

In The Matter Of:
ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

October 13, 2022

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ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

OCTOBER 13, 2022
9:00 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
MR. STEVE SUTTON
MR. RANDY HENDERSON
MS. LISA HUNTER
MR. JEFF WOOD

NON-VOTING PARTICIPANTS:

MR. JOHNNY KEY, Secretary of Education
MS. JESSICA SAUM, 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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P R O C E E D I N G S

1: PINE BLUFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

CHAIRMAN NEWTON: We're going to move on to our first item on the action agenda, the Pine Bluff Report and Recommendation, by Ms. Smith, Ms. Warren, Mr. Gragg, and Mr. Carlock. So welcome, all of you. We're glad that you're here this morning. This is a good day. This is a good day, so we're glad you're here.

MS. SMITH: Dan, they're going to start with the video.

MR. DAN DAVIS: All right.

CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right.

MS. SMITH: Good morning.

CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Good morning.

MS. SMITH: So just as we've done recently with Helena-West Helena and Lee County, the district is going to come and do a presentation highlighting the areas that, you know, they've been working on and some success pieces for their district; so that's where we're going to start today. And then I will follow-up with moving forward to a recommendation.

CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

MS. SMITH: Okay.

CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right.

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1 MS. SMITH: So just to make sure, you guys know
2 Ms. Barbara Warren --

3 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yes.

4 MS. SMITH: -- and then Dee Davis, Curriculum.
5 And then Phillip Carlock, Assistant Superintendent;
6 and Mr. Gragg back here, Assistant Superintendent.
7 And I see several community members here --

8 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yes.

9 MS. SMITH: -- from Pine Bluff. Over here we've
10 got the Wrights too.

11 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yes, welcome.

12 MS. SMITH: Okay. Welcome to all of them.

13 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yes.

14 MS. SMITH: So we'll start with the video.

15 (WHEREUPON, a video was shown; it may be viewed
16 on the ADE or YouTube website.)

17 SUPT. WARREN: Good morning, Madam Chair --

18 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Good morning.

19 SUPT. WARREN: -- State Board Members, Secretary
20 Key, and all that's here. We know that sometimes
21 people hear things in the media or maybe even by word
22 of mouth, and we wanted to take the opportunity --
23 again, a snapshot. We're not able to tell you all
24 the things that are going on in our community and in
25 our district, but we hope that you saw some things

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1 there that represent what we are saying we are
2 defined as. So we wanted to take that moment. Thank
3 you for the liberty of us sharing. And today, even
4 though we have limited time, we thought about how
5 could we share with you just some updates, really
6 some highlights of some activities going on in the
7 Pine Bluff School District. And we're going to do so
8 by sharing in the systems that are represented --
9 the Department of Education/DESE has already probably
10 mentioned these major systems that make schools
11 work. And as you see there in the center of those
12 systems are students.

13 So with me, as Ms. Smith mentioned, there are
14 some persons that we've brought along who represent
15 district cabinet members. And I will say Ms. Dee
16 Davis has been here with me before; she's the
17 Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction.
18 But the two faces of the gentlemen to her right are
19 new to our district: Mr. Kelvin Gragg, who some have
20 even seen in other capacities, and he'll make some
21 comments too; and Mr. Phillip Carlock. We are so
22 excited to fill our district team because, I tell
23 you, you need to build capacity to do this work and I
24 have needed this type of support and I'm really
25 excited they're here.

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1 So we're going to have conversations with you,
2 very, very briefly, around these systems, given you,
3 again, some highlights. And so first to come -- let
4 me make certain this is on -- yea, that helps me.
5 Okay. Very good.

6 So just some slices of the pie -- and for
7 stakeholder communication, family and community
8 engagement, Mr. Carlock will come and share.

9 MR. CARLOCK: Good morning. And I will try to
10 keep this limited. There's so many great things that
11 are happening at Pine Bluff. I have been there for
12 three months, 13 days, and about 27 minutes -- 9
13 hours and 27 minutes. Okay. But I've been enjoying
14 my experience in Pine Bluff. I feel at home.

15 And our community and stakeholders, we have been
16 -- Pine Bluff is just a community that bands together
17 and comes together for so many things. And I haven't
18 found a community member yet that doesn't want to see
19 the Pine Bluff School District succeed. And having
20 that support just lifts me up, lifts us up every day
21 as we come to work, because we not only have the
22 support of the school and staff but the community.
23 They're always patting us on the back, asking, "What
24 can we do?" So it pushes us to do our job better.

25 So one thing that we're doing to make sure that

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1 this wheel is turning that we're talking about, we're
2 strengthening our communication systems to better
3 communicate with our stakeholders. Communication is
4 key, and being able to get communication out faster,
5 quicker, in a succinct way is what we're striving
6 for. So we do have a new system that we purchased,
7 School Status. And as a matter of fact, we have our
8 system logistical rollout this Friday. So Ms.
9 Warren, I imagine she will be able to communicate
10 from her very seat with stakeholders, with our staff,
11 get information out. Even if an announcement came
12 out today, she would be able to fast-track and send
13 out a newsletter or some kind of announcement. If
14 there's a safety issue, we'll be able to communicate
15 in a rapid way. So being able to increase the speed
16 of communication is what we're striving for.

17 The other thing, we're nurturing relationships
18 and development -- and developing new partnerships
19 and support -- to support the district in building
20 goals. So this is a game-changer. It just happened
21 last week, we did a media rollout. We have a
22 partnership with AR Reads. AR Reads in turn
23 partnered with one of our existing partners, UAPB.
24 So AR Reads is supporting grade level reading and
25 they want to make sure that all of our readers,

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1 especially in elementary school, are reading at grade
2 level; so they offer that support for one-on-one
3 tutoring with students. So there's some identified
4 students they'll be pulling with volunteers to read
5 with, to just give them that practice and that
6 reading support additional to what they're getting in
7 the classroom. But the game-changer is UAPB, their
8 teacher candidate program; they're going to fill the
9 volunteer slots and they're also working on making
10 sure that those candidates will be able to earn
11 credits towards helping those students. So, and
12 that's what we look at a partnership as. It's not
13 just a lot of give, give, give; it's also some things
14 that we can give back and assist them with. The
15 byproduct of that is the students will be able to
16 also mentor the kids, they'll get some hands-on
17 experience that will help them catapult them into
18 their career.

19 And lastly on this slide, engage in community
20 stakeholders and strategic planning -- last night was
21 just awesome. And Ms. Warren will talk about our
22 partnership with West Ed and our district-wide
23 strategic plan. But we had a room full of about 30
24 --

25 SUPT. WARREN: Maybe about 40.

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1 MR. CARLOCK: -- maybe 40 community members that
2 are just coming together to help with the movement of
3 that strategic plan, setting goals and making sure
4 that we have the official rollout to the community
5 and we have a constant plug-in of community members
6 that are assisting with moving our strategic plan
7 forward.

8 So, back to you.

9 MR. GRAGG: Good morning --

10 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Good morning.

11 MR. GRAGG: -- Madam Chairperson, Commissioner.
12 Again, it's my privilege -- I've appeared before you
13 guys on several occasions, albeit in a different
14 role, different position. I will tell you guys that
15 I'm a little bit different than Mr. Carlock because
16 this time around is my third time in the Pine Bluff
17 School District. So with that being said, I believe
18 totally that the district can be successful. My
19 family, we bought a house in Pine Bluff this time; so
20 we are vested in the community in making sure that we
21 provide the best for our scholars within the Pine
22 Bluff District. Again, some of the areas that I am
23 responsible for is district operations, physical
24 governance.

25 And just to give you kind of an update -- I know

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1 that Ms. Newton and Dr. Moore was there a couple of
2 weeks ago. But we -- not just across at Pine Bluff
3 High School, but across the district we've
4 implemented new procedures, safety precautions to
5 insure that our students or our scholars are safe.
6 Some of the things were already in place; we just
7 kind of had to make sure that they were up and
8 operating. I know that we have our new visitor
9 management systems in place that we had to purchase
10 new software. We have the capabilities of checking
11 and following visitors as they come into campus.

12 As you guys know, we've done some cosmetic work
13 on all of our campuses. As I've told Ms. Warren, you
14 know, when you come to my house my front yard looks
15 good, but I have a fence around the back yard so you
16 don't see that. But we want to make sure that our
17 presence and the appearance of the facilities are
18 looking good.

19 We've insured that we are able to prepare for
20 any type of emergency that may come. As a matter of
21 fact, we had a district-wide training with Strategos
22 and then we broke and went to individual buildings.
23 Those were lockdown procedures, in terms of if
24 there's an event that takes place our staff were
25 trained as to what were the operational procedures

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1 that we needed to.

2 Again, within the business office we kind of had
3 a reorganization of the business. Our business
4 office, we're working hand-in-hand with OCSS to make
5 sure that we are developing sound physical management
6 strategies to insure that we are operating very
7 effectively with the district. And, of course, along
8 with that we have certain internal accountability --
9 I guess demands that we have. I mean it's just
10 things that are non-negotiable that we have to do
11 within the business office to make sure that we are
12 operating efficiently.

13 Well, again, with facilities/transportation, we
14 have made a certain specific effort to make sure that
15 we maintain, again, our facilities. We want to make
16 sure that we have the equipment, we have the manpower
17 to do that. I will tell you at this time we've got a
18 -- we're short in terms of maintenance workers, but
19 the maintenance workers that we have are committed;
20 they are mowing on Saturdays, trying to make sure
21 that our facilities -- maintain that good appearance.
22 Again, we are constantly trying to recruit
23 maintenance and custodial workers. As you guys know,
24 that's an ongoing problem, but we are constantly
25 working. And we've kind of developed the approach

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1 that if we can't get them, then what we have to do is
2 utilize -- to better utilize what we have, to kind of
3 have some systems in place so that the right hand
4 knows what the left hand is doing. Just like every
5 other school district in the state, we're
6 experiencing a shortage in bus drivers. And I don't
7 know how we're doing it but, you know, we're still
8 getting the kids to school every morning and getting
9 them home, along with all of the other activities.
10 So, you know, again, we want to continue to train and
11 secure, you know, those drivers. But we -- you know,
12 it -- what it is, we have to operate with what we
13 have. Again, I've been just in discussions with Ms.
14 Warren; we've got to upgrade our fleet. There's
15 just, you know, no and-if-and-buts about that; we've
16 just got to do that. And we're working to look at
17 different ways to upgrade -- you know, to upgrade our
18 fleet.

19 I've got one more.

20 MS. SMITH: (inaudible)

21 MR. GRAGG: Oh, okay.

22 MS. DAVIS: Good morning. Again, Dee Davis,
23 Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction for
24 the Pine Bluff School District. I want to be like my
25 two partners; I'm new to the district in this role

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1 but, like Mr. Gragg, this is my third stint. I'm a
2 product of Pine Bluff School District, I've taught at
3 Pine Bluff School District, and now this role. So I
4 often say you can take the girl out of the Zebra, but
5 you can't take the Zebra out of the girl. So I've
6 always been a Zebra at heart.

7 As I thought about the things that I wanted to
8 get to say to you -- I don't often get to talk to
9 y'all, but I had this whole list of like 25 things
10 because there's so much going on. I've had to learn
11 the hard way because there's so much we want to do
12 and I've had to learn that you have to slow down to
13 go fast. And so, but there's so many things that
14 have happened since the last time I got to see you.

15 One of those things is the -- we have
16 implemented 180 minutes, solid minutes of a literacy
17 block in K-3; 90 minutes of literacy in 4 -- grades 4
18 through 12 across the district, and really pleased
19 with that. We need those solid minutes.

20 We've implemented and are focused on a multi-
21 tiered academic system of support so that -- for all
22 students, so that we offer them Tier 1, Tier 2, and
23 Tier 3 instruction, all of it -- not just one, but
24 all three levels. So each campus has a separate
25 additional WIN time to give every student what they

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1 need as an individual.

2 We've purchased all the curriculum materials and
3 resources so that we have a common curriculum across
4 the two districts. You know, everybody came together
5 a couple of years ago, and now we've had to get all
6 that in common and we have all that in place.
7 Teachers have been trained and are implementing, and
8 we're so proud of that. We have ongoing support from
9 Solution Tree, our partners, helping teachers and
10 teams and instructional leaders in the building to
11 focus on those four critical questions. It's just
12 good planning, it's just good teaching. What do we
13 want all students to know and be able to do? When
14 they leave here today -- not tomorrow, not next week,
15 but when they leave here today what do we want them
16 to walk away with. So we're focused on that every
17 single day.

18 All of our teachers have been RISE trained or
19 our new teachers are currently in a program, so that
20 at the end of the year we will have all teachers
21 trained in those RISE -- that RISE information,
22 Science of Reading, and those strategies. All of our
23 principals have either completed or finishing up
24 their certification as RISE assessors; so every
25 principal will be able to assess in their building,

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1 and we're proud of that.

2 Dyslexia -- currently serving approximately 150
3 students. The dyslexia interventionists were in the
4 office yesterday at the elementary, analyzing all of
5 our beginning-of-the-year data and have pulled all
6 the elementary kids who need that next level of
7 dyslexia assessments. They are working, I believe,
8 tomorrow to get the secondary done, looking at
9 probably adding another -- probably 100 kids this
10 year who will be receiving those interventions as
11 well.

12 So proud of all of that; it has been a long time
13 coming. And we're just so pleased with where we are
14 and just really focused and everybody understands the
15 urgency and just are really laser-focused on that
16 Tier 1 classroom instruction and then providing the
17 additional to every single kid. It has to be kid-by-
18 kid, what they need.

19 SUPT. WARREN: Thank you.

20 MR. CARLOCK: It's me again. I don't know if
21 the new guys just got all the slides or I'm just too
22 green to know any better right now. But next time
23 you may see me less.

24 But when we talk about human capital I just
25 think all of us impact human capital. And in the

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1 time of teacher shortage we can say that Pine Bluff
2 School District was able to start the year off with
3 -- fully staffed. So that deserves a round of
4 applause, not only for our district but our
5 community. There's so many people just answering the
6 call to teach, because so many people have taken that
7 traditional track for teaching and there's so many
8 opportunities that our state provides for people to
9 get on track to get into the teaching field. And I'm
10 a product of a nontraditional license program, so I
11 fully support that and we want to make sure we have
12 systems in our district to support that. So when
13 we're looking at retention and recruitment, we are
14 working on -- it's an ongoing plan to strengthen our
15 retention and recruitment efforts, just making sure
16 that we're closely tied to the -- not only the
17 university, but other entities to let our community
18 know that there are other ways that they can get into
19 the teaching field that may not be traditional. So
20 if you feel that calling, you don't have to run from
21 it; there is a way we can plug you in.

22 So strengthening our educator pipeline -- and
23 we've looked at that as growing our own in so many
24 ways. And as you saw in the video, you saw a
25 previous student that came back to teach and is on

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1 track to get her license. But just think about that.
2 And we have the mindset of having to grow our own.
3 It's almost like Superman is not coming, we're not
4 going to get this big mother-ship of teachers that's
5 going to fly in, so we're looking at investing in our
6 community and growing our own individuals. And once
7 they come in we want to keep them. One thing I know
8 that was established before I got here -- but a sign-
9 on bonus. You're signing that contract, signing on
10 the dotted line, there's an incentive for that. And
11 also what goes along with that is an attendance
12 bonus. And I guess it's a catch-22 because we almost
13 have to force staff members to take off, you are
14 sick, go home. But they want to -- they work hard to
15 be there every single day and to show up for their
16 students. And being able to incentivize or give
17 incentives for those things just gives us that extra
18 leg up over competing entities. So we want to make
19 sure that we're not only bringing them in, but we're
20 training them, we're supporting them, we're
21 sustaining them and maintaining them, and making sure
22 that they're compensated, you know, in a nice way.

23 So we can go to the next slide.

24 And student support -- there are so many places,
25 community and especially within our district, that

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1 wants to support students. But we're making sure
2 that we make collaborative efforts to make sure that
3 we're not running over each other with support. We
4 want to make sure that that support is a continuous
5 support but it's working hand-in-hand, hand-in-glove
6 almost, to make sure that we are meeting the needs of
7 our students, whether it's with our social workers,
8 our counselors. Sometimes their supports may go in
9 the same direction but they're in two different
10 lanes. But we're trying to get them in the same lane
11 where they can ride together in supporting the
12 students.

13 So we're making sure that our wraparound
14 services are touching all the kids that need them.
15 Our social workers have gotten several grants to
16 support our students, and within one of those grants
17 they even have a vehicle to where they can drive to
18 communities, near and far, to go to the students'
19 homes and make sure that those supports are getting
20 where they need -- going to those homes and assessing
21 the need and making sure that they have those needs
22 to support when they come back to school. So I think
23 that's a game-changer in a lot of ways, just making
24 sure -- they're not things that didn't exist, but
25 they're things that currently exist and we just want

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1 to bring together.

2 Doing an intentional analysis of our students to
3 make sure that we are getting the best fit with the
4 academic support, behavior support -- we have so many
5 -- and I think in Pine Bluff this is unique, for me,
6 is that our outside services, our ALEs that support
7 our students, they're able to meet a variety of
8 student needs. And we're used -- I will say where I
9 come from we're used to ALEs supporting some of those
10 at-risk students. But we also have kids who need
11 some acceleration or they need some -- they have
12 needs that need to carry them to a higher level. So
13 we do have that Excel program. We have -- we do have
14 an ALE that meets the needs of at-risk students, but
15 we also have -- just as kids get in a bind, if they
16 have medical issues, they've been hospitalized or
17 they have some type of event that they couldn't
18 control, we have some ALEs to support them. So we
19 have ALEs to support a variety of students and a
20 variety of different needs.

21 Ms. Warren.

22 SUPT. WARREN: It feels really good, again, to
23 have support persons who can do a variety of
24 different things. There's so much work, again, to
25 do, and we need as many hands to do it. So I applaud

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1 their efforts and I thank them for their reports.

2 I didn't want to leave an opportunity to accent
3 some work or some partners that we are connected
4 with. And so it was mentioned a little earlier
5 related to our West Ed partnership. Over the last
6 year, we have connected around the work to develop a
7 strategic plan. And so there before you is our
8 Strategic Plan Theory of Action. We feel that if the
9 Pine Bluff School District will engage the community
10 to determine its hopes, aspirations and concerns for
11 our schools and create a research-based detailed plan
12 to address those priorities, then our community,
13 staff, leaders, everyone will be able to work
14 together to make some -- a number of specific
15 prioritized and sustainable changes, and those
16 changes will result in what we all want -- and that
17 is a better learning environment, stronger capacity,
18 and higher achievement.

19 And so I want to tell you just a little bit
20 about the planning process. And to go back a step or
21 so, I had an opportunity to converse with Ms. Smith
22 and Secretary Key around the idea of a Community
23 Advisory Committee, and so not a Community Advisory
24 Board. But I asked for support to connect with about
25 20 entities in the community, and those entities

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1 across -- be it law enforcement, social services,
2 medical, mental health -- to ask for those entities
3 -- University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, SEARK --
4 will you send to us an ambassador who will support a
5 Community Advisory Committee around developing a
6 strategic plan. So it's been those persons who have
7 been working together and coming together, via Zoom
8 or in person, over the last year to do and develop
9 this particular work. Why the members of those
10 community organizations? Well, we weren't at the
11 point where the conversations that are had now about
12 boards were in place, but we did know we needed
13 community input. So, again, those different
14 organizations that we really appreciate, who touch
15 our district every day, that we partner with and
16 connect with, we've got representatives from those
17 organizations. And this was the strategic planning
18 process. It's four-phased and we're actually in the
19 fourth phase. You will see we were connecting around
20 setting the direction, developing strategies, and
21 then expanding that commitment. And where we are
22 now, on November 1st, we're going to do a district-
23 wide community-wide launch that will take place at
24 the convention center to literally share with the
25 community on a wider scale the strategies that have

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1 come out of this work. We did solicit feedback from
2 our community and we've done that in a variety of
3 different ways. We have had -- and I was really
4 excited about this. You know, when you think about a
5 community as large as ours 527 respondents might not
6 sound so big, but you know people don't like surveys
7 so much. So we were excited that we got the type of
8 feedback we did. And so at that phase, when we were
9 soliciting the type of information we were, you can
10 see some of the things that those respondents said.
11 When they envision the school district in five years,
12 those are things that they want to see.

13 And as we work together as a strategic planning
14 committee, the Community Advisory Committee, you see
15 there the values and principles that this group said
16 they hope to -- for us to have and to maintain.
17 What's really powerful about that is they weren't
18 just acting on their own thoughts; they were sharing
19 with others some of the tasks that they were
20 associated with, was literally speak to X-number of
21 community members and glean from them information as
22 well. And so when we come back and have
23 conversations about values it wasn't just necessarily
24 that individual; it was multiple individuals that
25 they connected with. And those individual

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1 conversations were very, very powerful. As well,
2 they had the backing and support and opportunities to
3 talk to those organizations that they represented.
4 But you see there those values? Pine Bluff School
5 District cares deeply and our community, the Pine
6 Bluff city cares deeply about our students. And so
7 as we note here, Pine Bluff Schools are powered by
8 staff members and communities who are working
9 together. Sometimes I think what gets highlighted
10 are the very negative things that are going on. And
11 even in the midst of maybe even some hard
12 conversations what's deep down at the center of it is
13 love and care for our scholars. While maybe not all
14 the time everybody agrees on how to get there, what I
15 know is at the center for everyone is that we just
16 want what's better and what's best. And oftentimes,
17 I'll tell you this too, people get tired of it taking
18 so long to do what we know we need to do. But this
19 work -- like you said, Dee, sometimes it's a little
20 slow and you've got to go slow to go fast. We want
21 that in our district, our students feel like they're
22 in a place to belong. But that's not just even the
23 students; these things -- we being a center of
24 excellence and those varieties -- those values or
25 principles that this group collaborated around and

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1 the data said our community wants to see.

2 So you see some goals there and some critical
3 changes that will have to be made to achieve this
4 vision. Again, this was not the district's voice,
5 but this was the voice of our community members --
6 paths for student success; safe and supportive
7 schools; improved facilities; prepared educators;
8 community confidence.

9 So from all this work -- and there were a
10 variety of research-based strategies that were tied
11 to those values, to those goals. And what has been
12 determined that our focus would be are these priority
13 initiatives that you see here. It may not seem so
14 big when you just see, again, five strategies. But
15 when you think about what can happen when we tie the
16 district, community members, community organizations
17 to this work, and when we express what our goals are
18 specifically, these meet the bill. So you see here
19 these five strategies that we're going to talk to the
20 community a lot more about November 1st and that we
21 have shared some things around. These are those
22 initiatives that, as Mr. Carlock mentioned, we were
23 working with working groups on yesterday to discuss
24 moving forward. Inform to fix it faster, grow our
25 own great staff, elevate educators, soft-skills at

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1 school, allies for achievement -- I think all of
2 these tie into what you saw just a minute ago about
3 those values.

4 So I saved the partnership with West Ed. They
5 have really supported the moving forward of the work
6 and tying research -- and to be honest with you,
7 doing some things that we didn't alone as a district
8 have the capacity to do.

9 The second and last partnership I'll mention to
10 you that, again, is really important and that we have
11 been connecting to for a number of years now is our
12 Solution Tree partnership. And I wanted to share
13 with you about this partnership through the feedback
14 that we've gotten from members of the professional
15 learning community. So as you read there, this
16 feedback on an academic coach, each of our schools --
17 our teachers experience list major benefit, and that
18 is quality academic coaches coming in and supporting
19 math and literacy, especially this year in literacy,
20 to literally train teachers in their content and in
21 strategies. And so this is some feedback from a
22 teacher about Dr. Buck. And we had another academic
23 coach -- I think her name was Jessica -- and I didn't
24 know her last name because everybody just called her
25 Jessica -- but they were so excited and sad when she

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1 wasn't going to be returning. But Dr. Buck is who
2 came in her place and they actually liked Dr. Buck,
3 as you can see there. I thought it was neat to
4 highlight this comment and how she said that her
5 students loved him and that basically he could rule
6 the world. So this is a sentiment of a teacher about
7 an academic coach who actually came in and modeled
8 for her and did some work that I think is going to
9 really impress not only teachers, but also students.

10 Forest Park, we had added Forest Park to the
11 Solution Tree work that we're doing. We talk about
12 being a professional learning community and we talk
13 about the very powerful work that happens in our pre-
14 K center, our phenomenal pre-K center. We didn't add
15 them to the work; so they also have academic coaches,
16 a PLC coach, and we've expanded the work to support
17 them. And you see it there, something that came out
18 of their sessions that was really powerful and they
19 were all bragging and excited about is they're
20 organizing Intervention Monday. So we talk about WIN
21 time, What I Need; they've extended that. And
22 Mondays are tied to interventions.

23 District evaluations -- we always have the
24 opportunity for our leaders and members of our
25 district teacher, student -- not so much student, but

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1 sometimes we do get opportunities to hear from
2 students. But we hear from the persons within the
3 district about what the supports look like. And so
4 when you see district form evaluations, that's a
5 comment that has come from the district, the valuing
6 of the collaborations in those sessions. So excited
7 for you to see that comment.

8 And then just these last couple of pieces, some
9 principal feedback there. You see that first
10 comment. I love that this principal said, "Our
11 intention is to encourage the team to own it." And
12 that's something that we have really come far in.
13 The professional learning community process is one
14 that, yeah, sounds good on paper and -- but it looks
15 a whole lot better when you're walking it. But the
16 only way that can happen is if everybody owns it. So
17 we have seen evidence that our teachers are using the
18 process and are owning it and are really working it.
19 And at the center of that our students are the
20 winners.

21 This last comment is related to what a PLC coach
22 gave and it's some feedback, "The shift away from
23 compliance is occurring and that has to take place."
24 Teaching and learning has to be something that we
25 raise to greater heights. Instruction is what our

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1 major focus is on, and that relationship between the
2 teachers and coach. You see there, this is a comment
3 about it being strong and that teachers are eager to
4 learn.

5 I wanted to just again highlight those
6 partnerships that we have and that I know you've
7 heard some things about, and that was related again
8 to West Ed and to Solution Tree. I couldn't stand
9 here and talk with you without doing so.

10 Thank you for this time. I don't know if there
11 are going to be questions, but at this point again it
12 was a snapshot and just an opportunity to share with
13 you about the systems that we have going on in the
14 Pine Bluff School District. I appreciate everybody.

15 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Thank y'all. That was great
16 and it's very encouraging to see the work that is --
17 and the progress that has been made. So thank y'all
18 for that this morning.

19 SUPT. WARREN: Thank you for that.

20 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Ms. Smith.

21 MS. SMITH: So good morning. So today I went
22 ahead and did a very, very, very short presentation
23 just to kind of walk you through what we are making
24 as far as a recommendation today. Okay. And one of
25 the things I want to note is as we're going through

1 this process over the next three months -- okay, so
2 today, November and December -- I am available to you
3 at any time. If you want to reach out to me to visit
4 the schools -- Ms. Moore has done that, Ms. Newton
5 has done that, Ms. Hunter has done that; Coach Hill
6 dragged me to places on his own. I'm available to
7 you if you'd like to do that, if you want me to try
8 to organize something for you. If at any time you
9 just want to talk through some things, you're welcome
10 to have my cell phone number, you're welcome to call
11 me, and I'm happy to talk with you and visit with
12 you. Okay.

13 One of the -- I will tell you, as we have been
14 digging into our data from our test scores,
15 achievement scores are still low in the district and
16 we know that. But what we do know is we're seeing
17 growth and those are some celebration points. And
18 I'm hoping in the next month as everything is getting
19 finalized we're going to be able to come back and
20 share that. So we are seeing growth and we are
21 seeing movement. We are seeing progress on the exit
22 plan. Part of their exit plan includes implementing
23 professional learning communities; you heard about
24 that presentation today. Part of their exit plan
25 includes Science of Reading, training teachers; you

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1 heard about that today. Part of their exit plan
2 includes providing feedback on instructional
3 strategies in the classrooms with teachers. We have
4 set classroom walk-throughs in all of our buildings
5 that our staff participates in. So they're making
6 progress towards that. Part of their exit plan
7 includes their facilities and improvements. By
8 watching the video alone, you could see improvements
9 on the -- in the district as far as facilities goes.
10 Those of you that visited the campus, it's improved
11 from what it was. I give a lot of credit to this
12 team making that happen. So we are making progress.

13 What you just heard about that strategic plan,
14 what I want to point out about that is when we hear
15 from the community we hear about their vision of what
16 they want. And the best description today was the
17 seed that Courtney Smith said in the video. It
18 really is true for Pine Bluff. In fact, I stopped in
19 Commissioner's office yesterday and I said, "It's
20 happening there. It is happening there." There's
21 lots of pieces moving there. So their strategic plan
22 and vision, as we're putting together an appointed
23 board, that board is going to have to take ownership
24 of that. So it's not about keeping Pine Bluff at
25 "are they doing the professional learning

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1 communities, are they" -- like those are foundational
2 pieces that keep it. But those pieces on "how do we
3 grow confidence in the community, how do we continue
4 to move forward with career pathways, how do we" --
5 that's their future piece.

6 So, today, the Department is making the
7 recommendation that we move forward with an appointed
8 limited authority board. And this is a message that
9 we have talked to the community about for almost a
10 year. The first time I talked about it was in
11 January at a Pine Bluff meeting. What we recommend
12 is that -- today, that you guys make a motion for
13 that, that we do an appointed limited authority board
14 but it's determined by a subcommittee of five members
15 where you would have one State Board member on that
16 subcommittee; you would have four members appointed
17 by the Commissioner of Education. Of those four
18 members appointed by the Commissioner it would be in
19 consideration of community members, DESE staff, and
20 Arkansas School Boards Association.

21 So let me kind of keep talking about what -- how
22 I see this process moving forward. And, again, this
23 is a recommendation. You guys can provide feedback
24 and anything can be adjusted. So this is kind of
25 what we're thinking in terms of a recommendation.

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1 The process to apply -- the Department would
2 actually have a dedicated email for interested
3 community members. We would have a dedicated web
4 page with a banner on the front page of the ADE
5 website so that people can get to the front page,
6 there it is right there; they can click, take you
7 right there to it. We would ask interested members
8 in the community to email a letter of interest with a
9 resume. We're not going to have an application for
10 you to fill out; a letter of interest with your
11 resume, and your resume includes your name, your
12 current residence address, and your qualifications
13 that they would want the Subcommittee to consider.
14 The Subcommittee will accept applications through
15 October 23rd, 10 full days, two full weekends. The
16 Subcommittee would then -- after that date would
17 review and conduct interviews. That would bring us
18 to the November -- in the month of November, the
19 Subcommittee would continue to conduct their
20 interviews. Okay. So during that time, in November,
21 I would come back to you based on -- when we had our
22 working session I gave you different documents and
23 told you as you're reflecting and thinking about what
24 is the authority you would like to give this board or
25 where do we want to limit, you can reach out to me.

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1 So between now and November, continue that process,
2 have individual conversations. And then, in
3 November, bring to you like, "Hey, here's a thought,"
4 so that you guys can push back, ask questions,
5 continue to think. So no recommendation in November,
6 just a presentation by me to you on "here's what we
7 can -- here's what this could possibly look like
8 based on individual conversations I've had;" have an
9 open discussion about that. If you wanted to have a
10 work session, you could, or we could do it during the
11 board meeting. During that same time in November,
12 the Subcommittee would be conducting interviews.
13 Then, in December, again, going back and forth,
14 feedback. In December, we would come back to you
15 again with a recommendation for establishing the
16 limited authority board, with the limitations. And
17 in that time, in December, you guys then would have
18 the recommendation also by the Subcommittee on who
19 the members of that board would be. And then that
20 could be established in December. So I'm kind of
21 trying to walk you through the phases of what this
22 looks like.

23 So what we're asking you to do today is to
24 actually move forward with getting this process
25 started so the Department and the Subcommittee's work

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1 can begin on accepting applications and conducting
2 the interviews and getting that process going.

3 I will pause and see what questions or
4 clarifications you have.

5 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Let's see what questions we
6 have.

7 Well, see, Mr. Henderson, you're online, I
8 think. Let's see if you have any questions.

9 MR. HENDERSON: I do not.

10 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right. Anyone on
11 my left have a question or a comment?

12 Dr. Hill.

13 DR. HILL: On this, is this what we're going to

14 --

15 MS. SMITH: So that is just a recommendation --

16 DR. HILL: Right. Yeah.

17 MS. SMITH: -- or a motion that I -- we think --

18 DR. HILL: Right.

19 MS. SMITH: -- or the Commissioner thinks --

20 DR. HILL: Right.

21 MS. SMITH: -- is appropriate.

22 DR. HILL: The only thing I would like to see --
23 because you asked for three -- you asked for the
24 resume.

25 MS. SMITH: Uh-huh.

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1 DR. HILL: Read those again.

2 MS. SMITH: Letter of interest and a resume.

3 DR. HILL: So the letter of interest, is that a
4 statement of why they want to serve or -- because I
5 think to be succinctly precise in saying, you know,
6 in a statement of no more than 500 words on why you
7 want to serve on this board, something like that, as
8 you're reading through the qualifications will help
9 know who you're picking.

10 MS. SMITH: So more like an essay --

11 DR. HILL: Yeah.

12 MS. SMITH: -- of no more than 500 words of why
13 you want to serve on the board?

14 DR. HILL: Why do you want to serve on this
15 board. So as you're going through those, you can
16 look at that and say, hey, this -- you know, this is
17 what we -- you know, just fits what we're looking for
18 to help move this process forward, rather than just
19 something that, you know, is giving you something to
20 be very subjective about, rather than something just
21 to be objective about.

22 MS. SMITH: Great suggestion.

23 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Anyone else on this side?

24 Ms. McFetridge.

25 MS. MCFETRIDGE: Ms. Smith, you're going to have

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1 seven members. Will they be representing the zones?
2 Are we --

3 MS. SMITH: Great question. So the -- so, yes,
4 we would like to appoint seven members to the board
5 and we would like the seven members to reside in
6 their zones. So that's why we're asking for their
7 current residence address so that that can be matched
8 up. I wasn't going to ask for them to tell us what
9 zone they're in. When we get their address we'll be
10 able to determine the zone they're in.

11 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Dr. Moore, did you have
12 a question?

13 DR. MOORE: Yes, I did. So, on the five-member
14 committee -- the committee, the way I'm seeing it,
15 that you're recommending, they will provide a
16 recommendation for the Commissioner?

17 MS. SMITH: And then the Commissioner will make
18 a recommendation to the Board.

19 DR. MOORE: Is that in law that the Commissioner
20 is the one that chooses the limited authority board?
21 And what does law state about limited authority
22 boards?

23 MS. SMITH: So what --

24 DR. MOORE: Is there much in the law about
25 limited authority boards other than that one can be,

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1 you know --

2 SECRETARY KEY: No, there's not -- there's not
3 much detail on --

4 MS. SMITH: Yeah.

5 SECRETARY KEY: I mean, basically this board
6 determines what authorities -- you know, the
7 authority of a school board is cited in statute.
8 Y'all would look at that and determine which of these
9 authorities should they have and which should they
10 not have.

11 DR. MOORE: Okay.

12 SECRETARY KEY: Similar to the action you took
13 earlier this year with Helena-West Helena, where you
14 limited --

15 DR. MOORE: Right.

16 SECRETARY KEY: -- the authority of the
17 Commissioner to the personnel issues. But you left
18 all the other authority with that current board.

19 DR. MOORE: Okay.

20 SECRETARY KEY: So it would be similar, just in
21 a reverse situation.

22 DR. MOORE: Okay.

23 SECRETARY KEY: Now as far as what the law says,
24 I think it's -- I don't know that it's very clear.

25 We would interpret it to be that the Board makes the

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1 appointments. We -- I would be simply working with
2 this five-member committee to vet the -- you know,
3 and term applications, you know, it's not an
4 application form that we're going to provide. The
5 application is the resumes, the letters of interest
6 and interview process. And that five-member
7 committee will make -- present their findings to me,
8 and then I'll make a recommendation to this board.
9 But, you know, this board could still say, "You know
10 what, maybe we're not comfortable with this list or
11 maybe we want choices." I mean, you have a lot of
12 leeway there --

13 DR. MOORE: Right.

14 SECRETARY KEY: -- to make that final decision.
15 The idea here is simply that based on interviews and
16 what's submitted we would provide you a list. And we
17 would already know the zones, what Stacy just
18 mentioned, in which they reside, so that we would
19 have every zone of the seven zones covered.

20 DR. MOORE: Okay.

21 MS. SMITH: Yeah. And I do want to clarify,
22 because I kind of picked up on some different -- the
23 committee is a five-person committee to conduct
24 interviews for the seven-member board.

25 DR. MOORE: Right.

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1 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yeah.

2 MS. SMITH: Okay. I don't want people to think
3 that we're only doing a five-member board; it's a
4 subcommittee to conduct the interviews for the seven-
5 person board that would be reflective of the zones.

6 DR. MOORE: Okay. And that subcommittee, the
7 DESE staff and School Boards Association, are y'all
8 choosing those people?

9 MS. SMITH: So our recommendation is to appoint
10 the authority to the Commissioner to help figure out
11 who those folks are.

12 DR. MOORE: Okay.

13 MS. SMITH: And we would want to select
14 community members, someone from DESE, and probably
15 someone from the School Boards Association.

16 DR. MOORE: Okay. With the idea that they would
17 --

18 MS. SMITH: Assist and train.

19 DR. MOORE: -- have background and whatever?

20 MS. SMITH: Yeah, background on a board. Yes.

21 DR. MOORE: Okay.

22 MS. SMITH: Be able to clearly outline, you
23 know, responsibilities and be an integral part of the
24 interview committee.

25 SECRETARY KEY: And the reason we chose the

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1 School Boards Association is they work with 1700
2 school board members from all over the state. They
3 understand very clearly the duties, the roles, the
4 qualities that make a good school board member. We
5 want this -- you know, this is that next step in the
6 process of returning the district to the local -- to
7 local governance and we want to get off to a good
8 start. So we feel like the School Boards Association
9 will give us very good advice on -- in vetting those
10 resumes and letters and through the interview
11 process.

12 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. We'll see if we have
13 any questions over here.

14 Mr. Sutton?

15 MR. SUTTON: No.

16 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Mr. Wood?

17 MR. WOOD: So at the work session we did on this
18 a few weeks ago, I, you know, kind of expressed the
19 interest -- and kind of my default position would be
20 an elected board.

21 MS. SMITH: Uh-huh.

22 MR. WOOD: But, you know, under certain criteria
23 I would be open to an appointed board. But some of
24 the things that are of the most concern to me was a
25 question that I had really with regard to whether or

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1 not an appointed board would survive into the time
2 when the district is released from State control. I
3 believe the information that I've gotten from Legal
4 is that an appointed board could survive the return
5 to local control. And then at the time that they are
6 returned to local control that board would then draw
7 lots for the terms that they would have and they
8 would then set election dates for each member, based
9 on that drawing. So is that a correct --

10 Okay. So I'm getting a nod of the head in the
11 affirmative that that's a correct understanding from
12 the Legal Department. So that's good; that's for
13 most continuity. It doesn't -- it means that when
14 it's returned to local control -- in about a year; is
15 that right? A year-ish?

16 MS. SMITH: And that's what we're aiming for.

17 MR. WOOD: Right. Okay. There would not be --
18 there would not be the possibility of immediate
19 upheaval through election of the replacement of
20 everyone.

21 Second thing that's important to me is what will
22 be the community's response to an appointed board?

23 MS. SMITH: So, again, we've been talking about
24 this for -- my first presentation was in January, a
25 report to the public in the gym. And I will say it

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1 got overshadowed by the proposal of the high school,
2 the conversation that same night. But it has been
3 out there for about a year. I do know you have Pine
4 Bluff patrons here tonight. Some of them have
5 expressed -- tonight? I'm tired. It feels like it,
6 doesn't it? We'll take a nap at lunch, okay? So
7 there are some patrons here who have expressed that
8 they're interested in the appointed board. When --
9 and I can't talk for everyone, but I think this is
10 exciting. I think we are well ahead of a schedule in
11 which we would even be trying to establish a board
12 back in place. So to me, this is an exciting
13 opportunity.

14 MR. WOOD: But I guess my question is more in
15 line with is there an organized objection to the
16 things the State is trying to do in Pine Bluff?

17 MS. SMITH: Organized?

18 MR. WOOD: My experience is in Little Rock. And
19 I was appointed to the appointed board in Little Rock
20 that served for four years prior to the election in
21 November of 2020, and there was constant resistance
22 to everything we tried to do --

23 MS. SMITH: Right.

24 MR. WOOD: -- in Little Rock. And so I'm just
25 wondering if that same sentiment exists in this

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1 community.

2 MS. SMITH: So I can confidently say to you that
3 there are people in Pine Bluff who like what we're
4 doing, and I can confidently say to you there are
5 people in Pine Bluff who don't like what we're doing.

6 MR. WOOD: Yeah.

7 MS. SMITH: Do we have the same type of angst
8 that we had with the Little Rock? No.

9 MR. WOOD: Okay.

10 MS. SMITH: There are people in this room today
11 that have disagreed, but we have conversations, we
12 talk; it's not this battle.

13 MR. WOOD: Okay.

14 MS. SMITH: So it's different. It's different.

15 In community meetings, when I'm there I'm
16 greeted, where that -- when Little Rock was going on
17 it was completely different. So it is a completely
18 different scenario.

19 COMMISSIONER KEY: And I would just --

20 MS. SMITH: Commissioner, do you want to
21 comment?

22 SECRETARY KEY: I would add to that -- I think
23 what that looks like moving forward depends on what
24 the decision of this board is regarding the limited
25 authority. I mean we have said since the outset I,

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1 Stacy -- you know, we do not want to make the
2 decision on the location of a new high school. That
3 should be a community decision. You remember the
4 Little Rock situation, there were all -- there was
5 already plans in place, you know. And so that -- so
6 everything that -- where there might be some parallel
7 Little Rock, there's some pretty substantial
8 differences too. And so, you know, when we bring
9 back the recommendations on what should be in limited
10 authority one of those things would be, look, if
11 they're going to build a high school, they pick; that
12 board picks where it goes. I mean that's a local
13 decision with local input.

14 So I think your question about what does the
15 community think about it is going to depend on how we
16 finalize this over the next couple of months.

17 MR. WOOD: Okay.

18 MS. SMITH: Yeah. And the community is thirsty.
19 I mean, again, I want to go back to that seed
20 comment; there is so many moving parts in Pine Bluff
21 that are just ripe to grow, so many things. So the
22 opportunity for us to be able to make a big push
23 there in the community I think is there.

24 DR. MOORE: As we think about seeking the
25 applications and, you know, that process, are we --

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1 and I know we can't -- we're not going to decide at
2 this point what the authority of that board is. But
3 is there going to be information about what the time
4 commitment of that role looks like, that it will be
5 limited, you know, so that people aren't applying
6 thinking that it looks just like a school board --
7 and some more information around that.

8 MS. SMITH: Yes. So that would be one of the
9 things when the Subcommittee gets together, and that
10 was one of the reasons why when we talked about
11 School Boards Association possibly being a piece of
12 that, for them to really be able to outline what is
13 the time commitment you're looking at, what are the
14 things we're asking for candidates to me. I mean,
15 we're asking for candidates to come in open-minded
16 and not pre -- like this is what I think it has to
17 be. I mean, those of you who have served on school
18 boards know that when you get here it's not what you
19 thought. I mean, there's that piece. So this piece
20 of being open-minded about, "Well, we're taking one
21 district, one district," and what that looks like and
22 what are the best things for our students that we can
23 have the best outcomes. So we're looking -- I think
24 the Subcommittee will have to kind of outline that
25 and make sure that when people are coming in to be

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1 interviewed they really have a good understanding of
2 what they're getting themselves in there. It is
3 going to be a big time commitment and time because I
4 think they're going to have to have lots of proper
5 training. I think that the opportunity for the
6 district to really begin educating their community
7 about what's going on in their schools starts with
8 this board, and this board taking that message piece
9 too. I mean, that's part of your role as that school
10 board member to be able to do those pieces. So
11 that's another element to this.

12 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. How about we -- I
13 think I've given the Board opportunities to ask some
14 questions. Why don't we hear from the community,
15 since we're talking about the community? And we'll
16 have some public comment.

17 Secretary Key, did you have something else you
18 wanted to add?

19 COMMISSIONER KEY: No.

20 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right.

21 (OFF THE RECORD FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS, WHICH MAY BE VIEWED ON THE
22 ADE OR YOUTUBE WEBSITE)

23 (BACK ON THE RECORD)

24 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. So we have heard
25 from the community, we've heard from the district.

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1 And I just want to say just a little bit before we
2 move into a motion this morning. I had the
3 opportunity to visit the Pine Bluff School District
4 several years ago, pre-Covid, and then I had the
5 opportunity to visit the Pine Bluff School District
6 just a few weeks ago. It wasn't -- hasn't been very
7 long. It was like two different places. There was
8 so, so much difference in what I saw and what I
9 experienced. Students were in classrooms; they were
10 not wandering halls, they were not wandering the
11 campus. Teachers were teaching, and it was school.
12 That's the best way I could describe it. It was
13 school. The environment -- you know, sure, some of
14 the buildings were older, but they were being up-
15 kept. The teachers had the materials that they
16 needed, they had the resources they needed, and it
17 was just a totally different experience -- as Ms.
18 Smith and some others have described, "as night and
19 day." It was exactly that. And, sure, did I see
20 things that need to be done? Did I see things that
21 could be improved? Yes. But I think I could go in
22 any district in this state and I would probably say
23 the same thing. But progress -- progress has been
24 made. And the things that are on the exit criteria I
25 can see being done. And so I went away feeling much,

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1 much better about the Pine Bluff School District, the
2 things that are going on in the community, the
3 progress that is being made. And so I want to say
4 thank you. Thank you on behalf of the students and
5 the community of Pine Bluff. Thank you to the people
6 at the Department, to the staff that is at the --
7 that's sitting here today, the teachers and staff
8 that are at the schools right now working hard. And
9 thank you to the students that are buying into the
10 different -- difference and seeing the possibilities
11 that are being opened to them.

12 And so, it is a great day. It is a great day.
13 And we are moving forward. And on our timeline I
14 believe that we're a little bit ahead of schedule of
15 where we wanted to be, and we are so happy.

16 All right. You just come right on.

17 SUPT. WARREN: I just want to say Go, Zebras.

18 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. All right.

19 So with all of that, do any more board members
20 have a question or a comment that they would like to
21 make?

22 Ms. Smith, have we missed anything that you need
23 to add?

24 All right. Mr. Wood.

25 MR. WOOD: I do have a question just about the

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1 academic progress of the district. And this isn't
2 directly related to, you know, the plans that we're
3 talking about as far as limited authority goes. But
4 I've heard a lot of wonderful things and I will say
5 that, man, I was very encouraged by a lot of the
6 things you're talking about, 180 minutes literacy K-
7 3, 90 minutes 4-12, Tier 1, 2 and 3 support
8 throughout the district -- those are all really good
9 things. I do -- I would like to know, as the rookie
10 up here, what is -- how are 3rd graders doing in Pine
11 Bluff today? And how are they doing today compared
12 to how they were doing when the State intervened a
13 few years ago?

14 MS. SMITH: So, of course, our assessment data
15 with the pandemic took a hit, and so we're seeing the
16 same things happening there. Do we have the right
17 instructional pieces in place at the school? We do
18 now. Has that instructional piece made the progress
19 as needed for individual students as of yet that
20 we're seeing in the data? No. So we're not there.
21 Our achievement scores in Pine Bluff are still low.
22 They are. But I feel like we have the right pieces
23 in place for progress to occur. And as we're looking
24 at our data currently in our secondary, we have seen
25 growth, which is huge. The schools achievement-wise

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1 may still be in the lower category for schools across
2 the state, but we are seeing growth there. In the
3 elementary schools across the state we've seen a hard
4 hit in our elementary schools with the pandemic. A
5 lot of our kindergarten, 1st, 2nd grade kids, a lot
6 of them didn't come to school, and so there's a lot
7 of acceleration happening due to that. And so can I
8 tell you today, Mr. Wood, that our Pine Bluff 3rd
9 grade test scores are better than they were when we
10 took them over? No, I can't. But can I tell you
11 that anecdotally we have curriculum, we have an
12 emphasis on instruction, we have high-quality teacher
13 professional development happening? I can tell you
14 yes on all of those. If I walk through the schools
15 -- even when I walked through the schools with Ms.
16 Hunter, Dr. Moore, and Ms. Newton, and went into
17 classrooms, I saw some instruction and some lessons
18 that I thought was good and I saw some that I thought
19 was poor. So it's not consistent. And that -- and
20 Ms. Jennifer Barbaree, who's right back here, one of
21 the things that she said to me one time is, she said,
22 "Did you notice how when we walk through the schools
23 now we're focused on instruction and improving
24 instruction? Whereas, when I walked through the
25 school two years ago I was focused on the facilities,

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1 I was focused on kids out of the classroom, I was
2 focused on everything other than." So it's like we
3 had a systems piece built that we can now truly get
4 into making sure kids are taught well. So that's
5 where we are right now.

6 MR. WOOD: Well, good. I appreciate that and I
7 understand that. And what my new colleagues on this
8 board will learn about me is that, you know, I care
9 very deeply about literacy scores, in 3rd grade
10 specifically. And my experience in Little Rock over
11 the last six years really honed me in on that
12 particular datapoint. I never mean it to be overtly
13 critical or embarrassing by any means, but it is a
14 reminder that in all the things we do I think
15 probably I would assume this is the sentiment of the
16 board and everyone I hear that all the things we've
17 talked about, about processes and communication with
18 the community and where are we going to put a high
19 school and who's going to serve on this board and how
20 much work we're going to put in, it's so that the end
21 result is the students are learning and are well
22 prepared for adulthood. And so it's important to
23 bring all of our focus back to those things.

24 But I appreciate all the work you're doing. I
25 hear it and I'm glad for what's happening there.

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1 MS. SMITH: Well, if that's your focus, you and
2 I are going to get along real well.

3 MR. WOOD: Good.

4 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. Any -- Ms.
5 McFetridge?

6 MS. McFETRIDGE: I just wanted to comment as
7 well. After reading the quarterly report, I don't
8 know if ADE gives them-self enough credit sometimes.
9 Looking at the support that you're giving this
10 district on a daily and weekly --

11 MS. SMITH: If you want to shower compliments on
12 me right now, I'll take them.

13 MS. McFETRIDGE: Well, my comment to seven ADE
14 staff people that are in the school daily --

15 MS. SMITH: Yeah.

16 MS. McFETRIDGE: -- and weekly, on top of --

17 MS. SMITH: It's not me; it's really the staff.

18 MS. McFETRIDGE: Okay.

19 MS. SMITH: Honestly, it's the staff. It's
20 these guys right here; it's Jennifer Barbaree, it's
21 Ryan Whatley, it's Michael Watson, it's Julie
22 Amstutz, it's Dr. Michael -- I mean, we've got a ton
23 of people who are boots on the ground in those
24 schools every day across the state and they have
25 worked very, very, very hard. I do feel like I hold

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1 a high bar for them and I push them to get that, and
2 I hope I push you guys to reach a bar. But they do
3 the work.

4 MS. McFETRIDGE: Well, I was so impressed to
5 read this and I have to let you know that. And, yes,
6 you did not have your name in here, and I know you're
7 down there. So -- but thank you to all of you for
8 rolling up your sleeves and coming in to this
9 community that was so welcoming, because I was on
10 this board when the community was here asking us to
11 help or asking the Department to help. So I'm just
12 so pleased at how forward everything is moving. So,
13 thank you.

14 MS. SMITH: Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. Commissioner Key,
16 do you have anything you want to add?

17 SECRETARY KEY: I think she meant Ryan Burgess,
18 but Ryan Whatley does other things in Pine Bluff
19 dealing with the community.

20 MS. SMITH: Yeah, Ryan Burgess.

21 SECRETARY KEY: I don't want Ryan Burgess to get
22 left out, to miss his name. So I just -- I want to
23 say -- I mean, I can't remember -- I think, as you
24 said, it's a night and day difference between the
25 beginning of school last year and this year. You

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1 know, we were living through a lot of that. Let me
2 tell you, one of the things that is easily overlooked
3 -- well, two of them are -- they're not easily
4 overlooked --

5 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: No, but -- yeah.

6 SECRETARY KEY: -- but the addition of these two
7 gentlemen has been tremendous.

8 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yes.

9 SECRETARY KEY: Mr. Carlock, I was immediately a
10 fan of him when he was at Stephens Elementary and we
11 became acquainted, the work that he was doing there.
12 So, I so appreciate his willingness to step out of
13 what was a comfort zone for him. But he was -- he
14 raised his hand, and said, "Hey, I'm up for it."

15 And same for Mr. Gragg. You know, you think
16 about the people who are superintendents and, you
17 know, pinnacle of their career, and he said, "I'm
18 going to go home and I'm going to help the folks at
19 home."

20 So those two gentlemen have made a tremendous
21 amount of difference as we started this year just
22 with the organization, just with facilities, just
23 with making sure that, you know, the teaching and
24 learning is happening in the buildings. Because as
25 someone else said it, Ms. Warren can't do it by

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1 herself. But she's got some great -- she's got -- so
2 we have Aaron and her holding her arms up --

3 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: There you go.

4 SECRETARY KEY: -- right now.

5 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: That's it.

6 SECRETARY KEY: The other thing that I want to
7 say too is, you know, there was -- I won't say
8 pushback, but there was some doubt about the idea of,
9 hey, let's keep our 6th graders in the elementary
10 schools; let's keep our 9th graders, you know -- I
11 don't think we give enough credit to the impact that
12 has made where moving that transition -- delaying
13 that transition so that there could be some
14 consistency. And you're talking about -- Mr. Wood,
15 you know, he asked about the elementary schools, and
16 we hear it all the time. There are 3rd graders that
17 don't know how -- and 2nd graders that don't know how
18 to act in school because they haven't been there. So
19 you think about what elementary principals have to
20 deal with there and having last year's 5th graders
21 now being 6th graders that can show an example of
22 this is how we behave. That's tremendous.

23 So there's so many pieces that are easily
24 overlooked if we're not careful. I didn't want to
25 overlook that, so -- that's no bearing on the

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1 decision y'all are getting ready to make, but has a
2 bearing on the overall direction that this district
3 is going. And, today, I can say that is a positive
4 direction.

5 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yes. Yes.

6 All right. Any other comments or questions from
7 board members?

8 Mr. Carlock, did you have something you wanted
9 to add?

10 MR. CARLOCK: Well, I just wanted to add
11 something to what Jeff Woods said. We do have
12 similar experiences from Little Rock, and I do want
13 to -- a comment a teacher made to me in Pine Bluff
14 School District -- I don't know if I even shared this
15 with Ms. Warren, but I think it's appropriate for
16 this time. We were talking about literacy, and she
17 just said, "Mr. Carlock, if my kids don't know how to
18 read, they die." I was like -- you know, that
19 comment just hit me and I had to think about this,
20 "You mean figuratively or literally?" But, you know,
21 in so many ways that's true. And unless you know the
22 mindset of our educators, they understand that we
23 have to work at a level of intensity and
24 intentionality, with a purpose to make sure that our
25 kids know how to read. You know, just think about

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1 that. If they don't know how to read, they die, and
2 it just changes the whole trajectory of their life.

3 So I do want you to know that my teachers, they
4 have that mindset. They're working with the mind
5 that they have to -- the time is now to get our kids
6 where they need to be and we're working as hard as we
7 can. So I do want you to know that that is the
8 focus. It's not moving as fast as we want it to be,
9 but we do have the wheel turning in the right
10 direction.

11 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Very good. Thank you for
12 adding that, Mr. Carlock.

13 All right. So I believe that we are ready for a
14 motion from the Board. So --

15 MS. HUNTER: Madam Chair, may I make a motion?

16 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yes, Ms. Hunter.

17 MS. HUNTER: I move that the State Board begin
18 the process of establishing a seven-member Pine Bluff
19 School District limited authority board to operate
20 under the direction of the Commissioner of Education;
21 and that the board invite members of the Pine Bluff
22 community who are interested in serving on the
23 limited authority board to submit an application on
24 or before October 23, 2022; that a five-member
25 committee be formed to review applications, conduct

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1 interviews, and consult with the Commissioner
2 concerning its findings; and that the committee shall
3 include one State Board member appointed by the Chair
4 and four members appointed by the Commissioner, with
5 consideration given to community members, Department
6 of Elementary and Secondary Education, and School
7 Boards Association. After consulting with the
8 committee, the Commissioner shall recommend to the
9 State Board appointments to the limited authority
10 board.

11 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. We have a motion by Ms.
12 Hunter. Is there a second?

13 MR. WOOD: Second.

14 MR. HENDERSON: Second.

15 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Seconded by Mr. Wood.

16 Do we want to do a roll-call?

17 SECRETARY KEY: Yes.

18 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

19 SECRETARY KEY: Mr. Sutton.

20 MR. SUTTON: Yes.

21 SECRETARY KEY: Ms. Hunter.

22 MS. HUNTER: Yes.

23 SECRETARY KEY: Mr. Wood.

24 MR. WOOD: Yes.

25 SECRETARY KEY: Ms. McFetridge.

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1 MS. McFETRIDGE: Yes.

2 SECRETARY KEY: Dr. Hill.

3 DR. HILL: Yes.

4 SECRETARY KEY: Mr. Henderson.

5 MR. HENDERSON: Yes.

6 SECRETARY KEY: Dr. Moore.

7 DR. MOORE: Yes.

8 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: I would like to also vote yes
9 on that, please.

10 All right.

11 SECRETARY KEY: Ms. Newton votes yes.

12 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yes. All right. So motion
13 passes. Congratulations to the Pine Bluff Zebra
14 community.

15 And if it would be all right with the Board, I
16 would like to serve on the Subcommittee. I know it's
17 a little unusual for a Chair to appoint themselves,
18 but I feel like I have a heart for Pine Bluff; and so
19 I would like to serve on that, if that's all right.

20 All right. Okay.

21 SECRETARY KEY: And, Madam Chair, I will notify
22 the Board of the appointments of the other four
23 members --

24 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right.

25 SECRETARY KEY: -- when we get those done.

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1 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Thank you.

2 All right. I think we have been sitting in
3 chairs for two hours and one minute, so how about
4 let's take a 10-minute break. All right.

5 (OFF THE RECORD)

6 (BACK ON THE RECORD)

7 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay. We have all of our
8 board members back, so we're going to get back
9 started in just a minute.

10 And thank you all, to those of you who are
11 leaving, for being here today.

12 We are going to pick back up. Ms. Newton,
13 unfortunately, had to leave on a trip, so she left me
14 next. I'm sure I will forget something, so just kick
15 me or yell at me if I do. We're going to start back
16 on Action Agenda

17 2. CONSIDERATION OF THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL
18 LICENSURE STANDARDS BOARD FOR CASE 22-119 KEVAN MOORE

19 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: We're going to start back
20 on Action Agenda Item Number 2, Consideration of
21 Recommendation of the PLSB Board. We have Amy
22 Douglas to present.

23 MS. DOUGLAS: Good morning. I have placed at
24 your laptops two handouts, two pages. One is an
25 excerpt from the rules regarding State Board review,

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1 just as a quick reference for you all. And the other
2 is Appendix D of the rules, as well.

3 This case, Kevan Moore, was pulled to action by
4 vote and motion last month and set on the action
5 agenda this month. Mr. Moore was sent a certified
6 mail on September 9th and it was signed for on
7 September 12th. It was also sent via -- a notice for
8 this hearing today and it was sent via regular mail
9 and secure server link. He never opened the secure
10 server link, but the Certified mail was signed for.
11 I have not spoken to him, he has not reached out, and
12 to my knowledge, he is not present today.

13 So the options -- I don't know if the Board
14 wants the option --

15 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: I think that would be
16 great. Yes.

17 MS. DOUGLAS: Okay. So there are a few options
18 for the Board today. You can -- since it's been
19 pulled to action -- if you will refer to 16.1.3, so
20 if the Educator or his or her attorney does not make
21 any of the elections asking for a hearing, they can
22 -- or does not appear for the review meeting, the
23 State Board shall conduct the subsequent review
24 without the Educator and make the final decision. So
25 you have the ability to ask questions of me regarding

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1 any of the investigation and make the final
2 determination. In past, you have sent a case such as
3 this back down for an evidentiary hearing, if the
4 Educator had not already had one.

5 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Mr. Sutton?

6 MR. SUTTON: Yes. Amy, can you remind me or us
7 why this case got tabled with -- earlier?

8 MS. DOUGLAS: Ms. Newton, I believe, pulled for
9 it to be on action this month because she did not
10 feel like the sanction was severe enough due to
11 previous conduct by the Educator.

12 MR. SUTTON: Okay. Thank you.

13 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay. So at this point in
14 time let's open it up to questions of you. Because
15 we're not doing a hearing; correct? I mean --

16 MS. DOUGLAS: Well, I would be the hearing, so
17 --

18 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay. So we will open it
19 up to questions of you, and then we can discuss
20 whether we want to move forward.

21 We'll start down here. Dr. Hill, questions?

22 DR. HILL: No.

23 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Ms. Hunter?

24 MS. HUNTER: No questions.

25 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Ms. McFetridge?

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1 MS. McFETRIDGE: Help me with the process again,
2 if you don't mind. So do we need to send it back for
3 review in order to change what we want to do?

4 MS. DOUGLAS: You do not.

5 MS. McFETRIDGE: Okay.

6 MS. DOUGLAS: You can vote today to make a
7 recommendation or change the recommendation.

8 MS. McFETRIDGE: Okay.

9 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Mr. Sutton, do you want to
10 ask? You look like you have a question.

11 MR. SUTTON: Well, I guess I'm a little
12 confused. I read what was on the agenda, and I know
13 this was prior -- he had prior infractions.

14 MS. DOUGLAS: Yes.

15 MR. SUTTON: And do we -- would it help to
16 understand the recommendation that was made by the
17 PLSB --

18 MS. DOUGLAS: Sure.

19 MR. SUTTON: -- as opposed to why we might think
20 it was not severe enough?

21 MS. DOUGLAS: Sure. So the recommendation of
22 the PLSB is -- first off, let me say Mr. Moore's
23 license expires at the end of this year. So the
24 recommendation was made several months ago -- I
25 believe it was in July -- for a six-month suspension

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1 of license, suspending it throughout the duration of
2 its validity. And then, in addition to that, adding
3 trainings and a fine and an extra one year of
4 nonrenewal so that he would have to wait 18 months
5 before he even were to attempt to renew his license.
6 At that time of renewal he would have to complete the
7 trainings, pay the fine, and also be in compliance
8 with everything that a renewal of a license requires.
9 He did not participate in the investigation, so I
10 believe the Panel felt like this was long enough time
11 for his license to definitely be invalid, and then
12 that he would not pursue renewal.

13 MR. SUTTON: But being -- not being able to
14 renew his license for a year or 16 months, whatever
15 it was, whatever it is, is not the same as
16 permanently barring him from obtaining an Arkansas
17 teaching license?

18 MS. DOUGLAS: Correct.

19 MR. SUTTON: And is that --

20 MS. DOUGLAS: With the rules of --

21 MR. SUTTON: And was that --

22 MS. DOUGLAS: With the rules of current
23 revocation, the way the law is currently written,
24 after 10 years he could come back to the Board and
25 request reinstatement.

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1 MR. SUTTON: Okay. And was it the thought of
2 Ms. Newton that it should've been permanently
3 revoked?

4 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: I think -- based on what
5 she said last month, I think that that was either
6 additional review or permanent revocation.

7 MR. SUTTON: Okay.

8 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Mr. Wood, do you have a
9 question?

10 MR. WOOD: Do we have the ability -- do we have
11 the authority to take an action more severe than
12 recommended?

13 MS. DOUGLAS: Yes.

14 MR. WOOD: We do?

15 MS. DOUGLAS: Yes.

16 MR. WOOD: Okay.

17 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Mr. Henderson, do you have
18 any questions?

19 MR. HENDERSON: I do not.

20 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Ms. Saum?

21 MS. SAUM: So you're saying that the assumption
22 is that he would not pursue renewing his license; but
23 if we don't take action on that, then he can?

24 MS. DOUGLAS: After the 18 months time, yes.

25 MS. SAUM: Okay. And this -- he was cited for

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1 similar behavior in 2012. Is that correct?

2 MS. DOUGLAS: Correct.

3 MS. SAUM: Okay. Thank you.

4 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Mr. Wood.

5 MR. WOOD: Is it the desire of the Department
6 that he not be an educator in Arkansas? Is it the
7 hope that he won't pursue renewal? Because if that's
8 the case, why wouldn't we just do a permanent
9 revocation?

10 MS. DOUGLAS: That was just the purview of the
11 subcommittee when they were making the determination.
12 This particular student -- these were comments that
13 were made to the student about other students. And
14 so -- and due to the fact that he had been given a
15 written reprimand for similar behavior in 2012, they
16 felt like let's invalid his license and make it
17 harder for him to actually renew it, as opposed to
18 giving him revocation. But if the Board -- I mean,
19 the Board has the ability to permanently -- or to
20 issue a revocation today.

21 SECRETARY KEY: Mr. Wood, my concern is leaving
22 the door open is problematic for me.

23 MR. WOOD: Okay.

24 MR. SUTTON: That's what we needed to hear.

25 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: I was going to ask a

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1 question too. And so within this, if it were to
2 stand that it would be an 18-month, he could re-seek
3 a license, what if he didn't do that but went to a
4 school to teach? Could he teach as an Act 1240
5 waiver? Would there be a flag in the system?

6 MS. DOUGLAS: There would be a flag in the
7 system. He would not be able to be in a classroom --

8 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay.

9 MS. DOUGLAS: -- due to the suspension and
10 nonrenewal.

11 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay. What about moving
12 states, is there a flag in the system when you move
13 states as well?

14 MS. DOUGLAS: This would be uploaded into the
15 NASDAQ system, the national system. So it would flag
16 that he is -- does not have a -- or a suspended
17 license in Arkansas.

18 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay. Can you tell me too
19 -- and I know -- it's been a few years now and I
20 don't remember -- when is it that cases go to
21 evidentiary hearing?

22 MS. DOUGLAS: When an educator requests.

23 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Oh. Either educator or we
24 can require it?

25 MS. DOUGLAS: Right.

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1 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay.

2 MS. DOUGLAS: Previous times, when you have
3 reviewed cases and they haven't had an evidentiary
4 hearing, there have been several times the cases were
5 referred back for a full evidentiary hearing for that
6 educator.

7 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Do we think that if it
8 were to go back to an evidentiary hearing that that
9 -- would it be the exact same panel?

10 MS. DOUGLAS: No, it is a different panel.

11 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Different panel.

12 MS. DOUGLAS: And we do not anticipate that Mr.
13 Moore would participate.

14 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay. So it might not
15 result in any additional information?

16 MS. DOUGLAS: Correct.

17 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay. Thank you.

18 Any more questions?

19 Yes.

20 MR. WOOD: So, you know, I'm new. I do have
21 just an ounce of trepidation about taking pretty
22 severe actions toward someone without knowing more
23 specifically what really happened. And I'm not
24 trying to just delve into the salacious by any means,
25 but these are very vague statements of misconduct.

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1 And it's -- you know, if we're hoping to end
2 someone's teaching career on "made an inappropriate
3 comment," and I guess -- would it be possible to know
4 more specifically the nature of the inappropriate
5 nature?

6 MS. DOUGLAS: Absolutely.

7 MR. WOOD: Okay.

8 MS. DOUGLAS: So I'll just give you kind of a
9 snapshot of the investigation. So the Principal
10 advised that he had two or three conversations with
11 the Educator, advising him not to have female
12 students alone in his classroom. The -- and then the
13 Principal began to investigate inappropriate
14 communications and interactions and spoke to three
15 students, and then pulled in an independent
16 investigator. It was at that time that the Educator
17 resigned. The independent investigator interviewed
18 three individual students and found them to be
19 credible. The particular student in question in this
20 investigation, on this PLSB case, reported that the
21 Educator said to this student about another student,
22 "She's my type. If I were y'all's age, that's who
23 I'd date. She wanted to 'F' me. She has the nicest
24 body. She's easy." This Educator also told this
25 student, "I don't know if I like you wearing those

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1 jeans." The student expressed her belief that that
2 comment was made because her jeans were tight, and it
3 made her uncomfortable. He also said to this
4 student, "When did you get those," looking at her
5 breasts. Moore said to this student -- that was when
6 she was 14.

7 MR. WOOD: I've heard enough. I'm good.

8 MS. DOUGLAS: Okay.

9 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: More questions?

10 Okay. So will you remind us -- the options are
11 to keep it as-is, revocation -- or a different
12 sanction or evidentiary hearing?

13 MS. DOUGLAS: Correct.

14 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Does anyone at this time
15 ready to make a motion?

16 MS. DOUGLAS: I believe that you would have to
17 -- because it's on action, you would have to (1) make
18 a motion that you found -- I guess if you're going to
19 send it back for an evidentiary hearing you would
20 make a motion that it be sent back to the PLSB for a
21 full hearing.

22 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay.

23 MS. DOUGLAS: In the alternative, if you wanted
24 to take action you would find (1) that he -- you need
25 to make a motion that he did violate the Code of

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1 Ethics, accept the findings of the PLSB; but then you
2 can recommend a new sanction. So there would be
3 three motions in that.

4 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: And then we have to vote
5 three separate times for each one?

6 MS. DOUGLAS: Right.

7 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Is anyone ready to make a
8 motion at this time? Do we have additional
9 questions?

10 MR. SUTTON: I'll make the motion --

11 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay.

12 MR. SUTTON: -- but walk me through it again.
13 There is a preponderance of evidence there was
14 violation?

15 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Yes. So if the idea is
16 that you want to change the sanction as provided, you
17 have to do three different motions. So the first one
18 is whether there was a violation of the Code of
19 Ethics.

20 MR. SUTTON: I think there was. Yes. I'm
21 making the motion that I -- what am I agreeing?

22 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: There is a violation of
23 the Code of Ethics.

24 MR. SUTTON: There was one, okay.

25 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Yes.

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1 MR. SUTTON: Yeah.

2 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Is there a second to that?

3 MR. WOOD: Second.

4 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Second. Okay. A voice
5 vote. All in favor say aye.

6 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

7 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Against?

8 Motion passes.

9 So the second motion is around accepting --
10 well, actually, I'll let you say -- tell us, Amy.

11 MS. DOUGLAS: So the second motion you could say
12 we would accept the rationale -- so the findings and
13 rationale that he violated the Code of Ethics. So
14 you're saying (1) okay, there's a violation; (2),
15 we're accepting the reasoning why we think there's a
16 violation, or you can create new reasoning; and then
17 your next motion later would be whatever sanction you
18 feel is appropriate. Does that make sense?

19 MR. SUTTON: I guess. Number two, I make the
20 motion that we agree with the rationale.

21 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Do we have a second?

22 MS. McFETRIDGE: Second.

23 MR. HENDERSON: Second.

24 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: A second by Ms.
25 McFetridge.

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1 All in favor say aye.

2 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

3 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Any against?

4 The motion passes.

5 SECRETARY KEY: Did you have Ms. McFetridge for
6 the second or Mr. Henderson on it? I'm sorry. I
7 heard Mr. --

8 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Ms. McFetridge. I heard
9 both of them.

10 SECRETARY KEY: Okay. Thank you.

11 MR. SUTTON: And so, motion number three would
12 be I would make the motion that the license be
13 permanently revoked.

14 MS. McFETRIDGE: I'll second that.

15 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: We have a motion and a
16 second. All in favor say aye.

17 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

18 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Any opposed?

19 The motion passes.

20 MS. DOUGLAS: Thank you. I'll get the order
21 prepared so you can sign it.

22 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay. Thank you.

23 MS. DOUGLAS: Thank you.

24 3. CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF NOMINATED MEMBERS
25 FOR THE PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE STANDARDS BOARD

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1 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Now we move to item number
2 three. We have Ms. Saracini for the Members of the
3 Professional Licensure Standards Board.

4 MS. SARACINI: Karli Saracini, Assistant
5 Commissioner for Educator Effectiveness and
6 Licensure.

7 And Mr. Wood, just so that you know, the PLSB
8 board is of peers; it's not DESE, ADE. So that may
9 help you, since you're new.

10 Today, I'm recommending the nomination of Mr.
11 Tran for a position on PLSB, to replace the
12 representative from Arkansas Public School Resource
13 Center, which is the non-licensed teachers. He
14 currently serves, as you see in the letter, as
15 superintendent for Friendship Aspire Schools for
16 Arkansas. And I need a motion that you accept his
17 recommendation to be placed on the PLSB board.

18 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay. Any questions to my
19 left?

20 Any questions?

21 Mr. Henderson, any questions?

22 MR. HENDERSON: No questions.

23 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay. I'll open the floor
24 for a motion.

25 MS. McFETRIDGE: I move that we appoint Mr. Tran

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1 to the PLSB board.

2 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Is there a second?

3 MS. HUNTER: Second.

4 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: There's a motion and a
5 second. All in favor say aye.

6 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

7 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Any opposed?

8 Motion passes.

9 MS. SARACINI: Thank you.

10 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Thank you.

11 4. CONSIDERATION OF REQUESTS FOR ACT 1240 WAIVERS

12 a) EARLE SCHOOL DISTRICT

13 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Item Number 4, we have
14 Consideration of Requests for Act 1240 Waivers.

15 MS. FRENO: Good morning. Lori Freno, Arkansas
16 Department of Education.

17 We have two Act 1240 waiver requests from the
18 Earle School District. The superintendent, Tish
19 Knowles, is here with us today, in case you have any
20 questions. And these are very limited in their
21 scope, these Act 1240 waiver requests. The first
22 one, the district is seeking a waiver to accommodate
23 its student/teacher residency model program in its
24 kindergarten class at Earle. And the second one is a
25 waiver of licensure, teacher licensure, but it is

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1 only concerned one educator and that is Mr. Miller.

2 And if you have any questions, I would turn it
3 over to Ms. Knowles. Oh, and the Department does
4 support these waivers.

5 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Thank you.

6 Thank you, Ms. Knowles, for being here.

7 We'll start down here. Dr. Hill, questions?

8 DR. HILL: No.

9 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Ms. Hunter?

10 MS. HUNTER: No.

11 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Ms. McFetridge?

12 MS. McFETRIDGE: No.

13 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Mr. Sutton?

14 MR. SUTTON: No questions.

15 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Mr. Wood?

16 MR. WOOD: No.

17 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Mr. Henderson?

18 MR. HENDERSON: No questions.

19 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Ms. Saum?

20 MS. SAUM: No questions.

21 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: I did have a question
22 actually, if you don't mind, for Superintendent
23 Knowles. Thank you for driving in today. And I
24 think we're going to see her again later today.

25 SUPT. KNOWLES: Tish Knowles, Earle School

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1 District, Superintendent.

2 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: As we're looking at this
3 kindergarten classroom, how many students are in the
4 classroom?

5 SUPT. KNOWLES: Twenty-eight.

6 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Twenty-eight. Okay. That
7 -- I think that's what I had flagged. And describe
8 to me the relationship between the para and the
9 mentor teacher and what that will look like.

10 SUPT. KNOWLES: So the para in the classroom has
11 been going through Reach University. We have been
12 paying for her to go through that program. She is a
13 prior education major -- prior, many years ago. She
14 has worked for the district 22 years. She is -- the
15 mentor teacher is in the room daily with her. She is
16 listed as the teacher of record. She has a master's
17 degree in -- she is one of our dyslexia specialists.
18 She also serves for intervention. And they work very
19 closely together. There's also an additional para in
20 the room. So there is the mentor teacher, the para,
21 and we are also seeking to hire an additional para;
22 so there would be the teacher -- Arkansas teacher
23 resident, two paras, and the mentor.

24 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay.

25 SUPT. KNOWLES: And if you walk down the halls

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1 and you look inside the classroom, you see the work.
2 She is trained in our Wit and Wisdom; she's been
3 trained in Phonics First; she's been trained in all
4 the curriculum areas that we use. And she's a member
5 of our community and has been working in our school
6 district for many years and is seeking -- so -- to
7 finish up her residency. So she is -- this is our
8 Grow Your Own.

9 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: That's great and providing
10 that support. So the teacher licensure waiver is for
11 her, in this situation, to be able to be the teacher
12 of record?

13 SUPT. KNOWLES: Correct.

14 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay.

15 SUPT. KNOWLES: No.

16 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: No?

17 SUPT. KNOWLES: She would still be Arkansas
18 teacher resident with --

19 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: A mentor teacher.

20 SUPT. KNOWLES: -- mentor teacher --

21 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay.

22 SUPT. KNOWLES: -- as the teacher of record.

23 But she would get all that support, as well as that
24 support from Reach University, Solution Tree,
25 Crowley's Ridge Co-op, and DESE, OCSS. Very much

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1 support.

2 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: When you look down the
3 road, do you have two 1st grade teachers? Will you
4 be able to accommodate that class size next year?

5 SUPT. KNOWLES: Yes, we have two 1st grade
6 teachers.

7 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay.

8 SUPT. KNOWLES: Uh-huh. Yes.

9 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: So this is just
10 specifically for kindergarten?

11 SUPT. KNOWLES: Yes. And the reason for this,
12 we had 15 students registered for kindergarten in
13 May, so we did not anticipate we would need two
14 teachers. So when one retired, we lost her through
15 attrition, we ended up with one slot. And we have
16 been unsuccessful -- we have -- we posted this
17 position as soon as we knew our numbers were too
18 hire. We've been posting it. We don't even have a
19 bite. We haven't had anyone apply for the job.

20 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Well, thank you for being
21 creative and working and getting supports.

22 SUPT. KNOWLES: We're trying to think outside
23 the box and do what's best for our students.

24 MS. SAUM: Can I ask a quick question?

25 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Yes.

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1 MS. SAUM: The mentor teachers, are they
2 currently in a classroom of their own or they're
3 doing coaching and dyslexia support?

4 SUPT. KNOWLES: Interventions --

5 MS. SAUM: Yes.

6 SUPT. KNOWLES: -- and support for dyslexia. So
7 she doesn't have any type of classroom of her own.

8 MS. SAUM: So she's more available to support?

9 SUPT. KNOWLES: Yes, ma'am.

10 MS. SAUM: Okay. Thank you.

11 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: More questions from the
12 Board? I think --

13 MS. McFETRIDGE: When do you think you can get
14 the second parapro hired?

15 SUPT. KNOWLES: We're already advertising, just
16 in case the waiver passed. So we do have some
17 candidates already, but we haven't interviewed.
18 We're waiting for this today --

19 MS. McFETRIDGE: Okay.

20 SUPT. KNOWLES: -- to see what would happen.

21 MS. McFETRIDGE: Okay.

22 MS. SMITH: So, yeah, this is not the most ideal
23 situation and I had lots of concerns. So those of
24 you who are new to the Board, Earle is a district
25 under state authority. And so I did visit the

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1 campus, I did visit the classroom, and discussed, and
2 we did decide that we needed to add an initial para
3 to the room for that additional support if we were
4 going to do this. The conversation of do we split
5 it, we think the candidate that is in there right now
6 teaching and leading the class is the best person to
7 do that and we're better off keeping a larger class
8 with additional support, with her being the lead,
9 versus splitting them up and putting them in other
10 places. She is the 22-years. She does have the
11 training in the literacy program. She's an integral
12 part of the school. So for this situation that was
13 the best scenario.

14 I will comment on this too -- Earle has never
15 had a blanket district-wide 1240 waiver. So every
16 time, they have worked the process and had their
17 teachers in whichever licensure pathway. And even in
18 this case today with this one, this one is going
19 through the teacher residency model. And then the
20 only other 12 -- the licensure waiver we're asking
21 for, the only other one is for a specific person
22 who's been in the district -- well, he's the one
23 that's been there 23 --

24 SUPT. KNOWLES: Twenty-three years.

25 MS. SMITH: -- 23 years. I've also observed him

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1 in classes; I've observed his work. And so there's
2 that difference. That's a little bit different than
3 when we've given the waivers as blankets before.

4 SUPT. KNOWLES: I will say that we did poll --
5 you can see the results with the parents. It was
6 about a 60/40 split. And so parents are pleased with
7 the work that we're doing, as well. So we feel very
8 confident in the Arkansas residency and the model.
9 It's been great for us.

10 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Any more questions from
11 the Board?

12 Mr. Henderson, any questions?

13 MR. HENDERSON: Dr. Moore, just looking at the
14 1240 waiver impact survey, who were the participants
15 of that survey? (INAUDIBLE)

16 SUPT. KNOWLES: The parents -- we polled the
17 parents and then, of course, the teachers/staff. But
18 the parents were the participants in the stakeholder
19 survey, if you're asking for the resident model. And
20 then for the other was the public on the -- on
21 Miller, on the other candidate, the other waiver.

22 MR. HENDERSON: Thank you.

23 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Any questions?

24 Okay. So, Lori, let me ask for a motion. Do we
25 need two separate motions, or can they be taken in

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1 one?

2 MS. FRENO: You could do it together or you
3 could do separately.

4 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay.

5 MS. FRENO: It doesn't matter.

6 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: And both are being
7 requested for a three-year period?

8 MS. FRENO: That is correct.

9 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay. If no questions,
10 I'll open the floor for a motion.

11 MR. SUTTON: I'll make --

12 MS. McFETRIDGE: I make the motion that we
13 approve waiver request number one and waiver request
14 number two for the Earle School District.

15 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: We have a motion and a
16 second. Any questions?

17 Okay. All in favor say aye.

18 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

19 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Any opposed?

20 Motion passes.

21 MS. FRENO: Thank you.

22 5. REQUESTS FOR STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION WAIVERS

23 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Now we move down to item
24 number five, Requests for Standards of Accreditation
25 Waivers. We have Dr. Sutherlin to present.

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1 DR. SUTHERLIN: So Matthew Sutherlin, Standards
2 and Systems Support, Charter.

3 What we have here is they are standards waivers,
4 so these are for one year only. They're not
5 receivable the next year, so it would only be for
6 this one year.

7 a) ALPENA SCHOOL DISTRICT

8 DR. SUTHERLIN: The first one that we have is
9 Alpena School District is seeking a waiver of 4-E.2,
10 which sets forth the student-to-school counselor
11 ratio. The district has three students over the 450-
12 to-1 ratio. And I don't know if anyone is here from
13 Alpena.

14 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Is Superintendent McKinney
15 on the line?

16 Okay. Do we have -- Board Members, do we have
17 questions?

18 Down to my left, Dr. Hill?

19 DR. HILL: No.

20 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Ms. Hunter, Ms.
21 McFetridge?

22 Down to the right, any questions? Ms. Saum?

23 Mr. Henderson, any questions?

24 MR. HENDERSON: No.

25 MS. McFETRIDGE: So I understand they have no

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1 counselor?

2 DR. SUTHERLIN: No. They have a counselor.

3 MS. McFETRIDGE: Okay.

4 DR. SUTHERLIN: It's the ratio.

5 MS. McFETRIDGE: Okay.

6 DR. SUTHERLIN: So they're just three over in
7 terms of students.

8 MS. McFETRIDGE: Okay. But they do have one.
9 Okay.

10 DR. SUTHERLIN: Yes.

11 MS. McFETRIDGE: Okay.

12 DR. SUTHERLIN: Yes, ma'am.

13 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: And is that counselor for
14 the whole district?

15 DR. SUTHERLIN: Yes.

16 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay. And so typically if
17 you were to bump over, what's the ratio? 450?

18 DR. SUTHERLIN: Yes.

19 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: That requires two?

20 DR. SUTHERLIN: Well, it would require a
21 percentage of a counselor.

22 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay. Okay.

23 MR. SUTTON: So is that -- in other words, they
24 have a student population of 453?

25 DR. SUTHERLIN: Uh-huh. Yeah.

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1 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay. Any questions,
2 concerns?

3 Okay. Open for a motion.

4 MR. SUTTON: Motion to approve the waiver
5 request by Alpena School District.

6 MR. WOOD: Second.

7 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: We have a motion and a
8 second. All in favor say aye.

9 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

10 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Any opposed?

11 The motion passes.

12 b) EARLE SCHOOL DISTRICT

13 DR. SUTHERLIN: Okay. So the next one is
14 actually to help effectuate the 1240 waiver that was
15 just passed. The Earle School District seeks a
16 waiver of 1-A.5, which establishes the maximum class
17 size. The current class size, as was stated, is 28
18 students in the kindergarten classroom.

19 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay. Questions?

20 Dr. Hill, Ms. Hunter, Ms. McFetridge?

21 To my right, questions -- Mr. Sutton, Mr. Wood,
22 Ms. Saum?

23 Mr. Henderson, any questions?

24 MR. HENDERSON: No questions.

25 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Then the floor will be

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1 open for a motion.

2 MR. SUTTON: I'll make the motion to approve the
3 waiver request by Earle School District.

4 MR. HENDERSON: Second.

5 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: There's a motion and a
6 second. All in favor say aye.

7 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

8 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Any opposed?

9 Motion passes.

10 c) HEBER SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT

11 DR. SUTHERLIN: All right. The next standards
12 waiver is the Heber Springs School District. They
13 are seeking a waiver of Standard 1-A.5, and that's
14 also a maximum class size. The request is for
15 kindergarten and high school. And it's stated that a
16 paraprofessional will be assigned, when necessary.

17 I think Dr. Ashley is on.

18 SUPT. ASHLEY: Yes, sir. I am.

19 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Hi, Dr. Ashley. Thank you
20 for being here today.

21 SUPT. ASHLEY: Well, thank you. We had a
22 surprise growth in kindergarten, and so we have been
23 really struggling. We've not been able to find
24 another teacher or paraprofessional. So we're trying
25 to limit those right now, but the greatest size is

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1 22. We've got a total of 128 students in
2 kindergarten, with six teachers.

3 And then at the high school level we had a
4 growth of 49 -- or 46 students. And so we've got a
5 couple of classes that are over the 30 limit, as
6 well.

7 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay. Thank you for
8 sharing that.

9 Let's go to questions and see if board members
10 have questions for you.

11 Down to my right, Dr. Hill?

12 DR. HILL: No.

13 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Ms. Hunter?

14 MS. HUNTER: So I just want to confirm that we
15 could have some high school classes with as many as
16 34 students? Is that what I'm hearing?

17 SUPT. ASHLEY: I'm sorry; I couldn't hear you.

18 MS. HUNTER: Okay. Can you hear me now? So --
19 so am I reading -- I'm not on? Oh, okay.

20 So am I understanding that the high school
21 classrooms will have 34 students?

22 SUPT. ASHLEY: I think there's only one that
23 will be that way. And a lot of that is based on the
24 number of kids that need a certain class at a certain
25 time. We had -- again, we had 46 additional students

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1 at the high school in growth, and so just trying to
2 work those schedules. I think the other two are --
3 one is 31 and one is 33.

4 MS. HUNTER: Thank you.

5 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Ms. McFetridge, questions?

6 MS. McFETRIDGE: So do you know where this and
7 why this growth is happening, and how prepared will
8 you be going forward? This is just a one-year
9 waiver.

10 SUPT. ASHLEY: Right. I think -- hopefully,
11 we'll be able to find an additional kindergarten
12 teacher. And if our numbers -- when we started in
13 August, around August 1st, there were -- we only had
14 about 90 students. And by the time we got to August
15 15th, we had grown to right at 120, 121. And then
16 after school started we grew another seven to eight
17 students.

18 At the high school, I think we can accommodate
19 that in the future. I think the kindergarten will be
20 the one that will be the most challenging. Again, we
21 don't want to hire a teacher and end up having 10
22 kids in each classroom. We want to try to use the --
23 our taxpayers' money as wisely as we can.

24 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Questions, Mr. Sutton?

25 MR. SUTTON: No questions.

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1 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Mr. Wood?

2 MR. WOOD: No.

3 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Ms. Saum?

4 MS. SAUM: This waiver is just for one year;
5 correct?

6 SUPT. ASHLEY: Yes.

7 MS. SAUM: Okay. Thank you. That's what I
8 wanted to make sure of.

9 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Mr. Henderson?

10 MR. HENDERSON: No questions.

11 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Ms. Newton, I see that
12 you've joined us. Any questions?

13 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: I had a question on high
14 school. What support are you giving the high school
15 teachers with -- when you start getting 34 or 35 kids
16 in a classroom it gets pretty intense. What support
17 are you giving your high school teachers?

18 SUPT. ASHLEY: Well, they're veteran teachers,
19 and so -- I'm looking at my numbers. As of today,
20 I've got two with 31 students and one teacher with 33
21 students. So, and we've got an incredible team that
22 comes and supports our teachers. Our Director of
23 Assessment/Accountability is there to support. I've
24 spoken with the teachers; it's not created any
25 issues. It's just an additional three bodies at this

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1 moment.

2 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Is -- does this waiver
3 [Zoom audio disruption] the number of kids that you
4 would put in a classroom in high school?

5 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Ms. Newton, can you repeat
6 that?

7 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yes. Does this waiver have an
8 upper limit as far as the number of kids that you
9 would put in a high school classroom?

10 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Dr. Sutherlin, maybe you
11 could speak to that?

12 DR. SUTHERLIN: The district would need to
13 designate what their cap would be.

14 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay.

15 SUPT. ASHLEY: We requested four over in the --
16 in our letter.

17 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: I did have a question, as
18 well. It said in your letter that some teachers were
19 teaching during their prep period. Are they being
20 compensated for that additional time?

21 SUPT. ASHLEY: They are. Yes, ma'am.

22 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay. And then for the
23 kindergarten, is there -- are there paraprofessionals
24 who are part of the day in any of those classrooms?

25 SUPT. ASHLEY: There are. And we have a current

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1 paraprofessional that is in two of those classes, but
2 there's not one in one of the other classrooms.

3 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: And are there any concerns
4 about that by the Principal?

5 SUPT. ASHLEY: Well, we've spoken to teachers
6 and the teachers were okay with not having another in
7 there. If that changes, then we'll try to find
8 someone. We've been looking for someone since school
9 started and have not been able to find somebody that
10 we felt quality to be in there with the teachers.
11 And we'll continue to look.

12 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Any more questions from
13 the Board?

14 MR. WOOD: I have a question.

15 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Yes.

16 MR. WOOD: Just in general -- this isn't related
17 specifically to Heber Springs -- but next October I
18 won't remember that Heber Springs requested this
19 waiver this year. Would you tell us if someone has
20 requested the same waiver multiple years in rote?
21 Because I think that what Ms. McFetridge brought up
22 is a good point.

23 DR. SUTHERLIN: Yes. So our process involves
24 coaching them through the process of writing their
25 standards waivers. So if they have already requested

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1 one the previous year, we let them know that ahead of
 2 time. And so, you know, even when we have
 3 superintendents change out we keep track of that and
 4 so we can always go back and say, you know, "You
 5 requested this last year; your district can't request
 6 it again."

7 MR. WOOD: Okay.

8 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Thank you.

9 Any more questions?

10 We'll open the floor for a motion then.

11 MR. HENDERSON: I make a motion, the request for
 12 Standards for Accreditation for Heber Springs School.

13 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: A motion by Mr. Henderson.

14 Is there a second?

15 MR. SUTTON: Second.

16 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Second by Mr. Sutton.

17 All in favor say aye.

18 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

19 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Any opposed?

20 The motion passes.

21 SUPT. ASHLEY: Thank you.

22 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Thank you, Dr. Ashley.

23 6. STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION CONVERSION - ACT 1240 WAIVERS

24 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Next, Item Number Six, we
 25 have a report on Act 1240 waivers. I don't know

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1 who's coming. Lori. Thank you.

2 MS. FRENO: Thank you. Lori Freno.

3 In May of this year, 2022, we had a new set of
4 standards for accreditation take effect. Prior to
5 this change, we had one standard which encompassed
6 both Class Size and Teaching Load; that was 1-A.5.
7 Now, with the new set, we split that up so that Class
8 Size is 1-A.5, Teaching Load is 1-A.6. You have been
9 given a list of all of the school districts that we
10 are asking for you to give both a waiver of 1-A.5 and
11 1-A.6 under the new standards. It's basically a
12 conversion process, because we want to make sure that
13 all the school districts are getting the waivers that
14 they had prior to the Standards for Accreditation
15 change. So this is more of a technical thing.

16 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Questions of the Board?

17 Dr. Hill? Ms. Hunter? Ms. McFetridge?

18 Mr. Sutton?

19 MR. SUTTON: No, ma'am.

20 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Mr. Wood?

21 MR. WOOD: No.

22 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Ms. Saum?

23 MS. SAUM: No.

24 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Mr. Henderson?

25 MR. HENDERSON: No questions.

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1 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Ms. Newton?

2 MS. NEWTON: No.

3 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: I did write down a
4 question. So in the future, they will have -- the
5 district will have to come and request separate
6 waivers for Class Size and Teaching Load?

7 MS. FRENO: Yes. Yes, that's correct. And as a
8 matter of fact, every Act 1240 waiver that has come
9 before you after May 2nd, they have done that. So
10 we're currently, you know, splitting it. We started
11 splitting them up the day the rules became effective.
12 So this list that you're provided, this is only for
13 school districts -- or schools that requested that
14 waiver prior to that.

15 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Before that?

16 MS. FRENO: Uh-huh.

17 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay. And when they're up
18 for renewal there will be conversation about those at
19 that point?

20 MS. FRENO: Yes. Yes.

21 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: And some of them I imagine
22 they didn't actually want both of them; they just
23 wanted one of them?

24 MS. FRENO: Probably you're right. But what we
25 did is went back and looked at everything that we

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1 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Any opposed?

2 MS. FRENO: Thank you.

3 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: The motion passes.

4 7. STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION CONVERSION - OPEN ENROLLMENT
5 AND DISTRICT CONVERSION CHARTER SCHOOL WAIVERS

6 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Now we have Mr. Coy for
7 the Open Enrollment and District Conversion Charter
8 Schools.

9 MR. COY: Yes. Thank you, Dr. Moore, Board
10 Members.

11 Similar to what -- I'm Thomas Coy with the
12 Charter School Office.

13 Similar to what Ms. Freno just presented to you,
14 it's a very similar situation with our charter
15 schools. These waivers were -- this split of the
16 waivers was granted or was approved by the Charter
17 Authorizing Panel last month. So our request of you
18 today is to not review for the list of schools --
19 list of charter schools that are in the agenda. So
20 the Charter Authorizing Panel agreed that we should
21 split these waivers and made that decision at their
22 last meeting. We're asking you today to either
23 review or not review, and we're requesting that you
24 not review.

25 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay. Questions down to

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1 my left? Questions to the right?

2 Mr. Henderson, questions?

3 MR. HENDERSON: No questions.

4 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Ms. Newton, any questions?

5 MS. NEWTON: No.

6 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Open for a motion then.

7 MR. WOOD: I'll move to add Standard 1-A.6 to
8 the waivers granted to various open enrollment and
9 district conversion charter schools on the list
10 provided.

11 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: We have a motion -- oh,
12 actually -- yes, so this is where you can explain it.

13 MR. COY: This is where the Charter Authorizing
14 Panel made this decision to approve these waivers,
15 and then the Board's decision will be either to
16 review the Panel's decision or not review the Panel's
17 decision.

18 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: So by not reviewing we are
19 agreeing --

20 MR. COY: You are agreeing with the Charter
21 Authorizing Panel's decision.

22 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: -- with their
23 recommendation, which is what Mr. Wood just stated.

24 MR. COY: Yes. Yes, that's correct.

25 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: This gets technical.

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1 Okay.

2 So would you like to review or not review?

3 MR. WOOD: I'd like to withdraw my first motion.

4 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay.

5 MR. WOOD: I move to not review the decision --

6 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Yes.

7 MR. WOOD: -- of the Charter Authorizing Panel.

8 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: That's great.

9 There's a motion on the floor. Is there a
10 second?

11 MS. McFETRIDGE: I'll second it.

12 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Second by Ms. McFetridge.
13 All in favor say aye.

14 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

15 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Any opposed?

16 Motion passes.

17 MR. COY: Thank you.

18 8. CONSIDERATION FOR FINAL APPROVAL: DESE RULES GOVERNING THE
19 SUCCEED SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

20 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: We are rolling through
21 these. We have Item Number 8, Consideration for
22 Final Approval of the Rules Governing the Succeed
23 Scholarship Program. Ms. Salas-Ford.

24 MS. SALAS-FORD: Thank you. Courtney Salas-Ford
25 for the Department.

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1 These are the rules governing the Succeed
2 Scholarship Program. The State Board approved these
3 rules for public comment. It states in the agenda
4 item that no public comments were received. However,
5 I should clarify there was one comment received from
6 the School Boards Association that there was an extra
7 "d" on a word. So, almost made it away with no
8 comments. But other than that, no substantive
9 changes were made and we are asking for your final
10 approval.

11 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay. Questions to my
12 left? Questions, Mr. Sutton, Mr. Wood?

13 Okay. Mr. Henderson, questions?

14 MR. HENDERSON: No questions.

15 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Ms. Newton?

16 MS. NEWTON: No.

17 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay, no questions. And
18 this is for final approval. So the floor is open for
19 a motion.

20 MS. McFETRIDGE: I'll make the motion that we
21 approve the final rules on the Succeed Scholarship
22 Program.

23 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: We have a motion by Ms.
24 McFetridge. Is there a second?

25 MR. SUTTON: Second.

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1 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Second by Mr. Sutton.

2 All in favor say aye.

3 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

4 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Any opposed?

5 The motion passes.

6 MS. SALAS-FORD: Thank you.

7 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Thank you.

8 9. FOR PUBLIC COMMENT RELEASE: DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY AND
9 SECONDARY EDUCATION RULES GOVERNING SCHOOL COUNSELING
10 PROGRAMS

11 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Next, Item 9, we have
12 Rules for Public Comment Release. Ms. James.

13 MS. JAMES: I was going to say is it morning or
14 afternoon. Good morning. My name is Whitney James,
15 with the Department.

16 These are the rules governing the School
17 Counseling Programs, and we are requesting that the
18 Board release the rules pending Governor's office
19 approval. I'm happy to answer any questions. And I
20 also have Andrea Fortner and Ms. Lupe' here to answer
21 questions, as well.

22 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay. Down to my left,
23 Ms. Hunter? Ms. McFetridge? Mr. Sutton?

24 MR. SUTTON: No, ma'am.

25 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Mr. Wood, Ms. Saum?

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1 Okay. Mr. Henderson?

2 MR. HENDERSON: No questions.

3 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Ms. Newton?

4 MS. NEWTON: No.

5 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: I do have a question. And
6 so these rules are totally new?

7 MS. JAMES: Yes, ma'am.

8 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Was counseling in a
9 different section of rules before, or did the law
10 require a new set of rules?

11 MS. JAMES: Actually, the School Counseling
12 Improvement Act was passed in 2019, and we just had
13 another act that gave us the authority to promulgate
14 rules in the 2021 session.

15 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay.

16 MS. JAMES: So this is all brand-new.

17 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay. It seems like -- so
18 we're releasing these for public comment. Is there
19 going to be a way to get all the counseling
20 associations and others -- get this out there so that
21 they can input their comments, particularly being a
22 new rule?

23 MS. JAMES: Yes, ma'am. There was stakeholder
24 feedback involved in the drafting of the rules.

25 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: That's great.

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1 Any more questions?

2 MS. McFETRIDGE: We didn't have these rules
3 attached to our agenda, or I didn't. Did you?

4 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: She didn't hand them out.
5 Because when they're -- when it's for public comment
6 release we can't -- they can't put it on the public
7 page.

8 MS. McFETRIDGE: Yeah. Sorry.

9 MS. JAMES: Yes, ma'am. They haven't been
10 approved by the Governor's office yet. So we sent
11 them via One-Drive link.

12 MS. McFETRIDGE: So if I have any questions I
13 can just contact you?

14 MS. JAMES: Yes, ma'am.

15 MS. McFETRIDGE: Okay. Thank you.

16 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Any more questions?

17 Okay. So the motion on the floor would be
18 approval or not approval, depending on Governor's
19 office approval?

20 MS. JAMES: Yes, ma'am. It would be approve the
21 rules -- and the motion will be to approve the rules
22 -- approve to release the rules for public comment,
23 pending Governor's office approval.

24 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay. The floor is open
25 for a motion.

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1 MR. SUTTON: I'll make the motion.

2 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Motion by Mr. Sutton.

3 Is there a second?

4 MS. HUNTER: Second.

5 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Second by Ms. Hunter.

6 All in favor say aye.

7 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

8 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Any opposed?

9 Motion passes.

10 MS. JAMES: Thank you so much.

11 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Thank you.

12 10. EDUCATION OMBUDSMAN REPORT

13 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: And then, do we want to go
14 ahead and do this report and be done with our
15 morning? So this, our last item on our Action Agenda
16 is the Education Ombudsman Report, I'm reading. So
17 this would close out our Action Agenda.

18 SECRETARY KEY: And this is a new report,
19 because this is a new position and -- under statute.
20 And we're -- Carol has been very busy, especially in
21 the last several months. But she's doing great work.
22 And I think her work really is -- she's doing a good
23 job establishing what we weren't really sure, you
24 know, what this position needed to be doing, what the
25 role was. The role of an Ombudsman is not -- was not

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1 clearly defined. I mean, the law is clearly defined
2 as to what, you know, their responsibilities were,
3 but how you do it is what becomes the question. So,
4 Carol has done a great job and I appreciate the work
5 that she's done putting this report together.

6 MS. HERINGER: Now I do have a presentation that
7 I sent out. You all do have it on your agenda. So
8 if you want to pull that up so you can look at it,
9 that's fine. And so I will kind of walk through how
10 I put this together.

11 I did do one thing -- I do want to kind of
12 introduce myself first, before I start talking about
13 reading in Arkansas. I had originally kind of put
14 these slides in order. As you look through the Right
15 to Read legislation, I had kind of put them in order,
16 hitting each point. The Education Ombudsman does
17 come at the tail-end of that, and so that's where I
18 had put those slides originally. But then as I was
19 thinking about it, I thought these -- this group of
20 people needs to know who I am.

21 The first thing I want to say is, in 2017, when
22 I was asked or presented with an opportunity to
23 become a trainer for RISE Academy, I never, ever
24 dreamed that it would lead me to be addressing the
25 State Board of Arkansas. And so, at any rate, it's

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1 an honor to be here. It is almost straight-up noon,
2 so good afternoon-ish right now.

3 Okay. So my name is Carol Heringer. I am
4 almost a year into this position. I started November
5 1st of last year, kind of been working back. Prior
6 to that, I was a RISE Regional Specialist for the
7 State for about three years. Prior to that, I worked
8 at North Central Co-op. Prior to that, I worked
9 about 17 years in public education, taught many grade
10 levels from -- not traditional kindergarten, I taught
11 ALE K-1-2; I taught 1st grade; I taught 2nd grade
12 ALE; 2nd, 3rd, and 4th; I taught 4-5-6; and so, 7-8.
13 I have kind of a -- my career has been blessed with
14 lots of different opportunities. I have also served
15 as an Instructional Facilitator. So when this
16 position became available I was interested and I
17 applied and started November 1st of this past year.
18 And as Secretary Key said, this -- it is a brand-new
19 position, so we are kind of finding a place and
20 figuring out how this is going to roll forward.

21 I do want to say that as I kind of move through
22 each of these sections and talk about the law, please
23 -- I will kind of pause when we get to the end of
24 one. Please ask questions. I also value your input
25 on -- this report is part of the legislation yearly

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1 report. And so as we get to the end of this, if
2 there are things that you would like to know that I
3 did not include, I welcome that input.

4 Okay. So I want to first talk about kind of the
5 timeline. This will be an early slide, the timeline
6 of the reading legislation. We first passed the
7 dyslexia law, and when that came about we began
8 looking at screening students for dyslexia. It
9 became apparent pretty quickly that we had holes in
10 our core instruction. And we had many students who
11 may show markers or characteristics of dyslexia, but
12 it was because we didn't have a strong core. And a
13 lot of that was based on the fact that in teacher
14 education programs we did not learn how to teach
15 reading. We learned some things, but there were gaps
16 in our own knowledge. Then came about, in 2017, was
17 what we call the Right to Read Act and that was --
18 and we'll kind of walk through that in just a minute.
19 Then we had Act 83 in 2019. There are a couple of
20 other things. In 2017, we had Act 940 which we had
21 to begin reporting to parents where are your students
22 in reading progress. Then we came upon Act 83 which
23 was to ask districts to, as part of their school
24 improvement plan, to do a literacy plan to show how
25 are we moving forward with literacy. At that same

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1 year we also began looking at -- there it is -- we
2 began looking at the licensure requirements for
3 teachers and beginning to look at testing
4 requirements that were supportive of reading
5 instruction. We extended the timeline. As you all
6 know, we started the actual deadline -- original
7 deadline would have been the fall of 2021. We
8 extended that two years due to Covid, because that
9 just kind of upset everybody's applecart. And then,
10 finally, in 2021, was when the Education Ombudsman
11 became part of the Right to Read.

12 So the first thing that we did, the law in the
13 beginning requires professional development for
14 teachers to fill in those gaps that I have mentioned.
15 And this was based on the Science of Reading, which
16 is a body of research that has been collected over
17 the past about four years. And what we learned is
18 that there was a gap between the researchers and
19 practice in the classroom. And so it was not new
20 information, but it was information that we had
21 sporadically utilized in our instruction.

22 So the first thing that happened -- or the first
23 part of the law was that teachers participate in
24 professional development to learn about scientific
25 reading instruction, so they had a completion of a

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1 pathway to proficiency. The first part of that was
2 the learning portion of it. If you are a -- and
3 we'll talk a little bit about this, but all educators
4 have to have an awareness of the Science of Reading
5 and how the brain learns to read, because it impacts
6 every teacher in every classroom, every student in
7 every school in Arkansas. But certain teachers who
8 are more involved in explicit instruction have to
9 have a proficiency.

10 So as a result of that, there were different
11 pathways to that learning that were put together. Of
12 course, RISE Arkansas was developed and that is RISE
13 K-2, which is for K-2 teachers; RISE 3-6 is for 3-6
14 teachers. Both of those can be utilized for special
15 education teachers, K-12. But those are only two of
16 the pathways. When that training first happened,
17 there were only 40 trainers because, you know, it was
18 a huge undertaking. And so those 40 trainers, that
19 had limited cohorts of 25, could not encompass all
20 the teachers and all the people who needed to be
21 trained. And so that is the reason that many
22 different -- one of the reasons that many different
23 pathways were -- there was a stipulation, there was a
24 process that people could apply to be a pathway, and
25 so we now have 22 different pathways. There is -- on

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1 the DESE website you can see all of those. There are
2 -- originally, for awareness there were some videos
3 put together, some very good videos that I hope that
4 we will have access to. Because there were a lot of
5 experts in the field that collaborated with Arkansas,
6 with this and they created these videos. Secretary
7 Key and Stacy Smith participated in those. And so
8 that is hopefully a collection that will be around
9 for a long time. That was our original awareness
10 pathway, but there are six additional pathways. So
11 we wanted to provide a lot of -- you know, a choice
12 to schools to go on the -- you know, different ways
13 that they could meet this regulation and law.

14 So if we go to the next slide, since that time
15 we have -- now because there are other pathways
16 besides RISE Arkansas, we cannot -- we don't know
17 specifically what pathways different schools have
18 taken. The schools know; they keep that together.
19 But as far as our RISE Arkansas, we, you know,
20 estimate about -- and the reason we don't have solid,
21 solid numbers is because of all the different
22 trainers. And there are now 240 different trainers.
23 They would have to keep up with and turn in -- and
24 they have done much of that. But we estimate that
25 there are about 9500 who have been trained in K-2

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1 RISE Academy and about 11,000 who have been trained
2 in 3-6 RISE Academy. We have 240 from those 40, so
3 we have trained 200 additional K-2 trainers, and then
4 we have trained 270 3-6 RISE Academy trainers. Those
5 are our educational cooperative literacy specialists.
6 And then also we've opened it up to districts, and
7 many districts have taken the -- have taken advantage
8 of having people trained in-house.

9 One thing that I would always say, and I do say,
10 to RISE trainers, I hope that school districts
11 recognize the value of being a trainer for RISE,
12 because that brings with it the ability to do any of
13 the Science of Reading training that we are
14 continuing to put together. And because we are
15 coming to the deadline, we are slowing down on
16 creating those trainer-trainers. We probably will --
17 I'm not certain if we will completely stop, but that
18 is a very valuable thing to have on your resume if
19 you indeed are a RISE trainer.

20 Another part of that, as we move toward
21 proficiency, is certifying assessors to be able to
22 determine if a teacher is proficient in the Science of
23 Reading. And so in order to be an assessor, a
24 certified assessor, you have to be in your capacity
25 -- in the capacity of your job, you have to be able

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1 to evaluate teachers. You also have to complete one
2 of the learning pathways for proficiency, and then
3 complete two additional days of assessor training.
4 So, currently, we have about 1250 certified
5 assessors. Many others, about 650, are in process of
6 working on that, and that is changing daily. That is
7 part of the data that I am collecting, is keeping
8 track of what buildings have head principals who are
9 assessor trained, because that's very impactful. And
10 we'll talk about that in a little bit.

11 Arkansas IDEAS modules, those were the videos
12 that I mentioned earlier. We have had 347,334
13 completions of some -- of those modules. Now I will
14 say that was not my pathway, but I've watched those
15 several different times. So that's not each
16 individual person who is assessed, but that is the
17 number of people who are taking advantage of that
18 good information.

19 Any questions about that first part?

20 Okay. So that was the training that was to fill
21 the gap of the knowledge that teachers needed.

22 That professional development continues to be
23 developed because, as part of the school-based
24 literacy plans, they have to create those literacy
25 plans based on the needs of the district and then

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1 also based on the Science of Reading. So that is why
2 we are continuing to develop trainings based on the
3 needs of our districts and supportive of the Science
4 of Reading.

5 Although things don't change a lot, particularly
6 in K-2, there are some things that we are learning
7 about what we call the Top of the Road, which is more
8 the comprehension and vocabulary. So 3-6, we do have
9 more trainings that we have brought out of that.

10 So if you go to the next slide, just this past
11 summer we have 30 statewide trainings available. And
12 so these are the trainings that are offered to all of
13 the cooperative specialists, all of the district --
14 the people who are trained. And these are statewide
15 trainings that we house and can be presented, as
16 needed.

17 I looked at all of the cooperative websites and
18 there were 74 additional trainings that those
19 trainers developed to meet the needs of their
20 districts, per those literacy plans, this summer.
21 And so, roughly, 7,000 -- a little over 7,000
22 educators this summer attended the trainings in our
23 cooperatives this summer. So that is just at the
24 cooperatives. I know schools have a lot of
25 trainings, but this was what we can pull together

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1 from ESE Works. And so we still are training and
2 continuing to grow our knowledge in the Science of
3 Reading.

4 Okay. If you'll go to the next slide -- so,
5 proficiency and awareness, this was kind of the
6 second part. The first part of Right to Read talks
7 about the professional development and how we have to
8 continue that. The second part is the requirement
9 that teachers in K-6 who teach a core class --
10 English, English Language Arts, Math, Science, Social
11 Studies -- must demonstrate proficiency in the
12 Science of Reading. Also in the proficiency portion
13 are any K-12 special education teachers; added by
14 rule later, English Language Learner teachers K-6,
15 and then reading specialists. There is a designation
16 on licensure of a reading specialist and if you are
17 practicing as a reading specialist you have to
18 demonstrate proficiency.

19 So, in order to demonstrate proficiency -- and
20 so, aside from those all other educators have to
21 demonstrate awareness. Proficiency is part of
22 standards. We are asking, by October 2023, that we
23 are aware of all school buildings and the proficiency
24 status of their teachers who teach reading.

25 Awareness is tied to licensure and renewing license,

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1 and so that is -- by December of 2023, when you renew
2 your license you need to have demonstration that you
3 have completed awareness training.

4 If you'll go to the next slide, so there are two
5 phases to demonstrating proficiency. One is that you
6 go through one of those learning pathways that we
7 talked about; RISE Academy is one of them, but then
8 there are 20 others that you can go through. You
9 have to complete that pathway. You cannot mix
10 pathways. That's one of the things people will say,
11 "Well, I've done, you know, three days. Could I do
12 this?" We have to have one complete pathway of
13 learning. Then, there are several different ways
14 that you can become -- demonstrate your proficiency.
15 One is by passing the Pearson Foundations of Reading
16 assessment; the other one is to be observed by a
17 certified Science of Reading assessor.

18 One of the things that I looked at -- and this
19 number has changed a little bit since I -- because
20 we're continually adding assessors. About 66% of our
21 K-6 Principals of Record, the head principal or the
22 vice principal of our -- any building that has K-6
23 core teachers in it, about 66% of those buildings
24 have certified assessors. That is so powerful
25 because those assessors and your principal knowing

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1 everything that's going on in the classroom and
2 guiding that work is so valuable to those schools.
3 So I was very pleased about that.

4 Because in our secondary buildings only special
5 education teachers have to demonstrate proficiency,
6 there are fewer. And I think that that is going to
7 continue to grow, but right now about 19% of our
8 buildings that are 7-12 have certified assessors as
9 their head principal.

10 So those are the two ways for teachers to be
11 considered proficient. However, there are some other
12 proficiency pathways. If you are a CALT, which is a
13 Certified Academic Language Therapist, you are
14 considered proficient. If you are a RISE TOT, you
15 are considered proficient.

16 Then we also have -- there's part of the law
17 that looks at our college graduates. And if you go
18 on the website, you can look at one of the
19 requirements is that our educator preparation
20 programs put on their website the courses that lead
21 to that learning. So that is considered also a
22 pathway. In order to -- so if you graduate from one
23 of those programs, you get the learning and then you
24 have to pass -- if you are K-6, K-12 SPED, you have
25 to pass the Foundations of Reading assessment, which

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1 also is that second part of proficiency. And so that
2 is the way that we will begin bringing day-one ready
3 educators as we begin to move forward in this
4 deadline.

5 Any questions about proficiency and awareness?

6 MS. McFETRIDGE: What do you do if a teacher
7 that's gone through all the training just doesn't
8 pass the assessment? Is there help and support --

9 MS. HERINGER: Absolutely.

10 MS. McFETRIDGE: -- for that individual?

11 MS. HERINGER: Absolutely. In fact, we have
12 worked together with the Licensure and Education
13 Effectiveness to develop a tutoring for Foundations
14 of Reading, and we're continuing to work with that.
15 The test is -- it is one -- and I was involved in
16 that originally, and the test is one of great
17 stamina. It is a lot of reading. And so a lot of
18 the preparation -- the teachers may have the
19 knowledge but just the format of it and working
20 through the application problems -- so we are doing
21 several things to try to support. Developing --
22 we've got the tutoring that's still available once a
23 month. We also are going to work on developing kind
24 of a boot camp for the educator preparation programs
25 and they will be involved in this to kind of get

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1 their students prepared to take the test. So there
2 is -- that is definitely part of what we're working
3 on with that aspect.

4 Anything else?

5 MR. WOOD: How long would you say -- how many
6 hours would it take for an educator to become
7 proficient?

8 MS. HERINGER: As in being assessed?

9 MR. WOOD: I wouldn't say assessment. But from,
10 you know, the first time they walk into a PD to -- on
11 their pathway to proficiency until the time that they
12 complete the PD and are, you know, then waiting on
13 their assessment, how many hours?

14 MS. HERINGER: This is just -- would be just by
15 opinion. No less than a year's worth of practice.

16 MR. WOOD: But what is that?

17 MS. HERINGER: I mean, however many days we're
18 in school and having your literacy, depending on
19 working every day on that. But it is something that
20 -- it is not a broad -- once you begin to learn, you
21 realize that the focus -- that there are certain
22 things that you focus on. But it is for many
23 teachers, including myself, when I first started
24 learning this -- it takes a bit to kind of get the
25 information, that knowledge in place, and then be

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1 able to go in. I was saying to somebody yesterday we
2 have knowledge, we have practice, but our clientele
3 are children --

4 MR. WOOD: Yeah.

5 MS. HERINGER: -- and they are different and
6 they are wonderful and they are messy. And so it
7 takes work to do that. So that is why, you know,
8 ideally, we want someone to work on the learning --
9 and there is a coaching element to RISE so that the
10 trainers then begin to go in and support teachers in
11 implementing little pieces of that. So I would say
12 at a minimum, you know, continually practicing, going
13 through a coaching cycle, you know, kind of seeing
14 how this works -- and, of course, some people are
15 more natural with it, they have more background
16 knowledge. But that would just be my opinion on
17 that.

18 MR. WOOD: Would it be possible for some of us
19 who might be interested to see the training --

20 MS. HERINGER: Oh, absolutely.

21 MR. WOOD: -- in practice, at the various stages
22 of it? Because I think your answer kind of -- might
23 even illustrate that I might not know what I'm
24 talking about here when I even ask these questions.
25 And so I would like to learn more about what this is.

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1 MS. HERINGER: Yes. Well, and I know that there
2 have been State Board members before who have
3 requested the same thing --

4 MR. WOOD: Yeah.

5 MS. HERINGER: -- "could we sit in on RISE
6 training."

7 MR. WOOD: Right.

8 MS. HERINGER: And that absolutely would be
9 something that we could do. And so I will look to
10 see what might be an opportunity for you to do that.

11 MR. WOOD: Okay. Thank you.

12 MS. HERINGER: Other questions?

13 MS. HUNTER: Yes. So one of the pathways to
14 proficiency is through the educator's formal
15 education, like when they're in college.

16 MS. HERINGER: Yes.

17 MS. HUNTER: And looking at the chart, it looks
18 like it's a very small number of those educators
19 today?

20 MS. HERINGER: Yes. And it's only after --
21 because this -- when this rolled out in 2017, it was
22 -- there were several years before those graduates --
23 and I believe it was 2021 --

24 MS. HUNTER: Okay.

25 MS. HERINGER: -- before they would -- the

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1 programs would be able to incorporate the things that
2 they needed. And so, now, that will begin to be a
3 viable pathway, whereas in the past we did have
4 graduates who did have the coursework who took
5 Foundations of Reading. But because it's been kind
6 of rolling in these past few years, that's why there
7 are not many.

8 MS. HUNTER: Right. So maybe we'll see some of
9 that accelerate a little bit.

10 MS. HERINGER: Yes. Yes.

11 MS. HUNTER: But -- so in your opinion -- I
12 mean, like -- and I know we're not about higher
13 education here, but I mean they are -- we are
14 dependent on them.

15 MS. HERINGER: Absolutely.

16 MS. HUNTER: So are the Arkansas schools, like,
17 buying into this concept and they're teaching it and
18 making it available to our future educators?

19 SECRETARY KEY: They have to.

20 MS. HUNTER: Agreed.

21 SECRETARY KEY: Yes, because -- well, I mean
22 literally they have to because we approve their
23 programs for licensure.

24 MS. HUNTER: So they really have to.

25 SECRETARY KEY: Yes.

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1 MS. HUNTER: Okay.

2 SECRETARY KEY: So, yes. So they have to; and,
3 two, they are onboard with us. I mean I won't say
4 that everybody jumped onboard immediately. But I
5 will say that now we've gone through the rough patch,
6 the implementation curve, and now it's accepted that
7 this is how we do business in Arkansas.

8 MS. HUNTER: Uh-huh. Thank you.

9 MS. HERINGER: Yes. And as a matter of fact, I
10 am participating in a Zoom meeting with the literacy
11 people from Higher Ed. tomorrow afternoon. And so we
12 are -- we are collaborating. But as Secretary Key
13 said, it has been -- it's kind of grown as we have
14 gone through the law.

15 Okay. So go to the next slide. This
16 information is what I have pulled together. In 2020,
17 I believe, we first launched or it went live in
18 eFinance, I believe -- and I don't know a whole lot
19 about that because I have no access to it -- where
20 school districts could begin to go in and code their
21 educators with proficiency or awareness. And so this
22 graph represents what is in there so far. We do
23 recognize there are probably -- there's probably some
24 double-clicks. I don't know exactly. We don't know
25 how accurate this data is. So what I want to say --

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1 and this is going to -- this is a big push for this
2 year, in that we are working to -- we want to provide
3 more information and clarity about exactly how you
4 code and exactly how that works. We also are going
5 to work to kind of tie course codes to proficiency so
6 that when -- in eSchool, when a teacher is tied to a
7 course code it will automatically say this teacher
8 needs to be proficient. That will help provide some
9 guidance. What I do want you to see from this is
10 that the majority of people who are demonstrating
11 proficiency -- and so, this is looking at that Phase
12 2, which is demonstration of proficiency -- or most
13 of them are being assessed by an assessor. Many of
14 them also are -- the blue, the darker blue is the
15 assessment, Foundations of Reading assessment. I
16 also want you to notice that we have the highest
17 number of our kindergarten teachers who have already
18 been deemed proficient. We did start K-2 RISE
19 Academy first. And so seeing how that kind of drops
20 down to 6th grade is not surprising. But I really
21 wanted to present this, mainly to show you just what
22 we could learn from this, and this is going to be
23 something we are working on this year because this is
24 the final year before the deadline, as Cycle 2 ends
25 -- I believe it's October of 2023.

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1 Any questions about this?

2 We expect a lot of questions from districts and
3 we are going to put together some documentation to
4 help guide them through this.

5 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Questions?

6 MR. WOOD: I asked you in an email the other day
7 how this -- how these numbers would compare to the,
8 like, total number of kindergarten educators versus
9 total number of 1st grade educators. And I know that
10 you're not able to give just an exact number on that,
11 and that's fine. But would it -- will that be
12 possible for us to see, you know, what our -- what
13 we're achieving?

14 MS. HERINGER: What happens is some of these
15 teachers who -- they may have been coded when they
16 were a kindergarten teacher, and then now they're a
17 3rd grade teacher or 2nd grade teacher.

18 MR. WOOD: Okay.

19 MS. HERINGER: So that is hard to determine. I
20 do have -- I'm trying to collect as much data as I
21 can on the number of kindergarten teachers. After
22 next year, I think -- and when it's tied to course
23 codes I think we'll be able to see that a little bit
24 better. But it is -- I don't know that it will ever
25 be, well, pristine in what we can see.

1 Does that answer your question?

2 MR. WOOD: Yeah, I guess so. If you had to
3 guess, how many kindergarten teachers do we have in
4 Arkansas public schools?

5 MS. HERINGER: Well, I'm going to -- this is
6 rough, and I do have this somewhere -- probably 3,000
7 --

8 MR. WOOD: Okay.

9 MS. HERINGER: -- or less. I'm not a hundred-
10 percent sure.

11 MR. WOOD: Well, then we're doing pretty good.

12 MS. HERINGER: We are. I mean, I do think that
13 we are. And what this demonstrates is our districts
14 are trying to do what the law is asking. I see that
15 in all of the work that I'm doing in moving around
16 districts in the state. They are trying to do what
17 we are asking, and so that is encouraging.

18 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: I have an additional
19 question. If a teacher is in a school where there is
20 not an assessor, do they -- are they required -- I
21 mean, are they having to choose to do the assessment
22 themselves or are co-ops working to provide assessors
23 and that kind of thing?

24 MS. HERINGER: Most every district has an
25 assessor and needs to have an assessor.

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1 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay.

2 MS. HERINGER: Now, we have some very small
3 districts that that may be one person who assesses
4 everybody. But that needs to be an option because
5 the Foundations of Reading, it has -- you have to pay
6 to take that test.

7 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay. But teachers are
8 presented -- every teacher has that option to do one
9 or the other?

10 MS. HERINGER: I suppose, yes, they could choose
11 to take the test rather than be assessed.

12 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay.

13 MS. HERINGER: But the assessment will -- it
14 ties in and will eventually, after they are deemed
15 proficient, be part of their test evaluation, teacher
16 evaluation. So it's -- you know, they will one day
17 be assessed for their -- you know, their instruction
18 in the classroom.

19 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Thank you.

20 MS. HERINGER: But not necessarily for the
21 proficiency, per the law.

22 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay. And I did want to
23 take a note -- it is 12:30. Are we okay finishing
24 this and then doing lunch, or do we need a break in
25 the middle? I just wanted to check-in with the Board

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1 and see. This is the last action item that --

2 MS. SMITH: She's about halfway.

3 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay.

4 MS. HERINGER: I don't want anybody to get
5 hungry.

6 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Well, we have different
7 schedules. Okay. Thank you.

8 MS. HERINGER: All right. So on the next slide,
9 just as the awareness, is there are about --
10 currently, about 12,800 educators who have been
11 deemed aware. And that does -- that is a requirement
12 for getting your license renewed after December 2023.

13 Okay. So if we look at the educator preparation
14 programs, we've already talked about these a little
15 bit. And so this is where we are going, so that we
16 can begin to have educators coming in who are
17 prepared.

18 If you'll go to the next slide, this is
19 information provided by our assessment team. And
20 looking at the three-year first-time pass rate -- you
21 all may have seen this chart already. And it just
22 kind of shows there was a dip, you know, during the
23 19-20, but everybody, you know, began bounding back
24 20-21. And so this was for the Foundations of
25 Reading 90. That test has been revamped and is now

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1 the 190, and so this is the first time pass rate for
2 21-22 for all of the institutions. Y'all can just
3 take a minute to look at that.

4 MR. WOOD: So -- I'm really sorry -- what is a
5 three-year first-time pass rate? What does that
6 mean?

7 MS. HERINGER: That was looking at three years
8 of data for students who were exiting educator
9 preparation programs --

10 MR. WOOD: Okay.

11 MS. HERINGER: -- and passing the Foundations of
12 Reading test on the first attempt. Right.

13 Okay. The next section that we wanted to talk
14 about as we move through the law was program
15 evaluation and approval. Beginning in the 20-21
16 school year, we were charged with creating a rubric
17 to evaluate programs to determine did they support
18 the Science of Reading. Those were -- originally, it
19 was an approved list of materials, resources,
20 curriculum programs that were supported by the
21 Science of Reading. We did that. We worked
22 diligently through Covid reviewing programs. It was
23 arduous, I will tell you that. And we do have a list
24 that is on the DESE website of approved programs.

25 The rubrics were designed based on the science

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1 and also based on the law, the wording of the law, so
2 that we could demonstrate that these programs were,
3 you know, supportive of the Science of Reading.
4 Since that time, we have partnered with Ed Reports,
5 which is a nonprofit organization that has a very
6 good vetting process for core programs. And so we
7 have -- all of our teams that participated in program
8 review have been trained on the rubric for Ed
9 Reports. And we feel very confident that that
10 process will help us to continue this list of
11 approved programs.

12 There are two things that we do in-house,
13 continue to have to review. That is K-2 foundational
14 skills and also our reading intervention and dyslexia
15 programs. And so we, on a regular basis, meet
16 together. As new programs are submitted, new
17 applications are submitted, we do work to review
18 those programs.

19 If you look at from the initial review, we had
20 -- you can just kind of see the breakdown of the K-2
21 and 3-6 programs and the different number of
22 publishers on that list.

23 And then if you will go to the next, these are
24 the programs that have been added after we partnered
25 with Ed Reports to continue to add. Now core

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1 programs really are going to be what we focus on and
2 those are going to be reviewed through Ed Reports.
3 And then for K-2 foundational programs we will
4 continue to run them through a specially designed
5 rubric just to make sure that those pieces are in
6 place.

7 SECRETARY KEY: Well, let me ask you to pause
8 right there just for a second. And, Stacy, you might
9 want to add to this. But on the evaluation of these
10 programs -- I mean, I don't think we can under-
11 estimate the impact that quality programs, the work
12 that Kiffany and Karli's teams are doing regarding
13 high-quality instructional materials and the
14 professional development behind that. But the
15 process of going through these programs, it is --

16 MS. SMITH: Yeah.

17 SECRETARY KEY: When we talk about -- Mr. Wood,
18 when you talked about what -- you know, the impact or
19 what's happening on academics for 3rd graders in Pine
20 Bluff, you know, you -- about this, you know, we'd be
21 spinning our wheels. I mean, and so the impact here
22 is something that is not immediate because it takes a
23 while to -- you know, to your question about how long
24 does it take to really get proficient, you know, at
25 doing this, it's not going to happen in one year.

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1 And I know that we have so many kids that need it in
2 one year. But it's like I ask, you know, all the
3 time, what are the things we wish we would've done 10
4 years ago, let's do it now so that in 10 years we're
5 not having the same conversations. But this is one
6 of those things, so that in 10 years, because of this
7 work -- I mean, this is intense. Our teams spend --
8 have spent hours upon hours reviewing these programs,
9 the core instruction, the supplemental materials,
10 everything, to make sure they meet what we need them
11 to meet for our kids in the classrooms.

12 MS. SMITH: No, I agree with you a hundred
13 percent. In fact, I kept wanting to jump out of my
14 seat over here when you asked your question earlier
15 about how long does it take. When RISE first started
16 and we started doing the professional development for
17 RISE throughout the state, one of the things that
18 became glaring was teachers would do really intensive
19 professional development, which Dr. Moore has
20 participated in; she's gone through our RISE Academy.
21 And they'd go back to their classrooms and they would
22 have materials, supplies, core curriculum materials
23 that were not aligned. So we were asking them to go
24 back and implement something without the materials.
25 And so Ivy and I didn't know what we were doing. When

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1 we were sitting in the room late at night and they
2 were talking about legislation -- and we threw out
3 the Department should review materials. Ivy and I
4 were in the room. And the literacy team probably --
5 like that was a big deal and it got in legislation
6 and -- because it was needed.

7 So we talk about what does it take for someone
8 to be proficient; it takes intensive training, it
9 takes aligned materials and support; it takes direct
10 coaching and support for them to continue on; it
11 takes principals to recognize and identify what's
12 happening in the classroom and be able to determine
13 whether or not that is truly following the Science of
14 Reading and the body of research that's out there;
15 and it's continually evolving. It's really mind-
16 blowing for me, and probably everybody in Learning
17 Services that has ever worked on this initiative --
18 it's mind-blowing to me that we have a person now who
19 is insuring that the role of the Department is
20 adhering to the law and that we're moving this
21 forward. And when we look through here, I mean
22 you're looking at numbers and stuff; I'm looking at
23 that was Kiffany, that was Sandy, that was Kimberly,
24 that was Carol, that was -- these are hearts and
25 minds and years of people who have been spending in

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1 training, and teachers in classrooms, and your
2 advocates that are out there advocating for kids to
3 learn to read.

4 So how long does it take? In Arkansas, it took
5 a long time to get to this point. We've had a lot of
6 progress. To have quality instruction materials and
7 the work being done in that area is to me the
8 exclamation point, and all the training. And so they
9 can't shortcut this. And this part gets hard because
10 this is where you get money involved. And, you know,
11 people have programs they like and people have things
12 that they want, and there are people out there who
13 are pushing back on reviews, on whether or not it
14 meets or not. And so holding firm to what it is, but
15 at the same time understanding where we're moving
16 towards. So there's a lot there.

17 MS. HERINGER: And so a lot of what we are doing
18 currently -- as we are winding down the training and
19 moving forward full steam ahead, continuous
20 implementation, working with these high quality
21 instructional materials is key. A lot of what we're
22 doing is revolving around showing the teachers how
23 that material is supported by what you've learned and
24 how you can use that. I know in my career I never
25 had a curriculum when I was in the classroom, and

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1 it's very difficult to try to pull that together and
2 be as explicit and systematic as you need to be in
3 order to really provide that education, that reading
4 education for students. And so this is very, very
5 valuable.

6 So, okay. If you would go to where it has
7 Partial Rebound of Reading Scores, I kind of -- yeah,
8 there we go. One last thing that I wanted to add, on
9 the program evaluations, schools that are in Level 3,
10 4 or 5 support are required to purchase materials off
11 of the list, just so that they can -- because that
12 provides a very important support for those teachers
13 as they are dealing with that. So that is part of
14 the support that they get. It's helping them to
15 determine what is good there.

16 Okay. I know you've probably seen this. I just
17 wanted to -- you know, as we're looking at reading,
18 we did have some good rebound, not all the way back
19 where we needed to be, except in some grade levels.
20 But what this says to me is this is due to
21 instruction in the classroom. We were so sketchy and
22 scattered for -- during Covid. This shows me what
23 instruction can do, and I only expect this to
24 continue rebounding as we go along.

25 And if you'll go to the next slide, this is just

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1 our K-2 growth. We have different -- we can't really
2 compare across the state because we have different
3 programs for assessment. But all of them, if you
4 look at the first column and then the next, you can
5 see there is growth in the K-2 data all across. NWEA
6 MAP is a little different and they don't -- they did
7 not do a fall, but you can see that, you know, there
8 was a large percentage of students.

9 Okay. Kind of as we are winding down, I wanted
10 to say that a lot of what I've done this year is work
11 with the schools In Support and be part of the teams
12 that help those schools, you know, work to rebound
13 their scores. I did want to say that we were very
14 pleased when we looked at the data for these schools
15 that were In Support. And 72% of those decreased the
16 number that they had In Need of Support, so a large
17 majority moved kids out of that lowest level of
18 proficiency; 90% of those school districts increased
19 the number of students that they had who were meeting
20 proficiency. When I was watching -- when Pine Bluff
21 was here, I pulled up their scores and they moved in
22 both areas; so they're moving everybody this way.
23 They had a big jump out of almost 4% decrease in the
24 number of students who were In Need of Support and
25 then they also increased the number of students that

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1 they had who were meeting proficiency. We saw that
2 in most schools. We had 18 districts move out of
3 Level 3 support, so that means that they jumped below
4 that 40% mark. And so there was -- you know, there
5 were some good things that we saw and, as Ms. Smith
6 said, we are seeing movement.

7 In looking at high quality instructional
8 materials, about 70% of our districts In Support have
9 adopted or -- and more than that number are in
10 process of adopting these high quality instructional
11 materials.

12 I want to talk just for a second at the end
13 about dyslexia. That does kind of fall under reading
14 legislation, so I do have times that I am questioned
15 about that. I work closely with Vicki King and --
16 because she is our Dyslexia Specialist. When we are
17 looking at the legal requirements for dyslexia,
18 districts need to have trained interventionists.
19 That's been in place for awhile. They need to have
20 dyslexia programs. There are dyslexia programs that
21 are on the approved list. They are required to
22 screen all K-2 students for risks. And if they are
23 determined to be at risk, then there are Level 1 or
24 Level 2 screeners that they can go through. They are
25 required to provide interventions for those students.

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1 They are required to notify parents. And when we
2 talk about providing services with fidelity and
3 integrity -- when we talk about fidelity to the
4 program, it needs to be provided as the program is
5 designed, but also with the integrity and the
6 knowledge of the provider to meet the needs of that
7 student doing what they need to do. And then for
8 reporting, they report in eSchool during Cycle 7 the
9 number of students that they have served in dyslexia
10 intervention. And then the total number of students
11 that have been identified with characteristics of
12 dyslexia -- that does not mean that we are diagnosing
13 dyslexia; we are just recognizing these struggles
14 that kids are having and trying to intervene with
15 that.

16 If you look at the dyslexia data, again, this is
17 a graph that I had pulled from Vicki King. This is
18 looking at the cohorts of students and the number of
19 students identified in K, and then you can see -- so
20 starting in 2015-16, we had 233 students. By that
21 next year, that was 1,661. What we are noticing is
22 that we are still waiting before we are beginning to
23 identify these students as having characteristics of
24 dyslexia. That is something that causes people --
25 and I understand; it's understandable they don't want

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1 to mark someone in kindergarten who's not had
2 instruction yet as having characteristics of
3 dyslexia. Yet, we know that early intervention is
4 the best time to try to close those gaps. So we are
5 currently working on providing some guidance for
6 schools to help them see, not necessarily, you know,
7 that "oh, you must mark," but that you must
8 intervene. And so that is something that we are
9 continuing to work with with dyslexia so that we can
10 continue to support those students per the
11 legislation.

12 MS. SAUM: Can I ask a question?

13 MS. HERINGER: Yes.

14 MS. SAUM: You said that all students K-2 are
15 screened for dyslexia. Does that include students
16 who are currently receiving services under an IEP?

17 MS. HERINGER: That is something I would have to
18 ask. I would assume that they have data that they
19 are currently collecting. The original screening is
20 to identify risk, not necessarily to see what the
21 actual problem is. And so if there is data -- if a
22 student comes in and they are -- you know, they have
23 started receiving services in 1st, we do have to have
24 that progress monitoring data to see where they are.

25 MS. SAUM: And the risk assessments are -- is

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1 the RAN, like the color naming?

2 MS. HERINGER: The RAN and --

3 MS. SAUM: Okay.

4 MS. HERINGER: -- DIBELS. And there needs to be
5 an in-coding and a de-coding assessment.

6 MS. SAUM: Okay.

7 MS. HERINGER: So all of the -- they're listed
8 there of the different areas that have to be
9 screened.

10 MS. SAUM: Okay. Thank you.

11 MR. WOOD: Can I ask a question?

12 MS. HERINGER: Uh-huh.

13 MR. WOOD: On this multi-colored chart, the
14 2021-22 dyslexia data, over here it looks like the
15 highest number of students identified with dyslexia
16 is 6.4%. Would I be right in comparing that to an
17 expectation that the number should be closer to 18%
18 to 20%?

19 MS. HERINGER: I know that probably they would
20 need to be higher. As far as what percentage, I
21 would have to defer to Vicki King on that and that
22 would be based on her knowledge of per the research
23 what do we estimate to be the percentage of the
24 population.

25 MS. SMITH: So the structured literacy program

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1 is what dyslexia programs are based on and that's
2 what we built our K-2 core curriculums and what we're
3 reviewing for. So we're hoping that a lot of kids
4 who are maybe on the mild side of dyslexia are
5 getting their -- they're getting their instruction in
6 that classroom and those needs being met. And so --

7 MR. WOOD: Regardless of whether they're
8 identified?

9 MS. SMITH: Regardless of whether they're
10 identified or not.

11 MS. HERINGER: Yes.

12 MS. SMITH: So when you look at that, when you
13 hear that 20% of kids have dyslexia, one in five --

14 MR. WOOD: Yeah.

15 MS. SMITH: -- you know, you're talking from
16 severe to mild ranges. And do I think that we can do
17 better than 6%? Yes. Do I think it's going to get
18 up to 20%? Probably not.

19 MR. WOOD: Yeah.

20 MS. SMITH: But we've got to do a better job on
21 core instruction in the classroom and that would kind
22 of fill those holes.

23 MR. WOOD: But I would point out that 6.4 is the
24 best. You've got kindergartners down here at 1.2%.
25 Now it probably is related to the problem you said

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1 that they're not seeing words yet or they're not
2 whatever; they're not -- they haven't received
3 instruction yet. And so --

4 MS. HERINGER: Well, and if you look at this,
5 that 1.2% was for the whole 2015-16 year. So we have
6 continued to go up --

7 MR. WOOD: Fair enough.

8 MS. HERINGER: -- in the numbers that we have
9 identified. And that ties back into what we
10 discovered when we first started the dyslexia
11 legislation and screening kids; a lot of those, it's
12 because they did not have that express reading
13 instruction. So that is all part of the work.

14 MR. WOOD: Can I ask one more question?

15 MS. HERINGER: Sure.

16 MR. WOOD: You talked about a hesitancy to
17 identify students at kindergarten. Why is that?
18 What's the internal motivation that would cause a
19 teacher or an administrator to be hesitant to --

20 MS. HERINGER: I think because these are brand-
21 new babies coming into school for the first time and
22 they have not had explicit instruction. Some of them
23 may have been to preschool, some of them may not have
24 been. And so I think that there is a hesitancy to
25 label them as having characteristics of dyslexia

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1 before they've had any formal instruction. What we
2 know is that there are things that can be
3 demonstrated early before kids have had any
4 instruction that would indicate a risk for dyslexia.
5 And so that is kind of what we are trying to continue
6 to shore up that knowledge, because the best time to
7 intervene with a student who has characteristics of
8 dyslexia is early -- as early as you can.

9 MR. WOOD: I guess I would just -- my initial
10 response is so what. You know, if -- that's not a
11 label, that's not something that a kid is going to --
12 a stigma they're going to carry the rest of their
13 life. There is nothing wrong with that. And if they
14 get extra instruction, I think we should -- you know,
15 an encouragement should be let's over-intervene --

16 MS. HERINGER: Absolutely.

17 MR. WOOD: -- if we have to.

18 MS. HERINGER: Absolutely. And that is how we
19 are trying to express -- we are not saying the
20 student has dyslexia.

21 MR. WOOD: Yeah.

22 MS. HERINGER: We are saying the student has
23 characteristics that could develop, as Stacy said,
24 into, you know, a worse problem; let's catch it now
25 --

1 MR. WOOD: Yeah.

2 MS. HERINGER: -- and intervene for them.

3 Anything else on that?

4 Okay. I'm going to just really whip through.
5 Arkansas, in the past five years, because of what we
6 have done, we have -- it has opened a lot of doors
7 and there have been things that have happened. We
8 have received a comprehensive literacy grant to help
9 schools. We have launched pre-K RISE. We have done
10 all kinds of things that are kind of offshoots and
11 results of this legislation. And so the work that
12 has been happening -- and it is literally division-
13 wide; it is not just one aspect. And that's one of
14 the things that I have found in this role that I
15 love, but that it is a learning curve for me. I kind
16 of stand in the center of a lot of different parts of
17 the agency that all have to come together for us to
18 work, and that is part of what I really want to do
19 with this job is to kind of help at least provide
20 some steering to show all of the different things
21 that we are doing to improve this.

22 As we are upcoming for the next year, we're
23 really going to be working on that coding to -- for
24 proficiency and awareness, answering questions there.
25 Teachers that are not quite there yet we are going to

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1 work to support. Your cooperative specialists, your
2 RISE specialists, your -- all the people from DESE,
3 Public School Accountability, District Support
4 Specialists are in districts all the time. They are
5 working constantly to help see this happen because we
6 are all very passionate to see that Arkansas is going
7 to move in the right direction. Because one of the
8 things that I see in the schools that I go to all
9 over the state, the kids are all the same. They are
10 all the same. They all deserve to be able to exit
11 Arkansas public schools being able to read.

12 I am happy to answer questions. I am happy to
13 -- my information is on here; you are welcome to call
14 me, email me at any time, provide me with any
15 information that you would like to -- for me to dig
16 up, to answer, to include in this report. And I
17 appreciate all that you all do to support education.

18 MS. SAUM: I have one quick question.

19 MS. HERINGER: Sure.

20 MS. SAUM: When speaking about teachers showing
21 proficiency before, my license has to be renewed in
22 December 2023. So I've completed RISE training
23 through my district. What does that proficiency --
24 what additional work are teachers going to have to do
25 to show that? I know you said there was the Pearson

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1 test after they've completed the RISE training. Is
2 there additional steps that they'll have to complete
3 before this point next school year? And are teachers
4 being told this is what we need to do in order --

5 MS. HERINGER: Absolutely. That information is
6 give out and it's continuing to -- and that's part of
7 what I do when I answer questions from districts to
8 help them understand what we need to do. So you do
9 RISE training and then there would be a demonstration
10 of proficiency, and that is either being assessed
11 from a trained assessor, just to watch you in
12 practice, or passing Foundations of Reading.

13 MS. SAUM: And when does that observation of
14 that assessment need to be completed by? Could it be
15 completed this school year if they are up for renewal
16 in 2023, or will it need to be --

17 MS. HERINGER: Okay. For your license?

18 MS. SAUM: Yes.

19 MS. HERINGER: You've done everything you need
20 to do.

21 MS. SAUM: Okay.

22 MS. HERINGER: Awareness -- the learning pathway
23 for proficiency is awareness.

24 MS. SAUM: Okay.

25 MS. HERINGER: So you have done that part. If

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1 you are a K-6 teacher, you have to demonstrate the
2 second part. But in order to renew your license,
3 you're finished. So all you would need is the
4 documentation that you have completed that strand.

5 MS. SAUM: Okay. Thank you.

6 MS. HERINGER: Uh-huh. Anything else?

7 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Any more questions down
8 here? Down here?

9 Mr. Henderson or Ms. Newton online?

10 MR. HENDERSON: Yeah, I have more of a -- I
11 don't know -- more of a comment than a question. On
12 one slide it showed the flat-rate states that [Zoom
13 audio distortion]. One thing I find to be
14 impressive, that Arkansas, particularly because it is
15 in the Delta, is the only southern state I see with
16 that [Zoom audio distortion]. I'm just curious to
17 know what -- you know, looking at those numbers,
18 there has to be -- those numbers are [Zoom audio
19 distortion] in the Delta has to be far greater.

20 MS. HERINGER: I'm having a hard time hearing
21 everything. I know that there were -- Arkansas is
22 the one state -- I know in our southern states,
23 Tennessee is doing some things, Louisiana is doing
24 some things. But the collaboration has mainly been
25 other states reaching out to say, "This is what we're

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1 doing, we have seen you do this," you know, and kind
2 of getting input on the things that we are doing. I
3 would like to see more collaboration amongst our
4 southern neighbors, definitely.

5 MR. HENDERSON: Thank you.

6 MS. HERINGER: Thanks.

7 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Yeah.

8 SECRETARY KEY: Mr. Henderson, we were maybe the
9 first state -- certainly one of the first states that
10 basically, by your action as a State Board, has said,
11 "We're no longer going to approve anything as a three
12 cueing system," which was -- we were number -- the
13 first one? I know that's one of the things that a
14 lot of other states -- as soon as we did that, they
15 called us and said, "How did you do that? And how is
16 that working?" Because the fear was that, you know,
17 all of the publishing companies, "Well, they just
18 pull out of Arkansas." Well, we figured if they've
19 got three cueing, we don't want them in Arkansas
20 anyway, you know. So if you're going to threaten to
21 pull -- threaten us to pull out, fine. It didn't
22 happen that way and now we're seeing the publishing
23 companies come onboard. So Arkansas was really at
24 the -- you know, pointing the spear in that effort,
25 and now we're seeing all kinds of states all over the

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1 nation taking the same approach that we took. So we
2 -- you know, we want to see results right now, but we
3 just -- that's just not how it's going to work. But
4 in -- over the years we are going to see the results
5 of these very difficult decisions, because they
6 weren't easy decisions in the process of review. All
7 these things that we're doing, none of it has been
8 easy, but it's the right thing to do.

9 So, yeah, we're making waves in a good way, Mr.
10 Henderson.

11 MR. HENDERSON: Thank you.

12 MS. HUNTER: So a question. You mentioned
13 Tennessee and Louisiana. But states that have
14 implemented this ahead of us, how do they fare? I
15 mean what should we expect our future to be in a
16 realistic way?

17 SECRETARY KEY: Mississippi is 10 years ahead of
18 us -- or how many years ahead of us, Stacy, that --
19 and I mean they -- and a lot of the -- so you have to
20 look too that there's the state action that took
21 place, but then there's action that was taking place
22 by philanthropy and other things.

23 MS. SMITH: Yeah.

24 SECRETARY KEY: And when you look at a state
25 like Mississippi, that's -- that was one -- they've

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1 done a lot of work over the last decade, but a lot of
2 it started with philanthropy and --

3 MS. SMITH: Yeah. They really invested in their
4 higher ed. programs earlier through the philanthropy,
5 through that in just through K-12, and so it started
6 there. And they've actually showed increases in
7 their scores and they -- and stuff. So they've kind
8 of been one of these places that a lot of people have
9 talked about in that area. Arkansas, in terms of
10 impacting for K-12, is probably one of the first as
11 far as statewide had legislation like this and to
12 being looked at. In fact, there are outside parties
13 who contact us to do research on what we're doing in
14 the state and a lot of our folks have been on
15 national pieces. When Commissioner Key said other
16 states are contacting us, saying how did you do that,
17 that is definitely a true statement. Everything from
18 the Dyslexia Resource Guide, which I credit all the
19 dyslexia advocates on pushing that through way back
20 when, and then the follow-up of the Department in
21 actually getting that out there and being able to
22 provide it for people and the different networks
23 coming in. The reviewing of materials aligns with
24 Science of Reading, and calling out specifically
25 three cueing systems. The pulling in Higher Ed. in a

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1 room with all the literacy specialists after they
2 reviewed their Higher Ed. programs to say this isn't
3 good enough, so the first time that ever happened.
4 And that was a support because Ivy and the Teacher
5 Effectiveness Unit and the people who are working
6 with our colleges knew what we had to do. But we
7 also pulled in the K-12 literacy specialists to sit
8 right next to these colleges to say, "Look, your book
9 doesn't match." Those are huge pieces. The
10 Department has given professional development to
11 Higher Ed. in the manner of "we respect you enough
12 that we brought in professors who are national
13 experts, nationally who are teaching college courses
14 in the Science of Reading to teach our Higher Ed."
15 And they welcomed it. They welcomed it. Our Higher
16 Ed. are great partners right now.

17 So our scores are not where we want them to be.
18 And I'm going to tell you -- Commissioner Key knows
19 this and we've talked about it multiple times --
20 every time they come in it's like a punch in the gut
21 because I know we're doing the right work; we've got
22 lots of people working really, really, really hard,
23 and we're going to move at some point. We may all be
24 gone when we do, but we're going to move. So --

25 SECRETARY KEY: Yeah, he asked about other

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1 states. The other states are seeing some -- they are
2 seeing results of that. But, you know, there are
3 overnight successes that have been 10 years in the
4 making. Yeah. And I'll cover this in my report.
5 But in a couple of weeks, we'll get the NAEP results,
6 the National Assessment of Educational Progress.
7 That's really the only true national comparison and
8 it's required by the federal government, and it's a
9 statistical sampling and there are a number of
10 elements that make it a more apples-and-apples
11 comparison. But I'll use Mississippi as an example
12 again. A few years ago, they shocked the world with
13 NAEP results that were like how did they do that in
14 reading for 4th grade. And, again, it was -- we're
15 learning a lot about what they did, and I think we're
16 also learning about what worked for them, maybe some
17 things that didn't work. And so, we get the
18 opportunity to look in their rearview mirror while
19 we're looking at our -- through our windshield of how
20 we need to approach it.

21 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: All right. Okay. So do
22 we -- this is on the action agenda item. do we need
23 to vote?

24 SECRETARY KEY: We asked that it be on the
25 action agenda. It's because -- one, because it was

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1 the first report of the Ombudsman. It is in statute.
2 This does -- will be submitted -- well, it has to be
3 submitted here, and we wanted you to take formal
4 action just to accept the report. So that's what we
5 would ask is that y'all would accept the report.

6 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Thank you so much.

7 MS. HERINGER: Thank you.

8 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay. So, any more
9 questions?

10 The floor is open for a motion to accept the
11 report.

12 MR. WOOD: I move to accept the report of the
13 Ombudsman.

14 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Okay. A motion to accept.
15 Is there a second?

16 DR. HILL: Second.

17 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Second by Dr. Hill.

18 All in favor say aye.

19 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

20 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Against?

21 Motion passes.

22 MS. HERINGER: Thank you all.

23 VICE CHAIRMAN MOORE: Thank you again.

24 So that concludes our action agenda. We will
25 definitely take a break now. What time should we

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1 come back? And we'll do the reports. Should we do a
2 full hour or 45 minutes?

3 Forty-five. 1:45, we'll be back.

4 (The Action Agenda was concluded at 1:00 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF ARKANSAS)
) ss
 COUNTY OF PULASKI)

I, Miranda McEntire, Certified Court Reporter #852, do hereby certify that the facts stated by me in the caption on the foregoing proceedings are true; and that the foregoing proceedings were reported verbatim through the use of the voice-writing method and thereafter transcribed by me or under my direct supervision to the best of my ability, taken at the time and place set out on the caption hereto.

I FURTHER CERTIFY, that I am not a relative or employee of any attorney or employed by the parties hereto, nor financially interested or otherwise, in the outcome of this action, and that I have no contract with the parties, attorneys, or persons with an interest in the action that affects or has a substantial tendency to affect impartiality, that requires me to relinquish control of an original deposition transcript or copies of the transcript before it is certified and delivered to the custodial attorney, or that requires me to provide any service not made available to all parties in the action.

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