

CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL

AUGUST 13, 2024
9:02 A.M.

A P P E A R A N C E S

PANEL MEMBERS:

DR. MATTHEW SUTHERLIN, Chairperson - Coordinator of
Standards Systems Support and Charter
MR. PHIL BALDWIN, Retired Bank Executive
MR. FREDDIE SCOTT - Family and Community Engagement, School
Choice and Parent Empowerment
DR. TINA MOORE, ADHE - Director of Workforce Development
MR. KIM DAVIS, Walton Family Foundation - Senior Advisor
MS. TOYCE NEWTON, Former State Board of Education Member
DR. SONJA WRIGHT-McMURRAY, Associate Director -
Division of Career and Technical Education

NON-VOTING PARTICIPANTS:

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

LOCATION:

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

I N D E X

	Page
Call to Order	3
Consent Agenda	3
Action Agenda	6
1. Consideration of Garfield Scholars' Academy's Amendment Request	6
Adjournment	52
Court Reporter's Certificate	53

P R O C E E D I N G S

I. CALL TO ORDER

CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Good morning. The August 13, 2024 meeting of the Charter Authorizing Panel is called to order. I'd like to welcome everyone to the Department of Education and ask that you all please silence your electronic devices.

The goal is to facilitate a fair and responsible hearing, so therefore I ask that each person speaking please state your name and title for the record. I ask that you continue to speak clearly in the microphone throughout presentation for the benefit of the Panel, this audience, and the viewing audience.

This meeting is being live-streamed and recorded and the minutes of the meeting will be posted on the DESE website.

Good morning, everyone. And good morning to our Panel Members. Thank you for being here today.

II. CONSENT AGENDA

CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: We have our consent agenda before you today. If there are no questions, then I'll accept a motion to pass the consent agenda.

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

CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay. I have a motion. Do I have a second?

1 MR. SCOTT: Second.

2 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right. All those in
3 favor?

4 (CHORUS OF AYES)

5 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: I don't think we could hear
6 online yet. Let's see.

7 Do we have sound working online now?

8 MS. SUMMONS: It should be.

9 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay. All those in
10 favor?

11 (CHORUS OF AYES)

12 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Mr. Baldwin, can you hear
13 us?

14 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

15 MR. DAVIS: Good morning, folks. Can you hear
16 me?

17 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yes.

18 MR. DAVIS: Okay. Go ahead. I just wanted to
19 make sure we could hear each other. And I am not
20 sure if the folks in Little Rock are working -- still
21 working on it. I wasn't sure if they could hear us.

22 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yes. We can hear you loud
23 and clear.

24 MS. NEWTON: It's still -- my reception is a
25 little choppy, like it started last time.

1 MR. DAVIS: And you are coming through loud and
2 clear on my end.

3 MS. NEWTON: Okay. Well, good.

4 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Test. Can you all hear us
5 now?

6 (CHORUS OF YESES)

7 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay.

8 MR. DAVIS: I can hear you now.

9 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay. So we had a consent
10 agenda that was before us today, and we had a motion
11 and a second to approve. All those in favor?

12 MS. NEWTON: Sorry to interrupt. Again, I'm
13 having some problems with the -- you know, sometimes
14 I can hear one word, and it skips three or four.

15 MR. DAVIS: Yeah. It sounds a little muffled.

16 MR. BALDWIN: Yeah. Muffled and garbled.

17 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Testing. Is that any
18 better?

19 MR. BALDWIN: That was better.

20 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay.

21 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Yes.

22 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So I said -- what I had
23 just said was that we have a consent agenda item
24 before us today. We have a motion and a second to
25 approve. And I said all those in favor?

1 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

2 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right. Aye. The
3 motion passes.

4 **III. ACTION AGENDA**

5 **III.1. CONSIDERATION OF GARFIELD SCHOLARS' ACADEMY'S AMENDMENT**
6 **REQUEST**

7 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right. We're going to
8 move on to our first item. Mr. Reynolds, would you
9 come forward to review the procedures?

10 MR. REYNOLDS: Good morning.

11 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Good morning.

12 MR. REYNOLDS: Oh, boy, this is a hot mic.

13 All right. Stephen Reynolds, Staff Attorney
14 with the Department.

15 Dr. Sutherlin, you'll want to swear in everybody
16 that will be giving testimony, except for attorneys.
17 The applicants will have 20 minutes to present. To
18 my knowledge, there's no opposition for any of the
19 applicants on the agenda.

20 A reminder: all parties, please state your name
21 before you speak, even if you've talked before us, so
22 that we can have a clear record.

23 Any community members or community partners that
24 are here to speak on behalf of the applicant will
25 need to speak during the 20 minutes. Any elected

1 officials that are here can speak before the hearing,
2 during the 20 minutes, or at the conclusion of all
3 testimony. That's up to the official and the
4 applicant, how they want to move forward.

5 Following the charter's presentations, I'll go
6 through legal concerns and waivers, if any. Then you
7 guys can address any remaining concerns outside of
8 legal or ask any other questions.

9 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you.

10 Will all those who are going to speak on behalf
11 of the charter please stand and raise your right
12 hand? Do you swear that the testimony you're about
13 to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing
14 but the truth?

15 DR. KENNON: I do.

16 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right. You may begin.

17 DR. KENNON: Good morning.

18 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Good morning.

19 DR. KENNON: My name is Dr. Melanie Kennon. I'm
20 with Garfield Scholars' Academy. And we are seeking
21 a waiver to -- for a staff member serving as the
22 counselor without state licensure at the current
23 time. Our rationale for that is we have been looking
24 diligently for someone who is fully licensed in our
25 area that will work part-time. We are a small

1 charter, brand-new, first year. So we are not able
2 to hire someone full time, but we would like to have
3 someone three days a week at least.

4 MR. DAVIS: I'm sorry. Can we -- can we stop
5 just for -- I'm sorry to interrupt. My apologies. I
6 don't know about others, but, once again, it's still
7 sounding very muffled. And I just want to make sure
8 that we're in a little bit of a better position.

9 To all of my committee members that are on Zoom,
10 is that -- am I the only one or are you having --

11 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: No, it's the same for me.
12 I was trying to find my Raise Your Hand button, but I
13 couldn't find it to say I couldn't hear very well.

14 MR. BALDWIN: Yeah. For me, I couldn't even
15 understand what was being said at all. So --

16 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: I believe we're going to
17 work on that for just a minute. So we'll pause for
18 just a minute.

19 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

20 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Test. Test. Test. Is
21 that any better? No?

22 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Yes. So it's fine when
23 you do the test the first time or even when folks
24 start having the full conversation it starts to get a
25 little garbled.

1 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. And even -- even on the test
2 it's coming in -- you know, on a scale of ten you're
3 about a 3 of 4 on volume. And then -- and then when
4 people start talking it does get garbled. Some of
5 the words run together.

6 MR. REYNOLDS: Can you guys hear this pretty
7 clear?

8 MR. BALDWIN: Yes.

9 MR. REYNOLDS: So there's no problems with this
10 mic?

11 MR. DAVIS: That's better, but it's not, you
12 know --

13 MR. REYNOLDS: Okay.

14 MR. DAVIS: It's better. I can -- I can
15 understand when you say that; obviously, I'm
16 answering your question. But it's not ideal.

17 MR. BALDWIN: Yeah, it's not -- not good.

18 MS. MUNDELL: The only thing I can think of is
19 to restart the Zoom.

20 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So --

21 MS. MUNDELL: That's the only thing I can think
22 of. We've gone to settings and --

23 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Let's -- let's see if we
24 can go out and come back in and see if maybe that --
25 because they changed settings since we started the

1 meeting. So let's -- let's see if we can go out of
2 the Zoom and then come back in and see if that helps.

3 MS. MUNDELL: (inaudible, not at the mic)

4 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Uh-huh.

5 MS. MUNDELL: (inaudible, not at the mic)

6 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yeah.

7 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

8 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Test. Is that any better?
9 Testing. Testing. No?

10 MR. BALDWIN: Not by much. Can you all hear us
11 okay?

12 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yes. You're crystal clear.
13 But, you know, we want to make sure that you can hear
14 us on our end.

15 MR. BALDWIN: Yeah. We can't -- we can't
16 understand you.

17 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yeah.

18 Yeah. No. Unless somebody does that I'm not
19 aware of. But you've got your mic turned off; right,
20 Freddie?

21 MR. SCOTT: Yes.

22 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: And I'm not even joining
23 the audio, so --

24 DR. MOORE: Yeah. My light is off, and my sound
25 is off.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yeah.

(UNKNOWN SPEAKER): Let's do another test.

CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Test. Test. Is that any better?

MR. BALDWIN: Just marginal, maybe.

MR. SCOTT: Test. Test. How about this mic? Can you hear me?

CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Nothing. So, no.

MR. SCOTT: Test. Test. Test. Test. Test. Can you hear me?

CHAIR SUTHERLIN: Would it help if we turned on captions? You can do that by clicking More at the bottom of the screen and then turning on Captions. That might -- might help with some of the audio issue and I think they could hear it.

MS. MUNDELL: Matthew, Dan is going to come take a look at it, but we don't really know what the problem is.

CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay. If you'd like to take a seat --

DR. KENNON: Okay.

CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yeah, I hate for you to have to keep standing there.

(A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Test. Test.

1 MS. SUMMONS: Can you hear me?

2 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yes.

3 MS. SUMMONS: Can you hear me?

4 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yes.

5 Can -- can anybody --

6 MR. BALDWIN: I can hear you.

7 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay. Is it clear?

8 MS. SUMMONS: Can you hear me?

9 MR. BALDWIN: Yes.

10 (UNKNOWN SPEAKER): Is it clear? Does it sound
11 clear or garbled?

12 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Is it clearer?

13 (UNKNOWN SPEAKER): He said no.

14 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: It's not going to be
15 clearer through here.

16 Yeah. I don't know.

17 Testing. Testing. One, two, three. Testing,
18 one, two --

19 MR. DAN DAVIS: (inaudible)

20 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yeah. So far, yes.

21 So is everyone on here -- does it sound choppy
22 for everyone?

23 MR. DAVIS: It's more muffled.

24 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Muffled, they said.

25 MR. DAVIS: Yeah. It sounds as if, you know,

1 you have your hand over your mouth.

2 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Is it -- is it --

3 MR. DAVIS: Like I can hear you, but muffled is
4 -- is more what we're hearing. I mean I can -- I can
5 understand, but as the conversation speeds up or goes
6 back and forth it really gets muffled and can't
7 understand anything at that point.

8 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yeah.

9 MR. SCOTT: Is that the same case with this mic?
10 Can anyone hear me on the other side, on Zoom?

11 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: See, when they talk the
12 captions are fine. When we talk it's a different --
13 different word.

14 MR. DAN DAVIS: If I'm standing here talking
15 like this, are y'all able to hear me properly?

16 MR. BALDWIN: That was much better.

17 MR. DAN DAVIS: So if we talk a little bit
18 louder and we actually pick up or maybe we get closer
19 to the microphone we're picking up real good. And if
20 we're not talking five feet away from a microphone
21 and we get a little bit closer, then we're doing
22 better. Or is it as in a choppy -- when you're
23 saying choppy, is it that it's dropping the
24 connection completely and you're not able to get out
25 at all?

1 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: When you're close to the
2 mic, like you -- when you walked up, then it was very
3 clear. But then when you started to back up, then it
4 got back to where --

5 MR. DAN DAVIS: So we're back to the -- you're
6 hearing me nice and clear right now with me standing
7 here addressing everybody and continuing talking and
8 just saying things at random as I'm going through
9 talking, testing the microphone? Because -- but
10 then, if I start moving back, to where I start using
11 my hands and just addressing people inside --

12 MR. BALDWIN: I would say -- let me jump in. I
13 would say that when you were just talking -- when you
14 aggressively project your voice, we can hear you.
15 But if you were even close to the mic talking just
16 then it became where we couldn't hear you.

17 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I would have to agree that
18 it's -- you can hear but it starts to get where it's
19 kind of that muffled --

20 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So, what if --

21 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- sound.

22 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: What if I start talking,
23 can you hear me if I start talking?

24 MR. BALDWIN: We hear you now. But when you --
25 when you don't -- you know, basically, I think you

1 have to have your mouth on the microphone and be
2 strongly projecting into it. Because when you get
3 into a conversation, people start to get comfortable
4 and it fades.

5 MR. DAN DAVIS: Our continuous long-term thing
6 of "get close to the microphone, speak clearly, speak
7 with directness," use those teacher voices that -- I
8 would tell the State Board members all the time to
9 use their teacher voice, not the grandma voice. That
10 always makes a difference when we're talking and
11 using these microphones. Think if you've got a less
12 than a 30-degree angle coming off that microphone.
13 If you get outside of that 30-degree angle, you -- I
14 mean you hear --

15 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yeah.

16 MR. DAN DAVIS: -- the difference now. Y'all
17 are hearing me perfectly, even though I'm still --
18 I'm no closer or further away from the microphone;
19 it's just the difference of the angle that I'm at.

20 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So stay right on top of it.

21 MR. SCOTT: So I'm going to try to -- can you
22 hear me now, as we test the other mics?

23 MR. BALDWIN: No.

24 MR. SCOTT: What about now?

25 MR. BALDWIN: That -- that was better.

1 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: You'll have to pull it
2 right up to your face.

3 MR. SCOTT: So, can you hear me now?

4 MR. DAN DAVIS: (inaudible)

5 MR. SCOTT: Can you hear me now in my teacher
6 voice?

7 MR. BALDWIN: Let me just say nothing is really
8 ever really good. So when we say we're hearing you,
9 we're struggling to hear you, even at the best of
10 times.

11 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So even when we're right up
12 on the mic you're still struggling to hear?

13 MR. BALDWIN: That was actually really good,
14 right then.

15 MR. DAN DAVIS: Those are the different --

16 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I think what -- so when we
17 have very basic sentence conversations, like "Can you
18 hear me now" or "If I'm right on the mic," then it's
19 very clear. But then when it starts to get
20 conversational or in presentation mode that's when it
21 starts to get a little muddled. Because I think
22 there's --

23 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yeah.

24 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: It's intentional on how
25 you're speaking into the microphone. But I will say

1 as a Panel Member I am never sympathetic to those on
2 Zoom, and I will do a better job in the future
3 because the struggle is real and I'm trying to get
4 through this session.

5 MR. BALDWIN: And I would say, as someone that
6 has been on Zoom a bit, that this is unusual.
7 Normally, the sound is fine. So there's something
8 within the system that's causing this issue. It's
9 not just the fact that you guys aren't speaking into
10 the microphones, because I think you're probably
11 doing it just like you normally do. But there's
12 something else that's causing this issue.

13 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

14 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: If we're very intentional
15 with our words the whole time, will you be able to
16 hear us enough? I know that it will be difficult in
17 terms of conversational pieces, but we'll try and be
18 as intentional as possible. Will that work?

19 MR. BALDWIN: Yeah. For me, we can try it. But
20 I'm not -- I'm not comfortable it's going to work.

21 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yeah.

22 MR. BALDWIN: Even -- even in the conversation
23 you just had with us, it mumbled out there in parts
24 of it. But --

25 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay.

1 MR. BALDWIN: -- I'm open to trying. If we
2 can't -- if we can't understand, we'll just let you
3 know that.

4 MR. DAN DAVIS: For those that are watching
5 live-stream itself --

6 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yeah. I don't know.

7 MR. DAVIS: Yeah. I think intentionally slow
8 might be the best approach, if we can't work this
9 out.

10 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: The other thing, and I
11 mentioned this earlier, is we could turn on captions.

12 MR. DAVIS: That would be helpful.

13 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So I know that you can turn
14 on captions individually by hitting the More button
15 at the bottom.

16 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

17 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Testing, one, two, three.

18 Testing, one, two, three.

19 Is that better?

20 MR. BALDWIN: That's a lot better.

21 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay. Good.

22 Mr. Scott, you want to test yours?

23 MR. SCOTT: Testing, one, two, three, four.

24 MR. BALDWIN: That's also a lot better.

25 MR. SCOTT: Excellent.

1 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Dr. Moore, do you want to
2 test your mic real quick?

3 DR. MOORE: Testing, one, two, three.

4 MR. BALDWIN: Good.

5 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay. And then let's test
6 the main mic over here.

7 MR. REYNOLDS: Testing, one, two, three.
8 Testing, one, two, three.

9 MR. BALDWIN: Yes.

10 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right. If you are
11 ready, we can resume. Thank you.

12 DR. KENNON: Good morning.

13 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Good morning.

14 DR. KENNON: Okay. I'll start again. My name
15 is Melanie Kennon. I am with Garfield Scholars'
16 Academy, in Garfield, Arkansas, a new charter,
17 kindergarten through 5th grade.

18 We are seeking today a request for a waiver for
19 a certified school counselor to a non-certified
20 position with a degree in the area of emphasis. We
21 have a plan to include local agencies with access to
22 mental, as well as physical healthcare, and to
23 support our students until we can find a candidate
24 that is fully certified, fully licensed. We are --
25 we have looked and looked for a counselor. We have

1 also interviewed several. And our problem in this
2 area of the state is that most want to have a
3 full-time position. As a small charter school, we
4 are unable to support the salary for a full-time
5 position, but have allocated funds for a part-time,
6 three-day-a-week counselor position. We have some
7 good candidates that maybe lack just like taking
8 their counseling test, and so we just wanted to make
9 sure that we were covered in terms of a waiver until
10 we can get a qualified person in there. We continue
11 to search for that.

12 We -- our support system that we have in place
13 constitutes the schoolwide counseling plan, which
14 will be carried out by all the teachers and staff, as
15 well as time allocated for the counselor to be able
16 to implement that school counseling plan. The plan
17 is written and it is before our foundation board for
18 approval within the next week. We have our director,
19 who is trained in suicide and threat assessment, as
20 will be the counselor candidate that we hire. We
21 have a -- our special ed. teacher is also trained in
22 PCM, Professional Crisis Management. So we feel like
23 we've got a good support system in place for whoever
24 we find. And so that -- that's why we are looking
25 for someone who has the knowledge base but maybe

1 lacks a small piece, like to take for the counseling
2 test or whatever.

3 Okay, so -- okay.

4 And so the waiver we're requesting is just one
5 for licensure so that we are able to go forward with
6 a staff member. As I said, fully licensed school
7 counselors are very difficult to find in this area
8 that will work on a less than full-time basis. All
9 the teachers and staff, as I said, would follow the
10 school's comprehensive school counseling plan. And
11 there are a great many mental health and counseling
12 referral resources in northwest Arkansas that we can
13 access for student support and have been in
14 discussions with several up in that area of the state
15 to provide any emergency kinds of support to us for
16 our children and families.

17 So our ideal candidate would have the bachelor's
18 or higher degree in a field related to school
19 counseling, i.e., psychology, and be actively working
20 toward licensure and certification in school
21 counseling. They will be trained in school threat
22 assessment protocols necessary to identify and
23 respond to bullying, suicide, and threat to others,
24 and, of course, complete the required background
25 check.

1 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

2 DR. KENNON: Uh-huh.

3 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Before we get too deep into
4 the weeds, I do have some licensure questions just
5 because that -- those things could possibly resolve
6 the need for the waiver.

7 DR. KENNON: Ah. Okay.

8 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: And so the first question
9 would be in terms of your candidates that you're
10 looking at, do you have anybody that's a licensed
11 teacher?

12 DR. KENNON: Yes, I do.

13 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So for that individual they
14 could be placed on an ALP. An ALP is an Additional
15 Licensure Plan. So if they are working towards
16 school counseling, they -- you wouldn't need a
17 waiver; you could actually just utilize the ALP.

18 DR. KENNON: The ALP. Okay. We have a
19 candidate that we would like to hire who has 17 years
20 in the classroom, has an advanced degree in
21 psychology. And the only piece that she is lacking
22 is taking the school counseling test and she has
23 plans to do that within 90 days.

24 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: And is she licensed --

25 DR. KENNON: Yes.

1 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: -- like as a teacher?

2 DR. KENNON: Yes.

3 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So, technically, you
4 wouldn't need the waiver. You could actually have
5 her on an ALP --

6 DR. KENNON: Okay.

7 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: -- and then --

8 DR. KENNON: And that would be sufficient?

9 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: And that would be
10 sufficient.

11 DR. KENNON: Okay.

12 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Because if she's -- if she
13 has gone through a program of study --

14 DR. KENNON: Uh-huh.

15 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: -- and then she's taking
16 the exam, then the ALP would take care of that.

17 DR. KENNON: Okay.

18 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So there would be no need
19 for the waiver.

20 DR. KENNON: Okay. Sounds great.

21 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yeah.

22 DR. KENNON: Okay.

23 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So, I mean, really and
24 truly, if that's the person that you're planning on
25 hiring --

1 DR. KENNON: Uh-huh.

2 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: -- you need to put in for
3 the ALP.

4 DR. KENNON: Okay.

5 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: And she's completed a
6 program of study or she's enrolled in a program of
7 study?

8 DR. KENNON: She's completed it.

9 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: And that is for school
10 counseling?

11 DR. KENNON: Yes.

12 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay. And then the ALP
13 would allow her to then -- to do that.

14 DR. KENNON: Okay.

15 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yeah. That's if -- if that
16 person is going to be hired.

17 DR. KENNON: Okay.

18 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So --

19 DR. KENNON: That sounds -- sounds wonderful.
20 Should that fall through -- we haven't offered her
21 the position --

22 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Right.

23 DR. KENNON: -- yet. I'm wondering if we don't
24 need to go ahead and --

25 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So then --

1 DR. KENNON: -- look at the waiver, rather than
2 sooner than later.

3 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Well, and then my second
4 question is because you're -- you're looking at
5 services that would not be necessarily full time you
6 could go the long-term sub route, as well.

7 DR. KENNON: Oh, okay.

8 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Which means that they would
9 -- it would be a long-term sub that could be granted
10 for one year. And then, you know, during that time
11 you would have time to then find someone who could
12 then become your counselor.

13 DR. KENNON: Okay.

14 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So those two routes are --

15 DR. KENNON: Okay.

16 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: -- possibilities.

17 DR. KENNON: Okay. Wonderful.

18 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yeah.

19 DR. KENNON: Okay. Thank you for your time --

20 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yeah.

21 DR. KENNON: -- this morning.

22 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yeah. So I guess the
23 question then becomes -- and I need -- I need to
24 actually have the legal review and Mr. Reynolds come
25 up -- she would need to make a decision, correct, on

1 whether or not she wants to pull her request for this
2 waiver?

3 MR. REYNOLDS: That's correct.

4 And I wanted to add something additional. So I just
5 looked at the charter's enrollment cap, and their
6 enrollment cap is 340. The waiver requested for
7 Standard 4-E.2 is for the student -- school counselor
8 or student ratio, which is a 1 to 450. So they
9 wouldn't need that waiver anyway because they're not
10 going to --

11 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yeah.

12 MR. REYNOLDS: -- exceed that ratio.
13 But, yes, the charter would need to ask to rescind
14 their waiver request, if that's what they --

15 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yeah.

16 MR. REYNOLDS: -- want to do.

17 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yeah. Or, if they choose
18 to move forward, we can continue on. It's just --

19 MR. REYNOLDS: That's right.

20 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: -- we need to have that on
21 the record.

22 MR. REYNOLDS: That's right.

23 DR. KENNON: Okay. I think we have decided to
24 rescind our request for a waiver at this time.

25 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay. All right. And if

1 you will, you can work with my office to work through
2 the licensure exceptions and I can get with you after
3 the meeting to --

4 DR. KENNON: Certainly.

5 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: -- get your contact
6 information.

7 DR. KENNON: Thank you so much.

8 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right.

9 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Is there any new business?

10 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right. If there's no
11 new business, I will accept a motion to adjourn.

12 MR. DAVIS: Can we --

13 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yes.

14 MR. DAVIS: I'm not sure if this is the
15 appropriate time, because it's not necessarily new
16 business. But I do want to at some point for us to
17 kind of have a conversation just about this meeting
18 this morning, in regards to -- obviously, a couple of
19 things. You know, we're still having mic issues on
20 this end. It sounds as if there were a couple of
21 avenues that could've been taken that will give the
22 school what they need.

23 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Correct.

24 MR. DAVIS: So I'd be interested in hearing just
25 a little bit more about, you know, how did it even

1 get to the point where they're in front of us when
2 there are other avenues they could've taken and why
3 -- why weren't they sort of communicating to the dis-
4 -- to the school at that point. I mean I think that
5 there's -- there's just a lot of learning that we
6 have from this meeting this morning.

7 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yes.

8 MR. DAVIS: Sorry, Mr. Baldwin, I cut you off.
9 I saw you came up and --

10 MR. BALDWIN: No. I think you have raised the
11 point that was on my mind also.

12 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yes. And I think that --

13 DR. MOORE: Uh, I --

14 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Go ahead, Dr. Moore.

15 DR. MOORE: Sorry. I have a question as well.
16 Can you hear me?

17 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yes.

18 DR. MOORE: Okay. Is it not an issue the point
19 of the counselor only being there part-time? Is that
20 something that doesn't require a waiver? Is that
21 just allowed in Arkansas law or --

22 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: It --

23 DR. MOORE: -- counselor to only be part-time?

24 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: It would need to be
25 full-time though, in terms of -- I mean looking at

1 the ALP.

2 DR. MOORE: I'm sorry. It's really hard to
3 understand.

4 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So the ALP would -- the ALP
5 would require that the counselor be full-time.

6 DR. MOORE: Okay. Okay. So that's what I was
7 wondering. So -- because I didn't hear that being
8 addressed. So with the ALP you're saying that it
9 would be full-time, not a part-time person. Okay.

10 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So is it --

11 DR. MOORE: Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Is it going to be full
13 time?

14 DR. KENNON: No.

15 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: It will not be full time.
16 So --

17 DR. KENNON: No.

18 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: -- we would need the waiver
19 for the full-time piece.

20 DR. MOORE: Okay. That's what I thought.
21 That's what I --

22 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yes.

23 DR. MOORE: -- was wanting to check. Thank you.

24 DR. KENNON: Right. No. We --

25 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Because you're going to

1 flag in standards, otherwise.

2 DR. KENNON: Right. We are -- what about a
3 long -- the long-term sub position? It has to be
4 Full time?

5 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: It has to be full time.

6 DR. KENNON: As I said, our budget does not
7 command enough to pay a full-time position. So our
8 counselor will be there three days a week and on-call
9 for emergencies.

10 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay.

11 DR. KENNON: So, I guess, we do need the waiver
12 then.

13 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So then we're not
14 rescinding the waiver?

15 DR. KENNON: I'm not rescinding the waiver.

16 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay.

17 DR. KENNON: If those have to be full-time --

18 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay.

19 DR. KENNON: -- positions, we -- we're unable to
20 do that.

21 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay. So then we need to
22 move forward with questions then.

23 So, Mr. Scott.

24 MR. SCOTT: Thank you for clarifying that. And
25 I also appreciate out the gate, first year. I

1 certainly understand there are challenges.

2 DR. KENNON: Yes.

3 MR. SCOTT: On behalf of the children that
4 you're serving, I understand operationally the
5 difference between full time -- well, to the budget.
6 But you also mentioned that one way to get around
7 that, with a part-time person, was to access to
8 certain agencies --

9 DR. KENNON: Uh-huh.

10 MR. SCOTT: -- that provide those services. Do
11 you have an agreement today that speaks to what that
12 arrangement is like, what kind of contract it will
13 be, is it a full time?

14 DR. KENNON: I do not have an agreement. We're
15 in discussions with Living Well and some other
16 agencies that are up there. Pediatrics Plus is up
17 there. There are -- you know, we've contacted, but,
18 unfortunately, the public does not always move as
19 quickly as you need them to, in terms of getting
20 things lined out. What we envision is that if we
21 have -- if we have a situation that has been
22 identified as a critical situation with a student or
23 their family that we would be able to refer our
24 students and their families to those people, and they
25 perhaps come to the school to do some onsite

1 counseling services. That's -- we -- we've set aside
2 some money in the budget for that. And so we -- we
3 are trying to utilize all of our resources to support
4 those students and their families.

5 MR. SCOTT: Okay. Well, thank you. You spoke
6 to the sensitivity around the budget. Ultimately, I
7 think that approach of having a parttime counselor
8 and engaging an agency will impact your overall
9 budget. So --

10 DR. KENNON: Uh-huh.

11 MR. SCOTT: -- I don't know if you have a
12 revised budget on-hand that would support those
13 students being served on -- for the full week, right,
14 or for the full time, based upon that plan of action?

15 DR. KENNON: I do not, because they have not
16 gotten back with pricing to me, the -- the agencies.

17 MR. SCOTT: Do you know if that -- as you have
18 that dial-up with those agencies --

19 DR. KENNON: Uh-huh.

20 MR. SCOTT: -- if they'll present you what's
21 considered a fixed price deal or an hourly or -- in
22 other words, the type of contract to help you?

23 DR. KENNON: Typically, that -- yes. In most
24 cases, we're dealing with, for various agencies, \$85
25 to \$125 an hour, which, you know, we have \$6,000.

1 We can probably allocate a little bit more to cover
2 that but if -- if it's -- need be. But we're not
3 really anticipating the need for those. I know they
4 said that the cap was 340. At this moment we've --
5 the last enrollment information I got we have about
6 98 students, kindergarten through 5th grade. So, you
7 know -- as you know, budgets are fluid things.
8 They're -- they -- they grow and -- and change on a
9 daily basis, based on your needs of your students and
10 -- and the things that you're trying to get up and
11 going with. So I don't have a completed -- I just
12 know that -- a completed budget, but I do know that
13 we have a certain amount of money set aside right now
14 and there are plans to set more aside --

15 MR. SCOTT: Okay.

16 DR. KENNON: -- from other categories, if we
17 need to.

18 MR. SCOTT: I guess my questioning was the plan
19 -- the go-forward plan to support the services for
20 the children you're serving.

21 DR. KENNON: Uh-huh.

22 MR. SCOTT: And then also to take into
23 consideration the role that the counselor will play,
24 in particular as you move forward in the grade
25 levels, your student success plans --

1 DR. KENNON: Uh-huh.

2 MR. SCOTT: -- that will involve a counselor in
3 conjunction with the family and the students.

4 DR. KENNON: Sure. Every student -- and this
5 was part of our original plan as well. Every student
6 will have a -- an individual student plan, both for
7 academics and any other kinds of growth areas that
8 they may need, whether that be emotional growth or
9 social skills or whatever. Those will be identified
10 by the teachers, and the teacher and the counselor
11 candidate that we have will work together to make
12 sure that those students are successful in those
13 student plans going forward. So we feel -- we've set
14 -- we will be setting time aside to -- for the
15 counselor to be able to implement those plans and to
16 be -- to coordinate those plans with the teachers, as
17 well. We are so small that it is an
18 all-hands-on-deck kind of thing for us, and our
19 teachers know that they are a critical part. And we
20 have all licensed teachers that we've hired. And we
21 know that they will have a critical part in support
22 of the students, as well. So it's not just a
23 counselor's job, but it's everybody who's there --
24 teachers and staff.

25 MR. SCOTT: Okay. Lastly, your current

1 enrollment?

2 DR. KENNON: My last enrollment numbers were at
3 -- we were at 98 students. I have -- we are seeing
4 people walk in every day. We had a 5th grader sign
5 up yesterday. So we're still in the process --
6 that's still fluid. But we're -- we're hovering
7 right around 100 students.

8 MR. SCOTT: Okay. Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Dr. Wright-McMurray, you
10 had your hand up.

11 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Sorry. Yeah. So one of
12 my questions is looking at the -- the language of the
13 waiver request. It doesn't seem as if that -- it was
14 requesting to have a half-time. I'm trying -- I'm
15 trying to make sure I understand correctly what the
16 request for the waiver is.

17 I'm trying to get back down. Sorry.

18 Because as I read the waiver it's just stating
19 that they're wanting to go toward a non-certified
20 person. But it seems also that they're wanting a
21 non-certified person who is only going to work
22 part-time. So I guess I'm just trying to make sure
23 that the waiver request as it's written is reflective
24 of what they're asking us for.

25 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So, Mr. Reynolds, would you

1 -- would you mind stepping up to the podium to
2 discuss that?

3 MR. REYNOLDS: Stephen Reynolds, Staff Attorney
4 for the Department.

5 I think that's right, Dr. Wright-McMurray. When
6 I was looking at -- I was doing some research, quick
7 research. It looks to me like the waiver request
8 should be -- instead of standard 4-E.1 and 4-E.2 that
9 it should be 4-E.3, which is the allowing sufficient
10 time for each school counselor to carry on the
11 duties.

12 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Uh-huh.

13 MR. REYNOLDS: So we can clean that up on the
14 record. If the charter will make their request to
15 rescind -- to amend their request from standards
16 4-E.1 and 4-E.2 to 4-E.3, I think that will clean it
17 up.

18 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So, essentially, what --
19 what he's saying is that the -- the standard really
20 should be 4-E.3, because it's sufficient time to
21 carry out the duties of the counselor, because --

22 DR. KENNON: Okay. I'm not sure that I'm
23 understanding. Because, see, the 4-E-.1 was what we
24 were looking at, a waiver for full licensure --

25 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Which is --

1 DR. KENNON: -- for that position.

2 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: And -- and that's what we
3 could've taken care of with the ALP or the LPS. But
4 the -- the issue is the not being full time, not
5 having enough time.

6 DR. KENNON: Gotcha. So do we need 1 and 3?

7 MR. REYNOLDS: Yes.

8 DR. KENNON: Okay.

9 MR. REYNOLDS: That was an error on my part.
10 Yes. The waiver -- the waiver request should be for
11 standards 4-E.1 for the licensure component, and
12 4-E.3 for the half-time school counselor component.

13 MR. WALTER: Good morning. Tripp Walter, Staff
14 Attorney, Arkansas Public School Resource Center.

15 So to speak for the non-education part of this
16 -- and I agree with what Mr. Reynolds and the Chair
17 have said. But even if the board -- Panel, rather --
18 chooses to grant the waivers, I don't know -- I think
19 -- I don't know if Dr. Kennon has directly addressed
20 it, but she has assured me that the person that's
21 hired will have sufficient time to implement the
22 comprehensive school counseling plan laid out in the
23 statutes and in Act 190.

24 DR. KENNON: Absolutely.

25 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Well, I -- Chairman, I

1 have another question for you.

2 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yes, Dr. Wright-McMurray.

3 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. So I guess my
4 follow-up question to that is that we already realize
5 and understand that a school counselor's time is
6 extremely stretched now, as it is, with a full-time
7 position. So how comfortable are we that, if that
8 position is only half-time, that it will be able to
9 meet the expectations of that role?

10 DR. KENNON: As I said, we are an all-hands-on-
11 deck kind of school and our director has been trained
12 in suicide and threat assessment. We have a special
13 ed. teacher who has the professional crisis
14 management training under his belt. And so we have
15 additional staff who have training, who will be able
16 to assist the counselor. We have -- we are making
17 sure that in the counselor's scheduling that we
18 allocate enough time for her to fully implement the
19 schoolwide counseling plan. And our teachers and
20 staff will be a part of that, as well.

21 Did that answer your question?

22 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Well, it actually gave me
23 another question.

24 You mentioned your special education teacher is
25 also going to have some additional responsibilities,

1 which then that gives me a little bit of pause,
2 because we know our special ed. teachers are
3 extremely loaded as well. So can you just give me a
4 little bit more detail of what their role is going to
5 be in this process of helping to support the work of
6 the school counselor that will only be half-time?

7 DR. KENNON: The special ed. teacher will be
8 there in a -- in terms of crisis management. In
9 other words, if we have an emergency with a student,
10 then we have additional people that have been trained
11 that can assist the counselor if they need to. And
12 as I said, the counselor would be on call so that if
13 we need to call them in -- we're planning for three
14 days a week. If we need to call them in, they --
15 they would be able to handle any emergencies. But I
16 think what I was trying to get across was that we
17 have some assurance that we have some folks that are
18 -- are full time on-staff that will be able to handle
19 anything that might crop up for us, if the counselor
20 is not there.

21 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And so I -- what -- I
22 guess what I hear you saying is that this is your
23 way to address your current situation going into this
24 academic year?

25 DR. KENNON: Yes, ma'am.

1 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: But --

2 DR. KENNON: And we're just asking for one year.

3 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. But you're not
4 intending it to be a continued practice?

5 DR. KENNON: No. No. We are -- as I said, we
6 are -- we've interviewed a person that all she lacks
7 is our -- is taking the counseling test. She's fully
8 qualified and she's a licensed teacher of 17 years,
9 has great experience. And so we are hoping that as
10 our enrollment grows that position in year-two would
11 morph into a full-time position.

12 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: For this specific
13 individual or just whomever would fit the
14 requirements?

15 DR. KENNON: Well, for this individual or
16 whoever we -- you know, if -- if this individual
17 decides not to stay a second year, then whoever we
18 get --

19 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

20 DR. KENNON: Yes. We're -- you know, our plan
21 has always been to have fully licensed folks and, you
22 know, provide them with all the support and training
23 that they need. So --

24 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Well, last question. So
25 just for clarification, this is a result of not being

1 able to find a qualified individual, as well as for
2 this academic year budget concerns that did not allow
3 you to be able to support a full-time position --

4 DR. KENNON: Yes, ma'am.

5 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- and you couldn't pay?
6 The budget concerns will be resolved --

7 DR. KENNON: Yes, ma'am.

8 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- (inaudible).

9 DR. KENNON: Yes. We -- we have interviewed, we
10 have searched on social media, we have called
11 colleges of education to try to find someone coming
12 out of school with -- that's fully licensed. And
13 it's just been very difficult to find someone that
14 would be willing to come and work for what we're able
15 to pay them at this point, in this first year of our
16 charter.

17 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And then as for the budget
18 concerns, you feel like that those will be resolved
19 in year-two?

20 DR. KENNON: Yes, ma'am.

21 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I'll let somebody else ask
22 questions. I know I've asked quite a few. Thank you
23 so much for your time.

24 DR. KENNON: Oh, you're welcome.

25 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Mr. Baldwin?

1 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. So just -- just following up
2 a bit maybe on Dr. Wright-McMurray's questions. Can
3 you hear me okay? Let me ask that first.

4 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yes.

5 MR. BALDWIN: Okay. How many -- how many -- and
6 so going back to the budgeting question, how many
7 students would be a break-even point for you all to
8 hire a counselor? It sounds like you have right at
9 100 students right now. So how many students would
10 you need to have in order to be able to hire the
11 counselor full time?

12 DR. KENNON: 125.

13 MR. BALDWIN: 125. Okay. So that's a
14 reasonable number --

15 DR. KENNON: Uh-huh.

16 MR. BALDWIN: -- to achieve next year, it sounds
17 like to me.

18 In looking at your -- your request for a waiver
19 -- and I -- and I know that you say in the request
20 that it's a temporary request. But I would -- I
21 would like almost to have dates in there, so that we
22 -- so there's no confusion on what temporary means.
23 And so I guess I don't know the right wording for
24 that. But if you're asking for a waiver for the 24-
25 25 school year or -- or maybe -- maybe, for me -- I'm

1 not an educator, so I get somewhat confused even on
2 that. Maybe just put a date that -- that as of May
3 31st, 2025, this waiver will -- would -- would stop
4 to exist. Would that be --

5 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So --

6 MR. BALDWIN: Would that be okay?

7 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: That -- that would work.
8 And normally waivers would end on June 30th, if they
9 are like a one-year waiver, versus say five years.
10 But they always end on June 30th, because we try to
11 keep them consistent.

12 MR. BALDWIN: Does that -- does that give you
13 enough time --

14 DR. KENNON: Yes, sir.

15 MR. BALDWIN: -- to better your enrollment and
16 get where you need to be?

17 DR. KENNON: Yes.

18 MR. BALDWIN: Okay. That -- that was my only
19 question.

20 DR. KENNON: Okay.

21 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Mr. Davis?

22 MR. DAVIS: Yeah. No questions from me. My --
23 my colleagues have asked all the questions I had.

24 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay. Ms. Newton?

25 MS. NEWTON: I don't have any questions.

1 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Are there any other
2 questions from any Panel Members?

3 MR. SCOTT: I believe I do, only because as we
4 approach this year coming in you start -- first
5 start-date is --

6 DR. KENNON: The 21st of August.

7 MR. SCOTT: Next week?

8 DR. KENNON: Yes, sir.

9 MR. SCOTT: Okay. And this -- an approval of
10 this waiver will help you with this particular
11 position. It sounds like they're still -- because of
12 budgetary reasons it's kind of tight?

13 DR. KENNON: Uh-huh.

14 MR. SCOTT: That's certainly understandable.
15 And I think what was just discussed was the growth in
16 enrollment would help.

17 DR. KENNON: Uh-huh.

18 MR. SCOTT: One of the things you're --

19 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I'm sorry. I can't -- I
20 can't hear what Mr. Scott is saying. I'm sorry to
21 interrupt.

22 MR. SCOTT: All right.

23 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I can't hear what he's
24 saying.

25 MR. SCOTT: Thank you. I'm sorry.

1 One of the things you're facing with a waiver
2 here now is messaging to the public about --

3 DR. KENNON: Uh-huh.

4 MR. SCOTT: -- a waiver for that type of
5 skillset.

6 DR. KENNON: Uh-huh.

7 MR. SCOTT: So how are you prepared to handle
8 the messaging externally for -- in case you get some
9 darts thrown at you that says, hey, you're hiring
10 someone that is only part-time?

11 DR. KENNON: I believe that -- we've done a lot
12 of PR work in the area with our -- I'm sorry; can
13 she hear me?

14 We've done a lot of PR work in the area with --
15 and we have tremendous community and family support.
16 The principal, the Director of Schools that we have
17 hired is phenomenal and the -- our students and their
18 families have really taken to her. And I think that
19 -- that part of the -- part of the role of that
20 principal and of the counselor are -- going forward
21 are going to be to develop that sense of trust and
22 visibility with our students and families. And as I
23 said, the candidate that we interviewed yesterday
24 afternoon, who just has checked all -- almost all the
25 boxes for us, is one that I feel the -- that the

1 parents will get -- establish some great trust with
2 the parents. She has done things in her former roles
3 as teachers in sending out parent letters and
4 communicating with parents on a regular basis, so
5 that she does develop those long-term relationships
6 with her students. And so I think that the quality
7 of the people that we've chosen will speak volumes to
8 our parents. They understand that we're brand-new.
9 They understand that resources may be limited for
10 some things this first year. But we have dreamed big
11 for the next several years and I think that we are --
12 we will be positioned to grow enrollment, as well as
13 be able to turn that into a full-time position.

14 MR. SCOTT: All right. Just two quick
15 questions. I appreciate your sharing in regards to
16 what you said constraint-wise.

17 DR. KENNON: Uh-huh.

18 MR. SCOTT: And there's tremendous value in
19 reaching out to the community, community
20 partnerships. As you identify resources that may be
21 needed, you be able to tap into community partners
22 that are willing to come in and help fill that gap.

23 DR. KENNON: Uh-huh.

24 MR. SCOTT: So that's one significant element of
25 -- of your family and community engagement plan.

1 The last thing is that as you move forward you
2 -- this one other thing that impacts your budget is
3 the facility.

4 DR. KENNON: Uh-huh.

5 MR. SCOTT: I believe it's a lease. You have a
6 locked-in --

7 DR. KENNON: We do.

8 MR. SCOTT: -- amount --

9 DR. KENNON: I have a copy of it, if you'd like
10 to see it.

11 MR. SCOTT: -- with a utilization agreement.

12 Awesome. Thank you.

13 DR. KENNON: Yeah. It's -- I don't know if you
14 remember or not, but the -- from when we stood before
15 you before. But our -- our -- the place that we are
16 being housed this year is First Baptist Church, in
17 Garfield. They stepped out in faith and decided that
18 this was a way that they could help us help the
19 community. And our rent is \$1 a year. So, here's
20 our --

21 MR. SCOTT: Okay. Thank you.

22 Thank you. No further questions.

23 DR. KENNON: Uh-huh.

24 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Any other questions from
25 the Panel?

1 (NO RESPONSE)

2 Mr. Reynolds.

3 MR. REYNOLDS: Just for my own peace of mind,
4 with all the technical difficulties, can all the
5 members that are on Zoom confirm that you understood
6 everything that was said and what's going on and what
7 you're voting for?

8 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: We don't have a motion yet.

9 MR. BALDWIN: So I -- I would say that I feel
10 like I can vote on this, barely, because a lot of the
11 conversations -- I couldn't understand the questions
12 from other Panel Members at all. But this is a
13 simple -- to me, this is a simple decision. It's not
14 a complex decision. But I -- I would encourage -- I
15 would encourage somebody to get some diagnostic work
16 done on our system so we don't have this again. It
17 makes it very difficult for -- for remote Panel
18 Members to -- you know, to be -- to do -- to do this
19 the right way. In fact, that's what I would say that
20 I -- I confirm that I feel like I have enough
21 information to vote. I can't speak for the other
22 Panel Members on Zoom.

23 MR. DAVIS: I -- I would agree with Mr. Baldwin,
24 as well. I think I have enough information. And I
25 can tell by the responses, which I think we can hear

1 much better than the questions from the Panel Members
2 that are currently in Little Rock, I can tell from
3 the responses what the question was or what was
4 probably referring to. So I feel confident about
5 being able to make a decision on this item.

6 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Ms. Newton?

7 MS. NEWTON: I -- I feel -- my sentiments
8 as well. So I'm comfortable I have adequate
9 information. I would've liked to have had a more
10 clear conversation and understand the back-and-forth
11 from all sides of the table. But I feel confident to
12 make a decision.

13 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Dr. Wright-McMurray?

14 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Sorry?

15 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yes. Do you feel
16 comfortable moving forward with a motion?

17 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Yes, I do.

18 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay. All right. If there
19 are no other questions, I'll entertain a motion.

20 MS. NEWTON: I'll move to grant the waiver
21 request of Garfield Scholars' Academy charter.

22 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Are there -- so in terms of
23 your motion, is there a timeframe on that motion?

24 MS. NEWTON: If you recommend one -- I don't
25 know. I'd ask you that question. During -- well,

1 during this present school year.

2 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay. So the 2024-2025
3 school year.

4 So, Ms. Newton has made a motion that we grant
5 the waiver for the 2024-2025 school year. Do I have
6 a second?

7 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Second.

8 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay. All those in favor?

9 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

10 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Any opposed?

11 Any abstentions?

12 All right. The motion passes.

13 Let us get our voting sheets filled out and
14 we'll get right back with you.

15 DR. KENNON: Thank you.

16 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

17 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right. We'll start
18 with Mr. Baldwin.

19 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I support the Garfield
20 Scholars' Academy charter amendment request to waive
21 licensure and full-time status for a school counselor
22 for the 24-25 school year.

23 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right.

24 Dr. Wright-McMurray.

25 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Sorry. Okay. Sorry.

1 For -- I vote for. I support Garfield Scholars'
2 Academy charter amendment request to waive licensure
3 and full-time requirement for academic year '25. The
4 charter's temporary plan will allow other school
5 personnel to support students. And I appreciate the
6 charter's willingness to partner with local mental
7 health agencies to insure the mental needs -- mental
8 health needs of their students are met.

9 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay. Mr. Scott.

10 MR. SCOTT: I support the waiver request from
11 Garfield Scholars' Academy because of the window that
12 was provided to address the specific areas of
13 concerns on proper talent and budgetary concerns to
14 support the needs of the students.

15 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay. Mr. Davis.

16 MR. DAVIS: Yes. Due to the thoughtful plan to
17 fill the gap, I support the waiver request to insure
18 their students have the necessary support system in
19 the 24-25 academic year, while the school identifies
20 a licensed counselor.

21 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right. And Ms. Newton.

22 MS. NEWTON: Yes. I voted for the request
23 because adequate supports are in place to insure that
24 appropriate services are available until licensed
25 staff is hired, for the 24-25 school year.

1 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right.

2 Congratulations.

3 DR. KENNON: Thank you.

4 **IV. ADJOURNMENT**

5 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right. If there is no
6 new business, I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

7 MR. DAVIS: Motion to adjourn.

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

10 MR. SCOTT: Second.

11 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right. All those in
12 favor?

13 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

14 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Any opposed?

15 All right. Any abstentions?

16 The motion passes.

17 All right. We are adjourned.

18 (The agenda concluded at 10:18 a.m.)

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF ARKANSAS)

) ss

COUNTY OF PULASKI)

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

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

WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL this 23rd day of August, 2024.



MIRANDA MCENTIRE, CCR

Certified Court Reporter #852

