

CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL

APRIL 16, 2024
9:00 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
DR. SONJA WRIGHT-McMURRAY, Associate Director -
Division of Career and Technical Education
MR. FREDDIE SCOTT - Family and Community Engagement, School
Choice and Parent Empowerment
MR. KIM DAVIS, Walton Family Foundation - Senior Advisor
DR. TINA MOORE, ADHE - Director of Workforce Development

NON-VOTING PARTICIPANTS:

MS. DORIE SUMMONS, DESE Charter Schools Director
MR. STEPHEN REYNOLDS, Attorney Specialist - Elementary
and Secondary Education

LOCATION:

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

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P R O C E E D I N G S

I. CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Good morning. The April 16th, 2024, 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 please silence your cell phones and other electronic devices. The goal is to facilitate a fair and responsible hearing, so therefore I ask that each person speaking, speak clearly into the microphone and do so for this Panel and for the watching participants, this audience -- the viewing audience. So -- therefore this meeting is being livestreamed and recorded and a transcript of the meeting will be posted on the DESE website.

II. CONSENT AGENDA

CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Good morning, everybody.

Good morning, Panel Members. We have a consent agenda before us today. If there are no questions, I'll accept a motion to pass the consent agenda.

DR. MOORE: I move to pass the consent agenda.

CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Do I have a second?

MR. DAVIS: Second.

CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. All those in

1 favor?

2 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

3 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. The motion passes.

4 **III. ACTION AGENDA**

5 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Mr. Reynolds.

6 MR. REYNOLDS: Good morning.

7 All right. Good morning. Stephen Reynolds,
8 staff attorney for the Department. I'm just going to
9 go over the procedures real quick.

10 Dr. Sutherlin, you will want to swear in all
11 parties speaking, except for the attorneys, that are
12 going to be giving testimony.

13 For each item on the agenda, each applicant will
14 have 20 minutes to present. To my knowledge, there
15 is no opposition for any of the applicants. So then,
16 after they present, we will do the legal review and
17 you guys can ask questions. Anybody testifying,
18 please state your name before you speak even if you
19 have already spoken so we can have a clear record.
20 Any members of the community that are here to speak
21 on behalf of the applicants will need to speak during
22 the 20 minutes. Any elected officials that are here
23 can speak before the hearing, during the 20 minutes
24 or at the conclusion of all the testimony; that's up
25 to the official and the applicant -- how they want to

1 move forward. Following that, after each applicant
2 presents, we will go through the legal concerns and
3 waivers and then you guys can ask questions.

4 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you very
5 much.

6 **III.1. SCHOOL FOR ADVANCED STUDIES - NORTHWEST ARKANSAS**

7 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Ms. Summons.

8 MS. SUMMONS: Good morning. Dorie Summons, DESE
9 Charter Office. The first school on the agenda is
10 the School for Advanced Studies and they are
11 requesting to change the grade levels served from
12 grades 5-9 to grades 5-10. They're also asking to
13 waive the fine arts curriculum standard which is 1A
14 -- excuse me -- 1-A.1.3.6, waive the curriculum
15 advance placement, the code, the standard and the
16 DESE rules associated with that and waive the
17 curriculum foreign language standard 1-A.1.3.5. We
18 also have a representative for School for Advanced
19 Studies and Ms. Rowe is on Zoom --

20 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you very
21 much.

22 MS. SUMMONS: -- for questions.

23 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Appreciate it.

24 All right. Will all those who plan on testifying on
25 behalf of the Charter please stand and raise your right

1 hand. Do you swear that the testimony you're about to
2 give is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
3 truth?

4 MR. FERGUSON: Yes.

5 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. You may begin.

6 MR. FERGUSON: Chris Ferguson, vice president of
7 growth of BASIS Ed. and the School for Advanced
8 Studies. Ms. Rowe will lead off and kick off the
9 presentation today and I'm happy to be here to answer
10 any questions.

11 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you.

12 (MS. ROWE SWORN IN VIA ZOOM CHAT)

13 MS. ROWE: Good morning, Chair Sutherlin and
14 Panel Members. I'm Deanna Rowe, the executive
15 director for the Arkansas Schools for Advanced
16 Studies. I appreciate your consideration of our
17 amendment request. I'm sorry I'm not able to be with
18 you in person today, but I am pleased to have Chris
19 Ferguson, our vice president of growth for our
20 network there with you. And we'll -- together we'll
21 try to tackle any questions you may have.

22 As was shared in our amendment request
23 submission, higher than anticipated interest from
24 perspective rising 10th grade students and their
25 parents, we would like to amend our Charter to allow

1 Schools for Advanced Studies Northwest Arkansas to
2 include 10th graders beginning in August 2024 for the
3 '24-'25 school year. The school was approved for
4 grades 5-12 and originally applied to serve grades
5 5-9 in its first year of operation. It has been our
6 experience that when families are choosing their high
7 school, that choice usually occurs in 9th grade.
8 Therefore, we initially planned to enroll up through
9 9th grade in year one. However, we had enough
10 interest patients from families with 10 graders that
11 we can fill a section of 10th grade in year one and
12 are happy to do so.

13 Our request also includes a modification to a
14 few of the waivers originally approved with the
15 application. If the Panel approves our request and
16 10th grade can commence sooner than planned, then the
17 school will need less time on certain which person
18 initially requested and granted. Those waiver
19 requests have been updated to reflect their
20 expiration a year sooner than the original request.

21 That's the extent of our request today. We're
22 excited to be making it and we're happy to address
23 any questions you may have.

24 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

25 Mr. Reynolds.

1 MR. REYNOLDS: Good morning. Stephen Reynolds,
2 staff attorney with the Department. I'm going to go
3 over the legal review. So like Ms. Rowe said, the
4 Charter is requesting to have several waivers expire
5 a year earlier. So I'll just go through those real
6 quick.

7 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Let's pause for a minute.

8 All right. Mr. Reynolds, if you would like to
9 begin with the legal review.

10 MR. REYNOLDS: All right. So the Charter is
11 requesting to have a few of their waivers expire as a
12 year earlier. So for the curriculum -- so waiver
13 topic No. one is curriculum: advanced placement.
14 The statute is Arkansas code § 6-16-1204(c) and (d),
15 the standard for accreditation 1-A.1.3.10 and the
16 rules governing grading and course credit, just
17 section 6. And they're requesting for the waiver to
18 expire a year earlier which means the waiver would
19 expire June 30, 2025.

20 Waiver topic No. two is required instruction
21 9-12; and it's standard 1-A.1.3.6 which is fine arts.
22 The Charter currently holds a waiver standard 1-A.1.3
23 and the Charter is requesting for the waiver to
24 expire one year earlier as to this provision of
25 standard 1-A.1.3 which means this waiver would expire

1 June 30, 2026. The remaining provisions of standard
2 1-A.1.3 would continue to be waived until June 30,
3 2027.

4 And then waiver topic No. three is required
5 instruction 9-12. This is standard 1-A.1.3.5 which
6 is foreign language, and the Charter is requesting to
7 rescind this waiver. And I have no concerns with any
8 of these waivers.

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

11 All right. We'll start down here with Dr.
12 Wright-McMurray. Do you have any questions?

13 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Yes. I do. Thanks for
14 kind of giving us the overview and the legal review.
15 I'm just -- just want a little bit more detail on the
16 reason for the waivers. I guess, that's what I'm
17 just trying to get more understanding of.

18 MR. FERGUSON: So all three of these waivers are
19 waivers that we had been granted when we were here
20 earlier few months ago. We are actually just drawing
21 back the timeline on them. So they were due to
22 expire later, and we wanted to -- in good faith to
23 have them expire at the time we need them to expire.

24 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. All right. Thank
25 you.

1 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

2 MR. FERGUSON: Yeah.

3 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Any questions, Freddy --

4 MR. SCOTT: No --

5 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: -- Mr. Scott?

6 MR. SCOTT: -- questions.

7 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Mr. Davis?

8 MR. DAVIS: Just quickly. I'm interested in
9 hearing a -- just a little bit more about the
10 interest. Clearly, you all have been working really
11 hard in the community to get folks out. It seems
12 like it's being well received. Just love to kind of
13 hear just a little bit more about that.

14 MR. FERGUSON: Yeah. We've had interest overall
15 -- from all of the grade levels -- has actually been
16 very equal which was -- which was frankly surprising
17 to us. There's been a lot of interest. Some of the
18 hires that we've made have also influenced that where
19 just following that, you know, exceptional teachers
20 which that candidate pool has been amazing. Just
21 putting that out there.

22 So the interest, we've done a number of -- I
23 think 12 or 14 info sessions. And at every info
24 session they were pushing us, hey, what about grade
25 10? What about grade 10? What about grade 11? But

1 that was a step too far this first year. But it's
2 been an equal interest since over the last couple of
3 months it's been over 150 applications and fairly
4 evenly spread throughout that. And then that
5 interest is continuing to pick up. You know, every
6 week, every two weeks, info sessions at the park and
7 we're getting the same questions for grade 10 that
8 we're getting for grade 5, for grade 7.

9 MR. DAVIS: Thank you.

10 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: And, you know, you said that
11 the candidate pool is exceptional. Can you elaborate
12 on that? I mean, not get in the weeds too much, but,
13 you know, just talk a little bit to that; and then
14 also why you think that's the case? Like, what is it
15 that you're doing that's drawing in these candidates?

16 MR. FERGUSON: I think part of what we were
17 doing -- to answer that second part of the question
18 first -- is really we are doing something unique with
19 this seminar-based instruction and the high -- the
20 high level of engagement and also having a rigorous
21 curriculum. But purposely making it be very
22 accessible to any student who can come in. And I
23 think the combination of that I think is appealing to
24 teachers and also giving them the freedom within that
25 constraint of the -- to really be able to be amazing

1 teachers and engage with their students. And I think
2 it is something unique.

3 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay.

4 MR. FERGUSON: And as far as being able to get
5 them in, it's just the quality of the candidate from
6 their interpersonal skills, their ability to teach,
7 their resume, their educational experience, it has
8 been --it's been a long time since we've -- since the
9 pool has been that wide where all of the candidates
10 we're getting are such a high quality and we're
11 choosing among dozens of amazingly qualified
12 individuals.

13 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: That's really great to hear.
14 And it's really nice to hear that, you know, you're
15 providing some strategies maybe for other people to
16 think about as well.

17 MR. FERGUSON: Yeah.

18 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: So we appreciate it.

19 MR. FERGUSON: Thank you.

20 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Mr. Baldwin.

21 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. So let me just thank you all
22 for working through the -- the audio issues earlier.
23 It sounds good now.

24 Just a few questions about this. So I read your
25 information. Well -- well done. I like the fact the

1 waivers are going to go away earlier than we thought,
2 so we'll be back without as many as we expected. The
3 -- the 10th grade class, I'd be interested in hearing
4 a little bit more detail about -- about the
5 decision-making process that you went through to say
6 10th -- 10th grade was good, but 11th grade was a
7 step too far.

8 And then, I guess, from what I read, the budget
9 -- this decision would be budget neutral? And, I
10 guess, also the facilities are ready for the 10th
11 grade? So just a question there. And then final
12 question would be, how many 10th graders do you think
13 you'll have in the end? I don't know if you can
14 accurately project that, but I'd be curious how large
15 that class would be. I know you said it would be
16 small, I'm just wondering what small means. Thank
17 you.

18 MR. FERGUSON: I'll answer the last part first
19 and hopefully -- it was a little bit difficult to
20 hear you, Mr. Baldwin. So I'll -- I'll do my best to
21 answer all of them. As far as how big we're
22 anticipating, right now it looks like it's probably
23 just going to be one section of 10th graders. So
24 somewhere around 25 to 28 is what we hope to get it
25 to. We can continue to serve more than that will

1 continue to bring them in because of the way the
2 course schedule works. Realistically, there's only a
3 couple of courses where we have to expand the number
4 of courses offered in order to take more 10th graders
5 beyond that 25 to 28 number. So we are still hopeful
6 to get that up to 45 or so, but 25 to 28 is what we
7 are currently anticipating within -- within that time
8 frame.

9 As far as being budget neutral it is because a
10 lot of the electives and a lot of the science and the
11 math courses -- a lot of those are redundant from 9th
12 grade to 10th grade. You know, we're going to offer
13 an accounting course regardless if we have a 9th
14 grade or a 10th grade; we're going to be offering
15 that additional -- those additional courses for
16 biology and chemistry and physics, regardless of
17 whether there's a 9th grade or a 10th grade. So it
18 actually helps from that perspective to have a larger
19 high school.

20 I know I missed a question in there, Dr.
21 Baldwin.

22 MR. BALDWIN: I think the only one that you
23 didn't hit on would be the building capacity and I'm
24 sure that's fine, but I just want to hear you say
25 that.

1 MR. FERGUSON: The building capacity based on
2 our review is about 600 students, depending on how we
3 use the building.

4 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Any other questions, Mr.
5 Baldwin?

6 MR. BALDWIN: (Shakes head side to side)

7 Dr. Moore?

8 DR. MOORE: My only question was in extending to
9 10th graders who may not have been in an accelerated
10 environment prior, have y'all had discussions about
11 how those students may be accelerated to ensure that
12 they're able to take advantage of your coursework?

13 MR. FERGUSON: Yeah. So there's a couple of
14 ways that we're really looking at to that. One
15 that's going to be a major focus of our associate
16 head of school and the school counselor, one of which
17 is hired, the other which an offer is going out this
18 week. And then a piece of that is really ensuring
19 that the courses that they're able to take, whether
20 it's a math course that -- they may need to take
21 Algebra 1 they may need to take geometry -- that
22 they're accessible schedule-wise to be able to take
23 those. And then across the board, doing a
24 seminar-based instruction is going to be new for all
25 of these students. And really embracing that and

1 it's actually going to open up the opportunities to
2 really -- to push those kids in that way, but then
3 making sure that we are offering the supports for the
4 students. So all of our teachers will be offering
5 office hours every day after school from 3:15 to
6 4:00; and they're really working with the families
7 and the students to be able to -- to offer all the
8 supports that they need to come in and rise to that
9 level of rigor by the time they leave us.

10 DR. MOORE: Okay. Thank you.

11 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

12 Any other questions from the Panel? If not,
13 I'll entertain a motion.

14 MR. DAVIS: I move to support the Charter
15 amendment request.

16 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Second.

17 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. All those in
18 favor?

19 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

20 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Any abstentions?

21 (NO RESPONSE)

22 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. The motion passes
23 and congratulations.

24 MR. FERGUSON: Thank you.

25 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Give us just a few minutes --

1 MS. ROWE: Thank you.

2 CHAIR SUTHELIN: -- to fill out our voting
3 sheets.

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

5 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I voted in favor of the
6 amendment request. I think the -- these changes will
7 advance student learning and meets the needs and
8 requests received from the community.

9 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Dr. Wright-McMurray.

10 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I voted for. I support
11 the School for Advanced Studies Northwest Arkansas
12 request to amend the Charter and begin enrolling 10th
13 graders in the fall of 2024.

14 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

15 Mr. Scott.

16 MR. SCOTT: I voted for the amendment request of
17 the School for Advance Studies Northwest Arkansas,
18 because there's strong effort to engage families and
19 communities, and their due diligence effort to do so.

20 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Mr. Davis.

21 MR. DAVIS: I voted for. Due to high community
22 demand and interest, I support the Charter amendment
23 as requested.

24 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Dr. Moore.

25 DR. MOORE: I voted for. I approve the School

1 for Advanced Studies Northwest Arkansas request to
2 amend their charter to begin enrolling 10th graders
3 in fall 2024 and for the requested changes to
4 existing waivers.

5 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: And then I voted for. I
6 support this data-driven decision to expand the grade
7 levels provided and I'm excited to see the impact
8 that Charter makes on the students of Arkansas as
9 well as the Charter's landscape within the state.

10 So thank you very much and congratulations.

11 MR. FERGUSON: Thank you all.

12 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Ms. Summons.

13 **III.2. ARKANSAS LIGHTHOUSE CHARTER SCHOOL AMENDMENT REQUEST**

14 MS. SUMMONS: Okay. Next on the agenda is
15 Arkansas Lighthouse Charter School. They are
16 requesting to waive Arkansas Code 6-10-106(a) and we
17 have Ms. Noel and Mr. Turker here this morning.

18 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

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

24 (ALL ANSWER AFFIRMATIVELY)

25 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you very

1 much. You may begin.

2 MS. NOEL: Good morning. As Ms. Summons stated,
3 we are here to request a waiver of uniform start and
4 end dates. We are also here requesting a waiver for
5 alternative calendar. I'm not sure it encompasses
6 that rule? It doesn't?

7 MR. REYNOLDS: I was going to save this for
8 legal review, but it came to my attention that the
9 Charter's not only requesting the waiver of
10 6-10- 106(a) which is the uniform start date, they're
11 also requesting a waiver of 6-10-106(g) (3) which is
12 the reporting date by which a school or charter has
13 to notify the Division that they're using an
14 alternate calendar. So we've done this with several
15 school districts. I lost count at 150.

16 Because of the inclement weather, school
17 districts were transitioning from a traditional
18 school calendar to an alternate school calendar.
19 Under the law, they have to notify the Division that
20 they're doing that by July 1st of the start of the
21 school year. We're in April now, so they wouldn't be
22 able to do that; so we granted -- or the State Board
23 granted waivers for basically any school districts
24 that applied for it. And I thought that it was just
25 good to have charters come through the CAP instead of

1 going through the State Board to do that. So --

2 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you.

3 MS. NOEL: Thank you.

4 So again, our waiver request includes what he
5 said as well as the first day of the school year for
6 student attendance in public elementary and secondary
7 schools. Our rationale, Arkansas Lighthouse Charter
8 Schools will provide scholars with 100 and -- or I'm
9 sorry -- 1,131 instructional hours. That's 63 hours
10 longer than the minimum required by law. Our board
11 of directors requests the school year for the student
12 attendance begins earlier than is prescribed by law,
13 and the proposed first day for students for '24-'25
14 academic year would be Thursday, August 8th. I have
15 -- we have inserted a proposed '24-'25 school year
16 calendar as well. And then just a comparison,
17 student hours go from the 1,068 minimum to the 1,131
18 and then the professional development days that we've
19 embedded. The law requires no less than six and we
20 are providing our staff with 19.

21 Are there any questions?

22 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Would you like to come up for
23 the legal review?

24 MS. NOEL: So sorry.

25 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Oh, you're good.

1 MR. REYNOLDS: You stole my thunder a little
2 bit. So on -- the original waiver request was for
3 Arkansas code § 6-10-106(a) which is the start school
4 -- uniform school start date. Then I would recommend
5 that the Charter amend their amendment to include
6 6-10-106(g) (3) which is, as I stated earlier, this is
7 the reporting deadline for when you have to notify
8 the Division of when you're going to transition to an
9 alternate calendar. And I don't have any concerns
10 with either of those waivers.

11 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay. Thank you.

12 Dr. Wright-McMurray?

13 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I don't have any
14 questions.

15 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Mr. Scott?

16 MR. SCOTT: Just one question, just wondering
17 about getting feedback you have received from
18 families in regards to this particular change?

19 MS. NOEL: So our families are actually excited
20 about this change simply because this year we're
21 going to school until about June 19th. Our new
22 calendar will push this back to May 30th, which gets
23 our students out, gives them the opportunity to have
24 a little more summer and then it also gives us the
25 opportunity to run our summer program which we've

1 done in the past.

2 MR. SCOTT: And, I guess, lastly is that -- this
3 particular change, how do you feel it impacts your
4 goals relative to performance?

5 MS. NOEL: I think it -- it will assist us.
6 I'll let Dr. Tucker kind of speak to our thoughts
7 around that.

8 DR. TURKER: Thanks for your question. We will
9 continue with our summer institute program, that
10 won't go away, but that will give us flexibility as
11 well as the parents flexibility to enroll the
12 students during that time frame. So we call it
13 ALSEA, Arkansas Lighthouse Summer Institute. During
14 that time they come to school just 8:00 till 3:00.
15 During the morning period, we do project-based
16 learning. In the afternoon, we take them to beyond
17 the wall experiences.

18 But what we heard from our parents that --
19 especially the parents and scholars who play in
20 sports during that time period -- they have a lot of
21 camps. And our current calendar doesn't allow them
22 to attend those camps; and they are struggling to
23 make a decision just because by law we adopted that
24 calendar and now they have to come to school because
25 of the attendance purposes. So that is the biggest

1 feedback.

2 But our goals just like I -- Ms. Noel explained
3 -- we have 60 plus hours additional instructional
4 time in providing our scholars. We do have
5 after-school program currently and that will continue
6 for our scholars that who want to participate and
7 come to school. We will continue with our summer
8 institute. So we will educational period of time
9 during that given time period.

10 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

11 Mr. Davis?

12 MR. DAVIS: No questions from me.

13 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: I have a question, but it's
14 just -- it's more of a clarification point. We have
15 a year-round calendar currently and just so that we
16 have it on the record, what's the reason why you
17 didn't choose the year-round calendar versus the
18 alternate calendar?

19 DR. TURKER: So our current year-round calendar
20 -- we wanted to ensure that -- so we've done quite a
21 bit research, and we went to schools around the
22 nation who implemented year-round calendar. So the
23 goal was teacher burnout. We provide our teachers a
24 lot of the PDs begin of the school year. We wanted
25 to change that mindset and we want to give one week

1 off every -- after month PD time. So for us to
2 ensure that hitting 180 instructional period, we had
3 to extend our school year calendar. So that was the
4 biggest reason that we had to push our current
5 calendar all the way to June.

6 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yeah. And, I guess, I should
7 clarify on why I asked about the year-round calendar.
8 It's because they don't have to adhere to that --
9 that start date which is why you're needing to ask
10 for this waiver?

11 DR. TURKER: Correct.

12 MS. NOEL: Correct. Yes.

13 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: I have got you.

14 All right. Mr. Baldwin?

15 MR. BALDWIN: Yeah. Really just a clarifying
16 question. So the alternative calendar that we're
17 talking about, is that -- is the approval of that
18 just for a one-time situation because of weather or
19 is this a permanent approval for, you know, all years
20 in the future?

21 MS. NOEL: So we are requesting both. We are
22 requesting for the weather incident that happened
23 this year, and then we're also requesting for future.

24 MR. BALDWIN: Okay. Thank you.

25 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: And just to kind of help you

1 understand that a little bit. In terms of the
2 request they're making for this year, that's --
3 that's sort of just so that they can get by with the
4 inclement weather; for the coming years, that's a
5 start date waiver that's being attached to the
6 alternate calendar. And so that alternate calendar
7 gets reported out in July. And so that would be when
8 they will report that out, but they don't -- we don't
9 have to approve their alternate calendar; we're just
10 approving their waiver of start date. Does that make
11 sense?

12 MR. BALDWON: It does. Thank you.

13 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Dr. Moore?

14 DR. MOORE: My only question, similar to two
15 previous ones, like, what was the teacher feedback on
16 this?

17 DR. TURKER: Teacher burnout; right? They want
18 to have their June summertime off. We have done five
19 district staff meetings followed up with surveys and
20 our promise was for them to propose a calendar and
21 get their feedback. Based on their feedback, 85
22 percent of them said that we wanted to end just like
23 regular school districts around us. And we went back
24 to drawing board. We got their feedback, maybe have
25 to make some changes, take some PDs off. We had more

1 PDs, but still we're providing a lot more than what
2 state requires. And we were able to bring it up end
3 of May -- May 30th. And we -- on our next district
4 staff meeting, we proposed the calendar again. One
5 hundred percent satisfaction. They were super happy
6 to see that. And then we took it to our board, got
7 accepted, now in front of you -- before you proposing
8 for approval.

9 DR. MOORE: Thank you.

10 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

11 Any other questions from the panel? If not,
12 I'll entertain a motion.

13 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I move approval.

14 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right.

15 I have a motion on the floor by Dr. Wright-
16 McMurray. Do I have a second?

17 MR. SCOTT: I second.

18 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. And a second by
19 Mr. Scott. All those in favor?

20 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

21 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Any opposed?

22 (NO RESPONSE)

23 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Any abstentions?

24 (NO RESPONSE)

25 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. The motion passes.

1 Give us just a few moments to fill out the voting
2 sheets.

3 DR. TURKER: Thank you.

4 MS. NOEL: Thank you.

5 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. We'll start with
6 Mr. Baldwin.

7 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I voted in favor of the
8 amendment request. I support the alternative
9 calendar that the school has requested.

10 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you.
11 Dr. Wright-McMurray.

12 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I voted for. I support
13 the Arkansas Lighthouse Charter Schools request to
14 amend their academic year calendar.

15 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Mr. Scott.

16 MR. SCOTT: I've been voted for the waiver
17 requests of our Arkansas Lighthouse Academies because
18 of the supportive research and diligence effort to
19 support that supports the identified needs of the
20 teachers, families and the scholars they serve.

21 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Mr. Davis.

22 MR. DAVIS: I voted for due to support of the
23 school's board, teachers and families. I support the
24 request for the Charter to amend the school's
25 calendar and reporting deadline which will continue

1 to operate within guidelines as established by the
2 state of Arkansas.

3 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: And Dr. Moore?

4 DR. MOORE: I approve Arkansas Lighthouse
5 Charter School's request to amend start dates/school
6 calendar to best meet the needs of its students,
7 families, and educators. Additionally, I applaud the
8 commitment to provide professional development well
9 beyond the state minimum requirement.

10 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

11 And then I voted for the waiver to change to an
12 alternate calendar to make up for inclement weather
13 and the approval of a waiver of start date to ensure
14 stakeholder feedback and best practices for students
15 are kept at the forefront of the Charter's
16 educational model.

17 So thank you very much and congratulations.

18 **III.3. CABOT PANTHER ACADEMY**

19 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Ms. Summons.

20 MS. SUMMONS: Okay. The next school on our
21 agenda is Cabot Panther Academy. They are requesting
22 to add a new campus to be located within the Cabot
23 School District at 407 South Polk Street in Cabot,
24 Arkansas. Mr. Randolph is here as a representative
25 for Cabot School District.

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

3 Mr. Randolph, if you'd stand and raise your
4 right hand. Do you swear that the testimony you're
5 about to give is the truth, the whole truth and
6 nothing but the truth?

7 MR. RANDOLPH: I do.

8 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay. Thank you very much.
9 You may again.

10 MR. RANDOLPH: Thank you, sir, and thank you,
11 Members of the Panel for letting me speak today and
12 for hearing our request. It's been almost 20 years
13 ago that Cabot Panther Academy, formerly known as the
14 Academic Center of Excellence, was created as a
15 conversion charter school. And over the years we've
16 added students; we've added staff; we've changed
17 programs; and we've changed a lot of things; and to
18 be honest, we've changed with the time; and we have
19 also, through that time period, served as an
20 alternative learning environment knowing that there
21 are students that need something different beyond
22 what's happening in the regular school, in the
23 regular classroom.

24 Over the years, we've also subsequently
25 developed another program called Cabot Learning

1 Academy which is set up for students that really need
2 a lot more intensive emotional and behavioral
3 support; and we've housed it at two different
4 locations -- actually three excuse me. And we just
5 opened a new facility this January. A brand-new
6 state-of-the-art facility for right about 60 students
7 currently in that program.

8 And what we've done is that we follow the same
9 ALE protocols that we do at our other ALE campuses,
10 both Cabot Panther Academy along with our traditional
11 ALE setting. And what we're trying to do is to unify
12 all three of those ALEs under one charter
13 authorization so that we can just kind of keep
14 everything more in sync with everything that's
15 happening. And so we've actually gone through and
16 requested an LEA for that facility because one thing
17 that has been a little bit troublesome for us as a
18 school district is all 60 students that are in that
19 Cabot Learning Academy are still technically housed
20 in their home schools. And so when it comes time for
21 testing, when it comes time for grade reporting, it's
22 just made things very complicated.

23 And so our goal is that by having an its own
24 LEA, along with grouping it under this charter
25 umbrella, that we can have everything in one spot and

1 have one set process for everything that we're doing
2 for those students. So that's why we're requesting
3 that this new facility, under that new LEA, be
4 included in our Charter. Nothing would change with
5 how we're serving students in that school; nothing
6 would change with how we're serving students at any
7 other campus. This is more just for us. The way we
8 see it is is more of a logistics piece. But that's
9 the request I present before you all today.

10 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you very much. Mr.
11 Reynolds.

12 MR. REYNOLDS: Because there's no waivers being
13 requested, I didn't prepare a legal review. So I
14 don't have any concerns with the requests.

15 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you very
16 much.

17 Dr. Wright-McMurray, do you have any questions?

18 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So just for my clarity, so
19 our -- our decision today is just to allow you to
20 combine them under the one LEA?

21 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: So there would be a -- so the
22 district conversion would have a district LEA, the
23 overarching one, and then there would be individual
24 school LEAs within that. At least, that is how I'm
25 understanding the request.

1 MR. RANDOLPH: Correct, yes.

2 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And then just a new
3 facility that you're trying to request?

4 MR. RANDOLPH: (Nods head up and down)

5 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. All right. Thank
6 you. I don't have any further questions.

7 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay.

8 Mr. Scott?

9 MR. SCOTT: One of the questions I believe --
10 excuse me -- has been answered already relative to
11 your facilities utilization agreement. I'm just
12 wondering about the impact of that relative to your
13 operational budget? There is a -- the document spoke
14 to a signed facilities utilization agreement, and I
15 have not seen that.

16 MR. RANDOLPH: Yes, sir.

17 MR. SCOTT: So if you would just address the
18 financials and impact on the operational budget.

19 MR. RANDOLPH: Yes, sir. Thank you. So the
20 district has already incurred all the costs for that,
21 and that money does not in any way come from the
22 current building or location for the Charter. It is
23 its own entity and we've funded it as such. And so
24 it will have no impact financially on the current
25 organization or the processes of our Charter.

1 MR. SCOTT: Thank you.

2 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Mr. Davis?

3 MR. DAVIS: Yeah. No questions right now.

4 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay. Mr. Baldwin?

5 MR. BALDWIN: So, I guess, I had similar
6 questions to Mr. Scott and what I'm looking at is a
7 request -- a facilities request and maybe you could
8 just explain that to me in a little bit more detail.
9 So you -- tell us where you're where you're operating
10 out of right now and are you moving to a new
11 location? And I think what you just said was that
12 the school already owns the new location. So is
13 there going to be any cost to the Charter? Are you
14 going to allocate costs? Are there going to be more
15 teachers? I mean, just kind of explain the details
16 of the request to us a bit.

17 MR. RANDOLPH: Yes, sir. So -- so currently
18 there are three -- under the Charter umbrella I
19 should say, there are two schools. There are two
20 schools that we have, two locations that are district
21 owned. Under the ALE we have three. So two that are
22 under the Charter and that third the Cabot Learning
23 Academy. All three of those facilities are district
24 owned. We have our own staff there. And so there
25 would be no additional impact on district costs or

1 cost of the Charter with this change. The only time
2 we would add staff is if we have growth in student
3 need and then we would add staff to accommodate that.
4 But that would still -- even with the addition of 60
5 students from CLA, we're still well with -- under our
6 cap of our student enrollment. So the only thing
7 that would create further cost would be if we needed
8 to add staff members to accommodate more students to
9 the program. There's no -- no additional cost --

10 MR. BALDWIN: So are --

11 MR. RANDOLPH: -- that we would foresee from
12 this.

13 MR. BALDWIN: Are you all moving -- I guess, I'm
14 still confused. Are you all moving all the students
15 in one building or are you going to operate three
16 separate buildings?

17 MR. RANDOLPH: We will continue to offer three
18 -- sorry -- operate three separate buildings. So no
19 -- no movement of students whatsoever, sir.

20 MR. BALDWIN: Okay. So if you have -- if you
21 have this building operative already, why are we --
22 why are we needing to approve a new campus? That --
23 that's my confusion is the application said we we're
24 approving a new campus, but it sounds like you're
25 already operating in the building?

1 MR. RANDOLPH: The request is that a new campus
2 would be included under the Charter, not that a new
3 campus would be constructed. That -- that is --

4 MR. BALDWIN: Okay.

5 MR. RANDOLPH: -- already completed.

6 MR. BALDWIN: Okay. I'm with you. Thank you
7 for explaining that.

8 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Currently, we're looking at a
9 program; correct? And not an LEA, meaning that this
10 -- you don't have an LEA attached to it at all?

11 MR. RANDOLPH: Not yet. No, sir.

12 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yeah. And so --

13 MR. RANDOLPH: But this is part of that.

14 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Right. And so what this would
15 do is would enable you to then bring it --

16 MR. RANDOLPH: Correct.

17 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: -- under Charter umbrella,
18 give it a charter LEA number?

19 MR. RANDOLPH: Correct.

20 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: I have got you.

21 MR. RANDOLPH: Yes, sir.

22 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Dr. Moore?

23 DR. MOORE: So my question -- and it may be
24 related to sort of what you're talking about with CLA
25 -- but I was mainly concerned about the grade changes

1 going from serving 5-12 to K-12. Can you speak to
2 that?

3 MR. RANDOLPH: Yes. Yeah. Great question. And
4 so currently CLA serves K-12; and so the additional
5 of the K-4 to this is simply to accommodate the
6 program that's already in place at CLA. That would
7 be no changes to what's -- what's occurring at Cabot
8 Panther Academy; there would be no additional
9 students in that K-4 realm. This would just be to
10 accommodate those students that are already within
11 that school.

12 DR. MOORE: Okay. So you have no intentions of
13 adding students below 5th grade to Cabot Panther
14 Academy --

15 MR. RANDOLPH: No, ma'am.

16 DR. MOORE: -- or the ALE?

17 MR. RANDOLPH: No, ma'am. No. The one to 15
18 ratio that we have at Cabot Learning Academy and --
19 it has worked fantastically for our students. And so
20 we don't want to do anything to change what's
21 happening at Cabot Panther Academy.

22 DR. MOORE: Okay. Thank you.

23 MR. RANDOLPH: Yeah. Thank you.

24 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: It's more of a statement than
25 a question, but -- so what I'm understanding is that

1 programmatically, nothing's going to really change?

2 MR. RANDOLPH: Correct.

3 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: It is just a matter of
4 organizationally structuring it so that it's all
5 under one district umbrella with the three individual
6 school LEAs, and that's the only difference that
7 we're looking at?

8 MR. RANDOLPH: Correct.

9 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay.

10 DR. MOORE: I do have an additional question
11 about that then. So -- and I'm not familiar with
12 what existing waivers you have for your Charter, but
13 this would mean that those waivers would then apply
14 to CLA which currently does not have those waivers?

15 MR. RANDOLPH: I would say potentially they
16 could apply, but we would not be applying those
17 waivers.

18 DR. MOORE: Okay. That was -- so that's not
19 your intent?

20 MR. RANDOLPH: No, ma'am.

21 DR. MOORE: But us doing this, that would open
22 the door for that?

23 MR. RANDOLPH: Correct.

24 DR. MOORE: Okay. I do have concerns about that
25 -- about -- but I don't know what those waivers are,

1 so it may be a moot point. Do you have teacher
2 licensure waivers for your Charter?

3 MR. RANDOLPH: We do. Yes, ma'am.

4 DR. MOORE: Okay. So that would mean that for
5 those high-need students in K-4, that potentially
6 there would be no licensed teachers. So that gives
7 me a little bit of pause.

8 MR. RANDOLPH: No. I would agree. And I -- I
9 would be happy to entertain anything that would
10 prevent that waiver from going into place for that --
11 that location.

12 DR. MOORE: This reminds me of something we did
13 before --

14 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yes.

15 DR. MOORE: -- where we started running into
16 those issues. So --

17 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Go ahead, Mr. Scott.

18 MR. SCOTT: So from a messaging standpoint --
19 first of all, thank you for the effort to identify
20 the special needs of the of the population there.
21 From a messaging standpoint, there's a charter that
22 exists, and then there's also the traditional public
23 school that exists there. So if you can just help me
24 understand, if I'm a parent and I want to decide, am
25 I going to Cabot Public School versus the Charter?

1 Which -- how do I better understand my options?

2 MR. RANDOLPH: Sure. So that's a great
3 question. I will tell you what we -- we greet all
4 new families with is, all these students are students
5 of Cabot Public Schools. And so when you come into
6 our school district, we want to enroll you as a
7 student of our district and make sure that you're
8 getting what you need. And then if we determine as
9 -- and families or are included in that process. If
10 we feel that there is a different location or a
11 change of placement that's needed, we're going to
12 start to have those conversations. And again, for
13 those secondary students, it's fairly common for
14 students that apply to go to Cabot Panther Academy,
15 either in a hybrid setting or completely digital
16 setting, that there's been a lot of dialogue with
17 families before that. And it's the same way with
18 Cabot Learning Academy. Again, we have 60 students
19 if you think about K-12 currently. That's out of
20 over -- just over 10,000 students that we have
21 enrolled K-12 in the district. And so this is not a
22 large group of students. And what we recognize in
23 families, and we have conversations with them, that
24 this is not something they choose to -- I want to
25 seek out that building. It's something that we feel

1 and then through conversations that we need to look
2 at something different than the traditional school
3 setting after they've been in that traditional school
4 setting. And so that's -- that's just over a period
5 of time, sir, that we have conversations with our
6 families and -- and with staff members.

7 MR. SCOTT: Any outreach effort to community
8 partners and any particular feedback from them?

9 MR. RANDOLPH: In regards to this?

10 MR. SCOTT: Yes.

11 MR. RANDOLPH: To be honest, no, sir. Not --
12 not in the combination of it because the community
13 feedback we've had and with parents and students at
14 these locations is they're very comfortable and happy
15 where they are. And again, as this is just an
16 operation -- or sorry -- more of a behind the scenes
17 change, there wasn't really any impact to those
18 students that we foresaw.

19 But I understand your concerns completely, Dr.
20 Moore.

21 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Mr. Davis, did you have a
22 question?

23 MR. DAVIS: No. I was just going to say those
24 concerns are real and I would agree with that. So
25 this is now more than just a kind of organizational,

1 structural change because now you mentioned 60
2 students; right?

3 MR. RANDOLPH: Yes.

4 MR. DAVIS: So potentially 60 students and, you
5 know, how they are operating will then have an impact
6 on the overall student population of the district
7 without going through the traditional process around
8 waiver. So I appreciate you pinpointing that and
9 recognizing that. So my question would be is this --
10 is there some way to do this without having those
11 waivers apply? And --

12 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: So, Mr. Reynolds?

13 MR. REYNOLDS: I can honestly say I'm stumped
14 because the ALE program is under the district LEA
15 now. If you approve the -- if you approve the
16 amendment, the ALE program moves under the Charter
17 LEA.

18 DR. MOORE: Oh, yes.

19 MR. REYNOLDS: And whatever waivers apply to the
20 Charter LEA, then apply to the ALE program. I mean,
21 legally speaking, you can -- the CAP has the
22 authority to limit waivers and scope and duration,
23 but then it really turns into a practical problem
24 rather than --

25 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Right.

1 MR. REYNOLDS: -- I mean, a legal problem. I --
2 I mean, that's why I have no legal issue with it --
3 legal concerns with it, but that's really -- from a
4 policy perspective, that's up to you all.

5 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: But from a practical
6 standpoint, notes could be attached to those waivers
7 which state --

8 MR. REYNOLDS: Sure.

9 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: -- they would only be utilized
10 --

11 MR. REYNOLDS: For the Cabot Panther Academy,
12 not the Cabot Learning Academy. Yeah.

13 DR. MOORE: I'd be much more comfortable with
14 that if that was an option.

15 MR. REYNOLDS: Yeah. Yeah.

16 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Is that -- sorry. I
17 didn't mean to jump in. Is that done here or is it
18 done in a separate process? I guess, that's what I
19 would need to be clear on before I vote for or
20 against something.

21 MR. REYNOLDS: It's through the master waiver
22 spreadsheet; right?

23 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yes, yes. So the master
24 waiver spreadsheet, technically it could be completed
25 without those waivers being put in for that

1 particular school --

2 MR. REYNOLDS: Right.

3 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: -- that particular LEA. There
4 are certain district standards which, because it's a
5 district level standard, it may or may not apply.
6 That's where we get into a tricky situation. And
7 that's something we'd have to look at logistically,
8 maybe we put in notes on those particular standards
9 stating that it doesn't apply to those.

10 MR. REYNOLDS: For Cabot Learning Academy?

11 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Right.

12 MR. REYNOLDS: Okay.

13 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: It would be a manual process
14 --

15 MR. REYNOLDS: Right.

16 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: -- but -- at least for the
17 school level standards -- they just wouldn't be input
18 into the --

19 MR. REYNOLDS: Right.

20 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: -- system.

21 MR. REYNOLDS: Okay.

22 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yeah.

23 MR. REYNOLDS: Okay.

24 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So, I guess, I -- I still
25 have the question is this the best way to do what

1 they're wanting to do? This seems as if we're going
2 to like, say, okay, "they," and then there's going to
3 need to do some back-end things that will need to
4 take place. Is there a cleaner way to do it?

5 DR. MOORE: And on top of that, what's the
6 purpose then, I guess? It's, like, if you're not
7 going to use the waivers, why do these need to be
8 part of the Charter?

9 MR. RANDOLPH: I go back to -- to be honest with
10 you -- and we're in the midst of testing season right
11 now -- there's a lot of behind the scenes work that
12 goes with those students to make sure they're coded
13 appropriately and moving things around versus if we
14 had them under one location. They're still at the
15 end of the day, as they're classified ALE students,
16 all those things are going to go back to their home
17 school. But we're not juggling schedules and rosters
18 and everything beforehand to get those students set
19 up. But I -- would it make it easier if I was to
20 withdraw this from this month and to come back with
21 an alternate one that said all current waivers under
22 the Charter would not apply to this or --

23 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: So I think the cleanest
24 process -- and I -- I don't think they -- I guess, if
25 you're not going to apply the waivers, then we could

1 do a new charter, meaning district conversion
2 charter. But that's going to take a while.

3 MR. RANDOLPH: Yeah. That's -- yes, sir.

4 MR. REYNOLDS: Yeah. Because to answer your
5 question, Dr. Moore, the waivers that are at issue
6 the Cabot Panther cabin already has, and they're
7 attached to its LEA number.

8 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Right.

9 MR. REYNOLDS: So if you move the ALE program
10 from the district to the Charter, then those waivers
11 would attach too. So without some sort of notes or,
12 you know, action from the CAP limiting this -- the
13 scope of the waivers to the Cabot Panther Academy,
14 there's really no way to get around -- no other way
15 to get around to that --

16 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: And --

17 MR. REYNOLDS: -- issue.

18 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: And I will say there is a
19 precedent for putting notes in that waivers are
20 specific to particular areas. It's just that when it
21 goes into the system, it's going to have to be
22 manually checked. And so that's just understanding
23 it from the back end. There's not a clean -- real
24 clean way to do that.

25 MR. DAVIS: But to be fair, that -- like, that's

1 not our concern.

2 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: No, no, no, it's not. It's
3 not.

4 MR. REYNOLDS: No. That's the --

5 MR. DAVIS: That's not the concern of the --

6 MR. REYNOLDS: No. That's the -- yeah. That's
7 the Division's --

8 MR. DAVIS: -- Charter Authorizing Panel.

9 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Right.

10 MR. DAVIS: We -- yeah. Our duty and obligation
11 to ensure that we are not extending, you know,
12 without having a clear understanding. So I would
13 support this coming back and having a clear
14 understanding around what charter amendments we're
15 talking about; and what it would, you know, what the
16 notes -- what it might look like in the notes. And
17 -- yeah. I mean, on -- that's something for the
18 Department to work out on the back end.

19 DR. MOORE: And additionally, if that's going to
20 happen, I would appreciate just a better
21 understanding. I know you explained a little bit
22 about things are going on behind the scenes, but
23 really like why? Why CLA needs to be part of the
24 Charter? Like, what's not working now with it being
25 part of Cabot School District general LEA? So that

1 would be interesting. And I do want to applaud ACE
2 because -- well, not ACE. I'm sorry. That shows my
3 age -- Cabot Panther Academy because my son finished
4 through there and would not have graduated otherwise
5 and is a successful adult now. So I know that a lot
6 of times students need a different learning
7 environment to best meet their needs and I appreciate
8 those opportunities for students.

9 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: And then another piece of
10 information that would be helpful is, of those 60
11 students, how many of those students will receive --
12 or percentage of those students are receiving special
13 education services because that helps us to kind of
14 think through that as well as far as vulnerable
15 populations, etcetera.

16 Any other questions or comments? Mr. Reynolds?

17 MR. REYNOLDS: And I'm happy -- I'm happy to
18 pull the waivers that Cabot Panther Academy has just
19 so you can see what waivers we're actually talking
20 about.

21 DR. MOORE: I think that would help us.

22 MR. DAVIS: Yeah.

23 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yeah. That would be helpful.
24 All right.

25 MR. DAVIS: Do we need an official withdrawal?

1 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yes.

2 So for the record, do you want to withdraw and
3 come back next month?

4 MR. RANDOLPH: So I would like to withdraw our
5 application -- or amendment -- excuse me --
6 application and with your permission work with Mr.
7 Reynolds and others to make sure that we have the
8 best packet to present to you all next month.

9 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: I appreciate that. Thank you
10 very much.

11 MR. RANDOLPH: You bet.

12 MR. DAVIS: Thank you.

13 **III.4. FOUNDERS CLASSICAL ACADEMY OF ARKANSAS**

14 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Ms. Summons.

15 MS. SUMMONS: Okay. Next on the agenda is
16 Founders Classical Academies of Arkansas, and they're
17 requesting to waive Arkansas code 6-10-106(g)(3).
18 And Mr. Felton will be speaking on behalf of
19 Founders.

20 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you very much.

21 All right. Will all those who plan on speaking
22 on behalf of the Charter, please 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 MR. FELTON: I do.

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

4 MR. FELTON: Good morning. I'm Dennis Felton.
5 I serve as state director of Premier High Schools and
6 virtual learning for ResponsiveEd Arkansas. I want
7 to say -- I don't see anybody on zoom, but Ms. Susan
8 Provenza should be joining me as well.

9 But you'll see here in the packet for inclement
10 weather calendar waiver request for Founders
11 Classical Academies of Arkansas. By submitting this
12 waiver, you see that we've indicated the alternate
13 school calendar submission which includes the minutes
14 that's outlined in your packet as well. And so if
15 you look on the -- if you look on the calendar
16 submission in the middle under alternate calendar,
17 that has 1,068 instructional hours. If you look, we
18 had it broken down from kindergarten through 2nd
19 grade. 390 minutes a day, times 174 days, which has
20 the total amount of hours; going down to grades 3/4,
21 405 minutes per day, times 174 days, which equals
22 1,174.5 hours; and then you see for grades 5-12 which
23 will have 415 minutes per day, times 174 days, which
24 equals 1,203 hour -- 3.5 hours. Which all meets the
25 alternate calendar. This also has been approved by a

1 local board as well.

2 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right.

3 Mr. Reynolds?

4 MR. REYNOLDS: So this is the same waiver
5 request that Lighthouse did. It's 6-10-106(g)(3)
6 which is the deadline by which school district -- or
7 charter school has to submit to the division when
8 they're going to switch to an alternate calendar. So
9 -- I don't have any concerns with this waiver.

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

12 Dr. Wright-McMurray?

13 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: No questions.

14 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Mr. Scott?

15 MR. SCOTT: No questions.

16 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Mr. Davis?

17 MR. DAVIS: None from me.

18 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Mr. Baldwin?

19 MR. BALDWIN: No questions.

20 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Dr. Moore?

21 DR. MOORE: None. Thank you.

22 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. If there are no
23 questions. I'll entertain a motion.

24 DR. MOORE: I move to approve the request for
25 changing calendar.

1 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Second.

2 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: I have a motion and a second.

3 All those in favor?

4 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

5 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Any opposed?

6 (NO RESPONSE)

7 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Any abstentions?

8 (NO RESPONSE)

9 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Motion passes.
10 Give us just a few minutes and we'll fill out our
11 voting sheets and then get back to you. Thank you.

12 MR. FELTON: Thank you.

13 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. We'll start with
14 Mr. Baldwin.

15 MR. BALDWIN. Yes. I voted in favor of the
16 alternative calendar as requested by the Founders
17 Classical Academies of Arkansas and believe that this
18 change advances student learning for this charter
19 program.

20 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

21 Dr. Wright-McMurray.

22 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I voted for. I support
23 Founders Classical Academy of Arkansas's request to
24 transition to an alternate academic calendar for
25 academic year 2024.

1 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

2 Mr. Scott.

3 MR. SCOTT: I voted to support the amendment
4 request of Founders Classical Academy because of the
5 diligence to provide adequate student learning
6 opportunities for the students they serve.

7 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Mr. Davis.

8 MR. DAVIS: I support the request for the
9 Charter to amend the school calendar which will
10 continue to operate within guidelines as established
11 by the state of Arkansas.

12 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Dr. Moore.

13 DR. MOORE: I voted for. I support the request
14 for Founders Classical Academy to amend the school
15 calendar.

16 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: And I voted for. I support
17 the amendment to the calendar to -- due to inclement
18 weather in order to provide the best educational
19 experience for students. All right.

20 MR. FELTON: Thank y'all.

21 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

22 All right. We're going to take just a
23 five-minute break and then we'll come right back.

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

1 **III.5. PREMIER HIGH SCHOOL OF ARKANSAS AND PREMIER HIGH SCHOOL**
2 **OF NORTH LITTLE ROCK**

3 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. We'll call the
4 meeting back to order.

5 Ms. Summons, if you're ready.

6 MS. SUMMONS: Okay. We have Premier High School
7 of Arkansas and they're requesting to merge the
8 Premier High School of North Little Rock with the
9 Premier High Schools of Arkansas Charter. The North
10 Little Rock campus will keep all the waivers
11 currently associated with -- currently -- excuse me
12 -- currently held by the Premier High School of
13 Arkansas Charter. They also want to obtain a waiver
14 for Arkansas code § 6-17-2403(f)(2)(A)(i) which is
15 the minimum teacher compensation schedule. The
16 waiver currently exists in the Premier High School of
17 North Little Rock. And they're also requesting that
18 -- the Premier High School of Arkansas has identified
19 locations for the Premier High School of Russellville
20 and Premier High School of Fayetteville. And we also
21 have Mr. Dennis who will be presenting on behalf of
22 Premier High School.

23 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you very
24 much.

25 If you will stand and raise your right hand. Do

1 you swear the testimony you're about to give is the
2 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

3 MR. FELTON: I do.

4 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you very
5 much. You may begin.

6 MR. FELTON: Good morning. While they're
7 getting that loaded, I'm Dennis Felton, state
8 director of Premier High Schools and virtual
9 learning. Also, I think have remotely Ms. Katie
10 Stephens, who is our executive director of finance in
11 Arkansas, as well as Ms. Marla Pearson, who is our
12 state director of special services. I have here in
13 person with me, Mr. Curtis Shack, who is our
14 executive director of student information systems as
15 well as Ms. Rhonda Bradford, our superintendent of
16 ResponsiveEd Arkansas.

17 Do y'all have a copy of the presentation?

18 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yes, we --

19 MR. FELTON: I was just fixing to say, I don't
20 want to -- I know you've had technical difficulties
21 this morning.

22 So just an overview. The things we're asking
23 for today is one to merge Premier High School of
24 North Little Rock with Premier High Schools of
25 Arkansas. If you all remember, we had these

1 conversations several months ago and -- making this
2 merger. So we're excited about being able to present
3 that to you today. Also, if you recall last
4 fall/summer-ish, we received a waiver of Arkansas --
5 the code § 6-17-2403 in regards to the minimum
6 teacher salary and the 80 percent that has to be
7 spent. And so that waiver is in our North Little
8 Rock Charter; we're just trying to bring it over to
9 our Premier High Schools of Arkansas. And then we
10 want to notify you all the two sites that we found
11 for Premier High School Russellville and Premier High
12 School in Fayetteville that will open up this August.

13 So once again just revisiting, you guys know
14 Premier High School, we continue to serve a unique
15 population of students; and our mission is to provide
16 hope for students through a caring mastery-based
17 learning environment where we promote a free society
18 and cultivate moral academic excellence. We continue
19 to serve students who are seeking smaller,
20 personalized learning environments, students have
21 become disengaged from high school, students who have
22 -- at risk of dropping out of high school, students
23 who are currently working, students that are
24 currently parents as well, and students that are
25 engaged in our juvenile justice system. If you look

1 at the next slide, it has our structure of schools
2 that we have here in Premier High Schools of Arkansas
3 and you see Little Rock, Fort Smith, Texarkana
4 online, Russellville and Fayetteville. Merging
5 Premier High School of North Little Rock with Premier
6 High Schools of Arkansas will add Premier High School
7 of North Little Rock under Premier High Schools of
8 Arkansas; and so with that merger, we would still
9 only have -- we would only have two districts at that
10 point which would be Premier High School Springdale
11 and Premier High Schools of Arkansas. And then,
12 hopefully, we'll see you guys around the same time
13 next year to make that last merger.

14 You see on the next slide we have the new
15 district structure, that new district structure that
16 we were talking about that has Premier High School
17 North Little Rock in it. On this slide, it's giving
18 you guys a snapshot of our current enrollment in all
19 of our campuses and what that would look like when
20 they're all merged together. You also see where
21 we've kind of got an enrollment cap breakdown for
22 each building as well that supports our overall
23 enrollment cap.

24 So looking at our waiver 6-17-2043, we feel like
25 in meeting this, as we've -- you guys have previously

1 approved, and we voted on -- would definitely impact
2 the educational programs that we have. This waiver
3 right now is currently Premier High schools of North
4 Little Rock. And so just want to just kind of
5 revisit. There have been no legal concerns in the
6 past with this waiver. And we continue to pay our
7 teachers the minimum that's been set forth in the
8 LEARNS Act and as well as it's helped us with
9 retention and recruitment as well and being
10 competitive.

11 So looking at our new sites, we're excited about
12 Premier High School Russellville and Fayetteville
13 opening up this August. The community has been very
14 responsive and very inclusive as we're having this
15 additional educational offering. And so in
16 Russellville, we're looking at 620 South Arkansas
17 Avenue in Russellville, Arkansas. There you kind of
18 see our lease term that we're looking at. That just
19 gives you an exterior of the building -- image of the
20 building as well. And we're looking at, like, 37 --
21 3,760 as far as square feet. In Fayetteville, we're
22 excited about being located at 2853 North College
23 Avenue. We've signed a three-year lease at that
24 location and looking forward to serving the
25 Fayetteville community.

1 Just kind of sharing with you all some timelines
2 and where we kind of are in that process. We're
3 excited about over the next few months as we get
4 those schools ready and be able to serve students and
5 parents in those communities. And so, of course,
6 there'll be some permitting going on; there'll be
7 some renovations occurring as well; there'll be some
8 site preparations, equipment, things like that.
9 We're ordering curriculum, the marketing, the
10 communications, the parent information meetings,
11 working with individuals like the chamber of commerce
12 just to spread the mission and vision and this new
13 educational entity.

14 And so just revisit it again. We're just asking
15 to merge Premier High School of North Little Rock
16 with Premier High Schools of Arkansas. We're asking
17 to keep our waiver that we have with Premier High
18 School of North Little Rock and bring that over to
19 Premier High Schools of Arkansas. And just excited
20 to let you guys know the two sites we have for
21 Russellville and Fayetteville.

22 At Premier, we continue to keep students at the
23 forefront of our mind in every decision that we're
24 trying to do and continue to be responsive to the
25 communities in Arkansas. At this time, I'll take any

1 questions.

2 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you very much.

3 Mr. Reynolds.

4 MR. REYNOLDS: All right. So like Mr. Felton
5 said, the Charter is seeking over waive Arkansas code
6 § 6-17-2403(f)(2)(A)(i). The code specifically
7 allows the division and the CAP to waive this
8 requirement if meeting the requirement would
9 negatively impact student safety or the fiscal
10 stability or educational programs offered by
11 open-enrollment public charter school. And like Mr.
12 Felton said, Premier High School North Little Rock
13 currently holds this waiver. They're just seeking to
14 apply it to the broader Premier High Schools of
15 Arkansas Charter.

16 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you very
17 much.

18 Dr. Wright-McMurray.

19 MR. REYNOLDS: One other thing I neglected to
20 say, I did check all of the waivers that Premier High
21 Schools -- like, this is the only waiver that Premier
22 High Schools doesn't have already.

23 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: So you've cross-referenced?

24 MR. REYNOLDS: I cross-referenced. Yeah.

25 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you very

1 much.

2 Dr. Wright-McMurray.

3 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Thank you for the
4 information. Thank you, Mr. Reynolds, for helping us
5 on that piece so we don't revisit here.

6 Just for my clarification, the other schools
7 that are not included in the discussion today, is it
8 because they're not up date-wise or for review? Or
9 -- why --

10 MR. FELTON: So Premier High School Springdale
11 is the only one not associated and we still have that
12 school kind of running through a grant cycle.

13 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. So it's for that
14 purpose is why we're not hearing for that --

15 MR. FELTON: That is correct.

16 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. And then I was
17 trying to look through to get a sense of where your
18 caps are and then the enrollment numbers you
19 currently have. I was trying to get a -- I think I
20 was actually having to look through the packet for
21 that.

22 MR. FELTON: Here I have -- this is the current
23 average daily membership by school looking at the
24 current year. If you look at the next slide, this is
25 kind of where I have the CAP breakdown. So I would

1 make a guesstimate we're operating about 50 percent
2 capacity. So that's why we're not asking any cap
3 increase. We want to continue to grow in our cap and
4 then when we reach that number, then we'll seek for
5 enrollment cap increase.

6 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. And so you're
7 saying, like, right now you're -- feel like that --
8 for what you are allowed to enroll and what you have
9 enrolled, you're about 50 percent of that?

10 MR. FELTON: That is correct.

11 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And so can you just speak
12 a little bit on how you are planning on working on
13 that growth and getting those numbers to where you
14 are, you know, a little bit more than 50 percent of
15 that enrollment cap?

16 MR. FELTON: Yes, I will. So we put together
17 marketing campaigns for each one of our schools. A
18 lot of that's driven through community outreach; it's
19 driven through business and community partnerships as
20 well as partnerships with traditional school
21 districts. And so that -- we expect our school
22 leaders to be visible in the community, to be engaged
23 in community events. We expect them to host parent
24 informational meetings to be able to educate the
25 community about the school. We expect them to open

1 -- I mean, to host open house to invite those
2 community members and leaders in the school as well.
3 We also look at things like social media. We do
4 radio advertising; we do publication advertising; we
5 do billboard advertising. As well as we host
6 enrollment fairs every summer which give parents
7 opportunity to tour the school to learn about the
8 education opportunity, to meet staff and as well as
9 to be more informed about educational choices.

10 And so we know this -- this population is unique
11 as well. And so this is typically not the kids that
12 are hanging out, easy, accessible and so we have to
13 work with nonprofits; and we work with juvenile
14 justice system, parole officer, judges to communicate
15 them about this education opportunity as well. And
16 so I think when we hit all those points and
17 everything's going well and then -- and we're able to
18 meet our enrollment goal.

19 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. All right. That's
20 all I have for right now. Thank you.

21 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

22 Mr. Scott.

23 MR. SCOTT: Thank you.

24 Mr. Felton, I would like to first preface this
25 by saying I appreciate the effort and the mission

1 that you have as an organization to go after a
2 targeted population that typically is kind of
3 challenged. So a few questions I have initially are
4 more on the new site facilities-wise. There's a
5 facilities utilization agreement and it speaks to
6 numbers and -- numbers on the footage size -- square
7 footage side as well as on the lease side, but it
8 wasn't signed. Is there a signed facilities
9 utilization agreement available now?

10 MR. FELTON: There is. As you guys know,
11 there's a deadline as far as when I get this
12 information in to you all during the time I had
13 those, I guess, going through the signature process.
14 But yes, those are both -- I do have signed facility
15 utilization agreements for both sites and signed
16 leases.

17 MR. SCOTT: Okay. That's helpful. So the
18 signed lease would speak to, on the financial side
19 the lease agreement, but is there a plan relative to
20 construction the first day of students stepping
21 through readiness-wise? Could you just help us
22 understand the readiness of that facility, assuming
23 -- I believe you said you are targeting this year?

24 MR. FELTON: That is correct, yes. So we've
25 engaged with contractors Kinco. The timeline they've

1 given us is ten to 12 weeks on the job. So we
2 anticipate these sites being ready as early as July
3 15th; and trying to start school as early as -- is it
4 August 6th? August 6th. So we did not see any
5 concerns with it being ready. Just reemphasizing
6 that these are satellite campuses. So the sites that
7 we've chose, they are pretty much ready to go. We
8 have some minor renovations we're doing on those
9 sites. So it's not -- I guess, kind of in the past
10 we did some more extensive jobs on some sites that
11 are about seven/eight thousand square feet. These
12 jobs are only going to take they're saying ten to 12
13 weeks, very minimal renovations because of the sites
14 that we choose are pretty much ready to go.

15 MR. SCOTT: That's good. Step us through the
16 landscape of those facilities. We're very familiar
17 with your current locations. Help us understand
18 relative to your mission, and these particular
19 locations, describe the -- the neighborhood. I
20 appreciate the pictures --

21 MR. FELTON: Yeah.

22 MR. SCOTT: -- of the areas.

23 MR. FELTON: So part of the work that we do in
24 working in this CSP grant world is trying to identify
25 opportunity zones. And so we look at the IRS and the

1 Census Bureau has opportunity zone maps for each
2 community. And so we're looking at where we want to
3 put the school, we want to make sure we're in an
4 opportunity zone. So that was part of why we chose
5 these locations. And also, we're looking at certain
6 things that want to check the box. So is there
7 sufficient parking? You know, is it safe? Is it
8 accessible to parents and students in the community?

9 And so when we go back into the mission and
10 vision, we want to be most successful to parents and
11 students that we can serve. We want to have a
12 facility that's safe. A facility that can handle
13 what we're trying to do as far as the educational
14 offering. And the only difference is these are
15 satellite campuses, so they're just smaller. But the
16 learning environment will look very identical to
17 schools and every other Premier we have, just on a
18 smaller scale.

19 MR. SCOTT: I like hearing the safety portion of
20 that. Any -- I don't want to make an assumption,
21 they're all one level? Is your --

22 MR. FELTON: Oh, that is correct.

23 MR. SCOTT: Okay. No elevators?

24 MR. FELTON: No.

25 MR. SCOTT: Okay. Describe the engagement of

1 the families. What -- why that location? And why do
2 you believe that you'd be successful there?

3 MR. FELTON: So the engagement of family has
4 been really good. When you look at communities --
5 let's just go community by community. So when you
6 look at Russellville, Russellville does not have a
7 lot of educational options. They have Russellville
8 High School, and so my engagement with those parents
9 and community members as they've been excited about
10 this school that has this specific mission and
11 vision; and it's not as big as Russellville High
12 school amongst 1,500 kids.

13 For those who are familiar with the Fayetteville
14 area, Fayetteville once again, has a pretty nice size
15 high school. I think they serve over 3,000 students.
16 And so when I've engaged with parents and community
17 members in that community -- once again, having a
18 school of this size that offers this type of offering
19 to get kids caught back up or get kids back engaged
20 -- they've been very receptive to it as well.

21 In choosing those sites, I think there is a
22 consideration of what educational opportunities that
23 students have in those communities. There's also the
24 engagement with community individuals seeking to
25 learn more about what we do. And so, you know, we

1 celebrate 11 years in Arkansas coming 2024. And I
2 think that as people across the state in these
3 communities see and hear about the work that we do,
4 it's just -- become even more receptive to. Yeah,
5 you know, this community could use a school like
6 this. And so, you know, I'm blessed to stand here.
7 I mean, we're talking about eight Premier High
8 Schools. I remember 11 years ago; right? You come
9 meet me in Little Rock and we had one Premier High
10 School. And so to see these communities pour into
11 these schools and to see the traditional school
12 districts even partnering with these schools, to me
13 it's Premier High School just finding its niche in
14 Arkansas and the communities that it can serve.

15 MR. SCOTT: I have a few more questions, but
16 I'll come back later.

17 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Go ahead.

18 MR. SCOTT: Well, so thank you. And
19 understanding the challenges that you have in regards
20 to serving this particular population, can you share
21 what you believe will be critical success factors in
22 moving the needle -- improving when it comes to
23 school improvement in those targeted areas?

24 MR. FELTON: Yeah. I'm going to tell you, it
25 starts with the school leader. These are small

1 schools and so it starts with the school leader and
2 the school leader having a mission and vision that's
3 aligned to what we're trying to do and the things
4 that we present to you all. It's that school leader
5 hiring competent and qualified staff members that are
6 carrying out that mission and vision as well. We've
7 been hanging out a lot with data here lately and, you
8 know, no matter if the school is this small, it's
9 important and we think it's almost, you know, it
10 gives us somewhat an advantage of being as small to
11 make sure that we're having data-driven conversations
12 around students. And then looking at some of those
13 things that are not necessarily present in algebra
14 and biology and in science. And so we have students
15 that, you know, yes, they're in the juvenile justice
16 system; we have students that are parents; we have
17 students that are living in poverty; we have students
18 that are homeless.

19 And so, you know, how do we address all those
20 things and put students in the situation that way
21 when they come to Premier High School, they are able
22 to actually focus on the high school diploma. And so
23 I think it's data-driven decisions; it's looking at
24 that data very frequently to make sure that what we
25 are doing is working and we continue to do that. At

1 the same time, looking at those things that are not
2 working and let's stop doing those things that are
3 not working.

4 And then because we've grown across the state,
5 we've seen huge gains in the collaboration. You
6 know, it's one thing to be one Premier High School
7 principal and you're sitting they're trying to figure
8 this out -- what you're talking about. But then
9 you're sitting amongst eight Premier High School
10 principals all across this state who their community
11 looks different; right? Maybe their students look a
12 little bit different. But this educational piece
13 that we're talking about, how do you reengage the
14 disengaged? You know, how do you adequately monitor
15 student progress is kind of where we're hanging out
16 in this collaboration piece. So the collaboration
17 has helped as well in building capacity.

18 MR. SCOTT: Thank you. My last question is just
19 one assurance that -- getting back to the facilities
20 piece -- that whether or not it's the lease or any
21 upfront work that's required, we need to see a signed
22 agreement -- facilities utilization agreement, No.
23 one. It won't have any impact on -- on
24 responsibility of the state, obviously, as stated in
25 the facilities utilization agreement. But the work

1 to be done to get -- to make it ready day one would
2 not have an adverse effect upon the operational
3 budget; correct?

4 MR. FELTON: That is correct. And I'll get
5 those -- those signed leases to you -- I mean, those
6 signed facilities utilization agreements to you all.

7 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

8 Mr. Davis?

9 MR. DAVIS: Yeah. No questions from me.

10 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Dr. Moore?

11 DR. MOORE: No questions. Thank you.

12 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Mr. Baldwin?

13 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. Thank you.

14 My question really goes back to the waiver that
15 you're requesting and, I guess, really, it's a
16 clarifying question for me. And I'm looking at your
17 campus operating budget that you presented to us, and
18 it shows three different scenarios. One is with the
19 meeting minimum salary requirements and receiving
20 LEARNS funding; and then meeting -- then another
21 column says meeting minimum salary requirements, not
22 receiving LEARNS funding; and then the final is
23 meeting minimum salary requirements, receiving LEARNS
24 funding and meeting 80 percent requirement.

25 So, I guess if you could for my benefit, explain

1 what that 80 percent requirement is. I don't -- I'm
2 not aware of what that is. That's just my lack of
3 understanding. But it's -- it makes a big difference
4 on your bottom line which I think is why you're
5 requesting the waiver. So could you walk us through
6 -- through that?

7 MR. FELTON: Yeah. So I'm just referencing the
8 Commissioner memo, FIN-23-046; it's May 22nd, 2023,
9 where it indicates that -- the districts are
10 utilizing the amount of state funds equal to 80
11 percent or more allocated for school level personnel
12 salaries according to the accuracy funding matrix
13 recommended by the Senate Committee on Education and
14 the House Committee on Education for the previous
15 year for teacher salary and teacher raises.

16 Mr. Baldwin, in looking at those three scenarios
17 as you can kind of see, one does say meeting the
18 minimum or salary requirement which we want to do.
19 We want to continue to meet the minimum salary
20 requirement and we do want to receive LEARNS funding
21 that allows us to be able to pay the minimum salary
22 for teachers and be competitive in recruitment and
23 retention. If you look at the second option, the
24 second option is meets the minimum requirements, but
25 that does not allow us to receive LEARNS funding --

1 not receiving it. And then the third option is us
2 meeting the salary requirement and trying to meet the
3 80 percent requirement and receiving LEARNS funding.
4 And you see how that has a significant impact on our
5 budget, trying to do all of them. So that actually
6 --

7 MR. BALDWIN: So you got right now -- your
8 current state is that first column?

9 MR. FELTON: There you go. That's correct.
10 That's where we want to hang out.

11 MR. BALDWIN: And that -- that's where you want
12 to stay. And you are -- you are paying the teachers
13 the \$50,000 minimum required --

14 MR. FELTON: That is correct.

15 MR. BALDWIN: -- by the -- okay. I'm still not
16 sure I understand the 80 percent funding, but I -- I
17 do understand where you're at right now and that you
18 want to stay there. And this is currently a waiver
19 that you have, you just want to extend it over when
20 you merge the schools?

21 MR. FELTON: That is correct.

22 MR. BALDWIN: All right. Thank you.

23 MR. FELTON: No problem.

24 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you, Mr. Baldwin.

25 Do we have any other questions from the Panel?

1 Okay. All right. If not, I'll entertain a motion.

2 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I move approval of the
3 request.

4 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. We have a motion
5 by Dr. Wright-McMurray. Do we have a second?

6 MR. DAVIS: Second.

7 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: We have a second by Mr. Davis.
8 All those in favor?

9 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

10 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Any opposed?

11 Was that an opposed, Mr. Baldwin, or in favor?

12 MR. BALDWIN: No, I'm in favor.

13 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay. I just wanted to be
14 clear.

15 MR. BALDWIN: I was just slow.

16 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: No, no, you're good.

17 All right. All right. Then the motion passes.
18 Thank you very much. And give us some time to fill
19 out our voting sheets.

20 MR. FELTON: Thank y'all.

21 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Mr. Baldwin.

22 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I'm in favor of the three
23 request for Premier High School to merge the North
24 Rock campus with the Arkansas Charter to receive the
25 waiver that's currently held by the North Little

1 School for that -- that merge charter; and to move
2 forward with the new school locations in Russellville
3 and Fayetteville. I think that each of these actions
4 benefit the Premier program and promote quality
5 education.

6 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you very much.

7 Dr. Wright-McMurray.

8 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I voted for. And I said
9 that I support Premier High School of Arkansas's
10 waiver and amendment request.

11 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

12 Mr. Scott.

13 MR. SCOTT: I voted for the amendment and waiver
14 requests of Premier High Schools Arkansas because of
15 the diligence effort to ensure the operational needs
16 of the schools were met and the effort to engage and
17 recruit quality teachers to support the mission of
18 the organization.

19 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

20 Mr. Davis.

21 MR. DAVIS: I voted for to create organizational
22 efficiencies and legal compliance and support the
23 request to merge Premier's North Little Rock campus
24 LEA with Premier Arkansas's LEA and the waiver to
25 comply with the LEARNS Act utilization of funds.

1 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Dr. Moore.

2 DR. MOORE: I support Premier High School of
3 Arkansas's request to restructure LEA such that North
4 Little Rock campus is under the Premier of Arkansas
5 Charter LEA and the waiver request associated. I
6 acknowledge the site selection and plans for
7 additional campus locations in Fayetteville and
8 Russellville as previously approved.

9 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: And then I voted for the
10 amendment. The structure will bring greater
11 efficiencies to the overall Charter.

12 Thank you very much.

13 MR. FELTON: All right. Thank y'all.

14 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Congratulations.

15 MR. SCOTT: So just as a reminder, the signed
16 FUA.

17 MR. FELTON: We have got you.

18 MR. SCOTT: All right.

19 **III.6. LISA ACADEMY**

20 MS. SUMMONS: The last school on our agenda
21 today is LISA Academy. They are amending its Charter
22 to include a waiver of Arkansas Code 6-18-213(b) for
23 all LISA schools; and following that, we'll have the
24 data reviewed by LISA. We have Superintendent, Dr.
25 Bogrek, here this morning with his team.

1 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you very much.

2 Will all those who plan on speaking on behalf of
3 the Charter please stand and raise your right hand.
4 Do you swear that the testimony you're about to give
5 is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
6 truth?

7 (ALL ANSWER AFFIRMATIVELY)

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

10 DR. BOGREK: Good morning, respected Panel
11 Members. LISA Academy is formally requesting a
12 waiver for this code as a result of transition --
13 transitioning to an alternate calendar necessary --
14 state required by the recent snow days. And we don't
15 have intention for alternate calendar for next school
16 year just for this school year to make up our snow
17 days. And we add ours to our, you know, after
18 school. So to make up some of the days, we are
19 kindly requesting this waiver for all LISA schools.

20 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you.

21 Mr. Reynolds.

22 MR. REYNOLDS: So like Dr. Bogrek said, they're
23 requesting a waiver of 6-18-213(b) which is just
24 another reporting requirement for school number of
25 attendance. So I don't have any concerns with this

1 waiver.

2 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: So essentially, we're waiving
3 the reporting requirement and switching to an
4 alternate?

5 MR. REYNOLDS: Correct. Right.

6 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay. All right. Thank you.
7 Dr. Wright-McMurray, any questions?

8 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: No, not at this time.

9 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay.

10 Mr. Scott?

11 MR. SCOTT: Not at this time.

12 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Mr. Davis?

13 MR. DAVIS: No.

14 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Mr. Baldwin?

15 MR. BALDWIN: No questions.

16 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay.

17 Dr. Moore?

18 DR. MOORE: No.

19 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay.

20 If there are no questions, I'll entertain a motion.

21 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I move approval of the
22 request.

23 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: We have a motion by Dr.
24 Wright-McMurray. Do we have a second?

25 MR. SCOTT: I second.

1 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: And a second by Mr. Scott.

2 All those in favor?

3 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

4 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Any opposed?

5 (NO RESPONSE)

6 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Motion passes. Let us fill
7 out our voting sheets real quick and then we'll get
8 back.

9 All right. Mr. Baldwin.

10 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I support the amendment
11 request to adopt an alternative calendar for all LISA
12 Academy schools.

13 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

14 Dr. Wright-McMurray.

15 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I voted for. I support
16 LISA Academy's request to transition to an
17 alternative calendar for academic year 2020 -- 2024
18 -- sorry.

19 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

20 Mr. Scott.

21 MR. SCOTT: I voted to support the amendment
22 requests of LISA Academy because it provides a
23 meaningful approach to compliance and targeted
24 performance improvement for the school system.

25 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

1 Mr. Davis.

2 MR. DAVIS: I support LISA Academy's request as
3 presented for an alternative school calendar.

4 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Dr. Moore.

5 DR. MOORE: I support LISA Academy's request for
6 an alternate school calendar due to snow days.

7 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right.

8 And I voted for. I voted for the addition of
9 the waiver of the reporting date to amend the school
10 calendar due to inclement weather and -- in order to
11 better serve the needs of the faculty, staff and
12 students of LISA Academy.

13 All right. Thank you very much.

14 **III.7. LISA ACADEMY DATA REVIEW**

15 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: And I won't make you stand
16 again to testify. I'll have you come ahead and do
17 your data presentation.

18 DR. BOGREK: Good morning, again. As you know,
19 LISA Academy is serving in 11 schools over 4,000
20 students, and we are here to present data review for
21 West Elementary. Our senior director of academics,
22 Dr. Agam Altyyev, and principal, Ms. Hula. They are
23 going to present the presentation.

24 DR. ALTYEYEV: Okay. Quick introduction for
25 myself. I'm Dr. Agam Altyyev. I'm a senior director

1 of academics and previous math coordinator, math
2 coach, math teacher in charter school system.

3 And, Ms. Hula, do you want to introduce
4 yourself?

5 MS. HULA: Thank you for having us. Krystle
6 Hula, the principal of Lisa West Elementary School.

7 DR. ALTYEV: Okay. I'm going to do a quick
8 district overview and Ms. Hula will dive deep in West
9 Elementary data. So purpose of LISA Academy Charter
10 School is to provide learning environments that
11 engage all students through innovative and
12 personalized approach with focus on STEM, support
13 students, staff and community through collaborating
14 and caring environment. Enable students to achieve
15 academic success in the STEM fields through various
16 competitions, community involvement, sport, art,
17 language and other after school clubs.

18 Our mission is to provide academic rigorous
19 college prep program, partnering with students,
20 families and community, and guide all students in
21 gaining knowledge, skill and attitude necessary to
22 have their life improve, diverse society and excel in
23 academically rich learning environment. The vision
24 of LISA Academy is to prep students for education and
25 workplace of their choice, highly encouraging, you

1 know, STEM pathways. The student focus approach will
2 lead students becoming productive and responsible
3 citizen and even Nobel Laureates.

4 Our pillars are learn, innovate, support and
5 achieve. A quick history, LISA Academy first
6 established in 2004, as a West Middle School, 6-8
7 campus. In 2008, North campuses opened. In 2016,
8 received 13-year charter renewal and, you know, West
9 Elementary Campus opened and North Middle -- High
10 expanded -- West High School expanded. In 2019, we
11 moved to Northwest Arkansas, the Springdale campus.
12 And '21/'22/'23 hybrid Rogers and Fayetteville
13 campuses opened.

14 These are the current schools. At West
15 Campuses, we have West High, West Middle, West
16 Elementary; at North, we have North Middle, High and
17 North Elementary; and Northwest Arkansas we have
18 three campuses: Springdale, Fayetteville, Rogers and
19 we also have a hybrid online/in-person school.

20 So student number grew from 2017 from 2,100 to
21 over 400, currently. Staff grew almost, you know,
22 current -- almost 500 staff from around 200 back in
23 2017. This is the, you know, current plan as is. So
24 soon, hopefully, we'll be opening a
25 Rogers/Bentonville, you know, in next school year,

1 not this school year. And hope to open Fayetteville
2 Middle-High School.

3 So at Arkansas, LISA Academy has been, you know,
4 well known with various participations in any fields.
5 It could be, you know -- sorry -- the best high
6 school in Little Rock; the North high School No. four
7 in Arkansas in top growth, the most diverse student
8 body and continuously grow the enrollment. Our
9 current school ratings, we have one A school, our new
10 campus; and we have four B schools in last as ratings
11 which is half of our schools are A and B rated.

12 In participations, we are really, you know,
13 proud of getting our students do most they can. We
14 have some of our middle-high school students who
15 finished the year with, you know, multiple trophies
16 with various call it social studies, call it STEM,
17 call it engineering and call it leadership.

18 And these are some of our highlights. Ninety
19 plus college acceptance and 95 plus graduation rate,
20 high STEM focus. So even though we are STEM focused
21 our students, you know, we push them to go to
22 multiple places, especially with our quiz bowl, you
23 know, we have been, you know, state champion past
24 years. I don't recall, but I know more than before
25 COVID -- pre-COVID let me call it that way.

1 And in diversity -- and again, we are serving
2 the most diverse students in the state of Arkansas
3 with 60 plus percent free and reduced, 73 -- almost
4 75 percent, you know, 3/4 minority and around 50
5 language spoken as of this school year which is very
6 impressive.

7 And from here on, I'll let Ms. Hula talk about
8 West Elementary.

9 MS. HULA: Thank you.

10 And thank you, again. Just to give you guys a
11 little bit of information. I did start with West
12 Elementary as an assistant principal in the 2016-'17
13 year. So I have served as an administrator there for
14 seven of the eight years because we went to hybrid
15 for one.

16 All right. So you can see here, LISA Academy
17 you all know is a very diverse school district and
18 our campus in general too is extremely diverse and
19 we're extremely excited about that. I have team
20 members that are watching us here today. Everybody's
21 excited to get this going. You can see here too that
22 West Elementary, we've got a 70 percent free and
23 reduced lunch participation; 79 percent minority;
24 special education is 17 percent; and ELL is 28
25 percent. And we'll talk more about that.

1 All right. So we knew we had a call to action
2 because we, obviously, wanted better test scores for
3 our kids. We knew that we had a lot of work to do.
4 So, initially, we started with the school improvement
5 plan at the end of last year using the data that we
6 had, NWEA. And then, obviously, we updated it when
7 we got our ESSA data. We, again, have updated it
8 because we've been working on the highly effective
9 schools' application as well as Peer 2.0. So that
10 has all been added into our school improvement plan.
11 So it is a working document -- a live document.

12 Again, I'll mention that we do have the
13 high-needs population and when we really kind of
14 looked at this, we knew that, you know, our kids
15 needed something different, something special. We
16 needed our teachers to be very well equipped to work
17 with them. You can see here the percentages of
18 students that identify within these -- each
19 subgroups.

20 Okay. So when we got our ESSA stuff -- or
21 excuse me -- ESSA score, we did have some things to
22 celebrate. We did see an increase in overall
23 value-added growth. You can see here at 35
24 hundredths. We had an increase in SQSS too from a
25 lot of work that we did with attendance. However,

1 due to our achievement dropping slightly, we wound up
2 dropping by 6/10 of a point which dropped us down to
3 a D because we were barely a C. So again, we knew we
4 had a lot of work to do. We did see some success
5 here as well. You can see with our black/African
6 American subgroup we saw some growth here. We were a
7 little bit above the state. This actually gives you
8 a little bit more information because it shows us
9 over three years some of the -- the little growth
10 that we've seen. So we knew that there was just --
11 there's some major changes that have to shift with
12 instruction within our classrooms.

13 And again, this is just another way of looking
14 at the different scores between '22 to '23 where we
15 did see growth in math -- value-added growth, content
16 and EL, English language proficiency. SQSS, we did
17 work here. A lot of work with attendance. Some
18 things I'll mention, home visits, very popular with
19 LISA Academy, conferences, obviously meetings,
20 communication. We used SchoolStatus now. I think
21 that's been a huge tool for us with communicating
22 with families. Obviously, holding events, something
23 I'll point out is the tornado March 31st went right
24 behind our school. It was pretty big. We were in
25 the middle of the dismissal and, obviously, we had a

1 lot of families that were affected by this. So
2 transportation was difficult for some families; some
3 of them lost their cars. But we still grew in SQSS
4 because of the work we did for attendance.

5 So let's get into the work, because this is the
6 big part. We developed our SMART goals based on, you
7 know, we knew we were shifting from a ACT Aspire to
8 ATLAS. So, obviously, we had to just kind of look at
9 percentages here. We're looking at math and reading,
10 trying to increase by five percent; math and reading
11 value-added growth, trying to increase by three
12 percent; and then in science -- we know that that's
13 coming, we're excited about that -- we're wanting to
14 increase by 15 percent. We are -- I -- as I
15 mentioned, we just submitted our highly effective
16 schools' accreditation application yesterday in fact.
17 So we're crossing our fingers that that did -- that
18 went well. We worked with Dr. Guevara from Arkansas
19 South -- I'm trying to -- I can't recall the name all
20 of a sudden. Southern Arkansas University. That's
21 right. SAU. Sorry. I've said it a million times.
22 I promise. Okay. And Peer as well. We've been
23 working with them. We're very excited with the work
24 that we've been doing with them as well.

25 So here we identified some areas of growth for

1 us. We knew that Tier 1 instruction was our biggest
2 area. We needed to improve here. We needed to find
3 out what was going on in the classrooms. What were
4 the issues? How can we support the teachers? What
5 is it that we need to help them with? We developed
6 some professional development this year as a district
7 and as a campus that's been really, really good.
8 Curriculum support and professional development and
9 curriculum was extremely important too. We started
10 PLCs a couple of years ago -- and we're trying to
11 master those now. We want collective efficacy. We
12 want everybody on the same page with the same
13 beliefs. And then something that we're going to do
14 for next year is a book study -- well, we'll do this
15 like a dissection of the book, is what I'll call it
16 -- of the *New Art and Science of Teaching* because we
17 want everyone to have a clear vision on what our
18 model of instruction looks like.

19 And these are just links for you guys. You're
20 welcome to scroll through those if you have not
21 already done so. This is some of the data that we're
22 currently using.

23 All right. And so one of the questions was, are
24 you achieving your goals? And so I thought, okay,
25 let me pull a little bit of data here. One of them

1 was reading. We saw a decrease in the number of
2 students that were in low achievement or mid-level --
3 mid-low achievement. I'm not recalling the right
4 word here. I apologize. Low and low average is what
5 I'm trying to say. We saw a decrease. And what this
6 is is the 4th -- excuse me -- the 3rd graders from
7 last year and then those 4th graders this year. So
8 essentially it is the same students other than those
9 few that come and go. And you can see here, just
10 visually, we did see more students achieving, less
11 students in our red. And, again, I did this for 4th
12 grade into 5th grade. Here this graph just shows it
13 to you in a different way. Unfortunately, I wrote
14 4th grade twice on there. I apologize. It's the
15 same data. So you can just see the difference.
16 Third grade is an area that we are really focusing on
17 quite a bit.

18 Okay. So some of the innovations, as you know,
19 we've all mentioned it with LISA Academy, STEM.
20 Obviously, we're going to continue our after-school
21 programs. We've got in-school boot camps going for
22 ATLAS. We're doing ATLAS reviewed items, computer
23 skills class; we have a STEM class in elementary now
24 and that's huge for us. And we also have a Paws
25 program for our students to increase reading

1 engagement and that's been really cool for them this
2 year. This is just where they read, and they
3 respond, and a lot of kids get a lot of incentives
4 for that. And then, again, supporting our teachers
5 through the instruction.

6 So when we think about our mission statement, we
7 do feel like LISA West Elementary is doing everything
8 we can to encourage -- excuse me -- to shed light on
9 LISA Academy's mission statement. And we're kind of
10 developing our own at this time. We got a guide --
11 we have a guiding coalition. We want ours to
12 complement the districts, but we want it to be
13 specific to us. I'm sorry. I really need water.

14 All right. So in our school improvement plan --
15 if it's okay, I'll get a drink real quick. Okay. I
16 apologize. That's the norm for me when I talk a lot,
17 I have to have water.

18 All right. So in our school improvement plan,
19 here's some of the things that we're doing. We're
20 conducting our PLCs. We're making sure that we have
21 an accountability system. We want everybody with the
22 same beliefs that every -- every one of our students
23 can grow. We've got an additional literacy coach
24 support from APSRC, which has been wonderful, as well
25 as DESE. And I have really enjoyed the relationship

1 with her. She's been fantastic. I mentioned earlier
2 that this is the book that we will be using next year
3 to go through our model of instruction. We've
4 already picked out two -- the two little goals that
5 we'll have at the beginning of the year. Those will
6 be the things that we'll be coming into classrooms
7 and observing. All the teachers will know because as
8 a team will be doing that. So it's been -- it's
9 really -- it's a great effort. Targeted observations
10 and feedback, that's what I just described.
11 Curriculum training and support. And the master
12 schedule is written, and always has been, to give
13 teachers that common planning time because we know
14 how critical that is.

15 I've already mentioned our HESA coaching with
16 Dr. Guevara. I'm also enrolled in the master
17 principal program. I've -- finishing up the first
18 year. It's been fantastic for me, and I think that
19 that just helps me to try to be a leader for this
20 team that is watching me now. We're participating in
21 the Peer program. I have four teachers that will be
22 working through that with me. Intervention supports
23 as well. We've got our academic coaches and our
24 enrichment teachers that are even working with that
25 also. And we hold data meetings regularly after we

1 get new data.

2 Doctor Agam was amazing at putting this data
3 together. So Dr. Agam pulled data; he wanted to know
4 when we compare ourselves to Pulaski County schools
5 -- and this is all schools, both public and charter
6 -- that are similar in demographic -- he used the
7 free and reduced percentage. So he used 60 percent
8 as his line of the schools that -- his benchmark.
9 Sorry. Thank you. His benchmark. And of course
10 LISA West Elementary is at a little bit over 70
11 percent. So we'll note that. And when we sort our
12 school, we're right there at the top, like, fourth.
13 So we're doing some stuff that is different than
14 these kids home schools. Okay? And the next slide,
15 I'll actually talk a little bit about that. Doctor
16 Agam also thought, you know, let's figure out where
17 our kids coming from in Little Rock because we all
18 know that parents are transporting them in and out.
19 So they're coming from all over the place, but some
20 of the most concentrated areas have a lot of D and F
21 schools. And so those parents are actively making a
22 choice to take their child from their neighborhood
23 school and bring them into LISA Academy. And
24 although we are definitely huge proponents of working
25 with all schools and all children having success no

1 matter where they're choosing to go to school, we
2 feel a huge obligation to these kids, a huge
3 responsibility to them. We have to work to get this
4 up. We have to work to give them everything that
5 they need. So we have that little bit of excitement
6 with knowing that we were fourth and then finding out
7 where they were coming from and knowing that we have
8 to do even better for them. So that is definitely
9 something that we are working on.

10 I'll kind of take us back to mission -- the
11 mission. At LISA West Elementary, we know -- we're
12 working on a collaborative culture; that's huge for
13 us. We're looking in on pursuing instruction,
14 achievement and growth goals -- the whole team,
15 that's what's so critical about it. Continuous
16 improvement is the -- is going to be the culture.
17 Celebrating achievements, overcoming challenges,
18 collaboration and we know that that is huge for
19 unlocking success in education with our kids. And
20 that is my closing.

21 I am a parent of Lisa Academy as well. I have
22 two graduates that have already gone through the
23 system. So I've lived not only as an employee, but
24 also as a parent.

25 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you very

1 much.

2 Dr. Wright-McMurray, do you have any questions?

3 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I do. Thank you for your
4 presentation and your team's time and effort in
5 responding to our questions and putting together this
6 information. When I was trying to -- I can't recall
7 the slide. I'm sorry. But when you had your
8 subpopulations broke down on the growth that was
9 occurring, still noticed -- and just wanted you to
10 kind of speak to a little bit more on your supports
11 that you're putting in place for your learners with
12 disabilities. Because it looks like that that still
13 was, even when we're looking at growth --

14 MS. HULA: Right.

15 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- was the very lowest
16 category that -- what you're seeing on that on that
17 slide.

18 MS. HULA: Yes, definitely. And that's a great
19 question because we do have a lot of things going on,
20 not only as a district, but as a campus. We do have
21 a new team that we're working with within our student
22 services department, and they've been fantastic to
23 really work through some of the things that we knew
24 we needed to improve in. One thing that LISA as a
25 district is doing that I have seen a lot of success

1 with is inclusion. Our kids as much as possible are
2 going into those general education classrooms where
3 the teachers that have the expertise in that field
4 can teach them that content. And we've already seen
5 growth in these students, so we're definitely
6 focusing in on each area that we knew we needed to
7 see more growth in and that was -- that was one of
8 them.

9 DR. ALTYEV: And just to just add on that, as
10 of staffing, West Elementary has, you know, most
11 amount of staffing on special education. They have
12 in-house coordinator, three to four teachers, ESL
13 coordinators, they have math coach, ELA coach which
14 they work. So supports staff it -- it's really huge.
15 And we made a big shift this year with our special
16 education department. We're, you know, renewing the
17 structure putting all of our elementary and middle
18 schools into inclusion model. So this year, it's
19 only 6th grade should be inclusion, but we made it
20 shift at the beginning of the year. You know what?
21 We want all of our students in the inclusion model.

22 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And just still kind of on
23 that -- on that vein. So as our students are moving
24 through your elementary school and they're, you know,
25 transitioning to middle/high school, can you speak to

1 that conversations that are happening as relates to
2 their own IEPs and the 504 plans to make sure that
3 what was put in place is continuing to follow with
4 them? Because it sounds like that you guys realize
5 that there is concern there and you're trying to
6 address it, but how are we making sure that when they
7 transition to their upper levels, that that's
8 continuing?

9 MS. HULA: That's also a great question. We're
10 holding transition conferences with both teams, with
11 the elementary team and the middle school team, and
12 then so on and so forth. I'm assuming with the
13 middle to the high school team. Obviously, I know we
14 are with middle school. So both coordinators are
15 coming together as well as teachers. They're coming
16 to the table; they're talking about the student;
17 they're talking about what accommodations or
18 modifications that have been successful for that
19 kiddo. We're also, you know, we also encourage -- we
20 highly encourage our families to go to the middle
21 school for their parent nights and get information
22 from that administration.

23 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. Thank you.

24 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Mr. Scott?

25 MR. SCOTT: Yes. You spoke earlier in regards

1 to targeted goals, especially in the ESSA index, some
2 instances three percent, some instances five percent.
3 Could you just take a deeper dive into why those
4 percentages?

5 MS. HULA: Yes. So it kind of depended upon
6 where we were sitting in the current data. And this
7 was really an effort with Dr. Agam and I whenever --
8 and our dean of academics on my campus as well, Ms.
9 Elrod -- just coming up with where were we and then
10 what is attainable because we really want to see some
11 success this year. Our teachers need to see it too.
12 Our students need to see it so that we can get there.
13 And in fact, you saw that we have our high-
14 reliability schools' goals and then we have Peer
15 goals. And those Peer goals are around NWEA MAP
16 testing. So again, we always look at where are we,
17 where do we want to be and what's attainable
18 currently.

19 DR. ALTYEV: Just to add on to that. Some
20 numbers are high, some are low. On the growth part
21 LISA Academy is really proud of being, you know, high
22 growth. But on the achievement part where our, you
23 know, diverse students are struggling. So we -- we
24 added higher number to move that achievement high,
25 but growth was already high. So we -- they were a

1 slight upgrade to get more.

2 MR. SCOTT: Excellent. Thank you. Secondly,
3 you mentioned effort -- you're working on an effort
4 -- when you look at the students that were coming in
5 from the D and F schools, that you're working on a
6 plan for them. Could you describe?

7 MS. HULA: Oh, I'm sorry. That was probably a
8 poor choice of words --

9 MR. SCOTT: That's okay. That's --

10 MS. HULA: -- to be honest. But what -- we're
11 actively making sure that we are helping those
12 students achieve the things that their parents set
13 out for them to achieve by choosing LISA West
14 Elementary. Encouraging a lot of parent and school
15 relationships. I really want it to be familial, you
16 know, I want it to feel that way. That's super
17 important to me. I want to have conversations with
18 parents, so that too -- they can also learn, how do I
19 help my own child also? Because there is a piece
20 there, you know, that sometimes they just don't know.
21 So we're actively working on those subpopulations.
22 They chose us for a reason, so we want them to all
23 succeed. Is that -- did I answer?

24 MR. SCOTT: You have. You -- actually, I think
25 you saw my notes here because that was exactly what

1 would be my next question in regards to your strategy
2 hitting -- you do a great job of expressing how you
3 grow capacity for your staff, but also growing
4 capacity to for your parents and --

5 MS. HULA: Yes.

6 MR. SCOTT: -- family members to become equal
7 partners.

8 MS. HULA: Absolutely. Absolutely. And I feel
9 like that's a piece that because I've been an
10 administrator at West Elementary for so long -- but
11 I'm only a second-year principal here, so I'm a baby
12 principal. But that's something that I knew we
13 needed to improve is our parents coming in. So we
14 brought back a lot of events this year so that I
15 could have those face-to-face conversations with
16 families. I hold monthly meetings too, just for them
17 to come in and give me their feedback; tell me what
18 they're loving; tell me what they're not loving and
19 us work together in a partnership.

20 MR. SCOTT: I absolutely love that when you talk
21 about engagement, a lot of times we think of
22 instances where we have a -- a meeting or an event --

23 MS. HULA: Right.

24 MR. SCOTT: -- and we are sharing out doing a
25 lot of the talking versus listening --

1 MS. HULA: Oh yes.

2 MR. SCOTT: -- and that feedback is huge. So
3 thank you for that. I'd been remiss if I didn't give
4 you an opportunity to share about what I believe is
5 one of your strong points in regards to home visits
6 and gathering that data and in particular your
7 virtual home visits. If you can, speak to that.

8 MS. HULA: Yes. In fact, our -- one of the --
9 the people in our school district that does the most
10 home visits is on my campus. But we feel like home
11 visits really bridge that connection. We feel like
12 it's really important for families to not be afraid
13 of coming and having those conversations with us and
14 talking with us on how to best help their children.
15 So home visits are done in a various -- in various
16 ways. You can either go in person to their home, you
17 can meet them at an establishment, or you can hold
18 them virtually which a lot of families that's their
19 preference. And that's been huge because now we see
20 a lot more participation with the virtual home
21 visits. But during these visits it's really a
22 conversation. You know, we talk about where their
23 kiddos are and how they're doing, but more
24 importantly to me, it's how better can we serve your
25 child? What do you know about your child that can

1 help us serve your child? What are your goals long
2 term? You know, what is your students' goals? So
3 it's just those conversations and they've been
4 excellent.

5 Do you want to speak anymore to the district?

6 DR. ALTYEV: So, I guess, I'm the number guy.
7 So to give you numbers, our newest campus, they
8 finished 100 percent of their home visits, and they
9 are doing the second round right now which is
10 impressive. Her staff is her ESL coordinator, Ms.
11 Huatuco, which she's visiting with her, you know,
12 Spanish speaking or, you know, international and
13 parents. And she has the most home visit where she
14 also holds literacy nights for parent -- parent
15 nights -- we have parent nights for the parents. And
16 since it's elementary, our West elementary parent
17 participation is really high. We have fall
18 festivals; we have other parent events where parents
19 really come in and, you know, you know, fill up the
20 school. So --

21 MR. SCOTT: Thank you.

22 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Mr. Davis.

23 MR. DAVIS: Give me just one second. I'm
24 looking at the NWEA scores --

25 MS. HULA: Yes, sir.

1 MR. DAVIS: -- and it seems as if you've done a
2 tremendous job in moving 3rd grade -- 3rd grade to
3 4th grade. So I'm interested in hearing, like, tell
4 me how you do that; right? And then on the other
5 hand when I look at 4th to 5th --

6 MS. HULA: Yes.

7 MR. DAVIS: -- I actually don't see that
8 movement happening. So I just want to get a better
9 idea of what may be happening there compared to
10 what's happening in your 3rd-4th grade sort of
11 achievement -- sort of pieces.

12 MS. HULA: Yes. So, you know, obviously, we're
13 tutoring with all of our kiddos; we're also -- we
14 have RTI and -- excuse me -- in all of our master
15 schedules at every grade level. One of the things
16 that we did see, we had some major teacher turnover
17 in one particular class last year in 4th grade.
18 Also, quite a few of our --

19 MR. DAVIS: What does that mean? What does that
20 mean? Multiple --

21 MS. HULA: We had a teacher --

22 MR. DAVIS: Multiple teachers or just one
23 teacher?

24 MS. HULA: Well, one teacher moved down to a
25 different grade level --

1 MR. DAVIS: Okay.

2 MS. HULA: -- because she didn't feel like it
3 was her fit to be in that upper grade. And then
4 replacing that teacher proved to be difficult.

5 MR. DAVIS: Okay.

6 MS. HULA: So we had a lot of difficulty with
7 that, and that group was definitely impacted by that.
8 We, obviously, offered them summer school as well to
9 try to make up that and the tutoring as well. So
10 also that 4th grade group that's now in 5th grade
11 this year is our highest group for students that
12 are identified as IEP or 504. It's kind of a big
13 concentration within that particular group of kiddos
14 that have come up; so they're in the subpop that we
15 are working on, you know, with inclusion and getting
16 them in the classrooms and learning more.

17 MR. DAVIS: Can you talk a little bit about your
18 Saturday tutoring --

19 MS. HULA: Yes.

20 MR. DAVIS: -- program?

21 MS. HULA: Yes. Now we haven't -- we don't have
22 one currently at my particular campus, we have in the
23 past. But yes, the kiddos get to come, we try to
24 make it camp based; we try to make it fun and we're
25 doing a lot of this on Friday now that our day is

1 extended. But the kids come, they get to have a
2 little bit of fun, we -- get to do some hands-on
3 learning, but also some strategies in helping
4 themselves to learn. We -- you know, our kids need
5 to know, how do they learn best? Sorry. That was --
6 sorry.

7 DR. ALTYEV: About the Saturday tutoring, it's
8 -- I'm one of the, you know, the leaders on it as a
9 teacher, coordinator and director too. We have it on
10 other schools. At West Elementary it's a teacher
11 based, but -- and some other schools, it's the whole
12 school. They come in together. Like, we had some,
13 you know, schools with only 300/400 student capacity,
14 almost 80 students coming in on Saturday for the
15 camp. We call it camp because we provide food for
16 students; we provide activity. It's a -- we have a
17 -- we are a dress school; right? But it's a free
18 dress day so students actually enjoy, and we actually
19 have certain targeted students who want to come, but
20 even our highest students you see, you know what?
21 I'm available. I want to come. So, yeah, sure.
22 It's open to everybody. At West Elementary, we have
23 our again, ESL coordinator and our 2nd grade/3rd
24 grade team does Saturday school on their own
25 schedule.

1 And we also have high-impact tutoring. We -- I
2 applied with my team Ms. Ratermann, and we got
3 accepted. So we have -- we are working with a
4 company. They provide us almost 20 tutors and we
5 hired our own -- about six to eight tutors on our
6 own. So we have -- we started in the -- right before
7 spring break, so it's been going really well and,
8 hopefully, we'll continue next year too. So that's
9 some additional support that we have on the weekend.

10 MR. DAVIS: How is it decided, like, the
11 Saturday tutoring, which schools decide to offer it
12 and which schools don't?

13 DR. ALTYEV: Well, since it's Saturday, it's
14 not a -- it's not required, and we can't require
15 schools to do. All we do is really encourage and
16 show their passion, you know, get their admins and
17 teachers really like it. Of course, teachers get
18 paid for it; it's extra duty for teachers. And
19 students, you know, have extra learning and fun time.
20 So -- but we highly encourage schools to participate
21 in it, but among our ten/11 campuses, you know, more
22 than half is actively participating in it.

23 MR. DAVIS: So basically where you see parents
24 that are interested and willing --

25 DR. ALTYEV: Yeah.

1 MR. DAVIS: -- you offer that opportunity?

2 DR. ALTYEV: Yeah, yeah. We have a school
3 status, you know, one-on-one text messaging. Ms.
4 Hula can reach out any parent anytime through text
5 message directly. And we -- we send out to the
6 parents, hey, your child will benefit from this
7 tutoring, can you bring it over? So if they do,
8 then, you know, we have we have Saturday tutoring.

9 MR. DAVIS: Okay. Thank you.

10 MS. HULA: And I'll speak a little -- I just
11 want to kind of add to that. Unfortunately, I had
12 high-impact tutoring in my notes and I failed to
13 mention it. The tutors that have been sent to us by
14 this company are retired teachers and they've been
15 phenomenal. We're already seeing a lot of growth
16 with our kiddos. Doctor Agam mentioned our 2nd-grade
17 teachers, honestly, that was the only teachers that
18 were interested in coming in on a Saturday. We
19 wanted Saturday school camp. We put it out there a
20 couple of times asking teachers to come in and help
21 our kiddos out, but 2nd grade is the team that was
22 really, you know, game to do that as well as our EL
23 team.

24 MR. ALTYEV: Last year, we paid \$50 an hour for
25 it to make it very impressive. This year it's 35,

1 but still it's higher than regular touring.

2 MR. DAVIS: Thanks for that. Yeah.

3 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: And have you -- just to kind
4 of expand on that a little bit. Have you thought
5 about using some of those tutors that you've hired
6 beyond the classroom teacher to maybe offer some of
7 those Saturday schools -- or Saturday camps?

8 DR. ALTYEV: The high-impact tutoring, it's
9 state funded, and they have a restriction, has to be
10 during school day only. So they don't accept after
11 school or Saturdays. If there is any approval or if
12 you have any funding, we are considering that too.

13 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay.

14 DR. ALTYEV: Yeah.

15 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you.

16 Mr. Baldwin?

17 MR. BALDWIN: I think this has been a great
18 discussion. I appreciate the questions of my
19 colleagues and your answers, and that answered a lot
20 of thoughts I had. After -- after having heard that,
21 let me ask you -- and I know this is hard to do --
22 but looking to the future and -- do you see -- do you
23 see the improvement elevating your score from D back
24 to a C? And do you ever envision going from the C to
25 B in the future?

1 MS. HULA: Yes, absolutely. And I'll tell you
2 why I'm so confident in that because of the work
3 that's being done, the team that's coming together --
4 Hi! You know, everybody working together for sure.

5 DR. ALTYEV: Was it enrollment?

6 MS. HULA: I'm sorry?

7 DR. ALTYEV: Was it enrollment question?

8 MS. HULA: I think, he said, do I see ourselves
9 going from a -- let me make sure I understand -- from
10 a D to a C and then to a C to a B. Is what I heard?

11 MR. BALDWIN: Yes, yes.

12 MS. HULA: Okay. Yes. Absolutely. I mean, I'm
13 telling you, I -- I am extremely determined because I
14 love these kids; I love these families; and I love
15 this team. So I'll do everything -- we will do
16 everything in our power to definitely grow.
17 Obviously, we're coming into a brand-new test, so we
18 don't know what that's going to look like. But I can
19 assure you we will bring ourselves up to a C and then
20 ultimately a B.

21 DR. ALTYEV: Just to add on that, you know,
22 ATLAS the new testing, state had a science interim
23 which is official. But on top of science interim as
24 a director academics, I led math and reading
25 interims. We had our own two fall and winter interim

1 where next year's state will have it too. I mean,
2 it's unofficial. It's, you know, our team based, but
3 we had a really constructed testing schedule. And
4 our teachers are constantly using those assessments,
5 you know, to get their students do well in the
6 testing.

7 MR. BALDWIN: I just want to also really
8 compliment you all on pulling down the -- the peer
9 school performance scores and the high-reliability
10 schools. I think there there's some useful
11 information gathered when you look at what other
12 schools are doing and kind of challenge yourselves on
13 that. Some -- you know, some you'll be higher, then
14 others you'll be lower then. But it's always a good
15 challenge to see how that's going. So I think the
16 comparative to the other schools, it actually was
17 revealing to me, to see that you're at the top of the
18 list of comparative schools. I didn't expect that,
19 but it does give a different picture and I think
20 that's an important picture.

21 And on the side note, Mr. Chairman, I've got
22 something I'd like to discuss with the Panel at the
23 end of this, not relating to LISA Academy, just a
24 thought I have based on some information I've
25 received and other educational organizations I'm part

1 of. If we have time to take about 30 seconds. But
2 the peer data kind of triggered my memory of that and
3 I think it would be useful discussion for us.

4 But that's all my questions. Thank you.

5 MS. HULA: Thank you.

6 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Dr. Moore?

7 DR. MOORE: Thank you so much for your time and
8 for your thoughtful presentation. It's a lot of
9 great information. Under your innovations -- in
10 addition to the tutoring which I have questions about
11 -- so thank you for addressing that, it mentioned
12 strengthened academic and curriculum support to your
13 teachers. Could you speak a little more to that? I
14 know you talked about the high-reliability school in
15 the Marzano work. Is there anything with high-
16 quality instructional materials? What is --

17 MS. HULA: Oh.

18 DR. MOORE: -- your support?

19 MS. HULA: Yes. I'm glad you asked that
20 question, actually. One of the things -- I'm going
21 to answer that in a couple of different ways. One of
22 the things that we did see with our curriculum is
23 that we had a gap with the phonics curriculum. What
24 we had was considered supplemental. And so -- but we
25 didn't realize this. When we -- when this was

1 purchased through Benchmark, it was not clear that
2 the skills bags -- I'm using terms that you may or
3 may not understand -- or know -- but skills bags were
4 considered something that you did in Tier 2
5 instruction. So our teachers started teaching out of
6 these skills bags even though they had, you know,
7 Benchmark reading and vocabulary and they thought,
8 you know, it's referring to Tier 1; it's referring to
9 whole group. So we then started digging in and found
10 out this is not our Tier 1 instruction at all for
11 phonics which is critical for our primary grades,
12 especially. So we are making a purchase at the end
13 of this year to fill in that gap and we've been
14 working with the state making sure that the
15 curriculum that we chose checks as many boxes as
16 possible. In fact, the one that we did choose checks
17 more boxes than Benchmark phonics. We're going to go
18 with Magnetic Reading which is coming from -- Sandy
19 Shepard highly recommended it as well. So that was a
20 big choice. So the curriculum piece, yes, but we
21 also identified this year that we had a problem. We
22 didn't have a high-quality instruction material for
23 phonics. So that's coming.

24 DR. ALTYEV: The core curriculum still has the
25 Benchmark.

1 MS. HULA: Yes, yes. The core curriculum stays
2 Benchmark for our reading instruction. Yes,
3 definitely. That's right. So we're filling in that
4 gap. But also with the teachers, some of the things
5 that we also saw is that our teachers didn't
6 necessarily -- some of them, you know, newer ones
7 that weren't trained originally with Benchmark. Some
8 of them still needed some professional development in
9 how do they use this curriculum? So my coaches and
10 my assistant principal that's over academics as well
11 as myself went to training because I've never taught
12 in this curriculum. We had a different one back when
13 I was teaching at LISA Academy, so we needed to go to
14 training ourselves; we needed to understand the
15 curriculum. How does it work? And then the coaches
16 pulled teachers in throughout the year and did PD
17 sessions with them a grade level at a time; and
18 that's been really beneficial for our teachers also.
19 And in addition to that, we do coaching cycles where
20 our coaches are focused in on a particular teacher
21 for two to three weeks; they spend a lot of time with
22 them; they do a lot of modeling for them and the
23 teacher does some teaching and they get a lot of
24 feedback; and do some peer observations as well.

25 DR. MOORE: So -- thank you. And you mentioned

1 the curriculum for reading -- excuse me -- reading
2 and phonics. What's your math curriculum?

3 MS. HULA: It's come -- it comes from McGraw
4 Hill. It's called Reveal Math.

5 DR. MOORE: Okay.

6 DR. ALTYEV: Which is also HQIM.

7 MS. HULA: Yes.

8 DR. ALTYEV: At a LISA Academy Dr. Fatih has
9 been, you know, is a supporter of spending whatever
10 necessary money on the HQIM. Even back then, you
11 know, I came to LISA in 2019 from Texas, but when I
12 came in, we were using HQIM. And as you know, HQIM
13 started more -- being popular in Arkansas around that
14 time. But we've been using high quality
15 instructional material for core subjects like
16 Benchmark Universe or Reveal Math used to be my math
17 previously. But the main challenges, which Ms. Hula
18 addressed, it's, you know, especially after COVID,
19 teacher turnover and the training needs they have;
20 and they have to be in the classroom all the time.
21 So we -- which we are trying to address more at LISA
22 Academy on top of our -- we have one of the highest
23 teacher prep -- except the team came in we were
24 astonished, like, they have 17 PD days. Like, in
25 regular public schools, they only have three or four,

1 five top with the teacher prep. And they have three
2 with just 7/8 in -- in a year. We have about 12 at
3 LISA Academy and on top, we work with the principals
4 to pull the teachers from classroom where our coaches
5 can work one-on-one at the district or in the school,
6 you know, to support.

7 DR. MOORE: Thank you.

8 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Any other
9 questions from the Panel?

10 MR. DAVIS: Just one -- one more comment from
11 me. First of all, I would be remiss if I didn't tell
12 you how phenomenal this presentation is.

13 MS. HULA: Thank you.

14 MR. DAVIS: I really -- I really like the way
15 this is presented. And actually, as a Panel, I think
16 we should think about there are certain pages within
17 this presentation that whenever someone comes, the
18 layout and how it should be presented, should be this
19 way. It's very clear. It's very concise. You do
20 some comparisons that make a lot of sense. So I just
21 want to one, say congratulations on doing a --

22 MS. HULA: Thank you.

23 MS. HULA: -- phenomenal job.

24 DR. ALTYEV: Thank you.

25 MR. DAVIS: And I do think we should kind of

1 figure out, you know, page -- whatever the pages are
2 and sort of say to other charters. Like, you know,
3 here's what we expect and even create a template
4 based upon what we have.

5 DR. ALTYEV: And this -- this is my creation.
6 I use, you know --

7 MR. DAVIS: So if I didn't like it, were you
8 going to take credit then?

9 DR. ALTYEV: Sure. Yes, yes, yes. And it's
10 publicly available since it's a school data. I put
11 it on LISA Academy website for our parents to see.
12 And not just LISA, they can see entire Arkansas.
13 They can search all A schools, B schools, C schools.
14 They have a drag and drop. So it's a interactive and
15 it is available on LISA Academy website.

16 MS. HULA: You did the Power BI; right?

17 DR. ALTYEV: Power BI. Yeah.

18 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yeah. Okay. So you have that
19 set up on there?

20 MR. DAVIS: Great job.

21 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yeah.

22 DR. BOGREK: I would like to add one more thing,
23 you know, last year we had around 1,000 applications
24 for West Elementary School for 193 seats. So it
25 means around 800 students, they didn't find their

1 seat. Again, there is a huge demand. The
2 neighborhood maybe concerns, maybe accountability is
3 going to be updated hopefully next year to reflect
4 what they are doing. I think they do a great job.
5 Students, they really grow. There is a huge demand
6 and hopefully we will see better scores. Again, it's
7 not an excuse. It is our high priority school. We
8 have more support from the district, so I'm sure you
9 will see this, you know, school score improving every
10 year.

11 MR. DAVIS: Thanks.

12 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Thank you so much.

13 Yes?

14 MR. SCOTT: I would simply like to like to add,
15 I love the quality of presentation, have a great look
16 of what's going on within the schools themselves and
17 how you are engaging the families. If you could step
18 me through the -- a picture of the landscape of your
19 community partners, how you engage, whether that's
20 business partners or other outside groups in the
21 process?

22 MS. HULA: Yes. It's interesting because my
23 dean of academics who's watching me now, we're
24 talking about a field trip this week because we want
25 to go to some of these businesses that are local and

1 work with them a little more, actually. But we
2 actually have some parents that are family -- that
3 own their own businesses that we obviously work a lot
4 with. We also have some other local businesses.
5 Even for instance, I mean, all the way down to using
6 someone's food truck, you know, repeatedly throughout
7 the year to help local business out as well. So
8 trying to develop those relationships between LISA
9 West Elementary and all of our partners in the
10 community has been top priority for me. I want them
11 to know who we are; I want them to know what we're
12 doing; and I also want their input on what is it they
13 need when they see kids coming into the workforce.

14 DR. ALTYEV: And, of course, if it's STEM
15 related and they know us, they actually invite us to
16 come present. For example, in the fall they were Air
17 Force -- air base show, you know, the two/three-day
18 show. On the Friday students, you know, public
19 schools, you know -- I wish we have someday, a bus --
20 they bus their students. For charter school to bus
21 just one bus, it's around five to \$10,000, right,
22 that school has to raise. But LISA Academy was there
23 to present. We were part -- We were the vendors
24 there. So we had our STEM festival where we are --
25 we partner with, you know, some -- the hospital UAMS,

1 they brought their robotic hand --

2 MS. HULA: Da Vinci robot.

3 DR. ALTYEV: Da Vinci robot, yes.

4 MS. HULA: Impressive.

5 DR. ALTYEV: You know, military academies, they
6 always come and support us. And, you know, if they
7 have any festivals, any events, we go, and they also
8 come to present whenever we ask. So we have a really
9 strong, you know, community involvement as a
10 district.

11 DR. BOGREK: Also, LISA Academy graduation
12 requirement, you know, before, you know, the LEARNS
13 Act, you know, we were already requiring 100 hours
14 community service for our students. They were
15 supposed to go and do that community service hours.
16 So we were already doing this. So our students they
17 go and, you know, serve for the community, give back
18 to the community and then those community partners,
19 they appreciate it.

20 MR. SCOTT: Thanks. Thank you.

21 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Other comments, questions?

22 Thank you so much. We really appreciate it. We
23 really appreciate the thoughtfulness of the
24 presentation, and it helps us to kind of think
25 through what we want to ask for when we look at the

1 data for all the other charters. So thank you very
2 much.

3 DR. BOGREK: Our pleasure.

4 DR. ALTYEV: Thank you.

5 MS. HULA: Thank you.

6 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Any other
7 business?

8 DR. MOORE: Mr. Baldwin had comments. I don't
9 know if that --

10 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Oh, he did.

11 DR. MOORE: -- should be before or after
12 closing?

13 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Yes, I did -- sorry my
14 computer died on me.

15 Mr. Baldwin?

16 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I just -- I just had a
17 thought as LISA was presenting and really I think
18 follows up with Mr. Davis's thought real well. And
19 we talked about this over a couple of meetings, and I
20 think even last time when we were having lunch, we
21 visited about the importance of peer data and
22 understanding, you know, how well we're doing as
23 charter schools. And really my, you know, one of the
24 questions I always ask is, are we making a difference
25 for charter schools and are they fulfilling their

1 mission? And I think -- I think sometimes we as a
2 committee are -- we're very involved in the detail,
3 but stepping back a little bit and seeing kind of a
4 macro picture every now and then would be good. In
5 another group I'm a part of -- it's kind of an
6 educational group -- we were looking at a report that
7 the U of A office for education policy did and it's
8 called, "How Do We Know if Students are Learning?"
9 And I thought was just excellent. And I think it
10 would be great if we could look at this at our next
11 Charter Panel meeting if we could get that on the
12 agenda. I don't think it would take long, but I
13 think it would be great. I think the Panel Members
14 would appreciate it and it kind of helps me with my
15 question, are we making a difference? It makes me
16 feel better about that and it makes me feel that we
17 are, so I just wanted to mention that. And then I
18 also like Mr. Davis's comment about figuring out some
19 of those comparative pages that we that we require,
20 you know, for each school to present. I think that's
21 incredibly helpful to us also.

22 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you.

23 Ms. Summons, did you catch -- were you able to
24 catch what Mr. Baldwin said?

25 MS. SUMMONS: The first part, I did not. What

1 was -- what was he requesting?

2 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Mr. Baldwin, can you -- can
3 you repeat what you were requesting that we put on
4 the agenda for next time?

5 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I have seen a report that
6 the U of A's Office of Education Policy has put out.
7 I'm not sure, you know, if it's new or if it's a
8 couple months old. But it's called, "How Do We Know
9 if Students are Learning?" And I think that would be
10 an excellent document for the Panel Members to look
11 at and for us to maybe have a 15-minute discussion
12 about -- just see what we think about this type of
13 information.

14 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you.

15 MR. BALDWIN: Okay. Thank you.

16 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Any other comments
17 or new business?

18 MR. SCOTT: I have just two points. One is an
19 action on our part, another is an action on the part
20 of one of the schools. Action on our part is perhaps
21 to compile some questions for Cabot. They had --
22 they were going to come back. And so if we could
23 compile questions appropriated to them that would be
24 helpful. And then secondly, we are expecting Premier
25 to provide us a signed facilities utilization

1 agreement.

2 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Okay.

3 So, Ms. Summons, Mr. Scott was requesting that
4 we be able to send you questions to send to Cabot for
5 flushing out their --

6 MS. SUMMONS: Yes.

7 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: And then, also, the second
8 part of that was the facilities agreement for
9 Premier. If we can follow up on that as well.

10 Any other comments or questions or new business?
11 All right.

12 Thank you, again. We really appreciate it.

13 DR. BOGREK: And LISA Academy is going to
14 celebrate our 20th year. We are going to have an
15 anniversary on October 12th, so we are going to send
16 you an invitation for our 20th anniversary. And
17 also, we are pleased -- and also, we are going to
18 implement the 2.0 model. We are working with
19 Bellwether, a nationwide organization for the
20 strategic planning. So -- they came two years ago.
21 So we are following the plan, and we are going to
22 upgrade our system for the coming maybe decade as
23 LISA 2.0. So you will hear a lot of new innovations
24 in our model. So thank you for the opportunity to
25 listen to us. Thank you.

1 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Excellent. Thank you.

2 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Thanks.

3 **IV. ADJOURNMENT**

4 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. Is there is no new
5 business, I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

6 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I move that we adjourn.

7 DR. MORE: I second.

8 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. All those in
9 favor?

10 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

11 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Any opposed?

12 (NO RESPONSE)

13 CHAIR SUTHERLIN: All right. The motion passes.
14 We are adjourned.

15 (The agenda was concluded at 11:56 a.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF ARKANSAS)

) ss

COUNTY OF PULASKI)

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

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

WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL this 8th day of May, 2024.

Miranda McEntire

MIRANDA MCENTIRE, CCR
Certified Court Reporter #852

