meet the Needs of Children with  
8 Dyslexia. Ms. Freno, you're recognized.

9 MS. FRENO: Thank you, Madam Chair. Lori Freno,  
10 General Counsel, Arkansas Department of Education.  
11 As you said, I am here for Action Agenda Item A-11.  
12 The majority of the changes made to this rule from  
13 the last version are the result of our bringing these  
14 rules into compliance with Act 1268 of 2015. We  
15 drafted these rules. The Governor's office approved  
16 them. This Board, of course, put them out for public  
17 comment and we took them out for public comment.  
18 There was quite a robust public comment, both in  
19 hearing and otherwise. The Governor's office  
20 approved them, but after public comment we made some  
21 non-substantive changes in response to those public  
22 comments. The Governor's office at this point has  
23 not finally approved all the subsequent changes but  
24 requested that we just go ahead and present these to  
25 the Board. And, you know, should something come up

1 where the Governor's office had a problem with them  
2 later we could just bring them back, but I don't  
3 anticipate that. But in any event, at this point we  
4 ask that the Board give final approval to these rules  
5 pending legislative review and approval by the  
6 Governor's office.

7 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Ms. Freno. To my  
8 colleagues, any questions? Yes, Ms. Zook.

9 MS. ZOOK: I'll have several since this is my  
10 field. First of all, I think part of the issue and  
11 why it has taken so long to get all this through is a  
12 part of learning theory called Negative Transfer.  
13 When something is in your head or you've learned it  
14 and it applied in one area and then you make a shift,  
15 you're using some of the same terms but applying them  
16 to different things, then you get what we call  
17 Negative Transfer. Your old learning is not helping  
18 your new learning; it's getting in the way. So since  
19 dyslexia initially was under special education it was  
20 a specific learning disability, and in the minds of  
21 many it still is. But over time a lot of parents and  
22 some educators chose not to have it under the  
23 categories of special education; they wanted to pull  
24 dyslexia out. Part of that was because when you say  
25 special ed. a lot of people think developmentally

1 delayed, blind, deaf, whatever, one of the others.  
2 And many people -- I was not one of them -- feel like  
3 this is a negative for the children. I think that  
4 children are pretty resilient and they hold up  
5 regardless. But anyway, our state along with several  
6 other states chose to pass a law to deal with  
7 dyslexia. It was due in part to the fact that a lot  
8 of districts had not -- were not adequately or  
9 excellently serving the needs of the dyslexic  
10 children, and so therefore there was a need to put  
11 another bite into that. Unfortunately, the law as  
12 passed did not give ADE enforcement power, so they  
13 can have this rule, they can have these laws, they  
14 can be passed by the legislature, and ADE can do  
15 everything that they can to inform and educate, and I  
16 commend Kevin Beaumont and his crew and Vicki King,  
17 they've done everything within their human power to  
18 get this done; there are still districts who are  
19 dragging their feet and there is no penalty under the  
20 law and there's no enforcement by ADE to get it done.  
21 So, here we are. You know, you just have to hope at  
22 some point that people who are in our schools will  
23 take and do the spirit of the law, not just the  
24 letter of the law, because this benefits all  
25 children, just as the impassioned pleas yesterday for



1 the Marshallese community, and we have others.

2 All of that said, my questions to you, Lori,  
3 are: under 4.03 it says, "DIBELS alone may be  
4 insufficient to determine the existence of dyslexia."  
5 I still believe that it should say "DIBELS alone is  
6 insufficient to determine the existence," because  
7 your following sentence pretty much emphasizes that  
8 but a "maybe" means it could be and it couldn't be,  
9 and in fact it isn't. Are you with me on that, where  
10 I am?

11 MS. FRENO: I'm with you, Ms. Zook. Yes.

12 MS. ZOOK: And I don't know if that would be  
13 considered a substantive change or not because your  
14 sentence underneath it pretty well goes on to say  
15 that "additional screening assessments will need to  
16 be administered to measure components that are not  
17 measured by DIBELS."

18 MS. FRENO: Yes. And, Ms. Zook, I don't see an  
19 inconsistency -- excuse me -- in those two sections  
20 because all the first sentence is saying is DIBELS  
21 alone may indicate characteristics of a reading  
22 deficiency.

23 MS. ZOOK: That's correct.

24 MS. FRENO: And that's correct. "Additional  
25 screening assessments will be needed to administer to

1 measure the components that are not measured by  
2 DIBELS."

3 MS. ZOOK: Correct.

4 MS. FRENO: So that is recognizing, based upon  
5 public comment. That's why we made that change.  
6 Actually, I believe it was your public comment.

7 MS. ZOOK: Yeah.

8 MS. FRENO: The DIBELS alone is not enough.

9 MS. ZOOK: Right.

10 MS. FRENO: There's got to be more --

11 MS. ZOOK: So I think it's --

12 MS. FRENO: -- to measure all components.

13 MS. ZOOK: That's why I think it should say  
14 DIBELS alone is insufficient, as opposed to may be  
15 insufficient because it is never sufficient. But,  
16 you know, you're the lawyer and you know all you've  
17 got to do to either change it or not. The  
18 explanation below it is good.

19 Now all the way down to 12, so this gives you  
20 great hope because I'm almost finished --

21 MS. FRENO: No. No, everything you have we're  
22 very happy to respond.

23 MS. ZOOK: I want to know --

24 MS. FRENO: We're ready.

25 MS. ZOOK: Yeah. Is this being done? It refers

1 to "the Department of Education shall collaborate  
2 with the Department of Higher Ed. to insure all --  
3 that all teachers, education programs offered to  
4 state-supported institution of Higher Education  
5 provide dyslexia professional awareness."

6 MS. FRENO: Yes.

7 MS. ZOOK: It has been done?

8 MS. FRENO: Yes.

9 MS. ZOOK: Terrific. And number 13, this  
10 committee, I have all due respect for all of these  
11 organizations, but I guess I should've called like  
12 Tony Prothro and Richard Abernathy; I have no clue if  
13 there's anybody that are a member of either of those  
14 organizations that would have the knowledge and  
15 expertise needed in order to be an effective member  
16 of this committee -- or is it just going to be one  
17 more thing they send one more person to that they sit  
18 there, and sometimes they show up and sometimes they  
19 don't and -- but they really don't contribute? And  
20 sorry for being so plainspoken.

21 MS. SMITH: No, I always appreciate you being  
22 plainspoken. Really, when I first saw the law with  
23 those committees I thought the same thing. But what  
24 happened is we asked those different organizations to  
25 have a representative and they chose from their body.

1 So, for example, for AAEA, you had the superintendent  
2 Dale Query of Flippin --

3 MS. ZOOK: Oh, well --

4 MS. SMITH: -- who represented. So they chose  
5 people within their --

6 MS. ZOOK: Who's now retired.

7 MS. SMITH: He's now retired. But actually he's  
8 now over the Rural Educators Association --

9 MS. ZOOK: I saw that.

10 MS. SMITH: -- so he's still very much active.  
11 So he -- so they each selected someone that they felt  
12 had knowledge to be able to give input to that.

13 MS. ZOOK: So they took it seriously?

14 MS. SMITH: Yes. And also within the dyslexia  
15 resource guide we tried to break down the components  
16 of DIBELS and give other suggestions of other  
17 assessments that could also be used in helping them  
18 determine indicators of dyslexia.

19 MS. ZOOK: Okay. Thank you very much. Thank  
20 you, Madam Chairman.

21 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Any additional  
22 questions?

23 DR. BARTH: I just want to reinforce Ms. Zook's  
24 statement about the inequities in terms of  
25 implementation of this around the state. And it's a

1 law that's supposed to close the gap on inequities,  
2 because we know some kids have access to being  
3 identified and others don't; and because of the lack  
4 of the teeth that I think would insure more equity,  
5 ultimately I think that's a challenge. But it is --  
6 it's the law that is, and, you know, with time  
7 hopefully it will be the start to really taking a big  
8 step forward and we will have more districts -- that  
9 all the districts will be more like Flippin in terms  
10 of places that have really been asserted and  
11 aggressive on this.

12 MS. ZOOK: And just as an emphasis, this law  
13 originally to serve dyslexic children while under  
14 special ed. was passed in '78, with full  
15 implementation was supposed to be done in 1980. Now  
16 that's from the federal level. The state followed  
17 very closely behind that. So we're not talking  
18 about, gosh, people are just a couple of years behind  
19 here; I mean, this is -- this is embarrassing for  
20 those districts to continue to fail to serve the  
21 needs of these children, or any child. But  
22 obviously, as you can see, I'm very passionate about  
23 these children.

24 MS. SMITH: Well, and we're very passionate  
25 about children reading. We know that if a student is

1 not reading by the end of 3rd grade their chances of  
2 reading diminish, basically. And so what we are  
3 seeing is we have seen an increase of students that  
4 have been reported or identified by districts who are  
5 being served directly with a dyslexia program. Last  
6 year I think we had like 900 in the state that were  
7 identified as being served with a dyslexia  
8 intervention program. This year we had over 6,000.  
9 Now I'm going to say that I still think 6,000 is too  
10 low, but we are digging into the data and looking for  
11 school districts in areas in which maybe we need to  
12 reach out to support and to help. We also believe  
13 that not all school districts are identifying their  
14 students correctly still because there was a change  
15 in the way -- in the manner in which they reported  
16 last year in eSchool and because of a change in the  
17 law we changed how they identified this year. So we  
18 still believe that there is a disconnect there.  
19 Also, within our own agency at ADE, in our literacy  
20 specialists, they are all working closely with Vicki  
21 King and have sat through multiple days of training  
22 about "I know you're a literacy specialist, but let's  
23 talk about dyslexia, let's talk about the things that  
24 maybe you're unaware of," and starting that education  
25 there so that that is trickling out into all of our

1 cooperatives who are leading our professional  
2 development in early reading. So it is something  
3 that we take very serious and like you, we want to  
4 see the needle move for kids, especially in K-1-2 in  
5 this area, and even for our older students who have  
6 fallen through the cracks. We have got to make sure  
7 we've got the right people there who can support in  
8 this so that they also can be successful. So thank  
9 you for your comments about this and please know that  
10 we do take this serious.

11 MS. ZOOK: I know.

12 MS. SMITH: And we have built in assurance  
13 statements that superintendents sign that their  
14 district is complying with the law. We also have the  
15 mechanism in which they report within their districts  
16 their students that they are serving. We've reached  
17 out to our dyslexia specialists who are at the  
18 cooperatives and we have encouraged them, "Please  
19 know who's in your district, what programs your  
20 districts have chosen, and if they don't have a  
21 program you need to get in there." So we are trying  
22 to be -- we're not trying to drag our feet on this  
23 but we're really trying to make sure that it's being  
24 talked about.

25 MS. ZOOK: And I think to emphasize your point

1 on literacy, just because you know how to teach  
2 reading does not mean you know how to reach a child  
3 with dyslexia. Because they're wired slightly  
4 differently and they can learn to read but they have  
5 to be taught a special way. One of the ways I earned  
6 extra money when I worked at the Med Center was  
7 reading -- I had two students who were in med school  
8 and I read to them because they were so dyslexic that  
9 by the time they read the material they were losing  
10 the comprehension. But if I read it to them they  
11 would comprehend it and they could go in and take the  
12 test. Well, obviously, I didn't get out of med  
13 school but they did. So we're not -- you're not  
14 dealing with slow people here; you know, you're  
15 dealing with people that if you'll just help them  
16 unlock that or figure out some way to compensate for  
17 the fact it hadn't been unlocked -- you know, these  
18 are our doctors and lawyers and professionals and  
19 moms and teachers.

20 MS. SMITH: Well, I appreciate the fact that you  
21 recognized Vicki King earlier and her work with  
22 dyslexia. I also want to introduce to you Robin  
23 Stripling; she is within our special education unit  
24 and she is the contact for dyslexia concerns in our  
25 special ed. unit. So for those parents who have a



1 child who is disabled and has -- also has dyslexia,  
2 she's making sure that they -- that school districts  
3 understand how to serve them.

4 MS. ZOOK: Great. Thank you, Board, for your  
5 indulgence.

6 CHAIRPERSON REITH: No, thank you, Ms. Zook, for  
7 bringing that expertise to this Board. We appreciate  
8 it.

9 So with that, any additional questions or  
10 comments? Then I would entertain a motion, Board.

11 MS. ZOOK: I will proudly recommend approval.

12 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Do I have a second?

13 DR. BARTH: Second.

14 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Motion made by Ms.  
15 Zook, seconded by Dr. Barth. All in favor say "aye."

16 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

17 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? Motion carries  
18 unanimously. Thank you, Ms. Freno.

19 MS. FRENO: Thank you very much.

20 A-12: CONSIDERATION FOR FINAL APPROVAL: ADE RULES GOVERNING  
21 CREATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS BY DETACHMENT

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Moving on now to Action Item  
23 A-12, Consideration for Final Approval of the ADE  
24 Rules Governing the Creation of School Districts by  
25 Detachment. Ms. Davis.

1 MS. DAVIS: Yes, good afternoon. These rules  
2 are the rules governing the creation of school  
3 districts by detachment. You previously approved  
4 these for public comment. We did have a public  
5 comment hearing; we have not received any public  
6 comments. There were a few non-substantive  
7 technical, grammatical kinds of changes to the rule  
8 -- you know, making sure that dashes were consistent  
9 and things like that -- but no other changes have  
10 been made. And they have been approved by the  
11 Governor, and we do ask that you will grant final  
12 approval for these.

13 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Ms. Davis. Any  
14 questions from the Board?

15 DR. BARTH: Move final approval.

16 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Do I have a second?

17 DR. HILL: Second.

18 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Motion made by Dr. Barth and  
19 seconded by Dr. Hill. All in favor say "aye."

20 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

21 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? Then motion  
22 carries. Thank you.

23 MS. DAVIS: Great. Thank you.

24 A-13: CONSIDERATION FOR FINAL APPROVAL: PROPOSED ADE RULES  
25 GOVERNING ARKANSAS HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHER REQUIREMENTS

1                   CHAIRPERSON REITH: Moving on now to Action Item  
2 A-13, Consideration for Final Approval of the  
3 Proposed ADE Rules Governing Arkansas Highly  
4 Qualified Teacher Requirements. Ms. Davis.

5                   MS. DAVIS: Yes. All right. These rules for  
6 the Arkansas Highly Qualified Teacher Requirements,  
7 like we've talked several times today, with the doing  
8 away with the federal guidelines these are in place  
9 to insure that, you know, our teachers are highly  
10 qualified. You have previously approved these for  
11 emergency approval, so that is in effect. We had a  
12 public comment hearing; there were public comments  
13 received but we did not make any substantive changes.  
14 They have been approved by the Governor. And so if  
15 you have any questions I'll be glad to answer them,  
16 but we do ask that you give final approval to these  
17 rules as well.

18                   CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Ms. Davis. Any  
19 questions from the Board? Yes, Ms. Newton.

20                   MS. NEWTON: I don't have a question; I just  
21 have a comment. In the last cooperative waiver that  
22 we had, Woodlawn was not able to apply for the waiver  
23 because they did not have a student in the charter  
24 school.

25                   MS. DAVIS: That is correct.

1 MS. NEWTON: And so I'm sure that Woodlawn  
2 probably has just as much trouble getting teachers as  
3 all the other 13 schools in that cooperative. So  
4 what I would do is just encourage some sort of  
5 legislative intervention that would make an even  
6 playing field for those districts.

7 MS. DAVIS: Right. And thank you. And just to  
8 answer that, I don't believe that Woodlawn --  
9 thankfully, I think they were in slightly of a better  
10 condition than some of the other schools in the  
11 districts. So, I mean, not that that invalidates  
12 your point, but just in case anybody else is  
13 wondering about that.

14 MS. NEWTON: Yeah. Not even just Woodlawn. I  
15 know --

16 MS. DAVIS: Sure.

17 MS. NEWTON: -- there are districts all across  
18 the state --

19 MS. DAVIS: Absolutely.

20 MS. NEWTON: -- that don't have a student in a  
21 charter school but are having difficulty finding  
22 teachers.

23 MS. DAVIS: Absolutely. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Yes, Ms.  
25 Chambers.

1 MS. CHAMBERS: Just I was curious with the  
2 nature of the comments were. Did they tend to come  
3 in a lot of different flavors or were they of one  
4 specific interest?

5 MS. DAVIS: I'll let Ms. Pfeffer answer that.

6 CHAIRPERSON REITH: And, Ms. Chambers, there is  
7 a matrix document on here with comments.

8 MS. PFEFFER: The changes that were made in  
9 response to the comments were primarily just the  
10 clarification that -- for example, in ALE if  
11 licensure had been waived. These were not requiring  
12 licensure or things that could already be waived. So  
13 that was at least two of the concerns and -- I think  
14 those were the two areas. It was just a  
15 clarification in the wording.

16 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Additional questions or  
17 comments? Then I would entertain a motion.

18 MS. NEWTON: Move to approve.

19 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Do I have a second?

20 MS. CHAMBERS: Second.

21 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Motion made by Ms. Newton,  
22 seconded by Ms. Chambers. All in favor say "aye."

23 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

24 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? Motion  
25 carries. Thank you, Ms. Davis.

1 MS. DAVIS: Thank you.

2 A-14: CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDATION TO ADOPT THE PRAXIS  
3 FUNDAMENTAL SUBJECTS: CONTENT KNOWLEDGE (5511)

4 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Now moving on to Action Item  
5 A-14, Consideration of the Recommendation to Adopt  
6 the Praxis Fundamental Subjects. Ms. Pfeffer.

7 MS. PFEFFER: Thank you, Madam Chair. We're  
8 bringing this item before you. It really applies to  
9 Section 3.02.2.3 of the AQT rules, and that is the  
10 provision that teachers can meet AQT content area  
11 qualifications by passing a state-approved content  
12 assessment. This assessment is an assessment we  
13 currently don't have for licensure; it's a  
14 fundamentals assessment. And what we would like to  
15 do is make it an option for teachers who are licensed  
16 K-12 special education teachers -- so they would have  
17 to be K-12 special ed. before it would apply -- or an  
18 ALE teacher to be able to take this content  
19 assessment, which would make them qualified to teach  
20 in multiple core content areas. Most of the time in  
21 the placement of special education teachers or ALE  
22 teachers if you've got the right person with the  
23 right heart to teach students, either with  
24 disabilities or students that are not being  
25 successful in the traditional classroom, the idea

1 that they can be licensed in, you know, five or six  
2 different areas is not always feasible. But in these  
3 types of environments they're often required to teach  
4 students in multiple areas. So we have worked with  
5 the special education unit, with our alternative  
6 education unit, and we'd like to use this as an  
7 option for those two situations as a way for them to  
8 be qualified in that area that they're assigned,  
9 giving school districts flexibility to use really  
10 good people for multiple ways to really serve the  
11 children that need them. So you can see the score  
12 that is being recommended and on the -- I think on  
13 one of your pages you can actually see how some  
14 states are using this assessment. Some states  
15 actually use this as part of their K-12 special  
16 education licensure for this very purpose. So it's  
17 providing that content area expertise demonstration  
18 for special education educators who can teach  
19 students throughout the school career. So I know  
20 that Ms. Stripling and Dr. Gardenhire are here, if  
21 you want to ask them some specific questions about  
22 how this would apply to ALE or special ed.

23 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yes, Ms. Zook.

24 MS. ZOOK: So they're already certified as  
25 special ed. and then they take this --

1 MS. PFEFFER: They could.

2 MS. ZOOK: I mean, they could. But this isn't  
3 instead of?

4 MS. PFEFFER: This would be if that special ed.  
5 teacher was being placed in a core content area for  
6 which he or she would not be AQT already.

7 MS. ZOOK: Okay.

8 MS. PFEFFER: So it's not going to apply to all  
9 special ed. teachers; it's in these circumstances  
10 where a school needs this special ed. teacher to be  
11 able to do multiple things.

12 MS. ZOOK: So, but they're already a special ed.  
13 licensed educator?

14 MS. PFEFFER: Or on an ALP.

15 MS. ZOOK: Okay.

16 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Additional  
17 questions or comments from the Board? Then I would  
18 entertain a motion.

19 MR. BLACK: So moved.

20 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. And that would be to  
21 approve the recommendation to adopt the Praxis  
22 Fundamental Subjects; is that correct, Dr. Black?

23 MR. BLACK: Yes.

24 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Wonderful. And a second?

25 MS. CHAMBERS: Second.



1 CHAIRPERSON REITH: So motion made by Mr. Black  
2 and seconded by Ms. Chambers. All in favor say  
3 "aye."

4 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

5 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? Motion  
6 carries. Thank you so much, Ms. Pfeffer.

7 MS. PFEFFER: Thank you.

8 A-15: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOLS CLASSIFIED IN ACADEMIC  
9 DISTRESS

10 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Now moving on to Action Item  
11 A-15, Recommendations for Schools Classified in  
12 Academic Distress. Dr. Wilde, you're recognized.

13 DR. WILDE: Richard Wilde, Program Manager for  
14 School Improvement Unit. As the Board will recall,  
15 in April, schools -- a set of schools were classified  
16 in academic distress. As statute requires, ADE  
17 appointed a team of educators to do an on-site  
18 review. Ms. Barnes and Commissioner Key appointed  
19 the teams. The reviews were conducted in the month  
20 of May and for the most part it consisted of members  
21 from Educator Effectiveness, Special Education, the  
22 School Improvement Unit, and consultation and support  
23 from Federal Programs, School Performance, the  
24 Curriculum Unit, Standards, Professional Development,  
25 and Assessment. During the site reviews Mr. Harvey

1 and/or Ms. Barnes were process observers, so they  
2 were there; they did not participate but they  
3 observed the process. Each school that was reviewed,  
4 also there was a district representative so that all  
5 of the process was transparent for every group.

6 The process included a review of all written  
7 reports that were available and then it included  
8 interviews with the district leadership team, the  
9 school leadership team, the principal, instructional  
10 teams, instructional facilitators, and other support  
11 personnel, and, as appropriate, students.

12 The report that you have contains the  
13 recommendations that are made by the teams. For the  
14 most part -- to give you some insight into the  
15 thinking behind the recommendations, for the most  
16 part the schools -- most of the schools were already  
17 classified either as a Priority school or as  
18 previously classified in academic distress, so they  
19 already had plans that they were working on. The  
20 feeling of the teams basically was they're already  
21 invested, there needs to be refinement but lets keep  
22 moving ahead with what they're already working on.

23 The next piece was -- it was looking at district  
24 level support and it seemed to vary from district to  
25 district and in none of the districts was there a

1 written plan of support. So the next recommendation  
2 in the report was for there to be a written plan of  
3 action for how the schools would be supported with  
4 the highlighted points that the plan needs to  
5 address.

6 The next item was in relationship to -- there  
7 were two schools that were newly identified who had  
8 not been in Priority status or Focus status. So for  
9 those two schools the first recommendation really is  
10 for us to meet with them and develop a plan of action  
11 prior to the start of the school year.

12 The last recommendation was to engage the school  
13 boards more, that ultimately they are the first line  
14 of leadership in the district, and also by engaging  
15 them more it also becomes more transparent to the  
16 community and permits open public comment, open  
17 public discussion.

18 So the next recommendation, or the fourth  
19 recommendation, primarily was that there be a plan of  
20 action, for every quarter there to be a report to the  
21 Board for those schools that were in academic  
22 distress.

23 The school districts have all been contacted and  
24 the recommendations have been reviewed with each  
25 district. For the most part, I think there is

1 agreement that these are reasonable recommendations  
2 and fairly good support from the field. We're  
3 requesting that the State Board approve the  
4 recommendations with the knowledge that these will  
5 become binding upon the school districts once  
6 approved.

7 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much, Dr.  
8 Wilde. Questions from my colleagues? Dr. Barth.

9 DR. BARTH: So are we going to deal with the  
10 reporting schedule separate?

11 DR. WILDE: Yes.

12 DR. BARTH: Okay. Thanks.

13 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Additional questions? Ms.  
14 Zook.

15 MS. ZOOK: You weren't here yesterday to hear us  
16 compliment the report that you put together, and I do  
17 commend you for that and your team. And the only  
18 thing I would have to say is for those on the  
19 academic distress committee, which at this point I  
20 have Ms. Dean, Mr. Williamson, Ms. Newton, and Ms.  
21 Ables, if she chooses to. Were there others that  
22 wanted to serve that I may not be aware of?

23 CHAIRPERSON REITH: I would like to serve, Ms.  
24 Zook.

25 MS. ZOOK: Okay. And, I mean, that's not up to

1 me; you're the one appointing them.

2 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yes. So I think -- I think  
3 technically I'm ex officio, but just if you could put  
4 me down I would appreciate it.

5 MS. ZOOK: What I'd like for you to do is print  
6 this off so you'll have it and then we can use it  
7 along with the 45-day reports, and then we can stay  
8 on target. Then the team reporting to us, the  
9 schools coming before us, and we will all be on the  
10 same page and it'll save us from, you know, what we  
11 call bird-walking and taking off in different  
12 directions and not staying focused. So I would ask  
13 -- and thank you very much for joining.

14 CHAIRPERSON REITH: And thank you for your  
15 leadership on that.

16 Now, Dr. Wilde, do you need a motion from us in  
17 regards to your report or --

18 DR. WILDE: Yes. We're requesting approval of  
19 the report and adoption of the recommendations.

20 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. And then you do want  
21 us to handle that separately from the proposed  
22 reporting schedule? Yes?

23 DR. WILDE: Yes.

24 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. That's what it looks  
25 like.

1 COMMISSIONER KEY: Before we vote can I --

2 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yes, of course.

3 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Wilde, could you briefly  
4 describe what's different this year than in previous  
5 years?

6 DR. WILDE: In terms of the schedule?

7 COMMISSIONER KEY: In terms of ADE, the cross-  
8 functional -- the work that we're trying to make sure  
9 that we get, you know, everybody onboard that needs  
10 to be onboard as we help these districts.

11 DR. WILDE: And if you're referring to just in  
12 the process, if you notice, there were more units  
13 involved, more collaboration with all of ADE as  
14 opposed to it predominantly being a School  
15 Improvement Unit function. And so from that  
16 standpoint, we are trying to be -- within our own  
17 department as ADE trying to break down the silos.  
18 And we're also cross-walking our different rubrics  
19 and our different processes to get one language going  
20 to the school districts. And we're attempting to  
21 help everybody understand how all of the processes  
22 are really integrated together as opposed to  
23 different functions and silo'd efforts. Is that --

24 COMMISSIONER KEY: Yes. Thank you.

25 MS. ZOOK: And I had even noticed that as your

1 Assistant Commissioners came up they said Assistant  
2 Commissioner ADE and they didn't pinhole them with a  
3 certain division. So I knew something was afoot; I  
4 just wasn't sure what.

5 DR. WILDE: And now that every unit in ADE has  
6 hired somebody from School Improvement, we --

7 MS. ZOOK: Well, those could be moles, you know.  
8 You could be the most knowledgeable person in the  
9 building.

10 COMMISSIONER KEY: Yeah. As a gardener, I  
11 thought -- Dr. Gardenhire, who is a fellow gardener,  
12 was here earlier. But, you know, cross-pollination  
13 has very positive benefits, so we think that that  
14 works well in organizations too.

15 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Well, thank you so much, Dr.  
16 Wilde.

17 Do I have a motion then in regards to the report  
18 and recommendations for academic distress?

19 MS. DEAN: Move to approve the report and the  
20 new recommendations for scheduling.

21 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Do I have a second?

22 DR. BARTH: Not the schedule; right?

23 MS. DEAN: Not the schedule.

24 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Not the schedule.

25 MS. DEAN: No, not the schedule.

1 CHAIRPERSON REITH: No, not the schedule.  
2 That'll be handled separately.

3 MS. DEAN: Sorry. Excuse me.

4 DR. BARTH: I'll second.

5 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Motion made by Ms.  
6 Dean, seconded by Dr. Barth. All in favor say "aye."

7 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? Motion carries  
9 unanimately.

10 Dr. Wilde, yes, if you'll please walk us through  
11 the reporting schedule, proposed reporting schedule.

12 DR. WILDE: And this is proposed.

13 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yes.

14 DR. WILDE: As you're aware, last year it was  
15 not set at the beginning of the year. We were for  
16 the most part informing schools a month in advance.  
17 So what we'd like to do is set a schedule for the  
18 entire year and make everybody aware of the dates  
19 that they would be before the State Board or before  
20 the subcommittee and have that known from the  
21 beginning of the year. So this is our proposed  
22 schedule for the year with the different schools  
23 coming at different times, or different districts and  
24 their schools coming at different times.

25 MS. ZOOK: Are you -- is this the proposed



1 schedule for them to come before the full Board or  
2 before Academic Distress Committee?

3 DR. WILDE: For four districts, it's when they  
4 would come before the full Board; for the remaining  
5 of the districts, it's when they would come before  
6 the subcommittee.

7 CHAIRPERSON REITH: So there's two sections, Ms.  
8 Zook.

9 MS. ZOOK: Right.

10 CHAIRPERSON REITH: The top is reference to the  
11 State Board and the bottom is just to the Academic  
12 Distress Committee.

13 MS. ZOOK: Is there some reason you didn't want  
14 Dollarway and Little Rock to come before the Academic  
15 Distress, before the full Board? Is it because they  
16 are in takeover?

17 DR. WILDE: Yes.

18 MS. ZOOK: Okay. Good. Then I'm assuming  
19 correctly.

20 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Ms. Zook. Yes,  
21 Dr. Barth.

22 DR. BARTH: A couple of things on the full Board  
23 report. I know the elections in Pulaski County and  
24 Helena-West Helena will be really that week; right?  
25 And we won't -- there won't be the training, the

1           opportunity for training of the new board members. I  
2           would like something that feels kind of final with  
3           both of those districts as they kind of leave  
4           takeover. So I guess my question is: when would --  
5           when can we be pretty confident that the training  
6           will have taken place of the new board members? Is  
7           that --

8           COMMISSIONER KEY: It will happen very shortly  
9           after the election and the certification of the  
10          votes. I'm not sure -- you know -- a lot of that  
11          happens with timing of the County Clerk's office of  
12          the certification. But we start scheduling that as  
13          soon as we know who the --

14          DR. BARTH: Okay.

15          COMMISSIONER KEY: And if there's a runoff then  
16          that kicks it, you know, another few weeks down the  
17          road, so --

18          DR. BARTH: Oh, yeah, that would. Okay. So I  
19          guess a question -- I mean, on those last two, on  
20          Pulaski County and Helena-West Helena, do we really  
21          need one in November since it really will be election  
22          week for them? I mean, would it make sense just to  
23          have a final report that is kind of after the  
24          training has occurred so we can just kind of say, you  
25          know, they're on their way or whatever? It's just a

1 question; do we need --

2 COMMISSIONER KEY: Well --

3 DR. BARTH: Or we could wait till February. We  
4 could do two quarterly reports. We could do November  
5 and February, but that feels like a big gap.

6 COMMISSIONER KEY: Yeah. You know, when they  
7 leave takeover status then they revert to the special  
8 committee and they're included down at the bottom --

9 DR. BARTH: Right.

10 COMMISSIONER KEY: -- to be determined because,  
11 you know, they will still have schools in academic  
12 distress. So, really, the focus changes from, you  
13 know, the broader Board to the narrow Academic  
14 Distress because of the few schools they have. So --

15 DR. BARTH: Gotcha.

16 COMMISSIONER KEY: -- we can -- we can kind of  
17 give a -- provide a wrap-up that's part academic  
18 distress, part fiscal, just kind of a, you know,  
19 final, you know, here-they-go, but then they'll still  
20 be subject to the subcommittee, so --

21 DR. BARTH: Okay. Then I don't even know that  
22 we -- I don't even know that we need a quarterly  
23 report from them on November 10th. I mean, they  
24 really will be on the verge of being on their own;  
25 right?

1 MS. ZOOK: If there's a runoff, they'll already  
2 be --

3 DR. BARTH: Yeah.

4 MS. ZOOK: Isn't the election like the 8th?

5 DR. BARTH: Yeah.

6 CHAIRPERSON REITH: The 8th, yeah.

7 DR. BARTH: Anyway, I would like just something  
8 kind of summative with those, you know, for us to  
9 confident that they've gotten the training, that, you  
10 know, the board is kind of ready for action. That  
11 would be -- so I don't know what the magic date is on  
12 that. November 10th actually feels too early because  
13 they will have just been -- maybe just been elected  
14 the week -- two days before. So that feels kind of a  
15 little early.

16 DR. WILDE: Would the December meeting --

17 CHAIRPERSON REITH: That's what I was --  
18 December 8th.

19 DR. BARTH: I'm wondering if we might just have  
20 a December report for Pulaski County and Helena-West  
21 Helena.

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: And would that be -- I think  
23 it's December 9th.

24 DR. BARTH: A board meeting --

25 CHAIRPERSON REITH: The board meeting on the

1 academic distress is the 9th, Friday.

2 DR. BARTH: Right.

3 MS. ZOOK: And that's got Pine Bluff, Forrest  
4 City, and Blytheville, so that would be a lot if they  
5 just did academic. But if they came to the full  
6 Board then --

7 DR. BARTH: Right.

8 MS. ZOOK: -- it could be handled during the  
9 regular --

10 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yeah. And then it could be  
11 handled Thursday. Yeah.

12 DR. BARTH: And I would expect they would be  
13 fairly brief reports.

14 MS. ZOOK: It's fiscal anyway --

15 DR. BARTH: Right.

16 MS. ZOOK: -- on those.

17 DR. BARTH: Right. Right. Right. My other  
18 question on the quarterly -- on the State Board  
19 reports, with Little Rock and Dollarway, I understand  
20 that we can't take action on an item unless it's  
21 placed on the agenda, but it feels sometimes like a  
22 little disconnect. So let's say we needed -- I'm  
23 just using an example because it's fresh -- you know  
24 -- appoint the Community Advisory Board. We do that  
25 as an action item but then we've got a report later.

1           And so I'm wondering if we put -- if it makes sense  
2           to put those on the action agenda so if there is any  
3           subsequent action associated with those districts  
4           that we need to take that we might just have them  
5           together. Do you see what -- it feels in some ways  
6           -- you know -- we're asked to do action and then -- I  
7           guess we could do it the next month, but it's then --  
8           then it starts to defeat one of the goals here, which  
9           is to free these folks up, not to have to come every  
10          month. So I'm wondering if we could put them on the  
11          action agenda for their reports and then that would  
12          leave the space -- because I think it would be good  
13          for us to actually take action that we have as a  
14          board receive their reports, but that would also --  
15          if there was some action related to that district we  
16          needed to take we would've already gotten the report  
17          that's associated with it. Am I making myself clear  
18          or is it --

19                 MS. ZOOK: Yes, you are. But at the same time  
20                 -- I agree and see what you're saying. At the same  
21                 time, since Mr. Key is their board and we take  
22                 action, it would seem to me if they came with their  
23                 reports and then the Commissioner, as a result of his  
24                 meeting with the superintendent, comes to us and  
25                 said, "I'm going to need action taken on this that's

1 beyond what a school board can do" -- I don't know.  
2 I don't know. I'm just thinking out-loud.

3 DR. BARTH: Right. That's fine. I think it's  
4 just we just need to realize if we are going to take  
5 action it's probably going to be the next month,  
6 which starts to un-do -- I mean, one of the things --  
7 one of the goals here is not to have them here every  
8 month, and we may end up having them here more often,  
9 which is fine.

10 MS. ZOOK: But if it's reporting day and then  
11 it's Friday typically in the afternoon, then --  
12 because a lot of these reports or all these reports  
13 are done by the principal. And one of the things  
14 they're wanting done is the principals and the  
15 district on the same page and working together, and  
16 we're thinking in terms of which months we bring them  
17 in, which is the most convenient for all the  
18 principals to come. And, fortunately, with these two  
19 districts they don't have to drive very far. But  
20 having them here and having it Friday afternoon  
21 typically -- it might be Friday morning -- seems to  
22 -- if you're needing help, the last thing you need is  
23 to be pulled out of your district on a Thursday. And  
24 so I don't know how we can resolve those two, unless  
25 -- can you pull an action item over to --

1 COMMISSIONER KEY: No. No.

2 MS. ZOOK: Okay.

3 COMMISSIONER KEY: Let me suggest something to  
4 see if this might be workable. Because if these are  
5 on -- I mean, Little Rock is the only one that, by  
6 you-all's determination, has been on the action  
7 agenda regularly. But in the -- if we move to  
8 quarterly and something happens, you know, in  
9 November, and discussion leads to you-all wanting  
10 them on the December action agenda --

11 MS. ZOOK: Right.

12 DR. BARTH: That's fine.

13 COMMISSIONER KEY: -- then that would be no  
14 problem.

15 MS. ZOOK: Because that way, since they're going  
16 to have a CAB and their school board is here every  
17 month, it seems to make sense that they have the  
18 reports, and if something comes up then we put them  
19 on the action agenda rather than them coming in every  
20 month. Because, as we've seen, we are being updated  
21 but then we got the report that we had yesterday that  
22 said some of the very things that needed to be done.  
23 And I appreciate the fact that we also need to  
24 celebrate the wins, but at the same time that wasn't  
25 helping us get to the meat of what needed to be done



1 about the feeder patterns and those kind of things.  
2 So either that or we need to give Mr. Poore -- or  
3 Doctor -- is it Mister or Doctor? Mister -- a  
4 specific "we want you to report on this, this and  
5 this," and not just have it be extemporaneous. Other  
6 thoughts?

7 COMMISSIONER KEY: Well --

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Ms. Chambers.

9 MS. CHAMBERS: Well, I was along the same line  
10 of thinking, and whether -- to your point, Dr. Barth,  
11 so that we don't get caught where we aren't getting  
12 answers in any one month and so we're having to ask  
13 them back, is there anything that we can do to be  
14 more -- maybe not formulate, but intentional in what  
15 it is we're asking them to bring to us, so that we're  
16 getting the substance, so that time doesn't get away  
17 from us and then we're frustrated with each other?

18 MS. ZOOK: Well, the 45-day reports are really  
19 specific, as you see from the ones we have. They  
20 really get down to the meat of what is going to have  
21 to be done and what is being done and progress  
22 they're making, along with the testing. The other  
23 reports were informative and we got well-acquainted  
24 with the district, which I think was helpful, but I  
25 don't know that it was helpful to our true goal,

1 which is returning control, because they have now --  
2 are no longer in academic distress.

3 MS. CHAMBERS: Well, and to that point, one of  
4 the things that seemed to be an opportunity for us in  
5 past conversations relative to community, I love this  
6 fourth recommendation which is the local board, their  
7 participation. But it's making sure they understand  
8 where is the district relative to where it needs to  
9 be for local control to be returned. That seemed to  
10 be something that was not always obvious to the  
11 community, and making sure that's an outcome of this  
12 would be very helpful.

13 MS. ZOOK: Well, and I think that'll be  
14 especially helpful for the Blytheville's and the Pine  
15 Bluff's and those who have not been taken over. But  
16 then we continue to get reports that, in at least one  
17 of those districts, where part of the problem is  
18 maybe some of the board members' lack of training or  
19 overstepping or whatever. So if they are encouraged  
20 to come too, because they are now a part of the  
21 report, then that would help us help them because  
22 otherwise they're out there on their own looking like  
23 they have a lot of ideas but do they really have the  
24 power. So we want to be sure that they understand  
25 that we rely heavily on ADE and their reports to us

1 and as the more objective of the reports that we're  
2 getting.

3 DR. BARTH: So I guess I'm convinced that this  
4 is fine, but with that -- well, but with that  
5 recognition that we may --

6 COMMISSIONER KEY: Well, and --

7 DR. BARTH: -- end up having to come --

8 COMMISSIONER KEY: And it may take a month, you  
9 know, based on conversations here, to formulate the  
10 actual -- the action that needs to take place --

11 DR. BARTH: Right.

12 COMMISSIONER KEY: -- the next month.

13 DR. BARTH: Right. So I'm fine with that.

14 MS. CHAMBERS: I just wanted to make sure we  
15 didn't wear you down.

16 DR. BARTH: No, no, no, no.

17 MS. CHAMBERS: But you point -- it could evolve;  
18 we'll fine-tune this as we get more experienced with  
19 it.

20 COMMISSIONER KEY: Yeah. And Dr. Wilde is  
21 making some changes to the reporting, the 45-day  
22 report; you know, he's always making it better. And  
23 we just went through, a couple of weeks ago, and I  
24 signed off on some changes that are going to help  
25 you; I think they're going to help the district;

1           they're going to help the building leadership for all  
2           of our academic distress schools as we move forward  
3           so that, you know, there's -- it's -- right now we're  
4           not trying to be nontransparent, but some of the  
5           forms, some of the systems that we have don't lend  
6           themselves to transparency. What he's doing is going  
7           to be more -- lend itself to transparency, to you, to  
8           the patrons, to the community, to the folks in the  
9           district. So I think this schedule and other changes  
10          that he's made are going to help you all as we move  
11          forward.

12                   CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you.

13                   MS. ZOOK: For those districts --

14                   CHAIRPERSON REITH: Ms. Zook.

15                   MS. ZOOK: Excuse me. For those districts that  
16           are coming in in September, will we have the ACT  
17           Aspire concordance applied by the September 9th?

18                   COMMISSIONER KEY: No. We don't think we will  
19           have any of that ready until October, November  
20           timeframe.

21                   MS. ZOOK: Yeah. Because that sort of puts them  
22           in a bind because we're going to be looking at non --  
23           at their scores that have no concordance applied to  
24           them, and they could look different, you know. I  
25           don't know what their three years will look like, but

1           it could be, if they had a bad '12 and a really good  
2           '15, that -- you know -- of course, they might be so  
3           happy that they came off that they wouldn't care.  
4           But I just don't want them to feel that we're putting  
5           them at a disadvantage for having to come in when  
6           their scores haven't had the concordance applied.  
7           What does everybody -- Commissioner --

8                   COMMISSIONER KEY: Yeah.

9                   MS. ZOOK: -- Dr. Wilde, what do you think?

10                  COMMISSIONER KEY: I mean, I understand what  
11                  you're saying on that. And this is just a schedule,  
12                  and you just see the next dates are to be determined.  
13                  We're not -- you know -- we're not classifying any  
14                  new academic distress districts because of the pause.  
15                  But if we do find that their three-year rolling  
16                  numbers have improved, you can always have them come  
17                  in the next month and --

18                  MS. ZOOK: And maybe even have them come in in  
19                  the full board meeting and everybody cheer for them  
20                  or something, you know.

21                  COMMISSIONER KEY: Yeah. I mean, so this is  
22                  just a review, a schedule for review. This isn't  
23                  necessarily a schedule for action, because the action  
24                  would have to be taken by the full board anyway.

25                  CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yes. Yes, Ms. Newton.

1 MS. NEWTON: Is there a reason Covenant Keepers  
2 only has one date down? It only has the January 13th  
3 date.

4 MS. ZOOK: It seems like -- Ms. Barnes, help me.  
5 It seems like they're up for -- like, didn't we just  
6 give them a year extension or they had to come in,  
7 you know, since they're a charter?

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: I think we had requested bi-  
9 annual reports or something; it's possible.

10 MS. BARNES: If I remember -- good afternoon;  
11 sorry. If I remember correctly, what we did with  
12 Covenant Keepers is they were already going to be  
13 coming back up. They're on the -- they are on the  
14 charter review schedule. When we reviewed them we  
15 said that -- initially, it was an option to do two  
16 years to give them a chance to demonstrate the  
17 growth.

18 MS. ZOOK: With new leadership.

19 MS. BARNES: And then because -- because they  
20 did have new leadership. The other part was we moved  
21 it to three simply because they were a middle school  
22 and that was a request that was made; it was  
23 agreeable. But they are always going to be annually  
24 looked at anyway based upon whether or not they are  
25 moving in the right direction to be removed from

1 academic distress. So that's probably why you see it  
2 as one because they are constantly being reviewed all  
3 the way through.

4 MS. NEWTON: Do you know when they're going to  
5 be reviewed by the Charter Panel?

6 MS. BARNES: No, ma'am, I do not right now.  
7 Sorry.

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Dr. Barth.

9 DR. BARTH: Well, that was actually -- she asked  
10 my exact question. Yeah.

11 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any additional questions?  
12 Otherwise, I would welcome a motion.

13 MS. ZOOK: I move that we accept the proposed  
14 board reporting and academic subcommittee reporting  
15 dates for the 16-17 school year, with the  
16 understanding that if at any point anybody needs to  
17 do something differently -- but this will be our  
18 general guide.

19 CHAIRPERSON REITH: And if I could just ask a  
20 question there, my understanding was that Dr. Barth  
21 was asking for the two bottom dates there that say  
22 November 10th, right, for Pulaski County and Helena-  
23 West Helena to be December 8th now. Would that not  
24 be a modification? Did I understand that correctly?

25 DR. BARTH: Yes.

1 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yeah. So it would be with  
2 the modification of Pulaski County -- not to put  
3 words in your mouth, Ms. Zook --

4 MS. ZOOK: No.

5 CHAIRPERSON REITH: But if aligned with that,  
6 then it would be with the modification that Pulaski  
7 County School District and Helena-West Helena School  
8 District would come before the full board on December  
9 8th instead of November 11th as put in this draft.

10 MS. ZOOK: That's --

11 MR. WILLIAMSON: I'll second that long motion.

12 CHAIRPERSON REITH: So motion made by Ms. Zook,  
13 seconded by Mr. Williamson. Are we good, Ms.  
14 Coffman?

15 MS. COFFMAN: (Nodding head up and down.)

16 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Wonderful. All in favor say  
17 "aye."

18 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

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

21 And, yes, Dr. Barth.

22 DR. BARTH: Can I ask a question of the  
23 Commissioner? So the training that the folks -- the  
24 new school board members in Pulaski County and  
25 Helena-West Helena get, is it something beyond the



1 normal training that new school board members would  
2 get to better understand the history of their  
3 districts and how they got to where they were, et  
4 cetera?

5 COMMISSIONER KEY: That's a very good question.  
6 I'll give you the example from Lee County. We  
7 partnered with the School Boards Association. Mr.  
8 Tolbert and I actually went to the training when Lee  
9 County -- when they regained the board. And learning  
10 from that experience we continue to refine the  
11 training that needs to happen. So it is the standard  
12 training with a little extra flavor added because of  
13 the special situation, and we have a team working on  
14 what we can do to make that better.

15 DR. BARTH: And can they -- you know -- we know  
16 that boards are limited in terms of team building  
17 retreats and things like that, in some cases. I  
18 mean, I think oftentimes we see with those districts  
19 that are having some perpetual problems is that, you  
20 know, they never build bonds of trust with each other  
21 as board members, which is something different than  
22 would normally happen at a training. Can we -- I  
23 mean, it feels like these districts, they need the  
24 basics, they need --

25 (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: Chairperson Reith's

1 cell phone emitted an alert signal.)

2 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Another storm alert -- no,  
3 Amber Alert this time.

4 DR. BARTH: They need the normal training that  
5 folks get, new board members get; they need the  
6 history of their districts, but then they also need  
7 to figure out how they as a group can actually work  
8 together as a team. And I'm wondering if we might  
9 think about incorporating some of that team building  
10 into that training.

11 COMMISSIONER KEY: The School Boards Association  
12 has a component of that -- I mean, and this is being  
13 talked about certainly -- Ford is talking about  
14 leadership academy; I mean, a number of entities are  
15 talking about the importance of that, so -- and we're  
16 at the table when those conversations are taking  
17 place. It's -- you know -- there's some discussion  
18 of maybe some -- looking at legislation that might  
19 help encourage more of that. But your point is well  
20 taken and certainly our observations reflect the need  
21 for that, and we're going to try to do our best to  
22 see that that happens.

23 MS. ZOOK: Will you or Dr. Wilde make sure that  
24 Mr. Prothro knows about this added piece in academic  
25 distress about school boards being --

1 COMMISSIONER KEY: Yes, absolutely.

2 MS. ZOOK: Thank you.

3 COMMISSIONER KEY: Sure will.

4 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Does that answer  
5 that, Dr. Barth?

6 DR. BARTH: Yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much.

8 A-16: APPROVAL OF CUT SCORES FOR ACT ASPIRE

9 CHAIRPERSON REITH: So now moving on to Action  
10 Item A-16, our last action item for the day, Approval  
11 of Cut Scores for ACT Aspire. Ms. Allen.

12 MS. ALLEN: Thank you. Hope Allen, Director of  
13 Assessment for the Department of Ed. So I come  
14 before you today presenting -- you know, our ACT  
15 Aspire results were released last week and we are  
16 seeking approval from the Board to establish our cut  
17 scores. We are asking that we use the ACT Aspire  
18 established cut scores, and I'm going to go through a  
19 few slides to kind of give you some information about  
20 that.

21 There was a scaling study done in 2013 that was  
22 fully online. The reason that's important is because  
23 100% of our schools tested online this year. So when  
24 we're looking at the established cut scores those  
25 were established based on an online assessment given

1 to students in 2013. They then did a vertical scale  
2 established from this study of those tests that were  
3 given and then standard setting was conducted on  
4 those scores. It's a very standard procedure in  
5 large scale assessment of how you establish your cut  
6 scores. I'm not going to go into great detail here,  
7 but there is a full 200-and-something page document,  
8 if you'd love to read it, that's linked there. The  
9 technical bullet number two goes into all things  
10 announced of that scaling study and how that was  
11 accomplished.

12 So then we have the readiness benchmarks. They  
13 were empirically based on the ACT readiness  
14 benchmark. So basically what ACT did was they  
15 started with their readiness benchmarks for the ACT,  
16 saying this is what a student in the 11th grade  
17 should be able to do to go on and be successful in a  
18 college or -- excuse me -- score a C or better in the  
19 corresponding course in a college, and then they  
20 back-mapped from there. So based on what an 11th  
21 grader is expected to do, what would a 10th grader, a  
22 9th grader, and so-on be expected to do. The way  
23 that ACT establishes their benchmarks is they do  
24 surveys of various teachers from across the nation  
25 and take input from teachers about what should a 4th

1 grader be doing, what should a 5th grader be doing,  
2 and then that's how they establish their standards --  
3 a bit backwards from what we've always done, but  
4 completely statistically sound.

5 Students scoring at or above the readiness  
6 benchmark are on target to meet the corresponding ACT  
7 college readiness benchmark in grade 11. So what  
8 we're saying is if a 3rd grader -- if they score at  
9 the readiness level, we're not saying that they are  
10 college and career ready at that point; but what we  
11 are saying is that they are ready to move on to the  
12 next level of study, and that if they continue in  
13 this progress that they should meet their readiness  
14 benchmarks on the ACT in grade 11. So there is that  
15 progression towards that final assessment. And then,  
16 again, like I said, the back-mapping is used to  
17 create the standards that were used to write the  
18 assessment.

19 So I've given you the scale scores that are  
20 considered the readiness levels for ACT Aspire. So  
21 on any reports that you've seen or anything that's  
22 been published so far, any time that it says Ready  
23 then a student in that corresponding grade on that  
24 test scored at this particular level or above. And,  
25 again, those are scale scores, so it's not the number

1 of points.

2 So based on the readiness benchmarks in  
3 reporting, we do have four categories for ACT Aspire;  
4 those are Exceeding, Ready, Close, and In Need of  
5 Support. And, again, students in the Ready category  
6 have met the ACT readiness benchmarks and are target  
7 on all -- excuse me -- are on target for 50% or  
8 higher likelihood of college course success by grade  
9 11.

10 So what I've provided for you is just some  
11 preliminary data. We do have an entire report for  
12 you on the next agenda about the scores, where I've  
13 got lots of charts for you to look at and things like  
14 that, but this is just kind of our preliminary data.  
15 So when you're looking at this chart, when you look  
16 at the dark orange bar, the dark orange bar indicates  
17 the percentage of students that scored at or above  
18 the readiness benchmark in the state. Then the light  
19 orange bar indicates those students who were Close,  
20 and the bar that you can barely see, the very, very  
21 light orange bar, are those who were in the In Need  
22 of Support category. So this just gives you a broad  
23 overview of how our students scored across the state  
24 in each of the categories.

25 I've also provided for you the ELA and the STEM

1 scores. As we move into an era of looking at a  
2 broader picture of assessments, it's important for us  
3 to take a look at the ELA and STEM. Also, when we're  
4 thinking about AIPs, the establishment of using these  
5 cut scores will have implications on academic  
6 improvement plans for our schools, and we're  
7 requesting that we use the ELA score. Rather than  
8 trying to write three separate AIPs, one for reading,  
9 one for writing, and one for English, we're asking  
10 that we allow schools to use the ELA score, which is  
11 the average of those three scores together.

12 So speaking of academic improvement plans, we  
13 would like to assign those based on ELA, math and  
14 science scores. For science, we would like to  
15 require those at 5, 7 and 10 currently. As the new  
16 standards are rolled in and implemented in schools,  
17 then we would have additional requirements for  
18 remediation in science at the additional levels. If  
19 we go this route that would mean that between 40% and  
20 50% of our students will require remediation. If you  
21 remember, last year, based on the PARCC scores we  
22 were somewhere between 60% to 70%, so that is a  
23 reduction in the number of students who would require  
24 remediation.

25 So, in a nutshell, what we're asking is that the

1 Ready and Exceeding students, no AIPs assigned; but  
2 for those that are Close or In Need of Support that  
3 an academic improvement plan is assigned.

4 So what I'm asking from the Board today is the  
5 approval to use the ACT established readiness  
6 benchmarks as our state readiness benchmarks, which  
7 would indicate that a student scoring at the Ready or  
8 Exceeding category has met the proficiency level for  
9 that particular grade and that no remediation would  
10 be required the subsequent year.

11 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much. Any  
12 questions from my colleagues? Yes, Dr. Barth.

13 DR. BARTH: Thank you, Ms. Allen. Could we go  
14 back to the fifth slide?

15 MS. ALLEN: Sure.

16 DR. BARTH: The one -- the readiness level  
17 slide. Sorry.

18 MS. ALLEN: That's fine.

19 DR. BARTH: Yeah, exactly. One back. No, one  
20 forward; sorry. Right there, right there.

21 MS. ALLEN: Yes, sir.

22 DR. BARTH: So the final bullet there -- I'm  
23 just trying to put -- so the Ready category -- and  
24 this is for ACT Aspire; then they're on track to have  
25 a 50% or higher likelihood of course success. And



1 course success is defined as an "E?"

2 MS. ALLEN: A "C" or higher.

3 DR. BARTH: "C" or higher. So this worries me a  
4 bit in that having a coin-flip of whether you're  
5 going to be ready for college course success doesn't  
6 feel ready to me. I'm just worried about that. And  
7 this does get back to, of course, the PARCC -- the  
8 five categories for PARCC and the decision that was  
9 made to kind of pick up a line that was kind of more  
10 in sync with a higher likelihood of college course  
11 success. Right?

12 MS. ALLEN: Uh-huh.

13 DR. BARTH: So obviously fine with the cut  
14 scores, but I'm a little worried about deeming  
15 readiness this, which feels -- it doesn't make me  
16 confident that students are really going to be ready.  
17 A 50% chance of making a "C" -- a 50% chance of  
18 making a "C" or higher, that does not -- that does  
19 not give me great confidence of students' readiness.

20 MS. ALLEN: And I will need to check on this "C"  
21 or higher part.

22 DR. BARTH: Okay.

23 MS. ALLEN: It may be "B" or higher.

24 DR. BARTH: That would make me feel better.

25 MS. ALLEN: And I can check on that for you.

1 But I certainly agree. I pulled that straight from  
2 the interpretive guide, based on what ACT publishes.

3 MS. ZOOK: I know ACT talks about it relative to  
4 ACT in 11th graders and the C's and B's. I had not  
5 read anywhere where the ACT Aspire for a 10th grader  
6 predicted that. You know, I know they said they're  
7 on track to score a 19 or 22 or 23 or whatever the  
8 score is for the different subject areas, but I  
9 didn't know if they left all the way to predicting --  
10 because one of the things that troubled me about the  
11 ACT Aspire was it didn't say that this predicts how  
12 you'll do on the ACT; it just said "odds are," you  
13 know. But, you know, they didn't say we're going to  
14 be more apt to do well on ACTs if we use this test  
15 and we use these measures. Am I correct?

16 MS. ALLEN: Correct. I mean, the ACT is not a  
17 predictor -- well, you do get a predictive score of  
18 what you potentially could score on the ACT. The  
19 reason that they say it's not a predictive --  
20 "predictive" is not the right word. The reason they  
21 say it's not basically the pre-test to the ACT is the  
22 construct of the test requires different elements as  
23 far as the open response and the writing that is not  
24 required on the ACT and the types of items that are  
25 on there. So there is a correlation, and as far as

1 the standards there's the correlation there. Go  
2 ahead.

3 MS. SMITH: Okay. So kind of going back and  
4 clarifying a little bit, so, on the ACT right now,  
5 11th grade ACT, benchmark readiness. So if a student  
6 meets the benchmark readiness score, ACT says they  
7 have a 50% chance of obtaining a B or higher in a  
8 college freshman course. So if you scored the  
9 benchmark readiness score in math, then in college  
10 algebra you have a 50% chance or higher of scoring a  
11 B. You have a 75% chance or higher of scoring a C.  
12 And so then this is back-mapped from there.

13 DR. BARTH: Okay.

14 MS. SMITH: So as we're saying the readiness  
15 score for a 3rd grader or a 4th grader, if they  
16 continue to make the progress that they make in that  
17 trend, then when they hit 11th grade you have that  
18 50% chance or higher of making a B, 75% chance or  
19 higher of making a C.

20 DR. BARTH: Okay. That's more -- that is more  
21 comforting than the 50% chance of "C." Still a  
22 little worried -- it feels -- you know, I think we  
23 were -- we certainly heard the concerns about the  
24 large percentages of AIPs this last year; I know  
25 y'all heard it more than probably we did. But, you

1 know -- and I find moving it back somewhat -- but I  
2 guess this -- we will consider this each year, right,  
3 in terms of what the -- where the AIP -- what gets  
4 AIP or not, or is this pretty much --

5 MS. ALLEN: We would ask that this be set as we  
6 move forward, that we don't have to come -- there's  
7 nothing that requires us to bring this every year,  
8 but that's something that we could ask Legal.

9 DR. BARTH: Okay.

10 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Would it be helpful for just  
11 this first year, I wonder, since -- this is our first  
12 year, first process -- if in one year's time, not to  
13 make it an annual process but just because this is  
14 our first time with this and the concordance and all  
15 of that -- would there be concern? Would that be an  
16 impediment to you all in any way?

17 MS. SMITH: I don't think that there would be an  
18 impediment to it. I think the main thing here is  
19 we're establishing the cut scores --

20 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yes.

21 MS. SMITH: -- that ACT Aspire has set forth --

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yes.

23 MS. SMITH: -- to determine whether or not  
24 students are ready. So if we were to come back next  
25 year and ask for this, we would probably be asking

1 for the same thing as far as -- maybe not the exact  
2 number, but we would be asking for the cut scores  
3 that ACT has put forth as these students are ready.  
4 So as far as if you wanted to do it for a year based  
5 on an actual number of a scale score, I don't see a  
6 problem with that. But if we came back next year we  
7 would be asking for to accept the levels that ACT  
8 Aspire has set forth.

9 MS. CHAMBERS: I just think it will be --

10 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yes, Ms. Chambers. Yes.

11 MS. CHAMBERS: I think it will be interesting.  
12 Some of this you'll only know as you look at it over  
13 time. So being prepared to maybe look at a couple of  
14 years -- I mean, if there's something materially  
15 wrong we need to adjust and not stay the course. But  
16 when we were talking to some of the teachers this  
17 morning at the celebration, when I asked them,  
18 "What's the one piece of guidance you'd give the  
19 Board right now," the consistent answer was  
20 "consistency" --

21 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yeah. Yeah.

22 MS. CHAMBERS: -- and just some things that they  
23 could count on.

24 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yeah.

25 MS. ZOOK: And we all know that a junior who

1 scores 19 or 22 or whatever the score is for their  
2 subject may or may not make those when they get  
3 there; you know, there may be somebody that scored a  
4 14 that knocks it out of the park. So it is just a  
5 predictor; it is not an absolute.

6 MS. SMITH: Right. It is one piece of evidence  
7 as far as a student's academics. And one note I want  
8 to make -- and Hope had actually made this comment to  
9 me before she came up -- yes, it did show that we  
10 would have a little bit less AIPs for our students,  
11 but at the same time, you know, we all recognize the  
12 rigor that was in the PARCC test last year. And our  
13 standards are still at a very high level and the ACT  
14 Aspire test we believe maintains that and we're still  
15 seeing a large number in our state who require those  
16 AIPs, meaning we still have a lot of work to do in  
17 our state. And discussions that we've had today  
18 about students being ready in reading, in dyslexia,  
19 those are all indicators of directions that we have  
20 to move. So I'm not bothered at the fact that we're  
21 still recognizing that we are not where we need to be  
22 in Arkansas in education, and we have a lot of work  
23 to do. And so I'm comfortable with these cut scores  
24 as they are, and I'm comfortable with us saying that  
25 we have a large group of students who still are going

1 to need individualized academic improvement plans.

2 MS. ZOOK: And if more people use the ACT Aspire  
3 those national -- that may change too; you know, the  
4 little green thing on the top of each of these bar  
5 graphs shows national, but we know national is not  
6 national.

7 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Yes, Ms. Newton.

8 MS. NEWTON: That was just one of the comments  
9 that I wanted to make is that Ready means the student  
10 is ready to go to the next set of standards, not  
11 necessarily they're ready to go into college, because  
12 ACT Aspire only goes 3 through 10. And so that means  
13 that they have taken those standards and are ready to  
14 take on a new set of standards, and that's  
15 information that teachers can use. You know, if  
16 they're not ready to go on to that next grade level,  
17 then that teacher knows, hey, there's things that I  
18 need to work on. And if we've got 40% to 50% of our  
19 students that are not ready, then I have things in my  
20 classroom that I've got to work on and do  
21 differently.

22 MS. ZOOK: Well, and it wouldn't make any sense  
23 to okay Close.

24 MS. NEWTON: Right. Yeah.

25 MS. ZOOK: You know, we all heard Close only

1 counts in a couple of instances, so --

2 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Yes, Dr. Barth.

3 DR. BARTH: A quick question. I was a little  
4 confused on the science AIPs. So I know obviously  
5 science, which has been 5, 7 and --

6 MS. ALLEN: It's been 5, 7 and 10 traditionally.

7 DR. BARTH: And so what -- so let's say a 6th  
8 grader or 7th grader, whatever -- one of those in-  
9 between years where there wasn't a test result that  
10 was current, would they still kind of continue to get  
11 AIP or would it only be for one year?

12 MS. ALLEN: It's by district choice. So some  
13 districts would continue to have that AIP in place  
14 until the next science assessment and some would exit  
15 them. The schools can make the determination about  
16 the length and when to exit a student from an AIP.

17 DR. BARTH: Okay.

18 MS. ZOOK: And it seems to me like, based on  
19 what Ms. Smith and I were talking about earlier, if  
20 we can get that reading score up then that math and  
21 science and writing are all going to go up. So, you  
22 know, if we focus and get people to read, then they  
23 get through with the math portion on time and with  
24 their science. And as my grandson says, "Well, you  
25 know, Gram, if you can read a graph you can pass the



1           ACT easily on the science part," so -- but the  
2           reasoning is what he's not realizing what he's  
3           saying. So if we get that reading up, then all the  
4           rest of these will rise.

5           MS. ALLEN: Right.

6           COMMISSIONER KEY: Madam Chair, if I can --

7           CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yes, Commissioner.

8           COMMISSIONER KEY: -- remind the Board too, this  
9           -- what we're doing here is setting these levels for  
10          AIPs because it's compliance. I would just point to  
11          -- y'all have heard schools of innovation, charter  
12          waiver folks, schools that have come in here with  
13          charter waivers -- I think we heard from Little Rock  
14          Prep yesterday -- where they're talking about every  
15          student having a personalized education plan. And  
16          there's different terms for that out there, but it's  
17          an AIP. I mean, it may not be the form, it may not  
18          be the compliance part, but it's what -- you know --  
19          if I had kids starting -- if I was to start over,  
20          which I'm not planning on starting over -- but if I  
21          was to start over I would hope that my child's school  
22          would have a personalized education plan for every  
23          student, including my child. We've made it a  
24          negative, as some kind of a remedial thing, and it  
25          shouldn't be that way. We should strive for every

1 student to have that individualized plan. So keep  
2 that in mind as we talk about setting these levels.  
3 We're doing this for compliance, but shooting for a  
4 day where every student has the opportunity to have a  
5 plan and a chart or a course charted for them. The  
6 way we do AIPs, you get parents involved -- I mean,  
7 I'm telling -- I'm saying this and Ms. Newton is  
8 sitting there and she has lived this. But, you know,  
9 it's what we want, parents involved, teachers  
10 involved. I mean, it's an all -- the students are  
11 involved. It's an all-hands-on-deck approach.

12 MS. NEWTON: It is.

13 COMMISSIONER KEY: So this -- you know -- right  
14 now we're doing this because the law says we have to,  
15 but we hope for a day where it's done because it's  
16 just the culture.

17 MS. NEWTON: It's for kids.

18 MS. ZOOK: And if you go to Southside School,  
19 over by Batesville, those kids will show you their  
20 success plans, is what they're called. And, you  
21 know, they have a goal and here's where I am on the  
22 way to my success plan, and they can -- as their  
23 interests and abilities grow and mature, then they  
24 can adjust their success plan. But it's another word  
25 for what we call AIPs.

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CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Any final questions? Otherwise, I'll entertain a motion.

DR. BARTH: I'll move to approve the cut scores and the AIP -- what would I call that? -- the AIP --

MS. ALLEN: Test score needed --

CHAIRPERSON REITH: Recommendation.

DR. BARTH: Recommendation.

MS. ZOOK: Second.

CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Motion made by Dr. Barth, seconded by Ms. Zook. All in favor say "aye."

(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? Motion carries unanimously. Thank you, Ms. Allen.

With that, that concludes our action agenda.

(The action agenda was concluded at 3:05 p.m.)

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A-3: LRSD ADVISORY BOARD

EXHIBIT ONE (1)

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A-4: BARTON LEXA

EXHIBIT ONE (1)

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A-8: SOUTHEAST COOPERATIVE DISTRICTS

EXHIBIT ONE (1)

## C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF ARKANSAS     )  
   ) ss.  
 COUNTY OF SALINE     )

I, SHARON K. HILL, CCR, a Certified Stenomask Reporter before whom the foregoing testimony was taken, do hereby certify that the same is a true and correct transcription of proceedings before the Arkansas State Board of Education, in Little Rock, Arkansas, on July 15, 2016, that the said testimony was reduced to typewritten form by me or under my direction and supervision; and that the foregoing pages constitute a true and correct transcription of all evidence heard and proceedings had in said matter.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which this hearing was taken.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I have no contract with any parties within this action that affects or has a substantial tendency to affect impartiality, that requires me to relinquish control of an original transcript or copies of the transcript before it is certified and delivered to the custodial agency, or that requires me to provide any service not made available to all parties to the action.

WITNESS, MY HAND AND SEAL, THIS DATE: July 31, 2016.

---

SHARON K. HILL, CCR  
 Certified Court Reporter  
 Certificate No. 670

|   |   |   |   |  |
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