

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

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*May 12, 2016*

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BEFORE THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

May 12, 2016  
10:00 A.M.

APPEARANCES:

Mr. Johnny Key	Commissioner
Ms. Toyce Newton	Chairperson
Ms. Mireya Reith	Vice Chairman
Dr. Jay Barth	Board Member
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	Teacher of the Year/ Non-Voting Member

APPEARANCES (via telephone):

Ms. Vicki Saviers	Board Member
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LEGAL COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD:

Ms. Kendra Clay	ADE General Counsel
Ms. Lori Freno	ADE Deputy General Counsel
Ms. Courtney Salas-Ford	ADE Attorney Supervisor
Mr. Cory Biggs	ADE Attorney Specialist

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

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## EXHIBIT ONE (1)

2016-2017 ABC Program Income Guidelines, Summary of  
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## A-2: ARKANSAS BETTER CHANCE

## EXHIBIT ONE (1)

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## A-3: LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT

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PowerPoint Presentation

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P R O C E E D I N G S

A-1: CONSIDERATION OF THE 2016-2017 AR BETTER CHANCE RENEWAL OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH GRANTS

CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: We move now to our action agenda: A-1, Consideration of the 2016-17 Arkansas Better Chance Renewal of Professional Development and Research Grants, and that's Ms. Mary McKinney.

MS. MCKINNEY: Thank you. In your board packet you received a listing of the professional service contracts, and it's a renewal of previous year contracts and this will help support the services in the program for the Arkansas Better Chance. And I bring it to you to -- for your approval -- review and approval.

CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Any questions? Ms. Zook.

MS. ZOOK: Just one. Under grantee, is that who's giving the money or who's getting the money? I know "grantee" typically is who gets the money and "grantor" is -- but I wanted to be sure I was reading it correctly.

MS. MCKINNEY: They will receive the funding.

MS. ZOOK: Okay.

MS. MCKINNEY: Uh-huh.

MS. ZOOK: Okay. And thank you again -- I want

1 to thank you publicly for providing me some  
2 information I had requested and for how responsive  
3 that those at DHS have been to the questions I have.  
4 I really appreciate that.

5 MS. MCKINNEY: Thank you very much. And she's  
6 referring to the handouts that each one of you  
7 received. It has details on the federal poverty  
8 guidelines and that's the chart in bright colors.  
9 And then it -- that's what we use to look at the  
10 sliding fee scales, which is in the additional chart  
11 that's just in the white and black, and it gives the  
12 amount of monthly sliding fee scales. And then I  
13 also provided another chart that gives the details  
14 about the number of children that qualify due -- for  
15 low income or being at the 200% of poverty. And  
16 that's the charts that she's referring to. And thank  
17 you very much.

18 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Dr. Barth has a question.

19 DR. BARTH: So on the University of Central  
20 Arkansas grant for the longitudinal study could you  
21 -- do you have any more detail about that? And I  
22 apologize I didn't let you know in advance I was  
23 going to ask. But I know we've worried a little bit  
24 about there not being the kind of data we would like  
25 to track impact of the program over time. Is this

1 going to begin to remedy this, and for how many years  
2 are we going to be able to see -- to look at the  
3 impact of the ABC program?

4 MS. McKINNEY: I believe that we're in the  
5 process of working with the Department of Education  
6 to be able to continue that longitudinal view of our  
7 children as they leave from the pre-k going into  
8 public education.

9 DR. BARTH: And how many -- do you have a sense  
10 of how many years into school we're going to be able  
11 to track their --

12 MS. McKINNEY: It would be my hopes we'd be able  
13 to track them all the way through --

14 DR. BARTH: Okay.

15 MS. McKINNEY: -- to the 12th grade --

16 DR. BARTH: Okay.

17 MS. McKINNEY: -- although knowing that there  
18 would be attrition and --

19 DR. BARTH: Sure.

20 MS. McKINNEY: -- children moving on. But it  
21 would be my hopes that we would be able -- and I  
22 think that is the intent and plan.

23 DR. BARTH: Okay. Great.

24 MS. ZOOK: One of the questions -- or one of the  
25 answers that I was given too is part of the problem

1 on the longitudinal studies between them and K-12 is  
2 the same one that we in K-12 have between K-12 and  
3 higher ed. and then beyond is the sharing of data and  
4 student -- possibly identifiable student data and the  
5 rules surrounding that. So, you know, that all has  
6 to be worked out. It's not that people aren't  
7 willing; it's just that there are constraints on the  
8 kind of data that can be shared.

9 DR. BARTH: Yeah. And I totally agree with --  
10 understand that. I just don't want -- in the ForwARd  
11 initiative where high quality pre-K is a real  
12 centerpiece of that plan, that game plan for  
13 education, that the absence of good longitudinal data  
14 is -- has been a real concern. And it's one of the  
15 -- one of the focuses of that is improving the data  
16 as we improve the quality of pre-K, so I do think  
17 this is a super important piece. I was just curious  
18 exactly what that study was going to look like.  
19 Thanks.

20 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any other questions? Then  
21 what is the pleasure of the Board relative to action  
22 item agenda A-1?

23 DR. BARTH: I move approval.

24 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Moved by Dr. Barth.

25 MS. ZOOK: Second.

1 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Second by Ms. Zook. All in  
2 favor?

3 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

4 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any opposed? Motion  
5 carries.

6 A-2: CONSIDERATION OF AR BETTER CHANCE ENHANCEMENT GRANTS 2016

7 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: The second is your agenda  
8 item also, Ms. McKinney: Consideration of Arkansas  
9 Better Chance Enhancement Grants 2016.

10 MS. MCKINNEY: Yes. In the last meeting I  
11 brought to you the concept of using funding remaining  
12 at the end of the fiscal year to assist with helping  
13 us to provide the summer services for those programs  
14 that were interested in doing that, and so the first  
15 chart which says ABC Summer Services 2016. And I  
16 have passed out a new chart to you, other than the  
17 one that was in your initial packet, only because  
18 there was one that we had left off and it was the  
19 Lincoln -- and I highlighted it in yellow -- and it  
20 is the Lincoln Childcare Center. And so we'd like to  
21 add that. And that is located in Sebastian County,  
22 around the Fort Smith area, and that is a high  
23 priority area or focus.

24 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Any questions by  
25 board members?

1 MS. ZOOK: I do.

2 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Ms. Zook.

3 MS. ZOOK: And it's my understanding that this  
4 seven-plus million dollars in grants is in addition  
5 to the \$111,000,000 from the legislature. Is that  
6 correct?

7 MS. MCKINNEY: No, ma'am. It is the funding  
8 that was remaining at the end of the fiscal year due  
9 to programs not requesting their full amount or not  
10 fulfilling their enrollment slots.

11 MS. ZOOK: Okay. So it is not connected to what  
12 they just approved?

13 MS. MCKINNEY: No.

14 MS. ZOOK: Okay. Thank you.

15 MS. MCKINNEY: That -- what you just approved is  
16 for the upcoming fiscal year, so it will be part of  
17 the new \$111,000,000.

18 MS. ZOOK: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Any other questions?

20 I failed to mention that Ms. Saviers is joining  
21 us by teleconference, so she's on the line.

22 What is the Board's pleasure as it relates to  
23 action item A-2?

24 MS. ZOOK: Move for approval.

25 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Moved by Ms. Zook.

1 MR. BLACK: Second.

2 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Second by Mr. Black. All  
3 in favor?

4 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

5 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any opposed? The motion  
6 carries. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. McKinney.

7 MS. MCKINNEY: The next part of A-2 --

8 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay.

9 MS. MCKINNEY: -- is also an enhancement grant  
10 and it's for the infant/toddler program, to provide  
11 additional funding to them because they only receive  
12 like the other three to five age group, and to  
13 provide services to infant/toddler. Because of the  
14 low teacher-child ratio, this is additional funding  
15 that will -- we will pass through before the end of  
16 this current fiscal year. And then also a part of  
17 that is the Southeast Arkansas Education Cooperative  
18 for the AmeriCorps grant, and that's also part of the  
19 A-2 piece --

20 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay.

21 MS. MCKINNEY: -- for enhancement grants.

22 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Are there any questions  
23 about the A-2 part of this agenda that Ms. McKinney  
24 just went over? Any questions? If not, what's the  
25 pleasure of the Board?

1 DR. BARTH: Move approval.

2 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Moved by Dr. Barth.

3 MS. ZOOK: Second.

4 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Second by Ms. Zook. Any  
5 questions? All in favor?

6 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

7 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any opposed? Motion  
8 carries.

9 MS. MCKINNEY: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Thank you.

11 A-3: CONSIDERATION OF THE LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT (LRSD)  
12 PROGRESS REPORT

13 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: A-3, Consideration of the  
14 Little Rock School District Progress Report. Baker  
15 Kurrus.

16 SUPT. KURRUS: Good morning.

17 (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: Several board members  
18 responded with "Good morning.")

19 SUPT. KURRUS: Mr. Adams is going to come  
20 forward and begin our report with the CAC report, and  
21 then I'll step back up and briefly address the group,  
22 if that's your pleasure.

23 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: It is our pleasure.

24 SUPT. KURRUS: Thank you.

25 MR. ADAMS: Good morning and thank you.

1 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Good morning.

2 MR. ADAMS: I give apology for my partner, Dr.  
3 Dionne Jackson. She sent you an email earlier to  
4 explain her absence and sends her thanks, and I'll  
5 give my thanks too. A year-and-a-half ago when I was  
6 before you I had no plan and intent to be before you  
7 anymore but fate said otherwise, and I've appreciated  
8 the opportunity to be here and speak up for the  
9 community of the Little Rock School District.

10 Some of the updates that we have coming up for  
11 the rest of the month as we complete our work before  
12 the district moves over and transitions to a  
13 Community Advisory Board:

14 We have a yearend report from our community  
15 engagement efforts and forums and all of our  
16 committees with recommendations and any kind of  
17 reports that we'll have, and that will be next  
18 Thursday, a week from today, at Horace Mann Middle  
19 School.

20 We'll also be meeting with Mr. Michael Poore,  
21 the newly appointed superintendent for the Little  
22 Rock School District, as a committee on June 2nd.

23 And then we are looking forward to an equity  
24 report that the committee supported and that was done  
25 by the district in coordination with the Public

1 Policy Panel and the Arkansas Advocates for Children  
2 and Families, and that equity report is close to  
3 being completed. We've had a chance, a few of us, to  
4 look at that and get some input and we're hoping that  
5 that will be out at the end of this month or the  
6 first of June. And that will be, I think, a real use  
7 to the planners in the Little Rock School District  
8 going forward, seeing where we're doing well and  
9 where some things need to be improved.

10 At our last meeting, in April, we had a  
11 resolution that was passed without dissent that y'all  
12 received. We forwarded that to you and also  
13 forwarded it to the Governor. And it was a  
14 resolution for the Commissioner to be replaced and  
15 afford the district to be returned back to local  
16 control as soon as possible, whenever the next school  
17 board elections are available. Some might look at  
18 that resolution and consider that as unreasonable and  
19 dismiss it pretty quickly. And before doing that, I  
20 would really ask that you imagine the position of the  
21 community before dismissing the concerns that led to  
22 that resolution. The Little Rock School District at  
23 the moment has no advocate. When we had a school  
24 board, the school board worked as its advocate in the  
25 public -- in the public and in dealing with other

1 organizations and dealing in the marketplace of other  
2 schools. And when we lost our school board then we  
3 lost that advocate, and by design the Commissioner  
4 functions as the advocate. But because of whatever  
5 reasons, conflict of interest or whatever they may  
6 be, the Commissioner from our perspective has chosen  
7 not to be an advocate for the school district. Most  
8 recently that happened with the charter school  
9 expansion where the Commissioner took a neutral  
10 position and so did not advocate for the district, so  
11 we feel like we have no advocate at all. And then  
12 when Mr. Kurrus stepped forward to fill that role to  
13 be a public advocate, then shortly after that he was  
14 informed that his services would not be needed after  
15 this school year. So not only do we feel like that  
16 we don't have an advocate, we feel like that we have  
17 not been allowed to have an advocate going forward  
18 and that is the concern that has led to the  
19 resolution that we had. In some ways I think the  
20 experience of the community has been a little bit  
21 similar to that of a child who is removed from his  
22 parents because of neglect concerns and then feels  
23 neglected by the powers that took him over and took  
24 him out of the home.

25 Looking forward, the community's concerns as we

1 finish our work are several. One is we wonder about  
2 Mr. Poore and wonder if he will be allowed to be an  
3 advocate for the district. And I was very proud of  
4 our Civic Advisory Committee when we discussed this  
5 resolution; at no time did we criticize Mr. Poore,  
6 because we don't know him and it would be wrong to  
7 judge him without getting a chance to know him.  
8 Also, we wonder about the Civic Advisory Board that  
9 we've put into place. We wonder if that will be  
10 symbolic only or whether it will be treated  
11 respectfully and listened to and really used as a  
12 tool to help the district going forward. And then we  
13 worry that the district will be -- when it eventually  
14 does get returned to local governance, we really  
15 worry whether or not it will be returned whole. And  
16 when we think about whole we think about that in this  
17 time now where there's a greater and greater  
18 competitive marketplace. We wonder about how many  
19 students that we'll lose to the ever-expanding rolls  
20 of charter schools and we wonder about if it will  
21 even go so far that we will lose some of our schools  
22 and some of our schools might be contracted out to  
23 other organizations to govern so that when our  
24 schools are returned to us that we won't have all of  
25 our schools returned to us and with the

1 accountability and relationships that are there.

2 So we ask that the lessons from this past year  
3 -- we hope that there will be some lessons learned  
4 and there will be some better decisions made for the  
5 Little Rock School District in the coming year. And  
6 in the meantime, the community will be waiting and  
7 watching and speaking out and hoping that someone who  
8 is in a position to make decisions will listen and  
9 will respond when we speak.

10 Thank you for your time and your consideration  
11 this morning.

12 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any questions for Mr.  
13 Adams?

14 MS. ZOOK: Yes. It's my understanding -- I went  
15 back and looked at the minutes from January of '15.  
16 And the motion that we passed was that you all work  
17 with and come up with ideas and listen to the people  
18 in the schools about ways to improve performance in  
19 all the schools, not just the academic distressed.  
20 So will that be on your report on the 19th?

21 MR. ADAMS: Yes, ma'am. We have four different  
22 committees: an academic distress committee, a  
23 communication committee, a community engagement  
24 committee, and a facilities committee. And we'll  
25 have reports from each of those, but I think frankly

1 all of those reports will connect to how do we  
2 improve performance in the district overall. But  
3 they'll be looking at it from several different  
4 angles.

5 MS. ZOOK: Okay. And the facilities that Mr.  
6 Kurrus has been talking about that, you know, he has  
7 some ideas because he's been very active and then  
8 y'all will have those, so on the meeting on the 2nd -  
9 - because I know there are several of us who can't  
10 attend the meeting on the 19th. On the meeting on  
11 the 2nd with Mr. Poore will you -- will those -- the  
12 rest who can't attend the 19th be invited too or will  
13 there be a third meeting or will you have all of this  
14 in writing for us?

15 MR. ADAMS: The meeting we have on the 19th,  
16 we'll have a written report that we'll have  
17 available. We'll certainly make that available and  
18 pass it on to you and have it available for the  
19 public. And the meeting for the -- on the 2nd will  
20 be -- you know -- like our other meetings would be  
21 open to the public, although the communication would  
22 be intended to be just between the committee and Mr.  
23 Poore.

24 MS. ZOOK: Thanks.

25 MR. ADAMS: Certainly.

1 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any other questions for Mr.  
2 Adams?

3 Thank you.

4 MR. ADAMS: Okay. Thank you.

5 SUPT. KURRUS: Well, the sun comes up and it's a  
6 new day dawning every day -- every day, no matter  
7 what, no matter what befalls us, and we have to  
8 celebrate that. And I want to celebrate all these  
9 people that came today; many of them are out in the  
10 hall. I admire their passion, their power, their  
11 commitment to Little Rock, to Little Rock School  
12 District, and I know you join me in admiring people  
13 who are passionate, who want to make things better  
14 and are willing to work at it. So thank you to  
15 everybody who's here, here and in the hall. We need  
16 a bigger meeting room, not just for this meeting but  
17 the one on the 31st. And I really want to thank Greg  
18 and Dionne, Dr. Jackson, and everybody on the CAC  
19 committee because if you look at the arc of that  
20 committee it's instructive because we started off  
21 with issues and maybe problems, if you want to call  
22 them problems. But that's our town, you know; that's  
23 who we are. And then we worked and we talked and we  
24 hashed and we rehashed and we're together. We're  
25 together now. That doesn't mean we're always going

1 to agree, but it means we're always going to be  
2 committed and we're never going to abandon the  
3 institutions that can make cities great. We're never  
4 going to abandon the institutions that make cities  
5 great. And we're never going to give up about  
6 anything that deals with our town, never ever, not  
7 once, not now, not never.

8 But let me tell you what's most important today:  
9 teaching and learning in the classroom. And I've  
10 done a lot of things that people have noted with  
11 respect to organizational management, but we have not  
12 neglected teaching and learning in the classroom, not  
13 for a moment, not for a second. And nobody in our  
14 school district ever forgot the mission and the  
15 purpose of the Little Rock School District, not for a  
16 moment, not for a second. And I can't tell you how  
17 much I admire people who get up every day, no matter  
18 what's going on, no matter what's happening, where  
19 it's happening, or what the headline might be on the  
20 paper, and they go about the hard work of educating  
21 students. And I have such high regard for these  
22 people and they work so hard. That sort of focus is  
23 invaluable. You don't get distracted; you take the  
24 job in front of you and you do your dead-level best  
25 every day. And I have to thank LREA; I have to thank

1 every principal, every assistant principal, every  
2 administrator, every teacher, every custodian, every  
3 food service worker, every bus driver. And if I  
4 could shake every one of their hands I'd do it, and  
5 I'm working on trying. But they're just marvelous  
6 people who don't get distracted from the major  
7 mission. Very important. And it's a servant  
8 mentality where you understand what you're here to do  
9 is to help children and we don't lose our focus  
10 there, and you need to know that. That's the most  
11 important thing you need to know, that the community  
12 has not lost its focus with respect to teaching and  
13 learning in the classroom.

14 And the other thing I think we've learned  
15 through the last several weeks is that data make a  
16 difference. Talk is cheap, but let's look at the  
17 facts. Okay? Let's do more of that at ADE. Let's  
18 don't make the school districts bring forward facts  
19 and details and the hard work of delving into what  
20 really is going on. Let's get in our schools, let's  
21 find out what's happening. I'm going to talk about  
22 that in a minute.

23 Let me just say testing is virtually completed  
24 in our school district and it's gone well. We have a  
25 fully functioning battle star now. I mean, we can

1 make things happen and we've got reports on my desk  
2 that tell how many kids were tested, which kids were  
3 tested, where they were tested, and everybody knows  
4 how to do that now and it was really good. And I  
5 thank the Commissioner; he suggested that we don't  
6 fall back on paper testing. We challenged ourselves  
7 and we tested everyone on computers. It doesn't  
8 sound like that big a deal, but it's something we'd  
9 never done before. So that went well.

10 I'd like -- I'm going to show you just a few  
11 things because this is -- you own this school  
12 district. It's yours. And when you own something  
13 you need to know what it's doing, and so I want to go  
14 through just a few things. I'm so proud of our  
15 school district. Little Rock is actually the most  
16 decorated and celebrated school district in the state  
17 of Arkansas, and I want to show you a few things.

18 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

19 SUPT. KURRUS: I want to clap for our people.  
20 And I'm going to be accused of pandering with  
21 children, but I'm not. This is all real. I won't  
22 read every slide. But we have two young women who  
23 have won Gates Millennium Scholarships: Isha, who's  
24 at the lower right as I look at the slide, and Erica,  
25 who's at the upper left. Isha from Parkview, Erica

1 from Hall High School. Great schools. And that's  
2 Natalie on the upper right; she's a Dell scholar.  
3 And just so you'll know, a Gates Millennium  
4 Scholarship is not just a couple of thousand bucks  
5 and a happy thank you; it's tuition, books, spending  
6 money from the time you start undergraduate school  
7 till the time you finish your Ph.D. Imagine that.  
8 We have two of them. Two of them. Unbelievable.

9 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

10 SUPT. KURRUS: And then Isha also won the Dell  
11 scholar and -- no, I'm sorry -- Erica was a Dell  
12 scholar and Natalie was a Dell scholar. And that's  
13 nothing to sneeze [sic] at; that's -- sneeze at.  
14 That's \$5,000, a Dell computer, and, what's most  
15 valuable, a Dell mentor. Somebody from that company  
16 is going to be at those students sides as they go  
17 through their education. Marvelous thing.

18 Let's go to the next slide, please, Ms. Barbara.

19 You know what we've done with these schools?  
20 These are our top performing schools. Isn't that  
21 amazing? Look at that -- Forest Park, Gibbs,  
22 Jefferson, Roberts, Williams. We have thousands of  
23 students in schools that are in the top 5% in the  
24 state. Thousands of students in Little Rock go to  
25 the best 5% of schools in the state. And you say,

1 "Well, that's true, Baker, but what about the rest of  
2 the kids?" Well, they're outperforming their peers.  
3 If you look at poverty indexes and see how our kids  
4 perform and look at our competitors -- and the best  
5 competitors to look at are the ones in this town;  
6 look at Covenant Keepers, look at Little Rock Prep,  
7 and look at how we do. We are doing better. That's  
8 undeniable.

9 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

10 SUPT. KURRUS: We've got to face those facts.  
11 And we've got schools that are growing, and I won't  
12 -- I'm not going to read them all. I just -- I love  
13 these schools, and the people that are in them are  
14 working so hard. I was in Henderson the other day --  
15 I'm going to be pretty brief. I was at a faculty  
16 meeting and everything about the meeting was  
17 different than the one I went in last May, everything  
18 about the meeting. It was cooperative; it was  
19 collaborative; lots of communication; lot of  
20 teamwork. It really had a different feel and that's  
21 because those people are dedicated and working so  
22 hard. At Henderson Middle School, for all its  
23 publicity -- I'll tell you what, there's lots of  
24 teaching and learning going on at Henderson. We've  
25 got lots of room to improve, but we're on our way I

1 think. These schools are going to share some of that  
2 \$7,000,000 that's being handed down, and we're going  
3 to hand it out. We're going to celebrate somehow.  
4 We've been so busy.

5 Let me go on to the next slide, please. I'm  
6 going to skip through. That's Karina Bao; she's a  
7 Brain Bee Champ. She's going to Copenhagen this  
8 year. Isn't that amazing?

9 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

10 SUPT. KURRUS: And that's the one and only  
11 Meghana Bollimpalli -- and excuse, everybody -- the  
12 GENIUS Olympiad next month. She's going to compete  
13 there. We've got four of the eight Stephens Award  
14 winners and one of four teacher winners that their  
15 names are listed. And I'm going to give y'all a copy  
16 of this; I'm not going to read all the names. We've  
17 got thousands of students, all of whom are doing  
18 their best, and we've got some that don't. But we  
19 have all these high-achieving students. Thirty  
20 students recognized for participation at Duke TIP;  
21 that's a commonly recognized high academic  
22 achievement measure. Nineteen middle school students  
23 received state recognitions; their names are listed  
24 -- and I want this to be in the website at the ADE.  
25 Something you may not know, we'll graduate 1400

1 seniors Tuesday, Wednesday and -- well, two weeks  
2 from tonight we'll be right in the middle of  
3 graduation, and I'll be there, shake every hand, and  
4 employ about a gallon of -- no, I'm not going to --  
5 hand sanitizer, I was going to say. It's not a good  
6 joke, but I got sick. The only reason I say that is  
7 literally I got sick last year after I took this job,  
8 shaking hands with little kids, and I was really sick  
9 because they were just -- I was out of circulation  
10 too long. But we've got -- we'll get -- it's more  
11 like \$24,000,000 in scholarships awarded to Little  
12 Rock School District, your school district.

13 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

14 SUPT. KURRUS: \$24,000,000. And we don't know  
15 how to count those Gates Millennium Scholarships.  
16 What's one of those worth if you get a Ph.D. and go  
17 all the way through? My gracious. It's just -- it's  
18 electrifying. And you need to meet these young  
19 people because as exciting as they are from an  
20 academic standpoint, they're glorious people; they're  
21 interactive; they're gracious; they have a real  
22 strong spirit, not just academically but -- I'm so  
23 proud of them. We have 80 high school seniors that  
24 will be at academic signing day at the Governor's  
25 Mansion. It's great fun. The Commissioner and I

1 were there last year. He and I both enjoyed that  
2 very much.

3 A couple other -- I'm just going to whip through  
4 this. Let's go to the robotics team. Our robotics  
5 teams at Hall are doing quite well. If I were going  
6 to be in the job, we'd turn Hall into some kind of a  
7 STEM center. It would -- if I were around, that's  
8 what we'd do. That was in the works. SECME Robotics  
9 Team, TSA -- all these things you can read.

10 Central's Katie Parsons was named the Class Nobel  
11 Educator of the Year for 2015. That doesn't come  
12 around very often; the only one in Arkansas. Here's  
13 something that's really interesting. These two guys,  
14 DH Williams and Payton Woods, are the number one  
15 ranked debate team in the world, as far as I'm  
16 concerned. They've only ranked in the U.S. but I  
17 never -- I've never seen -- you know -- and I don't  
18 know much about debate, but the people that do tell  
19 us that these were the two most extraordinary  
20 debaters. They actually came in second in the  
21 national tournament in Lexington and their sponsor  
22 drove them thousands of miles; the kind of dedication  
23 from the school is unbelievable. And Payton Woods  
24 was ranked number one. They actually have a separate  
25 competition for the single best -- single solitary

1 best debater in the county and he won it and he's got  
2 a full scholarship. I'm not going to -- we'll let --  
3 y'all can -- when you get a chance to meet him you'll  
4 -- and DJ is just the same. Tremendous young men,  
5 high achievers.

6 Let's go to the next one, please, Barbara.  
7 Thank you.

8 Sixteen National Merit Semifinalists; two  
9 Commended Scholars; two students and a Parkview  
10 student, National Hispanic Recognition Program  
11 Scholars. These kids are marvelous. You need to  
12 meet them. One Little Rock Central High School  
13 student won the NCTE Achievement Award in Writing.  
14 I'm going to read you a couple of things in a minute  
15 from some of our other students, but -- Seimens Award  
16 Finalist; one of five National Student Poets. It  
17 just goes on and on. It just goes on and on.  
18 Spencer Sutterfield is a man you may have met; he's  
19 Teacher of the Year in our school district. He also  
20 directed the Addams Family. It was spectacular. It  
21 was long, but it was spectacular. The only thing I  
22 didn't like is we didn't have enough of Hand in it.  
23 Remember the hand? But the production involved 70  
24 people. The Commissioner I think went, did you not?

25 (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: Commissioner Key nodded

1 his head up and down.)

2 SUPT. KURRUS: It was marvelous. The Parkview  
3 dance instructor Michael Tidwell inducted into the  
4 Arkansas Black Hall of Fame, another lifetime  
5 educator who's touched so many lives for so long,  
6 consistently, always doing the right thing. He was  
7 recognized for that, the educator -- the Black Hall  
8 of Fame. I'm sorry. But he's been impacting  
9 students' lives for years in Little Rock. Don  
10 Roberts ranked 14 in the state, number two in the  
11 central region for student performance on the 5th  
12 grade science benchmark exam. And that's a marvelous  
13 school, top three scoring school in the state on the  
14 PARCC. Steven Helmick -- I don't know if y'all met  
15 Mr. Steven Helmick who's Arkansas History Teacher of  
16 the Year and one of the great educators in our school  
17 district. We have many. He just represents them in  
18 this instance. Joel Spencer, Teacher of the Year,  
19 Arkansas Association of Instructional Media  
20 Technology. I'm reading too fast and I know this is  
21 -- I feel like I'm piling on, but these are things  
22 you need to know about.

23 Let's go to the -- that next slide. I'm not  
24 going to go through all of this. I was at King  
25 Elementary when we opened a Lively Positive [sic]

1 Fitness Center. I haven't been back as often as I  
2 need to go. Come on, that's good stuff; y'all laugh  
3 a little bit.

4 Let's go to the Points of Pride, the grade level  
5 ESL summer program, what we're going to do, just so  
6 you can see that. You need to look at this. We're  
7 -- every single kid who's not proficient and advanced  
8 in elementary school in Little Rock was asked to  
9 attend summer school. We'll have thousands of  
10 students in summer school. Most school districts  
11 don't do summer school; they just don't do summer  
12 school. We're going to have thousands of students  
13 who are basic and below basic who will be in the  
14 summer school program. We'll run Camp Can Do again  
15 and it's a marvelous program. I love the program.  
16 There are pictures of me doing -- dancing down there;  
17 that's the only bad thing that happened down there.  
18 Y'all may know that we have -- I'm at the preschool  
19 program. We're attacking problems where they start  
20 and that's at the earlier grade. Never solve a  
21 problem at the end of a product cycle, I don't care  
22 if you're building a car or you're trying to teach  
23 kids. I think the time to do it is at the earliest  
24 grades. And you'll see that we have 1700 students in  
25 preschool programs and we're really proud of that,

1 and our preschools are marvelous and they're  
2 nationally recognized and attended by all who want to  
3 see how it's done right. We're really working and  
4 focused there. Mabelvale Middle is a school that at  
5 least one of y'all is very familiar with -- many of  
6 you are -- and it's first and second place at the  
7 Fall Stock Market Game, and I suspect their portfolio  
8 has outperformed mine. We have kids that read all  
9 the time. We give them awards. I'm going to move  
10 on.

11 There's stuff about closing the digital divide.  
12 Let's stop on that slide and let me tell you guys a  
13 couple of things that you need to know. May I? A  
14 couple more things. I don't want to feel like you're  
15 over-indulging me. But I want to tell you about my  
16 week because the things I'm going to tell you you're  
17 going to assume are extraordinary or they're  
18 different or they're special. And these next couple  
19 of things I'm going to talk about are not special;  
20 they're everyday things that I see every day in  
21 schools. Yesterday I was with a group of school  
22 nurses who are unbelievably dedicated and so giving.  
23 I see it every day. I was with the Teacher of the  
24 Year banquet; again, marvelous teachers doing the  
25 right thing every day. And in the course of some of

1 that, I had two kids give me poems that they each had  
2 written and I'm going to read them. I'm not going to  
3 tell you this kid's last name, so this one was by  
4 Skye who's a marvelous young lady. And the theme for  
5 which they were writing was Let Your Imagination Fly.

6 "You open up your eyes; you see the ocean, blue  
7 sky and singing birds; you hear God whispering, your  
8 heart thumping, and your breath. Every night you see  
9 the moon glowing and the stars looking down at you.  
10 The stars fade away, as you yell for them to stay.  
11 It's hard to see; you're passed away in the stars.  
12 But open up your heart; look inside it. Let your  
13 imagination fly."

14 And this one is another one that a young man  
15 read to me privately. I was at a meeting. He was  
16 there; he had received an award. And I said, "If you  
17 have just a few minutes, would you read your poem to  
18 me?" And I wish he were here to read it, but I will  
19 read it for you.

20 "Listen to your heart, let it guide you.  
21 Embrace it, love it, live it, and it may tell you a  
22 song. It is the thing that tells you the truth; it  
23 also knows right from wrong. Some people don't know  
24 how to let it out. You have to let your imagination  
25 fly. You can choose the path you take: heartless or

1 mindless, just do it and don't let anybody stop you."

2 That was Nicholas' poem. What a marvelous  
3 inspiration to me. And the reason I read you those  
4 poems is because I wonder how do our people do it;  
5 how do these people that work in Little Rock School  
6 District overcome the external factors and get up  
7 every day -- and that was the first thing I wanted to  
8 understand when I took this job: how do these people,  
9 these marvelous career people summon the courage to  
10 do their jobs every day when there are so many things  
11 going on around them that could distract them from  
12 it. And the answer lies in those poems. The answer  
13 lies in these students. The answer is a four-letter  
14 word called love. These are incredible people that  
15 you now manage and you cannot really grasp the depth  
16 of their dedication unless you're with them  
17 frequently and see the students that they inspire.

18 And I'm at the risk of -- again, I've been  
19 accused of a lot of things when I show pictures of  
20 students. But I'm going to tell you, the next  
21 picture -- if you'll flip it up -- is not a staged  
22 picture. This is not a picture that I put together  
23 or that I went to some length to find. I was walking  
24 through a hallway yesterday morning. This was  
25 yesterday morning -- yesterday morning, Wednesday,

1 and I see these two wonderful young men, and I'm not  
2 going to use their last names. Lemarion [ps] is the  
3 young man to my immediate right and the young man  
4 who's seated is named Lonheno [ps] but he goes by  
5 Junior. And I've met them both before. They're  
6 marvelous kids. And they weren't doing anything they  
7 didn't do every single day, which is look after one  
8 another, take care of one another, befriend one  
9 another, get acquainted with one another, and live a  
10 life that's resonant by getting acquainted with their  
11 neighbors. Because that's what public education  
12 ought to be about is bringing people together with a  
13 common purpose and a willingness to help each other.  
14 And I was so inspired by these kids.

15 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

16 SUPT. KURRUS: I'm going to tell you one more  
17 thing, if I can spit it out, and that is it's such a  
18 day of celebration because Junior is -- that's --  
19 he's a marvelous kid and he took the first steps that  
20 he's taken after some major surgeries just several  
21 days ago and he is on his way. He's a brilliant  
22 young man and he's got a great friend in Lamarion.  
23 We could all do to have friends like that.

24 So let me close by saying I'll be happy to sit  
25 around and answer questions on your next agenda

1 matter. But I want you to know I know what makes  
2 people tick in Little Rock School District. And to  
3 appreciate the people you have to meet the people and  
4 meet the students. And I hope you'll do that and  
5 you'll see that we've got a school district that's on  
6 the way. It's growing rapidly. It has the  
7 capabilities to sustain itself now with help and  
8 nurturing, but that's what it needs. It needs help,  
9 it needs nurturing, and it needs to be allowed to  
10 grow and blossom on its own as quickly as possible.

11 I'll close with one other remark that I'm  
12 reminded of and I'll show you a picture if I come  
13 back next month, and that is that Spider Man is an  
14 interesting superhero. We've got several Spider Men  
15 in our school district. And I wrote something about  
16 a couple of kids that dealt with Spider Man early in  
17 what we call Straight Talk. But Spider Man's motto  
18 is "With great power comes great responsibility."  
19 Everything you do makes a difference for every one of  
20 these kids we just talked about. And I appreciate  
21 your service and look forward to running hard to the  
22 finish line, till June 30th.

23 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE}

24 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Mr. Kurrus, would you stay  
25 for questions please. Do we have any questions by

1 board members? Ms. Zook.

2 MS. ZOOK: I want to commend your most recent  
3 Straight Talk column. I really enjoyed it and I know  
4 you must be very proud of the son that you and your  
5 wife raised and obviously go to him and seek his  
6 counsel. So I -- and I love the poem that was  
7 written there and the one you read today.

8 One of the things you mentioned when you started  
9 last summer was your concern about the facilities,  
10 not so much are we going to have schools and all of  
11 this and all of that, but the condition that you  
12 found through many years of neglect. And is there --  
13 has that been something that's going on? Do you have  
14 a plan? You know, the disrepair of some of the  
15 buildings and talking about some kids have better  
16 schools to go to and other kids don't -- can you  
17 update us a little bit on where you are with that?

18 SUPT. KURRUS: I can. And I don't think it's  
19 fair to use the word "neglect" with respect to our  
20 facilities. It's really not quite appropriate. And  
21 I'd be happy to take anyone who wants to see. We  
22 have older facilities that are dated, a number of  
23 them, but they're well-maintained and they're clear  
24 and they're serviceable. That's been my experience  
25 and I've been in all of our buildings frequently. We

1 also -- it's not quite fair to say that some -- it is  
2 fair to say that we have new buildings that are much  
3 nicer than our old buildings.

4 MS. ZOOK: I always say it's hard to build an  
5 old building.

6 SUPT. KURRUS: It is, and it's very true. And  
7 we have marvelous older buildings that still  
8 function. Our Grade A -- our 1A school is Forest  
9 Park and I don't know when it was built, I think in  
10 the 20s, wasn't it? I mean, it's old.

11 MS. ZOOK: It's over a hundred years old.

12 SUPT. KURRUS: Yeah, it's earlier than that  
13 then. And it has no elevator. They take art on the  
14 cart but they can't take it up and down the stairs.  
15 I mean, it's too small, but it's populated by high  
16 achieving students who are leveraged into that  
17 position by economics primarily; tremendous  
18 dedication by the staff. But that's -- and they rank  
19 right in the middle of my golf report and they finish  
20 right where they should, which is number one, and I  
21 love that school. I told the principal that.

22 But back on the facilities, the way out of the  
23 woods on facilities is to continue to grow the school  
24 district, not to strand capital on extraneous  
25 facilities. It's foolish for a town our size to have

1 large charter school districts that build new  
2 facilities. I think you need to ask eStem and Lisa,  
3 "Why in the world would you build new schools right  
4 now where we've over-schooled already?" That was a  
5 question that should have been asked. Because those  
6 buildings will be -- those buildings will be built  
7 with tax dollars. Those aren't charitable gifts to  
8 anyone. Those buildings are owned by others; we  
9 don't know who. There needs to be more transparency  
10 there. But then I say all that to say we need to  
11 focus on educating every child, no matter who runs  
12 the school, in a new, more modern building. And you  
13 can't do that in a competitive environment where you  
14 end up stranding large amounts of capital. And I  
15 don't want to get into all that, but in a public  
16 environment you'd never build two water systems and  
17 then see which one worked and which one went broke  
18 and then I guess abandon the pipe in the ground.  
19 That's essentially what we're doing now. It makes no  
20 sense to me but --

21 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

22 SUPT. KURRUS: Let me just -- if I were here --  
23 and I'm allowing the Civic Advisory Committee to do  
24 their work, but we can hopscotch our way through the  
25 school district and build new buildings, especially

1 if we could raise our millage ultimately, in a couple  
2 of years. It's going to be very difficult now.  
3 Every time you lose a voter you lose the potential to  
4 raise additional funds. But our millage is now no  
5 longer the highest. Tony Wood's millage is \$48.3 --  
6 \$48.3; North Little Rock, \$48.3; ours is \$46.4. So  
7 we could move in that direction and consolidate  
8 facilities; we just have to be very careful. But  
9 there's an easy way to do that. If the community is  
10 together and fully committed, we can do anything.  
11 And we've got some facilities that are under-  
12 utilized; we need to utilize them more directly. I  
13 have some ideas about that.

14 I'm going to let the Civic Advisory Committee  
15 report out and then I had told y'all I would provide  
16 you with my thoughts by August 15.

17 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Any questions? Dr.  
18 Barth.

19 DR. BARTH: Just a comment. We thank you a lot  
20 for your hard work and your dedication. And, you  
21 know, I think we also -- I want to thank you for your  
22 dedication to community. And just to share with my  
23 colleagues, you know, when the news broke that you  
24 would not be returning, the real sense of mourning  
25 that there was in this community. And it wasn't just

1 about you; it was really about this -- what appeared  
2 to be a loss of some hope about the future. I think  
3 we all know that was -- we have these moments of  
4 mourning where we can get through that and begin to  
5 move on. But I just want to share just how your  
6 spirit really had gotten this community in a new  
7 place on public education and I really want to thank  
8 you for that. And I also want to thank you for the  
9 inspiration you've shown in terms of the grace that  
10 you've shown in this very, very, very long last month  
11 and you have been a real inspiration in how to take a  
12 tough moment and live it gracefully. And so I just  
13 want to thank you for the inspiration you've shown.

14 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

15 SUPT. KURRUS: Thank you so much. I will only  
16 say one thing. My service has been a labor of love  
17 and it's been a cooperative. I appreciate the work  
18 that I've been privileged to do with so many great  
19 teammates, including people from ADE, Commissioner.  
20 It's just been -- it's been an unusual month but I'm  
21 so well supported by my friends and family and people  
22 like you that I'm gratified by everything that comes  
23 my way and I'm very appreciative of this opportunity.  
24 It's been a blessing to me.

25 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any other questions by

1 Board? On behalf of the Board, Mr. Kurrus, I'd like  
2 to also thank you for your service, for the unity --

3 SUPT. KURRUS: Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: -- and for your ideas and  
5 ideals. At this time we've got a couple of things we  
6 want to get a motion about, whether we accept the  
7 report and, additionally, we have some comments from  
8 the Commissioner after that action.

9 We also have several people that have signed up  
10 for public comment and before we do that we'll have  
11 to have a motion by the Board, so that will come  
12 after the Commissioner speaks. But prior to that  
13 I've reviewed the list and it's lengthy, although  
14 it's not impossible to manage, and this is the way  
15 I've chosen to manage it. There are some parents and  
16 I've chosen the first three parents that have signed  
17 up, unless -- and that's Leticia Reta, Tony Orr and  
18 Austin Bailey. You might want to confer during this  
19 time. They're outside. You might want to confer  
20 with each other about whether or not any other parent  
21 that's signed up might have something different to  
22 say because we don't want -- although we want to hear  
23 from everyone, we don't necessarily need redundancy.  
24 After that, there is Gene Levy, faith leader and a  
25 part of the advisory council; also Nell Matthews and

1 Ruth Bell are both from the League of Women Voters  
2 and we're going to ask those ladies to choose who  
3 will speak for their organization; additionally, we  
4 have also our Senators represented here and they will  
5 -- I'm going to ask them -- Joyce -- Senator Joyce  
6 Elliott and Senator Linda Chesterfield. It might be  
7 helpful if one starts and one ends the public comment  
8 period, and that's just for your consideration.  
9 Also, Bill Kopsky is here from the Arkansas Public  
10 Policy Panel; we'll hear him. We'll hear someone  
11 that's classified them-self as a Little Rock School  
12 District supporter, although it may be a parent or  
13 may choose to acquiesce to someone else. And last  
14 but not least is Payton Woods who is a student. So  
15 if you'll kind of start talking around that order, if  
16 that's the way we'll proceed.

17 SENATOR ELLIOTT: Madam Chair --

18 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Senator Elliott.

19 SENATOR ELLIOTT: -- since we have waited 18  
20 months, if you want to hear everybody why don't we  
21 hear everybody?

22 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: That will be --

23 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

24 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: We waited -- but -- and I  
25 don't have any problem with that.

1                   SENATOR ELLIOTT: We don't either. That's why  
2 we came today.

3                   CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Yeah. But we're asking too  
4 for the sake of information that if it's redundant  
5 that we don't hear that over and over again. That's  
6 just my request and the Board may see differently.  
7 But if you've got new or different information -- but  
8 the same voices -- or different voices with the same  
9 message is what I had in mind.

10                  SENATOR ELLIOTT: Well, but it's different  
11 parents who have different kids who want to say  
12 something for their kids. And I'm just requesting of  
13 this Board to stop cutting us off and let everybody  
14 be heard.

15                                   [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

16                  CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: I've never been in a  
17 position of cutting anyone off and certainly wanting  
18 to hear from everyone. So if that's the pleasure of  
19 the Board, certainly what we'll do. There's no  
20 intent -- and I have not discussed this with anyone,  
21 so the Board is not co-conspirators with me in this  
22 effort; this was my intent to manage the meeting as  
23 being the Chair of the Board. So, again, I want --  
24 if there's enough dissension around this issue as it  
25 stands without having anything to come into play that

1 would suggest that there is further conspiracy or  
2 further collaborating on one side or the other. So  
3 if that's the -- we'll likely take a break in the  
4 middle, if that's okay, but we can certainly do that  
5 if that's the desire of the board. So we'll go  
6 around when we have the motion -- we have not voted  
7 to have public comment. When we do that, and if  
8 that's what we do, then we'll go around and see what  
9 the intent of the board is. Any comment from the  
10 Board about that process?

11 MS. REITH: Just that I'll be prepared with a  
12 motion to hear all public comment when -- at that  
13 time.

14 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Then, Commissioner.  
15 Oh, no, sorry. Do we have a motion to -- concerning  
16 Mr. Kurrus's request -- I mean, report -- his report?

17 MS. CHAMBERS: I move that we accept his report.

18 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Moved by Ms. Chambers to  
19 accept.

20 MS. REITH: Second.

21 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Second by Ms. Reith. All  
22 in favor?

23 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

24 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any opposed? Motion  
25 carries.

1                   COMMISSIONER KEY: Okay. Thank you, Madam  
2                   Chair. I have two things. The first is I've  
3                   distributed to you a page that the front of that page  
4                   simply is a recap of the motion and the action of  
5                   this Board in the last -- in last month's meeting  
6                   concerning the appointment of a stakeholder group  
7                   representing the community south of the Arkansas  
8                   River. And we had a number of nominees for that and  
9                   on the back of that page you'll see that -- in this  
10                  last week I went down to Crossett and met with the  
11                  Chair and we came up with the list based on the  
12                  feedback and nominations from the stakeholders: Mr.  
13                  Tommy Branch, Ms. Tamika Edwards, Ms. Ann Brown  
14                  Marshall, Mr. Jim McKenzie, Mr. Antwan Phillips, Ms.  
15                  Leticia Reta, Dianna -- and Dianna Varady. The -- we  
16                  have been working to determine how best to assist  
17                  this group in moving forward. We will certainly  
18                  staff this and meetings will be held here in the  
19                  auditorium or other locations as this group  
20                  determines. So if they want to move it around to  
21                  other facilities around the area, then that is  
22                  certainly their prerogative. They'll be open to the  
23                  public. All the meetings that will be here we will  
24                  live-stream; meetings that are in other locations may  
25                  be live-streamed if the technology allows in those

1 locations. We certainly -- those meetings will be  
2 open for public comment. As I mentioned, we will  
3 staff the meetings, provide minutes, and we will post  
4 those to the ADE website. And at your request the  
5 committee will prepare written quarterly reports and  
6 present to the State Board regarding the status of  
7 efforts that you outlined in your motion and your  
8 action. We will post the agendas on the State Board  
9 website, the same site where your -- the agendas of  
10 this meeting are posted. In the first meeting of the  
11 committee, which -- the date of which has not been  
12 established, we will work with those members to set  
13 that date. But they will organize and they will  
14 select a chair and a vice chair, select their meeting  
15 dates and times, and then outline the timeline of  
16 events specifically to address the issues that you  
17 all have asked them to address. So that will --  
18 that's an update on that and I'll be glad to answer  
19 any questions on that particular item.

20 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any questions concerning  
21 that report? Okay. Ms. Reith has a question.

22 MS. REITH: Madam Chair, maybe less of a  
23 question but more of a request. Obviously, we're at  
24 a time right now where we're also talking about the  
25 Civic Advisory group and what will replace the

1 current citizen advisory committee that we have and  
2 if there could be some conscientiousness around  
3 branding of these committees to thoroughly identify  
4 that they are separate entities. I think there was  
5 some confusion even around the nomination and  
6 communication -- you and I had spoken of that. But I  
7 do want the public to know about the insights to that  
8 conversation because I do think at this time where so  
9 much transition is going on we owe it to the public  
10 to be just as clear as possible. And I think we have  
11 a tremendous opportunity here with some special  
12 branding, maybe even welcome some public thought on  
13 what that could look like so that we can be very  
14 clear, not just in names but more importantly  
15 delineation in tasks. I think there is a tremendous  
16 opportunity here to get more people involved and  
17 bring some folk to the table. That was the intention  
18 of the second committee. But the fact that both of  
19 these committees may be coming onboard around the  
20 same time does lend to the potential risk, right, of  
21 confusion of who's doing what and roles versus  
22 leveraging the potential of having the greatest  
23 number of folks possible and voices possible in the  
24 conversation. And so I think some additional thought  
25 in how we communicate that out to the public in the

1 weeks ahead, if I could kindly request that,  
2 Commissioner.

3 COMMISSIONER KEY: Well, we're certainly open to  
4 suggestions on that in our office. Because of the  
5 phrase "south of the river" that was used so much,  
6 we've kind of informally referred to it as the "south  
7 of the river group" and I don't know that that's the  
8 best branding that we want to apply. But certainly  
9 we'll give some thought to what -- you know -- a name  
10 of that group that better describes its role.

11 And the next group that I'm about to talk about  
12 it's set in statute, so that's -- we don't have a  
13 choice what we call that one, so -- okay.

14 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any other questions,  
15 comments?

16 COMMISSIONER KEY: Okay. In the next  
17 presentation, I want to talk with you and have some  
18 conversation about the appointment process for the  
19 LRSB Community Advisory Board. We can go to the next  
20 slide, please, Kim.

21 All right. The Community Advisory Board, if you  
22 remember -- okay -- let's keep in mind that what got  
23 us here is January 28, 2015 this Board voted because  
24 of the academic distress conditions, which were  
25 schools -- six schools below 49.5% proficiency in

1           literacy and math. That triggered the action of the  
2           State Board which puts the ADE and the Commissioner  
3           in certain roles and responsibilities. Immediately  
4           following the state takeover decision-making rests  
5           with the state-appointed superintendent and  
6           Commissioner. And then the appointment of a  
7           community advisory board in that second year begins  
8           the transition, a return to the traditional roles of  
9           a school board. So I want to stress that the  
10          Community Advisory Board is a significant step  
11          towards the return of local governance. Okay, Kim.

12                 The statute says that if the State Board  
13          determines sufficient progress has been made but the  
14          schools have not yet resolved all issues that caused  
15          the classification of academic distress, the  
16          Commissioner with the approval of the State Board may  
17          appoint a Community Advisory Board. As you all know,  
18          a couple of months ago Baseline Academy was removed,  
19          so progress is being made. If you look at the pre-  
20          and post-tests in the other schools, we certainly  
21          recognize that progress is being made. But as of the  
22          last classification we still have five schools that  
23          meet the definition of academic distress. Okay.

24                 So the qualifications in the statute for a  
25          Community Advisory Board is to consist of five or

1           seven members. They shall be residents of the  
2           district and they shall serve as volunteers on the  
3           board. We are responsible as ADE of providing  
4           technical assistance, making sure they get the  
5           technical assistance training, and that is the  
6           training that all school board members receive under  
7           Arkansas Code 6-13-629. We partner with the Arkansas  
8           School Boards Association to provide that training  
9           and they are trained in areas of school law, school  
10          operations, fiscal issues, and student achievement.

11           The duties of the Community Advisory Board: to  
12          meet monthly with the superintendent, again like  
13          traditional school boards would; they are to seek  
14          community input regarding the progress of correcting  
15          academic distress issues; conduct hearings and make  
16          recommendations to the Commissioner regarding  
17          personnel and student discipline; working to build  
18          community capacity for continued support of the  
19          school district; and submitting quarterly reports to  
20          you and to the Commissioner regarding progress of  
21          getting out of academic distress.

22           So the process -- many have asked, "Well, how --  
23          what is the process? How will this work?" We have  
24          the applications available at the ADE website and the  
25          link is listed there. There is also a provision in

1 statute that requires that we ask the local  
2 legislators that represent that district for  
3 nominations, so -- and this -- now this timeline is  
4 tentative, certainly subject to discussion and we can  
5 modify this if you all feel like it would be in the  
6 best interest of moving forward. But tentatively we  
7 are asking that the nominations be received by May  
8 31st of this year, and then an application deadline  
9 of June 17. We will review those applications and  
10 then select the members by zones. So many have  
11 asked, "Well, how will this be -- will we follow the  
12 current zones, school board zones? Will we do  
13 something different?" We intend to follow the  
14 current school board zones as currently established  
15 by LRSD. And then in the July State Board meeting it  
16 will be my intent to present those appointments to  
17 you for discussion and approval. We -- okay.

18 So there was one more point that I -- put that  
19 back up there for me, Kim, please. Okay. So under  
20 the next steps -- many have asked, "Well, what do we  
21 have to do? What does the district have to do to get  
22 off of academic distress?" The statute requires that  
23 ADE certify to you that (1) all conditions that led  
24 to academic distress have been corrected, and (2)  
25 that there are no schools in the district remaining

1 on academic distress. That leads us then to a  
2 timeline of when those next determinations will be  
3 made. We have asked and it is in the contract for  
4 both ACT Aspire and the multistate alternative  
5 assessment that we get those scores back by July 1,  
6 2016. We will need to open up a corrections period  
7 because, keep in mind, this is statewide; all of the  
8 statewide ACT Aspire and MSAA data will be coming in.  
9 So Ms. Barnes and her unit will be responsible for  
10 working with schools during this corrections period.  
11 And then after the corrections period we begin the  
12 calculation and analysis of academic distress, of all  
13 the components of accountability that are triggered  
14 by the ACT Aspire and multistate assessment. So  
15 sometime in the fall of this year there will be a  
16 determination of progress for academic distress in  
17 the five remaining schools. Depending on how well  
18 they do on ACT Aspire, again, remember this is a  
19 three-year rolling average and so those data -- that  
20 data will be looked at in conjunction with the  
21 previous years to determine if they have met or  
22 exceeded that 49.5% proficiency level for their  
23 students in math and literacy.

24 What happens after that -- well, I would open  
25 that up for some discussion here. After the academic

1 distress calculations, I've told you what our  
2 responsibility is under the statute. We have to  
3 certify to you those two things that I mentioned.  
4 Now there's also a provision in the statute that  
5 allows you to take any other action that is lawful  
6 regarding any school district that is in state  
7 control. A number of scenarios are in place that I  
8 think some of you may -- that were on the Board last  
9 year discussed possibilities other than district  
10 takeover. So that would be in your purview to have  
11 those discussions at that point in time. You know,  
12 if another school or two schools succeeded in getting  
13 off academic distress and we had, you know, four  
14 schools or three schools -- you know -- some number  
15 left, you know, what would we do at that point?  
16 Would we continue in the path that we are currently  
17 on, working with the district in a state takeover  
18 situation, or is there something else you all would  
19 want to do?

20 So, Madam Chair, I'll be glad to take questions  
21 but I pose that to generate some discussion either  
22 now or later on the future possibilities.

23 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Thank you, Commissioner.  
24 Dr. Barth.

25 DR. BARTH: Yeah, just a few things. Thank you.

1 On the duties -- if we could go back to the -- Kim,  
2 if that's handy -- the duties of the Community  
3 Advisory -- yeah, thank you. So obviously a kind of  
4 short list but a list where it feels like there's  
5 some elasticity in terms of how broad that is. And  
6 in particular, you know, I think there's, as Mr.  
7 Adams voiced earlier, you know, frustration of an  
8 absence of a community voice in -- on matters such as  
9 new charters, charter expansion, the possibility of  
10 the seeking of waivers, et cetera. Would it -- is it  
11 your view that these -- this list of duties would  
12 include it being appropriate for the CAB to come  
13 forward with their views, their majority views on  
14 those issues?

15 COMMISSIONER KEY: The fourth bullet point  
16 there, working to build community capacity for  
17 continued support of the school district, I would  
18 interpret that very broadly to say that a Community  
19 Advisory Board, if they chose to, could opine on  
20 anything that comes before this body or anything else  
21 dealing with public education in the district.

22 DR. BARTH: Okay. I just wanted us to be clear  
23 on the front-end that -- so that down the line  
24 there's not folks who say, "Oh, this is outside your  
25 bounds," because I want us to be really clear that

1 this is a step towards a return to local control, as  
2 you've said. It looks a lot like a school board; it  
3 doesn't have all the powers of a school board, and --  
4 but I do want us to be clear in terms of what powers,  
5 especially as a voice of the community, this group  
6 would have.

7 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Barth, and I would just  
8 point to a recent example. PCSSD's Community  
9 Advisory Board weighed in, passed a resolution  
10 regarding whether PCSSD would stay in state control  
11 for another -- a sixth year based on extenuating  
12 circumstances. You all received that; that was in  
13 the packet. So, you know, they felt like that was  
14 something they wanted to have input and they did so.  
15 So obviously a number of issues could fall under that  
16 category.

17 DR. BARTH: Okay. And on the -- I guess it was  
18 the last slide, but on the timeline -- so the -- so  
19 we'll get ACT Aspire results fairly soon. Now we do  
20 have -- you know -- this year we did have the  
21 concordance process, a variety of other things that  
22 really, in addition to the late return of the tests,  
23 slowed down any calculation of which schools were  
24 still in academic distress. What do we expect there  
25 in terms -- because you say fall 2016; do we think we

1 can do it that quickly?

2 COMMISSIONER KEY: I asked Dr. Airola that very  
3 question and, of course, she was hesitant to give us  
4 a concrete date because of those issues. But she  
5 felt confident that the fall of 2016 is reasonable.  
6 Now whether that's September 21 fall or November  
7 fall, you know, that's -- it is a broad range.

8 DR. BARTH: Right.

9 COMMISSIONER KEY: But there is certainly a  
10 legitimate reasonable estimate that we could have it  
11 done by then.

12 DR. BARTH: And under the statute, if at a point  
13 in time this board said it is time to return to local  
14 control, that could take place via an interim school  
15 board. Right?

16 COMMISSIONER KEY: Yes.

17 DR. BARTH: We don't have to wait until the next  
18 September. We can --

19 COMMISSIONER KEY: Yes.

20 DR. BARTH: We can act more quickly than that?

21 COMMISSIONER KEY: The statute provides for the  
22 appointment of an interim school board that would  
23 have full authority of a school board that would act  
24 in that role until the next elections.

25 DR. BARTH: Thanks.

1 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any other --

2 DR. BARTH: One --

3 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay.

4 DR. BARTH: One final thing. On the -- so your  
5 -- so under the -- your statement that if there are  
6 two or three schools still in academic distress that  
7 we could consider a new path at that point. That's  
8 also from the original power that this board has when  
9 it comes to academic distress districts and schools.

10 COMMISSIONER KEY: Yeah.

11 DR. BARTH: So at any point we have that power  
12 to say we want to think about a new path?

13 COMMISSIONER KEY: Yes. There's a provision, a  
14 very broad power provision there that says that any  
15 time the State Board may exercise their authority of  
16 any lawful action that's provided for in the statute.  
17 And Ms. Clay may want to -- did I get it right?

18 MS. CLAY: (Nodding head up and down.)

19 COMMISSIONER KEY: Okay. So she's saying that's  
20 correct. So, yes.

21 DR. BARTH: Okay. And we did have at least --  
22 before several of y'all were on, there was at least  
23 one motion to return the school board. I believe  
24 that was at the meeting when Mr. Kurrus was hired.  
25 There was a motion that failed, but -- so there is

1 some --

2 COMMISSIONER KEY: Yeah. I think Ms. Mahony  
3 made that motion.

4 DR. BARTH: Right. Right. Thanks.

5 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Ms. Chambers.

6 MS. CHAMBERS: My question was related to that.  
7 Just for those of us that weren't here, so that we  
8 not slow the process, if we could anticipate maybe  
9 use a meeting or two in the summer prior to when the  
10 Aspire scores are back so that we really know what  
11 our rights or responsibilities are as a board  
12 relative to giving back local control. If we could  
13 plan for that into the agenda, that would be great.

14 COMMISSIONER KEY: Sure. Happy to do that.

15 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any other questions? Ms.  
16 Reith.

17 MS. REITH: And I guess less of a question but  
18 building on both of my colleagues' request. I think  
19 we especially for the reasons cited by my -- our  
20 colleague Dr. Barth here around the feeling of  
21 mourning or confusion and such that has been felt in  
22 the community, the desire that we see with many folks  
23 here today. I do think that we owe as much clarity  
24 as possible leaving today's meetings about next  
25 steps. But I would like to present a motion of

1 hearing public comment to get us there because I  
2 think we've heard now from the district and from the  
3 Commissioner, but I do think that there's many folks  
4 here that are prepared and have given a lot of  
5 thought to different ideas and I think we owe it to  
6 that. So with that, if --

7 COMMISSIONER KEY: There's --

8 MS. REITH: Yes.

9 COMMISSIONER KEY: There's one more thing I  
10 think we -- I would like to hear from you all on and  
11 that's a process issue. It had been suggested to me  
12 by one of the legislators some type of -- when we get  
13 the nominations and applications in for the Community  
14 Advisory Board having some type of open process  
15 since, you know, I make the appointments, you all  
16 make the -- have the approval authority. You know, I  
17 told the Representative that I would bring this up  
18 and let y'all talk about it. Is there a place in  
19 this timeline where you all would want to have a  
20 meeting with those potential appointees and give them  
21 an opportunity just for introduction? Obviously, if  
22 we had, you know, 50 applications, you know, the size  
23 of that would certainly be something to consider.  
24 But that would -- is something that was requested of  
25 me to bring up to you all and I agreed that I would

1 ask that question after I had finished my PowerPoint.  
2 But I wanted to -- I didn't want to leave that  
3 hanging, so you all could have some discussion of  
4 what that process might look like so it would have  
5 more openness.

6 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Let's start with Ms. Dean.  
7 Do you have any objections or comments regarding that  
8 recommendation?

9 MS. DEAN: (Shaking head from side to side.)

10 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Dr. Barth?

11 COMMISSIONER KEY: And it might require a  
12 specially called meeting. Yes, ma'am.

13 DR. BARTH: Yeah. And I do think that would be  
14 helpful, at least -- I mean, often when we've gotten  
15 -- when we've approved CABs from other districts it's  
16 just been a list of names that we -- we have no idea  
17 really who they are. And I think especially because  
18 of the context in which this is -- this decision is  
19 taking place I think it would be helpful to begin to  
20 put faces and personalities to those names at a  
21 minimum.

22 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Ms. Zook, do you have a  
23 comment?

24 MS. ZOOK: (Shaking head from side to side.)

25 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Ms. Reith?

1 MS. REITH: No. I would just echo Dr. Barth's  
2 sentiments. And I think especially as we've all seen  
3 and already even heard some allusions to around  
4 especially the last few weeks' questions with the  
5 process, I think if we can add some transparency.  
6 And if not everyone is available for a special  
7 session -- I know in other circumstances like this  
8 we've created committees, a subcommittee of the Board  
9 to be able to support the Commissioner and such in  
10 this, and I would just say that that might be another  
11 approach. But I think if there's ways where we can  
12 add transparency, accountability and support to this  
13 then I know I very much would welcome it.

14 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Mr. Williamson?

15 MR. WILLIAMSON: My preference would be the  
16 entire board being involved in it instead of a  
17 committee. But --

18 MS. ZOOK: I agree.

19 MR. WILLIAMSON: -- other than, I'm fine with  
20 all that.

21 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Ms. Chambers?

22 MS. CHAMBERS: I agree and would just ask, very  
23 similar to what Ms. Reith was just talking about --  
24 there's been a declared, a spoken need for more  
25 engagement and transparency and community

1 involvement. And so one of the things I would ask in  
2 terms of specificity to the CAB is that they come  
3 back with a recommendation on how the Board can play  
4 a more specific role. There have obviously been some  
5 questions, maybe even confusion: what's the role of  
6 the interim superintendent, the Commissioner, this  
7 board. And so as we are trying to take a longer term  
8 view to something that's very sustainable in our  
9 relationships and how we engage I'd ask the CAB to  
10 come back; we may need Town Halls, periodic  
11 gatherings where we get together and questions and  
12 answers are exchanged so that we feel more connected  
13 and it all is much more clear about how we go forward  
14 together. So if that could somehow find its way into  
15 this, Commissioner, I think it would be helpful.

16 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Mr. Black, any  
17 comment?

18 MR. BLACK: (Nodding head up and down.)

19 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Ms. Saviers, are you  
20 there and if so, do you want to weigh in?

21 (BRIEF MOMENT OF SILENCE)

22 MS. ZOOK: She has to get herself off mute.

23 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Well, okay. Then at  
24 this point we'll hear a motion regarding whether  
25 we'll have public comment.

1 MS. SAVIERS: Doug?

2 MR. BRADBERRY: Yes, ma'am.

3 MS. SAVIERS: I'm here.

4 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay.

5 MR. BRADBERRY: Okay. Did you have any  
6 additional comments you would like to make?

7 MS. SAVIERS: No, thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Back to whether or  
9 not we want to hear public comment, can we have a  
10 motion one way or the other?

11 MS. REITH: As I alluded to, I do hope that we  
12 don't end with public comment and that we pick up  
13 where we're leaving this conversation here about  
14 offering specificity and clarity with next steps  
15 here. But I do move to hear all of the public  
16 comment and all the individuals that were signed up  
17 for today to speak on this action idea.

18 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. You heard Ms.  
19 Reith's motion. Is there a second?

20 DR. BARTH: Second.

21 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Second by Dr. Barth. All  
22 in favor?

23 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

24 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any opposed? Okay.

25 MS. ZOOK: And I think, speaking to Ms.

1 Chambers' comment, this isn't the first district  
2 that's had a CAB. And so we have a pattern plus  
3 statute, so we won't all have to reinvent the wheel.  
4 But I think this summer to have that -- because we'll  
5 also have two new board members and that will be  
6 helpful for them as well.

7 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. We'll go into public  
8 comment. The question now is whether we have a break  
9 now or -- I think we'll take a break now, till 11:30,  
10 and we'll reconvene for public comment.

11 (BREAK: 11:20-11:34 A.M.)

12 PUBLIC COMMENT

13 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: I'm going to call the  
14 meeting back to order and get started with our public  
15 comment. Again, we can't have individuals standing  
16 in the building. We ask that those that don't have  
17 seats would go outside and find a space either in the  
18 lobby or the overflow.

19 Okay. We're going to start our public comment.  
20 We're going to go in the order that folks have signed  
21 in, with the exception that we're going to ask  
22 Senator Elliott and then Senator Chesterfield to come  
23 up and speak first.

24 SENATOR ELLIOTT: Thank you, Madam Chair. And,  
25 Madam Chair, I do want to be sure you understand I do

1 not think you are part of some conspiracy about  
2 people speaking.

3 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Thank you.

4 SENATOR ELLIOTT: If there was any suggestion of  
5 that, that was my suggestion -- not my suggestion;  
6 only that people be heard. But I do have to say it  
7 is unusual of me to stand up at a body and ask such a  
8 thing. But the simple fact is -- kind of like Dylan  
9 Thomas said to us, "Do not go gentle into that good  
10 night" -- I've lost all my gentleness. And so don't  
11 expect that from me today because I've had 18 months  
12 of having I guess the rub to a point now it's just  
13 not gentle anymore.

14 So what I want to talk to you today about is  
15 almost an 18 long -- month-long what I call  
16 psychological assault, a strategy of shock and awe I  
17 think to this Little Rock School District and to this  
18 city. And I'm not here today to ask anything; I'm  
19 here today to demand Little Rock School District be  
20 returned to the people of our city.

21 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

22 SENATOR ELLIOTT: I'm also here today to suggest  
23 to you that it might not be you but this school  
24 district is being forced to operate under a rigged  
25 system, and I will tell you why I think it's rigged.

1 And it would not surprise me if many of you don't see  
2 it that way because many of you may not be as aware  
3 how long this has been going on in Little Rock and  
4 other parts of the state, that a few people with  
5 money and power who can afford to meet behind their  
6 gilded curtains and send out orders and have them  
7 carried out. And those of us who have to come in a  
8 situation like this and do this are then looked at as  
9 the ones who are less than civil. But that's no mind  
10 to me today because I have lost my gentleness.

11 So here's where we start. I don't know of any  
12 mathematical formula that should suggest to you -- or  
13 should have suggested to us that 6 out of 48 schools  
14 in academic distress should have even amounted to  
15 this district being taken over, but we did. We  
16 displaced the democratically elected school board --  
17 probably tired of hearing this but imagine living  
18 with it -- and we kept a superintendent who after the  
19 fact we found out, if you could put two and two  
20 together, were in collusion for him to be kept while  
21 he stood here and spoke against the Board and in  
22 essence, I guess, the district itself. Then we  
23 dismissed that superintendent. Then we hired a new  
24 superintendent for fiscal -- hired a new  
25 superintendent because we'd been taken over for

1 academic distress, and then somehow that morphed into  
2 fiscal reasons that we had to have the  
3 superintendent. You might understand why we're  
4 confused and think there's something rigged about  
5 this. And then we added to that a continuing  
6 creation of a parallel school system with expansions  
7 of the charters. And I say "parallel school system"  
8 and that takes me back to 1957 when I was starting  
9 school when we were under a racist --

10 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

11 SENATOR ELLIOTT: -- under a racist school  
12 district ordered by law that we were trying to  
13 change. And here we are, we've gone through all of  
14 this and we're more segregated than we were in the 19  
15 -- late 1970s and 80s. And what's the harm of our  
16 having a parallel school district or parallel school  
17 system? Think back to 1957; that's the harm. And  
18 for us to as a matter of policy continue to expand  
19 charters and as a matter of policy continue to create  
20 a parallel school district -- you can call it what  
21 you want, but that's what it is -- from my standpoint  
22 is indefensible. And I would think you couldn't help  
23 but feel as if there's not something rigged about  
24 this that we feel that this is okay.

25 So then after we expanded we fired a

1 superintendent because he now does not have academic  
2 credentials, although we said we hired him to take  
3 care of fiscal distress, which we were not in to  
4 start with. You might wonder why we're confused and  
5 feel like we're under psychological assault. Then we  
6 hired a new superintendent in a manner that would  
7 make Dark Money look transparent.

8 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

9 SENATOR ELLIOTT: I don't have anything bad to  
10 say about Michael Poore. But if this Board is okay  
11 with this process, let me just tell you I'm astounded  
12 if you are. I'm astounded if you think it's okay and  
13 not at least consider doing something about it. I  
14 don't -- Michael Poore might be the best thing since  
15 sliced bread; he might be. But I will just bet my  
16 meager wages that I make as a legislator, the way he  
17 was brought to Pulaski County was not the way he was  
18 brought to Bentonville and that would've been the way  
19 to do it. There's no such thing as hiring a  
20 superintendent and not attempt to go through some of  
21 the ceremony that you do so that the community has  
22 some sense of it. I don't understand how anybody  
23 could think this is okay. And so when I ask all of  
24 you in a letter that I sent to all of you a simple  
25 question about the expansion of a charter school we

1 got an answer that I will deal with in just a minute.

2 So now that we have Mr. Poore here, apparently,  
3 he came in and reported to us that there is this  
4 unilateral decision that's been made regarding some  
5 three-point plan that we've never heard of. And the  
6 three-point plan includes collaboration, which  
7 everybody likes, which I just -- you can push me over  
8 with a toothpick to understand that collaboration is  
9 one of the major points and he was brought in with  
10 absolutely no collaboration. Return to local control  
11 -- good steps today. And the third one, the third  
12 part of this plan is for career tech centers. If  
13 we're going to do career tech centers the way they do  
14 in Switzerland and Germany and Denmark, where they  
15 really matter and they're not dead-ends, this might  
16 have some merit. I have no problem with career tech.  
17 I'm an educator. I understand career tech. But I  
18 also understand too that it does not mean a lack of  
19 academics and that we're sending somebody down a  
20 dead-end road. But the most interesting thing to me  
21 about the career tech centers is this is a re-  
22 engineering of our schools and our school district  
23 and nobody asked anybody in this district is this  
24 what you want. Nobody asked anybody. And so I  
25 inquire, "Well, where did this come from?" Because

1 the people I have heard talk about this the most has  
2 been the Chamber of Commerce. I'm fine with it but  
3 the Chamber of Commerce -- and I can only guess; when  
4 you don't tell me I might guess wrong -- but nobody  
5 is telling us anything. This was just unilaterally  
6 decided and it's not okay. And then you wonder why I  
7 think it's rigged. Yes, I do. How else does this  
8 happen?

9 So we are going to, as I understand it now, have  
10 career centers in Hall, McClellan, and Fair, and  
11 nobody has asked anybody if this is what we want. I  
12 don't care how great it is. The community engagement  
13 that you referenced, some of you referenced earlier  
14 -- Ms. Chambers lastly, I know -- it's not happening  
15 and this is never going to be okay until it starts  
16 happening in a way that's respectful to the people.

17 So we've been under state control for almost 18  
18 months now and we're talking about appointing the  
19 board. One of the things I want you to be ever  
20 vigilant about this board is that Pulaski County has  
21 been under state control now for five years and  
22 they've had this board that in many cases has been  
23 summarily ignored. And we're going to have this  
24 board, and I think we should; we need to think about  
25 it very differently from the way the board has

1 operated in Pulaski Special School District because  
2 it hasn't operated in many ways out of respect for  
3 the people and the people who are on it.

4 So when we thought that was all, what else could  
5 happen, something else surely could. So this is the  
6 next thing that happened. Recently, we've had a  
7 suspension of rules and regulations to allow more  
8 charter school expansion. Now this is what seems odd  
9 to me. We're going to have more charter school  
10 expansion, then after that we're all going to get  
11 together and collaborate, but let's please have this  
12 expansion first, although we've had two that are  
13 absolutely problems for this district having any  
14 ability to plan. So Little Rock Preparatory Academy  
15 missed their deadline to make their appeal to the  
16 authorizing board, your authorizing panel. I looked  
17 back through their minutes for the last six months  
18 because that's what's available. I was curious as to  
19 why you would miss a deadline and then expect to have  
20 an exception. So I could look back through June and  
21 the only time in that six months -- these are the  
22 times that this was discussed, their expansion. The  
23 first mention was in August. It was innocuous.  
24 September, October, nothing happened. And November,  
25 there seemed to be a pretty robust discussion. And

1 December, there was obviously a robust discussion  
2 because it was in the minutes that they know -- they  
3 knew they had to make this February deadline. And  
4 according to what's in the minutes, the plan was 80%  
5 finished -- 80%. And they were going to have a  
6 meeting on January 5th to make sure they would have  
7 everything ready to get to the Panel on February --  
8 in February, 17th and 18th. They stated the  
9 deadlines in their minutes. They didn't do that. In  
10 spite of their own urgency, they didn't do that. And  
11 despite saying the plan was 80% finished back in  
12 December they still didn't do it. And then they come  
13 and ask for an expansion in Little Rock because they  
14 figure they can get it because it's Little Rock and  
15 you will just do it. So I guess the other thing that  
16 is important about what they are assuming, we don't  
17 have our expansion yet but we do have a building and  
18 we're just going to go ahead and get our building  
19 ready. That started in March. They didn't meet the  
20 February deadline. They start with a building in  
21 March -- and there is more Dark Money there that we  
22 don't know where things are coming from. And I asked  
23 you in the letter that I mentioned earlier, Why is  
24 this okay that Little Rock keeps getting beaten down  
25 and this other parallel school system keeps getting

1 exception after exception? And basically the answer  
2 I got was that if we did not waive this rule for  
3 these charter schools -- because if you do it for  
4 Little Rock Prep you have to do it for everybody else  
5 who's requesting; that's in the law -- but if you do  
6 it for Little Rock Prep you have to do it for  
7 everybody else. And if we don't do it, it will not  
8 be in keeping with our values, according to  
9 Commissioner Key. And what I don't know is what are  
10 those values. Whose values are we talking about? Is  
11 there some value statement that I missed someplace  
12 that I could understand this? Because I haven't seen  
13 it. And is it our values that we keep undermining  
14 the Little Rock School District? Is that in our  
15 values somewhere? That's what I want to know.

16 Madam Chair, I only have about five more dots  
17 and I'll read them quickly. You're being kind.

18 So the values that I ask you to exercise are the  
19 values of democracy, fairness, transparency,  
20 engagement, respect, and finally a release of this  
21 district from state control because we have clearly  
22 demonstrated we are doing two different things to two  
23 different (inaudible).

24 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

25 SENATOR ELLIOTT: And we are not following these

1 values. I suggest to you what's happening now is  
2 illegitimate. It is not in keeping with the faith of  
3 our traditional democracy. If we're going to  
4 continue to pull Little Rock School District apart  
5 and divvy it up and pass it out like so many awards  
6 at a middle school graduation, I think you ought to  
7 tell us. I think you ought to give us the plan. I  
8 think we need to see what the plan is that's  
9 obviously in somebody's head about the Little Rock  
10 School District, because it's not on paper anywhere  
11 that we have seen after all these 18 months.

12 I expect Little Rock to be governed by the rules  
13 and the data; I expect the charter schools to be  
14 governed by the rules and the data, and that's not  
15 happening. I am demanding that we stop expansions.  
16 I'm demanding that we put a clear delineation on  
17 paper with the rules so we know if we are moving  
18 toward getting out of -- from under state control.  
19 And the plan needs to show us forthrightly and how  
20 swiftly we can get out of state control and to a  
21 place of autonomy. Nothing else will do.

22 So if I've not made myself clear to you today,  
23 I'm not asking; I'm demanding that we be clear about  
24 what it takes and what are the steps and when is it  
25 that Little Rock will be a whole school again -- a

1 whole school district. This is not right. We are  
2 not the racist past of 1957. We should not be  
3 creating parallel school districts and adding to  
4 racism, but we are. I am slow to call things racist,  
5 but I can see. I can figure things out. And some of  
6 this is unintentional but the result is the same.  
7 Thank you.

8 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

9 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Thank you. Thank you,  
10 Senator Elliott, for your comments.

11 [APPLAUSE CONTINUES FOR A MOMENT]

12 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Senator Chesterfield.

13 SENATOR CHESTERFIELD: Madam Chair, Ladies and  
14 Gentlemen of the Board, and Ladies and Gentlemen who  
15 I hope are supporters of the Little Rock School  
16 District, as I am, it is my great challenge to  
17 represent the Jacksonville School District, the North  
18 Little Rock School District, the Pulaski County  
19 Special School District, and the Little Rock School  
20 District. I have probably the most eclectic district  
21 of anybody in Pulaski County. And I've been angry  
22 for some five years now because of the lack of  
23 involvement of the people in that which is most  
24 important to them, and that is the education of their  
25 children. Having taught social studies for a long

1 time I have defined democracy the way Lincoln has,  
2 "Of the people, by the people, for the people." I  
3 believe in the tenants upon which this country was  
4 based, "no taxation without representation," and you  
5 are taxing us and we don't have a voice. We are not  
6 represented and Community Advisory Boards don't do it  
7 because we don't elect them. And so it is time now,  
8 Ladies and Gentlemen, to return both school  
9 districts. We're keeping Pulaski County until  
10 November. No good reason. No good reason. It's  
11 been there five years; it's time to give it back in  
12 September, like anything else, instead of having to  
13 go through the process of going to the legislature  
14 and having to reinvent the law to fit what we want to  
15 happen. Because we told you in the beginning that  
16 where you have multiple school districts it's going  
17 to be more difficult to have elections parallel, and  
18 that is coming to pass.

19 The people are not apprised of what is going on  
20 with Community Advisory Boards. Most of them don't  
21 know the date nor the time when they meet. And they  
22 don't have to meet when it's convenient or where it's  
23 convenient for the folks. Finally, I have the  
24 audacity to believe that our public schools would be  
25 treated as your charter schools. But alas, reality

1 has reared its ugly head and we have been taken over  
2 in spite of academic progress, while charters have  
3 not made adequate yearly progress since, as the old  
4 folks say, Hector was a pup and he's since died of  
5 old age. But it's okay to expand them while you  
6 diminish us because any time a district is said to be  
7 in distress the community loses confidence in that  
8 school and thus takes its children out of that  
9 school. You've been unfair to us. You have not been  
10 representative of us. And we the people want our  
11 schools back. We the people want you to understand  
12 that this is not the land of charters; it is the land  
13 of public education. And we demand that we get our  
14 school districts back. I want Helena-West Helena to  
15 be restored. I want the school district in Pine  
16 Bluff to be restored, Dollarway, because I tell you  
17 something, your track record isn't that great. When  
18 you've taken over these schools, these schools have  
19 not shown great progress. You don't have the  
20 capacity to do it and obviously you don't have the  
21 will to do it. And when you get somebody in a  
22 position who has the will to do it, you get rid of  
23 him. It makes no sense.

24 And so I'm asking you for a commonsense  
25 solution. Give us back our schools. Thank you.

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[AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Thank you, Senator Chesterfield. The next person that's slated to speak is Leticia Reta. Leticia. Leticia.

MS. RETA: Leticia.

CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Leticia. I'm sorry. Leticia is coming from behind. Leticia. I'm sorry.

MS. RETA: Good morning, Members of the Board.

CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Good morning.

MS. RETA: Good morning and thank you for having me here today. Well, my speech is going to be very briefly and we're going to talk about the lack of communication.

CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Let me interrupt you before you start. You'll have three minutes --

MS. RETA: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: -- for public comment and that will be the limit for all those that come behind you.

MS. RETA: Certainly. Okay. We're going to talk about lack of communication with the Latino community, the Hispanic community. There is many proposals in the school district that they're not going down to the population. And we're trying to assimilate something and that something has changed

1 very quickly. We are trying to learn and go by the  
2 guides of the school, the law that guides the school  
3 district, but there are so many changes. We're  
4 confused and we're trying to assimilate what's going  
5 on. Right here, the problem is we, the Hispanic, the  
6 Latinos, we're not getting the news in our language.  
7 Probably it's difficult and probably it's hard for  
8 you to understand, but we're segregated; we're left  
9 behind because nobody is telling us what's going on  
10 right now. We need to know -- and many people think  
11 that we're not interested in our kids' education.  
12 We're interested. The problem is how do we  
13 cooperate; how do we know all of these changes,  
14 certainly if nobody is telling us what's going on.

15 So I'm here today because I'm representing part  
16 of the population and I'm the parent who is very  
17 interested in my kids' education. My kids already  
18 graduated from high school, and Latinos are  
19 graduating with honors. But so there's the second  
20 level. After the Caucasians and whites, the Latinos  
21 are highly graduating with honors and they have the  
22 best jobs, the best opportunity. Latinos are very  
23 hard-working persons, so the parents -- many of the  
24 parents don't have education; that's why we're  
25 working for our kids. And we're here because we were

1 looking for a better education and better life and  
2 now it's not what's going on. Nobody has put in --  
3 nobody is telling us what's going on. And that's my  
4 point of view. I know that's my choice. My time is  
5 very short but really, really I see Baker Kurrus or  
6 the other superintendents try to go to the schools  
7 and they was very having (inaudible) with the  
8 schools. But what about the population? What about  
9 the Hispanics? There is not any paper to say  
10 something is changing. Every time that we try to  
11 assimilate something, another change. So please just  
12 stop causing this change for all these students and  
13 their parents because we don't know what's going on.  
14 Really, we need that help. We need to know what's  
15 going on around to see the way to educate our kids.  
16 Until then, what we really think about all these  
17 processes.

18 Well, thank you. That's my part. Please just  
19 don't forget the Hispanics. Don't forget the Latinos  
20 and the schools from distress. Schools are not just  
21 whites, not just blacks, but there is a lot of  
22 Hispanics behind that (inaudible) really and they're  
23 all waiting.

24 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Thank you.

25 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

1 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: I started on the wrong  
2 page. The first person on the first page of sign-ins  
3 is Jeff Grimmett. Mr. Grimmett, you have three  
4 minutes.

5 MR. GRIMMETT: Good morning, Members of the  
6 State Board and the Arkansas Department of Education,  
7 Commissioner Key, and Concerned Citizens of Little  
8 Rock and all of Arkansas. My name is Jeff Grimmett  
9 and I am the LRSD.

10 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

11 MR. GRIMMETT: I proudly attended Booker Arts  
12 Magnet Elementary School, followed by Henderson  
13 Junior High School, and finally graduated from  
14 Central High School in 1998. Currently, I am  
15 finished my ninth year as an English teacher at  
16 Henderson Middle School and before that I worked as a  
17 special education paraprofessional at Mabelvale  
18 Middle School and J.A. Fair High School for five  
19 years. So, almost my entire life has been wrapped up  
20 in some form or fashion in the Little Rock School  
21 District.

22 As an idealistic 17-year old, I vividly remember  
23 covering the 40th anniversary of the historic  
24 integration of Little Rock Central High for my school  
25 newspaper, wandering through the throngs of

1 onlookers, listening as the Little Rock nine and  
2 President Clinton spoke about the fight for an  
3 equitable education for all. Now as we approach the  
4 60th anniversary the state of public education in  
5 Little Rock has heartbreakingly moved backwards.  
6 Just like before those infamous events of 1957, there  
7 are schools in our city that are for all intents and  
8 purposes segregated. And like our infamous past  
9 those schools are not in good shape sometimes.  
10 There's a lack of resources; there's a lack of staff.

11 It has become evident that Governor Hutchinson,  
12 Commissioner Key and other state leaders have no  
13 interest in a diverse and robust public education  
14 system in Little Rock or in Arkansas. Because  
15 despite the numbers showing that charter schools  
16 perform no better and sometimes even worse than  
17 public schools they continue to receive special  
18 treatment while the LRSD suffers under the  
19 ineffectual control of the state. For example,  
20 Covenant Keepers is perennially labeled as a priority  
21 and academically distressed school. ADE's rules  
22 governing public charter schools state that they can  
23 place a school on probation or may modify, revoke or  
24 deny renewal of its charter if the authorizer deems  
25 that the persons operating the public charter school

1 failed to meet academic performance criteria deemed  
2 appropriate and relevant. Why have none of these  
3 things happened? The whole idea behind charters was  
4 if they don't work, then they don't get to proceed.  
5 But that doesn't seem to be happening. Little Rock  
6 Prep Academy received similar favoritism about its  
7 academic outcomes, and on top of that Commissioner  
8 Key has granted them a special waiver to request  
9 expansion and relocation to the former Lutheran  
10 school which is in close proximity to several public  
11 schools. And meanwhile, the Walton Foundation and  
12 the Little Rock Chamber of Commerce has been working  
13 to build that place since March.

14 Just give me one more second. Well, I lost my  
15 last page. But I just would like to call for a  
16 restoration of the school board. We need local  
17 control back. It's hurting the Little Rock School  
18 District. Thank you for your time. Appreciate you.

19 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Thank you, Mr. Grimmatt.

20 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

21 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Ms. Zook.

22 MS. ZOOK: Yes. To put any mind at ease of  
23 anybody, the Little Rock Prep has withdrawn their  
24 request to expand. They still will be coming with  
25 the request to change locations but they have

1           withdrawn their -- so if that is part of your  
2           presentation and your concern, then put your mind at  
3           ease about that.

4           CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: The next person signed to  
5           speak is Ruth Bell. Ms. Bell, you -- when you hear  
6           the alarm your three minutes is up.

7           MS. BELL: Okay. Thank you very much. I'm  
8           speaking for the Pulaski County League of Women  
9           Voters. And my comments deal with the Community  
10          Advisory Board which you will be shortly, maybe by  
11          July, approving the appointment of. The makeup of  
12          the Community Advisory Board we feel should be  
13          citizens who have a record of positive support for  
14          the district in its progress toward returning to  
15          local control and who are knowledgeable in our  
16          community and known for their leadership in dealing  
17          with derisive issues. We hope those are the criteria  
18          you will put at the top of your list when you look at  
19          the slate that is presented to you in July. Thank  
20          you.

21          CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Thank you.

22                               [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

23          CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Is Julie Johnson  
24          Holt --

25          MS. HOLT: Here I am.

1 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Go ahead.

2 MS. HOLT: Good morning.

3 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Good morning.

4 MS. HOLT: Some of you know that I worked at ADE  
5 from 2005 to '11, so I'm well aware that the state is  
6 ultimately responsible for providing an equitable and  
7 adequate education for Arkansas students. So while I  
8 was here under the then new law we did -- we the  
9 state took over several school districts, almost all  
10 for fiscal distress. One was unable to make its next  
11 payroll; others were weeks away from running out of  
12 money. So the goals were clear: return the districts  
13 to financial solvency. ADE staff worked on the  
14 ground to make that happen and as soon as those  
15 benchmarks were reached, often in well under two  
16 years, financially stronger districts returned to  
17 local control. While communities never welcomed  
18 takeover, I felt confident then that the state was  
19 intervening in the best interest of the students.  
20 Excuse me.

21 So with that background, while I dreaded the  
22 rumored takeover of LRSD, I held on to the small hope  
23 that this action would prove to be in the best  
24 interest of our students. I came to the meeting  
25 upstairs last spring when you had Baker Kurrus

1           promising Little Rock needed stability. And I took  
2           hope in that move, given Baker's years on the school  
3           board and his history with the city. Baker's  
4           performance, of course, has strengthened that hope  
5           for many of us in Little Rock. But just as we  
6           relaxed a little, beginning to believe that LRSD  
7           would come out of this stronger, the ground beneath  
8           us began to shift starting with last month's charters  
9           expansion hearing. I was here, stood in line for  
10          four hours to not get to speak, and that's the night  
11          I lost faith that the state was working in the best  
12          interest of our students. Though presented with  
13          sound data, you pounded another nail into the coffin  
14          you seem to be building for LRSD.

15                 Having taken over the district I believe this  
16                 board and the Commissioner and the Governor have a  
17                 legal and moral obligation to act in a way that best  
18                 serves the students of the Little Rock School  
19                 District. Providing quality education is what that  
20                 law is all about. It's not about pushing the agenda,  
21                 especially when that will walk us right back to pre-  
22                 1957. In my opinion, you advocated your  
23                 responsibility to the children of Little Rock that  
24                 night. And, yes, I know that choice is the battle  
25                 cry for several in this room. But with state

1 takeover you had a responsibility to build an LRSD  
2 that is a great choice for students. Your actions  
3 that night were counter to that goal. Meanwhile, the  
4 ground continued to shift. Within weeks, words  
5 trickled out that Baker's contract would not be  
6 renewed. Amid great outcry, we heard the explanation  
7 over a day later that this action wasn't because  
8 Baker missed any benchmarks but because you, Mr. Key,  
9 wanted an academic leader. In my world, we call that  
10 trying to get ahead of the story -- but you were a  
11 little late. And I have to question the choice as  
12 the news on Sunday was that our new academic leader  
13 comes from a district with a quote/unquote "lousy  
14 record of graduating disadvantaged students." And  
15 I'm going to finish.

16 I'm proud to stand up for Little Rock but I'm  
17 tired of standing on shifting ground. I no longer  
18 trust that the district that performed so well for my  
19 students, for my children, is in able and caring  
20 hands while under state control. So I want to know  
21 -- and you were kind of getting at this but you  
22 didn't get there -- what are the benchmarks,  
23 benchmarks that are not going to shift, that will get  
24 us out of state control? Thank you.

25 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

1 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Next speaker is Bill  
2 Kopsky.

3 MR. PHILLIPS: I am not Bill Kopsky.

4 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: No, you're not.

5 MR. PHILLIPS: But --

6 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Is Mr. Kopsky going to  
7 speak?

8 MR. PHILLIPS: He is. But we switched spots  
9 because I have a lunch meeting and he was kind enough  
10 to allow me to speak in his stead.

11 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: And your name?

12 MR. PHILLIPS: I'm Antwan Phillips.

13 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay, Mr. Phillips. You  
14 have three minutes.

15 MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, ma'am. I always begin by  
16 saying I'm a McClellan grad; I'm a lawyer here in  
17 town and I also served as the adjunct professor at  
18 Bowen School of Law. And when we were doing our  
19 training as adjunct one of -- the Dean told us that  
20 when you're in the classroom don't be afraid of  
21 silence. You ask a question; don't be so -- don't  
22 expect everyone to speak right away. Don't expect  
23 action immediately. Allow people time to think and  
24 consider the question that's being posed. I tell  
25 that anecdote because I'm happy and I'm excited to

1 work with you all in the future as a member of the  
2 stakeholder group, south of the river group, whatever  
3 that group is formed -- I mean, determined to be as  
4 it relates to traditional public schools and charter  
5 schools within Little Rock. And just like we learned  
6 when I was preparing to be an adjunct professor, I  
7 ask you to think, pause about the issue before you --  
8 as we think about the expansion of charter schools.  
9 I mean, this committee was formed, as I understand  
10 it, to address this issue of how charter schools  
11 impact traditional schools within Little Rock, among  
12 other issues. And I would implore the Board -- I  
13 know people don't like to use the term pause, slow  
14 down, moratorium, whatever term you want to use to  
15 think about the purpose of this board and allow this  
16 board to do its job in recommending -- making  
17 recommendations to you and to the Commissioner about  
18 how charter schools affect traditional schools. So  
19 I'm glad to know that Little Rock Prep has taken back  
20 their request for expansion. But until our board has  
21 the opportunity to make recommendations I would  
22 request that any charter school expansion be on hold,  
23 that we think about how these things affect one  
24 another until we're able to make that recommendation.  
25 Thank you.

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[AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Thank you. Mr. Kopsky, Bill Kopsky is next. And after he speaks we're going to take -- the Board is going to take a lunch break at approximately 11:15. So, Mr. Kopsky.

Did I miss something?

MS. ZOOK: It's 12:15.

CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: I'm sorry. You know what it is. 12:15.

MS. CLAY: Madam Chair, Henri Smothers is here and I believe she is actually -- would actually be next if Antwan Phillips and Bill Kopsky switched places. Mr. Kopsky is going to be here after lunch and Ms. Smothers is not, if you would allow her --

CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: No problem.

MS. CLAY: -- to speak at this time. Okay.

CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Ms. -- so after we hear Ms. Smothers we'll break for lunch.

MS. SMOTHERS: In September of 1894, my hero was born. His name was Henry Smothers; he was my dad. I have his namesake. He lived to be an old man and one of the things he would oftentimes tell us is that if he had my age and his wisdom he could rule the world. He was so smart and I really looked up to him. He raised 11 children on a 3rd grade education. We were

1 very encouraged every day to do our best, and we did  
2 just that. But one of the other things my dad would  
3 tell us as we were growing up is that, "Baby, you  
4 have to stand for something because a fool will fall  
5 for anything." I have a granddaughter in public  
6 schools, Little Rock public schools, and when she  
7 grows up and she asks me, "Grandma, what were you  
8 doing when they took over our schools," I'll have to  
9 say, "Baby, I was standing for something. I was not  
10 a fool and I was not going to fall for anything."

11 I've been a card-carrying member of the Arkansas  
12 PTA, the National PTA for 20-plus year. I've also  
13 been a friend of the district for over 20-plus years.  
14 The National PTA has been in existence for 119 years.  
15 We are the very largest group that advocate on behalf  
16 of children. I've served as the Little Rock PTA  
17 council president. I've served as the vice president  
18 of legislation for the Arkansas PTA. Each year, we  
19 have a legislative program. This year, as in years  
20 past, we adopt what we believe we are for and  
21 against. The Arkansas PTA legislative program for  
22 2015-16 -- I'll be brief with this -- it says, "We  
23 support measures that provide for expanded funding  
24 for public schools, children's health and safety, a  
25 quality education for all children." These are the

1 things that we oppose: We oppose measures that weaken  
2 or minimize the power of local school boards.

3 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

4 MS. SMOTHERS: We oppose measures that put  
5 money, private -- public money into private or  
6 parochial choice voucher plans. Public dollars  
7 should be used to support public schools.

8 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

9 MS. SMOTHERS: We oppose measures that divert  
10 tax monies from school districts without the support  
11 of the affected districts' board of education. We  
12 oppose measures that weaken collaboration between  
13 school, home and community. I stand today for those  
14 parents, teachers, students who cannot speak or stand  
15 for themselves, those that are speechless, those that  
16 are voiceless, those who have the same concerns. We  
17 want our schools back.

18 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

19 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: We're going to recess now  
20 and we're going to return at 12:45

21 (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: Unknown man at the back  
22 of the room begins to loudly chant, "Give it back,  
23 Give it back, Give it back" -- and others join in.)

24 (LUNCH BREAK: 12:15-12:55 P.M.)

25 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: I'll call the meeting back

1 to order and continue with our public comment. The  
2 next person we have on the list is Kyndall Delph.  
3 Kyndall, you have three minutes.

4 MS. DELPH: Hello. I'm Kyndall Delph. I am a  
5 debater at Little Rock Central High and I'm just --  
6 it's a pleasure to come and address you on my  
7 opinions. I'm glad that -- I thank Kathy Koehler for  
8 allowing me to come speak today. I just -- I just  
9 want to get this out. Personally, I just want to say  
10 that any political action has public consequence and  
11 that's something we learned in debate. That's Debate  
12 101. And I have just -- with the recent expansion of  
13 charters in the district it's just proven that the  
14 ADE has chosen the wrong side of history. You have  
15 chosen the side of the corporations, of the 1%. You  
16 have ignored the students of color, like me. You  
17 have ignored the students of -- you have ignored the  
18 students who don't have the resources to attend these  
19 charter schools. I just want to point out that you  
20 have ignored the efforts of desegregation in the  
21 district. You have ignored the recent Lisa Academy  
22 brochures that were not sent to minority communities.  
23 You have re-entrenched the segregation of the  
24 district that has already affected many students like  
25 me. The quality of teachers is something that I feel

1 personally about. I feel helpless knowing that my  
2 peers and that my future children that attend these  
3 charter schools won't have a quality and qualified  
4 teacher education like I do.

5 Another thing is the removal of Baker Kurrus.  
6 He was someone who was an effective leader that -- in  
7 the district. We felt like even though we had the  
8 board -- we have the local board taken away, we felt  
9 that Baker Kurrus was a little bit of hope. And with  
10 the removal of him you have also shown that -- you  
11 have revealed your true intentions. We enjoy Baker  
12 Kurrus because he is the one who goes home at night  
13 and probably sweats the decisions he makes that  
14 impact students like me. And when you choose someone  
15 from Bentonville who has -- does not reflect the  
16 majority of the community to represent us it's a very  
17 paternal -- it's the paternalism that we say is bad.  
18 It's paternalistic that you can say minority parents  
19 and minority communities can't decide for them  
20 selves, cannot decide for their children. And we  
21 believe -- when we believe that you have chosen the  
22 side -- the wrong side of history, I have one  
23 question for the ADE and that's why can't you see me;  
24 why can't you see the students of color like me who  
25 work 14-plus hours a day, who negotiate with their

1 bosses so they can attend debate tournaments on the  
2 weekend, to further their education and college. I  
3 am a committed student at Campus University where I  
4 have worked out -- I have worked hours to get  
5 recommendations to work for scholarships. But I am  
6 an AP student and recently, this week, I done two AP  
7 tests. I have a disabled parent and I am the second  
8 oldest and it's just very unnerving to know that the  
9 ADE has chosen the wrong side of history. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Thank you for your  
11 comments.

12 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

13 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Next on our list is  
14 Tony Orr. Mr. Orr, you'll have three minutes for  
15 your remarks.

16 MR. ORR: Yes, ma'am. I want to thank you,  
17 thank all of you, Ladies and Gentlemen, for allowing  
18 me to come this afternoon. We started this morning  
19 and now the afternoon to address you. I'm a very  
20 loud, outspoken and vocal parent for the Little Rock  
21 School District. And so this morning when I was  
22 coming to think about what I was going to say I was  
23 listening to the radio and I heard this song, the  
24 theme song from Mash. There's some lyrics that goes,  
25 you know, "Suicide is painless but it brings about

1 many changes." And so I want to say one thing, that  
2 suicide can be very painful and it still brings about  
3 these changes. For so many for so long, the  
4 students, the parents and the citizens of Little Rock  
5 we feel have been held hostage by Mr. Key and this  
6 board. We feel like we have been extorted. Our  
7 money has been extorted, our children are being  
8 extorted, our rights to choose has been extorted.  
9 Some parents feel, like me, that Mr. Key is the Jim  
10 Jones of Little Rock School District and we're being  
11 forced and extorted to drink his poison Kool-Aid;  
12 we're being forced to drink his Kool-Aid of charter  
13 schools; we've been forced to drink his Kool-Aid of a  
14 superintendent that we have no -- that we had no  
15 right or had no choice in selecting. We feel like  
16 the only way that Little Rock can be the school  
17 district it's supposed to be is you allow local  
18 control, locally elected officials that we know. We  
19 don't know you and you don't know us. You have an  
20 agenda and your agenda don't include us. And one of  
21 the things we feel like is that if you're going to  
22 represent us then do it in a way that's transparent  
23 for all of us. We understand one thing, and let's be  
24 clear about it: we know this is not about students.  
25 This is not about academics. This is not about

1 distressed schools. It's about money and it's about  
2 somebody else's agenda. And the only thing we ask,  
3 be straight-up with us. Be honest with us. We're  
4 grown people. We can take it. If you come to us,  
5 "Listen, we don't care about you. Y'all, we don't  
6 care about" -- I've been watching just the posture of  
7 some of you on this board this morning; you could  
8 care less what we're talking about because you have  
9 an agenda that you want to see through. So just be  
10 honest about it. Say, "We don't care. We don't care  
11 about you, parents. We don't care about you,  
12 students. We don't care about you, residents. We  
13 care about what we want to care about and it's not  
14 about making sure that our students are being  
15 educated. It's about what we want to do." Thank  
16 you.

17 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Thank you.

18 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

19 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Austin Bailey. Austin  
20 Bailey is apparently not here. Erin Larkin. Not  
21 here. Liz Smith.

22 UNKNOWN PERSON: She's not here.

23 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Gene Levy. Mr.  
24 Levy, you have three minutes.

25 RABBI LEVY: Thank you, Madam Chairman, Members

1 of the Board, Commissioner. I'm Rabbi Gene Levy; I'm  
2 a retired Rabbi. I am on the current soon-to-be-out-  
3 of-business Civic Advisory Committee. We, I guess,  
4 go out of business in the next month or so. We have  
5 been busy over the course of the winter and spring of  
6 having five community forums and we're just now  
7 putting together the finished material, which will be  
8 presented next Thursday. We've had hundreds and  
9 hundreds of participants and have given hundreds of  
10 suggestions. We feel that we had just begun -- just  
11 begun to crack the areas of trust and transparency  
12 with many of our parents. We had just begun that.  
13 We have answered questions as to where are we going.  
14 But now with the secretive activities of last month  
15 we feel that much of that trust and that transparency  
16 has been totally dissipated and we've going to need  
17 to start all over again.

18 As a religious leader and a member of the Civic  
19 Advisory Committee, I implore the Board and the  
20 Commissioner to make known, just as our previous  
21 speaker said, make known directly what are your  
22 ultimate goals for this district. You have a moral  
23 obligation to let us know what the plans are for the  
24 LRSD, without excuses, without equivocation. We need  
25 to regain the trust of the parents of the Little Rock

1 School District. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Thank you.

3 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

4 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Next on our list is Brant  
5 Collins.

6 MR. COLLINS: Hello. How is everybody today?  
7 I'm an LRSB parent and a few things I'd like to talk  
8 about. I was looking through your website, trying to  
9 learn who I'm talking to here. I was looking up --  
10 I'm a transplant; I'm from a big city called Dover,  
11 Arkansas, which is north of here; moved to the big  
12 city of Little Rock. But when I was in Dover, went  
13 into the military, came back and I ended up going to  
14 ATU and I became a recruiter, academic recruiter for  
15 Arkansas Tech University. So I've traveled the whole  
16 state and went to a lot of high schools, trying to  
17 recruit kids. I looked on your board and I see  
18 there's -- and you can give a shout-out if you want  
19 to -- Daniel High School, Crossett; Fayetteville High  
20 School; Newport High School; South Side, Fort Smith  
21 -- who's South Side?

22 MS. REITH: That's Vicki. She's not here.

23 MR. COLLINS: Oh, Vicki. Okay. Because I --  
24 Melbourne High School; Oak Grove; El Dorado -- and El  
25 Dorado -- El Dorado -- and Gurdon High school. Hey,

1 Mr. Keys [sic]. All public schools in small towns,  
2 correct? How do you -- how would your town feel if I  
3 came into their town and tried to take over their  
4 school board? They wouldn't have that. And we're a  
5 small town too. I've been to some big cities, you  
6 know. Everybody that lives outside of this --  
7 outside of Little Rock says, "How do you live in  
8 Little Rock? It's so big;" you know, they haven't  
9 been to Dallas or anyplace else. It's a small town  
10 and we all know each other.

11 The mission for the Arkansas Department, off  
12 your website, "Arkansas Department of Education  
13 strives to insure all children in the state have  
14 access to a quality education by providing educators,  
15 administrators, staff with leadership, resources and  
16 training." So I think from the report that we saw  
17 earlier from Baker Kurrus shows that LRSD is  
18 providing that quality. The word "leadership" though  
19 -- it's the great thing about iPhones today, right --  
20 words matter, so we -- I like to use the Thesaurus.  
21 You know, leadership can be administration, it can be  
22 authority, but it can also be command, superiority,  
23 and supremacy. And that's kind of what we feel as  
24 parents. You've taken -- you have control over us.  
25 You're giving a supremacy over us. You're not

1 leading us down a path because you're not being up-  
2 front.

3 One of the things that Joyce Elliott said and I  
4 kind of heard a few other people say is faith. I was  
5 lucky enough to serve the United State military,  
6 United States Navy, on a submarine. It goes  
7 underwater on purpose, 150 young men. I was about 18  
8 at the time. You're going to go in and purposely go  
9 under the water. Fear sets in. I was also lucky  
10 enough to get to dive with the Navy Seal team and I  
11 had to go out of the submarine while we were  
12 underwater, the most dangerous thing, they said, that  
13 you could ever do. Why was I -- I had no fear at  
14 that point because I had faith in my training; I had  
15 faith in all of my shipmates; I had faith in the  
16 system. Without that faith, fear sets in -- and I've  
17 lost faith in this board; I've lost faith in the  
18 state government; I've lost faith in the system.  
19 Like most of the parents here, when you lose faith,  
20 fear sets in. Like the Hispanic mother, the fear,  
21 the stress, all of that comes into play.

22 So I implore you to please give us back control.  
23 Because I know I spent five years of my life to  
24 protect your freedom. There's a young man back here  
25 that we're going to ask to give his life. Don't let

1 us do these things for you and take away what we  
2 fought for, is that idea of democracy, freedom of  
3 choice, our voice. That's what I fought for. I did  
4 that for you, each of you. Please do this for me.

5 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

6 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. The next person  
7 that's signed to speak is Nell Matthews. Okay. Ms.  
8 Matthews, you have three minutes.

9 MS. MATTHEWS: I'm Nell Matthews. I am on the  
10 leadership team of the League of Women Voters of  
11 Arkansas. And the League has been involved in K-  
12 through-12 education for many years. Ruth Bell, who  
13 spoke to you earlier, is with the League of Women  
14 Voters of Pulaski County, and I don't know if you  
15 realize but Ruth Bell was a foot soldier in the  
16 Women's Emergency Committee. That's how long we've  
17 been involved in education in Little Rock and in  
18 Pulaski County.

19 The Little Rock School District lacks a  
20 publicized plan. Without a plan, then there is no  
21 way to achieve goals in a businesslike, efficient and  
22 effective way. We have been fortunate in having a  
23 leader, Baker Kurrus, who developed and implemented  
24 his plan, a plan that encompassed meeting with  
25 consultants like those in the district

1 administration, with teachers, with the community.  
2 But -- and he developed cooperation and understanding  
3 and agreement by his collaborative work. But his  
4 plan ends on June 30th. Where do we stand now in  
5 resolving the issues that brought us to this extreme  
6 situation? Commissioner Key, you're in charge. We  
7 want the plan. Give us the plan. It cannot be  
8 secretly held. The need to return the school  
9 district to local control as quickly as possible  
10 should be one prominent goal.

11 I'm also a member of VIPS and we are expending a  
12 tremendous -- "we," all of us, are expending a  
13 tremendous amount of energy in protests and meetings,  
14 energy that could've been applied to work in the  
15 schools. I say give us a plan, get us out of  
16 control, give us back our local school board. Thank  
17 you.

18 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

19 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Next we have Emily Kearns.  
20 Emily Kearns. Not here. Okay. Valerie Bailey. Is  
21 Valerie Bailey here? Okay. Ms. Bailey, you'll have  
22 three minutes.

23 MS. BAILEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Valerie  
24 Bailey. I'm a parent in the Little Rock School  
25 District of a 3rd and 4th grader at Fulbright

1           Elementary. That's the elementary that Baker Kurrus  
2           sent his kids to. And that's the elementary that  
3           when I complained the first week of school that we  
4           didn't have enough security he rode his bicycle  
5           through the parking lot the next morning to speak  
6           with our security guard and find out how she  
7           personally was doing, and then he wrote me back.

8           I'm upset. I'm upset just like Senator Elliott  
9           is, and that's why I'm here. And I want to talk to  
10          you about a situation that you -- the two -- there  
11          are two entities here in front of us. There's  
12          Commissioner Key who has complete and total authority  
13          by statute over the district and there's you, a  
14          board, who's made up of many people who are -- have a  
15          lot of -- many of you six, seven, eight, five years  
16          on this board and really do know what's going on in  
17          Little Rock. Dr. Barth, I will point to you in  
18          particular; you've stated in the past that you're  
19          from Little Rock and you care about what happens in  
20          Little Rock. Many of the members of this board I  
21          think feel the same. Commissioner Key not so much;  
22          you're not from Little Rock; you don't care about  
23          Little Rock. And I can -- I know that for two  
24          reasons that are facts. Number one, Baker Kurrus  
25          injected tremendous leadership, stability and heart

1           into this district, and then you fired him. Number  
2           two, a principal who I won't name -- she hasn't given  
3           me permission -- directed Baseline Elementary for the  
4           three years that they were under academic distress  
5           and was immediately sent home. I want to know why.  
6           I want to know why people who have been given jobs to  
7           do and have done them, why those people have been  
8           dismissed. A sinister plan emerges, sir, and it's  
9           not workable at all when you have 100% authority over  
10          the district, yet the parents in the district  
11          community have no recourse to this board who does  
12          know what's going on. And -- my time?

13                   CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Not yet.

14                   MS. BAILEY: Okay. How will you fix that? I'm  
15                   asking you, Commissioner Key, and I'm asking you,  
16                   Board, Madam Chair. The two entities here, the Board  
17                   and Commissioner Key, are able to hide behind each  
18                   other. One of you is able to go to our district of  
19                   3,000 slots; the other was able to fire our super.  
20                   And we can't go to either of you to ask for recourse.  
21                   That is unworkable; it's got to stop. And I would --

22                                   [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

23                   MS. BAILEY: Thank you. I would suggest that we  
24                   get back to the point, which is the two ways that  
25                   you, Commissioner Key, suggested earlier, that we get

1 the district off distress list. One was that  
2 everything be corrected, I think, and, second, that  
3 the -- all the schools get off the list. So what I  
4 think I understood was all of the problems should be  
5 corrected and then there's the second mysterious  
6 factor which says all of the schools should be off  
7 the list. So I actually demand an answer about what  
8 that means such that we don't come up again in the  
9 fall of '16, sir, and you say, "Well, all of the  
10 problems were addressed but there are still schools  
11 on the list."

12 We've been punked. I mean, I don't have my  
13 lawyer hat on, and I am a lawyer. I'm a parent and  
14 we're tired of being punked. And all of these -- I  
15 mean, we demand answers and we demand that you fix  
16 this. And, sir, Commissioner Key -- I'll end on this  
17 -- one thing that I personally would tell you -- and  
18 I admire you and I think you've done a good job for  
19 the state of Arkansas. But you're out of your  
20 element here; you're out of your depth. What you can  
21 do is -- excuse me, I'm sorry -- get in touch with  
22 Michael Poore, sir, and ask him to cancel his plans.  
23 We don't want him here. We want Baker Kurrus here  
24 and we want to move forward, and that would help a  
25 lot and I encourage you and ask you to do that. And

1 with that I'll end.

2 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Thank you.

3 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

4 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Jon Tribel or Tribell. You  
5 have three minutes, sir.

6 MR. TRIBELL: You all have no idea how happy I  
7 was that Bill Clinton won the presidency, the reason  
8 being that I'm from Arkansas. When I was 17 years  
9 old I was an exchange student in Germany, and as far  
10 away as many thousands of miles away as Germany is  
11 when people would say, "Hey, where are you from," I'd  
12 say, "I'm from Little Rock, Arkansas." Guess what  
13 they would tell me? They'd say, "Oh, you're from  
14 Arkansas, Little Rock, Central High crisis back in  
15 1957." Yeah, I'd hang my head low and say, "Yes,  
16 that's where I'm from." You have no idea how  
17 embarrassing that is to have to answer time and time  
18 again that you come from the place in the United  
19 States, in the world that is labeled for segregation,  
20 and to have it happen over and over again. When Bill  
21 Clinton won the presidency in 1992, I was in college  
22 in Paris, France. I was very thrilled. This has  
23 nothing to do with politics because from that day  
24 forward people would say, "You're from Little Rock?  
25 That's wonderful. You come from the same city as the

1 president of the United States." It took that for  
2 people to start to forget Central High in 1957. It  
3 is embarrassing to the state to have to live that  
4 down when you represent the state outside of Arkansas  
5 and the United States or, even worse, abroad where,  
6 believe it or not, people are very up-to-date with  
7 United States history.

8 When I moved back here five years ago from  
9 living in Europe, my daughter who was born over there  
10 was put into public schools. I myself went to  
11 private schools and I wanted my daughter to have the  
12 cultural depth and the cultural diversity that you  
13 can only get in public schools in this area of the  
14 country. You don't get that depth and the richness  
15 of life by going to private schools like I did. I  
16 wanted to remedy that with my daughter. Now I'm  
17 wondering if that's the right thing because we're  
18 losing -- through your decisions we're losing the  
19 cultural depth that we have had since 1957. And I  
20 wonder when my daughter goes to Europe to visit her  
21 grandmother this summer is she going to have to  
22 answer questions, "Oh, you're from Little Rock? My  
23 god, you know, almost 60 years after Central High you  
24 guys are going back to where you started. Really  
25 nice to know you're from Little Rock, Arkansas." I

1 don't want my daughter to have to undergo that  
2 embarrassment. So I ask each and every one of you --  
3 each member of the Board and you, Commissioner Key --  
4 when you go home at night I want each and every one  
5 of you to think do you want to be the names behind  
6 taking Arkansas back to pre-1957 or do you want to be  
7 the names to say, "This is 2016, next year is 2017,  
8 look at how far we've gotten in the 60 years since  
9 Central High." Well, right now we're on our way back  
10 to 1956, not to 2017. I want each and every one of  
11 you to think about that every night in light of the  
12 decisions you're making and what kind of consequence  
13 it has on the people of Arkansas, the people of  
14 Little Rock, and what you're going to be known for  
15 around the world. You can't hide behind these  
16 decisions because the whole world will know about it.  
17 Thank you.

18 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

19 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: The final individual that  
20 we have signed for public comment is Charles Zook.  
21 So we'll hear Mr. Zook and that will be the end of  
22 the public comment.

23 MR. ZOOK: All right. Hi. My name is Charles  
24 Zook and I am a K-through-12 product of the Little  
25 Rock School District. I'm also a former full-time

1 school teacher. For the past 10 years I've taught in  
2 Little Rock School District, primarily seven years as  
3 a sub, three years as a full-time Spanish teacher. I  
4 am here to talk frankly about the giant elephant in  
5 the room; I'm here to talk about Wal-Mart. Wal-Mart  
6 brought the new building -- bought the new building  
7 for the Little Rock Preparatory Academy, a very low  
8 achieving charter school, before they even knew if  
9 they would be approved for expansion. It would seem  
10 that Wal-Mart knew something that the public did not.  
11 What Wal-Mart wants, Wal-Mart gets. If this charter  
12 expansion continues, then it won't be too long before  
13 most of the good LRSD teachers will begin leaving in  
14 droves. That's what smart people who don't enjoy  
15 being treated poorly tend to do. But that, of  
16 course, is by design. Wal-Mart wants the teachers  
17 gone, the unions broken, and a proliferation of  
18 charter schools. This is likely the reason our  
19 Governor and others have set aside millions for TFA;  
20 they will pick up the slack. The same data that  
21 Superintendent Kurrus wanted a deep analysis of tells  
22 us that this juggernaut of school choice will  
23 decimate the LRSD. This choice that we are to be  
24 provided with will at first be delightful to many,  
25 like the low prices at Wal-Mart stores. Wal-Mart

1 will surely see to that, but over time most will come  
2 to rue the day that we allowed our democratically  
3 elected school board to be hostilely overtaken by  
4 people with a school choice agenda plus one  
5 unsuspecting board chair. It doesn't take a genius  
6 to read the writing on the wall. Yes, many will be  
7 happy at first about having choice. We will be like  
8 the small town that is excited when it gets a brand-  
9 new Wal-Mart, only to later end up a shell of its  
10 former self, pining away for the days before the town  
11 got sucked dry by low prices. This is bound to  
12 happen because, like Wal-Mart, charter schools are  
13 based on a corporate model and the profits will  
14 always end up being more important than the people --  
15 always. All we have to do is let them close the door  
16 and get down to business, destroying the teachers'  
17 union. That's what Wal-Mart wants and we will be the  
18 ones who suffer. I for one refuse to accept this  
19 quietly. I will continue to support the district I  
20 love and I will gladly eat my words if someone can  
21 prove me wrong.

22 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

23 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Thank you. That ends our  
24 public comment time and we -- I just -- I don't have  
25 to say this but I will. There have been several

1           comments that suggest very clearly that the Board  
2           does not listen and that we don't hear and  
3           internalize the comments that have been made. I will  
4           be very liberal and assume that I can speak for the  
5           Board and say that we do; otherwise, we don't have to  
6           do this actually. So our minds are not made up and  
7           certainly we hear your comments and understand your  
8           concerns. This is not an easy job but we take it in  
9           sincerity and we take it in seriousness. And I could  
10          be at home or somewhere doing something else rather  
11          than being ridiculed and accused and -- but that  
12          comes with the territory. But clearly --

13                    UNKNOWN MALE: You took the job.

14                    CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: I took the job and I'm here  
15          until June 30th.

16                    UNKNOWN MALE: You took the job.

17                    CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: I took the job here till  
18          June 30th and I'm doing my job. So in that, we won't  
19          all agree. We won't ever all agree because there are  
20          always two sides to the story. But, again, I speak  
21          on behalf of my fellow board members to say that  
22          we're not in a position of role-playing. As the  
23          children said, we're not acting; we're doing our job  
24          and we're doing it from the persuasion of our  
25          conclusions with the information that we have.

1           So with that said, we'll move on to A-4 and that  
2           is Consideration of Appeal from Denial of School  
3           Choice Application - Warren. We're moving on, unless  
4           Ms. Clay has something.

5           MS. CLAY: Madam Chair, two individuals are here  
6           that would like to give public comment. Ms. Annie  
7           Bryant was on the sheet that you and I both have.

8           CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Ms. Bryant is for A-7  
9           though.

10          MS. CLAY: She signed up in two places and would  
11          like to give comment on Little Rock as well.

12          CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay.

13          MS. CLAY: And then also Ms. Anika Whitfield  
14          signed up and didn't -- signed up on a sheet after  
15          you and I had our sheets.

16          CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay.

17          MS. CLAY: So those two individuals are here.

18          CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Ms. Reith, before  
19          then are you --

20          MS. REITH: I'd let them speak first and then --

21          CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Ms. Bryant on Little Rock,  
22          please, and we'll save Little Rock for -- I mean,  
23          sorry -- Pine Bluff for when Pine Bluff is on the  
24          agenda. And Pine Bluff has been pulled. The agenda  
25          item with Pine Bluff has been pulled.

1 MS. BRYANT: Yes. I'm sorry. I put A-7 on  
2 there but I meant to put A-3. I'm sorry.

3 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Excuse me?

4 MS. BRYANT: I said if I put A-7 on there I  
5 meant to put A-3.

6 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: It was A-7.

7 MS. BRYANT: Okay. Good afternoon and thank you  
8 for allowing me to speak. I'm here in support of the  
9 Little Rock School District and just excellence in  
10 education overall. I have three children in the  
11 Little Rock School District, two at Brady Elementary  
12 and I also have one in pre-K at Martin Luther King,  
13 Junior Elementary School as well. Basically, what  
14 I'd like to say is that my self and other parents are  
15 depending on you to insure that our kids receive the  
16 highest quality education possible and we do welcome  
17 choice and we need choice. Okay? And -- but we also  
18 need to be sure that you're insuring that we get that  
19 transparency and that honesty, that we get the whole  
20 story about what's going on and what these things  
21 entail. Also, when I look at charter schools,  
22 specifically from the Little Rock School District  
23 standpoint, what I'm finding out or what I'm hearing  
24 is basically that it's not necessarily inclusive.  
25 They are not soliciting students from all areas,

1 specifically that they're not looking at people from  
2 communities like my community, people like me. Okay?  
3 And so that concerns me. Now in the Pine Bluff  
4 community the issue that I have with charter schools  
5 is basically we have charter schools there and you  
6 can go to your website; they have F's and they've  
7 never met the standard or served the needs of the  
8 students that they're serving. So I don't understand  
9 the concept of bringing in others when we have those  
10 here that's not meeting the needs. And so those  
11 options, because of that, you know, I don't see those  
12 as valid options for us. And so I'm just asking as a  
13 parent and as a taxpayer and as someone who wants the  
14 resources used in the best manner for excellence in  
15 education to just make sure that we're focusing our  
16 resources in the best way possible to get the best  
17 results for the kids. Because we're taking away  
18 dreams and opportunities and many of the kids from my  
19 community, they've had those opportunities taken from  
20 them for a very, very long time. And it's just been  
21 too long, you know. And so I want to thank you for  
22 the choice and everything because we do appreciate  
23 it, you know, and it's been enlightening and very  
24 helpful. But we really need to have some good  
25 choices. Okay? Some honest choices. And also I'd

1 like to say that my self and other parents are  
2 standing with Little Rock School District for public  
3 education. And in Dollarway we'd like to say that as  
4 far as charter schools, No Way in Dollarway. Thank  
5 you.

6 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

7 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Ms. Whitfield will  
8 be our final speaker on agenda item A-3. Ms.  
9 Whitfield, you have three minutes.

10 MS. WHITFIELD: I've asked Kyndall to stand  
11 beside me because I want the focus to not be on my  
12 self but I want it to be on the students and the  
13 students of the Little Rock School District. When I  
14 started my journey in the Little Rock School District  
15 I was in kindergarten and I had an absolutely amazing  
16 teacher, Ms. Darling. And Ms. Darling saw the best  
17 in me and she allowed me to be a peer teacher in my  
18 classroom and she saw leadership. And she saw all of  
19 the students that were in our classroom, black,  
20 white, Latino. Everybody was treated the same. And  
21 she gave us love, she gave us hugs, she gave us a  
22 strong foundation. That's what I want for every  
23 child in the Little Rock School District.

24 As a member of the Civic Advisory Committee, at  
25 our very first meeting Mr. Key came -- Commissioner

1 Key came and one of the first things that I stated  
2 was I wanted our local control back, our local  
3 governance back. We can handle the Little Rock  
4 School District but we need to do better. And we  
5 recognize that the responsibility is not solely on  
6 the board; it also is on the people of Little Rock.  
7 We need to come together, and we recognize that and  
8 we've been starting to do that work and I hope that  
9 we will continue to do that work together.

10 But, Commissioner Key, I would specifically like  
11 to address you and ask you to remember that  
12 conversation that we had when I met you back at the  
13 Civic Advisory Committee. And I asked you what was  
14 it that the Board and what was it that you were going  
15 to do for our school district to make it better. And  
16 you said that we were charting new grounds, that this  
17 Civic Advisory Committee was a new committee and that  
18 we had pretty much full reign to decide what we were  
19 doing, and we took that responsibility and we took it  
20 very seriously. And Gene mentioned a little bit  
21 earlier we had community forums and we heard from the  
22 people and we heard from the parents. And, Ms. Zook,  
23 you mentioned when the charter expansion happened  
24 that you heard from the parents that supported  
25 charter schools, but I really want you to hear from

1 the parents who support the Little Rock School  
2 District.

3 And that being said, I would ask you,  
4 Commissioner Key, to step down from your position and  
5 allow the Governor to place someone in your position  
6 who will hear all of the people who really care about  
7 all of the students, that will look at a Kyndall and  
8 see her promise and her excellence in education, and  
9 look at her younger brother and all of the kids that  
10 are at Central High School, Hall High School, J.A.  
11 Fair, McClellan, Henderson -- all of the schools in  
12 the Little Rock School District. All of those  
13 children matter, all of those students matter, but we  
14 need leaders that care about them. We need leaders  
15 that show that they support them. We need leadership  
16 that will not go behind their back and take away the  
17 very resources that they need, and you have not done  
18 that, sir. You have not been honest to us, you have  
19 not been fair with us, and we would like for you to  
20 resign.

21 I'd also ask that the Board would consider the  
22 Little Rock School District and immediately restore  
23 local control to us because we can do it better than  
24 you have. Thank you.

25 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

1 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Ms. Reith.

2 MS. REITH: Thank you. And I want to thank the  
3 Madam Chair and all of y'all for giving me a moment.  
4 I think after hearing all these comments and things  
5 that were said it's important to have a conversation  
6 for many of the reasons that were cited, around  
7 transparency and accountability. And whether people  
8 in the audience know this or not, we're not allowed  
9 to speak to each other outside of these meetings here  
10 and so I think sometimes it's important to have a  
11 little bit of conversation -- am I out of order, Ms.  
12 Zook, or --

13 MS. ZOOK: No. I had a question with regard to  
14 something you were saying.

15 MS. REITH: Oh, okay. So what I did want to get  
16 to was what I did hear today because I do think that  
17 there's some things that can be done. I know from  
18 our past conversations that we may not all agree on  
19 everything that's been said thus far, but I do think  
20 that there's some things that were said, some  
21 actionable items that I would like to see if we can  
22 walk away with a commitment to. I don't have the  
23 gift of articulation that Dr. Barth has, so I don't  
24 have a prepared resolution or anything but more, some  
25 things that I'm taking away from this conversation

1           that I'd like to pose to you all and see if we can in  
2           turn pose this to communities so folks that are  
3           leaving here with the passion that we've asked them  
4           to have for our school district and for our schools  
5           don't walk away discouraged and don't walk away  
6           disengaged or disillusioned, because that's counter  
7           to I think what any of us want here.

8                     One piece for me is definitely around the  
9           accessibility, the transparency piece and then this  
10          commitment to legitimate power for the committees  
11          that we have created. I do think that there is  
12          something that we can do and part of it may be that  
13          special meeting that we have with this Citizen  
14          Advisory Board. If we can walk away with a  
15          commitment that we'll have that meeting, that we will  
16          -- as has even now been asked to us of the  
17          legislature, or representatives I think is what you  
18          said, to be part of that process that maybe at that  
19          time, one, it's open to the public so that they can  
20          see and observe and be part of that. But I think  
21          that would also give us an opportunity there to maybe  
22          flesh out a little further what's been asked of us  
23          here, right, in terms of putting the devil in the  
24          detail around the legitimate power for the Citizen  
25          Advisory Board. I think you're exactly right, Ms.

1           Zook; there is precedence and there is statute, but I  
2           think we've also heard that that hasn't always gone  
3           far enough. Right? And if we're going to talk about  
4           the Citizen Advisory Board, maybe we have an  
5           opportunity there while we're talking about who  
6           constitutes the board to also talk about what can we  
7           learn from the mistakes of the past to make this  
8           really feel like it has some legitimacy and some  
9           power. And with that, along with that, then having  
10          that conversation along the lines of what's being  
11          asked of us here in terms of strategy, of how does  
12          that relate to this new south-of-the-river committee  
13          that's there; maybe have an opportunity there to  
14          actually flesh out the branding and some delineation,  
15          what this looks like, but have that conversation in a  
16          special meeting, public format, where folks can  
17          observe -- or at least happen and we can offer a  
18          little bit more tangibility there. I don't have  
19          those answers right now. I know that this is  
20          something that we're doing as we go, and I know  
21          that's been said a lot of times. But I think it  
22          could be one of those additional steps that could  
23          help at least to demonstrate that we're not just here  
24          listening but we're actually willing to react and do  
25          something about what we've heard here.

1           Now with that, and this I feel like less certain  
2           around in terms of what the solution is, but we've  
3           heard so much today around local control and even  
4           you, Commissioner Key, teed us off with what that  
5           looks like at least in regards to statute and such.  
6           And I don't know what that -- and I put this honestly  
7           to my colleagues here; I don't know what that looks  
8           like in terms of a timeline. We can't have arbitrary  
9           timelines when we don't know the results of exams. I  
10          understand that now, having sat on this board for six  
11          years. But at the same time we've been hearing this  
12          over and over again, as Dr. Barth has said. We even  
13          discussed this shortly after we made the decision of  
14          taking control, and it seems like we need to do  
15          something more than just leave it hanging out there  
16          and I'd like to know what that could look like. I'd  
17          actually welcome the ideas of the Commissioner, if he  
18          has some thoughts on what that looks like beyond the  
19          timeline of fall of 2016. You know, is it the kind  
20          of thing where we could say it is with the guidance  
21          of the Citizen Advisory Board or -- I don't know --  
22          some sort of timeframe. I'll admit, I'm at a little  
23          of a loss of what this looks like and I've given it  
24          some thought; maybe some of you have as well. But I  
25          feel like we need to be responsive to this question

1 on local control.

2 And then the final piece that I've heard, and  
3 then some of it was said today and some of it was in  
4 conversations I've had around this, but the idea of  
5 having this moratorium on new charters or school  
6 closures until we can get some of these plans in  
7 place. And I realize that's a lot harder to do in  
8 regards to statute. Right? There's not a precedent  
9 for that. Some of it may be a timing thing because  
10 applications will be considered in the fall and it  
11 seems that we're talking about a timeline for these  
12 committees of having information in the fall. Maybe  
13 it's a commitment to the committees being able to  
14 present their positions and findings or trying to  
15 accelerate the pace in which they do this or an  
16 acknowledgement of how when we set up these  
17 committees that it's done in a way so that their  
18 research and strategy and analysis that they're  
19 tasked to do can feed into the decisions that are  
20 made in late fall and early winter around charter  
21 schools and such.

22 Again, I don't have formally formulated ideas.  
23 I thought in the thinking that I've done this last  
24 month and hearing today I would formally have  
25 something. I apologize to my colleagues that I

1 don't. It's more a feeling of concerns of being able  
2 and wanting to rearticulate with my colleagues, at  
3 the same time acknowledging what we can and can't do,  
4 after six years of having been on this Board, but  
5 feeling that we still can do more in terms of the  
6 process and some sort of assurances. It doesn't  
7 necessarily have to be at a level of a resolution but  
8 at least something that we walk away with today so  
9 that the community knows that this isn't -- they're  
10 not speaking to a vacuum.

11 [AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

12 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Dr. Barth.

13 DR. BARTH: I've been thinking about this, this  
14 same issue. And first off I want to thank everybody  
15 who came out today and I know all of us probably got  
16 our -- at some moment got our toes stepped on, but we  
17 very much appreciate y'all giving your time to show  
18 your care for this district and this community. On  
19 this issue, I talked to Dr. Airola a little bit at  
20 break about kind of what the timeline is going to  
21 look like in terms of scores and the concordance  
22 process and all that. And I would -- I think it is  
23 important for us to resolve to consider a new path  
24 after -- in the month following the time where we do  
25 have the final results from this year's ACT Aspire,

1 which would include, of course, the concordance  
2 process. And that doesn't lock us into saying we're  
3 going to do X or Y, but I do think that we have some  
4 responsibility to have a full conversation about what  
5 the new path is, if there is, or at least reaffirm  
6 that indeed we think it's important for the state to  
7 maintain control at that point. So that would be my  
8 notion is that we resolve to have that as an action  
9 item on the agenda the month following the completion  
10 of the test process for this year, which includes of  
11 course cut scores and all the rest. So that's --  
12 that would be my wish.

13 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any other comments?

14 DR. BARTH: And I will look to the Commissioner  
15 for his thoughts on that.

16 COMMISSIONER KEY: That's entirely doable. And,  
17 you know, as I mentioned in my presentation, that  
18 timeline is uncertain. We generally think it will be  
19 in the fall, so once that -- those determinations  
20 have been made then we'll certainly put that on the  
21 agenda for you all to contemplate and discuss -- and,  
22 as you all know, as we mentioned, the two new members  
23 that will be joining you in July.

24 If I may, Madam Chair, just -- I want to take an  
25 opportunity to recap because there have been a lot of

1 concerns voiced, very passionate voices, and I  
2 appreciate all of those. The question that keeps  
3 coming up is a question that has been asked  
4 repeatedly and has been answered by us in this  
5 setting and other settings: what are the -- you know  
6 -- what are the benchmarks. It's 49.5% average of  
7 the students at proficient or higher in math and  
8 literacy. I mean, that is the benchmark. That is  
9 the rule that was established according to the  
10 procedure, according to the statute, and that is what  
11 we at ADE are bound to follow. So that's why we go  
12 through all the calculations; that's why we present  
13 that to you. And as far as what goes into that, as  
14 far as what are the plans for getting to that point,  
15 it's ACSIP; it's the Arkansas Comprehensive School  
16 Improvement Process. It is the school improvement  
17 specialists that work through the School Improvement  
18 Unit, through Dr. Wilde, through the team that they  
19 have assigned school improvement specialists to each  
20 of the schools not just in academic distress but the  
21 priority schools. Tomorrow you're going to have a  
22 report. That report, which I don't know if you'll  
23 have time to discuss it -- but all the priority  
24 schools, including the five remaining academic  
25 distress schools, are there and this report is

1 principal feedback, leadership of those schools. And  
2 whereas you will see they have made great progress,  
3 they still have many challenges, challenges that ADE  
4 can't overcome. Because it is one of the things that  
5 principals have to respond to and provide us feedback  
6 on challenges and I just point to -- all of these  
7 schools point to absenteeism continues to be a  
8 problem. This is student absenteeism, this is  
9 teacher absenteeism. Look at the data. We want to  
10 talk about data; look at the data. Now this isn't  
11 going to get claps and applause out there, I  
12 understand that, but if we're going to have straight  
13 talk, well, let's have straight talk.

14 UNKNOWN MALE IN THE AUDIENCE: Give us the data;  
15 I'll look at it.

16 COMMISSIONER KEY: It is available every  
17 quarter. Every month we have these reports. The  
18 ACSIP is available at the schools; it's not available  
19 here. To think that ADE is going to have all this  
20 data, it's at the level where it needs to be and that  
21 is at the school level. It is with the principals,  
22 with the school leadership, with the teachers and the  
23 teams that are supposed to be taking this data,  
24 working with each other to put steps in place. Now  
25 the data is going to show pre- and post-test. Mr.

1 Kurrus has been here many, many times talking about  
2 pre- and post-test data and we are making progress,  
3 but there are still challenges. We have a school  
4 personnel development grant that in October -- and  
5 this was reported to you all, it's been reported a  
6 number of times -- that not only when you look at one  
7 of these reports for Hall -- and you're going to see  
8 where the principal identifies one of his problems,  
9 one of the challenges of the team there is that  
10 students come in three years or greater behind,  
11 still. Okay? This is the third-quarter report that  
12 you're going to be looking at. So what does that  
13 point to? That points to pipeline problems. And  
14 this three-year grant, half-a-million dollars that we  
15 specifically targeted, much of these dollars which  
16 accounts for professional development, for RTI  
17 (Response to Intervention) so that it builds the  
18 capacity. It is specifically a capacity building  
19 grant where our team works with the Little Rock team  
20 -- in the first year, Franklin, King, Romine,  
21 Stevens, Washington and Watson Elementary. Each  
22 school year the grant will support LRSD RTI scaling  
23 up by providing training and coaching to at least six  
24 more schools every year. This is work that we do  
25 through our special ed. unit and through Ms. Smith's

1 unit, with Learning Services. These are things that  
2 we've reported, we've talked about before. With  
3 regards to Baseline, the one school that has exited  
4 academic distress, a SIG grant, federal dollars to  
5 devote to building the capacity of that student  
6 population and the teachers that work in that student  
7 population. ACSIP -- what is ACSIP? It's through  
8 INDISTAR, through Dr. Wilde. And Mr. Harvey is here  
9 and we have some folks that can talk more about this,  
10 but they've presented this before. We have research  
11 based recommendations that we as the Department  
12 provide assistance to the teams out there to try to  
13 build the capacity to make the improvements that are  
14 needed, that build up to meeting that 49.5 --  
15 exceeding that 49.5%. So these things are in place.  
16 If things need to change -- many of these things have  
17 to change statutorily because we have the  
18 responsibility -- I've given you the statutory  
19 responsibility of ADE as it relates not just to  
20 Little Rock. This isn't just something we do in  
21 Little Rock. We have had multiple districts that, as  
22 you mentioned -- as someone mentioned earlier, fiscal  
23 distress, that's clear. A good leader can turn  
24 around a fiscal distress school in a very quick  
25 period of time. Academic is so different. Academic

1           distress points to pipeline issues because kids are  
2           going to be behind as they go through, three years  
3           behind coming into Hall. So our team at ADE is  
4           working hard, working diligently. The support of the  
5           Office of Intensive Support -- state superintendent  
6           Mr. Tolbert, his role is he attends these Community  
7           Advisory Board meetings, wherever they are. That's  
8           one of his tasks, to provide support and  
9           communication to and from the Department.

10                    So I would just make sure that the Board  
11           realizes that in the face of many of these passionate  
12           comments that there's a lot of work being done, a lot  
13           of work being done by this team, a lot of work being  
14           done by the LRSD team. And if we keep working in  
15           this vein we are confident that through the processes  
16           that are in place we will accomplish what needs to be  
17           accomplished for all of the children that are in the  
18           district. And these things -- we've talked about  
19           these things before. We've discussed them in this  
20           group before, but I think it bears repeating today  
21           because this information is not hidden; it's open,  
22           it's out there. And we will continue through the  
23           Community Advisory Board as that process and that  
24           committee gets put in place. These are the things  
25           that we'll continue to work on until such time as

1 academic distress has been corrected and those  
2 schools are left or this board takes other legal  
3 action according to the academic distress statutes.

4 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Ms. Zook.

5 MS. ZOOK: Yes. To answer the question that was  
6 asked earlier, I think, from the audience, on the  
7 meeting agenda that's for May the 13th, item number  
8 -- report nine, it lists all of the different schools  
9 that are in academic distress and the principal's  
10 most recent 45-day report. That is open for everyone  
11 to look at. There have been a lot of things said  
12 today for -- as fact and, of course, we don't want to  
13 get into a back-and-forth, but the data is there, as  
14 Mr. Key said, was reported by the principals and the  
15 superintendents. So you can look at the data of  
16 teacher absenteeism, student absenteeism, student  
17 reports, and student achievement. And you can see,  
18 in my opinion, there's a direct relationship in a lot  
19 of those schools with the teachers. As much as 60%  
20 were absent more than five days in a 45-day period.  
21 And then you look at the children and the scores they  
22 had in pre-test and sometimes you had as many as 90%  
23 scoring D's and F's. This is not hidden information;  
24 this information is posted always, at least eight  
25 days before our meetings. This is part of the data

1 that we study. I too have a vested interest in how  
2 -- since 1968, when I started teaching in Little Rock  
3 School District. These issues did not happen  
4 overnight. They've been going on since the '82  
5 lawsuit was filed, so that's three decades there. So  
6 I understand the passion and the need. And I also  
7 understand we get lots of emails and text messages  
8 from people who feel differently than those who spoke  
9 today. But we do listen to everyone and we want you  
10 involved. We want you to understand we're not making  
11 arbitrary decisions; we're making decisions based on  
12 visiting with people in the community, talking with  
13 principals and teachers, studying the data that's  
14 provided by those schools. This isn't data that  
15 someone from the outside did. But to answer the  
16 question, on report nine on tomorrow's agenda is the  
17 information referenced by Commissioner Key.

18 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Dr. Barth.

19 DR. BARTH: Just actually a procedural question.  
20 Before we moved into public comment, did we approve  
21 the creation -- do we vote on the creation of the  
22 CAB?

23 COMMISSIONER KEY: I asked Ms. Clay. But, Ms.  
24 Clay, would you come and talk about that?

25 MS. CLAY: I don't believe that the law requires

1           you to actually approve. I think that your  
2           determination of the fact that progress has been made  
3           towards removing the academic distress designations  
4           was done at the last meeting. If you want to take an  
5           affirmative step and be absolutely sure and have it  
6           on the record that you are directing the Commissioner  
7           to begin that process, that is certainly okay.

8           DR. BARTH: I do think it -- because I'm looking  
9           at the statute. It's not clear. We know this  
10          section has its challenges.

11          MS. CLAY: Yes.

12          DR. BARTH: But that one is -- and I think it  
13          would be best if we could affirm the creation -- the  
14          process for creating a Community Advisory Board with  
15          the powers laid out in the statute and then also the  
16          kind of additional role that that group would play as  
17          a vehicle for the patrons and parents in the district  
18          as we talked about earlier in the day. And I would  
19          also add to that, if it's appropriate, a resolution  
20          to consider -- reconsider the path forward for LRSD  
21          after the final results for the ACT Aspire are  
22          received for this year. That would be my motion.

23          MS. REITH: And --

24          MS. ZOOK: There was a lot there. Could you  
25          state it again?

1 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Yeah, absolutely,  
2 especially that last part.

3 DR. BARTH: It's a two-part. I mean, I guess  
4 one part is very simple which is creating the  
5 Community Advisory Board with the powers that are  
6 laid out in the statute, as well, as we talked about  
7 earlier, the fairly expansive reading of certain  
8 sections of that to give that group a real voice.  
9 And then the second part was a resolution to consider  
10 the path forward for LRSD in terms of governance  
11 after the final results of the ACT Aspire test are  
12 received this year. And by "final results" I mean  
13 not just the scores but also the concordance process  
14 so that we can understand what those scores really  
15 mean in the broader context.

16 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Would you consider making  
17 those two different?

18 DR. BARTH: I'm totally fine --

19 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Because they seem to be not  
20 consistent with each other.

21 DR. BARTH: I'm totally fine. Yeah, I'm totally  
22 fine to do that as two separate motions.

23 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. So we'll take the  
24 first motion from you considering the advisory board.  
25 Is that correct?

1 DR. BARTH: Uh-huh.

2 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. So we have a motion  
3 from Dr. Barth. Is there a second?

4 MS. CHAMBERS: Second.

5 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Second by Ms. Chambers.  
6 Any discussion?

7 MS. REITH: If I could just for point of  
8 clarity, are you also envisioning a meeting around  
9 the selection of the advisory board members? Is that  
10 something that would be --

11 DR. BARTH: Yeah. I think we had agreed, had  
12 consensus about that earlier. So I would also --

13 MS. REITH: So if you would take that amendment  
14 to your --

15 DR. BARTH: Yes.

16 MS. REITH: Okay.

17 DR. BARTH: Be glad to.

18 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: As amended, motion as  
19 amended. Ms. Coffman, did you get that?

20 MS. COFFMAN: I'm working on it.

21 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Any further  
22 discussion? All in -- Miss -- oh, I'm sorry. All in  
23 favor?

24 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

25 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any opposed? Okay. Dr.

1           Barth, do you have an additional?

2           DR. BARTH: Yeah. My second motion would be  
3           that we -- a resolution that we -- that this board  
4           will consider the path forward for LRSD in terms of  
5           its governance and other issues after the final  
6           results of the ACT/ACT Aspire are made available  
7           later in this year.

8           MS. ZOOK: Is that not understood?

9           DR. BARTH: I want to be clear. We are going to  
10          have a composition change.

11          CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Well, let's get a second  
12          and then we'll --

13          DR. BARTH: Okay.

14          CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Let's get a second to that.

15          MS. REITH: I'll second.

16          CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Now, discussion.

17          MS. ZOOK: I guess based on the presentation  
18          that was done earlier I just thought that was the  
19          path that was laid forward. Just like we do on  
20          fiscal distress, you look at the numbers, you go and  
21          it's easy. With this, based on the presentation he  
22          made, that that was what we were going to do. So you  
23          believe that we need a motion to that effect?

24          DR. BARTH: I would like us to commit as a board  
25          to do that. I think we're going to have composition

1 change in the board between now and then. I think  
2 this board that has spent a lot of time with these  
3 issues over the last number of months has some  
4 clarity about what is needed to begin to move things  
5 forward. It is not required that the Board do that.  
6 Certainly, we had some consensus in the conversation.  
7 I would just like us to commit in a more formal way.

8 MS. REITH: And if I could -- to add to that  
9 vein of, I think, trying to get to your intent, I  
10 think for myself as well if it was something along  
11 the lines of commitment to a special meeting or work  
12 session or hearing, more than -- "consider" I think  
13 could be considered broadly, right? That word. And  
14 so if we could elaborate on what "to consider" meant,  
15 for me, in my head, that would mean some sort of  
16 special meeting or commitment to a work session or  
17 something that could be open to the public but where  
18 we're actually committing to take a certain action of  
19 conversation.

20 MS. ZOOK: Okay. And I know you know this, but  
21 to be sure the public knows this we can't meet ever,  
22 even just two of us, without it being in public. So  
23 --

24 MS. REITH: Correct. Yes. Thank you. Yes.

25 MS. ZOOK: Yeah. I knew you knew it.

1 MS. REITH: It's redundant, but yes. Yeah. No,  
2 just to emphasize.

3 MS. ZOOK: Yeah. Sometimes --

4 MS. REITH: Thank you.

5 MS. ZOOK: -- the things we say and the way  
6 they're understood are not always the same. But,  
7 yes, I knew you knew.

8 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any additional comments?  
9 Okay. We're ready for a vote. All those in favor of  
10 Dr. Barth's motion?

11 MS. REITH: Again, I'm sorry, if he could amend  
12 the language to say something more than "consider."  
13 If you'd be willing to elaborate on the word  
14 "consider," I would feel more comfortable with your  
15 --

16 DR. BARTH: I need a Thesaurus.

17 MS. REITH: Or to have a meeting or a session or  
18 whatever.

19 DR. BARTH: To study and -- I don't know what  
20 the --

21 MS. REITH: Can we commit to have a work session  
22 or a special meeting?

23 DR. BARTH: I guess I -- yeah, I mean, of course  
24 we would have a work -- we have to take --

25 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: I'm not sure this is the

1 way it's done, but go ahead.

2 DR. BARTH: It has to take place in a formal  
3 meeting.

4 MS. REITH: Yeah.

5 DR. BARTH: I don't know if that -- I think  
6 we'll have to -- you know -- whether that's a special  
7 meeting or whether that's a regular meeting I think  
8 in some ways may depend upon timing. And so I --

9 MS. REITH: Maybe commit to a formal meeting, as  
10 you said?

11 DR. BARTH: Yeah. I mean, that's an action item  
12 --

13 MS. REITH: Yeah.

14 DR. BARTH: -- where we consider what that data  
15 means and how it links into the statute on governance  
16 of the district. I don't know if that helps.

17 MS. REITH: It does for me.

18 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: What does it do for you,  
19 Ms. Coffman? Did you get that?

20 MS. COFFMAN: I'm going with action item.

21 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. All in favor?

22 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

23 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any opposed? Motion  
24 carries.

25 A-4: CONSIDERATION OF APPEAL FROM DENIAL OF SCHOOL CHOICE

1 APPLICATION - WARREN

2 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Moving on to A-4,  
3 Consideration of Appeal from Denial of School Choice  
4 Application - Warren. Ms. Davis, Jennifer Davis.

5 MS. SALAS-FORD: Good afternoon, Madam Chair.  
6 Courtney Salas-Ford, Staff Attorney, filling in for  
7 Ms. Davis.

8 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay.

9 MS. SALAS-FORD: Before we get to the actual  
10 agenda items, I just want to review the procedures  
11 for the Board on school choice appeals. First, all  
12 parties with the exception of attorneys that wish to  
13 provide testimony must be sworn in by the  
14 Chairperson. Beginning with the nonresident  
15 district, each party will have an opportunity to make  
16 a 5-minute opening statement. Then each party has 20  
17 minutes to present their case. The Chairperson may  
18 extend any time as necessary. You may ask questions  
19 at any time and request others not giving testimony  
20 to provide testimony. The nonresident school  
21 district has the burden of proof in proving the basis  
22 for the denial of transfer. At the conclusion, you  
23 can either make a decision today to grant or deny the  
24 appeal or take the matter under advisement.

25 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Those individuals

1 from Warren District and others, would you please  
2 stand to be sworn in -- individuals regarding A-4?

3 MS. SALAS-FORD: Mr. and Mrs. Warren or Springer  
4 -- do you want to do just --

5 MS. ZOOK: It's Jacksonville, the Warren family.

6 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Oh, I'm sorry. It's the  
7 Warren family; it is the Jacksonville District.

8 MS. SALAS-FORD: Yes, ma'am.

9 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. So the Warren  
10 family. Who's the other family?

11 MS. SALAS-FORD: The Springer family is A-5.

12 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: The Springer family.

13 MS. SALAS-FORD: Uh-huh.

14 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. So they're A-5.  
15 We're on A-4 right now, Warren family.

16 MS. SALAS-FORD: Yes, ma'am.

17 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: So those that intend to  
18 testify would you please raise your right hands. Do  
19 you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony  
20 you're about to give is the truth, the whole truth  
21 and nothing but the truth?

22 (ALL WITNESSES ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

23 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. So the nonresident  
24 district, please come forward. That's Dr. Thurman.  
25 You have 20 minutes, Dr. Thurman.

1 SUPT. THURMAN: Twenty minutes? Okay.

2 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: You don't have to take the  
3 20 minutes.

4 SUPT. THURMAN: I just need three.

5 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Good. Good.

6 SUPT. THURMAN: Tony Thurman, superintendent of  
7 the Cabot School District. We did receive a school  
8 choice application from the family and were notified  
9 by the Jacksonville North Pulaski School District  
10 that they would not release the students due to an  
11 ongoing desegregation issue. So the denial was based  
12 upon JNP's not being able to release the students.

13 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Thank you. Now the  
14 Jacksonville District, anyone -- no one stood for the  
15 Jacksonville District -- or did they? I'm sorry.

16 MS. ZOOK: He's an attorney.

17 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: You're an attorney. Come  
18 forward. Please give your name for the record.

19 MR. RICHARDSON: Good afternoon. Scott  
20 Richardson; I'm here on behalf of the Jacksonville  
21 North Pulaski School District. We sort of went  
22 through this last month. Our comments will be very  
23 similar. Jacksonville North Pulaski is in a very  
24 unique position when it comes to this law. When it  
25 was created the agreement that created it was a

1 federal court order that also set limits on transfers  
2 among the three Pulaski County school districts. In  
3 order to comply with that limit, PCSSD has opted out  
4 of school choice. That limit also references the  
5 act, that the districts will comply with it.  
6 Jacksonville, having picked up those obligations from  
7 PCSSD as it separates from the district, was required  
8 to opt out of the general school choice law under  
9 which this application that's before you, and I  
10 believe the next one as well, were filed. The school  
11 choice law either a district is in or out; there's no  
12 partial withdrawal from school choice. So based on  
13 those set of facts that were given to Jacksonville  
14 when it was created we opted out and then had to deny  
15 these school choice transfers.

16 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Thank you. Any  
17 questions of Mr. Richardson?

18 MS. ZOOK: Little Rock and North Little Rock  
19 were both a party to that, as well. Right?

20 MR. RICHARDSON: Yes, ma'am.

21 MS. ZOOK: And they both have opted for choice.  
22 Right?

23 MR. RICHARDSON: They were in a different  
24 position than PCSSD was when the agreement was  
25 entered. I would note at the time that the

1 settlement agreement was entered PCSSD was not  
2 unitary in student assignments but the other two  
3 districts had been unitary in student assignments for  
4 a number of years. PCSSD was declared unitary in  
5 student assignments later, after the agreement. But  
6 the agreement does set in place limits on those  
7 transfers and Jacksonville is not in a position to  
8 disregard that requirement.

9 MS. ZOOK: And it's 30 students in and 30 out.  
10 Is that correct?

11 MR. RICHARDSON: I think that was the total for  
12 PCSSD. In the detachment agreement that this board  
13 approved it assigned a proportional number of those  
14 students to the Jacksonville North Pulaski School  
15 District, which I think gets us about five, maybe a  
16 few more.

17 MS. ZOOK: Okay. Have you allowed any of those  
18 five?

19 MR. RICHARDSON: I don't know. I'd have to  
20 check on that.

21 MS. ZOOK: Is Mister --

22 MR. RICHARDSON: I could check on that for you,  
23 if you'd like.

24 MS. ZOOK: Is Mr. Wood or somebody from the  
25 school board here?

1 MR. RICHARDSON: Mr. Wood is here. Do you know?

2 MR. WOOD: I don't know.

3 MR. RICHARDSON: He doesn't know either.

4 MS. ZOOK: Okay. And do you allow the children  
5 of people who teach out of your district, for those  
6 children to go or people who teach in your district  
7 who live other places to bring their children with  
8 them?

9 MR. RICHARDSON: Of course, those transfers are  
10 under a different law and a different set of rules.  
11 But I don't know if there are any transfers under  
12 that law.

13 MS. ZOOK: Does Mr. Wood?

14 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: You've got to be sworn.  
15 Were you sworn in, Mr. Wood?

16 MR. WOOD: I'm sorry?

17 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Were you sworn in?

18 MR. WOOD: I was.

19 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay.

20 MR. WOOD: I didn't intend to exercise that, but  
21 I was sworn. We have some teachers that we are in  
22 accord with state law in regard to that.

23 MS. ZOOK: And so you don't feel that it's  
24 discriminating against one group over another?

25 MR. WOOD: You know, I wish it was always that

1 simple. You use the phrase or the question says  
2 "discriminating against one group over another" --  
3 and by definition of discriminating, no.

4 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any further questions?  
5 Okay. Thank you, Mr. Richardson.

6 MR. RICHARDSON: Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: The Warren family, would  
8 you like to comment at this time?

9 MS. WARREN: Am I able to pass out some more  
10 papers, some letters?

11 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: I didn't understand what  
12 you said.

13 MS. WARREN: Am I able to pass out more letters  
14 --

15 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Of course.

16 MS. WARREN: -- to the Board?

17 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Of course. Okay. You have  
18 20 minutes.

19 MS. WARREN: Huh?

20 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Twenty minutes.

21 MS. WARREN: Oh, okay.

22 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: We're ready for you to  
23 speak.

24 MS. WARREN: I'm hearing impaired, so I can't  
25 hear as good. I'm just passing out papers on behalf

1 of the doctor that -- Dr. Ward at the Dennis  
2 Developmental Center and our pastor from Our Savior  
3 Lutheran. I have two twin boys; they're Samuel and  
4 Sutton Warren. They're aged 15. My son Samuel, he  
5 is a cancer survivor. He has been cancer free for a  
6 year-and-a-half -- five years now, just a year-and-a-  
7 half ago. I also have presented to you Sutton, his  
8 brother, and that is his twin. Both of the boys  
9 excel very well at Cabot school. I would like for  
10 you all to consider to keep them there for the  
11 stability and the academic learning, to keep them up.  
12 I really love Cabot schools. These boys love Cabot.  
13 Their friends are up there. Great teachers up there.  
14 Our problem has begun when their father passed away  
15 in June 17th of 2015. He died unexpectedly. He  
16 wanted us to move back into our family home. We were  
17 Cabot residents at the time and my boys have been in  
18 the Cabot School District since 2010. My daughter  
19 graduated in 2015. I would like to keep the children  
20 together as a family to graduate in one area, not in  
21 Jacksonville. I do not like Jacksonville School  
22 District and I don't want any part of it, because  
23 Cabot has got more academic -- top higher education.  
24 I gave you the death certificate because I wanted you  
25 to be aware that it's real. It happened to us and

1 we're all still grieving for this and we're trying to  
2 rebuild our lives, getting back into the home and  
3 adjusting to this new change. I drive the kids back  
4 and forth to school every day. My daughter helps out  
5 as well. She is 20 years old now. Basically, that's  
6 -- that's basically what I'm wanting to stress. We  
7 love Cabot and we just really want to stay. And I  
8 would just like you to consider the boys' stability,  
9 to keep that stable for them. I've had, you know,  
10 behavior problems with my older son Samuel and I do  
11 not like to see that disrupted and make it harder for  
12 them to learn and to make new friends and start all  
13 over. I don't know what else to say but other -- as  
14 a mom I fight for my kids and I want them to stay.

15 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Thank you. Ms. Zook has a  
16 question.

17 MS. ZOOK: Yes. Is it my understanding they're  
18 at the middle school?

19 MS. WARREN: No. They are in Cabot Junior High  
20 South.

21 MS. ZOOK: So is their school the one that's in  
22 academic distress?

23 MS. WARREN: No, not -- we --

24 MS. ZOOK: No, I mean the Jacksonville school.

25 MS. WARREN: Jacksonville is, I believe, in

1 academic distress. I have not read up on it. But  
2 Cabot I do not think is in academic distress.

3 MS. ZOOK: No. No. I was meaning the one they  
4 would attend if they went to Jacksonville.

5 MS. WARREN: Well, they would be going to high  
6 school.

7 MS. ZOOK: Okay.

8 MS. WARREN: And they will start 9th grade this  
9 year.

10 MS. ZOOK: Okay.

11 MS. WARREN: So these are the last fun years and  
12 I really want to enjoy them. I really do.

13 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any other questions? Okay.  
14 Do we have a motion? Or, Ms. Davis -- I'm sorry --  
15 do you want to --

16 MS. WARREN: I'm free to go, right?

17 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Excuse me. You're  
18 finished. Thank you.

19 MS. SALAS-FORD: I was just going to address Ms.  
20 Zook's question.

21 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay.

22 MS. SALAS-FORD: The school that they would be  
23 attending is not in academic distress, so opportunity  
24 school choice is not an option.

25 MS. ZOOK: Yeah, I realized that when she said

1 the high school. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Okay. We're ready  
3 for a motion, a motion on A-4, Consideration of  
4 Appeal from Denial of School Choice Application for  
5 the Warren family. What is the pleasure of the  
6 Board?

7 DR. BARTH: Obviously, all these cases are  
8 incredibly difficult and the facts, although they  
9 differ from parent to parent, are different. I just  
10 feel for consistencies sake and for the sake of past  
11 getting us -- getting PCSSD and the new district out  
12 of court oversight as swiftly as possibly it's our  
13 responsibility to go ahead and deny this choice  
14 application, as difficult as it is.

15 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. It's been moved by  
16 Dr. Barth to deny the appeal. Is there a second?

17 MS. REITH: Second.

18 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Second by Ms. Reith. Any  
19 further discussion? All in favor?

20 (MAJORITY CHORUS OF AYES)

21 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any opposed?

22 MS. ZOOK: Aye.

23 MR. WILLIAMSON: Aye.

24 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Two opposed. Motion  
25 carries. The appeal is denied.

1 A-5: CONSIDERATION OF APPEAL FROM DENIAL OF SCHOOL CHOICE  
2 APPLICATION - SPRINGER

3 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: The next is Consideration  
4 of Appeal from Denial of School Choice Application  
5 for the Springer family.

6 MS. SALAS-FORD: Madam Chair, Courtney Salas-  
7 Ford, Staff Attorney again. The Springer family is  
8 here to appeal a decision of the Cabot School  
9 District to deny school choice application for the  
10 16-17 school year. The family resides in the  
11 Jacksonville North Pulaski School District. And I  
12 believe -- were the Springers sworn in?

13 MS. SPRINGER: No.

14 MS. SALAS-FORD: Okay. Then they need to be  
15 sworn in, Madam Chair.

16 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Would you raise your  
17 right hands to be sworn? Do you solemnly swear or  
18 affirm that the testimony you're about to give is the  
19 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

20 (ALL WITNESSES ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

21 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Thank you. Dr. Thurman.

22 SUPT. THURMAN: Same situation. Cabot School  
23 District received the application and subsequently  
24 was notified by JNP that due to the desegregation  
25 lawsuit that they would not be able to release the

1 students.

2 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Mr. Richardson.

3 MR. RICHARDSON: Scott Richardson again for the  
4 Jacksonville North Pulaski School District; the same  
5 explanation as before. Because of the desegregation  
6 case and our obligations in that case, again, we're  
7 not able to participate in public school choice. And  
8 so this application had to be denied.

9 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. The Springers, do  
10 you want to come and speak? Would you please give  
11 your name for the record, please?

12 MS. SPRINGER: My name is Misty Springer. I'm  
13 the mother of Timothy Board and that's who we applied  
14 for. I didn't realize this is going to be the arena,  
15 so I'm a little intimidated, but thank you for your  
16 time. We moved into the Jacksonville area because my  
17 husband is Air Force and we moved onto base to  
18 utilize the amenities of what the government provides  
19 for us and we love living on the military  
20 installation. And we applied for the school choice  
21 for all three of my children. I have a daughter  
22 who's currently attending Cabot and she goes to the  
23 same Junior High South as the Warren children. And  
24 we were denied that. Applied for the opportunity  
25 because the Jacksonville Middle was in academic

1           distress and she has an IEP. So I was very adamant  
2           about her trying to get into Cabot because as an IEP  
3           student I didn't want her to have to go to a school  
4           that needed help when she needed help. I accepted  
5           the two sons that were denied and my senior drove  
6           them to Jacksonville, to the Jacksonville School  
7           District, which is North Pulaski High, all this year  
8           while I was driving Hannah to Cabot with my newborn.  
9           And we've love Cabot. We love the North Pulaski  
10          High. And it saddens me that it's, you know,  
11          canceling or going away, the fact that it's closing.  
12          This is the fourth high school that my son has  
13          attended. This next one will be his fourth. Right?  
14          Yeah. It will be his fourth high school because of  
15          the military and we've moved around so much. And I'm  
16          not at all trying to I want to say bash the  
17          Jacksonville High. I really hope that they can make  
18          their school district what they want. I just don't  
19          want them to test it out on my son. My children were  
20          raised in DoDEA schools; we grew up in Okinawa.  
21          They, all of them, went to -- I had two graduate from  
22          Kubasaki High in Okinawa. So they're used to the  
23          school district being there for them and this one is  
24          so in transitory and it just seems so up in the air  
25          and everything seems so confusing to everybody. And

1 I just want my son to finish two years of high school  
2 with his sisters so I don't have to drive two  
3 different ways. And it's been difficult having my  
4 children in two different school districts, but I was  
5 willing to do it because my daughter needed it. But  
6 now that the school is closing, which it was slated  
7 to close a whole lot later; I heard that it wasn't  
8 supposed to be closing so soon and now it is. So  
9 everybody is up in arms. Everybody is up in arms. I  
10 just want my son to go to the same district as my  
11 daughter. I'm not willing to pull my daughter back  
12 into Jacksonville because it's in academic distress  
13 and -- but my son, he has two years left. He'll be  
14 an upcoming junior. So in order to make it easier --  
15 I mean, I'm just asking as a mom to make it easier on  
16 me so I don't have to lug an infant to two different,  
17 you know, school districts, I mean, one one-way and  
18 one the other at two different times and, you know,  
19 just dropping them off. We did it, my daughter and  
20 I. I picked her up at one school, we went to the  
21 high school, and the academy is right behind the high  
22 school, so they're right there together. And I'd be  
23 picking up my daughter and picking up my son all at  
24 the same time, or -- next year if he has to go to  
25 Jacksonville I will have to dash to Cabot to get her,

1 fight the -- I don't know if y'all have been in  
2 Cabot, the Cabot traffic, but fight to get back down  
3 to get my son from the high school. So, luckily, my  
4 husband was able to get off because he works at the  
5 med group, and it's not something that can happen  
6 very often when you're in the military; your time is  
7 not your own. So I'm the -- I'm the everything, and  
8 especially if he deploys I'm the one and only. And  
9 I've been through deployments; I've been through  
10 multiple deployments, and they're not easy.

11 And I'm just -- and I understand the  
12 consistency. And I don't have any right to say  
13 anything about the Warren case, but you say  
14 consistency; you said consistency about denying her  
15 case because everybody else has been denied. What  
16 about the consistency of her children going to the  
17 same school that they've been going to for the last  
18 six years? And you just denied it just like that.  
19 You're not thinking about the families. They just  
20 lost their father last year and you're going to deny  
21 them just for consistency purposes. I disagree with  
22 that wholeheartedly. It breaks my heart that they --  
23 that you're going to say, "Oh, no, for consistency  
24 purposes. Their father passed; well, they still have  
25 to go to another school and make new friends." And

1           that's what you just did to the Warren's. I don't  
2           think that she was able to, you know, put that  
3           forward enough, but -- and that breaks my heart.

4           You know, it will put undue stress on the family  
5           that I'll have to drive my son to one district and to  
6           another district for my daughter. But there's  
7           families involved here. It's not a black-and-white  
8           letter of the law, you know, and I really think that  
9           that's what needs to be looked at as far as what  
10          happens with the families because that's what y'all  
11          are here for. I don't know how you got elected and  
12          how you got put in your seat, but you're here for  
13          them and for the people that support them. And I go  
14          to IEP meetings all the time, so I'm up at the school  
15          district and at the schools speaking with these  
16          teachers all the time. And I go up to the high  
17          school, you know, just to embarrass my kids, but to  
18          be involved in what they're doing. You know, I'm not  
19          there to disrupt their classrooms but I want to be  
20          involved. I want to know their teachers, and they  
21          have -- y'all have great teachers at North Pulaski  
22          High. I'm sad that the school is closing. I don't  
23          know what to say about Jacksonville High.

24                   CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Thank you.

25                   MS. SPRINGER: I have been there but --

1 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Thank you for your comment.  
2 But this is for clarification. I think Dr. Barth --  
3 and he can correct me or add to this -- the  
4 consistency comment had to do with the desegregation  
5 order and the cases that we hear month after month of  
6 families that want to make changes but are denied the  
7 opportunity to do that based on the deseg order that  
8 we have no choice over. So he was lamenting about  
9 the fact that he had to make the decision against  
10 what he would like to do. But in the letter of the  
11 law, following the letter of the law, so --

12 MS. SPRINGER: So then what is the appeal  
13 process for? If it's going to be a consistency, why  
14 are we brought up here? Why have I been here since  
15 9:30 with an infant?

16 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Well, in some cases there  
17 are other circumstances that we can consider. So  
18 that is the --

19 MS. SPRINGER: And the death of a father is not?

20 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Well, you're pleading her  
21 case. Thank you for your comment.

22 MS. SPRINGER: I am.

23 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Thank you. Your  
24 five minutes has expired.

25 MS. SPRINGER: Okay.

1 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: So any questions or  
2 comments? Ms. Zook.

3 MS. ZOOK: Yes. Ms. Clay or whomever -- yeah --  
4 would you explain to them their step beyond us if  
5 they don't get resolution here, that they do have  
6 another step of appeal?

7 MS. SALAS-FORD: Yes, Ms. Zook, we can  
8 communicate with the families and explain other  
9 options.

10 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. We're ready now then  
11 for a motion on A-5, the Consideration of Appeal from  
12 Denial of School Choice Application for the Springer  
13 family. What is the pleasure of the Board?

14 MS. REITH: I move to deny.

15 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Move to deny by Ms. Reith.  
16 Is there a second?

17 MS. CHAMBERS: Second.

18 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Second by Ms. Chambers.  
19 All in -- any further discussion? All in favor?

20 (MAJORITY CHORUS OF AYES)

21 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any opposed?

22 MR. WILLIAMSON: Aye.

23 MS. ZOOK: No.

24 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: So we have two opposed.  
25 Okay. The motion passes.

1 A-6: CONSIDERATION FOR CHANGING THE NAME OF LINCOLN ACADEMY OF  
2 EXCELLENCE TO LINCOLN ACADEMY FOR PURPOSES OF ACADEMIC DISTRESS

3 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: We're now down to A-6,  
4 Consideration for Changing the Name of Lincoln  
5 Academy of Excellence to Lincoln Academy for Purposes  
6 of Academic Distress. And that's Ms. Barnes.

7 MS. BARNES: Good afternoon, Madam Chair,  
8 Members of the Board. I'm just here to ask the Board  
9 --

10 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Excuse me. We're going to  
11 ask that you guys, the Springer and the Warren  
12 family, if you guys would take the discussion outside  
13 please. Thank you. Go ahead, Ms. Barnes.

14 MS. BARNES: I'm here to ask the Board to  
15 classify Lincoln Academy, in the place of Lincoln  
16 Academy for Excellence in the Forrest City School  
17 District, in academic distress. The Lincoln Academy  
18 for Excellence was a conversion charter school and it  
19 was on the list last month when we classified the  
20 schools, the reason being that it was the school name  
21 at the time of the assessments that led to the  
22 classification. However, in -- at the end of the 14-  
23 15 school year the district made a request to drop  
24 the conversion charter which changed the LEA number  
25 and drop "for Excellence" and just have the name

1 Lincoln Academy, as well as change the grade  
2 configuration from a 5-6 middle school to a 6th grade  
3 middle school.

4 So what I'm asking the Board to do -- and Dr.  
5 Hardrick is here; I've had this conversation with her  
6 to let her know I was going to make this request.  
7 Because Lincoln Academy for Excellence no longer  
8 exists in name or configuration or LEA number I'm  
9 asking the Board to classify or apply the  
10 classification to Lincoln Academy, which is a 6th  
11 grade building. And the 5th graders who were in the  
12 building at the time of the assessments are now the  
13 6th graders, so they are the same students. It's --  
14 the name has changed; the configuration changed; the  
15 LEA number and the name that's on our current list is  
16 not -- is no longer a school, but the students who  
17 were in the school are now the 6th grade students.  
18 So all I'm asking basically is that the  
19 classification be applied to Lincoln Academy in its  
20 current state, not Lincoln Academy for Excellence.  
21 And in times past if a school no longer exists it  
22 would cease to be a part of the list in future times.

23 Dr. Hardrick is here if you have questions  
24 regarding what I'm asking the Board to do. It's  
25 simply apply the current classification to the

1 current school and not the school that it used to be.

2 MS. ZOOK: Because the students' scores still  
3 are the students' scores?

4 MS. BARNES: Yes, ma'am.

5 MS. ZOOK: Okay.

6 MS. BARNES: It was a 5-6 building and it is now  
7 a 6 building. So the 5th graders who were in the 5-6  
8 building are now the 6th graders in the current  
9 building.

10 MS. ZOOK: Okay.

11 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Is that clear?

12 DR. BARTH: And it's clear that the subset of  
13 students -- that half the students who are in that  
14 grade, they are also below 49.5?

15 MS. BARNES: Yes. Well, they were in the half  
16 of the students that made the subset. Now as far as  
17 you having both, those 6th graders became 7th graders  
18 who are now at the junior high and they are receiving  
19 the services that they need and then these 5th  
20 graders are now the 6th graders. And so your  
21 question is are -- is their performance as low as the  
22 same. Dr. Hardrick may have a clearer answer to  
23 that. My answer to it is that they made up half of  
24 it over the time that they were in the building. And  
25 so if we don't classify Lincoln Academy, then it's a

1 restart but it's not really a restart.

2 Dr. Hardrick, did you want to --

3 DR. HARDRICK: Good evening.

4 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Good evening.

5 DR. HARDRICK: Afternoon. I researched that  
6 exact same question about whether or not it was clear  
7 if that subset of students contributed to those  
8 scores, and actually I have a little different lens  
9 on it. I was unable to parse out those 5th graders  
10 versus those 6th graders when we looked at those  
11 results. But what you see for those two groups of  
12 students is about 48.9% proficiency. But what I was  
13 able to very clearly see was this subset of students  
14 that we're talking about I was able to find their  
15 performance when they were 4th graders and when they  
16 were 3rd graders, and both times those students  
17 scored approximately 60% proficiency. So when you  
18 look at the three-year average of this subset of  
19 students that group of students are not performing at  
20 a level of academic distress. They are performing  
21 above 50% proficiency. And then I do have that data.  
22 And even together it was 48, I think, point nine.

23 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any other questions? Okay.  
24 We're ready for a -- or there's a question.

25 DR. BARTH: Ms. Barnes, do you have a response

1 to that just to --

2 MS. BARNES: Yes, sir. The simple response that  
3 I would have to that is that in the event that those  
4 students are, then that would also show up on the  
5 assessments that we have yet to see. And the current  
6 situation that we have is we can leave Lincoln  
7 Academy for Excellence on the list; however, that LEA  
8 number no longer exists. The students are the same  
9 students and that school also is on the priority list  
10 simply because it could not be removed as well. So  
11 as of the 2015, it's on the priority list. While I  
12 don't have the data that Dr. Hardrick is referring to  
13 in front of me or to review at this time, I can tell  
14 you that overall we have not seen the same  
15 progressive upward trend that Dr. Hardrick just  
16 responded -- referred to. Now, if we drill down to  
17 it I cannot tell you that we won't find that it looks  
18 like this group of students or beginning to have an  
19 upward trend. My only concern is that if we leave it  
20 as it is then in future we will not have the  
21 foundation that we are currently working with. So  
22 that's why we brought this before the Board. I  
23 understand the question and the concern, but when you  
24 look at the fact that you have half of the group of  
25 students who are currently in the building we will

1 know because they are under the same instruction and  
2 they are now the 6th graders that will be in the  
3 building -- will be moving forward to the junior  
4 high, so --

5 MS. ZOOK: Is this time sensitive or could we  
6 table it and look at it when you've had a chance to  
7 look at the data at the June meeting?

8 MS. BARNES: I don't know; is it time sensitive,  
9 other than the fact that we will be in the district  
10 next week working with those -- or doing evaluations  
11 to work on the recommendations? Actually, yes, I  
12 think it probably is time sensitive, as I talk about  
13 it, because we use the month of May; the school  
14 improvement specialists are in all of these schools  
15 in order to work within the timeframe of the rules  
16 and the law, and then those recommendations will come  
17 before the Board at a later date. But we are this  
18 month and we are in that window of time. We won't  
19 have the results of the ACT Aspire in time to see  
20 whether or not it should be, but when we do have the  
21 ACT Aspire and it has been corrected we will know at  
22 that time. But that will be in the fall. So, again,  
23 I don't have it and I would hesitate to put Dr.  
24 Airola on the -- I know she's over there trying to  
25 look. Other than tabling it until maybe a later time

1 in the meeting maybe -- I don't -- I don't know about  
2 that part. But I think it is time sensitive.

3 MS. ZOOK: It seems to me like, Board, that I  
4 remember when Forest Heights was changed from a  
5 middle school in Little Rock to a K-12 school, the  
6 LEA number changed and everything, that we went ahead  
7 and stayed academic distress and then at the end of  
8 another year it came off the list because of that.  
9 So if I'm not remembering incorrectly, this -- we  
10 have done this in the past where it stayed that way  
11 and then the following year it was. Am I remembering  
12 correctly, Jay, Mireya, Joe?

13 DR. BARTH: I can't remember. I remember the  
14 conversation, but I can't remember what we decided on  
15 it.

16 MS. ZOOK: Yeah.

17 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: So your recommendation is?

18 MS. BARNES: My recommendation was that we apply  
19 the classification to the current school in its  
20 current state as opposed to leaving Lincoln Academy  
21 for Excellence on the list, which no longer exists.

22 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: If there are no further --  
23 I'm sorry.

24 DR. HARDRICK: May I just --

25 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Dr. Hardrick.

1 DR. HARDRICK: May I just add one additional  
2 point?

3 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Absolutely.

4 DR. HARDRICK: I think that when we started  
5 talking about labeling academic distress it's not  
6 just about student performance; there were so many  
7 other factors that are there. And so in my mind  
8 Lincoln is a start-up and so should be treated like  
9 any other school that would be a start-up in its  
10 first year of operation. We chose to reconstitute  
11 the entire school. There's a completely new  
12 administrative staff there. There are new teachers  
13 that are there in the building. And so the only  
14 thing that's the same is 50% of the students.

15 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. So if there are not  
16 any further questions, what's the pleasure of the  
17 Board?

18 MS. CHAMBERS: I move to approve the  
19 recommendation.

20 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. It's been moved by  
21 Ms. Chambers. Is there a second?

22 MS. REITH: Second.

23 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Second by Ms. Reith. Any  
24 further discussion? All in favor?

25 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

1 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any opposed? Then the  
2 motion carries.

3 COMMISSIONER KEY: Madam Chair --

4 MS. BARNES: Thank you, Madam Chair.

5 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: I'm sorry.

6 MS. BARNES: Oh, I'm sorry.

7 COMMISSIONER KEY: Well, go ahead, Ms. Barnes.

8 MS. BARNES: I was also going to simply say the  
9 additional piece to that is next week, Monday and  
10 Tuesday, the team, along with my self, Mr. Harvey,  
11 Dr. Wilde, we will be in the district and we will  
12 have a more comprehensive evaluation at that point.  
13 Dr. Hardrick did point out that, you know, maybe 50%  
14 of the students are -- and in that case, that also  
15 constitutes why I made the recommendation.

16 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Yeah. I heard that  
17 earlier. Thank you for further explanation.

18 A-4: CONSIDERATION OF APPEAL FROM DENIAL OF SCHOOL CHOICE  
19 APPLICATION - WARREN FAMILY (continuing)

20 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Commissioner Key.

21 COMMISSIONER KEY: Madam Chair, Ms. Warren --  
22 the Warren family provided us with information that  
23 has personally identifiable information. If we could  
24 pass that over to Ms. Helton and we will make sure  
25 that gets taken care of appropriately.

1 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Let's take a 5-minute break  
2 and reconvene at 2:40.

3 (BREAK: 2:35-2:45 P.M.)

4 (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: Ms. Reith left the  
5 meeting during the break.)

6 A-12: CHARTER PANEL ACTION ON DISTRICT CONVERSION PUBLIC  
7 CHARTER SCHOOL AMENDMENT REQUEST: BADGER ACADEMY

8 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: We're going to move just a  
9 little bit forward in our agenda to action item A-12,  
10 which is the Charter Panel Action on District  
11 Conversion Charter School Amendment Request: Badger  
12 Academy. Ms. Boyd, would you come? Thank you.

13 MS. BOYD: Thank you, Madam Chair. On April 20,  
14 2016, representatives of Badger Academy appeared  
15 before the Charter Authorizing Panel requesting an  
16 amendment to their charter. By a unanimous vote the  
17 Panel approved the request. No request for the State  
18 Board of Education to review the decision made by the  
19 Panel was submitted. The State Board may exercise a  
20 right of review and conduct the hearing on the  
21 Charter Authorizing Panel's determination at the  
22 State Board's next meeting.

23 As a reminder, your motion today is to review or  
24 not review. And if you do decide to review, you'll  
25 need to state the reasons why you want to review and

1 any additional information you may need.

2 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Any questions for  
3 Ms. Boyd relative to A-12? Dr. Barth.

4 DR. BARTH: I move to not review the decision of  
5 the Charter Authorizing Panel.

6 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay.

7 MR. WILLIAMSON: Second.

8 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. There's a --

9 MS. ZOOK: Wait, wait, wait. Where are you all?

10 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: A-12.

11 MS. ZOOK: Oh, A-12.

12 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: There's a motion not --

13 MS. ZOOK: What happened to 7 and 8 and 9?

14 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: We skipped over them.

15 There's a motion by Dr. Barth to not review the

16 Charter -- the Panel's recommendation and there's a

17 second by Mr. Williamson. Any questions? All in

18 favor?

19 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

20 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any opposed? The motion  
21 carries. Thank you, Ms. Boyd.

22 MS. BOYD: Thank you, Madam Chair.

23 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Is that your only -- that's  
24 your only one, isn't it?

25 MS. BOYD: Yes, ma'am.

1 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Thank you.

2 A-7: DISTRICT REQUEST FOR WAIVERS GRANTED TO OPEN-ENROLLMENT  
3 CHARTERS: FORREST CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

4 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Going back to A-7, where we  
5 left Ms. Zook, District Waiver for -- District  
6 Request for Waivers Granted to Open-Enrollment  
7 Charters: Forrest City School District. Mary Perry.

8 MS. PERRY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Act 1240 of  
9 2015 allows the school district to petition the State  
10 Board of Education for all or some of the waivers  
11 granted to open-enrollment public charter schools  
12 that draw students from the district.

13 Representatives of the Forrest City School District  
14 are appearing before the State Board with a petition  
15 for waivers. And Kendra Clay will come and talk  
16 about the procedures with you, and Dr. Hardrick, as  
17 you know, is here.

18 MS. CLAY: Good afternoon. Kendra Clay, General  
19 Counsel for the Department of Education. As you  
20 know, you do not --

21 MS. ZOOK: Sound.

22 MS. CLAY: No sound? I'll stand -- is that  
23 better?

24 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Yes.

25 MS. CLAY: No? I can't get much closer.

1 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: I can --

2 MS. CLAY: Okay. As you know, you do not have  
3 rules that outline procedures for these district  
4 requested waivers, but you have followed some  
5 procedures in the past and I would recommend that you  
6 follow those same procedures today.

7 All persons with the exception of attorneys need  
8 to be sworn in. The district will have 20 minutes to  
9 present its request for waivers. Any parties opposed  
10 will then have 20 minutes to present their reasons  
11 for opposition and the district will follow that  
12 presentation with 5 minutes of rebuttal. You will  
13 then take time for discussion and questions and you  
14 may vote on the matter today or take the matter under  
15 advisement, but you will have to make a decision  
16 within 90 days of receipt of the petition. So if  
17 that becomes an issue, we will look at the date that  
18 the petition was actually received. And as a  
19 reminder, you have the option to grant in whole or in  
20 part or deny in whole or in part these waiver  
21 requests. Do you have any questions?

22 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: No. Okay. Anyone that --  
23 the superintendent of Forrest City, of course, stand  
24 to be sworn. Any others intending to give  
25 information or testimony concerning this action item

1 -- would you stand and be sworn please, sir? Would  
2 you raise your right hand? Do you solemnly swear or  
3 affirm that the testimony you're about to give is the  
4 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

5 (ALL WITNESSES ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

6 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Thank you. Please step  
7 forward. You have 20 minutes, starting with the  
8 Forrest City district.

9 DR. HARDRICK: I won't take 20.

10 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. We'll hold you to  
11 it.

12 DR. HARDRICK: All right. All right. I first  
13 would like to -- I spoke with Kendra and there's a  
14 couple of waivers that I will need to add that work  
15 in conjunction with other waivers. So I'm asking to  
16 amend and add 6-42-109 and 6-20-2208(c)(6).

17 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Yeah. Can you share  
18 with us what they are?

19 MS. CLAY: Board Members, both of those statutes  
20 relate to gifted and talented. And as you know,  
21 often when you request a waiver of the subject matter  
22 several statutes and rules go into that request. So  
23 upon review of the waivers they had requested, it was  
24 discovered that they needed these two additional  
25 statutes to compliment their gifted and talented

1 waiver.

2 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay.

3 DR. HARDRICK: The part that I added about the  
4 gifted and talented is that the only part of the  
5 waiver that we're particularly interested in is in K-  
6 2 students must take -- have a gifted and talented  
7 teacher. And given the challenge of hiring a gifted  
8 and talented teacher we would like our teachers to be  
9 able to deliver those units, which they are allowed  
10 to do but they're only allowed to currently do it a  
11 couple of lessons a month and it's offered once a  
12 week. And so we have a challenge of having a GT  
13 teacher that can go in and cover the 800-student  
14 school with the GT requirements. But it's not that  
15 we don't want to offer the GT curriculum.

16 So all the waivers that we're currently  
17 requesting relate to teacher certification. The  
18 Arkansas Department of Ed. did release those critical  
19 academic shortage areas and many of those areas are  
20 heightened when you're in our part of the state. And  
21 so we have a very large challenge of -- sometimes of  
22 hiring teachers in areas such as art, family consumer  
23 science, Spanish, et cetera. And so our options  
24 sometimes become long-term substitutes and that's --  
25 that is, you know, what we don't want to do for our

1 students. You know, part of the vision in Forrest  
2 City has to be -- is to be innovative and aggressive  
3 in our approach, and so we're trying to do that  
4 through these waivers, to be as innovative and  
5 aggressive as possible, putting the best person in  
6 front of our students. Currently, Forrest City has  
7 experienced some growth based on PARCC. All of our  
8 schools grew letter grades between 10 and 39 points.  
9 Our junior high school was named a growth -- a reward  
10 school for being in the top 5% of growth, and we met  
11 and exceeded all of our growth goals. So we're  
12 trying to do the right work but we need a little help  
13 in insuring that we can continue to grow by putting  
14 the best people in front of our students.

15 We did not want to rely on waivers, so we have  
16 implemented a very aggressive recruitment plan. The  
17 Deputy Superintendent and my self personally attended  
18 to date eight teacher recruitment events, in state  
19 and out of state. We have expanded our marketing  
20 efforts from advertising, not just in the local area  
21 but for Memphis to Little Rock, Pine Bluff. That has  
22 become our span of our market. We have also reached  
23 out and attempt to partner with the Arkansas Teacher  
24 Corps, Teach For America, and so we're hoping that we  
25 can get some of those teachers as well. But as a

1 result of our recruitment efforts what we have been  
2 able to do so far is just get some quality candidates  
3 that I would like to extend offers. One example is  
4 an art teacher who has a master's in visual arts who  
5 has taught at a charter school for five years that's  
6 from the area, so they also have teaching experience;  
7 a candidate that has a Ph.D. in science that would  
8 like to teach physics and has some experience there.  
9 And so I think that these are better options for our  
10 kids than long-term substitutes. We have also not  
11 been able to offer Spanish in our district for over  
12 -- almost six years and we're hoping to be able to do  
13 that and we have a candidate who has a juris  
14 doctorate, who has practiced immigration law and has  
15 taught Spanish abroad and is also from the area and  
16 is looking for a second career. And so I'm hoping  
17 that you will grant these waivers so that I can  
18 extend offers to these candidates so that we can  
19 insure that our kids have quality teachers in the  
20 classroom. I'm certain these kind of candidates, a  
21 charter school would hire them and can hire them and  
22 I just want the same opportunity for my students.

23 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Any questions?

24 Doctor -- Ms. Zook, are you --

25 MS. ZOOK: Go ahead.

1 DR. BARTH: A question on the AP front. How  
2 many students did you take -- have take AP exams this  
3 year and how many made a three or higher?

4 DR. HARDRICK: I'm not sure how many of our  
5 students had three or higher. We do have a lot of AP  
6 courses. I'm not certain the exact number of the  
7 kids that take the exam. I know that we have a big  
8 emphasis on concurrent enrollment. And just like a  
9 class night last night, we have 32 students that are  
10 graduating with over 54 hours from the community  
11 college. And so we do have a push for our students  
12 to be college ready.

13 MS. ZOOK: So if you get the waiver on the AP,  
14 the student might gain concurrent credit but not the  
15 college credit that an AP course would afford them if  
16 they scored high enough. Is that correct?

17 DR. HARDRICK: Well, our students -- whether you  
18 do concurrent enrollment or AP, you still could  
19 receive the same college credit.

20 MS. ZOOK: Except --

21 DR. HARDRICK: We are not looking to do away  
22 with AP. The challenge for us is around  
23 certification. And so I want that candidate to still  
24 be able to teach an AP course, if necessary.

25 MS. ZOOK: But College Board has to approve an

1 AP teacher and you don't have to pay if you take an  
2 AP and score high enough to get the college, whereas  
3 many times concurrent credit there is a charge.

4 DR. HARDRICK: That's correct.

5 MS. ZOOK: So I guess help me understand. If  
6 you have a teacher teaching AP physics and they're  
7 not a College Board AP teacher, does that mean if the  
8 student completes the course and scores would they  
9 even be able to take the AP test? And if so, would  
10 they be able to get the college credits since it's  
11 not a board -- a College Board teacher?

12 DR. HARDRICK: I don't know the specific answer  
13 to that. My thinking was that if the teacher was  
14 granted the waiver and was allowed to be able to  
15 teach the course that our students would be able to.

16 MS. ZOOK: Yeah. I'm not sure -- this came up  
17 in the district where I live and there were some  
18 teachers -- so they wound up having to do like  
19 concurrent credit but they couldn't do AP because the  
20 teacher wasn't College Board. So, Jay, does that --  
21 is that correct?

22 DR. BARTH: Correct.

23 MS. ZOOK: Okay.

24 DR. HARDRICK: Okay. I will research.

25 MS. ZOOK: Okay. I guess that would be one

1 concern is that the cost to the student and also that  
2 the student is aware that this isn't a true AP course  
3 because it's not being taught by a board certified  
4 teacher. And I don't know; somebody -- maybe Stacy  
5 can answer. Can you become board certified to teach  
6 an AP course if you don't have a traditional teaching  
7 license?

8 MS. SMITH: I think you have to have a teacher's  
9 license to go into the program.

10 (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: Ms. Reith returned to  
11 the meeting.)

12 MS. ZOOK: Okay. Okay. And I know KIPP is the  
13 example that you give as the charter --

14 DR. HARDRICK: Yes.

15 MS. ZOOK: -- which I understand. But right now  
16 it's 5th and 6th -- or will be next year 5th and 6th,  
17 and so AP doesn't apply to them yet.

18 DR. HARDRICK: Well, that's the KIPP in Forrest  
19 City. That KIPP has a bus that they currently run to  
20 their campus in Helena --

21 MS. ZOOK: Okay.

22 DR. HARDRICK: -- from Forrest City that are  
23 Forrest City students.

24 MS. ZOOK: Okay.

25 DR. HARDRICK: But I'll also add the other point

1 that currently the district pays the cost. Our  
2 students do not pay for those courses, concurrent  
3 enrollment courses.

4 MS. ZOOK: Okay. So they get the credit.

5 DR. HARDRICK: Yes.

6 MS. ZOOK: It's just it's not AP credit  
7 necessarily.

8 DR. HARDRICK: That's correct.

9 MS. ZOOK: Okay.

10 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any other questions? Thank  
11 you.

12 DR. HARDRICK: Uh-huh.

13 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Is there anyone here to  
14 speak in opposition to granting these waivers that  
15 Forrest City School District has requested?

16 MR. HENDRICKS: Thank you. Davis Hendricks with  
17 Arkansans for Gifted and Talented Education. And I  
18 sent y'all letters with this, but prior to knowing  
19 what the specific requests were of the district -- we  
20 knew they were asking for waivers regarding gifted  
21 and talented and advanced placement, but we didn't  
22 know specifically. After hearing specifically what  
23 she's asking for from the standpoint of advanced  
24 placement, our concern is that there's extensive  
25 training, as has already been mentioned by Ms. Zook.

1 Our concern is whether or not the students in those  
2 AP courses would really get the quality that's  
3 necessary for them to have the opportunity and make  
4 the grade, the threes, fours and the fives. We also  
5 are very concerned about the idea of watering down  
6 any aspect of our delivery of AP courses. College  
7 Board is very stringent and one of the things that  
8 separates the advanced placement from concurrent  
9 enrollment is the level of rigor. The level of rigor  
10 in concurrent enrollment classes across the state  
11 varies from school to school and we don't have a  
12 problem with any of the aspects of rigor in those,  
13 but it's not standardized like advanced placement is.  
14 AP through College Board is very standardized across  
15 the country. So that was our main concern. After  
16 hearing that I had to kind of reframe our remarks to  
17 address her specific request. So we would be very  
18 concerned about any change in the certification  
19 requirements.

20 The K-2 gifted and talented, that aspect, once  
21 again there's a certification required to serve  
22 gifted kids and there's more to it than just a  
23 teacher delivering a curriculum that's been prepared.  
24 Now if that curriculum was developed and prepared in  
25 conjunction with the GT coordinator and some training

1 was provided to those -- but I think our real concern  
2 about these kinds of waivers with gifted programs and  
3 AP is that we do have statutes on file that these are  
4 programs we offer to address the needs of the  
5 specific group of kids in our schools. And we think  
6 that there should be some real consideration given as  
7 to what's done in lieu of what is required by our  
8 guidelines. As long as our Office of Gifted and  
9 Talented were involved in the process of reviewing  
10 what districts are going to try to do, instead of  
11 offering according to our guidelines, we would  
12 welcome that. Getting out of the box is fine. But  
13 until such time as there is that review process or  
14 that kind of coordination with the Office of GT at  
15 the Department of Ed., we'll look at every waiver  
16 from gifted and talented and advanced placement very,  
17 very critically.

18 The other issue that we have with these waivers  
19 is we know that this -- that Act 1240 does not carry  
20 the same level of accountability and review than what  
21 is done with the charter schools. They have to go  
22 under review. And it's our understanding that when  
23 you grant a waiver under 1240 there's no real process  
24 for going back and changing that decision. That  
25 waiver is going to be there until we go back and

1           statutorily put something in the law that would  
2           require that review. So we'd be very hesitant to  
3           grant those kinds of changes in the -- for the  
4           potential that the services wouldn't be at the level  
5           of quality that the kids are used to or that the kids  
6           certainly deserve.

7           CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay.

8           MS. ZOOK: What do you --

9           CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Ms. Zook. I'm sorry; Ms.  
10          Zook has some questions. Go ahead, Ms. Zook.

11          MS. ZOOK: In those districts that obviously  
12          they're trying their best but they have no candidate  
13          for -- that is GT certified, would you rather the  
14          waiver or would you rather an assigned sub who isn't  
15          GT certified?

16          MR. HENDRICKS: Say that -- say it one more  
17          time. I'm sorry. I've got to process that.

18          MS. ZOOK: Okay. She -- obviously, you know,  
19          it's a good school district, engaged superintendent,  
20          people trying their best.

21          MR. HENDRICKS: Certainly.

22          MS. ZOOK: They can't find a GT teacher and so  
23          they -- if they don't get the waiver, they have to  
24          get an assigned sub who is also not GT certified and  
25          could be temporary for a few months or a year and

1 maybe change the next year. So I guess, you know,  
2 what comes to us is do we give the waiver with the  
3 knowledge that if she could find one she will do  
4 that, but if she can't -- you see the quandary we --

5 MR. HENDRICKS: Sure.

6 MS. ZOOK: -- we find ourselves in?

7 MR. HENDRICKS: Yeah. I think that in any other  
8 area that requires a certain type of certification  
9 there's an ALP or, in other words, a way to get folks  
10 certified over a period of time. There needs to be  
11 some process in place. We would want to see or have  
12 the Department and the Board be able to see that  
13 there is a way to where we haven't just waived that  
14 requirement for the certification, but within a  
15 certain amount of time whoever is delivering those  
16 services and is working with the GT coordinator in  
17 that district to make sure the curriculum is being  
18 delivered is at the quality of what was expected. We  
19 think there's a lot of leeway and kind of flexibility  
20 in this when you grant a waiver. We would want to  
21 see a more specific example of how you're going to  
22 insure that you're going to work toward having a  
23 certified person there -- and even the person that  
24 they selected to do that work could be working on  
25 their certification in GT. And if we saw some effort

1 being made or something in the plan that would  
2 guarantee that, we'd feel a lot better about it.

3 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Any other questions?

4 MS. ZOOK: Did she put a time limit on this?

5 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: She's going to come back  
6 for a summation. Would the district representative  
7 come back for your 5-minute summation? And also I  
8 think Ms. Zook --

9 DR. HARDRICK: Sure.

10 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: -- has a question.

11 MS. ZOOK: I was just saying if it's there I  
12 overlooked it. Did you put a time limit?

13 DR. HARDRICK: No. I did not put a time limit  
14 the way it's currently written, but I will be willing  
15 to do a time limit. Because we want certified  
16 teachers; we're just in a position where currently we  
17 don't have enough applicants.

18 So one of the things I would like to do is just  
19 kind of respond to some of the statements. One, the  
20 last thing that we as a district will ever do is  
21 water down our curriculum, whether it's GT or any  
22 other curriculum. As a parent of two students in the  
23 Forrest City School District who are both enrolled in  
24 pre-AP courses, I wouldn't water down curriculum for  
25 my own children as opposed to the students that I'm

1 responsible for. In addition, so I would love any  
2 support that they would offer beyond today when I'm  
3 asking for support in the form of waivers. We'd be  
4 more than willing to train and allow them to train  
5 and support us in preparing teachers for GT. But as  
6 of today, I have not received any of that support  
7 and, therefore, that's why I'm here today to try to  
8 insure that we can continue to offer GT and pre-AP  
9 for our students. We have hired candidates that are  
10 certified in our agriculture, which is another hard  
11 to staff area. The one candidate that applied that  
12 was certified, we hired that one candidate. So we  
13 are looking for certified teachers but we just need  
14 all options so that we don't start school with long-  
15 term subs who are not certified, nor do they have a  
16 degree in a specialty area.

17 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. I think the  
18 gentleman is nodding his head like he's willing to  
19 work with you. Do you want to step forward? And  
20 while he's coming forward, could you --

21 DR. HARDRICK: Yes, ma'am.

22 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: If you're interested in  
23 putting a timeline on it, could you -- are you  
24 prepared to do that today?

25 DR. HARDRICK: Yes, ma'am. If we could be given

1            somewhere between three to five years, three years or  
2            five years would be great.

3            CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay.

4            MR. HENDRICKS: Just that we would be glad --  
5            there's -- the Office of Gifted and Talented, I know,  
6            at the Department of Ed., if they were aware, could  
7            be involved. And within AGATE we have folks that are  
8            retired who love to be in the process of helping and  
9            could provide training -- folks who have been  
10           certified and have master's degrees and gifted ed.  
11           for numerous years. So if they reach out, we'll  
12           respond. Absolutely.

13           CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Thank you. Any  
14           questions?

15           MS. ZOOK: I think a comment. I know that in  
16           most times with charters, if I'm not mistaken, the  
17           not needing or having to have certification in an  
18           area is typically not -- is in core areas. In core  
19           areas we usually expect certification, with the  
20           possible exception of KIPP who has a national well-  
21           recognized organization where they train teachers in  
22           AP areas and other areas. So I'm a little reluctant  
23           to approve, for example, in physics for AP but I  
24           guess we could call it just regular physics and they  
25           could get concurrent credit but not AP. I don't

1 know. Jay, help me with that.

2 DR. BARTH: Well, and my concern here on the AP  
3 front is I think we know that those are simply more  
4 demanding courses typically --

5 DR. HARDRICK: Yes.

6 DR. BARTH: -- in terms of better preparing  
7 students for college. And especially, obviously, if  
8 the scores are high enough then one also gets credit.  
9 And so, yeah, I'm really hesitant on any of these.  
10 And I understand. I'm very sympathetic to the  
11 challenges that Forrest City faces in terms of  
12 getting personnel. But I just -- I don't see -- this  
13 is the first -- really the -- maybe first waiver  
14 request that has been so explicit about "we just  
15 can't get the personnel." There's really not a plan  
16 here; it's really a -- you know -- we're just trying  
17 to get through. And I appreciate the  
18 superintendent's recognition that this -- she doesn't  
19 want to water this down, but I do think at the end of  
20 the day it is watering it down. And so I'm very  
21 concerned. I'm really concerned in that, you know,  
22 early grades where, you know, talent identification  
23 occurs in so many cases and, you know, those first  
24 few grades of school on gifted and talented and that  
25 has ramifications, you know, all along the process.

1           So, you know, I'm sympathetic but this feels  
2           worrisome to me.

3                   CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any other questions? Any  
4           other comments?

5                   There's someone -- there's a Mr. Hendricks that  
6           had signed up for public comment. Oh, you're Mr.  
7           Hendricks. Okay. I'm sorry. Okay.

8                   COMMISSIONER KEY: Madam Chair, just a word of  
9           not warning but just be on the alert because based on  
10          feedback we're getting -- I mean, we heard from  
11          Southeast Co-op last week and there are schools in  
12          the Southeast Co-op -- there are 90 positions that as  
13          of right now schools in that co-op have not been able  
14          to fill, similar to what Dr. Hardrick is talking  
15          about. There's a good chance we will see more of  
16          these types of waivers. So, you know, you talked  
17          about specifically the first time that someone says  
18          "we can't find anyone;" it's very likely that they  
19          will -- that there will be more that will be coming.

20                   MS. ZOOK: Is there a reason why the requests  
21          are for waivers and not going the assigned sub route  
22          or that we see almost monthly that Ms. Pfeffer  
23          presents --

24                   COMMISSIONER KEY: I really don't have a good  
25          answer for that.

1 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any other comments or  
2 questions? Ms. Clay.

3 MS. CLAY: Madam Chair, before you move forward  
4 I would like to ask Dr. Hardrick to come back up and  
5 clarify whether she intends the duration of her  
6 request to be three or five -- three, four or five.  
7 She said three to five, but you'll need some more  
8 clarity if you move forward with this as in a  
9 specific number.

10 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay.

11 DR. HARDRICK: I'm requesting those waivers for  
12 five years.

13 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: So that concludes the  
14 presentations. What's the pleasure of the Board? Is  
15 there a motion?

16 COMMISSIONER KEY: Just I would remind you --  
17 Ms. Clay, if you could correct me if I'm wrong, but  
18 the law says you may approve in whole or in part or  
19 deny in whole or in part --

20 MS. CLAY: Correct.

21 COMMISSIONER KEY: -- of these waivers that were  
22 requested?

23 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Given that explanation, is  
24 there a motion?

25 MR. WILLIAMSON: I move to deny the request.

1 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: In whole or in part?

2 MS. SAVIERS: Second.

3 MR. WILLIAMSON: In whole.

4 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: In whole. It's moved by  
5 Mr. Williamson to deny the request in whole; it was  
6 seconded by Ms. Saviers. Any discussion? All in  
7 favor?

8 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

9 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any opposed? Okay. Then  
10 that request for waivers is denied.

11 A-8: DISTRICT REQUEST FOR WAIVERS GRANTED TO OPEN-ENROLLMENT

12 CHARTERS: HARRISON SCHOOL DISTRICT

13 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Moving on to A-8, District  
14 Request for Waivers Granted to Open-Enrollment -  
15 Harrison School District.

16 MS. PERRY: Mary Perry, Division of Learning  
17 Services. Act 1240 of 2015 allows a school district  
18 to petition the State Board of Education for all or  
19 some of the waivers granted to open-enrollment public  
20 charter schools that draw students from the district.  
21 Representatives of the Harrison School District are  
22 appearing before the State Board with a petition for  
23 waivers and Superintendent Mindy Moss will begin the  
24 presentation.

25 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Would you raise your right

1 hands? Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the  
2 testimony you're about to give is the truth, the  
3 whole truth and nothing but the truth?

4 (ALL WITNESSES ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

5 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Would you state your  
6 name for the record, please?

7 SUPT. MOSS: Melinda Moss.

8 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Mott, M-o-t-t?

9 SUPT. MOSS: Moss, M-o-s-s.

10 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Go ahead.

11 SUPT. MOSS: Good afternoon. I am so excited to  
12 present our program to you today. And if you will  
13 notice in your packet, we are requesting very  
14 targeted and specific waivers and only those that we  
15 need to implement our advanced learning opportunity  
16 program that we're proposing. I have been informed  
17 by Ms. Clay that we need to also add two waivers; one  
18 is 6-17-919 and that relates to licensure, and the  
19 other is 6-15-902 and that relates to grading scale.  
20 The licensure waivers that we are requesting today  
21 are not for core courses. What they are specifically  
22 outlined for you in our packet is courses related to  
23 industry certifications, and that would be elective  
24 course credit within our district.

25 I'd like to introduce some other people that

1           took the trouble to drive three hours down the  
2           mountain in the pouring rain this morning and to also  
3           illustrate the synergy and collaboration within our  
4           community that has brought us to this point. We have  
5           Mr. Ken Stuckey who is director of talent acquisition  
6           for Pace Industries, which is a major employer in our  
7           community. We also have representatives from North  
8           Arkansas Community College. We have representatives  
9           from our Harrison Chamber of Commerce, and others  
10          that could not be with us but sent letters like  
11          Representative Ron McNair and Wabash Industries, as  
12          well as the North Arkansas Regional Medical Center.

13                 We have been looking for three years at  
14                 opportunities across our state. We have gone to  
15                 school of innovation conferences. We have looked  
16                 closely at the conversion charter program. And then  
17                 what really brought this I would say to the forefront  
18                 of our attention and to our point today is that our  
19                 college received the Workforce Planning grant, which  
20                 was an impetus for us to meet extensively over the  
21                 last year and work toward writing our workforce  
22                 planning grant, which I believe will be due June 1st.  
23                 And so we'd like to thank the college for that  
24                 collaboration. Also, Denise Airola has been  
25                 tremendously helpful to us in putting together our

1 program and even accompanied us when we went to the  
2 Salt Lake City tour of Early College High School.  
3 We've looked at Siloam Springs Manufacturing Academy,  
4 many other programs, and what we've done is take a  
5 thoughtful pieces and parts of each of those to what  
6 we feel will fit in our community to help address  
7 issues that we're seeing in our own town with  
8 providing students with college and career readiness  
9 and meaningful workforce opportunities as they go  
10 forward.

11 I would like to turn over to Mr. Keaster at this  
12 point who is our high school principal, who will give  
13 you more details about our advanced learning  
14 opportunity program.

15 MR. KEASTER: Thank you, Dr. Moss. My name is  
16 Bill Keaster; I'm the high school principal at  
17 Harrison. And I'm going to go through the PowerPoint  
18 here that I've prepared. I think we also had this in  
19 our board packet as well. Just to kind of give you  
20 an overview of what we are actually proposing, HALO  
21 is the Harrison Advanced Learning Opportunities. As  
22 Dr. Moss mentioned, there are several reasons for the  
23 HALO. We have toured Springdale School of  
24 Innovation, the Salt Lake City Innovations Early  
25 College High School, Pea Ridge, Career Academy of

1 Siloam Springs, and we've kind of brought that back  
2 to Harrison and with our partners sat down and talked  
3 and worked out some things as far as what we think  
4 would be beneficial to us.

5 Our mission is real simple. It's to maximize  
6 the learning of every scholar. We have a good  
7 traditional high school at Harrison. We're not  
8 perfect but we have a good high school. We're asking  
9 to implement this offer -- we're asking to implement  
10 this pilot program to offer other options for some of  
11 our students. Some students like the traditional  
12 high school that we have and they do very well.  
13 However, others are sometimes bored because the pace  
14 is too slow; they're ready to move on. Other  
15 students are too stressed because somewhere along the  
16 way they missed a concept and the pace is too fast  
17 for them. Also, you know, over the school --

18 (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: A dial tone was heard  
19 from the conference phone, indicating Board Member  
20 Vicki Saviers had disconnected the call.)

21 MR. KEASTER: Over our educational career, you  
22 can take a picture of the schools in 1920s, the  
23 1950s, the 1990s, and even in 2000s. Schools have  
24 changed very little. Yes, we have modernized; we  
25 have updated with technology; we've updated desks,

1 but the classroom itself is pretty much the same.  
2 The school is still -- you know -- we're trying  
3 different things. We're trying project based  
4 learning, we've implemented technology, but there  
5 still needs to be something more. We're currently on  
6 a seven-period day, seven 49-minute class periods.  
7 We have a 30-minute enrichment encore period that we  
8 call Gob time. But every minute of the day is  
9 scheduled for the students. This is the  
10 configuration on the left of the traditional  
11 classroom. Science students are in the science  
12 classroom, math students are in the math classroom,  
13 so-forth. What HALO would look like at Harrison High  
14 School next year is that students would learn in  
15 different classrooms wherever they feel the most  
16 comfortable. If they have a connection with that  
17 science teacher, why can they not do math in that  
18 science classroom? They would also be in a lab and  
19 I'll get more to the specifics of what that would  
20 look like here in a minute.

21 In our pilot year what we are proposing is to  
22 offer it to 100 students. These students would be  
23 our students. They could be special education  
24 students, they could be regular students, they could  
25 be AP students. Any student that is currently

1 enrolled in Harrison School District would have an  
2 opportunity to apply. Obviously, if we have more  
3 than 100 students apply then we would choose students  
4 based on a lottery selection system. We're proposing  
5 to start out in grades 10 and 11; 9th grade is not on  
6 our campus this year. We've currently passed a  
7 millage; 9th grade will be on our campus the 17-18  
8 school year. So we're proposing to offer -- to start  
9 with grades 10 and 11. This would only be for the  
10 four core subject areas: math, science, English  
11 language arts, and social studies. The four teachers  
12 that we have selected and have volunteered to be in  
13 this program are all currently certified, traditional  
14 certification with initial licensures in the subject  
15 areas that they teach. The curriculum is going to be  
16 facilitated by these teachers 24/7 through one-to-one  
17 technology. The teachers will have regular classes  
18 scheduled. The students will go in there, take the  
19 class, but in addition to that if students are  
20 working at a faster pace they may be allowed to go  
21 into a silent lab, another classroom to get some of  
22 their work online. However, for students that are  
23 slower or have struggled with some concepts the  
24 teacher would do a re-teach maybe that afternoon for  
25 some of those individual students, thereby lowering

1 the teacher-student ratio and providing extra help  
2 for those students that need it. Those students that  
3 are advanced and move on when they hit a stumbling  
4 block the teaching would simply schedule a mini-teach  
5 during the day and she would facilitate that lesson  
6 with those individual students on that particular  
7 lesson. The students that would be in our HALO  
8 program would still go to traditional classes, like  
9 agri, choir, band, athletics, family consumer  
10 science, so they -- we call these the brick-and-  
11 mortar classes. They would still attend for the 49  
12 minutes every day, whatever period was in their  
13 schedule. We would still have, you know, bells and  
14 that would kind of dictate where the students are at  
15 certain times of the day. Now in future years, you  
16 know, we're hoping to grow this to 200 students next  
17 year in grades 9 through 12.

18 One of the big pieces with this proposal is not  
19 just the curriculum and the pace and place and path  
20 for the students. A big piece of this program is the  
21 mentor-mentee program. Mentors will meet with these  
22 students once per week. These four teachers would  
23 have 25 students as their mentees. They meet with  
24 them once a week; whether they're ahead, behind, on  
25 track, they meet with them each week and set goals.

1           The mentors will view all subjects that the students  
2           are enrolled in and they keep track of that and they  
3           set those goals based on how well the student is  
4           doing. Mentors of students will define goals for the  
5           upcoming week and these will be shared with the  
6           parents. The student -- the mentors will continue to  
7           monitor the student progress, like I said, in all  
8           their classes and students will be classified by  
9           different levels of responsibility. We use the stop  
10          light. If a student is behind in a majority of their  
11          classes, they're considered red and they would have  
12          to go to their assigned classes. If they were  
13          yellow, you know, they may be behind in one or two  
14          classes; they would have to attend the class where  
15          they are behind. If a student is green or is on  
16          track or ahead of pace in all subjects, that student  
17          would be given the freedom to go to the classroom  
18          where they learn the best, whether it's the library,  
19          a silent lab, wherever they're comfortable with.  
20          They may have a relationship with their mentor and  
21          they feel comfortable learning in that mentor's  
22          classroom. So that's kind of how we've set up the  
23          students with the red, yellow and green.

24                   And let me point out the teacher -- the mentor  
25          teacher -- it says here the teacher dashboard sample;

1 when the mentor looks at an individual student, they  
2 don't just see how the student is progressing in  
3 their specific class. They see how the student is  
4 progressing in every single class in HALO that the  
5 student is participating in. That allows them to  
6 write goals and make sure that student stays on track  
7 in all of the core subject areas.

8 HALO will allow students more flexibility. It's  
9 going to be -- allow for more parent contact. And  
10 one thing I failed to mention, besides the weekly  
11 meetings with the students, the mentors will meet at  
12 least monthly with the parents. Obviously, if a  
13 student is struggling and we need more contact we're  
14 going to call that parent to come in and we will have  
15 more parent-teacher conferences on a one-on-one  
16 basis.

17 It gives the students some responsibility over  
18 their education. Right now they go into a classroom  
19 and they sit there, the teacher goes through the  
20 curriculum, the hope -- we hope at the appropriate  
21 pace. And sometimes the students get it and  
22 sometimes they don't. But this is kind of shifting  
23 the responsibility back to the student. It gives the  
24 students time to pursue their passion, what they're  
25 interested in. If they have finished a math class,

1           they go ahead and can start on another math class.  
2           And we're hoping then in grades 10, 11 and  
3           particularly in 12 this will allow students more of a  
4           choice to take concurrent credit classes, to maybe  
5           partner with some of our workforce partners, with job  
6           interns or possibly employment. So it just frees up  
7           a lot of time for the student and gives them control  
8           of their time, place, pace and path.

9           HALO is a personalized learning -- is  
10          personalized learning. It's also a blended program  
11          that provides a flexible and extended instructional  
12          day in a teacher facilitated personalized learning  
13          environment, alongside the expanded industry  
14          certifications and concurrent credit opportunities  
15          that we currently have and are looking to expand. We  
16          also think that this engagement, along with our  
17          project based learning, will increase student  
18          engagement and make it more possible for students to  
19          achieve and be better prepared so they're college and  
20          career ready.

21          The result: personalized instruction opens new  
22          options, opportunities and pathways to the future.  
23          We're not changing but one small section of the  
24          school. We're still going to have a traditional  
25          school like we currently do. We're just asking for

1 the option and the opportunity to have this HALO  
2 program to help some of our students when the pace is  
3 too fast or too slow. Thank you. And I'll be glad  
4 to answer any specific questions.

5 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. You have about five-  
6 and-a-half minutes to finish up your presentation.

7 SUPT. MOSS: Just to wrap up, this will allow us  
8 to have students flex in and out of the schedule as  
9 is appropriate to each student, to look at certain  
10 industry certifications or concurrent credit  
11 opportunity as well. In your packet I gave you some  
12 specific examples because it's always good when you  
13 have a student or a face to put with what this would  
14 allow. And we have a student in junior high right  
15 now that under the EAST umbrella took courses in A+  
16 CompTIA computer technician certification. We've  
17 actually had more than one junior high student pass  
18 that test and we were told when our 7th grader passed  
19 it that he may be the youngest one ever to do that.  
20 But we've been offering that under the EAST umbrella  
21 with that teacher of record when actually the person  
22 coming alongside has 13 years of industry experience  
23 and may actually teach a course for the college next  
24 fall. And so those specific licensure waivers would  
25 be the only ones that we would be asking for, not

1 within this core area.

2 Also within your packet we talk about a digital  
3 learning day and all of these waivers that we are  
4 requesting we have put a time limit on because I know  
5 we need to go back and re-examine. Our intent is in  
6 the next year to pursue the conversion charter  
7 application and we hope that we can then roll these  
8 into that. And so we would be willing to limit that  
9 to five years.

10 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Thank you. Is there  
11 anyone here to speak in opposition of the request for  
12 the waivers?

13 (BRIEF MOMENT OF SILENCE)

14 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Any questions now?  
15 Dr. Barth has a question.

16 DR. BARTH: Thanks for your presentation. My  
17 real question is you kept talking about examples of,  
18 you know, career oriented -- you used the waiver for  
19 career orientation. But are you limiting the waivers  
20 you're requesting only to those -- to those programs?

21 SUPT. MOSS: No, sir. It just is an added  
22 benefit of having this program and we would encourage  
23 all of our students to pursue and start thinking  
24 about what they're going to do post-secondary. But,  
25 no, we would not limit that.

1 DR. BARTH: Okay. That -- I mean, and that's --  
2 I think all the examples that you give make lots of  
3 sense. I just have some concerns about the potential  
4 use of this waiver beyond those career oriented  
5 examples. I don't know if that -- could you respond  
6 to that? I mean, is --

7 SUPT. MOSS: Well, I think that we realize that  
8 that is a tricky subject when you're looking to waive  
9 licensure and that's why we have been so specific in  
10 our application to designate the core teachers are  
11 licensed in those areas. And we are only looking at  
12 possible partnerships with groups like Pace  
13 Industries to do some manufacturing certifications.  
14 We've talked to North Arkansas College about  
15 Certified Nurse Assistant and then we already have  
16 this opportunity with our computer technician  
17 courses. So that's why we mentioned those  
18 specifically to point out that we're not asking to  
19 expand beyond that.

20 DR. BARTH: Okay. So just -- so you are not  
21 looking to go beyond those programs?

22 SUPT. MOSS: Right. We --

23 DR. BARTH: Okay.

24 SUPT. MOSS: And that's -- we wanted to put the  
25 Board at ease by only requesting those specifics.

1 DR. BARTH: Okay. I -- my brain is tired, so --

2 SUPT. MOSS: That's all right.

3 DR. BARTH: But I keep hearing -- I kept hearing  
4 different things. I kept hearing they were just  
5 examples and then I -- but it sounds like we're in  
6 consensus that these are the programs that would be  
7 -- where these waivers would be used.

8 SUPT. MOSS: Yes, sir. As elective credit.

9 DR. BARTH: Great. Thanks.

10 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Ms. Zook.

11 MS. ZOOK: Okay. I have several questions. Did  
12 you say five years?

13 SUPT. MOSS: Yes.

14 MS. ZOOK: Okay.

15 SUPT. MOSS: Or until such time that we're able  
16 to roll these into a conversion charter.

17 MS. ZOOK: Okay. And is there a reason you are  
18 asking for waivers, not school of innovation?

19 SUPT. MOSS: Just that that was an avenue that  
20 was available to us through 1240 and it seemed to be  
21 the one that would most expedite the process.

22 MS. ZOOK: Okay. Are you proposing concurrent  
23 credit for 9th graders as well?

24 SUPT. MOSS: If we have some 9th graders that  
25 could avail themselves of that, I would like to make

1           that opportunity -- I think our junior high students  
2           have told us or have shown us that in some instances  
3           we may be expecting a little too small amount from  
4           them. And I think that we do have some students that  
5           could possibly be successful.

6           MS. ZOOK: How many students do you have that  
7           are in a virtual academy?

8           SUPT. MOSS: Three.

9           MS. ZOOK: Okay. And have you spoken with the  
10          people at Virtual Academy to see how those waivers  
11          have increased student achievement?

12          SUPT. MOSS: No, ma'am.

13          MS. ZOOK: And which businesses are you  
14          partnering with?

15          SUPT. MOSS: Pace Industries is one example;  
16          North Arkansas Regional Medical Center; Wabash  
17          Industries; and -- let's see, have I left one out?

18          MS. ZOOK: Are you partnering with FedEx?

19          SUPT. MOSS: Yes. FedEx Freight is our -- also  
20          the executive at FedEx Freight is our school board  
21          president. He did also accompany us when we went to  
22          see Early College High School in Salt Lake. And we  
23          have our board resolution in the packet.

24          MS. ZOOK: Okay. And also now I'm going to ask  
25          two questions in your packet, so I don't know if you

1 have that in front of you or not.

2 SUPT. MOSS: I do.

3 MS. ZOOK: On page 3 of the four-page piece, I  
4 would like to better understand what you mean by the  
5 minimum 70% threshold for advanced?

6 SUPT. MOSS: Yes. Since we're doing a blended  
7 learning opportunity through some digitalized  
8 curriculum, as well as teacher directed curriculum,  
9 we feel like students within the Spark Learning  
10 Management System need to reach a 70% threshold or  
11 better before they move on to the next area.

12 MS. ZOOK: And typically 85% is considered  
13 mastery. Is there some reason why you picked below  
14 mastery?

15 SUPT. MOSS: I wasn't aware that that was. I  
16 know on our grading scale 70% is a C and so our  
17 students do move on when they get a C. We have  
18 talked to Ken Grover at Early College High School and  
19 I believe that that was the threshold that they sent  
20 [sic]. We can certainly -- or set. We can certainly  
21 entertain a different threshold. But looking at our  
22 grading scale 70% is considered average.

23 MS. ZOOK: I understand that, but I also  
24 understand the long-term retention. If it's not 85%  
25 it typically is not there. Okay. But, you know,

1 that's research. You and I can talk about that after  
2 while.

3 SUPT. MOSS: Certainly.

4 MS. ZOOK: Okay. And on page 4, explain about  
5 the computer work counting for two days proposal?

6 SUPT. MOSS: Yes. That's our digital learning  
7 day. And we set that one apart because we are very  
8 aware that you can approve things in whole or in part  
9 and we didn't want that completely wrapped up in our  
10 HALO program because that is a K-12 proposal.

11 Oftentimes we will find ourselves having to cancel  
12 for emergencies, such as inclement weather, and so we  
13 want to frontload student learning by talking to  
14 parents at parent orientation and parent-teacher  
15 conferences early in the school year, to get packets  
16 to go home with our students. We did a survey and  
17 found that about 90% of our households do have  
18 internet access and so we would make accommodations  
19 whether we had internet or not. But we feel like  
20 some of those days where we have to cancel -- and we  
21 set it at two maximum -- could certainly be days that  
22 we would not have to lose learning and tack maybe at  
23 the end of the school year after Aspire testing when  
24 we oftentimes may run into June and minds and hearts  
25 just aren't quite as focused at that point.

1 MS. ZOOK: Thanks.

2 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any other questions? Okay.  
3 If not, are we ready for a motion on A-8?

4 MS. ZOOK: Can we take them individually or do  
5 you -- is that -- I would recommend we take the  
6 waivers individually as opposed to as a whole, unless  
7 somebody wants -- if you want to take a motion for  
8 the whole and see if it passes, we can do that first.

9 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: How do you feel about it?

10 MS. ZOOK: Well, I likely would vote against it  
11 as a whole but it doesn't mean I'm against all of the  
12 waivers. But that's just one person.

13 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any other board member have  
14 a recommendation or --

15 MS. DEAN: Instead of individually, because  
16 that's a lot of waivers, waiver topics. Because I  
17 think they're organized by waiver topic.

18 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Is that something  
19 that -- let's try it by topic then, if there's no --  
20 what's the first motion?

21 COMMISSIONER KEY: I may need to get another  
22 tally sheet for this, Madam Chair. Could you look in  
23 your packet and see if --

24 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Here it is.

25 COMMISSIONER KEY: Just give me the whole stack.

1 All right. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. So what's the  
3 pleasure of the Board?

4 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

5 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Do we need a break? No?  
6 Okay. Well, let's get started then.

7 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Clay or Ms. Perry, could  
8 y'all come help us?

9 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Yeah. Do it one-by-one.  
10 The first one is flexible schedule. Is that correct?  
11 So what is the Board's pleasure as regard to the  
12 waiver request for flexible schedule?

13 MS. ZOOK: Can you point to me where that is?

14 MR. WILLIAMSON: Move to grant the waiver.

15 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: It's on page 1 of 4.

16 MS. ZOOK: Okay. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: And Mr. Williamson has  
18 moved to grant the waiver for flexible schedule. Is  
19 there a second?

20 MR. BLACK: Second.

21 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Second by Mr. Black.  
22 All in favor?

23 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

24 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any opposed?

25 The second waiver is teacher licensure non-core

1 instructor for industry certification related to  
2 courses. What's the pleasure of the Board?

3 MS. CHAMBERS: Move to approve.

4 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Move to approve by Ms.  
5 Chambers. Is there a second?

6 MS. DEAN: Second.

7 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Second by Ms. Dean. All in  
8 favor?

9 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

10 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any opposed?

11 The next one is grading within the personalized  
12 learning program. What's the pleasure of the Board?

13 MS. ZOOK: I move that we deny that.

14 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Moved to deny by Ms. Zook.

15 MR. WILLIAMSON: Second.

16 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Second by Mr. Williamson.  
17 All in favor?

18 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

19 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any opposed?

20 Okay. The next one is digital learning days.

21 MS. CHAMBERS: Move to approve.

22 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Move to approve by Ms.  
23 Chambers.

24 MS. ZOOK: Second.

25 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Second by Ms. Zook. All in

1 favor?

2 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

3 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any opposed? Motion -- the  
4 motion for the waiver to be approved is carried.

5 The next is status standard -- standard --  
6 statute -- sorry -- slash standard slash rule to be  
7 waived. Is that right?

8 MS. CLAY: That's all of them. That's just an  
9 extra place on the form.

10 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: So is that it?

11 COMMISSIONER KEY: Uh-huh.

12 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Then we have, what, four  
13 motions approved and one denied.

14 MS. ZOOK: Unless they want to modify --

15 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Three approved, one denied.  
16 Okay.

17 If you're clear, Harrison -- are you clear on  
18 the motions -- I mean, on the waivers that were  
19 granted and the one that was denied?

20 SUPT. MOSS: Yes. I would ask since we are --  
21 since the threshold of 70% for a student to move on  
22 was denied, I'm not sure -- and I'm looking over at  
23 Denise because for students to move on within the  
24 content does that mean that whether they've mastered  
25 it or not they move on, like with a 50%, 60%, like

1 traditional grading, or are you saying we need to set  
2 that threshold higher? I'm a little confused.

3 MS. ZOOK: I can only speak for myself, but I  
4 know for knowledge and comprehension 70% is  
5 acceptable, but I know for an analysis and synthesis  
6 evaluation it would need to be 85%. That was my  
7 reason, but I don't -- I can't speak for anyone else.

8 SUPT. MOSS: So does that mean then, Ms. Clay,  
9 that we would go to a traditional grading scale for  
10 this program?

11 MS. CLAY: (Nodding head up and down.)

12 SUPT. MOSS: Okay.

13 MS. ZOOK: Okay. My colleagues have corrected  
14 me, saying that you're simply looking at a pass/fail.  
15 And with that in mind, then I can support the motion  
16 if we want to rethink it.

17 COMMISSIONER KEY: I want to make sure, Dr.  
18 Moss, you're talking about if we go back -- if you  
19 use 60% as a D, does that become passing and they  
20 make 60 and then they move on? I think that works  
21 against what Ms. Zook --

22 SUPT. MOSS: Yes. Within the traditional  
23 grading scale that is the process.

24 MS. ZOOK: I guess my thought was if the student  
25 is taking this on a computer without much interaction

1 with his other students or with live teacher right  
2 there in the classroom I felt uncomfortable with the  
3 70%. But if that's not what this says, then I've  
4 misunderstood it and I can live with it.

5 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: So what does that mean you  
6 can live with it? Do you --

7 MS. ZOOK: Well, it's very difficult to read  
8 these the way they're written and there is no  
9 standardized way they're written.

10 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: No. I mean in terms of the  
11 motion made and the second that passed. So you're  
12 wanting to un-do that and make another --

13 MS. ZOOK: Well, I was just one vote so I don't  
14 know how much it passed by.

15 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: It passed. It passed-  
16 passed.

17 MS. ZOOK: Okay.

18 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Yeah. So --

19 SUPT. MOSS: Right. And I think it's important  
20 for us to point out they will still have classroom  
21 instruction. Those are your classroom meetings.  
22 This just simply allows them to flex in and out of  
23 that schedule to take the industry certification and  
24 concurrent credit courses if they're offered at a  
25 different time, and whether that student is on that

1 red, yellow or green path. We are not taking away  
2 the teacher interaction piece. It's very much a  
3 blended and facilitated program.

4 DR. BARTH: How will it be denoted on the  
5 student transcript?

6 SUPT. MOSS: It would just be a regular course  
7 code like all the others because it's still teacher  
8 of record.

9 DR. BARTH: But in terms of the grade -- so they  
10 will have a number of courses on their transcript  
11 that have the traditional grading scale. Correct?

12 SUPT. MOSS: Yes.

13 DR. BARTH: And then there will be this subset  
14 of courses that have -- that would just essentially  
15 be a pass/fail. Right?

16 SUPT. MOSS: No. We would still be able to  
17 offer the A/Bs or whatever to match with that. This  
18 is just simply saying that for them to move on with  
19 this curriculum content we want them to at least have  
20 gotten the 70% within that learning management  
21 system.

22 DR. BARTH: Okay.

23 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: So our denial of that  
24 waiver does what to you now?

25 SUPT. MOSS: I'm not sure. That's why I looked

1 at Ms. Clay and Ms. Airola for some guidance with  
2 that. I think typically we would just go back to the  
3 -- to more of a --

4 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Could we ask Dr. Airola --  
5 I wanted to pronounce it like you did and that's not  
6 right; Airola. She's coming forward. Dr. Airola,  
7 would you come and give us some guidance?

8 DR. AIROLA: I think we're actually -- you all  
9 are at a level of detail that you rarely see in a  
10 situation like this. The uniform grading scale  
11 that's out there right now allows a student to get  
12 credit for a Carnegie unit at various levels of the  
13 assigned grade which are equated to percentages of  
14 points within the course itself that they earn over  
15 the course. And what the Harrison district is saying  
16 is that within this program, in order to allow a  
17 student to move on within that curriculum -- and in  
18 effect it allows them to complete a course if they do  
19 attain at least 70% of -- they score a 70% within the  
20 assessments and assignments that are within that  
21 course. What's behind that is and what is something  
22 that you don't hear about -- I mean, that's true  
23 everywhere in the state of Arkansas that you have  
24 this uniform grading scale and kids are getting  
25 Carnegie units based on their points earned within

1 the course, and generally they're getting a credit if  
2 they get 60% or more of the points. So in some ways  
3 this is setting a slightly higher standard. The  
4 issue that I think that, Ms. Zook, you were concerned  
5 about is does that impact the rigor with which we're  
6 allowing students to move from course to course. And  
7 that concern really is something that goes back --  
8 it's not unique to Harrison. It's everybody has this  
9 concern: what does a 70 mean and is that 70 with a  
10 high level of rigor or not, and that is usually  
11 handled within the course approvals and within the  
12 local curriculums. So that's an issue we have.  
13 Whether you're doing this in a flexible way in  
14 allowing students to move at their own pace and in a  
15 sense progress because they have demonstrated that  
16 they have that content within that course, to a  
17 certain degree you're still going to have this rigor  
18 question whether it's within this flexible timing  
19 that students move on or whether it's in a  
20 traditional course. In a sense, you did increase the  
21 requirement by putting it at a 70 as opposed to using  
22 the uniform grading scale of a 60. So the onus is  
23 still on the district to insure that students are  
24 achieving those scores with rigorous material and the  
25 catch that we have in place for that is the fact that

1 we do have statewide summative assessments that help  
2 us to see whether or not students are demonstrating  
3 proficiency on these rigorous levels. And because we  
4 are offering -- you know -- now that we're requiring  
5 -- I say "offering," but now that we -- as a state we  
6 have these more rigorous exams, the PARCC last year  
7 and now the ACT Aspire this year, we are getting a  
8 sense from that and that information can feed back to  
9 your concerns. But that's true for all high schools  
10 that are given credit and allowing students to move  
11 forward. The difference here is they're not chained  
12 to the timing. If the student gets it and  
13 demonstrates it, they can move on. So -- and there  
14 are other protections in place with the course  
15 curriculum and with approval of materials to support  
16 the course curriculum. Does that make -- does that  
17 help?

18 MR. WILLIAMSON: That helped me a lot.

19 MS. ZOOK: It does. I guess I'm just concerned  
20 that, you know, a really capable student, given two-  
21 thirds of the year's information, likely might come  
22 up and make a C when given all of it and taken they  
23 could, you know, actually master it and be ready for  
24 the next. I just -- it's the same concern I have  
25 about 9th graders having concurrent credit.

1 DR. AIROLA: Sure.

2 MS. ZOOK: There's a certain level of  
3 intellectual and emotional maturity needed to really  
4 know a subject thoroughly and be able to apply it in  
5 other subjects and in life, and so that was my  
6 concern.

7 DR. AIROLA: And that's -- we were just -- that  
8 70 would be the minimum, which is still higher than  
9 the current minimum in the uniform grading scale.  
10 And I definitely understand your concern. You will  
11 have kids who are high achievers who tend to be the  
12 over-achiever type that will -- they -- that 70 won't  
13 be good enough for them; they compulsively have to  
14 have that A. I've lived that. And then I also have  
15 my own children who, though capable of an A, would  
16 usually say to me, "C is credit." And so in this  
17 case those kids are able to move on and do things  
18 within their area of passion and so it does allow  
19 those kids some flexibility to really excel and do  
20 better and go more deeply. They're not reducing the  
21 minimum it takes to move on; they're actually  
22 increasing the minimum and then allowing these kids  
23 to really explore areas and spend more time in areas  
24 of passion where they might discover that doing more  
25 than just the minimum actually has its rewards. And

1 right now the system isn't set up to give them as  
2 many of those opportunities as we hope that through  
3 this plan these students will have. This is -- you  
4 know -- it is an innovation so-to-speak, the idea  
5 behind this, and it is something that we have seen  
6 others -- in other places we visited, places where  
7 this is having great results. And I will say that  
8 this team -- when we went to Salt Lake City there  
9 were 12 of them and two from our office that did this  
10 trip. And that commitment to have those people there  
11 to learn more -- they're very interested in the  
12 success of this for their students and I think it's  
13 something that we as a state can also learn from as  
14 they work through this because it's not easy. But we  
15 have looked at models that have been successful in  
16 improving outcomes for students and they're modeling  
17 -- it's tweaked for their community but they are  
18 using the successful elements that they've seen in  
19 these other places, bringing that together and then  
20 making it work for the community. So it's an  
21 opportunity to see if this can really give kids that  
22 flexibility and they can rise to the occasion.  
23 Oftentimes we don't give kids the flexibility and so  
24 they do what they have to do to get by.

25 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Ms. Dean, and then

1 Ms. Chambers.

2 MS. DEAN: No, go ahead.

3 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Ms. Chambers.

4 MS. CHAMBERS: I was just going to say based on  
5 this conversation I would change my vote if given the  
6 opportunity.

7 DR. BARTH: So I would move to rescind the  
8 previous vote on --

9 MR. WILLIAMSON: Second.

10 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: All in favor of rescinding  
11 that vote? I'm sorry.

12 MS. CLAY: One thing. The effect is going to be  
13 the same but since you are wanting to change a motion  
14 that was made in this meeting the correct motion is a  
15 motion to reconsider. Rescission is actually if it's  
16 at a later meeting.

17 DR. BARTH: Okay. I move to reconsider the  
18 previous --

19 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Dr. Barth has moved to  
20 reconsider --

21 MS. ZOOK: Second.

22 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: -- the denial of this  
23 waiver and Ms. Zook has seconded. All in favor?

24 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

25 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any opposed? Okay.

1           Then we have to move to approve it. Okay. So  
2 now we're waiting on a second motion. Do we have a  
3 motion to do something else with it?

4           MS. ZOOK: I'll make the motion but I want to  
5 caution Harrison, only because you're standing in  
6 front of us right now, and others, it troubles me  
7 greatly that districts are coming in asking for  
8 waivers but they haven't spoken with the charter who  
9 has the waiver to see if it in fact has been helpful  
10 to the achievement and the performance of students.  
11 You know, I want to know if that waiver has helped --  
12 and if it hasn't, then we don't want to keep giving  
13 waivers to other people and then spread it among more  
14 kids. So I'm sorry that you're having to be the one  
15 standing in front of me at this moment, but I want my  
16 fellow board members to understand that bothers me  
17 and for any of the people who are planning on coming  
18 in the future I will continue to ask this question  
19 and it will continue to give me pause when they say  
20 no.

21           CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. So, now to your  
22 motion.

23           MS. ZOOK: I move that we approve the grading  
24 within the personalized learning program.

25           CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Is there a second?

1 MS. CHAMBERS: Second.

2 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: All in favor?

3 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

4 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any opposed?

5 SUPT. MOSS: Thank you very much.

6 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Thank you.

7 Okay. A-9 and A-10 have been pulled.

8 We need a five-minute break.

9 (BREAK: 3:55-4:05 P.M.)

10 A-11: CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENT TO JNPSD/PCSSD DETACHMENT  
11 AGREEMENT

12 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: We have a few more agenda  
13 items; we want to move on. The next one is A-11,  
14 Consideration of Amendment to the Jacksonville North  
15 Pulaski School District/Pulaski County Special School  
16 District Detachment Agreement. And we have Tony  
17 Wood. I don't see Dr. Guess. Oh, there he is.  
18 Where have you been?

19 DR. GUESS: I'm so tall you missed me.

20 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: No comment. So I don't  
21 know how you proceed. I guess you start.

22 DR. GUESS: Well, these are two simple  
23 clarifications of issues that have surfaced. They  
24 have to do with the distribution of ALE funding and  
25 the other one is declining enrollments. And they are

1 issues that we have worked on for quite sometime and  
2 agree and have memorialized those in this amendment  
3 to our detachment agreement. So we simply bring it  
4 before you -- I'm sorry -- we bring it before you for  
5 your approval because the original detachment  
6 agreement was approved at this Board.

7 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Any questions from  
8 the Board? Okay. Then what is the pleasure of the  
9 Board?

10 DR. BARTH: Move approval of the additions to  
11 the agreement.

12 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Is there a second?

13 MR. WILLIAMSON: Second.

14 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: All in favor?

15 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

16 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any opposed?

17 Did you get that, Ms. Coffman? I'm sorry. It  
18 was moved by Dr. Barth, seconded by Mr. Williamson.

19 Thank you.

20 DR. GUESS: Would you like us to stay and --

21 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: No.

22 DR. GUESS: -- bring this certain spirit --

23 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: No.

24 DR. GUESS: -- of pleasure -- okay.

25 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: No.

1 DR. GUESS: Thank you, ma'am.

2 A-13: CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF NOMINATED  
3 MEMBERS FOR THE PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE STANDARDS BOARD TO  
4 REPLACE MEMBERS WHOSE TERMS ARE VACANT OR EXPIRING JUNE 30,  
5 2016

6 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Moving on to A-13,  
7 Consideration of Request for Approval of Nominated  
8 Members for the Professional Licensure Standards  
9 Board to Replace Members Whose Terms are Vacant or  
10 Expiring June 30, 2016. And that is Kathy Howell.

11 MS. HOWELL: Good afternoon.

12 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Good afternoon.

13 MS. HOWELL: Yes. Under Arkansas Code 6-17-422  
14 members of the PLSB are nominated by their respective  
15 parties. Today the people that have been nominated  
16 were nominated by the Arkansas Association of  
17 Colleges for Teacher Education. We have, first of  
18 all, Dr. Raymond "Donny" Lee, who is Dean at Harding  
19 University. He will actually be replacing Dr. Brad  
20 Baine. We have Dr. Victoria Groves-Scott, Dean of  
21 the College of Education at the University of Central  
22 Arkansas, who will represent deans with knowledge of  
23 licensure issues. And Dr. Zaidy Mohdzain, Dean of  
24 the College of Education, Southern Arkansas  
25 University, who will -- who has been re-nominated, so

1 he will be returning to the Board.

2 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: What's the pleasure of the  
3 Board concerning A-13?

4 MS. REITH: Move to approve the nominated  
5 members.

6 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: It's been moved by Ms.  
7 Reith. Is there a second?

8 MS. DEAN: Second.

9 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Second by Ms. Dean. Any  
10 discussion? All in favor?

11 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

12 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any opposed? Motion  
13 carries. Thank you.

14 MS. HOWELL: Thank you.

15 A-14: REQUEST FOR APPROVAL TO USE PSAT AS AN OPTIONAL COLLEGE  
16 AND CAREER READINESS ASSESSMENT

17 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Hope Allen is next, Request  
18 for Approval to use PSAT as an Optional College and  
19 Career Readiness Assessment.

20 MS. ALLEN: Yes. It's the desire of the  
21 Department of Education to continue to pay for the  
22 PSAT for students in grade 10 for districts that  
23 choose to participate and we would like to pay for  
24 this with the at-risk funding which we have done for  
25 several years now. And just as a note, last year we

1 had around 10,000 students participate and upon  
2 surveying schools early, over the past two weeks, we  
3 have about 15 -- excuse me -- 10,000 students. We  
4 have about 15,500 students currently that are  
5 estimated to participate, so that is growing and we  
6 would like to continue to offer that program.

7 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. What is the pleasure  
8 of the Board for 14?

9 DR. BARTH: Just a question. So are we reaching  
10 a point where the money is about to run out for that?

11 MS. ALLEN: No. There's still money within at-  
12 risk funding to pay for that. The way we do at-risk  
13 is after the PSAT is paid for then we distribute the  
14 rest of those funds in grants. And so we're still at  
15 a level we're able to do that.

16 DR. BARTH: Okay.

17 MS. ZOOK: Is it just for 10th graders? So not  
18 11th?

19 MS. ALLEN: The Department of Education will pay  
20 for 10th graders, then schools can administer to 11th  
21 graders if they choose. That's the National Merit  
22 qualification test.

23 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Any other questions?  
24 What's the pleasure of the Board?

25 MS. DEAN: Move to approve.

1 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Move to approve by Ms.  
2 Dean. Was that you?

3 MS. DEAN: Yes.

4 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Yeah. Okay. Is there a  
5 second?

6 MR. WILLIAMSON: Second.

7 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: By Mr. Williamson. All in  
8 favor?

9 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

10 MS. ALLEN: Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any opposed? Motion  
12 carries.

13 MS. ALLEN: Thank you.

14 A-15: REQUEST FOR APPROVAL: HIGH SCHOOL MATH COURSES

15 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: A-15, Thomas Coy, Request  
16 for Approval: High School Math Courses.

17 MR. COY: Yes. Madam Chair, Members of the  
18 Board, Commissioner Key, thank you for having me  
19 today. Last month I was here and we approved the K-  
20 12 math standards that had been revised by the  
21 educators in Arkansas. We've simply taken those 9-12  
22 standards and organized them into 15 different high  
23 school courses, some which are required to be offered  
24 by schools across the state, others as options for  
25 math courses beyond Algebra II. So with -- I'm happy

1 to answer any questions about those courses that we  
2 are proposing. But, again, this is just an extension  
3 of the work that had already been done by that K-12  
4 group that we assembled to review and revise the  
5 Common Core standards and make them Arkansas  
6 mathematics standards.

7 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Are there any  
8 questions? Okay. What is your -- oh.

9 MS. DEAN: Just a comment.

10 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay.

11 MS. DEAN: I'd just like to thank Mr. Coy and  
12 the group that did that from one of our requests when  
13 I was on the Common Core Review Council. So they've  
14 done an excellent job, so I just want to commend them  
15 for that.

16 MR. COY: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Great. Okay.

18 MS. DEAN: And I'd like to move to approve.

19 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Move to approve by Ms.  
20 Dean. Is there a second?

21 DR. BARTH: Second.

22 MS. ZOOK: Second.

23 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Second by Ms. Zook. All in  
24 favor? You beat Mr. -- beat somebody. Okay. All in  
25 favor?

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(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any opposed? Okay.

A-16: CONSIDERATION FOR FINAL APPROVAL: ADE AND ASBN RULES  
GOVERNING THE ADMINISTRATION OF INSULIN AND GLUCAGON

CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: We're down to A-16,  
Consideration for Final Approval: ADE and ASBN Rules  
Governing the Administration of Insulin and Glucagon.

MR. BIGGS: Glucagon.

CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: That's what it looks like.  
You're not Ms. Davis, but anyway --

MR. BIGGS: No, I'm not nearly as easy on the  
eyes as Ms. Davis, I apologize, but I'm going to try  
my best to fill in for her. Cory Biggs, Staff  
Attorney. These rules were approved by the State  
Board on March 10th. A public comment hearing was  
held on March 22nd and the public comment period  
expired on April 12th. We did receive comments and  
revisions were made, but no substantive changes, and  
the Governor's office has approved. It's my  
understanding that these rules basically mirror the  
State Board of Nursing's rules.

CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Any questions for  
Mr. Biggs?

MS. ZOOK: Yeah. What about the question that  
the Prairie Grove RN posed?

1 MR. BIGGS: Oh, with her concerns?

2 MS. ZOOK: Yes.

3 MR. BIGGS: Well, I guess, first off, what the  
4 changes to the -- or what the State Board of  
5 Nursing's changes to this brought on were strictly  
6 brought on by law. So while we certainly considered  
7 her concerns, there's not really anything that we  
8 could do to the language of the rules that would  
9 address those concerns because we're just following  
10 the law.

11 MS. ZOOK: Did -- does somebody communicate it  
12 with sentences like that or do you just say  
13 considered and didn't change? I mean, does she get  
14 feedback as to why?

15 MR. BIGGS: I am not sure. I will have to check  
16 with Ms. Davis. I can --

17 MS. ZOOK: Yeah.

18 MR. BIGGS: I can certainly make sure that we  
19 follow-up with her.

20 MS. ZOOK: Yeah. I think, you know, that would  
21 -- just a good PR kind of move. Thank you.

22 MR. BIGGS: Yes, ma'am.

23 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any other questions? Could  
24 I get a motion?

25 DR. BARTH: Move final approval.

1 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Moved by Dr. Barth.

2 Second?

3 MS. REITH: Second.

4 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: From MS. Reith. All in  
5 favor?

6 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

7 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any opposed?

8 MR. BIGGS: Thank you.

9 A-17: CONSIDERATION FOR EMERGENCY APPROVAL - ADE RULES  
10 GOVERNING ARKANSAS QUALIFIED TEACHER REQUIREMENTS

11 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: A-17, Consideration for  
12 Emergency Approval - ADE Rules Governing Arkansas  
13 Qualified Teacher Requirements. Ms. Reinhart.

14 MS. REINHART: Thank you. Cheryl Reinhart,  
15 Department of Education. These are rules that  
16 Commissioner -- Assistant Commissioner Ivy Pfeffer  
17 reported to you about last month and the rules apply  
18 only to certain categories of teachers. The first is  
19 those who have -- who work in an area that have a  
20 waiver from licensure from a charter school or a  
21 public school district, those who are special  
22 education teachers, and teaching in multiple subject  
23 areas, and also having ALE teachers involved. So  
24 those are the only categories that these apply to and  
25 it only applies to core subject areas as it's defined

1 in the rules. We've kept the house matrix because as  
2 this is basically a rule during a transition time.  
3 Under the -- since the implementation of ESSA, we are  
4 not wanting to do a major revision at this time to  
5 the house matrix. So the rules are basically in  
6 order to insure that we continue having quality  
7 educators in core subjects, to be able to meet our  
8 requirements and obligations with respect to special  
9 education teachers with the federal government, and  
10 to continue to meet our rules that are in place for  
11 ALE teachers as well. The emergency basically arose  
12 as kind of a perfect storm; we had the situation with  
13 school district waivers and then with HQT being  
14 eliminated from ESSA and then having special  
15 education needs to -- needing to report to the  
16 federal government on how we're going to handle those  
17 special education teachers. So as it all came  
18 together we felt that it was important to have an  
19 emergency rule at this time so that we can -- school  
20 districts will know who they need to hire, what the  
21 requirements are going to be. And I'll be happy to  
22 answer any other questions you might have.

23 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Any questions? Ms.  
24 Zook.

25 MS. ZOOK: So will there be a time when we will

1 put these out for public comment? Because I expect  
2 we would get a lot.

3 MS. REINHART: They are out for public comment  
4 because you voted on that on your consent agenda this  
5 morning.

6 MS. ZOOK: Okay.

7 MS. REINHART: So we will put those -- those  
8 rules we put through the usual public comment  
9 process.

10 MS. ZOOK: Okay. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Okay. Any other --

12 MS. ZOOK: I move that we approve.

13 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Move approval by Ms. Zook.  
14 Second?

15 MR. BLACK: Second.

16 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Second by Mr. Black.

17 Okay. I would've thought about saving these  
18 words till next month, but parting is such sweet  
19 sorrow, according to Shakespeare, and according to me  
20 today. Can we get a motion for adjournment?

21 MS. REITH: We need to vote.

22 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Oh, I'm sorry. Oh, I'm  
23 trying to leave too early. All in favor?

24 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

25 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Any opposed?

1 Now we'll depart with a motion for adjournment.  
2 I got ahead of myself.

3 MR. BLACK: So moved.

4 MS. ZOOK: Were you going to say something?

5 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Just saying -- no, I wasn't  
6 going to say anything.

7 MS. DEAN: It was moved by Mr. Black. Is that  
8 what you're asking?

9 (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: Ms. Dean was speaking  
10 to Ms. Coffman.)

11 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Yeah, it was moved by Mr.  
12 Black. I got delirious. It just got convoluted in  
13 all this stuff.

14 MS. COFFMAN: I'm waiting on a motion for  
15 adjournment.

16 MS. DEAN: That's what I'm saying.

17 CHAIRPERSON NEWTON: Yeah.

18 MS. DEAN: Mr. Black moved, and second by --

19 DR. BARTH: I second it.  
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22 (The meeting was adjourned at approx. 4:20 p.m.)  
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A-1: ARKANSAS BETTER CHANCE

EXHIBIT ONE (1)

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A-2: ARKANSAS BETTER CHANCE

EXHIBIT ONE (1)

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A-3: LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT

EXHIBIT ONE (1)

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A-3: LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT

EXHIBIT TWO (2)

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A-4: SCHOOL CHOICE APPEAL - WARREN

EXHIBIT ONE (1)



	<b>224:15</b>	<b>academic (54)</b>	<b>21:20;32:19;</b>	<b>121:17;131:19;</b>
<b>\$</b>	<b>A-15 (2)</b>	16:19,22;24:21;	<b>111:11</b>	<b>132:1;136:18;161:8;</b>
<b>\$111,000,000 (2)</b>	226:14,15	25:20,24;47:24;	<b>achieve (2)</b>	<b>163:11;170:18;</b>
9:5,17	<b>A-16 (2)</b>	48:15,23;49:15,21;	101:21;199:19	<b>192:20;200:17,21,23;</b>
<b>\$24,000,000 (2)</b>	228:3,5	50:22,24;51:1,12,16,	<b>achievement (6)</b>	<b>214:8;216:23;</b>
25:11,14	<b>A-17 (2)</b>	25;52:13;54:24;56:6,	24:22;27:13;49:10;	<b>217:21,25;219:15;</b>
<b>\$46.4 (1)</b>	230:9,11	9;65:14;66:1;67:1;	130:17;204:11;	<b>223:19</b>
38:6	<b>A-2 (6)</b>	76:2;82:1,7;86:9,12;	220:10	<b>adamant (1)</b>
<b>\$48.3 (3)</b>	8:6;9:23;10:7,19,	98:14;104:4;125:20,	<b>achievers (2)</b>	152:1
38:5,6,6	23;235:24	24;128:4,25,25;	27:5;217:11	<b>Adams (10)</b>
<b>\$5,000 (1)</b>	<b>A-3 (7)</b>	130:1,3,9;132:3;	<b>achieving (3)</b>	11:19,25;12:2;
22:14	11:11,13;113:2,5;	146:11,23;147:22;	36:16;109:8;	16:13,21;17:15,25;
<b>\$7,000,000 (1)</b>	115:8;236:24;237:24	148:1,2,23;151:25;	215:24	18:2,4;53:7
24:2	<b>A-4 (8)</b>	153:12;158:2,6,17;	<b>acknowledgement (1)</b>	<b>add (11)</b>
	112:1;138:25;	161:20;164:7;165:5;	122:16	8:21;60:5,12;
	139:2;140:2,15;	172:19	<b>acknowledging (1)</b>	132:19;136:8;156:3;
<b>[</b>	149:3;166:18;238:24	<b>academically (2)</b>	123:3	165:1;171:14,16;
<b>[APPLAUSE (1)</b>	<b>A-5 (4)</b>	25:22;81:21	<b>acquainted (2)</b>	177:25;190:17
74:11	140:11,14;150:1;	<b>academics (2)</b>	33:9,10	<b>Addams (1)</b>
<b>[AUDIENCE (38)</b>	157:11	68:19;95:25	<b>acquiesce (1)</b>	27:20
21:18;22:9;23:9;	<b>A-6 (2)</b>	<b>Academy (28)</b>	41:13	<b>adding (3)</b>
24:9;25:13;33:15;	158:1,3	48:18;70:14;82:6;	<b>acquisition (1)</b>	66:5;172:3;201:21
34:23;37:21;39:14;	<b>A-7 (6)</b>	92:21;109:7;153:21;	191:5	<b>adding (1)</b>
41:23;42:15;64:21;	112:8;113:1,4,6;	158:1,2,5,5,15,16,17;	<b>across (4)</b>	74:3
66:10;67:8;72:24;	169:2,4	159:1,7,10,19,20;	179:10,14;191:14;	<b>addition (4)</b>
74:8;77:1;79:25;	<b>A-8 (3)</b>	160:25;162:7;	226:24	9:4;54:22;184:1;
80:10;82:20;83:22;	189:11,13;207:3	164:20;167:7,12,14;	<b>ACSIP (4)</b>	195:19
86:25;89:1;91:3,8,	<b>A-9 (1)</b>	192:3,25;204:7,10	125:15;126:18;	<b>additional (14)</b>
18;94:12;96:18;98:3;	221:7	<b>accelerate (1)</b>	128:7,7	5:10;10:11,14;
101:5;102:18;	<b>abandon (3)</b>	122:15	<b>ACT (18)</b>	38:4;46:24;62:6;
104:22;106:3;	19:2,4;37:18	<b>accept (4)</b>	51:4,8,14,18;	120:22;132:16;
108:18;110:22;	<b>ABC (2)</b>	40:6;43:17,19;	54:19;55:20,23;	135:1;137:8;165:1;
115:6;117:25;123:11	6:3;8:15	110:18	85:17;123:25;	166:9;168:1;171:24
<b>[ps] (2)</b>	<b>ability (1)</b>	<b>acceptable (1)</b>	132:21;133:11;	<b>additionally (2)</b>
33:2,4	70:14	211:5	142:5;163:19,21;	40:7;41:3
<b>[sic] (4)</b>	<b>able (39)</b>	<b>accepted (1)</b>	169:8;180:19;	<b>additions (1)</b>
22:13;28:25;99:1;	6:2,6,10,12,21;	152:4	189:17;216:7	222:10
205:20	60:9;86:19;88:24;	<b>access (2)</b>	<b>ACT/ACT (1)</b>	<b>address (12)</b>
	104:17,18,19;122:13;	99:14;206:18	135:6	11:21;45:16,17;
<b>=</b>	123:1;141:12;145:9,	<b>accessibility (1)</b>	<b>acting (1)</b>	88:10;92:6;94:19;
	13;150:25;151:7;	119:9	111:23	116:11;148:19;
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