

ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

JANUARY 13, 2022
10:00 A.M.

A P P E A R A N C E S

BOARD MEMBERS:

MS. OUIDA NEWTON, Chairman
DR. SARAH MOORE, Vice Chairman
DR. FITZGERALD HILL
MS. KATHY McFETRIDGE
MS. ADRIENNE WOODS
MR. STEVE SUTTON
DR. BETH ANNE RANKIN
MR. RANDY HENDERSON
MS. CHARISSE DEAN

NON-VOTING PARTICIPANTS:

MR. JOHNNY KEY, Secretary of Education
MS. SUSANNA POST, Arkansas Teacher of the Year
DR. IVY PFEFFER, Deputy Commissioner
MS. STACY SMITH, Deputy Commissioner
MS. KARLI SARACINI, Assistant Commissioner
MS. DEBORAH COFFMAN, Assistant Commissioner
MR. MATTHEW SUTHERLIN, Interim Charter Director

DESE LEGAL COUNSEL:

MS. LORI FRENO, General Counsel

LOCATION:

ARKANSAS DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
- Auditorium
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Little Rock, AR 72201

I N D E X

	Page
1. Request for Waiver- LA-22-006; Emily Melton	3
2. Consideration of Requests for Act 1240 Waivers Lee County School District	16
3. District Conversion Charter Renewals	34
4. District Conversion Charter Renewals - Cabot ACE	35
5. District Conversion Charter Renewals - Hot Springs Junior Academy	40
6. District Conversion Charter Renewals - Cross County Elementary	42
7. District Conversion Charter Renewals - Lincoln High School	43
8. District Conversion Charter Renewals - Prairie Grove High School	44
9. District Conversion Charter Renewals - North Little Rock Center of Excellence	46
10. Open Enrollment Charter Renewals	47
11. Open Enrollment Charter Renewals - The Excel Center	47
12. Open Enrollment Charter Renewals - River Valley Virtual Academy.	49
13. Open Enrollment Charter Renewals - Arkansas Lighthouse Academies	50
14. Open Enrollment Charter Renewals - Exalt Academy of Southwest Little Rock	52
Conclusion of Action Agenda	54
Court Reporter's Certificate	55

1 information. And so it is so important for the
2 individual to be here so you can ask questions and
3 clarify.

4 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

5 MS. SARACINI: Okay. So they're asking a
6 request for a disqualifying offense on the child
7 maltreatment, and so I'm going to turn it over --

8 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Can I get --

9 MS. SARACINI: Yes.

10 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: -- Ms. Freno to start first?
11 Ms. Freno, would you come --

12 MS. FRENO: Uh-huh.

13 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: -- and give us kind of the
14 procedure that we need to follow.

15 MS. FRENO: All the witnesses who are not
16 lawyers will need to be sworn in. The -- each party
17 gets the opportunity to make a five-minute opening
18 statement. Ms. Saracini has indicated she does --
19 will not be making an opening statement. After that,
20 each party gets twenty minutes to present, starting
21 with the educator.

22 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right. So
23 anyone that is going to testify, would you stand and
24 raise your right hand, please. Do you swear or
25 affirm that the testimony you're about to give shall

1 be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
2 truth?

3 MS. MELTON: Yes.

4 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Thank you. And I think Ms.
5 Saracini has waived so --

6 MR. ALAGOOD: Okay.

7 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: You're welcome to come.

8 MR. ALAGOOD: Okay. Come on up here with me,
9 Emily. My name is Greg Alagood, and this is Emily
10 Melton from Huntsville. Do each of you have this
11 little four-page exhibit packet that we furnished?
12 It's a coversheet and then there is a copy of a
13 section of Arkansas statute that sets out the factors
14 that you can take into consideration in considering a
15 waiver. And well, let's just make sure everybody has
16 gotten it. I brought some extra copies just in case.

17 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Would you mind giving one to
18 our court reporter down there?

19 MR. ALAGOOD: Not at all.

20 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Why don't you give them to me,
21 and I'll take care of them?

22 MR. ALAGOOD: Oh, you're so kind. I appreciate
23 that. So in April of 2019, Emily Melton got a DWI.
24 Now, a DWI is not a disqualifying offense under
25 Arkansas § 6-17-410. It just isn't. Her daughter

1 was in the car with her, so the Department of Human
2 Services was notified, and they made a true finding
3 determination of maltreatment for what they called
4 "neglect." Which is actually "failure to protect
5 your child from a potentially dangerous situation."
6 I would respectfully submit to you while not good
7 that's the very mildest form of maltreatment when you
8 take a look at some of the other heinous things that
9 are defined under the definitions of maltreatment.
10 And I furnished you with a copy of that portion of
11 the Arkansas statute that sets out the factors that
12 the state board should take into consideration in
13 deciding if you should grant Ms. Melton a waiver from
14 revoking her teaching license on account of her name
15 appearing on the child maltreatment registry. And
16 you also have a letter from Aubra Kimball, who is the
17 superintendent of the Huntsville School District and
18 from Danny Thomas, who is the president of the
19 Huntsville School Board -- who are telling you that
20 they knew about this at the time. They've known
21 about it all along. That she has worked at the
22 Huntsville School District all along. That they love
23 her. They want to keep her as a teacher. They do
24 not consider her to be a threat to the health or
25 safety of school children or school personnel which

1 is the overarching factor to take into consideration.
2 And they are imploring you to please grant her a
3 waiver of revoking her teaching license, so that they
4 can keep her employed there at the Huntsville School
5 District. And here is Ms. Melton who drove down from
6 Huntsville this morning if anybody has any questions
7 of her.

8 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: We'll see if any board members
9 have a question.

10 MR. SUTTON: I do.

11 CHAIRMAN NEWTOWN: Okay, Mr. Sutton.

12 MR. SUTTON: Ms. Melton, will you tell us the
13 circumstances by which you were cited for the
14 offense?

15 MS. MELTON: I -- it was a DWI. And then --
16 and my daughter was with me for the DWI, so DHS was
17 involved with that.

18 MR. SUTTON: So did you leave an establishment
19 or --

20 MS. MELTON: Oh, yes. I was at a friend's house
21 for a birthday.

22 MR. SUTTON: And what was your court punishment?

23 MS. MELTON: I had my fines and then I was
24 charged the DWI. I was not charged for the -- for
25 child endangerment. I was just charged for DWI.

1 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Ms. McFetridge?
2 Questions? Dr. Rankin?

3 DR. RANKIN: No questions.

4 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Ms. Dean? Dr. Moore? Mr.
5 Henderson?

6 MR. HENDERSON: I do not.

7 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Ms. Post? I think I skipped
8 you. Ms. Woods?

9 MS. WOODS: Yes, I do. Ms. Melton, can you
10 explain to us what you have done since the DWI in
11 terms of -- have you had to attend meetings? What
12 have you done since then?

13 MS. MELTON: Yes. I took some classes, and I
14 took some parenting classes. The Mother's Against
15 Drunk Driving class as well.

16 MS. WOODS: Have you done anything else?

17 MS. MELTON: No, I believe that was it.

18 MS. WOOD: Okay. I know this is a -- I mean, do
19 you think that you have your drinking under control?
20 Or was this like sort of a one-off offense and this
21 had never happened before? I mean, I think we just
22 need some -- a higher comfort level to make sure that
23 this isn't going to happen again.

24 MS. MELTON: Yes, ma'am. This will never happen
25 again. I do not drink. This has never happened

1 before, nor would it ever happen again. That was the
2 worst mistake I have ever made in my entire life. I
3 would never, ever do that again, ever.

4 MS. WOODS: Were you a teacher at the time that
5 this happened?

6 MS. MELTON: Yes, ma'am.

7 MS. WOODS: I think the letter said, yes.

8 MS. MELTON: Yes, ma'am.

9 MS. WOODS: You were? How long have you been a
10 teacher?

11 MS. MELTON: This is my fourth year.

12 MS. WOODS: Okay. So this would have been your
13 first year teaching or your second? Based on the
14 dates.

15 MS. MELTON: My first year.

16 MS. WOODS: It was your first year?

17 MS. MELTON: Uh-huh.

18 MS. WOODS: Okay. All right. Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any other questions? Just to
20 make sure that you understand what our -- what we're
21 thinking about, Ms. Melton, is we need -- you know,
22 you said you took a couple of classes or whatever.
23 We just would kind of like some sort of -- I don't --
24 proof is probably not the right word, but something
25 that you have done to ensure that this is not going

1 to happen again. That you are trying to become a
2 better person, that you have done the work that needs
3 to be done to ensure the safety of not only your
4 child, but other children in the state of Arkansas
5 because we are as a body responsible for not only
6 your child, but all children. And so that's kind of
7 what we're trying to get you to say is something that
8 will assure us that you have done the work to show us
9 that this is not going to happen again. Does that
10 make sense?

11 MS. MELTON: Yes.

12 MR. ALAGOOD: When DHS became involved, they
13 referred the matter to a juvenile judge and Ms.
14 Melton had to be under that judge's purview for a
15 period of time and that was the forum in which she
16 took the classes that she was referencing. So why
17 don't you go into a little bit more detail for the
18 folks about what it was that the juvenile judge
19 required of you before she released you from her
20 supervision.

21 MS. MELTON: Okay. I took -- I did take some
22 parenting classes. I did go see a counselor for
23 several months as well and then they released me, and
24 I quit drinking. I mean, I don't drink at all
25 anymore. That -- not seeing my daughter for a period

1 of time really destroyed me and my job means the
2 world to me. I love my kids. I love being a teacher
3 and this is not something I would ever, ever do
4 again. I --

5 MR. ALAGOOD: Well, now, do you currently have
6 -- I think your daughter actually went to live with
7 her daddy for --

8 MS. MELTON: Uh-huh.

9 MR. ALAGOOD: -- a short period of time. But
10 she's back in your full custody?

11 MS. MELTON: I do have full custody of her now,
12 yes.

13 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

14 MS. MELTON: So I do have full custody.

15 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. So there were some
16 consequences and you --

17 MS. MELTON: Yes.

18 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: You followed through all
19 that's --

20 MS. MELTON: I did.

21 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: -- required of you?

22 MS. MELTON: Yes, ma'am. I did absolutely
23 everything required of me.

24 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: And you have been released
25 from all -- okay.

1 MS. MELTON: Yes, ma'am. Uh-huh.

2 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. And this is just
3 because I don't know, is there a way to get this
4 cleared off the child maltreatment record?

5 MR. ALAGOOD: Well, here's the problem.

6 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

7 MR. ALAGOOD: If you were charged with a
8 criminal offense, it's the same elements as the
9 matter for which you were placed on the child
10 maltreatment registry. The law says that your name
11 can never be removed --

12 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

13 MR. ALAGOOD: -- from the child maltreatment
14 registry.

15 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

16 MR. ALAGOOD: You see? Otherwise that's the
17 avenue that would have been pursued -- would have
18 been a name removal. And so her only option then was
19 to ask the state board to grant a waiver of the
20 requirement that you would otherwise revoke her
21 teaching license on account of her name being on the
22 maltreatment registry.

23 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: But she was not charged with
24 child endangerment or anything like that?

25 MR. ALAGOOD: The only thing on her record was

1 the DWI which is not a disqualifying offense in and
2 of itself.

3 DR. PFEFFER: So and that is something I was
4 going to mention to the board because these licensure
5 actions they do get confusing when the DHS element is
6 involved. The reason why this came before you today
7 was because of the child maltreatment central
8 registry aspect of it. The DUI by itself would not
9 have come to you for any type of licensure action.
10 So if that helps clarify for you. So in the past
11 these are like the other child maltreatment aspects
12 of the licensure action. You do have to grant a
13 waiver because having your name on that record is a
14 disqualifying offense -- or a disqualifier from
15 continuing to be employed and have a license.

16 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Are there any other questions
17 from board members? Ms. Woods? Mr. Henderson? Dr.
18 Moore? Okay. Any other discussion? We have a
19 couple. Here -- go ahead, Ms. McFetridge, and then
20 we'll get Ms. Dean.

21 MS. McFETRIDGE: I'm just interested -- how are
22 you keeping yourself sober? You said you are
23 committed to not drinking anymore. Are you going to
24 a program or counseling to help you with that?

25 MS. MELTON: No ma'am. I was not really a big

1 drinker. I just drank that day, which was not a
2 smart choice on mine, but I don't drink. I wasn't
3 really a drinker then, so it wasn't a problem for me
4 to just stop.

5 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Ms. Dean?

6 MS. DEAN: I didn't have a question. I just had
7 a comment.

8 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: We've got something online, so
9 make sure you speak up.

10 MS. DEAN: Okay. I didn't have a question. I
11 just have a comment. Thank you for being more
12 transparent about your story. It's helpful for us to
13 know the details, so that we can make the best
14 decision. Because until you went into further
15 detail, I was having issue. So I just want to say, I
16 know it's in your past, but it's good that you share
17 with us and be open with us about your experience and
18 what you've learned and what you've come through and
19 what you've learned on the other side of this. So
20 thank you for being more transparent. Appreciate
21 that.

22 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any other questions or
23 comments from board members? Does the department
24 have something that you would like to say?

25 MR. ALAGOOD: We can step aside.

1 MS. SARACINI: Karli Saracini, Assistant
2 Commissioner. It's just with this it's either deny,
3 waive or waive with conditions and that is all.

4 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

5 MS. SARACINI: And I appreciate you guys because
6 when it is a child maltreatment we can't -- we don't
7 know the specifics, so it's really nice when the
8 individual comes up and can -- you guys can ask her
9 the questions straight to her.

10 MR. SUTTON: So the department doesn't offer a
11 recommendation one way or the other?

12 MS. SARACINI: No, because it's your --

13 MR. SUTTON: Okay.

14 MS. SARACINI: -- decision.

15 MR. SUTTON: Got it.

16 MS. SARACINI: And so those are the three
17 options.

18 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

19 MS. SARACINI: Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: So the options are to grant
21 the waiver, grant the waiver with conditions or deny
22 the waiver. Okay? So if there is no further
23 discussion, we ready for a motion? Ms. Dean?

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

25 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. We have a motion by Ms.

1 Dean to grant the waiver.

2 MR. SUTTON: I'll second that.

3 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: A second by Mr. Sutton. Do we
4 want to do a voice or a roll call? Just voice?
5 Okay. All in favor?

6 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

7 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Any opposed? Okay.
8 Congratulations and we are going to hold you at your
9 word that this won't ever happen again.

10 MS. MELTON: Never.

11 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right.

12 MR. ALAGOOD: May we be excused?

13 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: You can be excused.

14 MR. ALAGOOD: Thank you.

15 MS. MELTON: Thank you very much.

16 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Thank you very much. Ms.
17 McFetridge just reminded us that because she is on
18 the child maltreatment it can't be removed. And so
19 every time she renews her license it will come back,
20 and so that will be a way we can make sure it has not
21 happened again.

22 **VI.3. CONSIDERATION OF REQUESTS FOR ACT 1240 WAIVERS**

23 **VI.3.a LEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT ACT 1240 WAIVER REQUESTS**

24 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. So item two has
25 been pulled and so we are down to the 1240 waivers.

1 I think Lee County is that we are discussing and Ms.
2 Freno.

3 MS. FRENO: Thank you, Ms. Newton. Lori Freno,
4 Arkansas Department of Education. The Lee County
5 School District has requested a waiver of teacher
6 licensure and library media specialist licensure.
7 This is not a waiver of the library media specialist
8 program in any way just the licensure. They
9 requested this waiver for three years. I know that
10 Superintendent Murdock is on the Zoom. And you would
11 need to swear in any witnesses who will be testifying
12 including superintendent Murdock. And the school
13 district will then have twenty minutes to present
14 their waiver and of course the Chair can always grant
15 more time if needed. And I have -- just a reminder
16 -- I have handed out one additional document to
17 everyone that should be attached to the back of the
18 Act 1240 waiver that I already -- that was on your
19 agenda.

20 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right. I see Ms.
21 Murdock and also see Ms. Hayden online. Welcome,
22 both of you and would you please raise your right
23 hand -- is there anyone else on the district besides
24 you two? Okay. All right. Raise your right hand
25 and do you swear or affirm that the testimony you are

1 about to give shall be the truth, the whole truth and
2 nothing but the truth?

3 MS. MURDOCK: Yes.

4 MS. HAYDEN: Yes.

5 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Thank you. All right. Go ahead,
6 Ms. Murdock.

7 MS. MURDOCK: Good morning, everyone.

8 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Good morning.

9 MS. MURDOCK: Thank you for allowing us to speak
10 on behalf of Lee County School District this morning.
11 I know that many of you are battling as we are the
12 pandemic at this time and it's making education a
13 little bit -- even more difficult during this time
14 but we are still trudging along and trying to make
15 sure that we keep our students the number one focus.
16 As you know Lee County has --

17 DR. RANKIN: Ms. Newton, can we pause until we
18 can hear a little better?

19 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Ms. Murdock, we are
20 having a little trouble hearing you.

21 MS. MURDOCK: Okay.

22 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: I don't know if you can get
23 closer to your microphone.

24 MS. MURDOCK: Okay.

25 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Or --

1 MS. MURDOCK: I have my earbuds in hopefully you
2 can hear me a little better.

3 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Let's see if we can get a
4 little bit louder.

5 MS. MURDOCK: Okay. Can you hear me?

6 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Is that better? Everyone?

7 MR. SUTTON: A little bit.

8 MS. MURDOCK: Okay. I'll just put my microphone
9 a little bit closer to my ear. I never heard anyone
10 say that I wasn't speaking loud enough.

11 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Use your teacher voice this
12 morning.

13 MS. MURDOCK: I'm using my teacher voice. My
14 drama major voice as well. As -- so as you know --
15 again, thank you for allowing us to speak on behalf
16 of Lee County School District this morning. I have
17 my Director of Learning Services as you mentioned,
18 Mary Hayden, on the line as well. Lee County is
19 requesting an extension of the waivers for Act 1240.
20 And as you know the Act 1240 -- a little history on
21 that. We've been battling and being challenged in
22 the Delta part of the state with trying to find
23 licensed teachers. As you well know. Representative
24 Murdock some years ago is the one that was the lead
25 on this actual Act who knows me very well. But at

1 any rate, Lee County is still struggling in that
2 aspect of trying to find licensed teachers. So we
3 believe in growing our own in Lee County. We are
4 trying to make sure that those -- we can get -- grow
5 our own and right now we have several teachers that
6 are in the district. I will say I'm a product of the
7 district. I was a nontraditional teacher as well
8 when I was hired back in the 1900s. But at any rate,
9 you already know our plight here -- down here in the
10 Delta. I don't need to explain all of that to you.
11 But we are requesting that our -- if you have any
12 questions, please feel free to ask them -- but we are
13 asking for an extension of those teacher waivers so
14 that we can get teachers in front of our students
15 every day in the classroom. And I will address any
16 questions and, Ms. Hayden, do you have anything to
17 add?

18 MS. HAYDEN: No, ma'am. You did a wonderful
19 job. Good morning, everyone.

20 (UNANIMOUS GOOD MORNING)

21 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: We'll see if any board members
22 have questions this morning. Dr. Moore?

23 DR. MOORE: Yes, I do. I wanted to double check
24 about how long have they had this waiver before? Was
25 it a five-year waiver, previously?

1 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Can someone --

2 MS. HAYDEN: I --

3 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: -- from the department --

4 MS. HAYDEN: -- three.

5 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: -- answer maybe? Ms. Murdock,
6 maybe you can answer?

7 MS. MURDOCK: I think the previous waiver was
8 for three years.

9 MS. HAYDEN: Three years, yes.

10 DR. MOORE: Okay.

11 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

12 MS. MURDOCK: So I've --

13 DR. MOORE: And how many teachers -- do you-all
14 know how many you employed under the waiver?

15 MS. MURDOCK: So I think right now it's about
16 27. Is that correct, Ms. Hayden?

17 MS. HAYDEN: That is correct. That's what --
18 that's the count I have.

19 DR. MOORE: And through that are you-all
20 continuing to require them to seek licensure within
21 three years or a certain time period? And what
22 routes are those individuals seeking licensure
23 through primarily?

24 MS. MURDOCK: So we -- we're three years. We're
25 working with our teachers. We have four or five of

1 them that have been under the waiver that have gotten
2 their license. So we are continuing to trudge away
3 on that. So we have a three-year requirement.
4 Hopefully, that -- we'll -- the ones that we have
5 first year, second year or even third year will meet
6 that mark at third year. Ms. Hayden do you have
7 anything to add? Of course, we have -- use the
8 pathways. Arkansas Department of Education (DESE),
9 OCSS and our local co-op is working with us on those
10 various pathways. Of course, Karli Saracini and her
11 team have been down to actually work with us as well.
12 So, we're doing our best to try to get licensed folks
13 in, but if we can we're trying to grow our own.

14 MS. HAYDEN: Yes. I do know that we have about
15 six right now who are in a licensure program and most
16 of the 1240 waivers that we have right now are first
17 year. And so we are working on getting those
18 teachers into the program, but they are brand new.
19 They are very first year teachers. I do know we have
20 only hired -- we just hired one last month or earlier
21 this month. One -- or a couple in December, so it's
22 -- these people are very new to us, and we are
23 working on getting them into some kind of
24 certification program. And then some of them have
25 come to us out of retirement as well. So --

1 DR. MOORE: I know it's certainly challenging in
2 your part of the state and then coupled with the
3 pandemic and everything. And so I appreciate those
4 efforts. Can you-all speak just a little bit more to
5 the support you're providing? Especially, I know
6 it's certainly really hard to start as a new teacher
7 in the middle of the school year.

8 MS. MURDOCK: So I will let Ms. Hayden go --
9 address that. But we try to provide support with the
10 professional development. Of course we have Solution
11 Tree in our midst. They are in their third year
12 working with the district. But, Ms. Hayden, she's
13 our professional development coordinator. She can
14 kind of explain more specifically some of the things
15 that we are doing with our new folks.

16 MS. HAYDEN: Yes. Most of our support is coming
17 from the Great Rivers Education Cooperative. We work
18 closely with Kelsey Riley, and I spoke with her this
19 morning to make sure I was on the right track. But
20 most of our teachers with the exception of those who
21 just have come in, she hasn't started working with
22 those teachers yet -- but we're working with those --
23 getting those certifications in. They do receive
24 training just like all the other teachers do. We do
25 have some who are moving forward with their personal

1 trainings as well getting degrees and such, but they
2 are required to get all of the trainings required by
3 all the other teachers. And we want to provide
4 mentoring for them as well. So we have mentoring.

5 MS. MURDOCK: And these --

6 MS. HAYDEN: Yeah. I was going to say we have
7 mentoring with those teachers who are veterans. So
8 they have mentors.

9 MS. MURDOCK: And these teachers who come to us
10 with college degrees --

11 MS. HAYDEN: Yes.

12 MS. MURDOCK: -- and some of them have master's
13 degrees. So we are doing our best to give them the
14 pedagogical knowledge with professional development.

15 MS. HAYDEN: Right.

16 MS. MURDOCK: And content. Some of them are
17 already strong in their content. Just trying to make
18 sure they understand instructional strategies and all
19 of that as it pertains to the particular kind of
20 student that we have in the district. So --

21 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Anything else, Dr. Moore?

22 DR. MOORE: That's all my questions. I
23 appreciate you-all answering them and thank you for
24 your work.

25 MS. MURDOCK: Thank you, Dr. Moore.

1 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Mr. Henderson?

2 MR. HENDERSON: No questions.

3 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Ms. Woods? No questions?

4 Okay.

5 MS. WOODS: No, ma'am.

6 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Ms. Dean? Dr. Rankin?

7 DR. RANKIN: I just want to say how much I
8 appreciate the efforts that you-all are going to in
9 your area. And Ms. Murdock I love the power of your
10 story. No one can do a Grow Your Own program better
11 than you. You are a product of that area and I feel
12 like you bring a really powerful perspective and
13 potential with that. I also love how this is such a
14 collaborative effort with all of these programs
15 working simultaneously. I mean, you've got -- you're
16 looking into Opportunity Culture and the REACH
17 program and Educators Rising and Grow Your Own and I
18 just -- I love how this is a full-scale effort and
19 initiative and I feel like you-all are going to reap
20 really rich dividends with that. We will be eager to
21 see that. I'm certainly looking forward to making a
22 motion to approve this waiver when it's time.

23 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

24 MS. MURDOCK: Thank you, Dr. Rankin. Because I
25 didn't mention Opportunity Culture that we are

1 designing this year and Educator Rising we're trying
2 to focus on our young people -- our students to get
3 them to be -- want to become teachers. There is a
4 couple things I always tell them -- I said two things
5 I wasn't going to do when I was in Lee High School
6 back in the 1900s was one, be an educator, and the
7 other one was stay in Marianna. Never say never.

8 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: That's right.

9 MS. HAYDEN: And may I add, Dr. Rankin, that Ms.
10 Murdock is teaching this -- the Educator Rising
11 herself. She goes in and works with those students.

12 DR. RANKIN: That's awesome.

13 MS. MURDOCK: Not teaching it yet.

14 MS. HAYDEN: Yet. Okay.

15 MS. MURDOCK: But the plan is to get students in
16 the room.

17 MS. HAYDEN: Yes.

18 DR. RANKIN: That's fantastic.

19 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yes. Ms. McFetridge?

20 MS. McFETRIDGE: No questions.

21 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Mr. Sutton?

22 MR. SUTTON: No, ma'am.

23 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Ms. Post?

24 MS. POST: Just a quick comment. I was honored
25 to speak yesterday at the Superintendent's Symposium

1 with AAEA and it was brought to the attention of the
2 room that we have 35,000 teachers in Arkansas and
3 nearly half of those have three years or less of
4 teaching experience. I believe it was 48 percent,
5 Dr. Pfeffer?

6 DR. PFEFFER: Yes.

7 MS. POST: So anything that I can do as your
8 Teacher of the Year to support you, please reach out
9 to me I would love to come and just encourage those
10 younger teachers.

11 MS. MURDOCK: Thank you so much.

12 MS. HAYDEN: Thank you.

13 MS. MURDOCK: I appreciate that. We will be
14 calling you by the way.

15 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Ms. Saracini, I know that you
16 have been working with Lee County on recruitment and
17 retention. Could you kind of give us an update on
18 that process? That gives us some assurances that
19 they do have a good solid plan going.

20 MS. SARACINI: Yes. Karli Saracini, Assistant
21 Commissioner, and we are very excited because they
22 are one of our Opportunity Culture schools this year
23 that we are helping with that initiative implemented.
24 And so we have been to Lee County five times. And so
25 you can see that we keep going back and we have some

1 really great successful stories. We have three of
2 the educators that when we first started working with
3 them have already made it to licensure -- full
4 licensure, which is huge and that's so important.
5 And then we also have several on the pathway. We
6 even met with the paraprofessionals that are in the
7 buildings. We met with 16 of those just so that we
8 could get them on a path to eventually taking over a
9 classroom. And so not only are we working with some
10 of the non-licensed staff in the classrooms, but
11 we're also, as Ms. Murdock said, "growing" what we
12 have there.

13 And so my group came back and we're just excited and
14 I just want to say that Ms. Smith's group -- I know
15 that Brent Miller is always calling someone in my
16 division and working with them to make sure they're
17 providing all the information needed to Lee County to
18 make sure that we're growing. And he even worked
19 with Williams Baptist to get some people to go
20 straight to Lee County -- I know Ms. Murdock is
21 shaking her head -- so that they could get some
22 experience there and maybe they could even recruit
23 them that were in their field one -- field two
24 experiences and internships. So we're really
25 thinking outside the box and as you said, Ms. -- Dr.

1 Rankin, that it's -- we're layering the support with
2 all the different initiatives and all the divisions
3 across the agency to help out. So I hope that
4 answered your question.

5 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yes, it did.

6 MS. SARACINI: Because they're doing multiple
7 things, so to focus on one -- but it's exciting to
8 see their Educator Rising come up. And you know
9 that's -- trying to recruit those high school
10 students and get them wanting to become teachers
11 because that's our future.

12 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yes. Ms. Smith, did you
13 have something you wanted to add?

14 MS. SMITH: I found myself getting
15 emotional, so -- Stacy Smith, Deputy Commissioner.
16 So first off, Willie Murdock has done an excellent
17 job with this. Excellent job. And I don't want you
18 to think that this is -- that all these great
19 initiatives that we probably won't be back in three
20 years again asking again because we probably will.
21 They are working diligently and COVID has taken and
22 hit and banged this district up like no other
23 district. And she's got a -- she's coming on live
24 and strong, but they lost people this year. And
25 they've lost family and we walk up and down, and we

1 get resignations because of health.
2 This district is getting beat up and they are
3 stepping up and I can not praise Karli's team enough.
4 I can not praise my OCSS staff enough. They're there
5 every day. And I hear stories about, you know, ADE
6 staff working in the hallway. ADE staff coming in
7 and teaching math when we have to. Willie going into
8 those buildings every single day. Karli's team --
9 five visits documented since spring. So thank you
10 for recognizing the collaboration and the work. And
11 while this is a moment to celebrate in their success,
12 it is hard, hard, hard work and I don't want anybody
13 to not think that it's not. Because they are doing
14 everything and they're pulling out all the stops, so
15 I appreciate Ms. Murdock and I appreciate the passion
16 that she brings each and every day to the district.
17 So, thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Ms. Murdock I hope you realize
19 that's high praise. When you get Ms. Smith to praise
20 like that, we know it's a great job so thank you-all
21 for all the hard work that you're doing, and we
22 appreciate that on behalf of your students.

23 MS. MURDOCK: And we appreciate that Arkansas
24 Department of Ed -- DESE for all that they're doing
25 for us. Sheila Whitlow rocks. Dr. Brent Miller

1 rocks, rocks. Listen you-all should be proud of what
2 the ADE is doing for Lee County as well. We
3 appreciate you.

4 DR. PFEFFER: Madame Chairman, may I add
5 something?

6 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Sure.

7 DR. PFEFFER: And I won't keep us long, but I'm
8 glad that Ms. Smith brought up the fact that, you
9 know, it -- they may be back. And I know after last
10 month's conversation -- this is a little bit
11 different though because of the work that's going on
12 because we want them to come back and here's why. As
13 part of the teacher residency model, there may be the
14 need for continued waivers for our master teachers to
15 be able to oversee our interns. That, you know, that
16 we're -- and our apprentices that our coming.
17 The reason I say that this group may be back is
18 because a few weeks ago when I was in a co-op Ms.
19 Murdock was talking about her students that were
20 going to be part of Ed-Rising. And she has told her
21 students that if they're participating in the course,
22 then they're going to have a summer job as a tutor.
23 And I'm hoping in those seniors -- as they have their
24 summer job as tutors -- are then going to go on and
25 start taking their coursework. I hope that she is

1 able to continue to then employ them as tutors, as
2 instructional aids in other capacities, so that they
3 are there at the school. And as they take on
4 increased responsibilities there may need to be some
5 of those waivers until they have their bachelor's
6 degree and all of their licensure requirements met.
7 So in those cases, I do hope that they are back. And
8 Ms. Murdock also alerted me to the fact that we had
9 started kind of putting a barrier up for those
10 students to be part of our Arkansas Tutoring Corp,
11 and to receive that really good training that they're
12 going to need to be good tutors. And that's my fault
13 and I told her, I said, "well, I think I was wrong."
14 And I made a phone call to Ms. Walley and said, "I
15 think I was wrong, and we need to back up because
16 when we have these kinds of plans and systems in
17 place that's what we want." So I do think that that
18 when we step back this district may be our premier
19 Grow Your Own model in the end and so, yes. I do
20 hope that they we're coming back and if it takes
21 providing some additional flexibility then that's
22 what we need to do.

23 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Thank you. So I think
24 it sounds like we are ready for a waiver, Dr. Rankin.

25 DR. RANKIN: I --

1 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: A waiver -- a motion.

2 DR. RANKIN: I am honored to --

3 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Sorry.

4 DR. RANKIN: -- make the motion to grant the Lee
5 County School District for an Act 1240 waiver for
6 three years.

7 MS. FRENO: Okay. And I just wanted to clarify,
8 Ms. Newton, there are two waivers. One is for
9 teacher licensure. One is for library media
10 specialist licensure.

11 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Do we need two motions?

12 MS. FRENO: You can do it either way you want
13 to. If you want to have further discussion on
14 library media specialist, that's fine. You can do it
15 either way you choose. I just want to make sure you
16 voted on both of the --

17 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

18 MS. FRENO: -- requests for the waivers.

19 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Is there any discussion on the
20 library media licensure? So, Dr. Rankin, is your
21 motion for --

22 DR. RANKIN: It is. For both.

23 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. But -- Dr. Rankin has
24 made a motion for a waiver for teacher licensure and
25 library media licensure for three years. Okay. Is

1 there a second?

2 MS. McFETRIDGE: Second.

3 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Seconded by Ms. McFetridge.

4 All in favor?

5 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

6 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any opposed? Motion passes.

7 Okay. Congratulations, Ms. Murdock and Ms. Hayden,

8 we are very proud of you and just keep up the great

9 work.

10 MS. MURDOCK: Thank you we appreciate it.

11 MS. HAYDEN: Thank you all.

12 MS. MURDOCK: And thank you for supporting us.

13 We appreciate it.

14 MS. HAYDEN: Thank you.

15 **VI.4. DISTRICT CONVERSION CHARTER RENEWALS**

16 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: We are moving on down to
17 district conversion charter renewals, Mr. Sutherlin.
18 Just want to say thank you on the organization of the
19 agenda. Putting those bullet points and highlighting
20 the major points of the request. That was very
21 helpful, so thank you for doing that.

22 MR. SUTHERLIN: Well, that was the former
23 director, so we can thank him.

24 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right. Thank you
25 for doing that.

1 MR. SUTHERLIN: All right. So, Matthew
2 Sutherlin, Coordinator of Standards & Systems
3 Support, Charter, Interim Charter Director. So on
4 December 14th, 2021, the Charter Authorizing Panel
5 approved the following conversion charter renewals
6 for a period of five years, unless otherwise noted.

7 **VI.4.a. CHARTER RENEWAL - CABOT ACE**

8 So we have first Cabot ACE. So the district
9 requested renewal of the charter for a five year
10 period. The campus serves grades 5-12. The current
11 enrollment cap is 2,500 students and they want to
12 change the charter name from Academic Center of
13 Excellence (ACE) to Cabot Panther Academy. And then
14 the charter will continue to follow a combination of
15 the Alternative Learning Environment (ALE) and
16 Virtual Only and Credit Recovery Models. A Digital
17 Learning Plan was included with the waiver request.

18 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. We'll see if there
19 is any questions or discussion. Mr. Henderson?

20 MR. HENDERSON: Yes. On the positive score mean
21 it looks like the score for 2021 honestly went down.
22 Can you discuss that a little bit? My assumption is
23 probably the COVID, but can you talk about that some?

24 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: I -- we could hear, but I
25 didn't understand what you said. Could you ask your

1 question again, Mr. Henderson?

2 MR. HENDERSON: Can you hear me better now?

3 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Try it again. Let's see.

4 MR. HENDERSON: Can you hear me better now?

5 MR. SUTHERLIN: A little bit, yeah.

6 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yes. A little bit.

7 MR. HENDERSON: Okay. I'll try to talk a little
8 more clear. On the composite score for 2021 year, it
9 looks like the score went down some. Can you
10 elaborate a little bit on that, please?

11 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: The score went down in the
12 2021 year --

13 MR. HENDERSON: Yes.

14 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: That's Ms. Coffman.

15 MS. COFFMAN: Thank you, Mr. Henderson, for that
16 question. Deborah Coffman, Public School
17 Accountability. 88 percent of our schools had a
18 lower score in the 2021 school year on the ESSA
19 school index. Certainly, we attribute that to all of
20 the effects and transitions and uncertainties that
21 schools experienced in the beginning of the -- of
22 COVID. So we do expect -- we expected that. We're
23 happy to see that it was -- while we don't think it
24 was great for our state of course. Never is in a
25 pandemic. But it was not as bad as other states have

1 experienced, but I will say that our schools are
2 working very closely with our co-ops and district
3 support team to try to fill in that learning loss and
4 get our students and our schools back on track. So
5 we see that pretty much across the state.

6 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yeah.

7 MR. HENDERSON: Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Dr. Moore? No
9 questions? Ms. Woods?

10 MS. WOODS: No, ma'am.

11 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Ms. Dean?

12 MS. DEAN: No, ma'am.

13 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Dr. Rankin?

14 DR. RANKIN: No questions.

15 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Ms. McFetridge?

16 MS. McFETRIDGE: Yes, ma'am. I'm just curious,
17 why the name change? Is there anyone from the
18 district on there?

19 MR. RANDOLPH: This is Aaron Randolph from Cabot
20 Schools.

21 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Mr. Randolph.

22 MR. RANDOLPH: Yes, ma'am. Thank you, members
23 of the board, for hearing us out. Really at our
24 school and in our district, we're looking for a re-
25 brand. Just for a renewal and one of the things that

1 we have noticed over the past couple of years is that
2 there is a lot of students that may have had an
3 association with the school for at-risk students or
4 at-risk kids and may not be interested in applying to
5 our conversion charter school and so we felt like it
6 was just time for a new beginning and so re-branding
7 allowed us to do that and talk more about the great
8 things that are happening for all students and just
9 kind of open doors more hopefully for our community
10 to see that.

11 MS. McFETRIDGE: Okay. Thank you. Also, you're
12 ask -- there is a teaching load of 200 and are you
13 able to add additional compensation for these
14 teachers?

15 MR. RANDOLPH: We are able to, but with this
16 waiver request at 200 -- and that is primarily those
17 that are handling digital students -- we are not
18 doing additional compensation at this point. I think
19 if we did, we would fall under the rules and regs
20 that currently exist for additional teacher load for
21 5-12 and that would be something that as a district
22 we would have to have a policy -- if we exceeded 200.

23 MS. McFETRIDGE: Okay. How are you supporting
24 the staff then?

25 MR. RANDOLPH: Yes, ma'am. So we have actually

1 two full-time administrators and a few other
2 curriculum supports in place for those staff members.
3 We also are able to organize their schedules, so they
4 are not overwhelmed at any point. Nor do they have
5 great, massive loads of students at one time. Also,
6 they're using Edmentum as a content management
7 system. So we're not asking them to create their own
8 curriculum in order to handle all of these students.

9 MS. McFETRIDGE: Okay. Thank you for that.

10 MR. RANDOLPH: Yes, ma'am.

11 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Mr. Sutton? Ms. Post?

12 MS. POST: No questions.

13 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

14 DR. RANKIN: Madam Chair, I did have one --

15 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

16 DR. RANKIN: I just wanted to say one thing. I
17 really appreciated in this presentation hearing
18 directly from the students. So I know that took a
19 little bit of creative innovation on your part to
20 embed that into the PowerPoint presentation, but I
21 really did appreciate that. Helped put a student
22 first perspective and impact on what's going on, so I
23 appreciated that element of the Cabot presentation.

24 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right.

25 MR. RANDOLPH: Thank you for that.

1 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. I want to remind board
2 members that our motion would be to review or not
3 review. Okay. And I think if there is no other
4 discussions, we are ready for a motion.

5 MS. McFETRIDGE: I'll make a motion not to
6 review.

7 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. We have a motion not to
8 review by Ms. McFetridge.

9 MS. DEAN: Second.

10 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Seconded by Ms. Dean. All in
11 favor?

12 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

13 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any opposed? Okay. Motion
14 passes. Congratulations.

15 **VI.4.b. CHARTER RENEWAL - HOT SPRINGS JUNIOR ACADEMY**

16 MR. SUTHERLIN: All right. The next one on the
17 docket is Hot Springs Junior Academy. So we're
18 looking at a renewal. So the district has requested
19 renewal of the charter for five year period. The
20 campus serves grads 7-9. The current enrollment cap
21 is 900 students. The charter will continue to follow
22 a traditional educational model and a digital
23 learning plan was not included.

24 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. We'll see if we have
25 any questions? Ms. Dean? Dr. Rankin? Ms.

1 McFetridge? Mr. Sutton? Ms. Post? Dr. Moore? Ms.
2 Woods? Mr. Henderson? I don't think we have any
3 questions. Again, our motion -- if there is no
4 discussion -- is to review or not review.

5 MR. SUTTON: I'll make the motion not to review.

6 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: I have a motion by Mr. Sutton
7 not to review.

8 MS. DEAN: Second.

9 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Seconded by Ms. Dean. All in
10 favor?

11 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

12 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any opposed? Okay. Motion
13 passes. Congratulations.

14 MR. SUTHERLIN: All right. Next up is Lincoln
15 High School. The district has requested the renewal
16 of the charter for a five year period. The campus
17 serves grades 9-12. The current enrollment cap is
18 850 students. The charter will continue to follow a
19 combination of the traditional education model. With
20 a focus on trade, skill, certification, college and
21 careers and a digital learning plan was included.

22 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. I guess -- yeah. I
23 think we skipped --

24 MS. WOODS: Did we skip --

25 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: We skipped Cross County.

1 MR. SUTHERLIN: Oh. Did we one? Oh. We did.

2 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yeah. We skipped Cross
3 County.

4 MR. SUTHERLIN: Okay. I apologize.

5 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

6 MR. SUTHERLIN: Oh.

7 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: I --

8 MR. SUTHERLIN: It was flipped over on the other
9 page. Sorry about that.

10 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: That's okay.

11 **VI.4.c. CHARTER RENEWAL - CROSS COUNTY ELEMENTARY**

12 MR. SUTHERLIN: So Cross County Elementary
13 Technology Academy -- the district requested the
14 renewal of a charter for a five year period. The
15 campus serves grades K-6. The current enrollment cap
16 is 500 students. The charter will continue to follow
17 a traditional education model and a digital learning
18 plan was not included.

19 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. So we are discussing
20 Cross County right now for their charter renewal.
21 We'll see if we have any questions or any discussion.
22 Ms. Dean?

23 MS. DEAN: No, ma'am.

24 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Dr. Rankin?

25 DR. RANKIN: No questions.

1 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Ms. McFetridge? Mr. Sutton?

2 MR. SUTTON: No, ma'am.

3 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Ms. Post? Mr. Henderson?

4 MR. HENDERSON: No, ma'am.

5 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Dr. Moore? Ms. Woods?

6 MS. WOODS: No.

7 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. So looks like we don't
8 have any. Again, our motion is to review or not
9 review.

10 MS. DEAN: I move to not review.

11 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: A motion by Ms. Dean not to
12 review.

13 DR. RANKIN: I second.

14 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Seconded by Dr. Rankin. All
15 in favor?

16 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

17 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any opposed? Okay. Motion
18 passes. Congratulations to Cross County. Now, we're
19 at Lincoln.

20 **VI.4.d. CHARTER RENEWAL - LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL**

21 MR. SUTHERLIN: Okay. So now back to Lincoln --
22 Lincoln High School. The district requested the
23 renewal of the charter for a five year period. The
24 campus serves grades 9-12. The current enrollment
25 cap is 850 students. The charter will continue to

1 follow a combination of the traditional education
2 model. With a focus on trade, skill, certification,
3 college and careers and a digital learning plan was
4 included.

5 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. We'll see if we have
6 any questions or discussion on Lincoln? Ms. Woods?

7 MS. WOODS: No.

8 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Dr. Moore? Mr. Henderson?

9 MR. HENDERSON: No.

10 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Anyone here have any? Okay.
11 So we are ready for a motion either to review or not
12 review.

13 MR. HENDERSON: I'll make a motion to not
14 review.

15 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. A motion by Mr.
16 Henderson not to review.

17 DR. RANKIN: I'll second it.

18 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Seconded by Dr. Rankin. All
19 in favor?

20 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

21 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any opposed? Okay.

22 Congratulations to Lincoln High School.

23 **VI.4.d. CHARTER RENEWAL - PRAIRIE GROVE HIGH SCHOOL**

24 MR. SUTHERLIN: Okay. Next up is Prairie Grove
25 High School. Okay? Just questioning.

1 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Oh. Yeah. I'm keeping up.

2 MR. SUTHERLIN: The district requested the
3 renewal of -- for a five year period. The campus
4 serves grades 9-12. The charter will continue to
5 follow a traditional education model and a digital
6 learning plan was not included.

7 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: We'll see if we have any
8 questions or discussions. Ms. Woods?

9 MS. WOODS: No.

10 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Dr. Moore?

11 DR. MOORE: (Moves head side to side)

12 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Mr. Henderson?

13 MR. HENDERSON: (Moves head side to side)

14 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Anyone here? Okay. Again, we
15 don't have any questions or discussions, so we're
16 ready for a motion to review or not review.

17 MS. McFETRIDGE: I'll make a motion not to
18 review.

19 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. We have a motion by Ms.
20 McFetridge not to review.

21 MR. SUTTON: I'll second it.

22 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Seconded by Mr. Sutton. All
23 in favor?

24 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

25 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any opposed? Okay.

1 Congratulations Prairie Grove High School.

2 **VI.4.f. CHARTER RENEWAL - NORTH LITTLE ROCK CENTER OF**
3 **EXCELLENCE**

4 MR. SUTHERLIN: All right. Next up is the North
5 Little Rock Center for -- of Excellence. The
6 district requested the renewal of the charter for a
7 five year period. The campus serves grades 9-12.
8 The current enrollment cap is 3,000 students. The
9 charter will continue to follow a blending of
10 traditional and digital education models and a
11 digital learning plan was not included.

12 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Again, we'll see if we
13 have any questions. Mr. Henderson?

14 MR. HENDERSON: No.

15 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Dr. Moore?

16 DR. MOORE: No.

17 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Ms. Woods?

18 MS. WOODS: No.

19 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Anyone here have a question or
20 a comment? Okay. So we're ready for a motion to
21 review or not review.

22 MS. DEAN: I move to not review.

23 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: A motion by Ms. Dean not to
24 review.

25 MR. SUTTON: Second.

1 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Seconded by Mr. Sutton. All
2 in favor?

3 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

4 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any opposed? Okay. Motion
5 passes. Congratulations to North Little Rock Center
6 of Excellence. That gets us to lunch, and we are
7 ahead of schedule. Could we move on and do the other
8 charters? Would there be a problem moving on? If we
9 have questions, we could wait until this afternoon?
10 Okay.

11 MR. SUTHERLIN: Okay.

12 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right.

13 **VII.1. OPEN ENROLLMENT CHARTER RENEWALS**

14 MR. SUTHERLIN: All right. Matthew Sutherlin,
15 Coordinator of Standards & Systems Support, Charter,
16 Interim Charter Director. So On December 15th, 2021,
17 the Charter Authorizing Panel approved the renewal of
18 the following open enrollment charters for a five
19 year period unless otherwise noted.

20 **VII.1.a. CHARTER RENEWAL - THE EXCEL CENTER**

21 MR. SUTHERLIN: So the first one is The Excel
22 Center. The district requested renewal of the
23 charter for a five year period. The campus serves
24 adults aged 19 and over completing grades 9-12. The
25 current enrollment cap is 1,050 students and the

1 charter will continue to follow an adult education
2 model.

3 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. We'll see if we have
4 any questions or comments on this one. Ms. Woods?

5 MS. WOODS: No.

6 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Dr. Moore?

7 DR. MOORE: No.

8 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Mr. Henderson?

9 MR. HENDERSON: No.

10 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Anyone here?

11 MR. SUTTON: This is in Little Rock; right?

12 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: They have campuses in Little
13 Rock. At one time we approved an expansion, I think.
14 Was it to Fort Smith? I can't remember. No not to
15 Fort Smith. They were talking about going -- they
16 were talking about expanding. I don't think we have
17 approved it. Okay. They were discussing expanding
18 to other areas of the state. Okay. All right. Any
19 discussion? Are we ready for a motion to review or
20 not review?

21 MS. DEAN: I move to not review.

22 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: A motion by Ms. Dean not to
23 review.

24 MS. McFETRIDGE: Second.

25 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Seconded by Ms. McFetridge.

1 All in favor?

2 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

3 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any opposed? Okay.

4 Congratulations to the Excel Center. We are very
5 proud and very thankful for the work that you do with
6 our adult education needs.

7 **VII.1.b. CHARTER RENEWAL - RIVER VALLEY VIRTUAL ACADEMY (RVVA)**

8 MR. SUTHERLIN: So the next charter is actually a
9 conversion charter and not an open enrollment
10 charter. I just wanted that to be noted in the
11 minutes.

12 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

13 MR. SUTHERLIN: It's River Valley Virtual
14 Academy and the district requested renewal of the
15 charter for a five year period. The campus serves
16 grades K-12. The current enrollment cap is 1,000
17 students. The charter will continue to follow a
18 virtual-only education model.

19 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right. We'll see
20 if we have any questions or discussion on this one.
21 Ms. Woods?

22 MS. WOODS: No.

23 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Dr. Moore?

24 DR. MOORE: No.

25 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Mr. Henderson?

1 MR. HENDERSON: No.

2 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Anyone here? I don't
3 know if they are listening or not, but I just wanted
4 to express my appreciation for this model. It is a
5 great model, and it has been very effective across
6 the state and so we appreciate their hard work and
7 getting this up and running. Okay. So we ready for
8 a motion?

9 MS. McFETRIDGE: I make a motion not to review.

10 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. A motion not to review
11 by Ms. McFetridge.

12 MR. SUTTON: I'll second it.

13 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Seconded by Mr. Sutton. All
14 in favor?

15 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

16 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any opposed? Okay. Motion
17 passes. Congratulations River Valley Virtual
18 Academy.

19 **VII.1.c. CHARTER RENEWAL - ARKANSAS LIGHTHOUSE ACADEMIES**

20 MR. SUTHERLIN: Okay. Next up is Arkansas
21 Lighthouse Academies. The district requested the
22 renewal of the charter for a five year period. The
23 campus serves grades P-12. The current enrollment
24 cap is 2,419 students. The charter will continue to
25 follow a traditional education model and a digital

1 learning plan was included in waivers requested.

2 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Mr. Henderson, do you
3 have any questions?

4 MR. HENDERSON: No.

5 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Dr. Moore?

6 DR. MOORE: No.

7 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Ms. Woods?

8 MS. WOODS: No.

9 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Anyone here? Any questions or
10 discussion?

11 MS. McFETRIDGE: I noticed there is a two year
12 review set by the (inaudible), so does that -- if we
13 do not review this and it's renewed for five years,
14 will that be automatically set in?

15 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: That was part of their --

16 MS. McFETRIDGE: Does that need to be part of
17 our motion or --

18 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: No. That's automatically --

19 MS. McFETRIDGE: Okay.

20 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: -- part of what the agreement
21 was that day.

22 MS. McFETRIDGE: Okay.

23 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any other questions? Okay.

24 So we're either review or not review.

25 DR. RANKIN: I move to not review.

1 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Dr. Rankin has made a
2 motion to not review.

3 MS. DEAN: Second.

4 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Seconded by Ms. Dean. All in
5 favor?

6 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

7 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any opposed? Motion passes.
8 Congratulations to Arkansas Lighthouse Academy.

9 **VII.1.d. CHARTER RENEWAL - EXALT ACADEMY OF SOUTHWEST LITTLE**
10 **ROCK**

11 MR. SUTHERLIN: So next up we have Exalt Academy
12 Southwest Little Rock. The district requested a
13 renewal of the charter for a ten year period;
14 however, this still needs approval at the January
15 18th CAP meeting.

16 MS. COFFMAN: (inaudible)

17 MR. SUTHERLIN: It doesn't? Okay.

18 MS. COFFMAN: Let me handle this one.

19 MR. SUTHERLIN: Okay.

20 MS. COFFMAN: This one's a little confusing, so
21 let me help. They were approved by the charter panel
22 for a ten year renewal. They do serve kindergarten
23 through 8th grade. Their enrollment cap is 540
24 currently and they do follow a traditional
25 educational model. They do not have a digital

1 learning plan. They never requested one. What they
2 are requesting is to increase their cap by 108
3 students annually. That has been held up by the
4 Charter Authorizing Panel and will be considered next
5 week because we needed to see evidence of a 35 day
6 notice to the traditional district, and we wanted to
7 know more information about the potential locations
8 of where that school might expand. So that's all on
9 the agenda next week at the Charter Panel. So today
10 you would be reviewing or not reviewing their charter
11 renewal for ten years and then next month you will be
12 looking whether or not they'll have a cap increase.

13 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. And then part of their
14 agreement was also a biannual report, wasn't it?

15 MS. COFFMAN: Their requirement was to come back
16 in two years with a report.

17 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: So that's automatically in
18 just like before and we don't need to put that in our
19 motion?

20 MS. COFFMAN: That's correct. And just for
21 note, the Charter Panel or the state board, can call
22 a charter at any time. So we monitor very closely.

23 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Thank you. So on your
24 list, we are not looking at the enrollment cap. It
25 would be just the first -- one, two, three -- four

1 bullet points there would be what we would be
2 considering in our motion. Okay? Is everybody clear
3 on that? Okay. And so we'll see if we have any
4 discussion on this one. Anyone online have a
5 question or a comment? Okay. Anyone here have a
6 question or a comment? Okay. So we are ready for a
7 motion to either review or not review Exalt Academy.

8 MS. DEAN: I move to not review.

9 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. We have a motion by Ms.
10 Dean not to review.

11 MS.McFETRIDGE: I second.

12 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: We have a second by Ms.
13 McFetridge. All in favor?

14 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

15 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any opposed? Okay. Motion
16 passes. Is there any new business? Okay.

17 (The Action Agenda was concluded at 11:25 a.m.)

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