

CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL

DECEMBER 19, 2023
9:04 A.M.

A P P E A R A N C E S

PANEL MEMBERS:

DR. MATTHEW SUTHERLIN, Chairperson - Coordinator of
Standards Systems Support and Charter
MR. PHIL BALDWIN, Retired Bank Executive
MS. KARLI SARACINI, ADE Assistant Commissioner -
Educator Effectiveness and Licensure
DR. SONJA WRIGHT-McMURRAY, Associate Director -
Division of Career and Technical Education
MR. KIM DAVIS, Walton Family Foundation - Senior Advisor
MS. TOYCE NEWTON, Former State Board of Education Member
DR. TINA MOORE, ADHE - Director of Workforce Development

NON-VOTING PARTICIPANTS:

MR. STEPHEN REYNOLDS, Attorney Specialist - Elementary
and Secondary Education
MS. DORIE SUMMONS, DESE Charter Schools Director
MR. TRIPP WALTER, APSRC - Staff Attorney
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LOCATION:

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P R O C E E D I N G S

I. CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Good morning. The December 19th, 2023, meeting of the Charter Authorizing Panel is called to order. I would like to welcome everyone to the Department of Education and ask that you silence all your electronic devices. And I guess I need to silence mine. The goal is to facilitate a fair and responsible hearing, so therefore I ask that each person speaking please state your name and title for the record. I ask that you continue to speak clearly into the microphone throughout your presentation for the benefit of the Panel, this audience and the viewing audience. This meeting is being livestreamed and recorded and a transcript of this meeting will be posted on the DESE website.

II. CONSENT AGENDA

CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Good morning, everybody. Welcome to the Department of Education. We have a consent agenda item before us today which is the minutes from the last meeting. Do I have a motion to approve?

MS. SARACINI: I so move.

DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Second.

CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. All those in

1 favor?

2 (UNANIMOUS CHORUSE OF AYES)

3 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Any opposed?

4 All right. Motion passes.

5 **III. ACTION AGENDA**

6 **III.1. WARREN MIDDLE SCHOOL RESCINDED THE CHARTER IN SEPTEMBER**
7 **OF 2023. ALL ASSOCIATED WAIVERS WERE RESCINDED AT THAT TIME.**

8 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay. Ms. Summons?

9 MS. SUMMONS: Good morning. Dorie Summons,
10 Office of Public Charter Schools. Warren Middle
11 School rescinded the charter in September of 2023,
12 and all associated waivers were rescinded at that
13 time.

14 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Do I have a motion to accept
15 the recension?

16 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So moved.

17 MS. SARACINI: Second.

18 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay. All those in favor?

19 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

20 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay. We have to fill out our
21 voting sheets on this.

22 MS. SARACINI: Okay.

23 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Just one minute and we'll be
24 back.

25 All right. We'll start with Mr. Baldwin.

1 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I voted in favor of the
2 motion to rescind the Warren Middle School Charter.

3 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Dr. Wright-McMurray.

4 DR. WRIGHT-McMurray: I voted for -- I support
5 Warren Middle School's request to rescind their
6 waiver designation and all associated waivers.

7 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Ms. Saracini.

8 MS. SARACINI: I support motion to rescind
9 waivers associated with charter.

10 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay. Dr. Moore.

11 DR. MOORE: For -- I support Warren Middle
12 School's request to rescind their charter designation
13 and all associated waivers.

14 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Ms. Newton.

15 MS. NEWTON: I also voted for their request to
16 rescind their charter.

17 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay. And Mr. Davis.

18 I think Mr. Davis may have some trouble getting
19 on, but he did state that he supports the request.
20 I'm not sure if he can get off mute or not. I can't
21 see the Zoom, but we will move on to our next agenda
22 item.

23 **III.2. 2024 PROPOSED CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL MEETING DATES**

24 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: And Ms. Summons.

25 MS. SUMMONS: The next item is the proposed

1 calendar dates for the Charter Panel meetings for the
2 year of 2024. This was based off the calendar that
3 was submitted -- I mean, that State Board approved
4 for State Board meetings. So that calendar -- our
5 calendar is based off of what they have approved.

6 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: So this would be the Tuesday
7 after?

8 MS. SUMMONS: The Tuesday after State Board.

9 DR. MOORE: I'll make a motion to approve the
10 Panel meeting dates.

11 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay. I have a motion. Do I
12 have a second?

13 MR. BALDWIN: Second.

14 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All those in favor?

15 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

16 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay. Motion passes.

17 **III.3. CONSIDERATION OF DISTRICT CONVERSION PUBLIC CHARTER**
18 **SCHOOL APPLICATION - MOUNTAINBURG HIGH SCHOOL**

19 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. So Mr. Reynolds,
20 would you like to come forward for the proceedings?

21 MR. REYNOLDS: Good morning, Stephen Reynolds,
22 staff attorney for the Department. I'll just go over
23 the procedures real quick.

24 Anyone who plans to provide testimony during the
25 hearing must be sworn in by the Chair. The Applicant

1 shall have 20 minutes to present its case to the
2 Panel. The Chair may grant additional time. Parties
3 speaking in opposition to the Applicant, if any,
4 shall have 20 minutes to present their case to the
5 Panel. The Chair may grant additional time.

6 To my knowledge we have received no opposition
7 to any of the matters before you today. The Panel
8 may issue a final decision at the hearing or take the
9 matter under advisement until a future scheduled
10 meeting. The Panel may defer it's vote to approve
11 or disprove a charter application renewal or
12 amendment in order to allow a charter school or
13 applicant to make modifications or receive technical
14 assistance to correct deficiencies in the application
15 or request.

16 And I'm going to turn it over to Dorie for the
17 presentation and the charter school for their
18 presentation. I'll be back for the really fun part.

19 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you.

20 MS. SUMMONS: Okay. Mountainburg Public School
21 District has submitted an application to convert
22 Mountainburg High School. The school will serve
23 grades 9-12 with a career and technical focus. The
24 applicant was asked to come back and provide
25 additional information and they are here this

1 morning.

2 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you very
3 much.

4 Will all those who plan to speak on behalf of
5 the charter please stand and raise your right hand.
6 Do you swear that this -- the testimony or statement
7 you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth
8 and nothing but the truth?

9 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

10 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. You may begin.

11 MS. CRISTEE: All right. Good morning.

12 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Good morning.

13 MS. CRISTEE: Courtney Cristee, high school
14 principal. Thank you for giving us some time to
15 really dig into our plan and make some corrections
16 and get more information. Today I have with me my
17 superintendent, Dr. Debbie Atwell; my assistant
18 principal Ms. Sarah Walker; I have the director of
19 workforce development for our area, Mr. Dennis
20 Williamson; and I have our mayor, Ms. Susan Wilson.
21 So thank you all for being here. Senator Petty may
22 join us later, but you know how busy he is.

23 So during our time in the last three weeks,
24 we've really started to look more at the technical
25 terms that were used and make some updates. So today

1 we are going to look at a day in the life of a
2 student; we're going to look at curriculum for
3 courses. That was a lot of the question -- we were
4 talking about a level 2, calling it a career
5 practicum, which was already used in the work-based
6 learning manual. And so we have changed some of that
7 language. We are going to look more in depth at the
8 work-based learning and how that would be managed.
9 Our student employer engagement, there were questions
10 about contracts and how we're going to ensure that
11 the student is being taken care of when they are at a
12 place of business and vice versa. And then we also
13 had questions about transportation.

14 So we'll begin with looking at a day in the life
15 of a student for the expanded offerings. Now
16 previously I referred to these as level 2 practicums
17 and so I had presented that students would take a
18 level 1 CTE course on-site with one of our on-site
19 teachers; and then the level 2 course would be more
20 student paced working with a business partner. There
21 was confusion because I called it a career practicum
22 and so we've cleaned up the language. It will not be
23 called a career practicum; it will be the name of
24 that level 2 course.

25 So if you look at this example student schedule,

1 we are still ensuring that students are getting their
2 English, their math, their history, electives that
3 they may need. And so an example course, eighth
4 period is agri. business management. We currently do
5 not offer agri. business management. I don't have
6 the faculty to be able to teach that course in
7 isolation. So what we are proposing is that we could
8 expand to this offering with some self-paced student
9 work. Virtual Arkansas, we already partner with them
10 for our concurrent courses, but they also offer CTE
11 courses. Some of those they just have the curriculum
12 that teachers can use to meet student needs. There
13 are also some courses that they do not offer and so
14 we are creating career cards for those level 2
15 courses using the CTE based standards that have been
16 put out the CTE department. So that way we can
17 ensure students are still getting that high level of
18 learning.

19 So students would -- if they're taking a level 2
20 course that we don't offer full time, they would
21 follow -- I have got to see if this thing goes
22 backwards. It does. Okay. So they would follow
23 this schedule. During their agri. business
24 management class, they would be with their level 1
25 CTE teacher. So let's say it's survey of Ag. So

1 they would go to their survey of Ag class during Agri
2 business management. What would they be doing? It's
3 going to be self-paced. We will use our platform,
4 Google Classroom, to be able to manage that work and
5 so that way students have a place to archive their
6 artifacts as well. They'll also have access to a
7 business partner in that career field so that they're
8 working closely with them on the specifics of that
9 class; and then they will also work with our work-
10 based learning coordinator.

11 After the level 2 course, we of course want them
12 to be able to continue for completer status. Then we
13 can go into a career practicum if we don't offer a
14 level 3 course. If we're not offering a level 2
15 course, more than likely we're not offering a level
16 3. There are a few anomalies where maybe you have
17 mechanics or metals that fall into that agri field,
18 but if you're looking at one of the survey of
19 business courses and following that pathway, we
20 probably don't offer a level 3. We still want them
21 to be able to get that experience and to be a
22 completer and so we would go into the career
23 practicum. We could use a pre-apprenticeship to
24 where they could apply to use that as a completer
25 course or another course if it's available.

1 Then we also talked to you last month about a
2 flexible schedule. And so we were really encouraged
3 to use the pre-apprenticeship -- or sorry -- the
4 work-based learning manual and to learn that. And as
5 I was going through that and found an idea with the
6 pre-apprenticeship to where we could expand, but
7 we're limited with how that would work. And so I
8 wanted to use the language here.

9 And so the pre-apprenticeship as it's currently
10 written, students do 90 hours of classroom work
11 before they really get into the business. And what
12 we're finding with students is they're not getting
13 that tangible hands on how does this apply? It's a
14 lot of virtual work and they're not seeing -- it's
15 the classroom, the front side. And we want to bring
16 that into them to where we're intertwining, getting
17 them into the business and so they're making those
18 connections earlier instead of getting all the
19 classroom work done and then going into the
20 apprenticeship side where they're in the business.
21 And so this is where the flexible schedule option is
22 going to come into play. So you can see here again,
23 a student has all the courses that would be required,
24 and then we have a class period built in for
25 pre-apprenticship.

1 And so if you go to the next slide, here's how
2 that would look. The first semester the student
3 could complete the 60 hours of registered
4 apprenticeship standard training. We would partner
5 with the NAFTA in order to get that training. And so
6 then the second semester where they start the next 30
7 hours of the pre-apprenticeship program, we also want
8 to include on the job training there. This is where
9 a student would need a flexible schedule because they
10 may not be on-site every day. So these courses that
11 are listed here could be virtual courses to where
12 they're still working, but they have the opportunity
13 to be out and about instead of sitting in a
14 traditional classroom all day long. There's
15 flexibility in their schedule while they're still
16 maintaining what they need to do. Their third -- so
17 that would be their junior year. Their third and
18 fourth semester, we would like to also expand that.

19 So right now the pre-apprenticeship program is
20 just 90 hours. They could complete that 90 hours
21 their junior year, but then what happens their senior
22 year? Do they just go back to doing nothing? And
23 so, no. We are working with workforce development to
24 keep moving them forward in that apprenticeship
25 program to meet the hours. We have modeled the

1 work-based learning language to where they would have
2 a minimum of 120 hours of on-the-job training per
3 semester. They would work on a portfolio and/or an
4 additional 30 hours of intensive registered
5 apprentice -- registered apprenticeship standard
6 training. Flexible schedule -- students could use
7 Google Classroom or Virtual Arkansas courses to
8 ensure learning of core courses. What we're finding
9 is a lot of our seniors right now, they are
10 completing all their requirements to where they don't
11 need a full schedule their senior year. We can
12 continue some more learning for them though in a
13 specific career path that would benefit them after
14 they graduate while also working towards industry
15 certifications and career and technical certificates.

16 Work-based learning, how is this managed?

17 Previously we talked about a team of people. It will
18 still be ran by a team of people, but I think one of
19 the concerns was that you didn't have one person who
20 could really track the students and know them. So we
21 will have a work-based learning coordinator. She's
22 actually already employed with our district. She has
23 the 4-12 endorsement.

24 Our first year, we would cap our work-based
25 learning at 25 students. One of the requirements is

1 that there is a planning period for one to 25
2 students. If you look at my graduating class, I only
3 have 39 students. So if I had 25 in a work-based
4 learning, that would be a large group. So it's not
5 going to apply to all of our students, but there is
6 opportunity there for all of our students.

7 Responsibilities of the work-based learning
8 coordinator: they would support the level 2 course
9 students who are virtual learning. And so if you
10 remember back a few slides ago, they would help
11 monitor that student's progress in those courses. So
12 it's not just left to the CTE teacher who's also
13 teaching another course. They're going to have
14 somebody who they can check in with more frequently.

15 We'll partner with Mr. Dennis Williamson to
16 establish local businesses and partnerships. We
17 currently have commitments from the National
18 Apprenticeship Training Foundation, Arkansas
19 Construction Education Foundation, Carpenters Local,
20 Arkansas general contractors and companies they
21 represent. And since I've created these slides,
22 we've also -- I attended a workforce development
23 meeting and I have commitments from Bekaert and local
24 banks as well. And so those partnerships are
25 continuing to grow, and we look forward to building

1 that out in the planning phase.

2 Our work-based learning coordinator will also
3 work with employers to develop our pre-apprenticeship
4 experience. We'll conduct visits to placements and
5 complete the necessary forms. We'll create side
6 agreements, maintain proof of work and work hours for
7 students and utilize the Arkansas Seamless platform.
8 I have the work-based learning contract and site
9 contract modeled off of CTE. That will be what we
10 use in order to build this out.

11 We will work on the student-employer engagement
12 so that there is a contract available for students
13 and employers. It will be created with the -- the
14 employer, the student, the work-based learning
15 coordinator, administration and CTE teacher if needed
16 and any other stakeholders. It will include learner
17 responsibilities, employer responsibilities, the
18 school responsibilities, a training plan, what's it
19 look like for the student and -- and then other
20 information is needed, plus signatures of all
21 stakeholders. We cannot forget the parents. They
22 will be a huge part in this. And so there will be a
23 lot of understanding, but before we enroll a student
24 in the course, they need to know what their
25 responsibilities are, the business needs to know

1 their responsibilities. And so as we're creating
2 those career cards and those contracts and looking at
3 the assignments, we want to have all that very clear.

4 Our work-based learning coordinator will monitor
5 the student progress and activities. They'll provide
6 support for its virtual students. I do want to
7 clarify the provide support. They may not be the
8 ones creating the curriculum. We will use either
9 iCEV, Virtual Arkansas or something of those means
10 for the curriculum. They are there to support to say
11 you have due dates coming up, make sure you're paying
12 attention to those. Do you understand what it means
13 by investigate this? And so they have somebody there
14 who's keeping track of them.

15 The CTE teacher will cocreate the curriculum and
16 assess student understanding if they are not using
17 Virtual Arkansas. Virtual Arkansas is laid out very
18 clear. iCEV has a lot of support as well. And so
19 we'll be able to use both of those.

20 Transportation: Mountainburg is very rural and
21 so we do have to travel. Students requiring daily
22 transportation, so let's say they are in that
23 pre-apprenticeship program, they're going out every
24 day, they're going to need to understand that they
25 may need to provide their own transportation. It may

1 not be feasible for the school to be able to provide
2 that. But during the planning phase, we're going to
3 work with our business partners to also provide
4 transportation. If we have a student who is showing
5 that they can go further into this -- this career,
6 and we have a business who's really interested in
7 them working with Dennis, we believe that we can get
8 some of the businesses to also help with that
9 transportation. So, for example, this would apply to
10 our third and fourth semester pre-apprenticeship
11 students.

12 For students who are going out for the periodic
13 observations, they're not going every day -- they're
14 going once every month or every couple of weeks, it's
15 not every day -- then MHS will provide that student
16 transportation. That schedule will be created at the
17 beginning of the year, so it's coordinated with our
18 transportation department, our businesses, our
19 parents and whoever else is involved so that way
20 there are no surprises coming up. We have that
21 planned out well in advance.

22 And I hope that answers all of your questions
23 today, but I am ready for more. So --

24 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you very much.

25 MS. CRISTEE: Thank you so much for this

1 opportunity.

2 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Dr. Wright-McMurray, do you
3 have any questions?

4 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Not really questions, but
5 comments.

6 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay.

7 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So I greatly appreciate
8 you guys taking the time to go back and put in this
9 amount of work. I know that you have worked closely
10 with your CTE coordinator, Ms. Turner.

11 MS. CRISTEE: Yes.

12 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And so, hopefully, you
13 found this process to be helpful to kind of flesh out
14 some more details, but I am highly impressed with
15 what you guys have come back with; and thankful that
16 you dug into the work-based learning manuals and kind
17 of change some terms around. So I think you'll find
18 that to be helpful to you, especially using the
19 Seamless system because that data will also be
20 helpful for you to be able to track your students and
21 their outcomes. And so for using the correct terms
22 and similar terms, you won't have issues going
23 forward. So thank you to you and your team and I'm
24 glad to see that you brought Mr. Williamson with you.
25 I know he's going to be a great partner with you in

1 your -- your area.

2 MS. CRISTEE: Thank you so much. I appreciate
3 that.

4 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Ms. Saracini?

5 MS. SARACINI: I don't really have anything, but
6 a comment. Thank you for coming today. It really
7 gave us a glimpse into what a day in the life of a
8 student at Mountainburg really is. I just -- as I'm
9 looking, I still kind of look at that letter grade
10 and I just kind of have to pause because it's a D,
11 but I -- it sounds like y'all are trying to work on
12 that.

13 MS. CRISTEE: The high school is not a D. The
14 high --

15 MS. SARACINI: It is not?

16 MS. CRISTEE: The high school is a C. Our
17 middle school just dropped to a D. Yes, ma'am.

18 MS. SARACINI: Good. That's better.

19 MS. CRISTEE: Sorry. Maybe you know something
20 that I don't.

21 MS. SARACINI: I'm glad you corrected me because
22 that's what I was looking at --

23 MS. CRISTEE: Thank you.

24 MS. SARACINI: -- at that data that we have got.
25 so that makes me feel a lot better. I -- just again,

1 I commend you for what you're putting in place to
2 meet the needs of students because it is changing.
3 We learned that with COVID.

4 MS. CRISTEE: Yes, ma'am.

5 MS. SARACINI: Thank you.

6 MS. CRISTEE: Thank you.

7 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Mr. Baldwin?

8 MR. BALDWIN: So I will -- I will add to the
9 complements of my colleagues and say thank you for
10 doing a really good job of looking at your
11 structuring program and considering the questions
12 that we had last time. You were very organized and
13 orderly in the thought process, and I was just
14 sitting here checking off all the things I had on my
15 sheet as you went along. The -- the only question I
16 have -- and it's really just a curiosity question --
17 you talked about that your cap would be 25 students
18 in the first year. How big do you think this could
19 be over -- over a long period of time?

20 MS. CRISTEE: To answer your question, I think
21 part of that is going to depend on enrollment; it's
22 going to depend on student need. And so right now, I
23 have small classes. So sometimes, I'll have classes
24 -- I'll have seniors who need to take every course.
25 So I -- at this point, I don't know; but I want to

1 grow it as big as it can be to meet the needs of our
2 students.

3 MR. BALDWIN: And you said that 25 is actually a
4 large number of --

5 MS. CRISTEE: That's a large percentage.

6 MR. BALDWIN: Okay. Thank you very much. I'm
7 very pleased with what you've done.

8 MS. CRISTEE: Thank you so much.

9 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Ms. Newton?

10 MS. NEWTON: Actually, I'm pleased with the
11 report and the explanations you have given. I'm
12 wondering -- and this is just maybe an ancillary
13 question maybe -- about broadband access and the
14 number of students that will be virtual. And whether
15 or not access is -- is something that is not an issue
16 as opposed to, you know, on a given day, something's
17 not working, but does all this fall on the family to
18 provide that access? Is it going to virtual? Is
19 that something that the school supports?

20 MS. CRISTEE: So we have not necessarily
21 explored the school supporting the virtual access.
22 Right now it would be up to the families. One of the
23 things that that we covered last month is we're
24 losing a large number of our students to go to
25 virtual. And so students who want a virtual option

1 are finding a means to be able to have Internet and
2 broadband access.

3 I do want to commend our community and Mayor
4 Wilson maybe will be able to speak more to that, but
5 we are expanding broadband connection in our area.
6 Wave Rural, I don't know if you're familiar --
7 they're with -- through Arkansas Valley Electric.
8 They're expanding to rural areas and so right now
9 they're covering at least 50 percent of our community
10 and they've just opened a new phase that will cover
11 another large portion of our community. And so we do
12 have some offerings there. And so to go back to your
13 question, we haven't necessarily explored providing
14 it for the students, but it could be something that
15 could be a discussion for our district.

16 MS. NEWTON: I just -- the obstacle -- the
17 obstacles that might arise in that area is something
18 that concerns me as far as having access because we
19 know that students aren't the ones that make the --
20 make that determination often.

21 MS. CRISTEE: Right.

22 MS. NEWTON: So that's my question.

23 MS. CRISTEE: Thank you.

24 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Dr. Moore.

25 DR. MOORE: I really don't have anything to add

1 beyond the comments that have already been made.
2 Thank you so much for taking the time. I know that
3 it was frustrating not to get an approval the last
4 time you were here, but I hope that you found that it
5 was the work that you would have been doing even if
6 you had got approved last time --

7 MS. CRISTEE: Absolutely.

8 DR. MOORE: -- it's all the things you would
9 have been doing and it just gives us a little more
10 peace of mind in seeing that it's going the right
11 direction. So thank you so much. It was very clear
12 and we could see what that day in the life of the
13 student looked like. And I do just encourage to
14 continue to push the academic rigor even for the
15 students who are doing the work-based learning
16 because we never want it to be any type of a less
17 than pathway for students.

18 MS. CRISTEE: Absolutely.

19 DR. MOORE: They're still getting the -- the
20 academic preparation.

21 MS. CRISTEE: Yes, ma'am.

22 DR. MOORE: Thank you so much.

23 MS. CRISTEE: Thank you. I appreciate it.

24 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yes. I was very impressed
25 with your presentation and seeing how you went

1 through the process. So thank you so much for doing
2 that and then coming back.

3 MS. CRISTEE: Thank you for the opportunity.

4 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Is there any other discussion?
5 If not, let's let Stephen go. I forgot about your --

6 MS. CRISTEE: The fun part.

7 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: I forgot about your part.

8 MR. REYNOLDS: The fun part.

9 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: The fun part.

10 MR. REYNOLDS: The fun part. All right. Just
11 to go back over the legal review from last time. I'm
12 just going to go into order.

13 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: I think we can go with just
14 the topics --

15 MR. REYNOLDS: Yeah.

16 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: -- on -

17 MR. REYNOLDS: Yeah.

18 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: -- this one.

19 MR. REYNOLDS: Yeah. So waiver topic No. one is
20 the salaries and compensation; we didn't have any
21 legal concerns with that. Waiver topic No. two is
22 teacher licensure; we didn't have any legal concerns
23 with that. Just keep in mind that only Section 7 of
24 the DESE rules governing educator licensure can be
25 waived. Waiver topic No. three is professional

1 development; we didn't have any legal concerns with
2 that. Waiver topic No. four is instructional day; no
3 legal concerns with that. Waiver topic No. five and
4 six are personnel policies, had no legal concerns
5 with that. And then I spoke with the -- the school
6 district, they alerted me that we were supposed to
7 add a waiver last time. I don't remember if we did
8 that or not. So we'll go ahead and do that now.
9 It's a class size and teaching load waiver which
10 would include Arkansas Code § 6-17-812, a standard
11 for accreditation 1-A.5 and 1-A.6, and the rules
12 governing class size and teaching load. And I just
13 wanted to get the Charter to confirm that on the
14 record that they're requesting that additional
15 waiver.

16 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay.

17 MR. REYNOLDS: And then I'm done.

18 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you very
19 much.

20 MS. CRISTEE: Yes. We are requesting that --
21 addition of those flavors.

22 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

23 MS. CRISTEE: Thank you.

24 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I just have --

25 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yes.

1 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And I know we had a
2 discussion last time -- I just wanted to reaffirm
3 that when it comes to our CTE teachers that our
4 intent is to get certified teachers that are in their
5 area and if not to do our best efforts to use the
6 technical permit process?

7 MS. CRISTEE: Yes, yes.

8 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

9 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Any other
10 discussion? All right. If not, I'll entertain a
11 motion.

12 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I move approval of
13 application.

14 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. We have a --

15 MS. SARACINI: I second.

16 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. So we have a
17 motion by Dr. Wright-McMurray and a second by Ms.
18 Saracini. All those in favor?

19 (UNANIMOUS OF CHORUS OF AYES)

20 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Any opposed? All right. The
21 motion passes. Give us just a minute to fill out our
22 voting sheets.

23 All right. We'll start with Mr. Baldwin.

24 MR. BALDWIN: Yes, thank you. I voted in favor
25 of the Mountainburg High School Charter request. The

1 program design is innovative and responsive to the
2 needs of the rural community.

3 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Dr. Sonja Wright-
4 McMurray.

5 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I voted for -- I support
6 Mountainburg High School's Charter request. The
7 administration has a well thought out plan to create
8 a learning model that includes CTE courses supported
9 by meaningful work experiences. I look forward to
10 their outcomes as their structure may serve as a
11 model for similar schools.

12 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Ms. Newton.

13 MS. NEWTON: I voted for approval, the
14 explanation being all previous issues are addressed
15 and corrected.

16 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Ms. Saracini.

17 MS. SARACINI: I support the motion to approve
18 the district conversion charter for Mountainburg High
19 School. I'm looking forward to seeing the impact on
20 career readiness to meet all the needs of students.

21 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Dr. Moore.

22 DR. MOORE: I support Mountainburg High School's
23 charter request and affiliated waivers. Expanding
24 the career technical learning opportunities for
25 students and allowing a flexible schedule will be an

1 advantage for their students and it is especially
2 needed in this rural area. The partnerships with
3 local business and industry and their workforce board
4 will be critical.

5 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Mr. Davis.

6 MR. DAVIS: Yes. I support the Mountainburg
7 School District's charter request. I support
8 expanding this option to students and families and
9 the region.

10 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you very
11 much. All right. Congratulations.

12 MS. CRISTEE: Thank you so much.

13 **III.4. CONSIDERATION OF HAAS HALL ACADEMY AMENDMENT REQUEST**

14 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Ms. Summons.

15 MS. SUMMONS: Haas Hall Academy at The Lane has
16 submitted an amendment request to relocate the
17 existing campus at 121 West Poplar Street to Peaks
18 Development at 2807 Ajax Avenue. We have Dr.
19 Schoppmeyer on the Zoom.

20 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay. Can we get the Zoom on
21 the main -- yeah. There we go.

22 DR. Schoppmeyer, if you'll stand and raise your
23 right hand. Do you swear that the testimony you're
24 about to give is the truth, the whole truth and
25 nothing but the truth?

1 DR. SCHOPPMAYER: Yes.

2 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Is there anyone else who is
3 going to on behalf of the charter?

4 DR. SCHOPPMAYER: (Shaking head left to right)

5 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay. All right. You may
6 begin.

7 DR. SCHOPPMAYER: I don't have a presentation
8 today, but I do have some recent accolades that I
9 think -- I think I would like to share with the
10 committee if that's all right. Haas Hall Academy has
11 been rewarded -- a reward school for the ninth
12 consecutive year: top five percent in performance
13 and top five percent in growth. We are a success
14 school. All four of our campuses received a letter
15 grade of A on the report card. For twelve
16 consecutive years, Haas Hall Academy has been
17 recognized by U.S. News & World Report as the No. one
18 public high school in the state. Due to a
19 challenging academic curriculum, Haas Hall Academy is
20 recognized as one of the most challenging schools in
21 the nation for twelve consecutive years. Haas Hall
22 Academy is ranked the No. one school district in the
23 state of Arkansas. Our Bentonville, Fayetteville,
24 Rogers and Springdale campuses received accolades
25 from AP as a 2023 honor roll Platinum. The only

1 school in the state of Arkansas to receive this
2 distinction. That's all I have.

3 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you very much.

4 DR. SCHOPPEMEYER: I'm open for questions.

5 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Let's see, do we have any
6 questions?

7 Dr. Moore, do you have any questions?

8 DR. MOORE: I do not.

9 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay. Ms. Newton?

10 MS. NEWTON: (Shaking head left to right)

11 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Mr. Baldwin?

12 MR. BALDWIN: No.

13 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay. Ms. Saracini?

14 MS. SARACINI: (Shaking head left to right)

15 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Dr. Wright-McMurray?

16 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: No questions.

17 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay. Any discussion? Oh,
18 Mr. Davis, I apologize.

19 MR. DAVIS: No. No questions. That's okay.

20 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Any discussion?
21 Okay. Then I'll entertain a motion.

22 MR. BALDWIN: I move we approve the request as
23 presented.

24 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Do I have a second?

25 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Second.

1 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. I have a motion by
2 Mr. Baldwin and a second by Dr. Wright-McMurray. All
3 those in favor?

4 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

5 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Any opposed? Any abstentions?
6 All right. Motion passes. Thank you very much.

7 DR. SCHOPPEMEYER: Thank you very much.

8 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Let us fill out our voting
9 sheet real quick.

10 All right. We'll start with Mr. Davis.

11 MR. DAVIS: Yes. I support Haas Hall's charter
12 request to relocate one campus in order to better
13 align with student population and offerings for
14 students.

15 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Dr. Moore.

16 DR. MOORE: I vote to approve Haas Hall's --
17 Haas Hall Academy's amendment request to relocate.

18 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Ms. Saracini.

19 MS. SARACINI: I support the request to relocate
20 the existing campus of Haas Hall Academy.

21 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Ms. Newton.

22 MS. NEWTON: I support the request for that
23 based on the fact that they have justified the
24 relocation and any questions surrounding.

25 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Dr. Wright-McMurray.

1 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I support Haas Hall
2 Academy's amendment request to relocate campuses.

3 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: And then, Mr. Baldwin.

4 MR. BALDWIN: I voted in favor of the motion in
5 support of the relocation of the Rogers campus. I
6 believe that such relocation can benefit student
7 recruitment and retention.

8 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you very
9 much.

10 **III.5. CONSIDERATION OF THE ACADEMIES OF WEST MEMPHIS DISTRICT**
11 **CONVERSION CHARTER APPLICATION RENEWAL**

12 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Ms. Summons.

13 MS. SUMMONS: Okay. Academies of West Memphis
14 district conversion renewal application. The
15 district is requesting a renewal for five years. The
16 campus serves grades ten through 12. The current
17 enrollment cap is 1,300 students. The Charter will
18 follow the traditional education model and we do have
19 representatives from West Memphis here this morning.

20 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you. All those who plan
21 on speaking on behalf of the Charter please stand and
22 raise your right hand. Do you swear that the
23 testimony you're about to give is the truth, the
24 whole truth and nothing but the truth?

25 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

1 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you very
2 much. You may begin.

3 DR. BROWN: Good morning. How is everybody
4 doing this morning?

5 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Doing well.

6 DR. BROWN: Good morning. I'm Terrence Brown,
7 and I am the superintendent of the West Memphis
8 School District. In the West Memphis School District
9 our goal is to prepare 100 percent of our graduates
10 for their futures beyond graduation. We are making
11 strides toward academic and economic enrichment for
12 our students and community. We are providing our
13 children with advantages and environment where
14 socioeconomic disadvantages often prevail. We're
15 giving them a chance to see beyond just the high
16 school diploma.

17 The West Memphis School District has experienced
18 change since the last time we stood before this
19 panel. With these changes have come the benefit of
20 new perspectives and ideals for the continuing --
21 continued development of our school.

22 One thing that has not changed is our belief in
23 the potential to provide life-changing opportunities
24 to our students through college, career and technical
25 education. We look forward to expanding our programs

1 and certification offerings through both the ASU
2 Mid-South campus and the Academies of West Memphis
3 campus. We hope that you share our vision and grant
4 us a renewal to continue this great work in the Delta
5 region of Arkansas. And I'd like to present our
6 super -- I mean, our Superintendent, I may be
7 speaking something into existence -- our principal,
8 Mr. Jimmy Sloan.

9 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Good morning.

10 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Good morning.

11 MR. SLOAN, JR.: I am Jimmy Sloan, Jr. I am the
12 principal of the Academies of West Memphis. And with
13 us today we have Katie Hutton, she's up one of our
14 business teachers; Tracy Panicola is our math coach;
15 Tamika Burnett is our sophomore counselor; Susan
16 Waggener is our assistant principal; and Senator
17 Reginald Murdock is here in support of our efforts as
18 well. I would like to say also thank you to the
19 Panel for this opportunity to make the case to have
20 our charter status extended for the next five years
21 at the Academies of West Memphis.

22 This is the mission statement for the Academies
23 of West Memphis -- everything we have done, are doing
24 and will do as we move forward, has its point of
25 origin in this mission statement -- we aim to prepare

1 our students to be successful anywhere in the world
2 with the hope that many will keep their skills and
3 talents in West Memphis as we build a brighter future
4 together. We are a public school, and our job is to
5 prepare every student that comes into our doors.

6 This map shows the percentage of students below
7 the age of 18 living in poverty in the state of
8 Arkansas. West Memphis is in the heart of the
9 highest percentage of students living in poverty in
10 the entire state. Some of our students come to us in
11 the midst of generational poverty. This level of
12 poverty creates disadvantages for our students,
13 including high mobility, homelessness and low
14 engagement. Because of this poverty, a large
15 percentage of our high school students work to help
16 support themselves and their family, which create a
17 false sense of economic stability, causing them to
18 devalue continuing their education. Some of our
19 students come to us attempting to be the first in
20 their family to ever graduate high school yet others
21 come trying to be the first in their families to ever
22 graduate from college. Some of our students, as well
23 as their parents, often come to us with very low
24 expectations for their own futures.

25 A little over a week ago, sophomore counselor

1 Tamika Burnett and myself were having a counseling
2 session with the student; and when I got to the part
3 of that session where I so often asked, what did you
4 plan to be doing at the age of 30, the young man's
5 response was at the age of 15 that he had no
6 expectation to live to see the age of 30.

7 For years, the plan to address these issues has
8 been to get everyone college educated. High School
9 was set up with the idea in mind of getting everyone
10 off to college. Educators believed that this was the
11 route out of poverty for all those who were enduring
12 poverty. But the data points out that only 24
13 percent of the population of the state of Arkansas
14 has a bachelor's degree or higher. That same data
15 shows that only 14 percent of the population of West
16 Memphis has a bachelor's degree or higher. That
17 leaves 86 percent of the population of West Memphis
18 needing another pathway out of poverty.

19 We are of the mindset that 100 percent of our
20 students should leave the high school with a pathway
21 that leads them out of poverty and into being a
22 productive member of society whether they plan to
23 attain a two- or four-year college degree, attend a
24 technical college, attain CTE certification or enter
25 the workforce directly out of high school. So we

1 have provided dual tracks for our students to travel.
2 Some choose to travel the college route, and some
3 choose to travel the technical route and we do have
4 those who choose to travel both. The results of this
5 dual-track mindset and system has increased our
6 graduation rate to be competitive with some of the
7 best in the state. We have put into place a system
8 that prepares college-bound students in such a way
9 they graduate from the Academies of West Memphis
10 knowing that they can be successful in any college in
11 the country.

12 We also have established and continue to build
13 on network innovations that will connect us and our
14 students to the best opportunities the world has to
15 offer. We are producing a prepared workforce for
16 West Memphis and the world. This will give our city
17 the tools it needs to attract businesses that will
18 provide for better economic development opportunities
19 as we move forward.

20 This is a snapshot of the dual-track system that
21 we have at the Academies of West Memphis. Our
22 college and career track is at the top in blue. Our
23 traditional delivery is at the bottom in red. The
24 next several slides will be a more thorough breakdown
25 of each of these pathways.

1 We provide the following programs, events and
2 activities to support our students and prepare them
3 to be successful -- for a successful college
4 experience ending with a college degree. Some of the
5 things we do include, but are not limited to, we
6 provide transportation to over 400 students every day
7 to and from ASU Mid-South for college courses and CTE
8 courses. We provide college visits and tours
9 throughout the state. So far this year, we've taken
10 our students to the University of Arkansas Pine
11 Bluff, we've taken busloads of students to the
12 University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, Arkansas
13 State University, as well as Henderson State
14 University, with plans to take them to even more
15 campuses as we move forward into the school year.
16 Our plan is to expose our students to as many college
17 opportunities as we possibly can.

18 When we're not in the business of taking our
19 kids to colleges, we go about the business of
20 bringing colleges to our kids in the form of career
21 fairs and college fairs. The college fair that we
22 host on our campus, we brought over 30 universities
23 and colleges to our campus to have our students
24 exposed to what the college experience would be like.
25 We have a number of our students who, because they

1 showed up with their credentials in their hands, were
2 given scholarship offers and offers for financial aid
3 at the college fair at our campus. We also took
4 several busloads of our students to the Shelby County
5 Schools College Fair, which housed over 60
6 universities and colleges throughout the state of
7 Tennessee, Arkansas and Mississippi. We also provide
8 weekend workshops for our college bound students
9 before every ACT to help prepare them for the ACT
10 that they're about to encounter.

11 We have an ACT summer boot camp. It's a
12 two-week intensive program taught by content experts
13 for students taking the June ACT. We have four
14 career coaches that we house at the Academies of West
15 Memphis to assist our college bound students with
16 scholarship preparation. They also assist them with
17 financial aid and FAFSA and they assist with the
18 filling out of college applications to make sure that
19 none of those are a hindrance to our students who
20 desire their college experience.

21 These are the course opportunities currently
22 provided by our partners at ASU Mid-South. When we
23 renewed our Charter in 2018, ASU Mid-South had 14
24 pathways that our students could choose at that time.
25 COVID caused a major drop in college enrollment that

1 forced ASU Mid-South to drop several other programs
2 in order that they might cut costs. We are in the
3 planning stages of building our own CTE facility so
4 that we can have campus -- house our programs on our
5 campus and provide some of those pathways that were
6 lost at ASU Mid-South as well as create new ones and
7 -- to make available to our students. We want to
8 give our students access to as many industry
9 recognized certifications as we possibly can.

10 Over the last five years, students from the
11 Academies of West Memphis have received 14,150 credit
12 hours at ASU Mid-South. That amounts to 1.2 million
13 in tuition saved at the rate of \$92 per credit hour
14 which is the current rate at ASU Mid-South. With the
15 average cost of \$394 per credit hour for the colleges
16 in the state of Arkansas, that raises the savings
17 amount for the families of students of the Academies
18 of West Memphis to \$5,577,464 over the past five
19 years.

20 As the college started removing programs, the
21 students started losing opportunities to obtain those
22 certifications that we value so much. Even with the
23 loss of programs, we have had over 400 industry
24 certifications earned by Academy of West Memphis
25 students over the past five years. Doctor West the

1 president of ASU Mid-South was not able to be here
2 today, but she did want to send words of support in
3 the form of a letter; and it reads as follows: "I'm
4 writing to you in enthusiastic support of the
5 Academies of West Memphis which was the first
6 conversion charter school in the state to marry a
7 high school and a community college. Over the past
8 five academic years, students in the West Memphis
9 School District have graduated with their high school
10 diplomas as well as with more than 14,000 hours of
11 college credit and more than 400 post-secondary
12 credentials. These are credentials that they can
13 either put to work immediately or use as the
14 foundation for additional education and training
15 after high school. Many of these students would
16 likely have never have sought post-secondary
17 education and training on their own due to the time
18 constraints and cost commitments. But the conversion
19 Charter provides them the opportunity to get a jump
20 start on their future at a time and cost saving to
21 their families. Students are gaining the career and
22 technical skills they need to secure gainful
23 employment locally; however, those skills are also
24 practical and transferable no matter where their
25 futures take them. For all these reasons and more,

1 we at ASU Mid-South value the relationship we have
2 with the Academies of West Memphis and I'm so proud
3 that the conversion charter model pioneered here in
4 Crittenden County has become the model for other
5 similar programs throughout the state. We are
6 especially grateful that our partnership is creating
7 such a positive difference in our school, in our
8 community and for our students."

9 One of the students earning a certificate was a
10 student named Greg Mosley. He started in his pathway
11 while he was a student at the Academies of West
12 Memphis. He continued his chosen path as a diesel
13 tech and Greg is now an instructor at ASU Mid-South,
14 the very school that he started his journey on.

15 Another student who has taken advantage of the
16 opportunities at the Academies of West Memphis
17 through the criminal justice pathway is a student by
18 the name of Hailey. On December 8th, 2023, through
19 the Arkansas Department of Corrections, she
20 graduated. And she wrote a letter to Mr. Brown, our
21 criminal justice instructor, saying "With the
22 assistance of Mr. Brown, I've gained valuable and
23 unforgettable skills and knowledge that has guided me
24 through my journey." Hailey tells us that she will
25 now be living her dream job for the remainder of her

1 life. It is also important to note that Haley was
2 one of our IEP students.

3 Just last week we watched three of our former
4 graduates receive their nursing pens, having
5 completed the programs they began while they were
6 students at the Academies of West Memphis, and each
7 of them are now registered nurses.

8 These are the current courses offered at the
9 Academies of West Memphis campus. Our CTO -- CTE
10 courses lead to skill development, increased
11 knowledge and workplace preparation. We offer three
12 programs of study through our business department,
13 two programs of study through our family and consumer
14 science, two programs of study through trade and
15 industry and one program of study through computer
16 science. All of our programs of study lead to
17 certification. Our students are able to earn the 75
18 hours of community service through our career and
19 technical student organizations.

20 Our goal is to put into place several additional
21 programs that would spark student interest and
22 provide industry recognized certifications when
23 successfully completed. One of our most successful
24 courses is our personal finance. Dr. Cheryl Ring
25 program ranked sixth in the nation in the year 2021;

1 and then first in the nation for back-to-back years
2 in 2022 and 2023. Doctor Ring is currently reigning
3 as the National Teacher of the Year for W!se Personal
4 Finance for the Year of 2023.

5 As we expand our CTE program at the AWM campus,
6 we will be able to offer these pathways that were
7 once offered at ASU Mid-South without the restraint
8 of ACT requirement or minimum GPA's. This will make
9 these pathways available to so many more of our
10 students without those obstacles that they sometimes
11 face when transitioning to the college. So we fully
12 expect this number to be much higher at the
13 conclusion of the next five years.

14 These next several slides present our
15 achievement data. Our ESSA grade is a D. We were
16 only a couple of points away from a C. But we do not
17 run from nor deny our letter grade. But we also do
18 not let our letter grade dictate what we can do as a
19 campus. Moving our school up from this D is at the
20 forefront of everything we do at the Academies of
21 West Memphis. We know that we have to get every
22 stakeholder on board with a solid plan and a
23 willingness to work if we're going to improve our
24 letter grade. Our parents have to know and believe
25 in the plan that we devise. Our students have to

1 know the plan and believe in it. Our staff, our
2 school board and superintendent have to know and
3 believe in the plan that we devise to move our
4 students forward. We all have to be willing to do
5 our part to execute the plan. Our community will
6 play a vital role in moving our campus forward. To
7 this end, we have recently held five community events
8 to share our vision for our school with our
9 community, as well as to gain feedback from our
10 community.

11 Our graduation rate is strong, but it can be
12 stronger. It will be stronger, not because more
13 students walk across the stage, but because of what
14 they walk across the stage with. They will walk
15 across the stage in four years with a plan. They
16 will have the knowledge and skills needed to fulfill
17 that plan. They will have the confidence they can
18 now finish their journey to a better life that is
19 above the poverty index.

20 We take our students where they are when they
21 come to us, and we start building a plan for success
22 for each student that comes into our building. We
23 are 10/11/12 building. When our students come to us
24 from 9th grade, we take their test data. This
25 current group, it was the ACT aspire and we take the

1 NWEA scores from junior high and we start developing
2 an individualized education plan for each student
3 that enters our building. We placed the students
4 reading below a 6th grade level into a critical
5 reading course so that they can work on foundational
6 reading skills to improve their reading level.
7 Because we realize that is essential to performance
8 at the high school level. We placed those who score
9 less than ready on the ACT Aspire in math, science or
10 reading in Ready math, Ready science and Ready
11 English courses to drill down in the areas of their
12 specific deficits.

13 We provide tutoring for our students seven days
14 a week. We also provide transportation for our
15 students to each and every tutoring section --
16 session. During tutoring students are able to work
17 directly with content area teachers in specific areas
18 of weakness.

19 We are indeed excited about the ATLAS assessment
20 because we feel we have a standard based target that
21 we can prepare our students to hit. Our teachers are
22 already assessing that platform for information and
23 writing it into their lesson plans how it is to be
24 provided to use it for exposure to our students every
25 day as we move forward.

1 Even though we cannot control how our students
2 come to us, our growth from the point they arrive to
3 the time they leave is among some of the highest in
4 the state. In 2023, our literacy growth score was
5 82.88. It was the third highest in that area among
6 poverty -- high poverty schools. We move our
7 students to this extent in less than 150 days before
8 they take the state mandated exam on our campus, and
9 we continue to grow them until they graduate from our
10 campus. We feel our students are trending in the
11 right direction and we would love the opportunity to
12 continue this trend with a solid plan and the
13 relentless pursuit of betterment for our students.
14 With that, I say thank you and I will be more than
15 happy to answer any questions you may have.

16 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you. I believe we will
17 have our legal review and then we'll open it up for
18 the questions.

19 Mr. Reynolds.

20 MR. REYNOLDS: Stephen Reynolds, staff attorney
21 for the Department. I'll just go in order on the
22 legal review. So waiver topic No. one is the
23 attendance. The Charter is seeking to waive Arkansas
24 code § 6-18-213 (f) (2), had no legal concerns about
25 that. I did have one note. This waiver would allow

1 the Charter to collect ADM funding for students that
2 they aren't providing services for. Just -- that's
3 just kind of the reality of waiving that section.
4 Waiver topic No. two is class size. The Charter is
5 seeking to waive Arkansas code § 6-17-812, the
6 standard for accreditation 1-A.5 and DESE rules
7 governing class size and teaching load; I don't have
8 any legal concerns with that. Waiver topic No. three
9 is teaching load. The Charter is seeking to waive
10 standard 1-A.6 and the DESE rules governing class
11 size and teaching load; I don't have any legal
12 concerns with that. Waiver topic No. four is clock
13 hours. The Charter is seeking to waive the standard
14 for accreditation 1-A.2; I don't have any legal
15 concerns with that. Waiver topic No. five is a
16 flexible schedule. The Charter is seeking to waive
17 Arkansas Code § 6-16-102 except A-5; I don't have any
18 legal concerns with that. Waiver topic No. six is
19 the instructional day. The Charter is seeking to
20 waive standard for accreditation 1-A.4.2; I don't
21 have any legal concerns with that. Waiver topic No.
22 seven is teacher licensure. The Charter is seeking
23 waive of Arkansas Code § Section 6-15-1004, Section
24 6-17-309, Section 6-18-401, Section 6-17-418, Section
25 6-17-902, Section 6-17-908, Section 6-17-919, the

1 standard for accreditation 4-D.1 and section 7 of the
2 rules governing educator licensure; I don't have any
3 legal concerns with that. The Charter -- these are
4 the -- those are the waivers that the Charter is
5 seeking to continue.

6 And the Charter is requesting to rescind the
7 following waivers -- I'll just go by waiver topic.
8 Waiver topic No. one is attendance. This -- I don't
9 have any legal concerns with that; this rule was
10 repealed. Waiver topic No. two is curriculum. I
11 guess I have to go through the -- the actual
12 standards. The standard for accreditation, 1-A.1.3.1
13 and 1-A.1.3.7; I don't have any legal concerns with
14 that. The waiver topic No. three is board of
15 directors -- is Arkansas Code § 6-13-609; I don't
16 have any legal signs with that. The statute was
17 repealed. Waiver topic No. four, superintendent
18 licensure, that's the standard for accreditation
19 4-B.2; I don't have any legal concerns with that.
20 Waiver topic No. five is the principal. It's
21 Arkansas Code § 6-17-302, standard 4-C.1 and standard
22 4-C.2. I don't have any legal concerns with that.
23 Waiver topic No. six is school counselor. The
24 Charter is seeking to rescind standard 4 -- the
25 standard for accreditation 4-E.1 and 4-E.2; I don't

1 have any legal concerns with that. Waiver topic No.
2 seven is library media program. It's Arkansas code §
3 6-25-103; I don't have any legal concerns with that.
4 Number -- waiver topic No. eight is the library media
5 specialist. Arkansas Code § 6-25-103, standard for
6 accreditation 4-F.1 and 4-F.2. I think this was a
7 typographical error. I think the correct code
8 section was supposed to be 6-25-104 and I'll get the
9 Charter to confirm that.

10 Is that the -- is it the right waiver? Was it
11 supposed to be -- so this was 6-25.

12 MR. WALTER: Good morning, Dr. Sutherlin,
13 members of the panel. Tripp Walter, staff attorney
14 APSRC. On behalf of the Applicant, I would ask that
15 under waiver topic eight to be rescinded that that --
16 the -- the statute -- statutory reference from
17 6-25-103 be changed to 6-25-104.

18 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

19 MR. REYNOLDS: I don't have any legal concerns
20 with that. Waiver topic No. 9 is a comprehensive
21 school counseling plan. The Charter is seeking to
22 rescind the standard for accreditation 2-C.1 and
23 2-C.2; I don't have any legal concerns with that.
24 And waiver topic No. 10 is monitoring procedures to
25 ensure curriculum alignment. The Charter is seeking

1 to waive standard 1-A.3; I don't have any legal
2 concerns with that.

3 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right.

4 MR. REYNOLDS: And with that, I'm done.

5 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you.

6 Yes. Dr. Wright-McMurray.

7 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. I do have a couple
8 questions about a few of the waivers. So I don't
9 know if Stephen is going to come back? And they're
10 just more little clarification points.

11 First, I would like to say thank you to the
12 Charter for rescinding those waivers that you feel
13 like you no longer need. So that means you dug and
14 did some work and realize what you can do and can't
15 do. So I do appreciate that. I just need a little
16 bit of clarification.

17 The first waiver you mentioned on attendance,
18 you made a comment that they could receive funding
19 for students that they're not serving. Can you
20 please provide a little bit more detail on how that
21 would happen or --

22 MR. REYNOLDS: Right. So that's -- that
23 statute, that section is for the requirement for a
24 school district to drop student after ten days of
25 consecutive absences. And so theoretically, waiving

1 that section would allow the district -- or the
2 student to remain enrolled in the district even
3 though they're not attending school. And so if -- as
4 long as a student is still enrolled, the district is
5 still getting foundation funding for them even though
6 they're not actually at the school.

7 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Is that typical?

8 MR. SLOAN, JR.: I can speak to that.

9 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

10 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yes.

11 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Yeah. Thanks.

12 MR. SLOAN, JR.: That's not a waiver that we use
13 very much at all. But dealing with the high mobility
14 of our students, what we typically do is at three,
15 five and nine days, we reach out to the family of any
16 student that we cannot contact or has missed those
17 many consecutive days. And what we so often find is
18 that that student has been relocated, sometimes with
19 a friend or relative, or we have found students in
20 other states. But after the ninth day we turn it
21 over to our district wide truancy board, and they
22 make an effort to reach those students before we
23 actually drop them.

24 But once we turn them over to the district
25 level, we only have one day left before they would

1 drop from the roll and once the student drops, you
2 know, the chance of them graduating in four years
3 pretty much diminishes completely. And the chance of
4 them graduating in five years greatly diminishes.
5 And we realized that if we could just get two to
6 three more days for our district board to reach out
7 and find these students, and it gives us a chance if
8 it's something that we can assist the student with
9 that's keeping the kids from coming to school, we
10 would like to correct that and get them back in
11 school rather than drop them. Because once they know
12 they've lost basically a semester, their whole
13 mindset changes as it pertains to education.

14 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Do you have other questions on
15 that one because I have question related to that?

16 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I'll let you ask your
17 questions and if I have a question --

18 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay. So I guess my question
19 would be, in terms of the deadlines for when that
20 happens -- and you said three, six and nine -- what
21 would happen if you backed that timeline up for
22 turning it over to the district?

23 MR. SLOAN, JR.: That is a possibility. We
24 could turn it over sooner. And that's just what we
25 have been doing up until this year. We've always at

1 the ninth day, we do the home visit with either our
2 truancy officer or admin. And if we can't find that
3 kid by the ninth day, we turn it over to the district
4 level, but that is something that we could consider.

5 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: And I say that only because I
6 can see -- not to say that it would happen, but there
7 could be some mistakes made in terms of, you know,
8 dropping the student. If that's not in place with --

9 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Correct.

10 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: -- you know, with the waiver.
11 Dr. Wright McMurray?

12 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So that was my next
13 question is -- potentially if we could do something
14 different with the timeline to where we could, you
15 know, provide more of that flexibility for you in
16 that realm versus carrying it all the way through.
17 I'm just not sure that's --

18 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: And that would be a district
19 policy.

20 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

21 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Correct. And the other thing
22 that I would like to make the Panel aware of as well
23 is our -- we drop at ten. The only time that there
24 would be anything different is if we went to the
25 counselor and specifically said, we're still trying

1 to locate this particular kid for whatever particular
2 reason we may have. Otherwise, they do drop all
3 students after ten consecutive days.

4 DR. MOORE: I have an additional question about
5 this. I'm not familiar with that statute, so I
6 didn't know about that, so it might be outlined
7 further in that statute. But like, what's the limit
8 on that? Like, if a student misses -

9 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Usually, no more than two or
10 three days. We just try to give our district team at
11 least a couple days to come behind us because they
12 have more resources that they -- our resources come
13 from our building, but the district resources, they
14 are able to be out in longer periods of time
15 searching down these students. So we try to get them
16 at least two to three days to try to locate those
17 students.

18 DR. MOORE: Okay. Because with this statute,
19 this might be a legal question -- would this allow
20 someone to miss 25 days?

21 MR. SLOAN, JR.: No.

22 DR. MOORE: The statute allows that?

23 MR. REYNOLDS: Yeah. I mean, the -- so the
24 requirement is the ten days. And so if you waive
25 that requirement, then theoretically it could be, you

1 know, any time that the school could be -- have a
2 student enrolled and they're not showing up to
3 school.

4 DR. MOORE: Could -- could a waiver mention that
5 -- put some limit on that? I'm just uncomfortable
6 that carte blanche of oh, they could just miss the
7 whole semester.

8 MR. REYNOLDS: Yeah. I mean, the CAP can limit
9 the waivers and -- and provide, you know -- the Panel
10 can limit the waivers and provide, you know, some
11 sort of accountability structure within the waiver or
12 cannot grant that specific waiver as part of the
13 application.

14 DR. MOORE: Apparently it was approved before,
15 but that just -- I'm not familiar with that; that
16 just sounds -- caught me off guard.

17 MR. BALDWIN: I was wondering why it was
18 approved before that seems --

19 MR. REYNOLDS: I couldn't tell you that.

20 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Ms. Saracini.

21 MS. SARACINI: Well, I just want to clarify
22 because when you get into that and say they enroll
23 somewhere else, which it happens all the time --

24 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Uh-huh.

25 MS. SARACINI: -- I'm just thinking back in my

1 old position at a large district, you know, so
2 they're going to do schools. I mean, if we just have
3 an open-ended, it becomes a money issue too.

4 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: And also a data issue.

5 MS. SARACINI: Yes. Because if they're enrolled
6 here and they're still receiving funds so it stays on
7 the books and the longer, you would receive that
8 entire amount all year long? Whether they come back
9 or not when you waive this.

10 MR. REYNOLDS: Yeah. And I didn't have any
11 legal concerns with -- I mean, that's not a legal
12 question. It was just more of a -- I flagged that
13 just for the CAP's attention. So --

14 MS. SARACINI: So I will --

15 MR. REYNOLDS: Yeah, sure.

16 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I will say that I -- I do
17 understand --

18 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Yes, ma'am.

19 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- your explanation and
20 your rationale. So I'm not saying that I'm not
21 supportive of that because I do understand that when
22 students feel as if their options are limited, then
23 they start to check out; we don't want that to
24 happen.

25 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Correct.

1 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: However, I -- I'm like my
2 colleagues, I'm just not as comfortable with the idea
3 of just there being kind of --

4 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Open ended.

5 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- an open-ended --

6 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Yes, ma'am.

7 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- date on that. So I
8 would be more comfortable if we could figure out a
9 way to meet the needs of what you need to do to
10 support our kids, but then also what we need to do to
11 make sure that data is clean and that we're not
12 having any physical concerns.

13 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Because there is no -- it's
14 open-ended, so we're willing to rescind that waiver
15 and we'll make some changes on district policy to
16 give our district group a chance to get started,
17 maybe a little earlier so that we can still try to
18 reach those students before it gets to the point
19 that's critical.

20 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: I think that that is a good
21 decision. Yeah. I appreciate that.

22 Any other questions? Yes.

23 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Sorry.

24 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Dr. Wright-McMurray.

25 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And then this is just also

1 more just a little bit more detail or more -- yes,
2 sir -- clarification. So I'm looking under teaching
3 load and the explanation for CTE is that teaching
4 role may need to be increased in instances where
5 career pathway has a large number of students and
6 interested in participating. Do you mind just
7 providing a little bit more detail or an example of
8 what that would look like?

9 MR. SLOAN, JR.: We have not gotten to that
10 point. We anticipated that it could -- depending on
11 what pathways we bring into the building -- kids have
12 a tendency to flock to what's popular and we don't
13 want to have to turn a student back because they
14 exceed the number that that teacher can have. But we
15 have not had that issue yet. Probably the closest
16 that we have right now is our criminal justice
17 program and he's pretty close to maxed out, but we
18 have not had that issue as of yet. But that's why we
19 did ask for that particular waiver.

20 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

21 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: And if teaching load is
22 exceeded, is there compensation for the teacher?

23 MR. SLOAN, JR.: That has not been discussed,
24 no.

25 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yeah. I just wondered, you

1 know, because if the program does become very popular
2 and the teacher has an enormous amount of students
3 that -- that might be something to consider.

4 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Okay.

5 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yeah. Uh-huh.

6 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Which was my next question
7 which you -- and then just one more comment, sorry.
8 No, go ahead.

9 MR. SLOAN, JR.: So we do have -- the waiver
10 would require us to pay for extra students and so
11 that was an error on my part.

12 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

13 MR. SLOAN, JR.: So that teacher would be
14 compensated --

15 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay.

16 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

17 MR. SLOAN, JR.: -- for those extra students.

18 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

19 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And then my last waiver
20 question. Again, it's a relationship to CTE and the
21 clock hours, and it looks like you're speaking of
22 internship --

23 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Yes.

24 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- and where students may
25 not make their hours?

1 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Yes. On campus.

2 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. So -

3 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Some of our students will do
4 half of their day at the campus. Typically by the
5 time they're senior, it's their English and math that
6 they're pursuing. And then we would give them that
7 credit for that afternoon working with their partner
8 we have partnered them up with as it pertains to
9 which particular pathway they may be traveling.

10 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So it's more so they're
11 not going to make the hours on campus --

12 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Correct.

13 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- but they're making
14 their hours. It's just it may not be on their --

15 MR. SLOAN, JR.: On campus.

16 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- campus.

17 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Yes, ma'am.

18 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: But they will be making
19 their full hours to get the internship credit, which
20 is the 120 hours?

21 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Through -- right. Either
22 through directly through an internship or an
23 employment that is a result through their internship.

24 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Which is aligned to the
25 course?

1 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Correct.

2 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

3 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Ms. Saracini, do you have any
4 questions?

5 MS. SARACINI: No.

6 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Mr. Baldwin?

7 MR. BALDWIN: I appreciated your -- your report
8 and especially the comparisons to the other school
9 districts in the area and the -- the growth
10 percentage was I thought very good; but I do want to
11 talk about the letter grade.

12 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Yes, Sir.

13 MR. BALDWIN: Have you been a D-rated program
14 since the beginning?

15 MR. SLOAN, JR.: We were at one point of C and
16 then we fell right after that to a D, and then we did
17 COVID and we're now in the process of trying to
18 rebound.

19 MR. BALDWIN: And you said you were real close
20 to a C, how --

21 MR. SLOAN, JR.: We were a C.

22 MR. BALDWIN: You were a C?

23 MR. SLOAN, JR.: We were a C and then we fell to
24 a D and then COVID and now we're in the process of
25 trying to get back to that C and beyond that we once

1 were.

2 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. And you had said that you
3 were closing the gap to the C.

4 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Yes, sir.

5 MR. BALDWIN: I was wondering, how far are you
6 right now from the C?

7 MR. SLOAN, JR.: We were two points with the
8 last ACT Aspire data that we received.

9 MR. BALDWIN: What -- what leverage do you need
10 to pull in your perspective to close that gap and how
11 long do you see that taking?

12 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Well, every group of 9th
13 graders we get is different. So what's this
14 particular group strong suit may be the next group's
15 weakness. So our ELA and math has to improve. It
16 carries a great deal of weight for our score. So
17 we're talking about foundational issues that we have
18 to address as a district and put solid plans in place
19 at the secondary level, to get these students moved
20 from the time they get to our building in August
21 until they test in April. So all the tutoring, all
22 the drill down, all the specific IEPs that we do for
23 our students, it's what we're doing to try to move
24 that letter grade. But it really is a foundational
25 issue. I don't think there's any magic dust. It's

1 going to take us rolling up our sleeves, getting
2 these kids exposed to high-level instruction, engaged
3 in their own educational process and I think that's
4 what's going to move us to the next letter grade.

5 MR. BALDWIN: Well, I encourage you to -- to
6 make that effort. I think you don't ever want to get
7 content.

8 MR. SLOAN, JR.: We are not content with being a
9 D.

10 MR. BALDWIN: Thank you.

11 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Thank you.

12 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Ms. Newton?

13 MS. NEWTON: Just a segue -- or comment to Mr.
14 Baldwin's question and comment. I want to
15 congratulate you on the resources and the supports
16 that you have put in place for your students.

17 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Thank you.

18 MS. NEWTON: I think that those things are
19 critical to their success, so -- and critical to
20 moving forward -- but more often than not, some
21 resources are not available to help shore up students
22 and their families, and what they need. So I want to
23 say I think that is a critical piece in the puzzle
24 for the Academy, and I want to congratulate you and
25 your staff on having that available.

1 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Thank you. Thank you.

2 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Dr. Moore?

3 DR. MOORE: Okay. So I want to applaud you on
4 your growth. In the past, I've worked some with West
5 Memphis School District in mathematics.

6 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Yes, ma'am.

7 DR. MOORE: And I know what a challenge it is at
8 the high school level because I'm -- I really
9 appreciate when you said we take students how they
10 come to us.

11 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Yes, ma'am.

12 DR. MOORE: And --and I remember those days. I
13 remember working with Ms. Wagner and -- and how
14 challenging is when a student is coming to you at the
15 level that they're at and you're trying to get them
16 up in geometry and algebra 2. And I know the
17 challenges that you face there, and I appreciate the
18 growth because that's -- that's what you're really
19 looking for when a student is coming to you at that
20 level, you're looking to get that growth. So that is
21 great.

22 I do have questions about -- I appreciate the
23 opportunity for students to have concurrent
24 enrollment and earn certificates and certifications
25 both, but why have those gone down so much? The

1 numbers have dropped drastically. I know you did
2 mention that Mid-South closed some programs, but even
3 the programs that they still have, it looked like a
4 lot of those numbers were down.

5 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Well, one of the obvious
6 reasons they went from 14 programs to six that they
7 now offer and we're in the process now trying to get
8 some of those where we can house them in our -- on
9 our campus so that our students can gain access to
10 those programs that will cause our numbers to go up.
11 And the program is about popularity. You have got to
12 offer what kids want. We don't force our kids to go
13 out to the college and say you're going to have to go
14 take this because -- and some of the programs that
15 they got rid of were some of the more popular
16 programs. So the kids are not as into -- we do great
17 with our med pro and our diesel, but those are by far
18 the two most popular programs that they have at the
19 college right now. So we got to get some high
20 interest programs that end with industry recognized
21 certifications on our campus so that all of our kids
22 will have an opportunity to find a pathway that they
23 choose not one that we force them into.

24 DR. MOORE: And so, like, concurrent numbers I
25 believe we're down as well. Is there anything that

1 points to what concurrent credits were down?

2 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Can't put my finger on a
3 specific as to why our concurrent numbers dropped
4 other than when we did go through the COVID ordeal,
5 we ended up going virtual and a lot of students went
6 home and we're still working on getting students used
7 to being back out of the home and into the classroom.
8 And that pertains to the college as well.

9 DR. MOORE: Thank you.

10 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Mr. Davis?

11 MR. DAVIS: Yes. First of all, thank you for
12 what I consider to be a very thorough and very good
13 presentation. I do want to talk about just a couple
14 of things and then -- and then a couple of questions.

15 The first thing is I want to say, you know, way
16 to go in regards to your growth score. I'm somebody
17 who's always interested in the growth score, and you
18 all are doing -- you're doing well when it comes to
19 that and taking students as you mentioned who come to
20 you and moving them forward. The other thing in
21 doing just a little bit of my work on the background
22 side is the college credit rates. You all are doing,
23 I think, exceedingly well when you look at the number
24 of students who are receiving college credit and
25 that's across demographic; right? Even your low-

1 income students are receiving above state average
2 college credit and all other demographics as well.
3 So I first want to say, you know, way to go in
4 regards to that.

5 Where there are concerns, I think my Panel
6 members have sort of asked those questions. One is
7 around the letter grade -- and we may want to just
8 double check there the letter grade that's reported
9 in My School Info is actually about four points away
10 from that next letter grade right -- kind of right
11 there in the middle is what they have you at. And so
12 we may need to look at making sure that we are
13 updating in a timely fashion so that the most
14 relevant information is there.

15 And then, of course, you know, I -- I'm going to
16 call out and I think you're right about how -- I
17 appreciate how you're thinking about the education
18 that you're providing to students. Ensuring that
19 they have the opportunity if they're interested in
20 accessing some type of post-secondary college
21 education, those students are able to do so, but also
22 placing an emphasis on students who are interested in
23 going another path and ensuring that they have what
24 they need. So I want to say congratulations on
25 thinking about those things that way. Now with that

1 being said, you know, I love the idea of the things
2 you have offered in regards to your ACT prep, but
3 you're still in a situation where those students are,
4 you know, behind I think what the capabilities are
5 based upon the amazing programming that you're
6 providing those students.

7 And the one question I do have -- and feel free
8 to respond to anything that I've said. I know I'm
9 just sort of putting a lot out there. But the one
10 question I do have I want to hear a little bit more
11 about this facility and when you plan on this -- the
12 CTE work and happening on campus. I appreciate you
13 being proactive and understanding that the
14 partnership may not get you what you need, therefore
15 there are some things that you would need to do on
16 your own campus. Can you talk to me just a little
17 bit more about where you are in that process.

18 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Yes, sir. Well, I will start
19 that response and I will let -- Dr. Brown is probably
20 going to be in a better position to tell you the
21 exact timeline. We've already started the process of
22 looking at what some other facilities do. We went to
23 Benton, and we took a look at what they have there,
24 which is absolutely amazing. And we really want to
25 take bits and pieces from some of the best programs

1 and centers in the state as it pertains to what we're
2 going to try to build and provide for our students in
3 West Memphis. So we're in the very early stages of
4 getting that done, but even when the college was
5 providing for our students at the best that it could,
6 there were still restrictions that came with it
7 because it was a college campus and we had to respect
8 the atmosphere that they were trying to protect with
9 adults coming into their building who were, you know,
10 they were spending money, they were customers. So we
11 understood the GPA requirement and some of the other
12 things. But we want to provide a state-of-the-art
13 facility on our campus that can offer everything that
14 the college did without the restrictions. Now what
15 we're going to spend for that and when we're going to
16 be able to build that, I will yield to Dr. Brown.

17 DR. BROWN: Good morning. Again, thank you for
18 your question. We're at the at the tail end of,
19 like, a \$100,000,000 five-year building plan and so
20 there has not been a building campus in the school
21 district that has not been touched. And so right --
22 as we complete this part of the building phase, we've
23 come to recognize that we need to upgrade our CTE
24 facilities on campus. That's a much older building.
25 So we are in the planning stage this year to see if

1 we want to replace the building or if we will be
2 allowed to -- the state will allow us to update it
3 because the building was grandfathered in. This
4 older building was grandfathered in, and so that's --
5 we are in the preliminary planning stages.

6 But we completed -- and I -- and I'm kind of
7 speaking in chunks -- once we finish our second
8 junior high -- our first junior high was completely
9 finished this year and it is being opened. We have
10 another junior high that's using the facilities on
11 the high school campus. That -- once they -- that
12 building is complete, they will move back to their
13 building and then we'll have an opportunity to
14 remodel that space and redo this space. So this is a
15 planning year. And it will be within the next 18 to
16 24 months before we are completely finished and that
17 will be -- depend on whether the state says, you
18 know, we're not going to grandfather that anymore,
19 you have to replace it or if we're able to just
20 simply remodel the CTE building as it as it stands.

21 One other piece to it, we have a junior high
22 that that was closed that we are remodeling and we
23 we're going to move some offices and some programming
24 that exists on the high school campus to that
25 building and that will free up space for some of the

1 -- and one new building on the high school campus
2 that can be used for CTE offerings, especially around
3 STEM education and some of our other programming. So
4 we're on the move. We're just waiting as we complete
5 the huge investment to the tune of, like,
6 \$100,000,000 and then we can move on to the next
7 part.

8 MR. DAVIS: Yeah. Fantastic. Thank you for
9 that. I don't know -- and I -- you might have said
10 this already, had you -- have you had the opportunity
11 to visit the Ignite program at the Bentonville School
12 District? Is that --

13 DR. BROWN: I think that -- I have not.

14 MR. DAVIS: And if not -- I mean, if not, I, you
15 know, I want to go ahead and extend that invitation.
16 I'll be more than happy to make the connection with
17 the superintendent Debbie Jones there. They have an
18 outstanding program now. Granted, I know Bentonville
19 is different from West Memphis. I'm not -- I -- I
20 understand that. But some of the things you're
21 wrestling with in regards to how to think about
22 programming --

23 DR. BROWN: Yes, sir.

24 MR. DAVIS: -- and what that might mean, those
25 sort of questions were also asked there. And, you

1 know, I know it might be an aspirational push, but it
2 might be something that, you know, helps begin to
3 round the thinking on some of these items.

4 DR. BROWN: And I want to clarify my comment. I
5 have not visited the campus. All right. So -- okay.
6 You said Bentonville? Which one did you? They --
7 okay. So we've not visited the Bentonville campus.
8 The team did go to Benton to see their campus. And
9 so yes -- I appreciate that.

10 MR. DAVIS: Yeah. And once again, I just want
11 to offer that opportunity. I'll be more than happy
12 to make that connection and even, you know, kind of
13 spend some time with you if necessary if you were
14 able to make it to this side of the state and kind of
15 show you what is happening on this side of the state
16 just once again from an aspirational and learning
17 perspective --

18 DR. BROWN: Yes, sir. We accept your
19 invitation.

20 MR. DAVIS: -- but I appreciate all the great
21 work you're doing.

22 DR. BROWN: Thank you.

23 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

24 DR. MOORE: I have an additional question. Oh.

25 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: I think Ms. Saracini had a

1 question.

2 DR. MOORE: I'm sorry. I apologize for --

3 MS. SARACINI: I just want to say thank you for
4 your presentation. It was great.

5 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Thank you.

6 MS. SARACINI: Thank you for y'all reaching out
7 to me about licensure because I didn't have any
8 questions today. So thank you so much for that, that
9 clarification. That helps tremendously when we can
10 have those conversations before.

11 I just want to make -- I am hesitant because --
12 I know Dr. Davis looks at it too -- we look at where
13 we are and right now we are at a D. I don't have a
14 -- I just have pause with five years still, maybe
15 coming back within three and seeing where we are
16 then. That's just my only
17 concern/pause/thought/suggestion?

18 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Any other thoughts from other
19 members?

20 DR. MOORE: About that or just --

21 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: About that.

22 DR. MOORE: So is that an option to approve for
23 three instead of five?

24 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: We -- we could.

25 MS. SARACINI: I think it would give us a

1 chance. They put things in place, and we can see
2 that growth then.

3 MR. BALDWIN: I like that idea.

4 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Dr. Wright-McMurray, any
5 thoughts?

6 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I didn't have a thought.
7 I have a comment on something else, but --

8 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay.

9 DR. BROWN: And may I speak to that? I -- and I
10 think that's a generous offer and we thank you. We
11 -- our preference would be the five, so kind of -- so
12 we could work with our entire class, but we would be
13 more than interested in accepting the interim or
14 being asked to provide interim updates on a regular
15 basis if that's -- if that would be helpful to the
16 committee. You know, and I do understand and respect
17 your concern around the five year.

18 MS. NEWTON: My -- my comment on that is I'm
19 leaning toward -- I would lean toward the five years.
20 We have the --

21 DR. BROWN: I appreciate that.

22 MS. NEWTON: -- ability to come in and to look
23 and to see what's happening. But I think what five
24 years does is it gives you a longer runway --

25 DR. BROWN: Yes.

1 MS. NEWTON: -- you know. And so you're always
2 looking -- those variables that have happened, you
3 know, at the point that we're seeing. So we look at
4 their plan, their curriculum and their support. So
5 I'd be more inclined to think that, like I say, with
6 a longer runway and the opportunity to look further
7 into what's down the road and still with the
8 Department having the capability to be able to look
9 at any time to see if that's something that needs to
10 be reconsidered. But if I were in your shoes --

11 DR. BROWN: Yes.

12 MS. NEWTON: -- I would like to have that
13 flexibility to be able to look long-range as opposed
14 to what -- a shorter period.

15 DR. BROWN: And I concur with that, and I
16 appreciate the offer too. We would prefer the longer
17 length of time, but we are -- we are very much open
18 to giving regular status updates related to
19 performance or any specific targets that the
20 committee has.

21 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Is there any other discussion
22 around that before we move to Dr. Moore's question?

23 Dr. Moore?

24 DR. MOORE: I was wondering -- I may have just
25 overlooked it in the application, but I didn't hear

1 or read anything about the WorkKeys, and I was just
2 wondering how that is panning out in your school
3 because Crittenden County is a work-ready community
4 and that's, like, a real opportunity for students to
5 earn a credential and especially since credential
6 numbers are down.

7 MR. SLOAN, JR.: We originally had all of our
8 seniors go through the WorkKeys as we were partnering
9 up with the community. That was last year; we have
10 not had that opportunity to get all of our seniors
11 through that on this year. But we do understand the
12 potential and opportunity that it opens up having
13 that credential in their tool bag when they walk
14 across the stage. So that is something that we try
15 to invest time into.

16 DR. MOORE: Yeah. I -- I would highly recommend
17 ensuring that all students take that just as much as
18 you do the ACT. And of course, with new legislation,
19 there's more of a focus on that anyway. But I think
20 the original intent of that legislation

21 (INDISCERNIBLE) English would have said for all
22 students to take it --

23 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Yeah.

24 DR. MOORE: -- not just it, be offered as an
25 option so highly encourage that.

1 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Yes, ma'am.

2 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Dr. Wright-McMurray?

3 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Just a couple of comments
4 and a couple of suggestions and a few more questions.
5 So -- Chair Sutherlin knows that I usually have a lot
6 of questions. So --

7 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Yes, ma'am.

8 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So just give me that that
9 latitude, please. So first you have a shining star
10 in your district that I feel like can greatly support
11 your graduation rates.

12 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Yes, ma'am.

13 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So I was looking at your
14 JAG data. And so for those of you that may not be as
15 familiar, Jobs for Arkansas Graduates is program
16 designed to support our students that may have some
17 type of barrier to graduating on time with their
18 peers. And just this past year, JAG National went
19 from a five-to-five model to a six-to-six, which
20 means that they have increased the number of outcomes
21 you have to obtain to be seen as an exemplary
22 program. West Memphis was designated as an exemplary
23 program. The graduation rate requirement from the
24 National Office is 90 percent of students that are in
25 JAG have to graduate on time with their peers, which

1 means in four years.

2 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Yes, ma'am.

3 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So West Memphis had 100
4 percent of the students that are in JAG graduate on
5 time with their peers. So in looking at your four-
6 year graduation rate, it looks like it's about 85.8
7 is what's listed here.

8 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Yes, ma'am.

9 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I would encourage you to
10 lean more into the JAG program, the JAG model. Many
11 of our schools that have a larger number of students
12 that would qualify for JAG sometimes offer two
13 programs in the school so that you can get more
14 students into the program and increase your outcomes.
15 I even pulled the further graduation. So further
16 graduation -- for -- further education speaks to
17 students getting credentials certifications beyond
18 the high school typical classroom instruction or
19 diploma, and the national standard is 35. You guys
20 were 37, so you outpaced the national standard as
21 well. And then they also added this past year that
22 JAG has to follow all students after graduation to
23 see how they're doing. And that connectivity rate is
24 at 90 percent. You guys were at 100 percent. So I
25 feel that you have a exemplary model that's within

1 your district that can help you with some of your
2 outcomes. So I would lean into that a little bit
3 more and if possible, try to see if you can add a
4 program --

5 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Yes, ma'am.

6 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- within your school so
7 that you have more students that can be in that
8 process and get those supports because Ms. West,
9 who's your JAG specialist, obviously is doing a
10 wonderful job. And so you have somebody in place
11 that if you do add another specialist that can be a
12 great mentor to the next person.

13 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Yes, ma'am. Thank you.

14 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So additional questions
15 that I had, just a little bit more detail looking at
16 your SMART goals. And again when CTE is mentioned,
17 you know, my eyes and ears perk up. So Goal 3, you
18 want to increase the number of students that are
19 earning certifications. Can you give us a little bit
20 more detail on what are going to be some of those
21 actionable things that you anticipate putting in
22 place so that we can see those outcomes received?

23 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Yes, ma'am. As far as trying
24 to get them -- again, going back to the replacing
25 what we lost at the college, we feel like we if -- if

1 we get just the eight programs they lost back on our
2 campus, that in itself will get more students
3 certified. We currently -- we're looking at -- the
4 State sent out a list of some of the most high demand
5 job markets that we could put students into. So
6 we're looking at adding programs from that list to
7 our campus so that we can increase that number of
8 students who graduate with certifications. But we're
9 still in the building phases. We're looking for room
10 to put those build --those students so that we can
11 offer those programs on campus. Like Dr. Brown said,
12 that's why we're so excited about our junior high
13 getting off our campus this year so that we can open
14 up another part of our campus to get some of these
15 programs up and going. But we're currently looking
16 at which ones can be reinstalled into our campus at
17 what phase of the building? Which ones can we get in
18 while we have our CTE lab available to us now as is
19 with the modifications? And we have a building of
20 four classrooms right now that has been used to house
21 a different program that's going to be moved. And
22 we're looking at what programs would we be best
23 benefited to move into that building as far as, you
24 know, materials needed to house the program. We know
25 that the heavy lifting, like, auto mechanics and all

1 that we're going to have a space all that's on for
2 that. So we are looking at some things that we can
3 do in that building as it is to try to get programs
4 back on campus as quick as possible.

5 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And then your goal for
6 where you're planning to add five additional CTE
7 pathways.

8 DR. SLOAN: At a minimum.

9 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. Can you just walk
10 us through a little bit, how did you select these
11 pathways that you're planning on adding?

12 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Some of those are based
13 strictly off student popularity, things that students
14 saw and had a interest in, but you know sometimes
15 what the students have the highest interest in if it
16 does not end with an industry credential, it's really
17 not to their benefit necessarily to add those
18 programs. So what we're trying to do is we're going
19 to try to merge what they have an interest in and
20 what the State says is going to getting your
21 credential that's going to get you a job when you
22 graduate. So, you know, we have to make an adult
23 decision on those, but what those five programs going
24 to be are are still yet to be determined. But it
25 will -- we will take into consideration what the

1 students want. But we'll also take into
2 consideration what the students need so that they can
3 graduate high school with a plan that's going to help
4 them get above the poverty index.

5 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And you're basing the
6 students desired pathways off of -- what process are
7 you using to identify the --

8 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Student surveys.

9 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

10 MR. SLOAN, JR.: We did student surveys. We did
11 student surveys; we did community surveys, and we had
12 all that information as to what the students wanted.
13 I mean, our students have a a burning desire for
14 cosmetology, and we really want to try to give them
15 that. But at the same time, we got to look beyond
16 high school, what credential will you actually
17 graduate with cosmetology? What percentage of our
18 population will it touch? So we have to take all
19 those things into consideration before we go and put
20 in the leg work and move a building around to where
21 we can accommodate cosmetology. So we want to take
22 that into consideration, but at the same time, we
23 have to do what's going to be most beneficial and
24 efficient for the students that we serve.

25 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So at what point are

1 students surveyed? Like, in -- like, what part of
2 what grade?

3 MR. SLOAN, JR.: It was -- it was all grades.
4 It was -- it was across the curriculum when we did
5 the surveys. It was 10th, 11th and 12th. We don't
6 have ninth grade in our building.

7 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

8 MR. SLOAN, JR.: So it was 10th, 11th and 12th
9 when we did the surveys.

10 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. And are student
11 success plan is a part of this process, or no?

12 MR. SLOAN, JR.: It was not. No, it was not.
13 We look at our student success plans and what they
14 planned for, but that was not part of the -- what we
15 were using to determine what pathways we were
16 thinking about bringing to the campus.

17 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So the reason why I was
18 kind of trying to get a little bit more detail on the
19 process that you're using to get to one the pathways
20 that you selected and then when our students being
21 engaged to think about those pathways is because the
22 structure of the CTE programs of study and how we
23 want students to move through pathways. And so
24 ideally the best scenario is students are able to get
25 enrolled in those pathways beginning, say, in the

1 ninth grade. Then they're able to take that
2 foundational course that then leads to the different
3 levels and then when they get to that 12th grade
4 year, they're either in that Level 4 or they're
5 getting a workplace center experience. And the
6 reason why I think that's extremely important for
7 specifically your district is because when we look at
8 our outcomes for students that are identified as
9 concentrators, those are taken two or three courses
10 and two more courses in a pathway, and then those
11 that are completers, those that are graduating
12 through pathway, we do continue to see those gaps for
13 our students that are in some of our what we consider
14 to be special populations.

15 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Yes, ma'am.

16 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And so that's why I would
17 strongly encourage them. If we can have those
18 conversations earlier with our students --

19 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Yes, ma'am.

20 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- so that they also have
21 as much of an opportunity as their peers to be able
22 to enroll in a pathway and then be able to be
23 concentrators and completers because we see that's
24 where the true strength of outcomes happens for our
25 students: higher graduation rates, higher post-

1 secondary education, higher economic growth and
2 development once they graduate from high school is
3 when they engage early. So that's why I was asking
4 all those questions --

5 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Yes, ma'am.

6 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- to try to encourage you
7 to be able to do that earlier so that all of our
8 kiddos can have the best opportunity to succeed and
9 pursue through a CTE pathway effectively.

10 MR. SLOAN, JR.: And I -- and I agree 100
11 percent that that process needs to start with our
12 freshmen. And with the building leaders that we have
13 with our two junior highs now, those conversations
14 have been had about how we could become one
15 coordinated effort to get our babies where they need
16 to be. This is my first year as the building
17 principal. So we're trying to build this as we go,
18 but there are conversations being had with our junior
19 high buildings about what is in the best interest of
20 our ninth graders as they prepare to enter into the
21 tenth grade. What can you do to best prepare them
22 for their completion or their concentrated status in
23 the ninth grade? So we are having those
24 conversations.

25 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So I would encourage you

1 to work very closely. I saw you have four career
2 coaches.

3 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Yes, ma'am.

4 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So I would encourage you
5 to work very closely with them so that they can carry
6 that message earlier to your students. And if --
7 when possible, engage them in when you are making
8 selection of those pathways so they can be educating
9 students on what's coming.

10 MR. SLOAN, JR.: What possibilities.

11 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So they're not getting
12 into the tenth or 11th grade and saying oh, I'd love
13 to do this, but they've missed two valuable years
14 where they --

15 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Yes, ma'am.

16 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- could be affected.

17 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Yes, ma'am. And we do have our
18 freshman seminar where we do expose them to all the
19 things that we offer, either at the high school --
20 and then we'll bring all the freshmen up and they'll
21 get to walk to campus and see the different things
22 that we offer. And then we offer a career fair where
23 they go to the college, and they get to walk the
24 campus of the college and see what all -- so they get
25 exposed in the junior highs, but not to the extent

1 that we would like for them to be exposed. So we're
2 trying to build on that.

3 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Thank you.

4 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Yes, ma'am.

5 DR. MOORE: Sorry. I just have one more little
6 thing. I was looking at your math course offerings
7 and just something you may want to consider in the
8 future since you're -- have such a strong CTE focus,
9 is to consider the technical math because it doesn't
10 -- I know you're not offering that at least it wasn't
11 offered to this --

12 MR. SLOAN, JR. : Right.

13 DR. MOORE: -- current school year. That might
14 be a great opportunity for students since you're --
15 have such a focus on --

16 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Yes, ma'am.

17 DR. MOORE: -- career and technical. It counts
18 as a fourth math even beyond algebra 2, so it's a
19 great opportunity for students.

20 MR. SLOAN, JR.: We would definitely consider
21 that.

22 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Other questions? Mr. Baldwin?

23 MR. BALDWIN: Yeah. I'd like to go back to
24 Doctor Brown's comment about being willing to provide
25 periodic reports and I wanted to kind of talk a

1 little bit about what that would look like. And so
2 what I was thinking -- and you were talking about
3 five years or three years. I know you'd prefer five
4 and I would too if I was you. That gives you some
5 time. What I would like to see or think about would
6 be understanding three or four or five key drivers of
7 the grade and what you all are going to do to affect
8 that. And I understand every -- every class is
9 different and so -- but you'll have to factor that
10 into this. But to have something that we could look
11 at periodically that would be more than just what we
12 see here because I look at this and I don't know. We
13 look at all the grades for all the schools and don't
14 have anything detailed in here. And so I would like
15 to see what you all are focused on to go from a D to
16 a C and see how you're progressing along that line.
17 Is that -- is that the type of report you were
18 thinking about, something that --

19 DR. BROWN: First of all, thank you again for
20 the question. We'd be willing to collaborate on
21 whatever sort of data that this committee would need
22 to better understand where we're going. But in terms
23 of the type of reporting, I think it's an opportune
24 time for this because we're moving from the ACT
25 Aspire to the ATLAS, and so we this new -- this

1 renewal would correspond with that and we could then
2 offer up real-time or end-of-the-year data, apples to
3 apples, so you could see where we were are -- where
4 we are in a timely manner.

5 MR. BALDWIN: I have no doubt you all are
6 focused on this, but I also know there's a lot that
7 you've got to do every day. And so I've always found
8 for myself as a banker, you know, we look at numbers
9 a lot and when we have improvements to make, I like
10 to get reports that showed me how I'm doing. Because
11 there was a lot of, you know, my day was busy and so
12 is yours. So if there's a way to collaborate like
13 you say -- and I don't have an answer, I just have a
14 thought about how we can help you maybe with what
15 you're doing and maybe report -- a proper report
16 would be a way to do that?

17 MS. NEWTON: I have a question connected with
18 that.

19 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yes, Ms. Newton?

20 MS. NEWTON: So with a five-year renewal, would
21 we be prohibitive to do what you're asking as opposed
22 to a three-year or five-year? Would we still have
23 the same ability to be able to monitor or put into
24 place conditions where -- I just think that in
25 planning, I -- I've seen the information and the

1 supports. I know that COVID dealt us all a wretched
2 hand and in light of the fact that you were seeing --
3 you're so close to seeing, I like that -- if I were
4 an administrator, I'd like to have that extra. Also,
5 built into that is the ability for us to put those --
6 those conditions in place. And that's just --

7 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: And the ability is there.

8 MS. NEWTON: Right. Right. So --

9 MR. BALDWIN: That's really where I was headed.
10 I'm fine with five years if we're going to have a
11 progressive reporting -- reports.

12 MS. SARACINI: I think I am too. As long as we
13 can come back and keep monitoring.

14 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: And at any point in time, we
15 could do that.

16 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So for my clarification,
17 what are we deciding? Sorry.

18 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: So the -- the discussion was
19 around a five-year renewal, but with reporting built
20 in so that could -- we could determine at what point
21 we would want that reporting. Now, you know, it
22 could be at 2 1/2-year reporting it could be a
23 two-year reporting, it could be a three-year
24 reporting. Whatever this body decides.

25 MR. BALDWIN: And I think it might be even --

1 because I think the report has to be appropriate. It
2 has to be more detailed than this.

3 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Well, and I think --

4 MR. BALDWIN: So --

5 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: I think too -- to
6 Dr. Wright-McMurray's point -- the SMART goals that
7 they have laid out, those should be what we are
8 looking at too, is your progress towards those SMART
9 goals.

10 MR. BALDWIN: So maybe this Panel's thought
11 would be to ask DESE and the school district to come
12 together and figure out what works for everybody and
13 not try to set that right now because I don't think
14 we know enough right now --

15 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Right.

16 MR. BALDWIN: -- to do that.

17 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Because that was -- sorry.
18 Because I didn't want to get too much into -- I just
19 focused on the ones that were -- it was all about me
20 -- on the CTE for the for the goals. But it would
21 have been helpful -- it would be helpful going
22 forward if I can see where you feel like you are,
23 where you feel like you would like to be --

24 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Uh-huh.

25 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- because -- that's why I

1 was trying to ask a little bit more detailed
2 questions about those two goals because I needed a
3 little bit more actionable activity that was going to
4 take place and then also to kind of see what was
5 going to be your goal if you are given the five-year
6 -- at the end of the five-year, what would that
7 outcome look like?

8 MR. SLOAN, JR.: Uh-huh.

9 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So those would be some
10 things that I would want to see going along because
11 part of it is -- I did greatly appreciate you sharing
12 the amount of resources and services and supports
13 that are in place. But I just need to kind of get it
14 -- the chance to kind of figure out if we put in more
15 things, what's going to be the outcome for those
16 pieces? Because it seems like we're still having
17 some challenges and with that being in place there
18 and just trying to get my mind reconciled around what
19 do we need to have happen to -- to see movement?
20 Because I feel like the work is there. You guys are
21 putting in the resources and you're coming up with
22 great interventions, but we're still struggling for
23 some reason trying to figure out how to right that
24 shift. So --

25 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: And I think to Mr. Baldwin's

1 point, if we can get you all together collaborating
2 with the Department to, you know, maybe even flush
3 out those -- those SMART goals a little bit more so
4 that whenever we have -- or review -- we can look at
5 those and see if we're meeting those SMART goals.

6 DR. BROWN: It makes sense.

7 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yeah.

8 MS. NEWTON: Well, I have a motion if you're
9 ready?

10 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Any other discussion before we
11 motion.

12 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I don't think so.

13 CHAIR SUTHERLOIN: All right, Ms. Newton.

14 MS. NEWTON: All right. Taking into
15 consideration all the comments and remarks and
16 recommendations, I move to approve the application of
17 the Academies of West Memphis for five-year renewal
18 of their charter.

19 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: And did we want to build in
20 the reporting feature?

21 MS. NEWTON: And the report -- I thought I said
22 that.

23 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Oh, okay.

24 MS. NEWTON: Including reporting requirements.

25 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right.

1 DR. MOORE: I second.

2 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I did have the -- a
3 question.

4 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Dr. Wright-McMurray.

5 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: What -- well, my question
6 is, what -- what is the timeline for them coming back
7 to give the reporting? Does it -- do we need to
8 include that in -- sorry. Do we need to include that
9 in the motion -- the timeline for them to come back
10 and report?

11 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: I think there --

12 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- for us and --

13 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: -- needs to be some --

14 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- then for also for them
15 to be able to know what to prepare for.

16 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: I think there needs to be some
17 clarity around that.

18 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

19 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: So do you --

20 MS. NEWTON: And I'm open to recommendations
21 because my understanding is, is that Ms. Summons and
22 her folks are in the process of doing that anyway, so
23 I don't want to appoint artificially.

24 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Oh, yes. Yes.

25 MS. NEWTON: You know, to say in a year into

1 when that's already ongoing. I don't know. It may
2 not be, but that's the impression I have to say --
3 here's what you asked for and here's how we need it
4 as opposed to setting -- and I'm not like I say, I'm
5 not an educator; I'm social worker.

6 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Well -- and I think, you know,
7 we are doing reporting at this point, but we're not
8 really, you know, as far as the -- the unique
9 situation here where we're doing a direct
10 collaboration if that's something we want to see
11 happen, we can include that in the motion.

12 MS. NEWTON: I take the recommendation of the
13 Board, you know, in that area, especially the CTE
14 connected people.

15 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Uh-huh.

16 MR. BALDWIN: I like the -- I like the direct
17 collaboration and the details because this doesn't
18 give us anything; it just gives us the grade. And so
19 I think the details would be most helpful to you all.

20 MS. NEWTON: So does that an even amendment or
21 --

22 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: I think we need an amendment
23 to the motion.

24 MR. BALDWIN: Oh, I'm lost on that.

25 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: -- so do we want to say --

1 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Maybe we can start over.

2 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: So I'll voice it -- and then

3 if you agree with it --

4 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

5 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: -- then --

6 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

7 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: -- so do we want to have a

8 five-year renewal with a report that is done in

9 collaboration with the Department that takes place

10 halfway through the five-year period, so 2 1/2 years?

11 Is that --

12 MS. NEWTON: I said what you said.

13 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay. You said what I said?

14 Okay. All right. So I have a motion. Do I have a

15 second?

16 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Second.

17 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. All those in

18 favor?

19 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

20 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Any opposed?

21 Uh, oh. Mr. Davis was that -- was that for in

22 favor?

23 MR. DAVIS: Aye. I approved.

24 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Oh, okay. It -- there was a

25 little lag there and we weren't quite sure.

1 So any opposed? All right. The motion passes.
2 Let us fill out our voting sheets and
3 congratulations.

4 All right. We'll start with Mr. Baldwin.

5 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I voted in favor of the
6 requested five-year renewal accompanied by letter
7 grade improvement progress report presented to the
8 Charter Panel at the midpoint of the five-year term
9 with such report determined in collaboration between
10 DESES and the Academies of West Memphis.

11 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Dr. Wright McMurray.

12 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I voted for -- I support
13 the Academics of West Memphis request for a five-year
14 renewal with an ADE collaboration report presented to
15 CAP in 2.5 years.

16 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Ms. Newton.

17 MS. NEWTON: I voted in favor of the renewal
18 based on comprehensive -- a comprehensive plan to
19 increase the capacity of students to get credentials
20 in demand occupations.

21 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Ms. Saracini.

22 MS. SARACINI: I support the renewal of the
23 Academies of West Memphis conversion charter with the
24 stipulated conditions.

25 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Dr. Moore.

1 DR. MOORE: I support the Academies of West
2 Memphis request to continue their charter for another
3 five years under specified conditions, including
4 working closely with DESE and set monitoring and
5 review by the Charter Authorizing Panel. The Panel
6 would be remiss not to acknowledge the letter grades
7 of the feeder schools to the Academies of West
8 Memphis. I commend the Charter's growth scores and
9 encourage their perseverance to also increase their
10 achievement scores under the new ATLAS testing. I
11 highly recommend that all students complete the ACT
12 WorkKeys assessment for the opportunity to earn the
13 NCRC.

14 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Mr. Davis.

15 MR. DAVIS: I approve the motion to renew the
16 Charter -- the conversion Charter for the Academies
17 of West Memphis in order to provide pathways for
18 students in the region to post-secondary
19 opportunities with the reporting stipulations.

20 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you very much. All
21 right. Well, congratulations. Thank you all so
22 much.

23 I think we're going to take maybe just a quick
24 break about ten minutes and then we'll come back for
25 the -- the next part.

1 (WHEREUPON, after a break was taken, the
2 proceedings were resumed as follows to-wit:)

3 **III.6. 2023 CHARTER SCHOOL DATA**

4 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: So we will call this meeting
5 back to order. Our next presenters are Ms. Tiffani
6 Grayer and Mr. Jeffery Fetters.

7 MS. GRAYER: Good morning --

8 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Good morning.

9 MS. GRAYER: -- Mr. -- Dr. Sutherlin, Panel, we
10 are glad to be here with you today. We are -- this
11 is -- I am -- sorry. I'm the director of school
12 performance and monitoring. My name is Tiffani
13 Grayer and I'm here with Mr. Jeffery Fetters. He is
14 the coordinator of monitoring.

15 And --

16 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Good morning.

17 MS. GRAYER: -- we are here to go over some of
18 the 2023 State and Federal Accountability Data with
19 you today. So just a brief overview of our
20 accountability system here in Arkansas. We do have a
21 timeline for releasing data here in Arkansas.
22 Usually in -- in October, we release our ESSA School
23 Index and our public-school rating reports which
24 includes the A to F letter grade and also the school
25 recognitions and rewards.

1 I would mark your calendars that that will be
2 delayed in 2024. Due to the change in assessment, we
3 will have to go through standard setting, setting new
4 cuts for A to F and all of that. So just be mindful
5 that we will have late reporting next fall.

6 In October, we also send out notification
7 letters to districts who have been identified in the
8 bottom five percent for comprehensive support and
9 improvement and also to schools who have consistently
10 underperforming subgroups within their schools; and
11 the State's definition of consistently
12 underperforming means that the subgroup has scored in
13 the bottom one percent for the current year and for
14 two prior years. That's an annual notification the
15 comprehensive support, additional targeted support
16 and the various levels of comprehensive support.
17 That's on a three-year rotation. The last time
18 schools were identified was 2022, and so the next
19 identification round will be ESSA Cycle 3 which will
20 happen in 2025. So we will determine exit criteria
21 based on the current formula for those schools, just
22 to maintain some consistency there.

23 In December, so just last Friday, we pushed out
24 the Commissioner memo related to the exhaustive
25 school report card which is a combination of state

1 and federal reporting values. Some of these go into
2 the accountability measure, some of them do not.
3 That does have more values, including teacher quality
4 values, school expenditure values; it does breakdown
5 assessment data by grade level and gives you crosstab
6 reports. So if you want to see the percent in need
7 of support at the district level for mathematics that
8 data value is there, but you do have to wait till the
9 school report card is released. That's also where
10 you can see the district level percent of need of
11 support for reading. So some of those data metrics
12 do come in a little later in the school year.

13 By April, that school report card will be
14 finished on the state side, so some of our data comes
15 in late through Cycle 5, such as our annual school
16 board training hours and some other metrics. So the
17 federal piece is due by December 31st. The state
18 piece is due by April 15th. And this year we're
19 actually -- we were monitored by U.S. ED on our
20 report card, had very minimal findings and got
21 praised by the Feds on our compare and analyze
22 features that we have available to schools and to our
23 stakeholders. And we have fixed all of those minimal
24 findings that that they had for us.

25 So the ESSA School Index is comprised of

1 multiple robust indicators. We have gone through a
2 procedure where we have asked for feedback for all --
3 from all stakeholders, including Arkansas educators,
4 district leaders, parents, families, all of those
5 different stakeholders that we provide our reports to
6 see how we could maybe make our system better. But
7 we have been living under this system for about seven
8 years now, ever since we've adopted that ACT Aspire.
9 So we are looking for ways to expand on what we are
10 currently doing and make that better.

11 So right now the weights for ESSA calculation at
12 the K-8 level, I don't believe you'll see any major
13 shifts. But right now we have weighted achievement
14 coming in at 35 percent, value added growth coming in
15 at 50 percent. And those measures are really
16 including ELA and mathematics. Now the growth you
17 have that EL component, the progress towards English
18 language proficiency that counts proportional in our
19 growth model. So the more English learners you have
20 within a school, the more they count towards growth.
21 So basically, they're counting twice in your growth;
22 they're counting once per content; they're counting
23 once in their progress towards English language
24 proficiency. So if a school has 100 percent English
25 language learners, it'll be half and half content

1 versus progress towards English language proficiency.
2 If the school has zero English learners, that all --
3 that whole growth measure will come from their
4 content. The SQSS right now currently features
5 student engagement, which is chronic absenteeism,
6 science growth, science achievement and reading at
7 grade level.

8 At the high school, you see the weights there.
9 We have an -- the additional SQSS components such as
10 college and career readiness measures, such as ACT,
11 on-time credits, AP/IB concurrent credit measures,
12 things of that nature. But then we also have a four-
13 year adjusted cohort graduation rate and a five-year
14 adjusted cohort graduation rate. So for schools who
15 are struggling with graduation, it's very important
16 for them to be mindful about how they're enrolling
17 their students. And that there's -- those students
18 are on time when they leave the school or district.
19 If the student is not on time, that student remains
20 at that school, in that school's cohort, until either
21 the receiving school can catch them up and graduate
22 them on time. Or, you know, if they -- if they left
23 on time and they could provide sufficient
24 documentation, they would come off.

25 Our school rating is just a direct

1 transformation from the ESSA School Index Score.
2 These cuts were set back in 2017/2018 when we were
3 establishing our ESSA system and now that we are
4 doing a rehaul to all of our standards, our
5 assessment and now our accountability system, we will
6 be looking at setting new cuts. But those cuts were
7 established years and years ago and they had -- they
8 do not move from year to year. So now that you're
9 seeing more D and F schools, that is truly the impact
10 that the pandemic had on school scores. So prior to
11 that you saw more of a normal bell curve or even
12 perhaps a skewness towards more A and B and C schools
13 and less D and F. Now that -- that whole
14 distribution is just shifted.

15 So these are all charters within the state and
16 they're color coded based on the letter grade that
17 the schools received. The Fs are showing up as red
18 dots; the Ds are showing up as orange dots and the
19 size of the data points are based on the enrollment
20 at the school. So that large orange circle in
21 Northwest Arkansas is actually ARVA so that's why it
22 has such a large dot. The students may not all
23 reside there. They reside all over the state, but
24 that's where their headquarters are.

25 This is another way to look at that geographic

1 spread of the districts. The ones showing up in
2 gold, those are our district conversion charters
3 versus the ones showing up in blue those are our open
4 enrollment charters. So what's interesting about
5 this, this is their ESSA School Index scores from
6 2023. And what's kind of interesting about this
7 distribution is while the majority of our district
8 conversion charters are sort of all located near the
9 center of the distribution, the open enrollments are
10 kind of -- kind of more widespread near either their
11 ranking near the top of the spread or they're more
12 towards the lower end of that distribution. So the
13 open enrollment seem to be really high performing
14 schools or more of the lower performing schools. The
15 state average is not on here, but you just can kind
16 of relate to -- one school to the other.

17 I'll turn it over to Jeff. He's going to
18 highlight some schools that were performing above and
19 beyond in 2023.

20 MR. FETTERS: I get the pleasant news --
21 pleasant task. So every year the Office of Public
22 School Accountability recognizes schools that have
23 made progress in the four areas pertaining to ESSA
24 and that would be school letter, grades weighted
25 achievement, the value-added growth score and the

1 overall ESSA School Index Score. So I just want to
2 take a few minutes and share some of these charter
3 schools with you today.

4 The first one is Fayetteville Virtual Academy, a
5 district conversion charter, and they increased their
6 letter grade from B to an A and gained nearly eight
7 points on the ESSA School -- their overall ESSA
8 School Index Score.

9 The next one is DRIVEN Virtual Academy. Again,
10 they increased their letter grade from a D to a C and
11 gained over seven points on their overall ESSA School
12 Index Score. This again kind of just explains that
13 they improved in both of those two components.

14 MS. GRAYER: Can I add something?

15 MR. FETTERS: Yeah, sure.

16 MS. GRAYER: So while we are recognizing these
17 two schools, I want to make a -- an additional
18 comment. These schools also had to increase by five
19 or more points, so there are additional charters that
20 increased their letter grade or may have increased
21 their ESSA score. But these two schools met both
22 conditions simultaneously.

23 MR. FETTERS: So just looking at that weighted
24 achievement component those two schools, Fayette
25 Virtual Academy and Driven Virtual Academy, also

1 increased their weighted achievement scores. And
2 additionally Cabot Panther Academy you can see
3 improved 19 points on their weighted achievements.
4 So -- this is coming from the statewide summative
5 assessment scores. And also ResponsiveEd Solutions
6 Premier High School of Springdale gained almost 30
7 points, so that's also a pretty pronounced
8 achievement.

9 And finally we had two schools that scored more
10 than two standard deviation points above the mean of
11 80 in 2023 and those would be Haas Hall of
12 Bentonville and Haas Hall Academy at The Lane. So
13 congratulations to all those schools.

14 Thank you.

15 MS. GRAYER: Yeah. It's always good to hear
16 something positive in our reporting. So I know you
17 guys are interested in the D and F schools,
18 especially the D and F charters that we have. So we
19 had 12 charter schools, and these are combined
20 open-enrollment and district conversion that had an F
21 in 2023, compared to only ten in 2022. We had 31
22 charters combined open enrollment and district
23 conversion that earned a D in 2023 compared to 27 in
24 2022. Four of these schools, however, were new
25 charters and did not have any reporting data prior to

1 2023. So that explains the uptick in numbers, and I
2 have provided you guys with a list of the charters
3 with D's and F's. So you can -- you can look at that
4 list of charters.

5 Here are where those charters reside within the
6 state, so you can kind of see where they are
7 geographically. Again, the Ds are orange, the reds
8 are Fs. There were schools that also had a decline
9 in letter grade from -- this should say '22 to '23.
10 I apologize about the dates on here. We had two
11 schools decline from a B to a C. Five schools
12 declined from a C to a D. One went from a D to an F.
13 We had one school decline from a C to an F and then
14 one decline from an A to a D. Yeah. And I've also
15 provided you with that list as well.

16 And then I have a whole lot of data about a
17 whole lot of schools. So we have a review of the
18 open enrollment charters and then we would have a
19 review of the district conversion charters and Dr.
20 Sutherlin has let me know that you guys have looked
21 at my presentation. So at this point, I would just
22 ask what questions you have about any particular
23 charters that I've provided data on?

24 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Can you speak just a little
25 bit to Founders?

1 MS. GRAYER: Of course. Oops. So Founders
2 Classical Academy -- these were the schools that I
3 pulled. They had a school go from C to D. The West
4 Little Rock and the West Little Rock Elementary was
5 the one school that actually declined from the A to
6 the D.

7 I've also included growth scores on this
8 particular slide. In West Little Rock, the math
9 growth score is significantly below the average. You
10 know, we are wanting to see growth scores around 80
11 or above and this math growth score is at a 72.01
12 which I would have to say that that had a significant
13 impact on the decline in scores at this school. You
14 know, I would -- I would want to, you know, go a
15 little further and dig on and look at West Little
16 Rock scores because the growth alone is not enough to
17 explain the stark decline from an A to a D.

18 So if you look at West Little Rock, the 2023
19 overall score, there is a 60.62. And I've included
20 information about rebound rates. Their score dropped
21 almost 20 points from 2022 to 2023, so it -- if it's
22 -- with that being an elementary, if it's not the
23 growth, it's got to be the achievement. And they are
24 still 4.36 points away from being a C at that school.
25 And we do have --

1 MR. DAVIS: Can you -- can you go back to the
2 previous slide?

3 MS. GRAYER: Yes.

4 MR. DAVIS: One more. One more, please.

5 MS. GRAYER: Yes, sir.

6 MR. DAVIS: Thank you.

7 MS. GRAYER: Uh-huh.

8 MR. DAVIS: And -- the 2022 letter grade,
9 particularly for the online, were they -- help me
10 understand why they did not have a 2022 letter grade?

11 MS. GRAYER: Because those were new schools.

12 MR. DAVIS: Okay. So that -- that's what I
13 thought.

14 MS. GRAYER: Yes. So --

15 MR. DAVIS: Again --

16 MS. GRAYER: -- the --

17 MR. DAVIS: -- I just want to call out to the
18 Committee the idea that, you know, here you have new
19 schools launching --

20 MS. GRAYER: Yes.

21 MR. DAVIS: -- particularly with D and F grades.

22 MS. GRAYER: Yes. And I --

23 MR. DAVIS: Okay.

24 MS. GRAYER: I would look at that math growth
25 score for Founders Classical Academy Elementary

1 Online being a 47.78. And then we just approved
2 another school for Founders.

3 MR. DAVIS: Yes. And it's my understanding,
4 right, when we look at growth scores -- you've
5 mentioned this -- the idea of an 80 on the growth
6 score indicates that a student has made what would be
7 considered typical progress --

8 MS. GRAYER: So --

9 MR. DAVIS: -- and above that, it -- how would
10 you explain it?

11 MS. GRAYER: So, sir, I would say that if a
12 school has an 80, then that means the average student
13 at that school is meeting the growth expectation. If
14 the score is above 80, then that means the average
15 student at that school is exceeding the growth
16 expectation for that year.

17 MR. DAVIS: And then my last question on
18 Classical Academy, especially elementary online math
19 growth score. I have never -- I have never seen it.
20 I don't live this day-to-day, but I have never seen a
21 growth score at a 47; is -- is that something that
22 you've seen before?

23 MS. GRAYER: I would agree with you.

24 MR. DAVIS: Okay. Thank you.

25 MS. GRAYER: Yes, sir.

1 MR. DAVIS: Thank you.

2 MS. GRAYER: Absolutely.

3 DR. MOORE: So --

4 MS. GRAYER: Thank you.

5 DR. MOORE: -- this may not be the time to ask,
6 but maybe later, but being new to Charter -- what
7 opportunity is there to either support this school or
8 monitor in some way? I mean, how do you -- you can't
9 let that go. Like --

10 MS. GRAYER: Well --

11 DR. MOORE: -- what's that --

12 MS. GRAYER: Also -- I would also look at the
13 enrollment at that school. There's four kids that
14 were running accountability on.

15 DR. MOORE: Oh, that's --

16 MS. GRAYER: Isn't --

17 DR. MOORE: -- interesting.

18 MS. GRAYER: -- that interesting?

19 DR. MOORE: Yes. I did not see that.

20 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: So that makes a difference --

21 DR. MOORE: That --

22 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: -- too. But, I mean, to your
23 question, we can always call in a charter school and
24 actually have them report out and give us more
25 contextual information for what's going on in their

1 school and why we're seeing the scores that we're
2 seeing. And I think that's kind of to Mr. Baldwin's
3 point earlier in being able to see what are those
4 factors that are leading them to get that D or to
5 drop from an A to a D, you know, what is it that's
6 happening there? And I think that's our
7 responsibility to call them in for those things.

8 MR. BALDWIN: And let me ask you, if you have
9 one school that just doesn't perform well over a long
10 period of time in spite of all the corrective
11 actions, can we revoke the charter?

12 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yes.

13 MS. GRAYER: Uh-huh.

14 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: At any point in time.

15 MS. GRAYER: Yes.

16 DR. MOORE: And I want to clarify that I still
17 think it matters for the four, it's just --

18 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yes.

19 DR. MOORE: -- statistically, that tells me
20 something different, but I still am concerned about
21 those four --

22 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Uh-huh.

23 DR. MOORE: -- students, even though --

24 MS. GRAYER: Yes.

25 DR. MOORE: -- it's --

1 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yes.

2 DR. MOORE: -- not a large group.

3 MS. GRAYER: Yes.

4 MS. SARACINI: Maybe even looking at the
5 viability instead of looking at -- getting a bigger
6 --

7 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yeah.

8 MS. SARACINI: -- look or more comprehensive
9 look beyond just a letter grade.

10 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: And I think, you know, just in
11 looking at all of the schools under the Founders
12 umbrella, that would be one that I would want to see
13 more information on and more discussion from the
14 school.

15 MS. GRAYER: Uh-huh.

16 MR. BALDINW: Absolutely. Yes. There is a
17 story there that needs --

18 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yes.

19 MR. BALDWIN: -- we need to know about.

20 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yes.

21 MS. GRAYER: Yes. Well, from an accountability
22 standpoint, a K-12 with being rated on the high
23 school grade span might be more advantageous for that
24 district with 20 kids.

25 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yeah. Are there other

1 districts that we have questions about?

2 DR. MOORE: I was wondering about the Friendship
3 Academy in Little Rock -- elementary.

4 MS. GRAYER: Sure. It's the next one.
5 Friendship Academy Elementary, going from the C to
6 the F.

7 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Uh-huh.

8 MS. GRAYER: Yes. So again, a low ELA growth
9 score there. And of course the Southeast Pine Bluff
10 did not have a letter grade in 2022, starting off
11 with a D and a very low ELA growth score there as
12 well. The elementary dropped 13.36 points in the --
13 overall ESSA, which is why they had that stark
14 decline and, you know, it could have to do with the
15 fact that their ELA growth score is very low. That
16 could have a lot to do with it. If the growth in the
17 ELA is low, I would imagine the achievement in ELA is
18 -- is low as well. I think that -- and they have
19 3.12 points to get to the D. What's concerning also
20 for me is that the Little Rock middle school has
21 eight points to get to the C level.

22 MS. NEWTON: Is there any point where the
23 variations of scores -- decline of scores triggers an
24 automatic response? You know, so you were here and
25 now you're there and it's such a decrease that, you

1 know, the alarms go off, you know? Some people go
2 orange light or red light or -- or something.

3 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Do you want to talk about the
4 levels of support?

5 MS. GRAYER: So we do have five levels of
6 support here in Arkansas, they range from general to
7 intensive. I believe -- do you know what level of
8 support friendship is in? That is information I did
9 not include in this report, but we can get that to
10 you. But three -- level 3 collaborative -- or
11 collaboratives -- sorry -- coordinated support is if
12 they have between 40 and 50 percent in need of
13 support for reading; level 4 would be directed
14 support which that would be where they have 50
15 percent or more in need of support for reading; and
16 level 5 would be intensive support and that is where
17 they're taken over and -- by the Board. We only have
18 four districts in the state that are in intensive
19 support right now.

20 MR. BALDWIN: When you provide intensive
21 support, do you -- have you seen improvement in
22 schools?

23 MS. GRAYER: Yeah. I mean, yes, we've seen
24 improvement even with level 3 or level 4 support,
25 especially when it's an ELA issue. And we've been

1 trying to -- I've been trying to watch personally
2 even when they're in level 2, which a lot of these
3 schools are in level 2 support; that's collaborative
4 support, which means they've been identified
5 federally, for either comprehensive or targeted
6 support.

7 MR. BALDWIN: Who does the support? Is there a
8 staff -- a team of people?

9 MS. GRAYER: Carol Heringer is the one doing the
10 support; and then 1003 support comes from Dr. Ginny
11 Stroud.

12 MR. BALDWIN: Okay. They -- are they staffed
13 sufficiently?

14 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: At --

15 MR. DAVIS: Can you --

16 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: -- this point in time, I don't
17 -- I don't know that I can really answer that
18 question because I don't know the -- who's actually
19 performing those duties at this point in time.

20 MR. BALDWIN: Yeah.

21 MS. SARACINI: But maybe, Ms. Newton, to your
22 point, is what's a mechanism in place that we would
23 want to review possibly? Or it come back, and we
24 just look at where they are, like what we talked
25 about earlier with West Memphis, what's that? When's

1 a good time for us to look or what's that indication
2 or red light that says, let's take a look and just
3 see?

4 MS. GRAYER: I think a lot of that goes back to
5 the first slide I showed with the timeline around
6 reporting. I mean, you have to check in -- like,
7 we're giving you different data points at different
8 times. Just like with West Memphis, the data that
9 just came out, you know, we're -- we're giving you
10 2024 graduation rate information right now. Like, we
11 already know what the grad rate is going to be that
12 goes into the 2024 ESSA. It was released last Friday
13 when we released the report card, so if you know what
14 data you're supposed to be looking at and you stay on
15 top of that data as it's released, you can start to
16 be more proactive at tracking your subgroups, your
17 schools, your district, but you just got to know what
18 -- what the right data is and how to track it.

19 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: And I would say too, you know,
20 this review right now, this kind of broad overview
21 can then trigger us to come back later. We did that
22 last year when we had our review of data in November
23 and then we came back in February with more data.

24 MS. GRAYER: Uh-huh.

25 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: So that is an option as well

1 if we have specific districts we want to have come
2 back and report out for us. I think last time we
3 really only reported out on letter grades and ESSA
4 scores. But I think to Mr. Baldwin's point earlier,
5 if they were able to provide some of that progress
6 towards their SMART goals, I think that would be
7 contextual information that would be good for us to
8 know.

9 MS. GRAYER: Yes. And I'll help provide
10 whatever data I can as long as I know what you need.

11 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yeah. And I think them being
12 here too would be a good thing because I think last
13 time we did it we -- you and I --

14 MS. GRAYER: Uh-huh.

15 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: -- did the report and we -- we
16 basically stood up and -- and just gave the data
17 information, but we didn't have any contextual
18 information. And so I think that that extra
19 dimension would be a good piece to have for us to
20 look at. I think this -- since we have the full
21 report now, I think it's good for us to then step
22 back and say which of these -- these charters do we
23 think need to come in in February --

24 MS. GRAYER: Uh-huh.

25 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: -- and have us, you know, do a

1 deeper dive.

2 DR. MOORE: Tiffani, can you speak too -- and --
3 and I could do a report and figure it out myself, but
4 you may know this offhand.

5 MS. GRAYER: Sure.

6 DR. MOORE: As I'm, like, looking at the school
7 literary distribution on the ADE Data Center --

8 MS. GRAYER: Uh-huh.

9 DR. MOORE: -- and I'm wondering if you know
10 offhand since, like, 43 of the charters are D or F
11 schools, do you know what percent of the charters are
12 D or F schools compared to what percent of non-
13 charters or D or F schools?

14 MS. GRAYER: No, but I can definitely run that
15 report for you --

16 DR. MOORE: Okay.

17 MS. GRAYER: -- Dr. Moore.

18 DR. MOORE: It would probably be faster if you
19 do it than if I because I --

20 MS. GRAYER: For sure. I've already got all the
21 data and I thought about making that graph, but we
22 were giving y'all so much I didn't know exactly what
23 you wanted so.

24 DR. MOORE: I would like to compare that just --

25 MS. GRAYER: I would love to come back and

1 present that for you, Dr. Moore.

2 DR. MOORE: Thank you.

3 MS. GRAYER: Uh-huh.

4 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: That's usually the
5 question that I have, is how are the charters
6 performing to their comparable peers --

7 MS. GRAYER: Uh-huh.

8 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- because the intent is
9 that the charter is supposed to be able to, you know,
10 build a better mouse trap --

11 MS. GRAYER: Yes.

12 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- for this process and so
13 that's what we should be able to see. So that's why
14 I would like to be able to see because sometimes you
15 kind of think about the demographics they're pulling
16 from and so what are their outcomes, comparable.

17 MS. GRAYER: Yes.

18 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So that would be helpful.

19 DR. MOORE: Yeah. And -- and to add to that.
20 So, like yes, I want to see the state level, but to
21 your point, sort of like how West Memphis showed the
22 surrounding schools --

23 MS. GRAYER: Uh-huh.

24 DR. MOORE: -- with some of the demographics,
25 that's very good to compare with.

1 MS. GRAYER: So I did try to add some of those
2 comparisons in my report. So as you can see, like,
3 these are the Friendship schools that I have the
4 arrows pointing to. And then I have, like, Pine
5 Bluff schools in here and Little Rock schools to
6 compare and this -- these the funky little red lines
7 I compared to the 2022 fifth percentile cuts because
8 to me that's important. Are you above that line or
9 are you below that line? Because if you're below
10 that line, that means you are identified for
11 comprehensive support as opposed to the state
12 average. Because I need to know whether you are the
13 bottom five percent of schools or not. So that red
14 line does indicate bottom five percent, not state
15 average.

16 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So just for my
17 clarification, as part of our discussion today and
18 we're trying to identify some schools that we want to
19 come in and chat with us a little bit more.

20 MS. GRAYER: Uh-huh.

21 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yes.

22 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Because one that I am
23 interested in is Jacksonville Lighthouse.

24 MS. GRAYER: Yes.

25 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Part of the reason being

1 that I know that they were before us not too long ago
2 where they kind of split some schools out, they kept
3 some and they sent some to Friendship. And so that's
4 one of the schools that they kept and it's still at a
5 D.

6 MS. GRAYER: Mm-hmm.

7 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So I would want to kind of
8 get some idea of where do they feel like they are on
9 being able to address that.

10 MS. GRAYER: Yeah. And their high school
11 doesn't look like -- it looks like it's faring pretty
12 well as far as growth concerns. My bigger concerns
13 would be with that elementary just because the growth
14 scores are considerably low there and that's creating
15 a feeder pattern where eventually those kids are
16 going to feed up to that high school and not be
17 prepared.

18 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And then also the LISA
19 Academy things, it looks -- also the elementary went
20 from a C to a D. I'm kind of curious what's going on
21 there also.

22 MS. GRAYER: LISA, yes, went from a C to a D and
23 low ELA growth there. LISA Academy, Arkansas -- oh,
24 that was West Elementary. And so they had a slight
25 decline, but they -- if you look on this rebound, Dr.

1 Wright-McMurray, they must have been barely holding
2 on to a C because they only dropped .61 points.

3 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

4 MS. GRAYER: So I really like the rebound rates
5 because it goes further to tell that story. The C
6 and D, you know, if you're on that verge, you could
7 have lost maybe a tenth of a point and lost an entire
8 letter grade, but really didn't move your ESSA score
9 that much; so they only need that .6 to get their C
10 back.

11 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

12 MS. GRAYER: So not as big of a concern there as
13 with the school that needs, you know, four points to
14 get their --

15 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Sure.

16 MS. GRAYER: -- their letter grade back.

17 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Yeah.

18 MS. GRAYER: So with even the slightest
19 modifications there, I feel pretty confident they'll
20 get their letter grade back to where they need it to
21 be.

22 MS. SARACINI: Last year we had eStem come in
23 here; and talk and I just you know, as I was looking
24 through that eStem -- that elementary lost again.

25 MS. GRAYER: Yeah.

1 MS. SARACINI: So how far they --

2 MS. GRAYER: Let's --

3 MS. SARACINI: -- from an F?

4 MS. GRAYER: So eStem, the bigger concern there
5 looks to be math and -- yeah. eStem East Village.
6 And I remember eStem East Village, they had been one
7 of our schools on the move in the past because of
8 their high growth scores. But yeah, lost just a
9 minimal point, but they are -- over time they've lost
10 quite a bit. And so they are 3.324 points away from
11 a C.

12 MS. SARACINI: What about the -- just the
13 elementary?

14 MS. GRAYER: And the elementary is 2.13 points
15 away from a C, so work to do -- work to do there.
16 But they've lost points over a longitudinal time
17 space, not just within the past year. So it's more
18 of a -- a pandemic overall rebound rate, not just
19 within '22/'23. They're trying to catch back up.

20 MS. SARACINI: Okay. That's what I wanted --
21 just -- that's --

22 MS. GRAYER: Yeah.

23 MS. SARACINI: -- what I needed you to say.

24 MS. GRAYER: Yes, ma'am.

25 MR. DAVIS: Is there -- is there any way -- is

1 there any way to see or run a report that indicates D
2 and F schools that are not only current but
3 historical; right? So even before the pandemic --

4 MS. GRAYER: Yes.

5 MR. DAVIS: -- are there --

6 MS. GRAYER: -- we --

7 MR. DAVIS: -- are there schools -- I'd be
8 interested in knowing if there have been schools over
9 the last, you know, five to seven years that have
10 been consistently D and F schools before the pandemic
11 and even after?

12 MS. GRAYER: Yes. We -- how far would you like
13 me to go back, sir?

14 MR. DAVIS: I would -- I would think, you know,
15 I would think two years before.

16 MS. GRAYER: So 2017?

17 MR. DAVIS: Yeah, let's do 2017. I was -- yeah,
18 2017. I was thinking '18, but 2017. I would be
19 interested in seeing --

20 MS. GRAYER: Yes, sir. As long as I know what
21 you want, I can run it.

22 MR. DAVIS: Okay. Yeah, 2017.

23 MS. GRAYER: I can do it. Okay. You're writing
24 all this down, Jeffrey? Okay.

25 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Any other observations?

1 MR. BALDWIN: I just want to say thank you guys.
2 I know -- I know, it's hard to -- to take stuff and
3 put it in something that we can understand, and I
4 think y'all did a good job.

5 MS. GRAYER: Thank you, Mr. Baldwin. I
6 appreciate that. Yeah. Well, we're here to serve
7 you. So -- and help the schools to do better. Any
8 other questions from the Panel?

9 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I guessed just -- in your
10 observation, is there any school that we didn't
11 discuss that you would like to bring forward for us
12 to take a peek at?

13 MS. GRAYER: Thank you for that question. Yes,
14 there is.

15 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

16 MS. GRAYER: I would like to highlight some of
17 the growth that's going on in the Delta. I think
18 that KIPP has made some progress, even though that
19 they are still on -- on one of our list. They do
20 have some pretty good growth scores going on and they
21 have moved one of their schools from a D to a C.
22 Let's see. I have got to sing my alphabet song. So
23 they've moved to one of their schools from an F to a
24 D and one from a D to a C; and they -- I have gone up
25 to KIPP a few times and worked with their leadership

1 group trying to help them understand our
2 accountability system; and I believe that that is --
3 that is paying off for KIPP. I love seeing all the
4 green around their growth scores because that means
5 that those schools are scoring at least an 80 or
6 above. So for the -- the majority of their schools,
7 they are showing improvement there. And then their -
8 - their rebound, they've got a few places where they
9 have a positive rebound or they have less than two
10 points to achieve their next letter grade which is --
11 which is showing progress and promise for me that
12 they will -- will get there. And they do have a
13 little -- a little ways to go, but -- but they are
14 showing some positive movement. So I think that they
15 were in a similar boat last year where they had made
16 some -- some positive movement. So they were one of
17 the ones especially in that area of the state where I
18 thought might want to be highlighted.

19 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: And they were showing that
20 trend last year as well?

21 MS. GRAYER: Yeah, yeah.

22 CHAIR SUTHERLIN; Any other thoughts?

23 MS. GRAYER: Do you have any --

24 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So -- sorry.

25 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Go ahead.

1 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So I guess on the other side
2 of the coin, when we have schools that we feel better
3 doing really good jobs, is it possible for them --
4 for us to give them that opportunity to come in and
5 share what they have been doing?

6 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Uh-huh.

7 MS. GRAYER: Yeah.

8 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I think that helps us to be
9 able to understand when -- for me, when I'm listening
10 to others to come in to maybe provide recommendations
11 or to know what direction other folks should be going
12 instead of just always bring in some of our
13 challenges, can we bring in, like, KIPP Delta that
14 has done some good work?

15 MS. GRAYER: Uh-huh.

16 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Oh, we can definitely do that.

17 MS. GRAYER: Yeah. For sure.

18 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: You taking notes, Ms. Summons?

19 MS. GRAYER: And I'll just throw out there that
20 me and my team will be glad to work with any school
21 that needs the help. Because a lot of it is
22 understanding what components make up our
23 accountability system and where to focus the work.
24 It should be about the achievement and growth of
25 students and when schools get distracted away from

1 that, that's what tends to lead them in directions
2 that maybe they shouldn't go in. But when it's all
3 about the teaching and learning of children, that's
4 what helps schools grow.

5 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Any other thoughts?

6 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So --

7 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay.

8 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- as these schools are
9 coming in, are we providing them any guidance on what
10 they should be coming with so that they'll know what
11 they need to be coming to share with us so that we
12 can get a better sense of what's going on? And --

13 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: So if -- if we're calling
14 particular schools in --

15 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

16 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: -- we would provide them with
17 specific guidance. So --

18 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

19 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: -- we would gather that
20 guidance. And we can filter that through Ms. Summons
21 --

22 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

23 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: -- and she can make sure that
24 they have that information in any presentation that
25 they -- they provide.

1 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

2 MR. FETTERS: We do also -- we do interview the
3 top. This year we have six featured schools that
4 scored particularly high -- they were all public
5 schools -- but we do enter the interview them for
6 things like practices, best practices, initiatives
7 and the programs they may be running and then put
8 that on our website on the web page for schools on
9 the move so that we can share that information out as
10 a learning kind of --

11 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

12 MR. FETTERS: -- lesson for others schools. And
13 we can do that.

14 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Because I would love to hear
15 the stories --

16 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yeah.

17 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- also and give them an
18 opportunity to be recognized instead of just always
19 calling folks in when we have a concern. Also call
20 in some --

21 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yes.

22 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- of those that doing some
23 great work.

24 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: And thank you for actually
25 putting those on the -- the presentation so we could

1 see those schools on the move.

2 MS. GRAYER: Absolutely. And, you know, like
3 Mr. Bragg was saying, you know, the -- the 41 was
4 that the lowest growth score you've ever seen? Well,
5 the highest growth score I've ever seen was a 91.43
6 and that happened at Pottsville Elementary. And so
7 that was one of the schools that we interviewed. So,
8 you know, I -- I'm from Hot Springs and they always
9 say that we have the best water in Arkansas, but we
10 might all want to start drinking the water in
11 Pottsville instead.

12 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: So since this is on the action
13 agenda and we would like to have some schools come in
14 in February, do I have any discussion or a motion
15 surrounding which schools and whether or not we would
16 like them to come in in January?

17 MR. BALDWIN: I was -- I was thinking that the
18 schools that we were saying we were interested in
19 would be the schools on this list?

20 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: The schools that I have -- and
21 correct me if I'm wrong because I tried to jot them
22 down as we were discussing them: Friendship -- and
23 that was -- was that the elementary in Little Rock?

24 MS. GRAYER: The Friendship? It was the
25 Friendship Little Rock Elementary --

1 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Uh-huh.

2 MS. GRAYER: -- and I think maybe the Southeast
3 Pine Bluff that had no letter grade in 2022, starting
4 out with a D, had particularly low growth scores.

5 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay. And then we had
6 Jacksonville Lighthouse, Founders --

7 MS. GRAYER: Yes.

8 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I thought it was the
9 elementary?

10 MS. GRAYER: It was the elementary. Yes. The
11 high school was doing a little better than the
12 elementary --

13 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay.

14 MS. GRAYER: -- there.

15 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: And then Founders, we had a
16 couple there.

17 MS. GRAYER: The online elementary.

18 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yeah.

19 MR. FETTERS: Founders also had an elementary in
20 West Little Rock.

21 MS. GRAYER: Yes.

22 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yeah. And that's -- I believe
23 that's one of the ones we were wanting to look at
24 too.

25 MS. GRAYER: Yes.

1 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: West Little Rock. And then --

2 MS. GRAYER: And the -- the West Little Rock, I
3 guess it's a high school or a middle school it went
4 from a C to a D.

5 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay. And then eStem.

6 MS. GRAYER: I don't know that we -- oh, yes, we
7 did.

8 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Because we -- we talked about
9 the long longitudinal drop.

10 MS. GRAYER: Yes. That was East Village and
11 eStem Elementary.

12 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: And then with LISA, did we say
13 that we weren't as concerned?

14 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Well, I had asked about LISA
15 because it went from a C to a D, but I think then the
16 explanations that they lost just like maybe tenths of
17 a point.

18 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay.

19 MS. GRAYER: Yeah, it was .61.

20 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay.

21 MS. GRAYER: Less than a point.

22 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: So are you still interested in
23 maybe hearing from them?

24 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I would be.

25 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay. So the motion is for us

1 to look at the schools we just named and then we will
2 provide you with feedback surrounding what we want
3 the reporting to look like from them. So we'll
4 provide that to Ms. Summons and that will happen
5 through a report that takes place in February. Does
6 that sound good, Mr. Baldwin?

7 MR. BALDWIN: That sounds good.

8 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Do I have a
9 second?

10 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Second.

11 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay. All those in favor?

12 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

13 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Any opposed? Was that -- was
14 that in opposition or was that --

15 MS. GRAYER: That was --

16 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: -- in favor?

17 MS. GRAYER: -- an aye.

18 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay. Just making sure
19 because it came in right as I said, the other. All
20 right. So the motion passes. So in February, we'll
21 have reporting out from these schools and, you know,
22 what we'll do for a future meeting is try to get some
23 of these schools in here that are, you know, doing
24 really positive things and that are on the move so
25 that we can hear from them as well.

1 MS. SARACINI: Yes.

2 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Sounds good.

3 MS. GRAYER: Were there any questions about
4 district conversion charters? We're okay with --
5 okay.

6 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right.

7 MS. GRAYER: Perfect.

8 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you very much.

9 MS. GRAYER: I appreciate you all inviting me
10 here.

11 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yes.

12 MS. GRAYER: Thank you all so much for your
13 time.

14 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Y'all have a great day.

15 MS. GRAYER: You too.

16 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Thank you.

17 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Any new business?
18 If there's not, I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

19 DR. MOORE: I motion that we adjourn this
20 Charter meeting.

21 MS. SARACINI: I second.

22 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Oh, yes. Thank you. So we
23 just wanted to take this time to thank Karli Saracini
24 for her service on the Charter Panel. How many years
25 have you been on the Charter Panel?

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MS. SARACINI: Several.

CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Several. And so she'll be rolling off here in December, so we thank you so much for your service. We appreciate it.

All right. So we have a motion on the table. Do I have a second?

MS. SARACINI: Second. All right. So I have a motion and a second. All those in favor?

(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Motion passes. We are adjourned.

(The Agenda was concluded at 12:06 p.m.)

