

In The Matter Of:
ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

December 9, 2021

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ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

DECEMBER 9, 2021
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
MS. CHARISSE DEAN
DR. FITZGERALD HILL
MS. KATHY McFETRIDGE (via Zoom)
MS. ADRIENNE WOODS
MR. STEVE SUTTON
DR. BETH ANNE RANKIN
MR. RANDY HENDERSON

NON-VOTING PARTICIPANTS:

MR. JOHNNY KEY, Secretary of Education
MS. SUSANNA POST, Arkansas Teacher of the Year

DESE LEGAL COUNSEL:

MS. LORI FRENO, General Counsel

LOCATION:

ARKANSAS DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
- Auditorium
#4 Capitol Mall
Little Rock, AR 72201

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E X H I B I T S

1(a): FAYETTEVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT ACT 1240 WAIVER REQUEST

EXHIBIT ONE (1)
 Additional Documentation in Support of
 Waiver Request

1(b): SOUTHEAST EDUCATION SERVICE COOPERATION ACT 1240 WAIVER REQUEST

EXHIBIT ONE (1)
 Act 1240 Utilization Report

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P R O C E E D I N G S

PROCLAMATION OF ARKANSAS SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER RECOGNITION MONTH

CHAIRMAN NEWTON: We first have Mr. Jordan is going to come and read a proclamation from the Arkansas School Boards Association.

MR. JORDAN: Yes, ma'am. Thank you. I'm Dan Jordan with Arkansas School Boards, and I thank you for this opportunity.

I'll read the resolution, Arkansas State Board of Education Resolution:

WHEREAS, More than 473,000 students attend public schools in Arkansas; and

WHEREAS, The Arkansas State Board of Education acknowledges the importance of public education and its impact on our communities today and in the future; and

WHEREAS, The Arkansas State Board of Education recognizes the vital role of more than 1,500 elected local school board members who establish the mission and direction for their local districts and approve policies to guide their school systems; and

WHEREAS, School board members must make key decisions regarding the curriculum, instruction, finance and facilities of public schools; and

WHEREAS, School board members employ and

1 evaluate the superintendent, who has the daily
2 responsibility for the operation of the school
3 district; and

4 WHEREAS, School board members must participate
5 in professional development every year in order to
6 enhance their knowledge and skills related to their
7 responsibilities;

8 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT

9 The Arkansas State Board of Education recognizes
10 and salutes the members of the local school boards of
11 education by proclaiming the month of January 2022,
12 as Arkansas School Board Member Recognition Month.

13 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yes.

14 MR. JORDAN: And on behalf of them, I thank you
15 for allowing me to share.

16 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. And so we do need
17 a vote to proclaim January as School Board
18 Recognition Month. And so, do we have a motion?

19 MR. SUTTON: So moved.

20 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Motion by Mr. Sutton.

21 MR. HENDERSON: Second.

22 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Seconded by Mr. Henderson.

23 All in favor?

24 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

25 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any opposed?

1 We very much appreciate the work that school
2 board members do in our districts because that voice
3 speaking up is just -- you know, it's an unpaid, it's
4 a lots of times unsung position. But we are very
5 appreciative of all the hard work that they do.

6 MR. JORDAN: Thank you. We appreciate the
7 recognition. Thank you.

8 SECRETARY KEY: And, Madam Chair, just to make
9 sure everyone realizes, too, we have members of this
10 body that have served on school boards in their local
11 school board capacity -- Ms. McFetridge many years on
12 the Springdale board and Mr. Sutton on Marion school
13 board, and I think -- is that -- I think that's all.
14 But two of you, right? But that's experience and --
15 that they bring to this body that really does help us
16 understand, a perspective of looking at things
17 through their -- the perspective of a school board
18 member, and it's been very helpful to us in the
19 Department.

20 So thank you, Mr. Jordan. Thank you, Dr.
21 Prothro.

22 MR. JORDAN: Yes.

23 SECRETARY KEY: And we will be joining you a
24 little later on today, I think --

25 MR. JORDAN: Yes.

1 SECRETARY KEY: -- for lunch.

2 MR. JORDAN: For lunch. Thank you.

3 SECRETARY KEY: And, Mr. Jordan, stay there.

4 We're going to get a picture --

5 MR. JORDAN: Okay.

6 SECRETARY KEY: -- real quick.

7 (OFF THE RECORD FOR CONSENT AGENDA)

8 (BACK ON THE RECORD)

9 1: CONSIDERATION OF REQUESTS FOR ACT 1240 WAIVERS

10 a) FAYETTEVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT

11 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: We're moving on to the action
12 agenda. Under the action agenda, the first thing
13 that we have are 1240 waivers. And, Ms. Freno.

14 MS. FRENO: Thank you. Lori Freno.

15 And as you said, the first -- we have some Act
16 1240 waivers today. The first is for the
17 Fayetteville School District.

18 And the District requests a waiver of Teaching
19 Load for grades 5-12 at several of its schools in
20 order so that they can implement a teacher intern
21 program. Mary Claire Hyatt is here to present this
22 request and she will have 20 minutes to present the
23 request, but I know she will not take 20 minutes.

24 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Ms. Hyatt is very well aware
25 of the rules because I think she helped write them,

1 so --

2 MS. HYATT: That's funny because I had talked to
3 Ms. Freno, and I said, "Well, who -- who wrote that
4 into the rules?" But Mary Claire Hyatt, Fayetteville
5 Public Schools. I will try and be brief. I think
6 you guys have seen several of these teacher
7 apprenticeship programs come before you.

8 We do have great community partners with
9 University of Arkansas and with Harding in northwest
10 Arkansas. And we're excited to help grow teachers at
11 Fayetteville Public Schools and give opportunities to
12 teachers that want to come and work for the school
13 district and hopefully stay in that area in our
14 school district.

15 So the mentor teacher is completely voluntary
16 for that person. You should have gotten a printout
17 that has -- we currently have one teacher who has
18 done something similar before and she is totally in
19 support. It would be voluntary for any teacher that
20 wanted to participate. And it wouldn't be every
21 student in teacher prep programs; it would be those
22 that are deemed ready by their teacher prep program
23 and vetted by the school district.

24 And I'm happy to answer any questions that you
25 have.

1 And before I do that, I think we will use that
2 pretty sparingly. I think we have one or two
3 students that we're looking at maybe, if this is
4 approved, for now, and make sure and keep a really
5 tight eye on it. We'll look at how it's working,
6 talk with the mentor teachers and with the principals
7 of the buildings where those apprentice teachers are,
8 and if it's not working, back off. But if it is,
9 hopefully we'll be able to grow some of our own
10 teachers and get people excited about working for our
11 district.

12 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: And this Teaching Load would
13 be for three years and only apply in this situation
14 for the teacher interns?

15 MS. HYATT: That's correct.

16 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right. We'll see
17 if we have any questions from the Board.

18 Anyone on this side?

19 DR. MOORE: I do.

20 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Dr. Moore.

21 DR. MOORE: Thank you. In the application it
22 looks like so far there's just one. Is that correct?

23 MS. HYATT: (Nodding head up and down.)

24 DR. MOORE: And will that be for this upcoming
25 semester?

1 MS. HYATT: So that student was previously a
2 long-term sub, in the way that it kind of used to
3 work.

4 DR. MOORE: Okay.

5 MS. HYATT: He's actually graduating in
6 December, so he won't -- he will be a teacher in our
7 school district, I believe, which is really exciting
8 for us. So we don't have -- I think we're waiting to
9 see if it gets approved before we look at midyear
10 options for the next semester of school. So we do
11 have this kind of one person, but he will be hired as
12 a teacher and then we'll look at having one or two in
13 midyear placements.

14 DR. MOORE: Okay. What does compensation look
15 like for the teacher?

16 MS. HYATT: I believe that they are paid on --
17 not the teacher -- which teacher, the mentor teacher
18 or the apprentice?

19 DR. MOORE: The apprentice.

20 MS. HYATT: Okay. I think they are not on our
21 teacher salary schedule, but they're on one of our
22 other salary schedules. And then there's not
23 additional compensation for the mentor teacher --
24 but, again, it's voluntary. And they're not actually
25 in that class teaching; they're providing that

1 oversight.

2 DR. MOORE: Okay. I imagine there's a lot of
3 student teachers in the Fayetteville district. Is
4 that correct?

5 MS. HYATT: I do think we have quite a few that
6 work and do their student teaching there. It's my
7 understanding that we've just had the one that was
8 kind of, you know, a long-term sub position that had
9 his own class. But typically I think they kind of
10 work under the direction of other teachers.

11 DR. MOORE: Okay. Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Ms. McFetridge, did you
13 have a question?

14 MS. McFETRIDGE: No. Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Any questions over
16 here?

17 Okay. All right. So we are ready for a motion
18 for the Fayetteville School District 1240 waiver
19 request.

20 MS. DEAN: I move to approve.

21 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Motion by Ms. Dean.

22 DR. RANKIN: I'll second.

23 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Seconded by Ms. -- Dr. Rankin.
24 All in favor?

25 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

1 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any opposed?

2 Okay. Motion passes.

3 Congratulations, and it's good to see you.

4 MS. HYATT: Thank you. It's so good to see all
5 of you.

6 SECRETARY KEY: Before she gets away, Madam
7 Chair, if I can, I want to say thank you, Mary
8 Claire, because she helped us. And I'll explain a
9 little bit more, but she helped bring Bessie B. Moore
10 back home to the Department. It's a big portrait and
11 we needed assistance and she was willing to -- since
12 she was coming this way to work with our friends at
13 the U of A and transport that portrait. And thank
14 you for doing that for us.

15 MS. HYATT: Actually, it's your birthday
16 present.

17 SECRETARY KEY: Thank you. All right.

18 MS. HYATT: But it's great to see all of you.
19 Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Good to see you.

21 b) SOUTHEAST EDUCATION SERVICE COOPERATIVE

22 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. Ms. Freno, the
23 1240 waiver acts for the Southeast Education Service
24 Cooperative.

25 MS. FRENO: Good morning again. Lori Freno.

1 And I'm here with Dr. Ivy Pfeffer to introduce this
2 item.

3 This is an Act 1240 waiver request from the
4 school districts within the South -- within the -- I
5 forget what it's called -- Southeast Education
6 Service Cooperative. They're seeking Teacher
7 Licensure and Media Specialist Licensure. They are
8 not seeking any waiver of the Media Specialist
9 program -- Media Services program. It's just for
10 licensure. And they're requesting this for three
11 years.

12 And I'm going to turn the floor over to Dr.
13 Pfeffer to discuss this a little more.

14 DR. PFEFFER: Okay. Good morning, Board
15 Members.

16 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Good morning.

17 DR. PFEFFER: And I'm going to just speak for
18 just a minute. I know that the school districts are
19 here. They've provided you with a lot of really good
20 information in your board packet, and several of you
21 did have some questions and concerns about this
22 waiver request. And I do believe they're asking for
23 five years. We had communicated that we might want
24 to consider a three-year option for this, but I do
25 think they have some information to explain to you

1 how they've utilized these waivers over the last five
2 years and why they have a request for five years.

3 One thing that we wanted to talk about though is
4 that starting in July of this year districts are
5 required now to submit a recruitment and retention
6 plan; so, all districts will be required to do this.
7 In the past the legislation had only required those
8 that had a greater than I think 5% minority
9 population would do a plan, and the legislation has
10 changed pretty significantly the purpose of the
11 plans. It's a larger teacher and administrator
12 recruitment plan, and so we're in the process right
13 now of outlining a template for districts to use the
14 data. But they'll need to be sure and include --
15 plans will have to include their specific strategies
16 and goals, the things that they're trying to address.

17 And so in kind of preparing for today we started
18 thinking about, okay, how will these teacher
19 recruitment and retention plans intersect with
20 districts that have Act 1240 waivers. In the
21 information I sent you yesterday I included a couple
22 of graphics; one had kind of done the -- TNTP had
23 done a report on teacher shortages in Arkansas. As
24 you can see, that area of the state does continue to
25 have a shortage of teachers in Arkansas. The four-

1 year institution that is in their immediate service
2 area has very, very low enrollment in their
3 traditional educator preparation program; and so all
4 of those factors there are combining to make it very
5 difficult for them to have the pipeline of certified
6 teachers that they need.

7 I think that you'll see from the data they share
8 -- and Ms. Saracini also pulled together some data
9 from the co-op, and I'm going to give you a handout
10 here.

11 (WHEREUPON, 1(b) Exhibit One (1) was marked for
12 identification and entered into the record.)

13 DR. PFEFFER: Because we wanted to look at and
14 see if the district in utilizing the Act 1240
15 waivers, if they were also having to rely on other
16 types of licensure exceptions. And you can see that
17 they are not utilizing emergency teaching permits or
18 long-term substitutes to a very great degree. So I
19 do think when you look at that that is showing that
20 the Act 1240 waivers are meeting that need that they
21 have to be able to have the flexibility in getting
22 people to the classroom. The larger question though
23 really is how do we move forward, because Act 1240
24 waivers don't need to be a permanent solution to our
25 teacher workforce, and that's why we have these

1 larger initiatives like the teacher residency model
2 moving forward, really pushing the grow-your-own
3 initiative, and having those plans that will be
4 submitted. And I don't have -- I think I had told
5 you that the recruitment and retention plans will be
6 a three-year plan. So you have the plan and then you
7 have this request here, so hopefully kind of putting
8 several of those things together might help you in at
9 least asking the questions and deciding how you want
10 to proceed.

11 So if you have any questions for me, I'll be
12 happy to answer that. Otherwise, I'll get out of the
13 way and let them present to you.

14 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Does anyone have a
15 question for Ms. -- Dr. Pfeffer?

16 DR. RANKIN: Dr. Pfeffer, I do have a quick
17 question. Under normal circumstances, I would be
18 very open to the five-year in this case -- the five-
19 year waiver. Is there a lot of pushback from the
20 Department to stick to the three -- the three-year
21 waiver only? I mean how strongly are your feelings
22 on that?

23 DR. PFEFFER: So, you know, I think there's
24 really two ways to look at that. In terms of
25 granting waivers, five years is the maximum amount of

1 time that you can grant the waiver.

2 And just kind of out of curiosity, how many of
3 you were on the Board five years ago when these
4 waivers were granted?

5 Okay. So, a couple of you.

6 How many of you will be on the Board in five
7 years because of your terms?

8 Okay. So, a few of you.

9 So, you know, part of it is when you start
10 thinking about five years and that historical
11 knowledge of, you know, what do you do when it's time
12 to make that next decision. You know, I think
13 initially I had more concerns because "we've done
14 this for five years and now we're asking to do it for
15 five more years," where do we stop. And so we
16 started thinking about it in terms of, though, when
17 the waivers are granted if we're not also talking
18 about what is the end-game, what is that end-goal.
19 It wouldn't matter really if you granted it for three
20 years, five years, or 15 years; you know, you just --
21 at some point you have to think about, you know,
22 where do we go after this. And so that's when then
23 it occurred to us that we had this other part of the
24 plan from the state and that is working with the
25 districts on their recruitment and retention plans,

1 and so those plans will cover a span of three years.
2 And even if you go ahead and grant the waivers for
3 five years, after three years you've got the
4 opportunity to look and see, okay, are they making
5 progress and, you know, what are we going to be
6 looking at in terms of needing those waivers beyond
7 that.

8 So really I think it's going to be more about
9 your level of comfort with the districts in terms of
10 is -- has this been a strategy that has helped them
11 bring people to the workforce and get them licensed
12 and keep them there, or is it -- you know, do we need
13 to double-down and really focus on those other
14 efforts.

15 So I think just the realization that we have the
16 recruitment and retention plans in place, I think
17 that helps us be more comfortable with their request
18 of five years, because there's always that -- that
19 plan is going to really help to focus, I think, the
20 efforts. So not an exact answer, but I think we feel
21 a little bit differently now in terms of thinking
22 about the plans as part of the overall solution.

23 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any other questions before we
24 hear from the district?

25 Ms. McFetridge?

1 MS. McFETRIDGE: No.

2 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right. So --

3 MS. FRENO: Lori Freno, again.

4 Just for clarity, Karen Eoff is here. She will
5 be presenting these waivers. She is the director of
6 the co-op. She will have 20 minutes to present. Of
7 course, the Chair can grant more time if necessary.
8 And all of the school districts that have requested
9 these waivers are here in person or via Zoom, so
10 they're available for questions.

11 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

12 MS. EOFF: I am Karen Eoff. I'm the Director of
13 the Southeast Co-op that represents these 15 schools
14 that we're -- that are under discussion, and I would
15 love to give you some of the results that we have
16 seen with our Act 1240 waivers. And after I talk
17 briefly, Dr. Tucker from Hermitage will talk, Gary
18 Williams from Crossett will talk, and Kelvin Gragg
19 from Dumas will talk and tell you what it really
20 looks like in our districts.

21 We are truly -- since 2016, we have had to hire
22 430 Act 1240 teachers, and of those 430, 169 are now
23 already fully licensed -- fully licensed teachers.
24 And so we are using this as a grow-your-own program,
25 grow-your-own teachers in your community to -- so

1 that they will stay and so they will help and they're
2 vested in our student achievement in our area.

3 So here's the problem: 430 -- when we tried to
4 recruit from every avenue possible -- we only fill
5 and use Act 1240 teachers when we have no other
6 choice. And so since we've used 430, 169 are fully
7 licensed teachers. UAM has only produced 58 trained
8 -- classically trained teachers that went through
9 student teaching, and they're a main avenue that
10 provides student teachers.

11 Now I want to tell you what we're currently
12 doing in recruitment and retention of teachers
13 because I think you're going to be very, very
14 interested in what I'm about to tell you.

15 Not only do we recruit in our area, we recruit
16 in our region, we recruit in our state, we recruit in
17 Mississippi and Louisiana as well, always looking for
18 licensed teachers first, always. We also recruit
19 internationally, and internationally we have
20 recruited from the Philippines -- licensed teachers
21 in the Philippines, and we have placed eight in Dumas
22 and -- no, we've placed eight in Dumas and five in
23 the Lake Village district. So we've even went
24 international, that's how serious we are about
25 recruitment. We leave no stone unturned, no stone.

1 We also recruit from the Teach for America program
2 for the Southeast Co-op Americorp program, and then
3 from the co-op Americorp program alone we have
4 produced 34 licensed teachers, 34 -- 30 who came
5 through the classically trained route going through
6 student teaching and four who came through the MAT
7 program. We hire paraprofessionals. But when we have to hire
8 paraprofessionals in our 15 districts the first question we
9 ask is are you willing to go back to school, because
10 we need licensed teachers. That's totally our
11 preferred method of supplying our classroom is a
12 licensed teacher. And here's the results of what
13 we've done with our paraprofessional-to-teacher program at
14 UAM: we have 26 fully licensed teachers who used to
15 be paraprofessionals -- 26. We have 22 more that are in that
16 program now, from paraprofessional-to-teacher, and will be when
17 they complete that program a fully licensed -- and
18 pass the Praxis exam will be a fully licensed teacher
19 in our district. Because fully licensed teachers is
20 what we want. We would take them wherever we can
21 recruit them. If we can find them and get them to
22 come to our economically depressed area, we'll take
23 them every time. Whoever can supply them, we'll take
24 them. Again, we don't leave any stone unturned in
25 recruitment. We don't.

1 So, but what happens when you advertise and you
2 recruit through all these methods and you still have
3 not one licensed applicant for your position? So
4 what do you do next? So what we do is that's where
5 we start the journey with our Act 1240 teachers and
6 we hire an Act 1240 teacher, someone with a college
7 degree, preferably with 18 hours in the area that
8 they're going to be teaching in -- 18 hours of
9 content preferably, if we can find them, and then we
10 start this intensive mentoring and training program
11 for them. Now every one of our schools make it
12 perfectly clear when they're hired that they prefer
13 them to get through and become licensed within three
14 years -- every one of them. And then they have a --
15 every year they review them intensely, if they've
16 made adequate yearly progress to be rehired for the
17 next year, and it's sometimes with tears in their
18 eyes they say, "We're not going to renew you because
19 you did not meet your obligation to meet the first-
20 year requirement to progress to a second year." We
21 invest heavily in these people.

22 But let me give you two roadblocks that we face
23 to getting them all through in three years. We'd
24 love to get them all through in three years but
25 sometimes it's just not feasible, and we're going to

1 talk about that real briefly. One is we have some
2 outstanding high school teachers that have completed
3 their program of study, that have passed their Praxis
4 content and have excellent, outstanding TESS
5 evaluation and are outstanding teachers but have yet
6 to pass the Foundations of Reading; that's the only
7 thing hanging them up to getting a license. And then
8 the second category that we need for -- sometimes for
9 four and five years is teachers who have passed
10 everything I just talked about but have not passed
11 the Principles of Learning and Teaching, the PLT,
12 that is required by UAM to complete a program of
13 study. If you don't complete your program of study,
14 you can't get a license, so they are hung-up by that.
15 They need the fourth and sometimes the fifth year to
16 pass their PLT test.

17 So, but -- and let me also address, because I
18 know it's a concern of ours and it's a concern of
19 yours, is how do these teachers -- Act 1240 teachers
20 help students' learning opportunities and how do they
21 enhance their learning opportunities and how do they
22 enhance student achievement. We put teachers in the
23 classroom from our area who know the economics of our
24 area, the emotional reality of our area, and the
25 roadblocks in our area to student learning; they know

1 their home environment and they know how to support,
2 they know how to put in emotional support and
3 learning structures that help those teachers -- help
4 those students achieve. They know them better than
5 anyone because once, they were them. They understand
6 our kids; they love our kids with all their hearts
7 and they want to do the best for our kids, and they
8 will work -- work, work, work to help our kids
9 achieve.

10 And let me give you two real-life examples,
11 because we have put our story all through your -- all
12 through our application. Everyone, we've had example
13 after example, but let me just take two examples.
14 One is Hannah Terry, and the Cleveland County School
15 District found Hannah Terry in the Rison Revenue
16 Department. You talk about recruitment, we go
17 everywhere; we look under every rock. Hannah Terry
18 had a science degree but she did not have an
19 education degree, and she became -- she was hired as
20 an Act 1240 teacher. She became one of the most
21 innovative, creative middle school science teachers
22 that's ever been at Cleveland County Schools. She
23 had high standards, she had high student achievement,
24 and she was beloved by the students even though she
25 was tough. She was beloved by the students, by the

1 parents, by the other teachers. And she was a
2 natural leader, so much so that when she -- there was
3 an opening this year for an elementary school
4 counselor she applied. Now she already had her
5 license as a teacher. She'd by then acquired her
6 license as a teacher, and she is now the elementary
7 school counselor and she's helping many, many more
8 kids of poverty as an elementary counselor as well.

9 Let me give you a second example. We talk about
10 high achievement. I want you to listen to what I
11 tell you about Aaron Jones. Aaron Jones was hired
12 straight out of college at UAM with a chemistry
13 degree, absolutely no education hours. He was -- he
14 had a chemistry degree and he was hired by Crossett.
15 He then became a -- went back and was -- became --
16 took hours and became a college board trained teacher
17 and started an AP chemistry test -- AP chemistry
18 course at Crossett. And then he was so outstanding
19 and his student achievement was so great that he
20 became the lead teacher for the engineering pathway;
21 so he then started teaching engineering. Then he
22 agreed to go to California, to get the robotics arm
23 training that was available in California, and he got
24 that training. Then he became the Project Lead the
25 Way teacher and he started an engineering design

1 course, a Principles of Engineering course, a
2 computer integrated manufacturing course in Crossett
3 High School. Then he started a Becks [ps] robotics
4 team; then he started a first robotics team that had
5 -- that they did not have in Crossett. What a guy.
6 But that's not the end of it; he did us one more
7 favor. He married a young art teacher who had no
8 education hours but wanted to become a teacher. And
9 guess what? She became an Act 1240 teacher for
10 Crossett High School when they had an art opening.
11 And not only did she get involved at the school and
12 was motivational to the art teacher, she, along with
13 her arts team, started something that we had not had
14 before in the community of Crossett: a community
15 outreach program where the students could do visual
16 and performing arts before a real-world audience in
17 the community. That had not been done before. Think
18 about the benefits to our students.

19 So, State Board Members, I beg you for five
20 years. I'll just lay it on the line. I beg you for
21 five years because we invest so heavily in these
22 teachers that by the time -- we don't want them hung
23 up on year-three and have to non-renew them when they
24 only lack one test and we could still continue their
25 journey to full licensure. I beg you. We will use

1 the waivers wisely, we will use the waivers
2 productively, and we will grow our own teachers in
3 our own community that will be here until they
4 retire.

5 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Thank you. I want to -- you
6 said you had three others that are going to speak?

7 MS. EOFF: Yes.

8 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: I'll let you know you have
9 about seven minutes left.

10 MS. EOFF: Okay. Dr. Tracy Tucker is up next
11 and -- to tell you what it looks like in the district
12 to support these teachers.

13 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Welcome, Dr. Tucker. If we
14 need to extend, we will a little bit.

15 DR. TUCKER: Good morning, Board Members.

16 Good morning, Teacher of the Year, Ms. Post.
17 Congratulations and thank you for representing our
18 teachers. We appreciate you.

19 Happy birthday, Secretary Key.

20 So this morning I just want to share a little
21 bit with you about the processes that we as districts
22 have had to put into place to support our 1240 waiver
23 teachers when they come to our districts. As Karen
24 said, this is not a new problem for our economically
25 deprived little area of the state. They have lots

1 and lots of challenges. It's a problem that came to
2 our attention about eight years ago as we began work
3 to become an ACT work-ready community. So not only
4 in our part of the state are we facing challenges
5 with finding teachers to fill our classrooms, we're
6 facing challenges with doctors to work in our
7 hospitals, we're facing challenges with drivers to
8 drive our trucks coming and carrying logs from our
9 woods. So it's a problem that we're dealing with
10 that is common in our part of the state.

11 So our waivers give us the opportunity, the best
12 opportunity that we've had in our part of the state
13 to put a teacher who has a bachelor's degree with
14 content area knowledge in the classroom with students
15 over a long-term sub. And so I think probably the
16 beauty of the process that we have found in southeast
17 Arkansas is in our recruitment efforts. We have
18 worked recruitment. You've heard some of the stories
19 from Karen. But when I say we do just about
20 anything, we do just about anything. We rob from
21 daycares, we go to churches, we meet people at the
22 revenue office, we look in-house, we look at our
23 paras, our secretaries. Anyone that we can find that
24 might be interested in working with our students,
25 their students in our schools -- their schools in

1 southeast Arkansas, that's what we do. So the
2 recruitment is the piece I think that's been so vital
3 to helping us find success. We've invested in our
4 teachers. Once we get our 1240 waiver teachers into
5 our schools, it is truly a process. We have a plan
6 for that process.

7 So the recruitment and retention plan, we're a
8 little bit ahead of that because we've already got
9 that, because we already know what support our Act
10 1240 waiver teachers are going to need and how we're
11 going to help them be successful in the classroom.

12 One of the things -- that year-one is so
13 important because most of our Act 1240 waiver
14 teachers when they start a master's program they're
15 taking 12 to 15 hours per semester of college
16 courses, in addition to working a new fulltime job.
17 So it's imperative that we use our mentor teachers,
18 our instructional facilitators, our mentor -- and our
19 administrators, our outside consultants, our novice
20 people at the co-op. We are surrounding them with a
21 bed of support to, number one, make them successful
22 in their role as a classroom teacher, but to also
23 improve our chances of being able to retain them as a
24 teacher in our district. Those efforts continue for
25 -- through years two and three. At the end of year-

1 two, the beginning of year-three is when we really
2 start to shift our focus from completing the
3 coursework to obtain that credential into how do we
4 support them to pass an assessment. And that may be
5 tutoring sessions within our own school district;
6 that may be school business leave to attend tutoring
7 sessions at the co-op and to help them have a better
8 chance of passing that Praxis. It may be releasing
9 them sometimes to sit on a Zoom that's being done by
10 the Department of Ed. with that same purpose. It's
11 really just about anything goes, anything that we can
12 come up with to support our teachers to help them be
13 able to obtain that license, and we try to do that in
14 that three-year timeframe.

15 We know that our 1240 waiver teachers are our
16 best chance of giving our teachers -- of giving our
17 students their classroom teachers, who are going to
18 stay -- teachers who are invested in them and
19 teachers are who are invested in our communities and
20 in our schools. That's the bottom-line. We are not
21 growing our teachers through the recruitment efforts
22 that we have right now in getting a traditional
23 teacher license, and so we've thought outside the box
24 and we have worked hard to find those people wherever
25 we can find them, being resourceful, being creative,

1 and working hard to find people that are going to
2 invest back in our communities in our part of the
3 state.

4 So we appreciate your faith that you've shown in
5 us in the past. We've worked hard. We're proud of
6 the work that we've done. And we ask you to please
7 continue to work with us, allow us to continue our
8 efforts which are benefitting our kids and our
9 schools in southeast Arkansas. And we invite you
10 down; come down and see our schools, see our
11 teachers. I have one teacher who was a finalist for
12 Teacher of the Year in our Southeast Arkansas Co-op
13 region. We have teachers participating in Leadership
14 Academy, Teacher Leader Institutes. We have teachers
15 -- Act 1240 waiver teachers trying to become national
16 board certified. So we're having some successes and
17 we would love for you to come down and see the work
18 that we're doing. Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Thank you.

20 All right. Mr. Gragg, I think there was
21 somebody before you? I don't --

22 MR. GRAGG: Yes, ma'am. Mr. Williams.

23 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Oh, Mr. Williams.

24 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes. I know we're short on time
25 and I'll try to abbreviate my comments. I thank the

1 Board and Secretary Key for allowing us to speak with
2 you guys today and your time. And we are hoping to
3 truly convey that we are coming on behalf of our
4 students and we are making every effort to get the
5 best trained teacher possible in front of those
6 students.

7 One of the steps that we've taken here, we
8 realize the support needs to continue to grow and
9 improve. And we were approached by the Department of
10 Education three years ago to consider the multi-
11 classroom leader model through Public Impact and
12 travel to Charlotte, North Carolina, to look at that
13 model in place and in practice, and realized this is
14 a model that we really need to embrace. This is a
15 similar position to an instructional coach, but it's
16 more specific to teachers who need that support. And
17 we went from three instructional coaches to six
18 multi-classroom leaders, and we have currently eight
19 of our 1240 teachers that have the support, daily
20 support of these multi-classroom leaders that are
21 experts in content, experts in pedagogy, classroom
22 management, and they're walking side-by-side. So
23 this is another piece of that support that we're
24 offering at Crossett. As Ms. -- as Dr. Tucker
25 stated, a lot of support is being given to these

1 teachers. And one of the things I would like for the
2 Board to consider is we look at the ways of certified
3 teachers coming our direction. We all have to
4 realize that number is small and that leads a huge
5 gap, and these 1240 waivers have been a godsend for
6 us that the Board has granted us, and we use them
7 wisely. We support these teachers. And Ms. Eoff
8 mentioned Aaron Jones; he's been a great example at
9 Crossett, and we have many other success stories that
10 we can share. But, again, the teaching supply is not
11 coming our direction. Another thing I think is
12 important to consider is when you think about the
13 population shift. The population is shifting out of
14 southeast Arkansas. And when we attempt to recruit
15 traditionally trained teachers from other parts of
16 the state, they're moving against that flow of
17 population, and those teachers either want to stay
18 home or they want to stay in those areas or go to
19 those areas that are growing, and that's not
20 southeast Arkansas. So they're going against that
21 population shift. And so the 1240 teachers have
22 given us the opportunity to retain many of those
23 talented people who may not have work in other areas
24 that their degree was intended to focus on. So we
25 use them to retain the talent in southeast Arkansas.

1 These are the individuals that are committed to our
2 community; they have looked at the teaching
3 profession and decided this keeps me home, it keeps
4 me invested in my community, and puts me in a
5 wonderful profession. So it really supports us as we
6 continue to recruit teachers, and it's important for
7 us to do that. We -- when we get an Act 1240 teacher
8 into our districts they are really, really
9 overwhelmed at times because they're a brand-new
10 teacher going back to school in a new profession, and
11 that support that we talked about is in place and we
12 have had a lot of success. But if we get into year-
13 two of the waiver, in year-three, and we only have
14 three years total with the waiver to consider, many
15 of those teachers may decline not to come into our
16 profession because they realize that they don't have
17 time to fulfill the requirements. And that's why
18 that fourth and fifth year I think is really, really
19 important to this process. And we hope that the
20 Board will consider those -- the fourth and fifth
21 years as part of this approval process.

22 And, again, we appreciate your time and your
23 consideration and all that you guys do for our
24 teachers and our students across the state.

25 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Thank you, Mr. Williams.

1 Mr. Gragg, we're going to extend time and allow
2 you an opportunity to speak if you'll keep your --

3 MR. GRAGG: Thank you. I won't be long.

4 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

5 MR. GRAGG: Good morning, Commissioner --
6 Secretary Key, Chairman Newton, State Board Members.
7 My name is Kelvin Gragg and I'm the superintendent of
8 the Dumas School -- proud superintendent of the Dumas
9 School District.

10 I had written everything out, but I'm going to
11 talk to you from the heart for just a minute, if you
12 would. As Mr. Williams said, the process with three
13 years really limits us because the only group of
14 teachers that we're going to have three years to work
15 with are the teachers next year. The Act 1240
16 teachers after that we're going to only have two
17 years. And if we're fortunate enough for year three
18 to -- you know, to get a teacher to come in, we'll
19 only have one year to work with those teachers.

20 Now let me talk to you specifically about Dumas.
21 But before I got on, I want to just kind of share
22 this story with you that I told five years ago. My
23 grandfather in the 1950s said Governor Orville Faubus
24 came on the radio and told the people of Arkansas,
25 said, "People, we have got to support those poor

1 folks in northwest Arkansas." Okay. But I know you
2 guys don't remember that, but he came on and said,
3 "We've got to support those poor folks in southeast
4 Arkansas" -- I mean "in northwest Arkansas." So I'm
5 here today to ask the State Board to support those
6 poor people in southeast Arkansas, to educate the
7 students. That is basically what we're here for.

8 Specifically in Dumas, I'm one of the few school
9 districts that have offered a fourth year to three of
10 my teachers. Now let me add that I have dismissed
11 six teachers since 19 -- since 2016, because they did
12 not make adequate yearly progress. I informed those
13 three teachers in the spring that I was not going to
14 renew them because they had not completed all
15 portions of the Praxis, the PLCs and so-forth. So I
16 advertised two math positions and a high school
17 English teacher, and when I looked at the applicants,
18 guess what, all of the applicants were Act 1240
19 teachers. So I have to make that decision do I waste
20 the three years that I've put in with these teachers
21 and hire new Act 1240 teachers. I chose not to. I
22 chose to continue the work that we're doing with
23 those teachers. Now those teachers have passed
24 either their content area or their PLCs. They were
25 lacking in some area, so we have doubled down on

1 helping those students. Now in an effort to obtain
2 certified teachers, people, I've gone to the
3 Philippines. I've gone to the Philippines. In my
4 district we have eight teachers that we interviewed
5 that we are paying for them to come over to teach our
6 students. We have special ed. teachers that are
7 doing a fantastic job. We have math teachers. In
8 fact, my good friend down the street, Billy Imans
9 [ps], I told him about it and he went over and he
10 hired five teachers. I've got a friend in east
11 Arkansas, at Palestine Wheatley, John Estes. John
12 called me and said, "Kelvin, I'm having trouble. Who
13 -- or how did you get your teachers from the
14 Philippines?" We explained that process and he has
15 some. So we are turning over every rock to get what
16 we need to help our students. We wholeheartedly
17 support the State's initiative of growing their --
18 growing our own. We support that 100% and we will
19 fulfill all the requirements that the state requires
20 of us. We just believe that in southeast Arkansas --
21 in southeast Arkansas that three years is not enough
22 for us. Others that have a larger demographics and
23 more to choose from, that may be the process. We
24 just believe that for us the five years is best. And
25 I think that we have illustrated to you all that we

1 have gone beyond and above to work with our 1240
2 teachers to get them certified.

3 So, in closing, I thank you for time, Mrs.
4 Newton. But we humbly request that you approve our
5 request for a five-year waiver and know that we are
6 doing everything in our power to educate the students
7 of southeast Arkansas. Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Thank you, Mr. Gragg.

9 All right. Ms. Freno, does someone from the
10 Department speak now or do we move on?

11 Okay. Okay. All right.

12 MS. FRENO: No one from the Department will be
13 presenting.

14 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right. And I'm
15 just going to remind the board members and the ones
16 that are here, we have a hard stop at 11:30 today
17 because of other obligations; so just letting you
18 know.

19 Okay. Ms. McFetridge, do you have questions
20 that you would like to ask?

21 MS. McFETRIDGE: I would just like to hear back
22 from the Department on three years versus the five
23 years, if somebody wouldn't mind doing that again.

24 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Dr. Pfeffer.

25 DR. PFEFFER: So I think, as I listened to this

1 information and gone back and read through it, this
2 group has approached the Act 1240 waiver process
3 differently than I think what we see sometimes. They
4 have been very diligent in following up with their
5 candidates. I do think a point Mr. Gragg made a
6 minute ago as far as having three years, yes, they
7 would with this first group, but then you start
8 running out of the three-year time. I think what
9 would make me more comfortable would be for the
10 districts to assure that they do understand that the
11 grow-your-own program -- we don't want to tie a grow-
12 your-own program to an Act 1240 waiver process
13 because we're not going to waive our way to
14 excellence, I guess. And so I think that approach
15 with grow-your-own, in the future we want it to be,
16 you know, all the way through the high school,
17 realizing we still have groups in our communities
18 that will come. Because, you know, our -- you know,
19 I want you to keep that picture in mind where there
20 are multiple pathways to the workforce. So we
21 definitely know that an Act 1240 waiver process is
22 there to meet a need, but we want our recruitment and
23 retention to evolve beyond more of that emergency
24 desperate feeling.

25 And so I think that with their commitments to

1 saying, "yes, we want to get onboard, we want to
2 implement Ed Rising programs with our students, we
3 want to offer the pre-educator programs of study" --
4 even if that comes from maybe a consortium model,
5 that's an option for them as well because they have
6 some small school districts that it may not make
7 sense for every single one of them to be offering the
8 same courses; they could do that in concert with UAM
9 and with the co-op. So to me, that's where the
10 difference is, plus that being part of their
11 recruitment and retention plan where we can help
12 monitor their progress and give you reports so that
13 you would feel comfortable.

14 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Could -- if we did the five
15 years, could maybe after the -- I think you said it
16 was July 1 they had to have their plans in -- after
17 July 1 maybe the Department do an analysis of their
18 plans and how well the 1240 works in with how does it
19 match, how -- is it going to move them forward.
20 Could we maybe get a report from that and then --
21 because I know that no matter what the waiver is, it
22 can be pulled back in at any time.

23 DR. PFEFFER: Yes.

24 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: So --

25 DR. PFEFFER: That is something we can do. We

1 will be having a monitoring process anyway for plans.
2 And so we could do a review, come back, you know,
3 after a couple of months to give a process update.
4 And that is definitely something we could do.

5 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right.

6 SECRETARY KEY: Madam Chair, and Ms. McPetridge,
7 if I may, you know, add to what Dr. Pfeffer was
8 saying, I don't want -- I don't want there to be any
9 thought that this is -- there's great friction in
10 this debate of three versus five or between the
11 Department and the co-op. It's not that at all.
12 What we have tried to do at the Department over the
13 last several years and through changes to
14 legislation, through development of teacher residency
15 models, through the legislative changes to
16 recruitment and retention is to create
17 sustainability. And it's not -- I mean I think the
18 superintendents would agree that recruiting teachers
19 from the Philippines is not necessarily the most
20 sustainable plan because that's -- there are things
21 outside of our control -- congressional actions,
22 something would -- could happen that would close the
23 door for international teachers or limit it in some
24 -- we saw it with TFA. I mean Teach for America was
25 mentioned. We had, a few years ago, hundreds of

1 Teach for America teachers and over the last few
2 years we've seen that dry up. And Mr. Gragg and I
3 have had conversations about why we can't get more
4 TFAs, because that was a -- that was a key part of
5 Dumas providing a good quality education to their
6 students for quite a while. So trying to create that
7 sustainability, that's all this is about. You know,
8 we looked at the three years as something we would
9 feel good about in that transition of getting more
10 sustainable through some of these other initiatives.
11 But I don't want the Board in any way thinking that
12 we're at odds with this work, because we all partner
13 together to try to make this work in a tough area of
14 the state to recruit and retain.

15 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right. Thank you.
16 Anyone over here have questions or comments?
17 Over here?

18 Dr. Moore.

19 DR. MOORE: Yes, I do. I have some questions,
20 maybe the co-op or the districts, around the library
21 media specialist waiver.

22 Are there supports -- when individuals are hired
23 in that role, is there also a mentoring and support
24 process for those individuals?

25 MS. EOFF: Yes. It's the -- it's the same --

1 it's the same -- yes, we work with them the same way,
2 try to get them a mentor. We've not had to use that
3 media -- that waiver as much. We've only used it
4 three times. But when we can't get one, yes, we do
5 the same support, support, support model that we do
6 with the regular teacher waiver, absolutely.

7 DR. MOORE: Okay. As a district and co-op --
8 again, co-op or districts -- as you're looking at
9 hiring an Act 1240 waiver teacher, are there
10 different interview processes that you all go
11 through? What does that look like, you know, if
12 you're hiring a licensed versus a non-licensed
13 teacher?

14 MS. EOFF: I'll let Dr. Tucker, who's there, or
15 someone who's there talk to that because I think the
16 waiver is exact -- I mean it's the same.

17 DR. TUCKER: It is the same, Dr. Moore.
18 Obviously, our 1240 waiver teachers, some of them are
19 going to be at a great disadvantage because they
20 don't have the knowledge or the background. That
21 actually in turn gives us a better idea of what we
22 need to do as a district to support those teachers.
23 In my small little rural school district, I will tell
24 you if I have had a licensed teacher that has come to
25 my district they've pretty much been hired over an

1 Act 1240 waiver -- waiver teacher.

2 DR. MOORE: Okay.

3 DR. TUCKER: So --

4 DR. MOORE: As far as dismissal process, because
5 they're on a waiver is it -- do you go through all
6 the steps that you do for a licensed teacher?

7 DR. TUCKER: I've not dismissed one.

8 DR. MOORE: Mr. Gragg?

9 DR. TUCKER: Mr. Gragg?

10 MR. GRAGG: Basically, what we do --

11 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Would you mind -- Ms.
12 McFetridge is on Zoom and she can't hear you.

13 MR. GRAGG: I'm sorry.

14 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: That's okay.

15 MR. GRAGG: Okay. Once we hire an Act 1240 in
16 Dumas, what we do is we have a specific chart or plan
17 that that teacher knows after year-one what we have
18 -- what you have to do is you have to have an
19 acceptable teacher evaluation, you have to have the
20 ProEthica ethics training, and you have to have taken
21 the practice exams. Year-two is the same thing; you
22 have to make your progress, you have to have an -- or
23 an acceptable teacher evaluation, and you have to
24 have taken the practice exam during that year. The
25 third year everything is the same, with the exception

1 of you have to have passed all of your practice exams
2 in order to be rehired. Now we hire our teachers on
3 a classified contract. Our Act 1240s --

4 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

5 MR. GRAGG: -- are on a classified contract, but
6 they are paid on the base of the certified salary
7 schedule. So at that point in time it is known in
8 advance that this is what you have to do year-one,
9 year-two, year-three. And at the end of that year-
10 three if you have not met those objectives then you
11 are -- you're non-renewed.

12 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

13 MR. GRAGG: And in my case I extend them because
14 they have all of the above and they had passed a
15 portion of their practice but not all. Okay.

16 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

17 DR. MOORE: Thank you. That certainly makes
18 sense.

19 My last -- but it's more of a comment than a
20 question, I think directed more at the Department.
21 But we've talked about this before, but I think the
22 end-goal that we're looking at here is licensure, and
23 I think the real end-goal we want to see is student
24 impact. And so as we look to approve this waiver,
25 how can we support you all so that in three years or

1 five years, however many years, we're coming with
2 student information, student data for how is this
3 impacting our students? And what would it look like
4 if we don't -- we don't know because it might be just
5 a lot of empty seats; so, you know, a lot of students
6 doing virtual programs or that kind of thing. But I
7 think as we approve this I really want to push us to
8 look at that moving forward.

9 DR. PFEFFER: And that's good feedback. And I
10 think even beyond licensure, I think what we are
11 really seeking is stability in the teacher workforce
12 and -- because there are -- and there are a lot of
13 different options, even from a traditional standard
14 license; you have your tech permits, you have, you
15 know, just different areas. But it's really about
16 having well-prepared people in front of children,
17 yes, so that you see the success and we have that
18 stability. So I think that would also be a piece
19 that I would want to add that we're going to know
20 we're successful as we start to see that and as we
21 start to see those charts not be lit up with dark
22 colors of school districts with large percentages.
23 When you look at that as a geographic percentage and
24 we have groups of students who are more impacted by
25 having teachers who are not prepared and not

1 qualified in the classrooms, we know that has a huge
2 detriment on student achievement overall, especially
3 when it happens in a large region.

4 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

5 MR. SUTTON: Question, Dr. Pfeffer. Is it
6 possible to blend or to consider blending -- if the
7 Department were to hold fast on its recommended
8 three-year for the district could you have an
9 exception that if you were a 1240 teacher applicant
10 that regardless of what year during that three years
11 that you applied you've got three years to get your
12 licensure?

13 DR. PFEFFER: I think with this specific request
14 because you're granting the request for the district
15 under that --

16 MR. SUTTON: I understand.

17 DR. PFEFFER: Yeah. I don't think -- I think
18 you would -- I don't think -- I think you would have
19 to extend the waivers for the district.

20 So to Ms. Ouida -- to Ms. Newton's question a
21 minute ago, you know, it could be that the better
22 option would be to grant them the waivers but ask
23 that the Department is reviewing the recruitment and
24 retention plans after the initial submission and then
25 maybe again after that third year to see are we on

1 track, what do the numbers look like, what is -- you
2 know, how are things changing and progressing, and
3 then look a little further down the road.

4 MR. SUTTON: I'm just trying to come up with a
5 --

6 DR. PFEFFER: Yeah. I don't think it would be
7 --

8 MR. SUTTON: -- suggestion.

9 DR. PFEFFER: -- possible to help individual
10 teachers --

11 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Right.

12 DR. PFEFFER: -- without --

13 MR. SUTTON: Yeah.

14 DR. PFEFFER: -- granting the waiver for that
15 district.

16 MR. SUTTON: Okay.

17 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any other questions?

18 Dr. Hill?

19 DR. HILL: I don't really have a question; I
20 have a comment. And I think I remember two board
21 members [sic] ago I mentioned how much time we spend
22 on this topic, and for good reasons. And I -- you
23 know, I hate being government in local communities
24 and I sit here in a position and see teachers and
25 administrators trying to specifically address the

1 needs in their communities and we as a board are here
2 trying to tell them what they need to do. And I
3 don't think that's good governance because of he's on
4 the battlefield, he's in combat, and we're back up
5 here in headquarters and he sees the bullets coming
6 at him in the foxhole and he's trying to call in
7 artillery and he's trying to fight for effect. And
8 I've been in that situation. And when I sit here and
9 heard him say that we're bringing in teachers from
10 the Philippines to possibly replace somebody who's
11 been in the community for three months or three years
12 -- and then I start talking to Stacy about
13 relational-ship educational achievement and we think
14 it's more important that we have a certified
15 instructor -- okay, this is what I was talking about
16 -- in these urban and underserved communities to come
17 in because that teacher is certified based on paper,
18 I have a big problem with this. Based on paper, that
19 student could have -- that teacher can do that. Then
20 I go back and I look at the movie Hidden Figures,
21 what -- they sent the teachers to the moon, the
22 people to the moon and they wasn't certified.

23 I think we've got to really, really understand
24 we can't over-extend -- and I think it's good that we
25 have these parameters and these laws that we have to

1 go by. But when we see a plan, a strategic plan
2 that's coming in to address the specific need of
3 their communities and we deny that -- so what
4 alternative do they have? Now if we're sitting here
5 and we said they've got 300 qualified teachers out
6 here to select from, I'm all about that. That's
7 good; you've got them out there. You know, it's just
8 like, "Hey, if you want to go recruit a five-star
9 athlete, if you've got a bunch of five-stars out
10 there and you don't want to recruit, that's great."
11 All right. So we've got five-star teachers. But
12 we're not going to take them because they're not
13 five-star; we're going to go get them. Well, they
14 ain't got that. They don't have that. So what are
15 they going to do? So if there is a plan that's going
16 to do that, I'm all about that. But they don't --
17 but that's not there and we spend -- I've been here
18 five years and we do that, and so what do they go do
19 if we say no? Where do they go? And I'm about
20 standardized evaluations. That's what it's for. But
21 here's what I know: you can't tell me that a person
22 in the Delta -- I've been to Dumas five times. You
23 can't tell me a person -- you're going to bring in
24 somebody from the Philippines who have never been
25 there, they're from the culture -- they're from the

1 Philippines now -- that's going to come into that
2 community, work there six weeks and is going to be
3 able to do better because they have a standardized
4 passing than a person who goes to church in that
5 community, eats at McDonald's in that community, at
6 the Boys and Girls Club in that community is better.
7 If so, if I can see that data, then I'll change my
8 perspective. But until then, I'm recommending five
9 years and I hope I get a second and I hope we can
10 send them on back so they can get in their foxhole
11 and fight for our children.

12 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Is that a motion, Dr. Hill?

13 DR. HILL: Yes, that is a motion.

14 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. Okay.

15 DR. RANKIN: I'll second that.

16 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. Second by Dr.
17 Rankin.

18 Is there any other discussion?

19 Is that for both teachers --

20 DR. HILL: All of them. Yes.

21 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: No, I'm talking about is it
22 for teacher licensure and the library media, both?

23 DR. HILL: Yes, ma'am.

24 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right. Any other
25 discussion?

1 All right. Ms. Post.

2 MS. POST: When we hear some follow-up in the
3 very beginning, Ms. Eoff -- am I saying that
4 correctly?

5 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Eoff.

6 MS. POST: Eoff, okay. She mentioned that 169
7 out of the 430 teachers had reached certification, so
8 that's below 40%. I would like to hear how they're
9 being supported in passing the Foundations of
10 Reading. I looked up the exam. It's four hours
11 long; it's 100 questions and two essays. That's a
12 lot. So I would just like to hear how they're being
13 supported by the State or by the co-ops in passing
14 that.

15 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Ms. Saracini maybe?

16 MS. EOFF: They -- what they're doing is now
17 they're being -- they're being tutored. We start
18 tutoring them with a literacy specialist that
19 understands the Foundations of Reading at the local
20 district; they also have sessions at the co-op
21 specifically, and then the State has started also
22 offering some Zoom sessions. So they're getting
23 triple -- they're getting triple tutoring.

24 MS. SARACINI: Karli Saracini, Assistant
25 Commissioner.

1 At the State level, we have to remember that the
2 Foundations of Reading is in law. And so we are --
3 we have worked with -- my division has worked with
4 Learning Services, Dr. Pride's division, and we have
5 worked extensively with the literacy specialists that
6 are based out of Dawson Co-op. And we have
7 appropriated the funds for them to actually sit and
8 take the test so that they would come back and design
9 a really robust tutoring that lasts over two weeks,
10 and it's done a fabulous job because here are your
11 reading specialists going and sitting for the exam.
12 So they're coming back and building this tutoring
13 program to make sure that our teachers -- if they
14 have not had that content instruction in reading --
15 because a lot of them are your Act 1240 waivers or a
16 nontraditional route, not through a traditional route
17 -- it gives them that opportunity to learn that
18 content and we've had great success with it. We've
19 had one person go and sit for the exam, came back,
20 went through that two-week tutoring session, and
21 actually brought their score up over 40 points. So
22 we are having very -- a lot of success with it. But
23 we also know that there may be some one-on-one needs,
24 and so those reading specialists that are helping us
25 out of Dr. Pride's unit are now actually doing some

1 one-on-one tutoring for those that may have taken it
2 more than two or three times. So we as a state are
3 really working hard and we're calling it Licensure
4 Ready, and Andy Sullivan in my department is leading
5 that. And we're not just doing it with the reading,
6 but we're also doing it in other content areas and
7 we're working with Dr. Pride's division to make sure
8 we have those content specialists that are
9 specializing in those content areas. And this is --
10 we are -- we have appropriated funds to actually pay
11 these specialists extra because they're putting on
12 this tutoring at night. And I dropped in to a few
13 sessions, because I wanted them to know that we're
14 supporting them, and they're really doing some great
15 work. Now we just started it in the past six months
16 -- six or eight months, and so we don't have great
17 numbers yet. But hopefully soon we can look back and
18 say this past year this is how it's impacted for
19 teachers getting licensed.

20 We understand the barrier of the exams. And I
21 just want to clarify that we used to have -- before
22 you could get your license, we had a Praxis 1 in the
23 Praxis core and we eliminated that barrier. And
24 we've also eliminated that barrier of the Principles
25 of Teaching and Learning. If they can -- they can

1 either take that test or have a performance
2 assessment.

3 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right.

4 MS. SARACINI: And so we are working to
5 alleviate those barriers that are out there.

6 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Thank you.

7 Dr. Hill, I do need a clarification on your
8 motion. I realize it was for both areas, but I need
9 the number of years. You didn't state that.

10 DR. HILL: It was five.

11 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right.

12 DR. HILL: Do we need to separate --

13 SECRETARY KEY: No, I've got it. That's fine.

14 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

15 DR. HILL: Yeah, the motion -- okay. Do we need
16 to break them up in two different motions?

17 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: No.

18 DR. HILL: Okay.

19 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right. So we do
20 have a motion on the floor, with a second.

21 Is there anymore discussion?

22 Okay. Do we need to do a roll-call or just a
23 voice vote?

24 SECRETARY KEY: Voice vote.

25 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Vote, voice vote. Okay.

1 All in favor?

2 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

3 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any opposed?

4 Go forth and do great things.

5 MR. GRAGG: Thank you all very much.

6 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. And, Dr. Pfeffer,
7 I think that maybe -- after the plans come out at
8 some point of time, maybe you could come back and
9 give us an update on how things are progressing and
10 how it's aligned.

11 DR. PFEFFER: Would that need to be part of the
12 -- that wasn't part of the motion. We'll just --

13 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: But I think you can just do
14 that --

15 DR. PFEFFER: We'll have to put it in as a
16 report.

17 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right. That's
18 fine.

19 All right. We do have a hard-stop right now. I
20 know we have more things on our agenda but we do have
21 an obligation to take care. So we'll return I think
22 at 1:00; is that right? One-ish?

23 SECRETARY KEY: One-ish.

24 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: One-ish. Okay. We'll be back
25 at one-ish this afternoon.

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(The Action Agenda was concluded at 11:31 a.m.)

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VII-1(a) - FAYETTEVILLE ACT 1240 WAIVER REQUEST

EXHIBIT ONE (1)

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VII-1(b) - SOUTHEAST CO-OP ACT 1240 WAIVER REQUEST

EXHIBIT ONE (1)

C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF ARKANSAS)
) ss.
COUNTY OF SALINE)

I, SHARON K. HILL, CCR, a Certified Stenomask Reporter and Notary Public before whom the foregoing proceedings was taken, do hereby certify that the same is a true and correct transcription before the Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, State Board of Education, in Little Rock, Arkansas, on December 9, 2021, that the said proceedings was reduced to typewritten form by me or under my direction and supervision; and that the foregoing pages constitute a true and correct transcription of all proceedings had in said matter.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this action.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I have no contract with any parties within this action that affects or has a substantial tendency to affect impartiality, that requires me to relinquish control of an original transcript or copies of the transcript before it is certified and delivered to the custodial agency, or that requires me to provide any service not made available to all parties to the action.

WITNESS, MY HAND AND SEAL, THIS DATE: December 17, 2021.

SHARON K. HILL, CCR
Certified Court Reporter
Certificate No. 670

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