

**In The Matter Of:**  
*ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL*

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*May 19, 2023*

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ARKANSAS DIVISION OF  
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL

MAY 19, 2023  
12:00 p.m.

A P P E A R A N C E S

PANEL MEMBERS:

MS. DEBORAH COFFMAN	Chairperson/ADE Asst. Commissioner - Public School Accountability
MR. PHIL BALDWIN	Retired Bank Executive
MS. KARLI SARACINI	ADE Asst. Commissioner - Educator Effectiveness & Licensure
DR. SONJA WRIGHT-McMURRAY	Division of CTE Associate Director
MR. KIM DAVIS	Former State Board of Education Member

ADE LEGAL COUNSEL:

MS. SHASTADY WAGNER DESE Attorney

ALSO APPEARING:

MS. DORIE SUMMONS	DESE Public School Program Coordinator
MR. THOMAS COY	DESE Public School Program Advisor

LOCATION:

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

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P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Good afternoon. I'd like to welcome you to the May 19, 2023 meeting of the Charter Authorizing Panel. This meeting is now called to order. I'd like to ask all of you to please silence all of your electronic devices.

The Charter Authorizing Panel oversees the authorization, renewal, revision, and revocation of charters. And we welcome you today. Our goal is to facilitate a fair and responsible hearing. So I will ask that each of you that come to the microphone today to get right to the microphone, say your name for the record, and also state your title. And I ask that you continue to speak clearly into the microphone for the benefit of the Panel, the audience, the viewing audience, and the recording. This meeting is being live-streamed and recorded, and a transcript of the meeting will be posted on the DESE website.

So, we welcome all of you. And we have a pretty lengthy agenda, but I expect to move it -- move through it fairly quickly.

CONSENT AGENDA

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: So with no further ado, let's look at the Consent Agenda. And, Panel Members, do

1 you have any questions about the Consent Agenda?

2 If not, I'll accept a motion.

3 MS. SARACINI: I make the motion to approve the  
4 Consent Agenda.

5 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Second.

6 MR. BALDWIN: I'll second that motion.

7 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Okay. I have a motion by Ms.  
8 Saracini and a second by Dr. Wright-McMurray to  
9 approve the Consent Agenda as submitted. All those  
10 in favor?

11 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

12 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Motion passes.

13 ACTION AGENDA

14 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Action Agenda Item 1, please.

15 MS. WAGNER: Good afternoon. Wow, this is very  
16 loud. Okay.

17 Good afternoon, everybody. It's different  
18 seeing everybody in the afternoon than first thing in  
19 the morning.

20 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: It is.

21 MS. WAGNER: So today we have got 16 amendment  
22 requests on the agenda, so I want to go over our  
23 hearing procedures one time. We all know them; I  
24 think by now we probably all know them by heart. So  
25 the amending charter gets 20 minutes to present their

1 amendment. I'm sure none of them will take that  
2 long. We have received no opposition to any of these  
3 amendment requests. And then after they present  
4 theirs the Panel gets an opportunity to ask any  
5 questions, and then we'll follow it up with a legal  
6 review after you guys have concluded any questions.

7 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: So, Shasta, we have a  
8 commonality between all of these. You want to give a  
9 little bit of background of why all of the charters  
10 are here today?

11 MS. WAGNER: Sure. So most of the charters are  
12 here today -- I believe actually every single one of  
13 them is here to rescind 6-17-20 -- sorry -- 6-17-  
14 2403, which is the Teacher Salary Schedule. And they  
15 are rescinding that in order to comply with the  
16 LEARNS Act, so that they can receive the additional  
17 funding to equalize teacher salary for that \$50,000  
18 that was part of LEARNS.

19 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. Thank you so  
20 much.

21 MS. WAGNER: Oh. And, Chair, you have to swear  
22 everybody in.

23 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: I've got my sheet, I'm ready  
24 to go.

25 MS. WAGNER: All right. Let's get started.

1) RIVER VALLEY VIRTUAL ACADEMY

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. Coy.

MR. COY: Thomas Coy, DESE Charter Office.

Our first charter amendment is from River Valley Virtual Academy. They are requesting to rescind the waiver of the Minimum Teacher Compensation Schedule. And I believe that Superintendent Jeffcoat, Principal Feeny, and Myron Heckman are here from River Valley.

Are they online?

MS. FEENY: Hello.

MR. COY: There they are; they're waving at us.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. If you will stand and raise your right hand -- do you swear or affirm that the testimony you're about to give shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

(ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. You may proceed. And please state your name and title as you present.

MS. FEENY: My name is Jennifer Feeny. I serve as the Principal here at the River Valley Virtual Academy. We're excited to be number one on the agenda. Thank you very much.

We don't have a presentation necessarily. We have never utilized the waiver for salary. We have always followed the Van Buren School District as a

1 district conversion charter, so we've never utilized  
2 the waiver; so there's really no impact on us.

3 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. And, according to  
4 our legal review, there were no concerns?

5 MS. WAGNER: That is correct.

6 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Okay. Hearing that, are  
7 there any questions from the Panel?

8 I'll accept a motion.

9 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I move that we accept --

10 MR. DAVIS: Motion to accept the rescinsion of  
11 the waiver.

12 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Second.

13 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: I have a motion from Mr.  
14 Davis and a second from Dr. Wright-McMurray to  
15 approve the rescinsion of the waiver for River Valley  
16 Virtual Academy. All those in favor?

17 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

18 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Motion passes.

19 Thank you.

20 MS. FEENY: Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. Coy.

22 MR. COY: Our next item is the amendment request  
23 to rescind waivers for Arkansas Arts Academy. The  
24 same -- okay.

25 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Shasta, do we need to fill



1 out voting sheets?

2 MS. WAGNER: Yes.

3 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Okay. One moment, please.

4 MR. COY: Sure.

5 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. Baldwin, if you'd like to  
6 read your voting sheet.

7 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair.

8 I support the waiver request to conform to the  
9 new state law.

10 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.

11 Dr. Wright-McMurray.

12 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I voted for and I support  
13 the waiver request to amend their existing charter.

14 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Saracini.

15 MS. SARACINI: I support the waiver request.

16 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: And Mr. Davis.

17 MR. DAVIS: I support the waiver request.

18 2) ARKANSAS ARTS ACADEMY

19 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. Number 2, Mr.  
20 Coy.

21 MR. COY: All right. Our next waiver request is  
22 from Arkansas Arts Academy. They are requesting to  
23 rescind the waiver of the Minimum Teacher  
24 Compensation Schedule. Additionally, they have asked  
25 to rescind their waiver of Gifted and Talented.

1 Is that correct?

2 MS. WAGNER: Yes.

3 MR. COY: And I believe Dr. Roberts was supposed  
4 to be here. Is Dr. Roberts online or someone from  
5 Arkansas Arts Academy?

6 DR. ROBERTS: Yes, I am here. Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Dr. Roberts, thank you. If  
8 you'll raise your right hand -- do you swear or  
9 affirm that the testimony you're about to give shall  
10 be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the  
11 truth?

12 DR. ROBERTS: Yes, I do. Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. You're ready to  
14 present your amendment?

15 DR. ROBERTS: So I present -- we'd like to waive  
16 the Teacher Salary, as well as waive our waiver for  
17 -- to allow us to have a Gifted and Talented program  
18 at Arkansas Arts Academy.

19 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Would you like to elaborate  
20 on why you're rescinding your GT waiver?

21 DR. ROBERTS: We have identified students that  
22 would benefit greatly from having a focus and a  
23 deliberate Gifted and Talented program and we would  
24 like to move forward with providing those enriching  
25 and advanced educational opportunities for students.

1 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you so much.

2 Panel Members, any questions?

3 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I do have a question.

4 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Dr. Wright-McMurray. And get  
5 real close to your microphone.

6 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: If you wouldn't mind just  
7 sharing a little bit more detail on how you will  
8 identify those students that will qualify for Gifted  
9 and Talented services in your school?

10 DR. ROBERTS: Sure. We've been in contact with  
11 the Gifted and Talented Division at the Department of  
12 Education, and we're going to go through a screening  
13 process. First, we've had a school-wide survey of  
14 the current classroom teachers and some initial data  
15 review on possible students to be screened. And then  
16 we'll review the teacher data and then we'll provide  
17 a screening mechanism to identify the students and  
18 begin the rollout of this program in the fall.

19 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Any additional questions?

21 I'll accept a motion.

22 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I move approval.

23 MR. BALDWIN: I'll make that motion.

24 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Hold on. Shasta is coming.

25 MS. WAGNER: So sorry. I forgot to state that I

1 was Shastady Wagner with DESE Legal earlier.

2 But also I don't know -- we had to put a new  
3 legal review on the agenda; so if you had looked at  
4 the old legal review it had had that Dr. Roberts had  
5 not put in the correct standard to rescind that. I  
6 just wanted to clarify, in case you had looked at the  
7 previous legal review, that Dr. Roberts did in fact  
8 include the standard; so she is fully effectuating  
9 the waiver for Gifted and Talented. So I have no  
10 legal concerns about the rescinsion of these two  
11 waivers.

12 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.

13 Now I'll accept a motion.

14 MR. BALDWIN: I'll make that motion.

15 MS. SARACINI: Second.

16 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: I have a motion from Mr.  
17 Baldwin and a second from Ms. Saracini to approve the  
18 rescinsion of the two waivers, as requested by  
19 Arkansas Arts Academy. All those in favor?

20 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

21 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Any opposed?

22 Motion passes.

23 If you'll take a moment to fill in your sheets  
24 -- Mr. Baldwin, I'll start with you.

25 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. Thank you.

1 I support the waiver requests -- first, to  
2 conform salary administration to the new state law;  
3 and then, second, to add the Gifted and Talented  
4 program as beneficial to students.

5 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.

6 Dr. Wright-McMurray.

7 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I voted for. I support  
8 the request to rescind their waiver -- salary waiver  
9 to comply with the LEARNS Act, as well as I support  
10 the request to rescind the waiver for Gifted and  
11 Talented services. They have a well thought-out  
12 plan.

13 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Saracini.

14 MS. SARACINI: I support the waiver requests to  
15 rescind the Minimum Teacher Salary and Gifted and  
16 Talented.

17 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.

18 Mr. Davis.

19 MR. DAVIS: Yes. I support -- I voted yes; I  
20 support both.

21 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.

22 Dr. Roberts, we're always excited to hear we're  
23 going to have a new Gifted and Talented program. So  
24 congratulations to you.

25 DR. ROBERTS: Thank you so much. I appreciate

1           it. Thank you, everyone.

2           CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.

3    3) SCHOLARMADE ACHIEVEMENT PLACE OF ARKANSAS

4           CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Number 4, Mr. Coy.

5           MR. COY: Number 3, I believe.

6           CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Three, Number 3.

7           MR. COY: The request is from Scholarmade  
8           Achievement Place. Scholarmade Achievement Place of  
9           Arkansas is requesting to rescind its waiver of the  
10          Minimum Teacher Compensation Schedule. And I believe  
11          Dr. Alice -- Dr. Phillis Anderson is online with  
12          Scholarmade.

13          CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Dr. Anderson, if you'll raise  
14          your right hand -- do you swear or affirm that the  
15          testimony you're about to give shall be the truth,  
16          the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

17          DR. ANDERSON: I do.

18          CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: And you may -- your -- may  
19          make your presentation.

20          DR. ANDERSON: Good afternoon. I do not have a  
21          presentation. We too are requesting to rescind our  
22          waiver to enable our charter to conform to Arkansas  
23          LEARNS. And we are asking that the Panel approve our  
24          request.

25          CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you, Dr. Anderson.

1 Any questions?

2 Hearing no questions, I'll accept a motion.

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

5 MS. SARACINI: Second.

6 MR. DAVIS: Second.

7 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: I have a motion from Dr.  
8 Wright-McMurray and a second from Ms. Saracini to  
9 approve the rescission of the waiver as requested by  
10 Scholarmade Achievement Place of Arkansas. All those  
11 in favor?

12 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

13 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All those opposed?

14 Motion passes.

15 All right. If you'll take a second to fill out  
16 your voting sheets -- Mr. Baldwin, I'll start with  
17 you.

18 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I support the request to  
19 conform to the Arkansas LEARNS Act.

20 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.

21 Dr. Wright-McMurray.

22 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I voted for. I support  
23 the request to rescind their salary waiver to comply  
24 with the LEARNS Act.

25 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.

1 Ms. Saracini.

2 MS. SARACINI: I support the waiver request to  
3 comply with the LEARNS Act on teacher salary.

4 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: And Mr. Davis.

5 MR. DAVIS: I voted yes. I support the waiver.

6 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. Thank you so  
7 much.

8 4) VILONIA PATHWAYS ACADEMY

9 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Number 4, Mr. Coy.

10 MR. COY: Vilonia Pathways Academy is requesting  
11 to rescind its waiver of the Minimum Teacher  
12 Compensation Schedule, and I believe Dr. Riggins is  
13 online from Vilonia.

14 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: I see her.

15 If you'll raise your right hand -- do you swear  
16 or affirm that the testimony you're about to give  
17 shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but  
18 the truth?

19 MS. RIGGINS: I do.

20 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. Thank you. And  
21 you're recognized.

22 MS. RIGGINS: Again, the Vilonia Pathways  
23 Academy would like to rescind the waiver 6-17-2403  
24 based -- in order to comply with the LEARNS Act. We  
25 originally requested this waiver anticipating that we



1 might need it for non-licensed adjunct and district  
2 professionals, and we have not used this waiver. And  
3 we would like to request to rescind it.

4 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.

5 Any questions for Dr. Riggins?

6 Hearing none, I'll accept a motion.

7 MS. SARACINI: Make a motion to accept the  
8 request to rescind.

9 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Second.

10 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: I have a motion from Ms.  
11 Saracini and a second from Dr. Wright-McMurray to  
12 approve the rescission of the waiver as requested for  
13 Vilonia Pathways Academy. All those in favor?

14 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

15 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All those opposed?

16 Motion passes.

17 If you'll fill out your sheets -- Mr. Baldwin,  
18 we'll start with you.

19 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I voted to approve the  
20 request to rescind the compensation waiver to comply  
21 with the LEARNS Act.

22 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.

23 Dr. Wright-McMurray.

24 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I voted for. I support  
25 the request to rescind their waiver -- salary waiver

1 to comply with the LEARNS Act.

2 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.

3 Ms. Saracini.

4 MS. SARACINI: I support the waiver request to  
5 comply with the LEARNS Act on teacher salary.

6 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: And Mr. Davis.

7 MR. DAVIS: I support the waiver to comply with  
8 the Arkansas LEARNS Act.

9 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you so much.

10 5) CENTERPOINT ACADEMY OF AGRICULTURE AND SKILLED TRADES

11 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Number 5.

12 MR. COY: Centerpoint Academy of Agriculture and  
13 Skills -- and Skills Trades is requesting to rescind  
14 its waiver of Minimum Teacher Compensation Schedule.  
15 And I believe Superintendent Cowart is online with  
16 us.

17 SUPT. COWART: Yes, I'm present.

18 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. Thank you so  
19 much. If you will raise your right hand -- I'm  
20 looking for you. I see him. I'm sorry. I see you  
21 now. The font is very small here. Do you swear or  
22 affirm that the testimony you're about to give shall  
23 be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the  
24 truth?

25 SUPT. COWART: Yes, ma'am, I do.

1 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: You're recognized to present.

2 SUPT. COWART: I also have no presentation  
3 today. We'd also like to rescind the waiver to  
4 participate in the Arkansas LEARNS Act. The  
5 Centerpoint School District has never utilized the  
6 waiver and has compensated teachers of the  
7 Centerpoint Academy of Agriculture and Skilled Trades  
8 according to the adopted district salary schedule.  
9 We'd like to continue to do so.

10 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you, sir.

11 Any questions from the Panel?

12 Hearing none, I'll accept a motion.

13 MR. BALDWIN: I'll make the motion to approve.

14 MS. SARACINI: Second.

15 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Second.

16 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Was that you? Okay. It just  
17 came out of the right side of my head.

18 So I have a motion from Mr. Baldwin and a second  
19 from Ms. Saracini to approve the rescission of the  
20 waiver as requested by Centerpoint Academy of  
21 Agriculture and Skilled Trades. All those in favor?

22 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

23 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All those opposed?

24 Motion passes.

25 And get on the right -- Mr. Baldwin.

1 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I voted to support the  
2 waiver request to comply with the Arkansas LEARNS  
3 Act.

4 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.

5 Dr. Wright-McMurray.

6 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I voted for. I support  
7 the request to rescind their salary waiver to comply  
8 with the LEARNS Act.

9 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.

10 Ms. Saracini.

11 MS. SARACINI: I voted for. I support the  
12 waiver request to comply with the LEARNS Act on  
13 teacher salary.

14 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.

15 Mr. Davis.

16 MR. DAVIS: I voted yes. I support the waiver  
17 to comply with the LEARNS Act.

18 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you so much.

19 6) FUTURE SCHOOL OF FORT SMITH

20 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Number 6, Mr. Coy.

21 MR. COY: Future School of Fort Smith is  
22 requesting to rescind its waiver of the Minimum  
23 Teacher Compensation Schedule. And Superintendent  
24 Logan is on -- or Superintendent Boyd, I'm sorry, is  
25 online with us.

1                   CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. Boyd, if you'll raise  
2 your right hand -- do you swear or affirm that the  
3 testimony you're about to give shall be the truth,  
4 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

5                   SUPT. BOYD: I do.

6                   CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: You're recognized to present.

7                   SUPT. BOYD: Like most of the others, we have no  
8 presentation. We are requesting that we have this  
9 waiver rescinded in order to comply with the LEARNS  
10 Act and start making the minimum teacher salaries  
11 that were -- that are required underneath that.

12                   CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you so much.

13                   Panel Members, any questions?

14                   Hearing none, I'll accept a motion.

15                   DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I move approval.

16                   MS. SARACINI: Second.

17                   CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: I have a motion from Dr.  
18 Wright-McMurray and a second from Ms. Saracini to  
19 approve the rescission of the waiver as requested by  
20 the Future School of Fort Smith. All those in favor?

21                   (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

22                   CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All those opposed?

23                   Motion passes.

24                   Mr. Baldwin.

25                   MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I voted for the waiver in

1 order for the charter to comply with the Arkansas  
2 LEARNS Act.

3 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Dr. Wright-McMurray.

4 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I voted for. I support  
5 the request to rescind their salary waiver to comply  
6 with the LEARNS Act.

7 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Saracini.

8 MS. SARACINI: I voted for. I support the  
9 waiver request to comply with the LEARNS Act on  
10 teacher salary.

11 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. Davis.

12 MR. DAVIS: I support the waiver to comply with  
13 the LEARNS Act. Yes.

14 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you so much.  
15 Congratulations.

16 7) ARKANSAS VIRTUAL ACADEMY

17 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Number 7. Are we on 7?

18 MR. COY: Yes.

19 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: 7.

20 MR. COY: Arkansas Virtual Academy is requesting  
21 to rescind its waiver of the Minimum Teacher  
22 Compensation Schedule. The charter is also  
23 requesting to change the instructional delivery  
24 method from virtual instruction to in-place hybrid  
25 blended instruction. And Superintendent Johnson is

1 here with us, I believe.

2 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: If you will raise your right  
3 hand -- do you swear or affirm that the testimony  
4 you're about to give shall be the truth, the whole  
5 truth, and nothing but the truth?

6 MS. JOHNSON: Yes.

7 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you. You have 20  
8 minutes.

9 MS. JOHNSON: Hello. My name is Amy Johnson.  
10 I'm the Head of School at Arkansas Virtual Academy.  
11 Thank you for the time. I will take just a little  
12 bit of time because the second request we have needs  
13 a bit of explanation, and I do have a presentation.

14 I'm not sure if the Panel can see that, but --  
15 oh, look, there it comes. Thank you so much. So --

16 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: There's your --

17 MS. JOHNSON: Oh, a clicker.

18 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Make sure it's on.

19 MS. JOHNSON: It appears to be. Yeah, it is.

20 MR. DAN DAVIS: Give us one second here.

21 MS. JOHNSON: Okay.

22 MR. DAN DAVIS: I'm doing a little training.

23 MS. JOHNSON: No problem. I'll go ahead and get  
24 started. The slides for this first piece aren't  
25 entirely necessary because we are also asking for the

1 rescinsion of our waiver for the Teacher Minimum  
2 Salary. I do have a bit of information on the slide,  
3 but ultimately I think what's important for the Panel  
4 to know is that we have worked to always meet the  
5 minimum salary. However, we've not had a salary  
6 schedule in place and that was the reason for our  
7 waiver. So we are working to put that in place to  
8 comply with LEARNS.

9 MR. DAN DAVIS: It's ready now.

10 MS. JOHNSON: All right. So I'll just remind  
11 the Panel a little tiny bit about us. Arkansas  
12 Virtual Academy does service 4,117 students across  
13 the state in all 75 counties. And we are currently  
14 working very digit -- diligently, excuse me, with the  
15 Department of Ed. on really focusing on our literacy  
16 scores. We just came into collaboration with the  
17 Department. We've been working with Tally Harp and  
18 her team and that's been a really successful  
19 relationship; we're very excited to see our results.  
20 And then I always like to remind the Panel about the  
21 CTE pathways that we have, and this will be a little  
22 bit of an important point when we get into our second  
23 ask of the day, that we do have the resources for all  
24 of our students to participate in about 20 different  
25 certification-driven pathways in five different



1 industry areas. [Clearing throat] excuse me.

2 And this is the slide that I was referring to as  
3 far as the rescission of the Teacher Salary waiver,  
4 just a little bit of data. We do have a draft  
5 schedule there for you, and the board will be  
6 providing final input and board vote for that in  
7 June. And then just some data on our salary raises  
8 over the last little bit but also identifying that we  
9 do also provide an annual bonus for our teachers --  
10 and that is a performance level bonus, so that's  
11 based directly on student outcomes.

12 So, not to move too quickly but this is the --  
13 probably the discussion topic of my time. So we are  
14 requesting to add the ability to provide some face-  
15 to-face or in-place instruction for our students.  
16 And the goal here is for us to form a proof of  
17 concept. As this Panel is well aware, as I stood in  
18 front of you not very many months ago, we're highly  
19 fine-tuned on our letter grades and looking for  
20 solutions and opportunities that can increase the  
21 academic outcomes of our students. And so this proof  
22 of concept is born out of that, but it's also born  
23 out of a very specific group of parents that  
24 currently have students with us that are very  
25 interested in the offering of some extra instruction

1           that takes place face-to-face.

2                       So the idea of the ARVA Bridge was born out of  
3 this request. This is a little bit of a hub-and-  
4 spoke model, if you will. I will certainly not read  
5 through this entire slide for you; however, I think  
6 the things that are important to note about this  
7 concept and being able to offer this instructional  
8 method is not only the idea of blended learning but  
9 the utilization of resources that ARVA does have  
10 available especially through those CTE pathways, but  
11 also dividing -- or developing community partnerships  
12 that are strong, where we have those engaged pieces.

13                      I think the other piece that I'm the most  
14 excited about this possibility is that growth and  
15 empowerment piece, not only for our students but to  
16 collectively be able to connect teachers in both a  
17 face-to-face and blended, where our teachers  
18 virtually and in-person can connect and rely on each  
19 other's expertise to grow their practice.

20                      So let me give you a little detail because  
21 that's really where the nuts and bolts of this are.  
22 So we have a community in Sparkman, Arkansas, where  
23 we have existing students. I know most are familiar  
24 with Sparkman's concern about losing their school.  
25 And when the upper grades were closed down several of

1 those students came to ARVA rather than go to the  
2 resident district. And now the elementary will be  
3 closing in the coming year, so we have more students  
4 that have applied. And we have a very strong  
5 community group there -- in fact, they have recently  
6 developed a 501(3)(c) as a parent community  
7 organization and they are very interested in  
8 providing a place, a location for ARVA instructors to  
9 be able to provide some face-to-face instruction. So  
10 we currently have 30 students that are either  
11 actively enrolled or through the enrollment process,  
12 in the application process. And we have around --  
13 just under 10 other students that have expressed  
14 interest. What the community is interested in is up  
15 to four days of in-person instruction -- and I state  
16 it that way because these students are ARVA students;  
17 nothing changes about that. This isn't a -- I want  
18 to be very clear: this is not a brick-and-mortar  
19 charter, this is not a brick-and-mortar location for  
20 ARVA; this is a partnership where ARVA teachers and  
21 ARVA students have been provided an opportunity to  
22 come together. Up to four days is important because  
23 our students will have the choice; our parents can  
24 elect to come one day, three days, four days,  
25 depending on what their family situation might need

1 or what their student might need. They may have a  
2 student that's a high-flyer that wants to come once a  
3 week for some enrichment opportunities or they may  
4 have a student that really needs the intervention  
5 practice for four days.

6 Our goal right now is to really hone in on math  
7 and literacy for the in-person instruction. It  
8 doesn't mean that there won't be other pieces, but  
9 where we really want to fine-tune and become experts  
10 in that face-to-face instruction is in those two  
11 areas.

12 Now, again, with this parent/community  
13 relationship this is a hosted location by the  
14 community. The community organization is organizing  
15 the transportation; they're organizing lunch for the  
16 students. Honestly, I don't even know whether that's  
17 provided, if they're planning on providing anything,  
18 if they're asking students to bring their lunch.  
19 What is important for me that the Panel hears is that  
20 ARVA's business will run just like ARVA's business  
21 always has from a financial standpoint. We are not  
22 interested in getting into the brick-and-mortar  
23 business. I'm not interested in transportation plans  
24 or lunch menus. That's not what we do. So it's very  
25 important to me to identify and call out for all of

1           you that that is not what this is. This is a  
2           community that has expressed interest to provide a  
3           place for our teachers to be able to be in the same  
4           room with students. [clearing throat] excuse me.

5           We want to utilize a team teacher approach, so  
6           it will be a truly blended environment where some  
7           students are receiving math and literacy lessons  
8           based on our curriculum, and maybe other students at  
9           that same time are working virtually with a teacher  
10          for social studies or science or a club or whatever  
11          activity that they might having going on.

12          We're currently building the schedule. As you  
13          can imagine, this is a little new, so we don't have a  
14          fine-tuned schedule. But the idea right now, based  
15          on the way the enrollments are coming in, is that we  
16          would move to a community school type environment as  
17          far as multiple grades in each classroom; so, we have  
18          the K-3 classroom, a 4-6 classroom, and a 7-12  
19          classroom. And, again, those are subject to change  
20          based on the grade levels of students that are  
21          interested. We want to keep those ratios reasonable.  
22          Right now, based on the staff that we feel we can  
23          allocate there we're looking at about a 10-to-1  
24          ratio. So this is going to be a very community-  
25          school oriented feel.

1           As far as staffing is concerned -- and the slide  
2 doesn't address it, but I know that that's likely a  
3 question -- we already have some staff that live in  
4 the area. And then, certainly, as we have openings  
5 through our hiring process, if we can hire  
6 instructors that fit the bill and have the expertise  
7 that we need and they are in that area, then  
8 certainly that would be, you know, a consideration in  
9 our hiring process.

10           So I think two of the biggest questions probably  
11 are why now and why here. So ARVA is getting ready  
12 to open a new facility right here in Little Rock, and  
13 we open August 1st. It's about a 48,000 square foot  
14 facility that we've been blessed to open. And so  
15 when you go back to that hub-and-spoke model it makes  
16 sense that we would -- as this location rolls out  
17 that we would want to offer some of these same  
18 things, is this proof-of-concept, so we can really  
19 accomplish what we hope to in our new facility. And  
20 also we're at a very good place to fine-tune  
21 instruction and those inputs so that our academic  
22 outputs are what we want them to be.

23           Our enrollment has settled. As the Panel is  
24 very well aware, we grew significantly during Covid.  
25 And our weighted achievement is a factor in our grade

1 card that we've been watching, and it has started to  
2 climb back up from that initial dip that we took in  
3 the spring of '21. So our weighted achievement is  
4 actually right -- almost right at all three grade  
5 bands where it was prior.

6 And then, again, reading proficiency has been a  
7 huge focus of ours. We are showing gains for end-  
8 year progress monitoring.

9 And then, why here? You've already heard a  
10 little bit about Sparkman and their families and the  
11 community that is primed and ready and really asking  
12 for this type of engagement. They also were just  
13 awarded by their resident district their school  
14 building in their area. So I received word of that  
15 -- again, not my details, because that's the board  
16 and the community, but they do have a stable place to  
17 be able to house this. And we do have some community  
18 industry as well there that's very interested in  
19 utilizing some of our CTE programs, trying to do some  
20 localized credit that builds skills back into the  
21 industries that are in this rural area to help  
22 develop the community. And, you know, to give it the  
23 ability to stand on its own again is really our goal.

24 So that's really the long and short. I'm  
25 certain I did not answer all the questions that you

1 might have, so I'm happy to field them. But, again,  
2 in the interest of time, I definitely wanted to take  
3 a little higher level for you, but glad to answer any  
4 questions.

5 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you so much.

6 Dr. Wright-McMurray, would you like to start  
7 with any questions that you have?

8 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Thank you for your  
9 presentation and walking us through the second half  
10 of your waiver rescinding request.

11 So I guess I'm -- so the desire is that students  
12 would be on-site somewhere at least four days a week?

13 MS. JOHNSON: Well, up to.

14 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Up to four days a week.

15 MS. JOHNSON: So, basically, we would provide  
16 the opportunity for students to take advantage of  
17 some of that in-person instruction, if they so  
18 choose. Now the other thing I didn't mention is that  
19 even though the location is in Sparkman, if I had a  
20 student that lived in Little Rock, they're at ARVA  
21 student -- if they wanted to drive to Sparkman and  
22 take advantage of this opportunity, they certainly  
23 could. So this isn't a situation where we're locking  
24 students or families into, you know, you must attend.  
25 Our attendance is pulled directly from our system and



1 interacting with our curriculum and our virtual  
2 classrooms. All of that pulls automatically. So  
3 there would still -- they would still be interfacing  
4 with the curriculum, the online curriculum; it's just  
5 that they would have the opportunity for math and  
6 literacy to have someone there, a facilitator there  
7 to be able to instruct and provide any extra  
8 assistance that they need.

9 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. And just for my  
10 clarification, so there's not any type of allowance  
11 in your charter at this point that would give you an  
12 opportunity to have students to come onsite. Say if  
13 they are having a struggle with the online  
14 instruction, they don't have the capability to come  
15 see anyone in person at this point?

16 MS. JOHNSON: Technically, the way the charter  
17 was created, no. The only instructional method  
18 that's written into the charter is a virtual  
19 delivery. Now that's not to say that we don't  
20 interface with our students. We do have some -- what  
21 we call academic outings where we interface with our  
22 students and provide some extension opportunities,  
23 things that are harder to do virtually -- you know,  
24 build a volcano or a solar system, something that is  
25 a little bit more hands-on. But the charter, the way

1 it was created 20 years ago -- it's our 20th  
2 anniversary this year, believe it or not -- was for a  
3 virtual instruction method only. And so we wanted to  
4 be very careful and move forward wisely with the  
5 charter to insure that whatever it is that we do as  
6 far as this in-person outreach that we have all of  
7 our I's dotted and T's crossed.

8 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Can I ask one more?

9 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Yes.

10 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So I guess I'm just trying  
11 to get my mind wrapped around it.

12 MS. JOHNSON: That's fine.

13 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So --

14 MS. JOHNSON: We're used to it.

15 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So if you were given the  
16 ability to have this opportunity, it would be  
17 statewide or you -- because I'd noticed in the  
18 presentation it said why here and it mentioned  
19 Sparkman. It didn't mention just generally that any  
20 student that is participating in ARVA would have this  
21 opportunity, but more like it was just really  
22 targeted towards providing the opportunity for  
23 Sparkman to have that in-person building.

24 MS. JOHNSON: Okay. So that's a perfect  
25 question, actually.

1 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

2 MS. JOHNSON: So because this is proof of  
3 concept what I don't want to do as a school leader is  
4 launch sites all over the state until we know that  
5 what we're doing is working, that it's moving the  
6 needle academically, and that we're doing the best  
7 service to our students as possible. So our intent  
8 for this school year is to stand up this opportunity  
9 in the Sparkman area. Happy to come back to the  
10 Charter this time next year and let you know what the  
11 results were. And we're going to tightly monitor and  
12 datapoint our efforts there; so all of our beginning,  
13 middle, and end-of-year assessments, certainly our  
14 state assessments, will be not only comparing those  
15 for growth for the students involved at Sparkman but  
16 also to the larger in-group of ARVA proper and  
17 students that didn't have that same opportunity to  
18 interface face-to-face. So really the whole idea is  
19 proof of concept. It's an innovation opportunity.  
20 It is not a request to do this statewide out of the  
21 gate. I think that would be a pretty foolish ask  
22 when we're trying something to see how it's going to  
23 affect not only the community but also our academic  
24 outcomes.

25 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. Last question.

1 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Go ahead.

2 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. So no more than  
3 four days?

4 MS. JOHNSON: Correct.

5 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Is there a point to where  
6 if a student is consistently coming four days -- I'm  
7 just trying to think through this -- at what point  
8 does that student probably need to be an in-person  
9 instruction type of student?

10 MS. JOHNSON: Yeah, so I think that's a fair  
11 question. I think we -- I think the important thing  
12 to know is we always have those conversations with  
13 our families. So, even my students that are virtual,  
14 we have a compliance process that we move students  
15 through. I'm sure you can imagine that it's somewhat  
16 easier in some ways for students to hide virtually,  
17 and we saw that during Covid, certainly. And so we  
18 have a process that we take students through that  
19 moves them back to what could potentially be best for  
20 them as a day-in/day-out face-to-face brick-and-  
21 mortar experience. So we'd be no different there,  
22 especially if we see things like, you know, is the  
23 child well cared for, what happens on that fifth day  
24 to that student -- you know, do they have some place  
25 safe they can be. But typically on a higher level

1           what we look at is just academically do they need  
2           more, do they need to be seen with somebody that can  
3           provide that instruction for all subjects. And so we  
4           will continue to monitor that, even in this face-to-  
5           face environment through that same process that we  
6           use virtually. It's a pretty good process because  
7           adding -- I'm interested to see like how much more  
8           we'll learn seeing them face-to-face every day in  
9           those four days. But we'll still keep that process  
10          in place where we can conference with that parent if  
11          we do see things that we feel like they do need to  
12          move back to a brick-and-mortar setting.

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

14                   CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Saracini, any questions?

15                   MS. SARACINI: No. I think she asked them.

16                   CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right.

17                   DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Sorry.

18                   CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. Baldwin, do you have  
19          questions?

20                   MR. BALDWIN: Yes, I do, just a couple.

21                   So I guess my first question would be you  
22          mentioned a host location, and it sounds like it's  
23          going to be a school building that's not being used.  
24          So my first question I have, who is the host? What  
25          legal entity is the host?

1 MS. JOHNSON: The parent organization in  
2 Sparkman is the one who actually has taken possession  
3 of the building, and so the community organization  
4 will be hosting us at this site.

5 MR. BALDWIN: So is that a legal entity or is  
6 that just a group of parents?

7 MS. JOHNSON: It's a 501(3)(c) that they  
8 developed.

9 MR. BALDWIN: Okay. Do you -- and I just don't  
10 know this or maybe this is a question for DESE. What  
11 is the process of approval for a building where kids  
12 are going to be taught like this? Is there a state  
13 approval process that they have to go through?

14 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Wagner is coming to the  
15 microphone.

16 MS. WAGNER: Hi, Mr. Baldwin. So what I  
17 understand from what Ms. Johnson is saying is it is  
18 not that -- this is not going to be a school; this is  
19 a group of parents getting their kids together and  
20 ARVA is going to go in and do some onsite teaching  
21 with them at this group. It's just a group of  
22 parents though getting together; it's not tied to  
23 DESE, it's not tied to a school, and it's not tied  
24 directly to ARVA. So they're not going to charge  
25 ARVA rent, it's not anything like that.

1 Correct?

2 MS. JOHNSON: Yes.

3 MR. BALDWIN: Okay. I guess now I'd ask another  
4 question. If it's not tied to us, why are we acting  
5 to approve or deny it? I think parents can do that  
6 on their own anyway, can't they?

7 MS. WAGNER: Yes. So, Mr. Baldwin, it's not  
8 that you're approving them using the Sparkman campus.  
9 You're approving ARVA changing their instructional  
10 method, because this hybrid instructional method was  
11 not in their original charter and any amendment to  
12 charters have to come before this panel and be  
13 approved.

14 MR. BALDWIN: So I hate to be -- I guess I'm  
15 just -- so if this is a hybrid method, is it a -- I  
16 mean I guess I just don't understand. If it's  
17 something that is informal, which it sounds like it's  
18 kind of an informal meeting the kids and parents and  
19 teachers, why a formal action? And then I guess you  
20 may have answered that by we're actually changing  
21 something in the narrative of the charter?

22 MS. JOHNSON: Yes, sir.

23 MR. BALDWIN: (inaudible)

24 MS. JOHNSON: Yes, sir.

25 MR. BALDWIN: Is that -- going back to Dr.

1 Wright-McMurray's question, this is just a change for  
2 Sparkman. I haven't read the narrative, so is it  
3 clearly stated this is only for Sparkman and not a  
4 global change to your --

5 MS. JOHNSON: It is clearly stated in the  
6 presentation. The request of the amendment to the  
7 charter is just to request to add the ability to  
8 provide this face-to-face instruction. So the intent  
9 is that clearly we would not expand this out,  
10 definitely not in this first year. But what it does,  
11 by adding it to our charter, it does allow -- to Dr.  
12 Wright-McMurray's question, if I do have a student  
13 that is struggling with a concept and wants to meet  
14 with a teacher, it does allow me to do that, where I  
15 haven't necessarily been able to do that in the past.

16 MR. BALDWIN: Okay. So we are approving what  
17 will -- like what would change to your program?

18 MS. JOHNSON: Yes.

19 MR. BALDWIN: Okay. Well, so let me ask you  
20 this question -- I would be interested in  
21 understanding the way we've got it here. Was this a  
22 strategy that you all have been working on and wanted  
23 to do and Sparkman just was opportunistic? Or was  
24 this Sparkman approaching you all and saying, "We  
25 want to do this in Sparkman," and then you guys were



1 reactive to them?

2 MS. JOHNSON: So I would say it's a little bit  
3 of both, if that's a fair answer. We have been doing  
4 a lot of research on blended and hybrid instructional  
5 models, especially since the time of Covid -- and we  
6 did take on so many students and we have so many  
7 different needs within the periphery of our school.  
8 So we've been looking at that. But were we ready --  
9 like, you know, we're knocking on doors? No, we were  
10 not knocking on doors to make this happen. It was  
11 the group at Sparkman that already had students with  
12 us that said, "Hey, we would really like to have this  
13 opportunity here." And so, it's a little bit of both  
14 in that it's something that we were investigating and  
15 Sparkman was requesting our -- like I said, our  
16 already enrolled families and parents. And so it  
17 just kind of became the perfect time to be able to  
18 launch an opportunity.

19 MR. BALDWIN: Okay. Thank you.

20 MS. JOHNSON: You're welcome.

21 MR. BALDWIN: That's all my questions.

22 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. Davis?

23 MR. DAVIS: Yes. And, Mr. Baldwin, thank you so  
24 much because your questions are along the lines that  
25 I have questioned as well.

1           First of all, I think you've been fairly clear  
2           that students will be receiving instruction from  
3           teachers that have been vetted and have gone through  
4           your process and are enrolled with you all. But my  
5           question gets back to the facility piece and the idea  
6           of a risk and responsibility. If something were --  
7           first of all, is there an MOU that will be signed  
8           between your school and the parent organization that  
9           [Zoom sound cuts out] risk and responsibility?

10           MS. JOHNSON: I believe there will be. I know  
11           that there has been discussion to create an MOU for  
12           the instructional delivery, and as well as the  
13           agreement that the building will be available. Only  
14           from the standpoint that we want to protect the  
15           Sparkman community, as well as our ARVA, if it's not  
16           working out for either party there has to be a  
17           protection in place there. We don't want to create a  
18           situation where we uproot students in the middle of  
19           something that they're very used to. So we will be  
20           looking at that. ARVA's legal counsel, I'm sure the  
21           501(3)(c)'s legal counsel will be looking at that to  
22           make sure that the amount of risk that is involved is  
23           mitigated and correctly assigned.

24           MR. DAVIS: Okay. So those things haven't been  
25           worked out yet? Because what I'm getting to is let's

1 say you have a group of students, 10 or so, that does  
2 consistently come three to four days a week. Right?  
3 And although, you know, they have that opportunity --  
4 I mean it almost presents like a small class or small  
5 school; so then you start to think about schools.  
6 Who's responsible for the safety of those students?  
7 And that's where I'm starting to have some concern.  
8 Because what I'm hearing you all say is, "We're not  
9 interested in all of that, but we're just interested  
10 in delivery." And so my question then becomes if you  
11 have an organization that you're partnering with are  
12 they going to assume the responsibility for student  
13 safety? And if so, what does that look like? How  
14 have conversations been laid out?

15 All those things I think are a bit of a  
16 challenge with something like this. There may be  
17 some opportunities -- you know, maybe someone in the  
18 Department can clarify that we're doing this type of  
19 model somewhere else with -- in which the school is  
20 not responsible for the facility or they're not  
21 meeting on a school facility location. I mean I'd be  
22 interested in hearing that. But this sounds to be  
23 just a little bit different in that way.

24 MS. JOHNSON: I would say that one of the  
25 conversations that we have had is from the aspect of,

1 to your point, insurance. You know, we do provide  
2 insurance for our students for when they are at  
3 outings and that sort of thing; so looking at how  
4 those pieces line-up. The community group just  
5 received the building in the last week, so they are  
6 working pretty diligently to figure out all those  
7 details -- what does insurance look like for us, what  
8 kind of, you know, liability do we have, and how do  
9 we support that through that risk mitigation.

10 So those conversations definitely are being had,  
11 but because the awarding of the building is so recent  
12 they just have not been completely fleshed out. So I  
13 wish I had more details and finite answers for you,  
14 but just the timing has not allowed us to get all  
15 those things lined out.

16 I want to make sure that you understand though,  
17 I am definitely interested in being responsible for  
18 these students. That is not our intention to say,  
19 oh, we're just going to show up and teach, and if  
20 they're safe, they're safe, and if they're not,  
21 they're not. That's definitely not our intention or  
22 line of thinking here. But to your point, those  
23 conversations of where those lines are and who takes  
24 on the risk for the building itself, who takes on the  
25 risk for the students, we're still ironing that out

1 just because the awarding of the building is so new.

2 MR. DAVIS: No additional questions from me.

3 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you, Mr. Davis.

4 So I did have the opportunity to talk to Ms.  
5 Johnson and I'm feeling good about our conversation  
6 because I'm just clicking off all of the things that  
7 we addressed.

8 So we did talk about making sure that you had a  
9 thorough and clearly articulated MOU. We did talk  
10 about making sure that you spelled out who's in  
11 charge of fire drills --

12 MS. JOHNSON: Yes.

13 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: -- insurance, extinguishers,  
14 you know, all of those safety components. But that  
15 because this is a community organization it implies  
16 that there will be community members coming in to  
17 provide support and insuring that background checks  
18 are done appropriately. And then, also, we discussed  
19 that this would not change your LEA number, your  
20 name, your address, or anything at all.

21 So one of the final things that you and I talked  
22 about, and you spoke to it a minute ago, was you'd be  
23 willing to come back with a report.

24 MS. JOHNSON: Yes, ma'am.

25 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: And if it pleases the Panel,

1 I would recommend that we put that in the record so  
2 that you do come back with a report. Because as part  
3 of parental empowerment, I think that's what this is  
4 speaking to and we need to really know what works  
5 well, what didn't work well, what did you have to  
6 adjust. So I would encourage you to kind of keep a  
7 timeline.

8 MS. JOHNSON: Absolutely.

9 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Keep those notes of what  
10 happened. Don't wait till next May to write the  
11 report; kind of write the report as you go so that  
12 you not only have the data on the students, as you  
13 described, but really the experience. Because if you  
14 do want to do this again and again, the more you can  
15 jot down those questions we need to ask and the  
16 answers we got that worked and didn't work I think  
17 just makes it easier to replicate in the future for  
18 others.

19 MS. JOHNSON: Absolutely. And as you were  
20 talking it also reminded me, to Mr. Davis's question,  
21 one of the things that's also important for the Panel  
22 to know is that through our state testing we actually  
23 work with 23 facilities all over the state annually  
24 that we have to send our students to. We have to  
25 make sure that we mitigate that risk; we create

1 crisis plans; we create tornado escape routes, fire  
2 routes; we communicate with the local authorities  
3 because of our nature, even though we have to test  
4 face-to-face -- but we still do have to implement  
5 that in these facilities.

6 So, Mr. Davis, it will be much -- a little bit  
7 of a different situation in being there consistently  
8 throughout the year, but we do have some of those  
9 processes in place to make sure that we handle those  
10 pieces. And absolutely, we will definitely come back  
11 and be providing some data along the way as well.

12 MR. DAVIS: Can I jump back in here? Just a  
13 couple more questions.

14 One, in those facilities or in those situations  
15 in which testing is happening, give me a little bit  
16 more -- where is that happening? And is it a  
17 sizeable group of students that's happening with?

18 MS. JOHNSON: Yes. So we have, as I said, about  
19 23 locations we use across the state. We try to test  
20 our students to where they don't have to drive longer  
21 than an hour before the assessment, and so these  
22 facilities are all sorts of different facilities.

23 They may be a church, they may be a community center,  
24 they may be, you know, a local organization that has  
25 space. We have to vet these spaces because of the

1 requirements of the assessment for large group and  
2 small group settings. Some of our larger sites, we  
3 will test between 50 and 100 students at a time in  
4 those sites. We test our entire 3rd through 12th --  
5 our 3rd through 10th grade population in about 10  
6 days, so you can imagine those are large groups of  
7 students. We deploy our teachers in those  
8 situations. Each of those sites has a site  
9 coordinator who is responsible for contacting local  
10 authorities, working with the POC at the location,  
11 making sure that all of our security measures are  
12 met. We have an entire training for our site  
13 coordinators and for all of our staff that we  
14 disperse for the 10-day time to go and assess. So  
15 it's -- severe event planning is about the best way  
16 that I can describe it. And so we've had to learn  
17 over the years how to be in the presence of our  
18 students in a way that does mitigate some of the  
19 risks that clearly the Panel is rightfully concerned  
20 about.

21 MR. DAVIS: Okay. And so, what I'm taking from  
22 that is in situations like that you have the  
23 responsibility for those students in regards to their  
24 safety. And with this change in the charter you're  
25 expecting to assume the same type of responsibility



1 for students in this new location?

2 MS. JOHNSON: Yes, absolutely. And part of that  
3 is interfacing with the POC of the building, of the  
4 location to insure we -- for testing we walk those  
5 facilities, we look for things that could cause risk  
6 or cause issues for students. So, absolutely, we  
7 would have that same level of responsibility and  
8 accountability for our students.

9 MR. DAVIS: And when do you expect all of this  
10 to be hammered out? What happens if there is a walk-  
11 thru and the 501(c)(3) says, "No, that's not  
12 something we can do?" So I'm just trying to figure  
13 out when will the T's be crossed and the I's dotted  
14 in regards to the MOU or whatever is necessary to  
15 insure the safety of students?

16 MS. JOHNSON: That's a great question. So I  
17 expect the MOU's to be in place by the end of this  
18 fiscal, by the end of June. We'll start some walk-  
19 thru's in the next couple of weeks. The community  
20 organization actually takes possession of the  
21 building on July 1. So any risks identified would  
22 not be able to be corrected or mitigated until after  
23 that time, when they do have possession of the  
24 building. But the absolute intent would be that all  
25 of those pieces would be in place before that first

1 day of school. We ask our teachers back on August  
2 1st, so that's probably as best of a timeline as any  
3 to say that, you know, we would have everything  
4 completely ironed out by that date.

5 MR. DAVIS: Thank you. No further questions.

6 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. Baldwin, did you have  
7 additional questions?

8 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. Thank you.

9 So I'm -- I mean I like what you're saying. I  
10 like the innovation of what you're saying. But I'm  
11 nervous about acting today on this request without  
12 really having seen anything. We've talked a bit.  
13 And to me, this feels like a new way of doing  
14 education. I mean, and I would like to --  
15 personally, I would like to know more about who the  
16 parent group is and what's their background, what  
17 qualifies them to be doing this, and I'd like you to  
18 have an MOU that's signed that we can look at. And I  
19 know you're up against a deadline and you're trying  
20 to make all this happen, and I can appreciate that.  
21 But still, there's just not a lot -- I mean, to me  
22 this feels like a precedent that we're setting and I  
23 just don't feel like I have enough information to set  
24 a precedent that -- you know, your charter and then  
25 possibly others.

1           How long would it take for you to try to get  
2           some of this information back to us? Is it a 30-day  
3           process? I mean would that -- if we do that, would  
4           that -- and I don't even know if we can -- you know,  
5           if we're able to do that. And this is just me asking  
6           this question; so everybody else may be more  
7           comfortable than I am.

8           MS. JOHNSON: I'm certain that we would try to  
9           meet whatever timeline would create comfort with the  
10          Panel. Without having that conversation directly  
11          with the Sparkman community organization I would hate  
12          to bind us into a specific deadline. Again, they  
13          were just -- they just received the building. So I  
14          know that there's also still school going on there,  
15          so we're trying to, you know, be very respectful  
16          about that space and not get ahead of ourselves as  
17          far as that goes. But this piece is sort of the  
18          foundational cornerstone piece. If we can't, you  
19          know, provide the face-to-face instruction, then  
20          that's a different direction for them entirely with  
21          the building that they've been awarded and with the  
22          decisions that they may or may not make for their  
23          students. So that was why this was the first piece  
24          to sort of get clean and tidy. But I'm happy to come  
25          back and, you know, share MOU's, share progress as

1 far as risk mitigation with the building, any of  
2 those pieces, if that would please the Panel to come  
3 back at the meetings this summer just to insure that  
4 you all, you know, have oversight of those pieces as  
5 they roll-out.

6 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Wagner, as our legal  
7 authority, do you have any concerns? Do you --  
8 anything that you can express to help Mr. Baldwin?

9 MS. WAGNER: So I don't particularly have any  
10 concerns, because these are parents making the choice  
11 to bring their kids to this location. I understand  
12 the safety aspect of it, and I would like to see an  
13 MOU between the two of you; I definitely would like  
14 to see that. I mean you could -- as a panel you  
15 could defer the vote on this section of their request  
16 until July -- June, July; you could just ask them to  
17 come back and report on the MOU. And if the Panel,  
18 for whatever reason, doesn't think that this is  
19 appropriate, then we can discuss that at that point  
20 in time, and ARVA -- work with them to figure out  
21 what we want to do in the meantime.

22 It's really at the pleasure of the Panel what  
23 you guys want and what you feel comfortable with.  
24 But I don't have any legal concerns with what ARVA is  
25 attempting to do.

1                   CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Johnson, if approved  
2 today, you would be willing to bring -- come back in  
3 July, August, whenever, to bring the MOU and the name  
4 of the 501(c)(3) that will be running the community  
5 -- I don't need to say community center -- the  
6 community location? So you would be willing to bring  
7 those -- submit those documents back?

8                   MS. JOHNSON: Yes, absolutely. I would hope  
9 that I could have an MOU for the Panel's review by  
10 the June meeting just to make sure that we have  
11 comfort not only from the Panel, but that ARVA is  
12 poised and ready for the beginning of the school  
13 year, but then also that the community organization  
14 feels comfortable as well. So I think that we could  
15 definitely make that happen, and then any of the  
16 other pieces that the Panel would like to review.  
17 Certainly, I can be here in June, I can be here in  
18 July, whatever would bring a level of comfort for the  
19 Panel.

20                   CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Panel Members, any other  
21 questions, discussion?

22                   MR. DAVIS: Just one more point, and it's  
23 actually a point of clarity. But it sounds as if we  
24 are discussing today -- let's take away the facility  
25 piece. Right? What you're really asking us is just

1 to approve a change in your model, right, that would  
2 allow face-to-face instruction?

3 MS. JOHNSON: Yes, that's correct.

4 MR. DAVIS: That I think is clean. That it gets  
5 muddy when you say we have a relationship and a  
6 partnership and there's a group of parents and they  
7 just got a building, and then whoa --

8 MS. JOHNSON: Absolutely.

9 MR. DAVIS: -- that's where it starts to get a  
10 little touchy. Right? I think all those things that  
11 we're talking about, MOU's and all that, are  
12 important. But, you know, it is a situation in which  
13 we're talking about obviously the waiver for the  
14 Arkansas LEARNS and then the approval of a waiver  
15 that will allow face-to-face instruction. I think  
16 that's clear and clean and that makes sense to me.  
17 But I think you've now introduced a couple of other  
18 things that I do think we should think about  
19 following up on or at least laying eyes on as, you  
20 know, a responsible body.

21 MS. JOHNSON: Absolutely.

22 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I agree.

23 MS. SARACINI: I agree.

24 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I agree.

25 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. So I'm hearing a

1 consensus here from Dr. Wright-McMurray and Ms.  
2 Saracini.

3 Ms. Wagner.

4 MS. WAGNER: If the CAP would like to schedule  
5 check-ins even, if that's something the CAP would  
6 like to do to -- you know, i.e., after school starts,  
7 a month in -- we're going to get the MOU, we're going  
8 to get all this stuff on the front-end. And then if  
9 you guys would like to have ARVA come and check-in  
10 with you about this, we can even do that as well;  
11 that is an option for the Panel. And ARVA is  
12 amenable to it.

13 MS. JOHNSON: Absolutely.

14 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: The future Charter Panel  
15 could also make an onsite visit.

16 MS. JOHNSON: Absolutely. We would love that.

17 MR. BALDWIN: Madam Chair, let me ask -- I mean  
18 I need more legal advice. So if we act on this today  
19 and change -- and I agree with Mr. Davis on the  
20 nuances of this. But if we act today and let them go  
21 forward, and then they come back and give us a report  
22 that we don't like -- I mean let's say there's  
23 something we don't like -- can we act -- can we take  
24 back our decision today at that point?

25 MS. WAGNER: So we can have them amend their

1 charter back, if it's not something that you agree  
2 with. Yes.

3 MR. BALDWIN: Okay.

4 MS. WAGNER: We would have to work with them to  
5 do that but, yes, we can do that. You are the Panel.  
6 You have the discretion.

7 MR. BALDWIN: Okay. Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Any additional questions,  
9 conversations, discussion, wonderings?

10 Dr. Wright-McMurray.

11 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So just for my  
12 clarification, it seems like that we're moving in the  
13 direction where we would be considering rescinding  
14 the waiver for the salary and allowing the amending  
15 of the charter for hybrid instruction. So we're not  
16 --

17 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: That's the request.

18 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- approving or  
19 disapproving the addition of the Sparkman and all the  
20 other --

21 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: No. In the Sparkman it's  
22 just -- then if you want to ask them to come back and  
23 provide -- if you want to ask Ms. Johnson to come  
24 back and present her MOU and to provide some reports  
25 along the way -- because this really is a pilot, an



1 innovative pilot. So if you want to come back and  
2 get periodic updates from her, she has said she's  
3 willing to do that.

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

5 MS. SARACINI: Just to clarify, may I ask a  
6 question?

7 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Sure.

8 MS. SARACINI: So we would put that in our --

9 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: In your motion.

10 MS. SARACINI: Okay.

11 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. If there's not  
12 any other discussion, I'll accept a motion.

13 Oh, here comes Ms. Wagner.

14 MS. WAGNER: I just want everyone to be  
15 comfortable. You could also limit the approval of  
16 changing the instructional model to just one year.  
17 If that would make you more comfortable as a panel,  
18 you could limit it to one year for review, at this  
19 time next year. So she could come back at that point  
20 in time, because she'll know exactly how the method  
21 has worked out, to approve it going forward from  
22 there.

23 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Can I ask --

24 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Yes. That's what we're here  
25 for.

1 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So I guess, for me, I do  
2 find value in allowing there to be the hybrid model  
3 because -- if you do have a student that the virtual  
4 instruction is the best option for them. However, if  
5 they do have a need to need to be in front of someone  
6 to have that touch, I do find value in that. So I  
7 don't want there to be this thought that that's not  
8 what I'm understanding or appreciating; it's just the  
9 other piece that I just needed more clarification on.

10 So from my standpoint I'm okay with -- if they  
11 would like to do it, because I do find value in  
12 having at least the option to be able to bring  
13 children in front of you if you need to do that. So  
14 --

15 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. I'll accept a  
16 motion. I'll help you.

17 (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: Ms. Saracini and Dr.  
18 Wright-McMurray talk quietly together.)

19 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Say it out-loud so I can --

20 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I don't know quite what to  
21 say out-loud, but --

22 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Shasta will help us. Go  
23 ahead.

24 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. Okay. So I move  
25 approval of the request to rescind the waiver for

1 salary to comply with the LEARNS Act. And I support  
2 the request to amend the charter to allow for a  
3 hybrid model. And would like for the school to agree  
4 to provide documentation of their desired partnership  
5 with the Sparkman School District periodically --  
6 periodically being --

7 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: So you'd like for Ms. Johnson  
8 to come back with the MOU?

9 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Yes.

10 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: And then you would like for  
11 her to come back with a report --

12 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So I would like for her to  
13 come back with the MOU once it is established. And I  
14 think we thought that could be within 30 days?

15 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: She's going to try.

16 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

17 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: So we'll --

18 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So with the goal being  
19 within 30 days of reviewing the MOU agreement between  
20 ARVA and Sparkman. And then at end-of-the-year a  
21 review of the outcomes of the pilot.

22 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Do I have a second?

23 MS. SARACINI: I second.

24 MR. BALDWIN: Can I amend -- ask Dr. Wright-  
25 McMurray to put one more thing in her motion?

1 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Absolutely.

2 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Sure.

3 MR. BALDWIN: Yeah. I mean the motion is great.  
4 I would love to have some background information on  
5 the parent group.

6 MS. JOHNSON: Yes, of course.

7 MR. BALDWIN: I mean I'm just -- you know, I  
8 live in a small town and I know that sometimes parent  
9 groups can be good and sometimes they can be bad.  
10 And I just -- I would love to know that this is a  
11 good parent group.

12 MS. JOHNSON: Absolutely.

13 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Dr. Wright-McMurray, are you  
14 willing to amend your motion?

15 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Yes, as long as I don't  
16 have to start from the beginning.

17 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Yes.

18 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

19 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Saracini, are you willing  
20 to second that?

21 MS. SARACINI: Yes.

22 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. Here we go. Dr.  
23 Wright McMurray has made a motion and Ms. Saracini  
24 has seconded the motion to rescind the waiver for  
25 teacher salary, and to approve the amendment request

1 to change the instructional delivery method to hybrid  
2 on the -- I lost my word -- on the basis that you  
3 will provide documentation of the MOU and some  
4 background information on this community group within  
5 30 days, if possible, or soon thereafter; and that  
6 you will schedule with the Charter Office to bring an  
7 end-of-year report at the end of the first year that  
8 has documented not only your data but all of the  
9 steps along the way.

10 MS. JOHNSON: Yes, ma'am.

11 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Is that what you said?

12 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: That's what I said. Yes.

13 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Any other discussion?

14 All those in favor?

15 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

16 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Motion passes.

17 Oh, any opposed? I don't guess -- no one left.

18 All right. Your motion passes.

19 MS. JOHNSON: Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: And if you'll take a moment,  
21 we will write in our voting sheets. And I'll ask the  
22 Charter Office to mark those days on your calendar to  
23 reach out to Ms. Johnson for those reports.

24 Ms. Saracini, I'll start with you. I see you  
25 are finished writing.

1 MS. SARACINI: I support the waiver request to  
2 comply with the LEARNS Act on teacher salary  
3 schedule. And support going to a hybrid model, when  
4 necessary --

5 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.

6 MS. SARACINI: -- to meet all students' needs.

7 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.

8 Mr. Baldwin.

9 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I support the waiver request  
10 to rescind the compensation in compliance with the  
11 Arkansas LEARNS Act. And then I also support the  
12 amendment to the charter to allow for a hybrid  
13 learning model, subject to receiving an MOU and  
14 background information on the parent group.

15 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.

16 Dr. Wright-McMurray.

17 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I voted for. I support  
18 the request to rescind the salary waiver to comply  
19 with the LEARNS Act. I also support the request to  
20 amend the charter to offer hybrid instruction, with  
21 the contingency that MOU and parent group -- and  
22 that's as far as I got -- will be reviewed within 30  
23 days, and a report by the end of the academic year.

24 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: And it won't actually be  
25 within 30 days; it will take a little bit longer --

1 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

2 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: -- before our next meeting, I  
3 think -- somewhere in there.

4 And Mr. Davis.

5 MR. DAVIS: I voted for. I support the waiver  
6 request to comply with the LEARNS Act and the  
7 amendment to allow hybrid instruction.

8 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Perfect. All right. Well,  
9 congratulations, Ms. Johnson.

10 MS. JOHNSON: Thank you so much.

11 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: We look forward to hearing  
12 more, learning more, and blazing new trails.

13 8) ACADEMICS PLUS CHARTER SCHOOLS

14 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. Ms. Summons,  
15 number 8.

16 Do y'all want to take a break after this one?  
17 That will kind of be about a little over halfway  
18 through.

19 Okay. All right. Ms. Summons.

20 MS. SUMMONS: Good afternoon. Dorie Summons,  
21 DESE Charter Director.

22 Next on the list is Academics Plus. Academics  
23 Plus is requesting to rescind its waiver of the  
24 Minimum Teacher Salary Compensation Schedule. And  
25 they are requesting an additional waiver of Code 16

1 -- I mean, excuse me, 6-13-636 of the LEARNS Act  
2 concerning employees receiving a hearing before the  
3 board upon dismissal. We have Dr. McGill here.

4 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Dr. McGill, if you'll raise  
5 your right hand, please --

6 MR. MCGILL: It's Mr. McGill.

7 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. McGill.

8 MR. MCGILL: I hadn't got that far yet.

9 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. Do you swear or  
10 affirm that the testimony you're about to give shall  
11 be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the  
12 truth?

13 MR. MCGILL: Yes.

14 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: You're recognized for your  
15 presentation.

16 MR. MCGILL: Did you make the change?

17 MS. WAGNER: So just real quick, on Academics  
18 Plus Charter School's legal review I had accidentally  
19 put in 6-13-636(d)(e); it should've been (d)(1)(e).  
20 Specifically, they are narrowing the waiver down to  
21 just the notice and hearing requirements to be put in  
22 employee contracts. That's all they're waiving;  
23 they're not waiving the entire code section. It's  
24 just that because, to my understanding, they handle  
25 that all at the Superintendent level. So, and I have



1 no legal concerns about either of those waiver  
2 requests.

3 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: So would you like to explain  
4 what you just said in laymen's terms?

5 MS. WAGNER: So, essentially, what Academics  
6 Plus is waiving is they are not going to put notice  
7 and hearing requirements for their employees in their  
8 employee contracts; they're not going to have that in  
9 their contracts. That's what they're asking for a  
10 waiver of, because they handle all of that at the  
11 Superintendent level. He makes all those decisions.

12 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Gotcha.

13 MS. WAGNER: So that's all they're asking for a  
14 waiver of, of that section. It's just that one  
15 little part.

16 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Okay.

17 MR. MCGILL: Thank you.

18 Okay. Yes, we are asking for 6-17-2403, same  
19 reasons for it as everyone else. We have met the  
20 minimum teacher salary standards since 2010, continue  
21 to do so, and we want to exceed those standards as we  
22 go forward.

23 Paragraph (d)(1)(e) of 6-13-636, as was just  
24 said -- well, we've had -- first of all, we've had  
25 Teacher Fair Dismissal Act waived since 2001. I've

1           been at the school since 2010, but it has been waived  
2           actually the 22 years of existence. And at this  
3           time, as was just said, as the CEO -- the CEO hires  
4           and terminates employees; so when a teacher is hired  
5           or an employee is hired the contracts or the at-will  
6           employment agreement -- actually, we don't have  
7           contracts; we have at-will of employment agreements  
8           that serves as those contracts -- goes to the  
9           Superintendent; I sign -- as CEO, I'll sign, and then  
10          the employee signs. They do not go to the board.  
11          And that is what we're trying to waive is the -- that  
12          one paragraph that says they have the right to go to  
13          the board. And my board supports this unanimously.  
14          Over the last -- since 2010, we've -- you know, we've  
15          had employment issues. And I see it as two things:  
16          my job is to make sure that employees are treated  
17          fairly; you know, there should be no surprises when  
18          it comes to termination, unless they did something  
19          yesterday that deserves termination today. But if  
20          it's a performance thing over time they should know  
21          what's about to happen. And then, the next thing is  
22          I have to be there to make sure -- to protect the  
23          institution. We don't want lawsuits, and when it  
24          comes to employment hearings we want to be able to be  
25          successful in those. So those are the things we look

1 at to make sure we're moving forward correctly. And  
2 over the last 13 years I've been there we've had no  
3 employment lawsuits, and we've had two EEOC  
4 complaints of terminated employees and both of those  
5 came back with no findings from the EEOC. So our  
6 system works, it's successful. The reason our board  
7 considers this important is they went through an  
8 employment hearing in 2011, I believe it was, and  
9 after that they said there is no reason for them to  
10 be involved in that. That was their opinion, "we  
11 don't want that anymore and it should be the CEO who  
12 we're holding accountable to -- for the charter  
13 school to make those decisions and do what's best for  
14 the students and the school."

15 So with that, I'll open it up to any questions  
16 you may have.

17 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Panel Members, any questions?

18 All right. Then I'll accept a motion.

19 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I move approval to -- I  
20 lost my train of thought --

21 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Rescind two.

22 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Rescind two, the waiver  
23 requests currently held by Academics Plus Charter.

24 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Okay.

25 MS. SARACINI: I'll second.

1 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: I have a motion by Dr.  
2 Wright-McMurray and a second by Ms. Saracini --  
3 [coughing] excuse me -- to approve the rescission of  
4 the waivers -- both waivers as requested for  
5 Academics Plus Charter School. All those --

6 MR. MCGILL: Point of order. I'm not rescinding  
7 the 6-13-636.

8 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you for that catch.  
9 Rescinding one, adding a waiver request. Thank  
10 you. So let me re-start. So I have a motion by Dr.  
11 Wright-McMurray and a second by Ms. Saracini to  
12 approve the request to rescind the waiver for Teacher  
13 Salary and to add a waiver of Arkansas code 6-13-636  
14 for Academics Plus Charter Schools.

15 MR. MCGILL: (d)(1)(e).

16 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: (d)(1)(e). All right. 6-13-  
17 636(d)(1)(e)?

18 MR. MCGILL: Yes.

19 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Perfect.

20 All right. Any -- all those in favor?

21 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

22 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Dr. Wright-McMurray, I didn't  
23 hear you.

24 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I said aye.

25 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.

1 MR. DAVIS: Aye.

2 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. Thank you so  
3 much. No one in opposition, your motion passes.

4 MR. MCGILL: Thank you very much.

5 All right. And if you will take a moment to  
6 fill out your voting sheets -- Mr. Baldwin, we'll  
7 start with you.

8 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I support the waiver request  
9 to comply with the Arkansas LEARNS Act. I also  
10 support the amendment to the waiver. I also support  
11 the waiver request pertaining to notice requirements  
12 as it relates to employee practices.

13 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.

14 Ms. Saracini.

15 MS. SARACINI: I support the waiver request to  
16 comply with the LEARNS Act on teacher salary. I  
17 support the new waiver of the school personnel hiring  
18 and placement decisions in Arkansas code 6-13-  
19 636(d)(1)(e).

20 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. Davis.

21 MR. DAVIS: I support the request to rescind the  
22 waiver to comply with the LEARNS Act and to add the  
23 additional waiver.

24 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: And Dr. Wright-McMurray.

25 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I voted for. I support

1 the request to rescind the waiver to comply with the  
2 LEARNS Act. I also support the request -- oh, what  
3 have I got typed up there -- the requirement to  
4 include teacher -- the teachers' contract. Yeah.

5 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Okay. All right.

6 Congratulations.

7 We're going to take a quick 7-minute break.

8 It's 1:20. We're going to start at 1:27.

9 (BREAK: 1:22 P.M. - 1:30 P.M.)

10 9) WESTWIND SCHOOL FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

11 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Summons, Number 9,  
12 please.

13 MS. SUMMONS: Westwind School for the Performing  
14 Arts is requesting to rescind the Minimum Teacher  
15 Salary Compensation Schedule. And Ms. Timmons is  
16 here representing Westwind.

17 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: If you'll raise your right  
18 hand, please -- do you swear or affirm that the  
19 testimony you're about to give shall be the truth,  
20 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

21 MS. TIMMONS: I do.

22 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you so much. You're  
23 recognized.

24 MS. TIMMONS: Thank you. Good afternoon.  
25 Westwind, we are requesting to waive our Teacher

1 Salary Schedule to comply with the Arkansas LEARNS  
2 Act.

3 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Panel Members, any questions?  
4 Then I'll accept a motion.

5 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I move approval of the  
6 request.

7 MS. SARACINI: I second.

8 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: I have a motion from Dr.  
9 Wright-McMurray and a second from Ms. Saracini to  
10 approve the rescission of the Teacher Salary waiver.  
11 All those in favor?

12 (CHORUS OF AYES FROM 3 PANEL MEMBERS)

13 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Did I lose Mr. Davis?  
14 Okay. Then, I'll vote. Aye.

15 MS. TIMMONS: Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Any opposed?  
17 Okay. Motion passes.

18 If you'll give us just a moment to record.  
19 Thank you for being here today.

20 MS. TIMMONS: Thank you so much.

21 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Okay. I voted I support the  
22 waiver request to comply with the LEARNS Act  
23 regarding teacher salary.

24 Ms. Saracini.

25 MS. SARACINI: I support the waiver request to

1 comply with the LEARNS Act on teacher salary.

2 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Dr. Wright-McMurray.

3 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I support the request to  
4 rescind the salary waiver to comply with the LEARNS  
5 Act.

6 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: And Mr. Baldwin.

7 MR. BALDWIN: I support the waiver request to  
8 comply with the Arkansas LEARNS Act.

9 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. Thank you.

10 Ms. Wagner.

11 MR. DAVIS: Ms. Coffman --

12 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Yes.

13 MR. DAVIS: -- this is Mr. Davis. I'm actually  
14 on by phone. I'm having some connectivity issues. I  
15 support the waiver -- the waiver request to rescind,  
16 as well, to comply with the LEARNS Act.

17 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Perfect. Thank you so much.

18 10) GRADUATE ARKANSAS

19 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. Ms. Summons.

20 MS. SUMMONS: Graduate Arkansas is requesting to  
21 rescind its waiver of the Minimum Teacher Salary  
22 Compensation Schedule. We have Ms. Hatley here.

23 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Hatley, if you will raise  
24 your right hand -- do you swear or affirm that the  
25 testimony you're about to give shall be the truth,



1 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

2 MS. HATLEY: Yes.

3 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: You're recognized.

4 MS. HATLEY: Oh, so we're not really using the  
5 waiver, but I'm here today asking for rescission of  
6 the waiver. It would allow Graduate Arkansas to  
7 align with the LEARNS Act.

8 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.

9 Any questions for Ms. Hatley?

10 I'll accept a motion.

11 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I move approval of the  
12 request.

13 MS. SARACINI: Second.

14 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: I have a motion from Dr.  
15 Wright-McMurray and a second from Ms. Saracini to  
16 rescind the waiver of 6-17-2403. All those in favor?

17 (CHORUS OF AYES BY 3 PANEL MEMBERS)

18 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Any opposed?

19 MR. DAVIS: Aye.

20 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Any opposed?

21 Motion passes.

22 And if you'll give us a second, Graduate  
23 Arkansas -- Mr. Baldwin, if you'll start please.

24 MR. BALDWIN: I support the waiver request to  
25 comply with the Arkansas LEARNS Act.

1 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.

2 Dr. Wright-McMurray.

3 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I voted for. I support  
4 the request to rescind the waiver to comply with the  
5 LEARNS Act.

6 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Saracini.

7 MS. SARACINI: I support the waiver request to  
8 comply with the LEARNS Act on teacher salary  
9 schedules.

10 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. Davis.

11 MR. DAVIS: I support the waiver request to  
12 rescind to comply with the Arkansas LEARNS Act.

13 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you so much.  
14 Congratulations, Ms. Hatley.

15 MS. HATLEY: Thank you.

16 11) HOPE ACADEMY OF NORTHWEST ARKANSAS

17 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Number 11, Ms. Summons.

18 MS. SUMMONS: Okay. Hope Academy of Northwest  
19 Arkansas is requesting to rescind its waiver of the  
20 Teacher Minimum -- the Minimum Teacher Salary  
21 Compensation Schedule and to change the grade levels  
22 served from K-6 to K-4. The enrollment cap is 60.  
23 And we have Ms. Katie Drake on the Zoom.

24 MS. DRAKE: Yes, I am.

25 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Drake, if you'll raise

1 your right hand -- do you swear or affirm that the  
2 testimony you're about to give shall be the truth,  
3 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

4 MS. DRAKE: Yes.

5 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you. You're  
6 recognized.

7 MS. DRAKE: I do not have a presentation for the  
8 waiver amendment, but Hope Academy does request to  
9 rescind our waiver for Minimum Teacher Salary to  
10 comply with the LEARNS Act. We have updated our  
11 salary schedule to support this change.

12 Additionally, Hope Academy requests to amend our  
13 charter to move from a K-6 to a K-4 school. I do not  
14 have a visual presentation, but I do have talking  
15 points on that, if you all would like those at this  
16 time.

17 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Yes, please.

18 MS. DRAKE: So as a reminder, Hope Academy is a  
19 charter school designed to serve students who have  
20 experienced childhood trauma. We have small class  
21 sizes with a 1-to-10. We have one grade per -- one  
22 class per grade, and 10 students per class, served by  
23 one teacher, and we have one paraprofessional in each  
24 classroom.

25 When we opened our charter our intent was to go

1 through 6th grade. Prior to this year concerns arose  
2 around that, primarily because of the transition from  
3 our program to a junior high setting in 6th -- in 7th  
4 grade. With our local schools being 5th and 6th  
5 grades for middle school, our students would go  
6 straight from our very small program into their local  
7 junior high. We did not feel like that was setting  
8 our students up for success, keeping in mind that  
9 middle school teachers and the middle school model is  
10 really uniquely prepared to make that transition for  
11 students from the smaller classroom size in  
12 elementary school and the really classroom support  
13 model of elementary school into the broader supports  
14 that are offered in middle school with students  
15 needing to know how to change classes, that large  
16 group free movement that happens beginning in middle  
17 school, lockers for many schools that kids start to  
18 use, and the lunchroom freedoms that are provided in  
19 middle school settings. We did not feel like coming  
20 out of our very small 1-to-10 classrooms would -- and  
21 transitioning into junior high -- having missed that  
22 middle school period where those teachers and that  
23 staff are uniquely qualified to really set those  
24 kiddos up for success and help them make those  
25 transitions, we did not feel like that was going to

1 be best for our students.

2 So we -- another concern for 6th grade initially  
3 was that from a structural capacity standpoint we  
4 really are out of room to add a 6th grade within our  
5 school once we got open and recognized how much space  
6 was going to be required. Many of our rooms are  
7 already multi-functional -- not our classrooms, but  
8 our other spaces -- and we really do not structurally  
9 have the capacity for 6th grade.

10 So, initially, we had planned to be a K-5  
11 school. When we added our 5th grade classroom this  
12 year -- a lot of our 4th graders last year  
13 transitioned out because our local schools, primarily  
14 Bentonville and Siloam, where many of our kids come  
15 from, that model is K-4 elementary and 5th grade  
16 starts middle school; and so, many of our 4th graders  
17 transitioned out. We ended up starting the year with  
18 only five of our ten 5th graders, and we didn't --  
19 those numbers didn't change. While we had a couple  
20 more transition out at semester, we got a couple of  
21 new kiddos in. So declining enrollment for 5th grade  
22 is a concern for us. It's difficult to fill those  
23 spots once they're open because it's only that one-  
24 year turnaround; it's a short turnaround for  
25 families, and so that's -- creating another

1 transition for a student doesn't often make sense to  
2 families unless you're just in a very difficult  
3 situation and need a placement for their student.  
4 There are currently a few of our 4th grade [Zoom  
5 sound cuts out].

6 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Drake, we've lost sound.

7 MR. DAN DAVIS: It's on her end.

8 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Try again.

9 MR. BALDWIN: I'm not --

10 MR. DAVIS: I can't hear you, as well.

11 MS. DRAKE: Okay.

12 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Okay. We can hear you again.  
13 Thank you.

14 MS. DRAKE: Okay. So our concern is that  
15 currently our 4th graders, most of them are also  
16 planning to transition to their local middle school  
17 for next year, for 5th grade, for --

18 [Zoom says Recording Stopped]

19 MS. DRAKE: The recording has stopped. I'm not  
20 sure if that's an issue.

21 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Just a minute and Dan will  
22 tell us if it's an issue.

23 MR. DAN DAVIS: My recording is still going.

24 [Zoom says Recording In Progress]

25 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: We're good. Go ahead.

1 MR. DAN DAVIS: What it appears is --

2 MS. DRAKE: Okay. Thank you.

3 So our concern is that we're going to have this  
4 same issue again next year where we have few students  
5 enrolled in our 5th grade program because parents and  
6 students want to transition into middle school with  
7 the rest of their community. Given that, I think  
8 it's not financially a sustainable option to have a  
9 fulltime teacher and para, which is a model, to serve  
10 a partial classroom, when we are only a 1-to-10  
11 classroom size as it is. We do anticipate full  
12 enrollment with wait lists in all of our other  
13 grades. That has not been a concern up to now. This  
14 really seems to only be an issue with that transition  
15 from elementary to middle school that happens with  
16 our other local schools and our families wanting to  
17 participate in that same transition, as well as our  
18 concerns for our students not being prepared for that  
19 larger environment since they don't have the  
20 opportunity to participate in those local middle  
21 schools.

22 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. Thank you, Ms.  
23 Drake.

24 Any questions? Questions?

25 Hearing none, I'll accept a motion.

1 MR. BALDWIN: I move we approve both requests as  
2 submitted.

3 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Second.

4 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: I have a motion from Mr.  
5 Baldwin and a second from Dr. Wright-McMurray to  
6 approve the rescission of the waiver of 6-17-2403 and  
7 to change the grade levels served from K-6 to K-4 for  
8 Hope Academy of Northwest Arkansas. All those in  
9 favor?

10 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

11 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Any opposed?

12 Motion passes.

13 While they're filling out their voting sheets,  
14 Ms. Drake, I'll just remind you that the Public  
15 School Accountability Office will be reaching out to  
16 you on Monday to make an LEA change request in LEA  
17 Insights. It needs to be in by next week. Thank  
18 you.

19 MS. DRAKE: Yes, ma'am. Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Yeah, you're just -- you're  
21 changing your grade span, but we'll need to have that  
22 in there, into our system.

23 All right. Mr. Baldwin.

24 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I support the request to  
25 rescind the salary waiver to comply with the Arkansas



1 LEARNS Act. I also support the request to amend the  
2 charter's authorization from a K-6 to K-4 program.

3 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.

4 Dr. Wright-McMurray.

5 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I voted for. I support  
6 the request to rescind the salary waiver to comply  
7 with the LEARNS Act. I also support the request to  
8 amend the charter to allow grade level change from K-  
9 6 to K-4.

10 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Saracini.

11 MS. SARACINI: I support the waiver request to  
12 comply with the LEARNS Act on teacher salary and  
13 amend the enrollment from K-6 to K-4.

14 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.

15 And Mr. Davis.

16 MR. DAVIS: I support the waiver request to  
17 rescind to comply, as well as the change in grades.

18 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.

19 All right. Well, congratulations. I know  
20 you're doing fabulous work up there. I've been to  
21 visit -- and if you haven't been to visit, you should  
22 schedule a visit. It's amazing work. Thank you, Ms.  
23 Drake.

24 MS. DRAKE: We would love to have you. Thank  
25 you.

1 12) FRIENDSHIP ASPIRE ACADEMY ARKANSAS

2 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Number 12, Ms. Summons.

3 MS. SUMMONS: Friendship Aspire is requesting to  
4 rescind its waiver of the Minimum Teacher Salary  
5 Compensation Schedule. And we have Dr. Tran on the  
6 Zoom.

7 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Dr. Tran, if you'll raise  
8 your right hand -- do you swear or affirm that the  
9 testimony you're about to give shall be the truth,  
10 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

11 DR. TRAN: I do.

12 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: You're recognized to present.

13 DR. TRAN: Sure. And I have no presentation.  
14 We're just rescinding the waiver to comply with the  
15 LEARNS Act.

16 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Any questions from Panel  
17 Members?

18 I'll accept a motion.

19 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I move we support the --  
20 or move to approve the request to rescind the waiver.

21 MR. BALDWIN: Second.

22 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: I have a motion from Dr.  
23 Wright-McMurray and a second from Mr. Baldwin to  
24 approve the rescission of the waiver of Arkansas Code  
25 6-17-2403 for Friendship Aspire Academy Arkansas.

1 All those in favor?

2 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

3 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Any opposed?

4 Motion passes.

5 Mr. Baldwin.

6 MR. BALDWIN: I support the waiver request to  
7 comply with the Arkansas LEARNS Act.

8 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.

9 Dr. Wright-McMurray.

10 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I support the request to  
11 rescind the salary waiver to comply with the LEARNS  
12 Act.

13 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Saracini.

14 MS. SARACINI: I support the waiver request to  
15 comply with the LEARNS Act on teacher salary.

16 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. Davis.

17 MR. DAVIS: I support the LEARNS -- I support  
18 the request to comply with the LEARNS Act.

19 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you so much.

20 Congratulations, Tran.

21 DR. TRAN: Thank you. See you guys later.

22 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.

23 13) EXALT ACADEMY

24 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Summons, number 13.

25 MS. SUMMONS: Exalt Academy is requesting to

1 rescind its waiver of the Teacher -- Minimum Teacher  
2 Salary Compensation Schedule. And Ms. Long is on the  
3 Zoom.

4 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Long, if you'll raise  
5 your right hand -- Ms. Long, if you'll raise your  
6 right hand, please --

7 MS. LONG: Yes, ma'am. I am.

8 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Okay. I see you now. Do you  
9 swear or affirm that the testimony you're about to  
10 give shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing  
11 but the truth?

12 MS. LONG: I do.

13 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: You're recognized.

14 MS. LONG: Thank you. Thank you for taking the  
15 time. We too would like to rescind the waiver to  
16 comply with the Arkansas LEARNS Act.

17 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. Panel Members,  
18 any questions?

19 I'll accept a motion.

20 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I move that we approve the  
21 request to rescind the waiver.

22 MS. SARACINI: Second.

23 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: I have a motion from Dr.  
24 Wright-McMurray and a second from Ms. Saracini to  
25 approve the rescission of the waiver of 6-17-2403 for

1 Exalt Academy. All those in favor?

2 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

3 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Any opposed?

4 Motion passes.

5 MS. LONG: Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. Baldwin, if you would  
7 read your vote sheet.

8 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I support the waiver request  
9 to comply with the Arkansas LEARNS Act.

10 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Dr. Wright-McMurray.

11 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I support the request to  
12 rescind the salary waiver to comply with the LEARNS  
13 Act.

14 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Saracini.

15 MS. SARACINI: I support the waiver request to  
16 comply with the LEARNS Act.

17 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: And Mr. Davis.

18 MR. DAVIS: I support the request in order to  
19 comply with the LEARNS Act.

20 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Awesome. Thank you so much.  
21 Congratulations, Ms. Long.

22 14) HAAS HALL ACADEMY

23 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Number 14, Ms. Summons.

24 MS. LONG: Thank you.

25 MS. SUMMONS: Haas Hall is requesting to rescind

1 its waiver of the Minimum Teacher Salary Compensation  
2 Schedule. And we have Mr. Schoppmeyer on the Zoom.

3 DR. SCHOPPMEYER: That's correct.

4 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Good afternoon, Mr.  
5 Schoppmeyer. Would you raise your right hand,  
6 please? Do you swear or affirm that the testimony  
7 you're about to give shall be the truth, the whole  
8 truth, and nothing but the truth?

9 DR. SCHOPPMEYER: Yes, ma'am.

10 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: You're recognized.

11 DR. SCHOPPMEYER: We'd like to comply with the  
12 Arkansas LEARNS Act by rescinding our waiver of 6-17-  
13 203 [sic].

14 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. Any questions  
15 from the Panel?

16 I'll accept a motion.

17 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I move that we approve  
18 their request. I move we approve the request.  
19 Gotcha.

20 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Second?

21 MS. SARACINI: I second.

22 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: I have a motion from Dr.  
23 Wright-McMurray and a second from Ms. Saracini to  
24 approve the request to rescind the waiver of 6-17-  
25 2403 for Haas Hall Academy. All those in favor?

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(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Any opposed?

Motion passes.

Mr. Baldwin.

MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I support the waiver request to comply with the Arkansas LEARNS Act.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Dr. Wright-McMurray.

DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I support the request to rescind the salary waiver to comply with the LEARNS Act.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Saracini.

MS. SARACINI: I support the waiver request to comply with the LEARNS Act on teacher salary.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. Davis.

MR. DAVIS: I support the request in order to comply with the LEARNS Act.

15) LISA ACADEMY

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Summons, Number 15.

Thank you, Dr. Schoppmeyer.

DR. SCHOPPEMEYER: Thank you very much.

MS. SUMMONS: LISA Academy is requesting to rescind the waiver for the Minimum Teacher Salary Compensation Schedule. And we have Dr. Bogrek, who's the Superintendent, and we have Ms. Ratermann here also as representatives for LISA.

1 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: If you will both raise your  
2 right hand -- do you swear or affirm that the  
3 testimony you're about to give shall be the truth,  
4 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

5 (BOTH REPRESENTATIVES ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

6 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: You're recognized.

7 MS. RATERMANN: Good afternoon. I am Bethany  
8 Ratermann, Director of Communications for LISA  
9 Academy. Thank you so much for having us.

10 We are just here to rescind the waiver 6-17-2403  
11 to comply with the LEARNS Act.

12 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Panel Members, do you have  
13 any questions?

14 I'll accept a motion.

15 MS. SARACINI: I make the motion to -- to move  
16 --

17 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: To rescind.

18 MS. SARACINI: -- to rescind. Okay.

19 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Second?

20 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I'll second.

21 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: We have a motion from Ms.  
22 Saracini and a second from Dr. Wright-McMurray to  
23 approve the request to rescind the waiver of 6-17-  
24 2403 for LISA Academy. All those in favor?

25 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)



1 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Any opposed?

2 Motion passes.

3 Mr. Baldwin.

4 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I support the waiver request  
5 to comply with the Arkansas LEARNS Act.

6 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Dr. Wright-McMurray.

7 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I support the request to  
8 rescind the salary waiver to comply with the LEARNS  
9 Act.

10 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Saracini.

11 MS. SARACINI: I support the waiver request to  
12 comply with the LEARNS Act on teacher salary.

13 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. Davis.

14 MR. DAVIS: I support the request in order to  
15 comply with the LEARNS Act.

16 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you so much.  
17 Congratulations.

18 If you missed the STEM --

19 MS. RATERMANN: Festival.

20 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: -- Festival it was amazing.

21 MS. SARACINI: As always.

22 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: It was just awesome. So if  
23 you missed it, come back next year.

24 16) eSTEM PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

25 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. Number 16, Ms.

1 Summons.

2 MS. SUMMONS: Next, we have eStem and they're  
3 requesting to rescind their waiver of the Minimum  
4 Teacher Salary Compensation Schedule. It looks like  
5 we have some representatives from eStem on the Zoom.

6 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Is Mr. Millhollen available?

7 MR. MILLHOLLEN: Yes.

8 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: I see his office. Oh, there  
9 you are. Okay. All right. If you'll raise your  
10 right hand, both of you -- thank you. Let me get to  
11 my sheet. Do you swear or affirm that the testimony  
12 you're about to give shall be the truth, the whole  
13 truth, and nothing but the truth?

14 (BOTH REPRESENTATIVES ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

15 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you. You're  
16 recognized.

17 MS. MILLER: Hi. I'm Angie Miller; I'm the CFO  
18 for eStem Charter Schools. And we are requesting to  
19 rescind our waiver on the Minimum Teacher Salary so  
20 that we can comply with the LEARNS Act and receive  
21 the associated funding.

22 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. Charter Panel  
23 Members, any questions?

24 Hearing none, I'll accept a motion.

25 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I move approval of the

1 request to rescind the waiver.

2 MS. SARACINI: Second.

3 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: I have a motion from Dr.  
4 Wright-McMurray and a second from Ms. Saracini -- I  
5 stopped being able to spell your name -- to approve  
6 the request to rescind the waiver of 6-17-2403 for  
7 eStem Public Charter Schools. All those in favor?

8 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

9 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Any opposed?  
10 Motion passes.

11 MS. MILLER: Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. Baldwin.

13 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I support the waiver request  
14 in order to comply with the Arkansas LEARNS Act.

15 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Dr. Wright-McMurray.

16 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I support the request to  
17 rescind the salary waiver to comply with the LEARNS  
18 Act.

19 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Saracini.

20 MS. SARACINI: I support the waiver request to  
21 comply with the LEARNS Act on teacher salary  
22 schedules.

23 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. Davis.

24 MR. DAVIS: I support the request in order to  
25 comply with the LEARNS Act.

1                   CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. Congratulations,  
2                   Mr. Millhollen.

3                   ADJOURNMENT

4                   CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. That brings us to  
5                   the end of the agenda. Is there any other business  
6                   before this panel today?

7                   If not, I'll accept a motion to adjourn.

8                   MS. SARACINI: I make a motion to adjourn.

9                   DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Second.

10                  CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: I have a motion from Ms.  
11                  Saracini and a second from Dr. Wright-McMurray to  
12                  adjourn. All those in favor?

13                  (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

14                  CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Any opposed?

15                  Motion passes.

16                  Thank you, everyone.

17

18

19

20                  (The meeting was concluded at 1:54 p.m.)

21

22

23

24

25

C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF ARKANSAS )  
 ) ss.  
COUNTY OF SALINE )

I, SHARON K. HILL, CCR, a Certified Stenomask Reporter and Notary Public before whom the foregoing proceedings was taken, do hereby certify that the same is a true and correct transcription before the Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, Charter Authorizing Panel, in Little Rock, Arkansas, on May 19, 2023; that the said proceedings was reduced to typewritten form by me or under my direction and supervision; and that the foregoing pages constitute a true and correct transcription of all proceedings had in said matter.

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

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

WITNESS, MY HAND AND SEAL, THIS DATE: May 21, 2023.

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

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