

ARKANSAS DIVISION OF  
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION  
CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL  
DECEMBER 14, 2022  
9:00 a.m.  
A P P E A R A N C E S

PANEL MEMBERS:

MR. KIM DAVIS	Acting Chair
MS. DEBORAH COFFMAN	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
MS. TOYCE NEWTON	Former State Board of Education Member

ADE LEGAL COUNSEL:

MS. SHASTADY WAGNER	DESE Attorney
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ALSO APPEARING:

MS. DORIE SUMMONS	DESE Charter Schools Director
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LOCATION:

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

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E X H I B I T S

No Exhibits.

## P R O C E E D I N G S

1  
2 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Good morning. The December 14,  
3 2022 meeting of the Charter Authorizing Panel is  
4 called to order. Welcome to the Department of  
5 Education auditorium. Please silence all of your  
6 devices.

7 My expectation is to facilitate a fair and  
8 responsible hearing. I request that each person  
9 speaking please state your name and title for the  
10 record. I ask that you continue to speak clearly  
11 into the microphone for the benefit of the audience,  
12 the Panel, and the viewing audience. The entire  
13 meeting is being live-streamed and recorded. A  
14 transcript of the meeting will be posted on the DESE  
15 website.

16 At this time I'd like to call Ms. Wagner up and  
17 give us an understanding of our process for today.

18 Are we having issues? Are they --

19 DR. SUTHERLIN: We're having issues on the Zoom.

20 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Okay. So why don't we hold a  
21 minute.

22 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

23 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: We're okay now? Can everyone  
24 on Zoom hear us okay now?

25 MS. COFFMAN: Yes.

1                   CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Can I get a thumbs-up from the  
2 folks on -- Ms. Coffman, can you hear us?

3                   MS. COFFMAN: Yes, we can hear you now.

4                   CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Fantastic. Before we move on,  
5 let me just -- I want to repeat that again just for  
6 the record and I hope we're recording at this point.

7                   DR. SUTHERLIN: Go ahead.

8                   CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Okay. My goal is to facilitate  
9 a fair and responsible hearing. I will request that  
10 each person speaking please state your name and title  
11 for the record. I ask that you continue to speak  
12 clearly into the microphone for the benefit of the  
13 Panel, the audience and the viewing audience. The  
14 entire meeting is being live-streamed and recorded.  
15 A transcript of the meeting will be posted on the  
16 DESE website.

17                   Ms. Wagner, will you walk us through the process  
18 for today, please?

19                   MS. WAGNER: Good morning, Panel. Shastady  
20 Wagner, ADE Legal.

21                   So the process for today, anyone that is  
22 testifying in front of this panel needs to be sworn  
23 in by the Chair. After they are sworn in, the  
24 Charter then gets 20 minutes to present. If there's  
25 any opposition, which we have not been made aware of

1 any opposition to any of these charters, the  
2 opposition will get 20 minutes. And then the Charter  
3 would get 5 minutes to respond, at which point the  
4 Charter would then -- we start our legal review. And  
5 after legal review you ask all the questions you  
6 want.

7 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you so much. We're  
8 going to move right into the business for the day.  
9 Panel Members, I know we have a couple of items  
10 dealing with Calendar and Application Timeline. We  
11 will take those at the end of the day today. So  
12 we're going to move right into -- considering we have  
13 our schools here, we want to move directly into the  
14 meetings with the schools.

15 1) SCHOLARMADE ACHIEVEMENT PLACE OF ARKANSAS OPEN ENROLLMENT  
16 RENEWAL APPLICATION

17 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: If I can have everyone from  
18 ScholarMade Achievement Place of Arkansas please  
19 stand -- if you plan or may be called upon to speak,  
20 please stand. If you would, raise your right hand.  
21 Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you're  
22 about to give shall be the truth, the whole truth and  
23 nothing but the truth?

24 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

25 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you. Please be seated.

1 I think, Dr. Anderson, are you going to be up --  
2 you're going to be up first?

3 SUPT. ANDERSON: Uh-huh.

4 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: I think we're going to go ahead  
5 and load your presentation. There should be a  
6 clicker inside there. And as soon as we're up and  
7 loaded we can begin. Thank you for coming this  
8 morning.

9 SUPT. ANDERSON: Thank you.

10 Good morning. I am Dr. Phillis Nichols  
11 Anderson. I am the founder and Superintendent of  
12 ScholarMade Achievement Place of Arkansas. Thank you  
13 for the opportunity to share our journey over the  
14 last four years.

15 ScholarMade was approved by the Arkansas State  
16 Board of Education as a three-school single site  
17 public charter on September 14, 2017. ScholarMade's  
18 first school opened its doors on August 13, 2018, to  
19 over 250 students, and is now serving nearly 400  
20 students.

21 MS. COFFMAN: Mr. Davis, we are unable to hear  
22 the speaker.

23 SUPT. ANDERSON: Oh, okay. I'm sorry.

24 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: That's okay.

25 SUPT. ANDERSON: Do you need for me to repeat?

1 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: No, you're fine.

2 SUPT. ANDERSON: You heard it. Okay.

3 Our mission is we prepare our scholars through  
4 emotional intelligence and personalized learning to  
5 be self-confident, intellectually inquisitive,  
6 emotionally intelligent, and academically  
7 accomplished beings. Our scholars will become  
8 leaders and problem-solvers who will improve  
9 conditions wherever they choose to work and live.

10 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: We're having a little bit of  
11 trouble with the clicker. Just give one second.

12 Okay. I think we're ready.

13 SUPT. ANDERSON: So why is this place important?  
14 ScholarMade is important because it provides families  
15 with a desirable educational choice option. The  
16 building, which is a historic landmark, sat vacant  
17 for nearly 15 years and now serves as a catalyst for  
18 economic renewal for the central Little Rock area.  
19 It represents a significant investment into the  
20 community that brings joy and anchors the community.

21 And so, who are we? 94% are African American  
22 and 94% qualify for free and reduced lunch.  
23 Approximately 20% of our students received support  
24 services for Students with Disabilities (or 504).  
25 Approximately 30% are receiving reading intervention

1 services. Approximately 60% of our students live  
2 within five miles of the school, and approximately  
3 40% of our students come from schools that closed in  
4 the communities where they live. And approximately  
5 95% of our students came from schools with a D or F  
6 rating.

7 So how did we build ScholarMade? We did it with  
8 our boots on the ground. We held nearly 100  
9 community meetings across the city and gatherings to  
10 reach families, to let them know about this  
11 opportunity.

12 Over the years, ScholarMade has been fortunate  
13 to receive a number of awards and recognitions. We  
14 received the Award of Merit from the Quapaw Quarter  
15 Association on behalf of the Historic Preservation in  
16 Greater Little Rock; Arkansas Preservation Award for  
17 the renovation and restoration of the historic  
18 Mitchell School; Office of the Secretary of Defense  
19 Patriotic Employer Award for the employer support of  
20 America's National Guard and Reserve Forces;  
21 ScholarMade's Prodigy Prep received a Beating the  
22 Odds Award in the area of math from the Office of  
23 Education Policy in 2021; and ScholarMade was  
24 recently presented with a proclamation from the City  
25 of Little Rock for ScholarMade's model, service-

1 oriented work in the community, and its focus on  
2 emotional intelligence with children, naming August  
3 13th as ScholarMade Day.

4 Personalized learning is a key part of our  
5 model. It includes personalized learning plans for  
6 each student -- these plans outline individual  
7 student goals, reflecting the student's areas of  
8 growth, needs and strategies to reach those goals;  
9 Instructional resources that chart personalized  
10 pathways to proficiency; our Response to Intervention  
11 -- we provide a multi-tiered system of academic  
12 support; and small group instruction.

13 Another key component is our emotional  
14 intelligence and mental wellness. Children who have  
15 experienced adverse childhood experiences are more  
16 likely to have behavior problems and more likely to  
17 experience academic failure. In Arkansas, 60% of  
18 children have experienced at least one ACE. At  
19 ScholarMade, nearly 90% of our scholars have  
20 experienced one or more adverse childhood experiences  
21 resulting in challenging behaviors and frequent  
22 outbursts of emotional distress. Services and care  
23 are provided to these students through the support of  
24 a counselor, mental health providers, and a culture  
25 team that is trained in RULER, Conscious Discipline,

1 and First Aid Mental Health. Our model offers trauma  
2 informed care and is building new emotional skills in  
3 our scholars that allow them to better process and  
4 transcend these experiences. We are endeavoring to  
5 increase academic performance and decrease the long-  
6 term impact of ACES and provide a pathway for our  
7 scholars for a more promising future.

8 And how do we do this? Our Emotional  
9 Intelligence Framework consists of RULER, Conscious  
10 Discipline, Playworks, and Emotional Maps that  
11 outline weekly lessons to cultivate our competencies  
12 of pursuit, optimism, win, empathy, respectful  
13 relationships. Daily our students check in on their  
14 emotions and feelings by identifying how they feel  
15 with a color and a word. This provides students the  
16 opportunity to develop their emotional and social  
17 awareness. Students become more aware of how they  
18 feel and the causes. Students use this information  
19 to manage their emotions.

20 Our academic performance -- most ScholarMade  
21 students have had previous challenging school  
22 experiences. The opening year of 2018-2019 is the  
23 only uninterrupted year of the charter cycle. During  
24 its second year, the Charter was interrupted by Covid  
25 19 pandemic; therefore, the Charter only has two

1 years of consecutive data. Results are mixed with  
2 highs and lows across the testing areas. During the  
3 21 -- 2021 school year and the 2022 school years  
4 teachers missed more than 140 days during the fall  
5 semester alone due to the pandemic. ScholarMade  
6 offered virtual asynchronous and synchronous lessons  
7 to its students who chose onsite, virtual or hybrid  
8 as their method of instruction.

9 Our proficiency comparison to area elementary  
10 middle schools -- we're comparable with free and  
11 reduced levels of 90% and above. In math, reading,  
12 and science, ScholarMade elementary schools,  
13 highlighted on the chart for you in green,  
14 outperformed all local comparable schools and  
15 performed on par in the area of English.

16 In its first year, ScholarMade's middle school  
17 performed above all area middle schools in math, but  
18 dropped slightly in the second year.

19 In the area of science, ScholarMade's middle  
20 school also outperformed all area middle schools in  
21 science, but dropped slightly below or on par in the  
22 second year.

23 ScholarMade's middle school performed above all  
24 area middle schools in English in both years.

25 ScholarMade's middle school performed above all

1 area middle schools in reading both years.

2 Some of our school progress highlights that I'd  
3 like to share with you is that Ivy Hill, which is our  
4 elementary school, grew 13 points in math proficiency  
5 from 2021 to 2022, and was among the top 30 schools  
6 in the state that grew by 10 points or more in math.  
7 Ivy Hill grew by 9 points in science proficiency.  
8 Ivy Hill grew by 4 points in reading proficiency from  
9 2021 to 2022.

10 ScholarMade was able to reduce the number -- the  
11 percentage of students in the Needs Support category  
12 by 18%, from 83% to 65% from 2019 to 2022.

13 The next academic analysis will discuss the  
14 performance and ESSA Index ratios of African American  
15 students, economically disadvantaged students, and  
16 those with disabilities. From 2019 to 2021, there  
17 were only 125 schools in the state whose ESSA Index  
18 score grew. Ivy Hill Academy was one of those  
19 schools whose index score grew by 4.29%.

20 Our elementary overall index comparison --  
21 ScholarMade's elementary school earned a higher  
22 overall index rating than comparable schools. There  
23 is a 13-point gap between ScholarMade and the lowest  
24 school.

25 ScholarMade's middle school earned a higher

1 overall index score than comparable middle schools.

2 Black students in our elementary schools earned  
3 a higher rating than all comparable schools. There  
4 is a 16-point gap between ScholarMade and the lowest  
5 school.

6 ScholarMade's middle school Black students  
7 earned a higher rating than all comparable schools.  
8 There is a 7-point gap between ScholarMade and the  
9 lowest school.

10 Economically disadvantaged students in our  
11 elementary schools earned a higher index rating than  
12 area comparable schools. There is nearly a 16-point  
13 gap between ScholarMade and the lowest school.

14 Our economically disadvantaged middle school  
15 students earned a higher index score than comparable  
16 schools.

17 ScholarMade's Ivy Hill students with  
18 disabilities earned a higher rating than comparable  
19 area middle schools.

20 Students with disabilities at our middle school  
21 earned a higher index rating than comparable middle  
22 schools.

23 The achievement gap remains a major concern.  
24 Schools who earned a higher letter grade and those  
25 who earned a lower letter grade had significant gaps

1 between Black and White students. Pulaski Heights,  
2 Forest Heights, and Gibbs, who all earned B's, had  
3 gaps as high as 27 points between Black and White  
4 students.

5 Same for the middle schools. Schools who earned  
6 a higher letter grade and those who earned a lower  
7 letter grade had significant gaps between Black and  
8 White student performance. Pulaski Heights Middle  
9 School and Mann Magnet gap between Black and White  
10 students is more than 20 points.

11 So our highlights -- ScholarMade schools  
12 achieved a overall higher index rating than all  
13 schools with a comparable free and reduced level.  
14 ScholarMade schools achieved a higher index score for  
15 Black students in all comparable free and reduced  
16 levels. ScholarMade schools achieved a higher index  
17 score for economically disadvantaged students and all  
18 schools with a comparable free and reduced level.  
19 And ScholarMade schools achieved a higher index score  
20 for students with disabilities than most of the  
21 schools with a comparable free and reduced level.

22 Ivy Hill highlights over the years include Black  
23 student index scores increased by 5.2 from 2019 to  
24 2022, and increased each year. Our Economically  
25 Disadvantaged index rating for students increased by

1 5.66 points from 2019 to 2022. And Students with  
2 Disabilities index ratings also increased by 3.36,  
3 from 51.97 in 2029 [sic] to 55.33 in 2022. Index at  
4 Ivy Hill -- overall index rating of 62.8 was only 2.8  
5 points -- 2.18 points from a C. Washington  
6 Elementary, which is the nearest elementary school in  
7 proximity, overall index rating of 49.75, is 13  
8 points below Ivy Hill and 5.5 points below NIA. And  
9 Washington's index score is 8.34 points from the next  
10 letter grade.

11 For Nichols Intermediate, Hispanic and Latino  
12 students index ratings increased from 52.42 to 55.16.  
13 And English Learners index ratings increased by 51 --  
14 by 15 points, from 45.15 to 60.25.

15 Student with Disabilities and Prodigy Prep's  
16 index rating increased by 9.21, from 37.48 to 45.69.

17 Our resources and our partnerships --  
18 ScholarMade Achievement Place of Arkansas has not had  
19 a single audit finding during its annual financial  
20 audits in history.

21 How do we use our ESSER funds? I would like to  
22 think we use them very wisely. We use them on  
23 technology, transportation, additional staff,  
24 extended learning opportunities, strategies to reduce  
25 the spread of Covid 19, additional pay, mental health

1 support, and instructional resources.

2 ScholarMade is governed by individuals  
3 representing all occupations who offer expertise and  
4 insight in finance, education, community development,  
5 and higher education. ScholarMade enjoys the support  
6 of skillful consultants who provide expertise and  
7 support in curriculum, leadership development,  
8 coaching, finance, literacy, special education,  
9 counseling, and facility management and operations.  
10 ScholarMade enjoys support from organizations  
11 including the Wright Avenue Association, local  
12 churches, sororities, and civic organizations,  
13 community members, colleges, and other charters.

14 Beyond the pandemic, the vision forward --  
15 ScholarMade partially met goals for a program  
16 designed to address pre-pandemic achievement gaps  
17 for students whose learning method was onsite with  
18 instruction delivered in person. In its second year  
19 of existence, the Charter was forced to modify  
20 critical components of the model to respond to severe  
21 staff shortages, highly mobile population, rolling  
22 school closures, virtual and hybrid instruction,  
23 higher rates of bullying behaviors and misbehaviors,  
24 a disconnect from families and parents, and students  
25 and educators struggle with mental health challenges.

1           ScholarMade is requesting a 7-year renewal to  
2           implement systematic, ongoing process involving  
3           planning, implementation, evaluation to meet local  
4           and statewide goals and priorities. During the first  
5           charter cycle, Restore, Rebuild and Raise Up were our  
6           guiding principles. It is now time for us to Reset  
7           and Recapture.

8           ScholarMade plans to address students'  
9           opportunities and the academic gaps from a lack of  
10          high-quality early childhood experiences and offer a  
11          pre-K program to better prepare children to be  
12          kindergarten ready. Through its charter, ScholarMade  
13          will serve students in grades K through 8 and  
14          continue with the goal of preparing students to be  
15          high school ready.

16          ScholarMade will continue to offer a  
17          personalized learning approach, but will  
18          strategically shift teachers' focus from being the  
19          sole resource for students to being a resource  
20          provider and a guide for more student-directed  
21          learning.

22          Our professional development will focus on  
23          increasing student [sic] efficacy and study --  
24          teacher efficacy and student agency to address post-  
25          pandemic instructional challenges. ScholarMade

1 teachers will receive training in Visible Learning,  
2 the instructional framework of Dr. John Hattie.

3 We recognize that we are at a disadvantage when  
4 recruiting teachers and administrators. Many  
5 factors, including serving a high-risk population and  
6 extended day, make it challenging for us to attract  
7 top talent. Therefore, ScholarMade will continue its  
8 longstanding partnerships with area colleges,  
9 strengthen our Grow Your Own model by employing  
10 apprentice teachers who work with the classroom  
11 teacher, and continue to provide financial support to  
12 staff to obtain credentials.

13 ScholarMade will continue to prioritize the  
14 emotional wellness of its students and provide  
15 holistic student supports to be used as a lever for  
16 student achievement. Emotionally intelligent  
17 students have essential core competencies that boost  
18 their ability to learn.

19 We also recognize that our teachers and staff  
20 members have also experienced trauma from the  
21 pandemic and we will continue to provide no-cost  
22 mental health services for teachers and staff  
23 members.

24 Our goal for the next cycle -- students scoring  
25 in the lowest performance category in each content

1 area as measured by state testing will decrease by  
2 5%. As measured by state testing, students scoring  
3 in the readiness level will increase by 5% in each  
4 content area. Students will grow from Fall to Spring  
5 by a minimum of 8 points in math and reading as  
6 measured by NWEA or meet the grade level target. 75%  
7 of our students will rate their SEL competency level  
8 positively in the Spring of each year as measured by  
9 our emotional wellness surveys. And ScholarMade  
10 teachers and staff will participate in 50 hours of  
11 professional development annually to build capacity  
12 and effectiveness.

13 ScholarMade has requested the continuation of  
14 waivers granted in the first charter term and  
15 requested new waivers to enhance instruction and  
16 innovation and allow flexibility in the areas of  
17 class size, student services, personnel, and Gifted  
18 and Talented.

19 During the initial charter term, the Covid-19  
20 pandemic extended start-up challenges throughout the  
21 entire first charter. Even with the disruption, the  
22 early data is promising. The request for a 7-year  
23 renewal considers the unforeseen factors experienced  
24 in the initial charter term and acknowledges that the  
25 pandemic extended the start-up challenges. We've

1           crafted strong new annual goals that are rigorous and  
2           will be measured annually throughout the next charter  
3           cycle. The 7-year term will produce the body of data  
4           needed to determine a model's effectiveness and its  
5           impact on students. We know that it takes time for  
6           the roots of a tree to grow.

7           (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: A video began playing,  
8           which may be viewed on the DESE website.)

9           CHAIRMAN DAVIS: We appear to be missing the  
10          audio on the video.

11          DR. SUTHERLIN: So I think -- Mr. Baldwin and  
12          Dr. Wright-McMurray, I think you just need to do your  
13          Zoom.

14          (OFF THE RECORD, AS AUDIO ISSUES ARE RESOLVED)

15                                (BACK ON THE RECORD)

16          CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Sorry about this, Dr. Anderson.  
17          Give us one second.

18          (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: A video again begins to  
19          play, which may be viewed on the DESE website.)

20          SUPT. ANDERSON: ScholarMade is a symbol of hope  
21          for a better tomorrow for children. We express our  
22          appreciation to the community, our partners, our  
23          families, our scholars, the various departments of  
24          the Department of -- the various departments of the  
25          Elementary and Secondary Education and to the

1 Arkansas Public School Resource Center for the  
2 support that has been provided to us.

3 Thank you for the opportunity to serve the  
4 children of Arkansas.

5 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you so much for the  
6 presentation.

7 I think, as was indicated, this portion of the  
8 meeting is reserved for anyone who has opposition to  
9 the application. There doesn't appear to be anyone  
10 at this time. And so we will move directly into  
11 legal review regarding the waivers that have been  
12 applied for. And so I'd like to ask Ms. Wagner to  
13 come up and we'll begin to go through the waivers  
14 that have been applied for.

15 LEGAL REVIEW

16 SUPERINTENDENT

17 MS. WAGNER: Good morning again. So we will  
18 just get started into the first waiver topic, which  
19 is Superintendent, Arkansas code annotated section 6-  
20 13-109, 6-17-427, standards 4-B.1, 4-B.2, and the  
21 DESE rules governing the Superintendent Mentoring  
22 Program. And there were no legal concerns with this  
23 waiver request.

24 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: I do see Ms. Coffman has her  
25 hand up. Ms. Coffman, is there something in regards

1 to this or is there a step that we need to back-up  
2 to?

3 MS. COFFMAN: Mr. Davis, we can't hear Ms.  
4 Wagner.

5 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Okay.

6 MS. WAGNER: Did this help?

7 MS. COFFMAN: Yes. Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Ms. Wagner, can you --

9 MS. WAGNER: Okay.

10 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: -- repeat those again, please?

11 MS. WAGNER: Yes. So first waiver topic is  
12 Superintendent, Arkansas code annotated section 6-13-  
13 109, 6-17-427, standards 4-B.1, 4-B.2, and the DESE  
14 rules governing the Superintendent Mentoring Program.  
15 And there were no legal concerns with this waiver  
16 request.

17 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Are there any questions or  
18 concerns regarding this waiver request from the  
19 Panel?

20 Hearing none, we'll continue.

21 PRINCIPAL

22 MS. WAGNER: The next waiver topic is Principal,  
23 Arkansas code annotated 6-17-302 and standard 4-C.1  
24 and 4-C.2. And I had no legal concerns.

25 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any questions regarding this

1 waiver?

2 Hearing none, let's continue.

3 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

4 MS. WAGNER: All right. The next waiver request  
5 is Board of Directors, Arkansas code annotated  
6 sections 6-13-608, 6-13-611, 6-13-612(c), 6-13-613,  
7 6-13-615, 6-13-616(a), 6-13-619(c) through (d), 6-13-  
8 625(a)(ii)(b), 6-13-621, 6-13-624, 6-13-628, 6-13-  
9 630, 6-13-631, and the ADE rules proposed -- excuse  
10 me -- ADE proposed rules governing Reimbursement by  
11 School Districts for Election Expenses. The only  
12 thing that I did ask --

13 MS. COFFMAN: Mr. Davis, we've lost sound to the  
14 podium again.

15 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Yes, ma'am. How about now?  
16 Can you say something?

17 MS. WAGNER: Yes. Can you hear me now?

18 MS. COFFMAN: It's back.

19 MS. WAGNER: Okay.

20 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Why don't we start at the top  
21 of those?

22 MS. WAGNER: Okay. So we will start over.

23 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Just with this waiver.

24 MS. WAGNER: Okay. So we'll start over with  
25 Board of Directors. All right. Arkansas code

1 annotated section 6-13-608, 6-13-611, 6-13-612(c),  
2 6-13-613, 6-13-615, 6-13-616(a), 6-13-619(c) through  
3 (d), 6-13-625(a)(ii)(b), 6-13-621, 6-13-624, 6-13-  
4 628, 6-13-630, 6-13-631, and the ADE proposed rules  
5 governing Reimbursement by School Districts for  
6 Election Expenses. The only thing that I had on here  
7 was I did ask the Charter to provide rationale as to  
8 why it needed 6-13-621, 624, and 628, as they are not  
9 commonly granted waivers.

10 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Good morning. Name and title,  
11 please.

12 MR. WALTER: Good morning, Mr. Chair, Members of  
13 the Panel. My name is Tripp Walter and I'm Staff  
14 Attorney with the Arkansas Public School Resource  
15 Center. And on behalf of ScholarMade I'd like to  
16 address those new waiver requests.

17 First of all, while they may not be commonly  
18 granted waiver requests anymore, they were at one  
19 time and they specifically deal with situations that  
20 are unique to school districts.

21 6-13-621 talks about the ability to convey 16  
22 section lands and that's not something that's  
23 applicable to a charter school; they would not have  
24 these old lands available.

25 6-13-624 is the ability to execute oil, gas and

1 mineral leases. Again, that's not going to be  
2 something that's applicable to a charter.

3 And 628 allows school districts in small  
4 communities under a certain size to make certain  
5 purchases without bids. Again, because they're not a  
6 district and located in a community of a particular  
7 size this would be inapplicable.

8 So that's the reason. It goes along with the  
9 rest of the waivers. Again, they're generally  
10 inapplicable. And the Board of Directors section,  
11 they're generally inapplicable to charter schools and  
12 that's why we've asked as a part of this review.

13 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you for the explanation.

14 Any questions?

15 Ms. Wagner, is there -- is that --

16 MS. WAGNER: I would just follow-up by saying  
17 since they're not applicable to charter schools  
18 there's no reason to waive them, because the charters  
19 don't have to abide by them. So that was my concern.

20 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Okay. Any questions or  
21 comments regarding this waiver?

22 Considering the Department has indicated that  
23 these charters are not applicable to charter schools,  
24 is that something that the charter school is willing  
25 to rescind?

1           Please feel free, Mr. Walter, to step up or --  
2           if you disagree with that assessment.

3           MR. WALTER: Tripp Walter, APSRC.

4           I won't take up too much time on this, I mean,  
5           if that's the pleasure of the Panel. But, again, I  
6           mean we could kind of make that same comment for a  
7           lot of the waivers.

8           CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Maybe we should.

9           If I could, Dr. Anderson, can you --

10          MR. WALTER: I'm sorry; I don't mean to  
11          interrupt. I think I can address it, if that's okay.  
12          Tripp Walter, APSRC.

13          Dr. Anderson has indicated she does not have a  
14          problem with rescinding those waivers. So on behalf  
15          of her, I'll make that comment.

16          CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you.

17                           TEACHER LICENSURE

18          MS. WAGNER: The next waiver topic is Teacher  
19          Licensure, Arkansas code annotated section 6-15-1004,  
20          6-17-401, 6-17-309, 6-17-902, 6-17-908, and 6-17-919,  
21          and standard 4-D.1. This charter has also asked to  
22          add the DESE rules governing Educator Licensure  
23          section 7. And with the addition of that, I have no  
24          legal concerns.

25          CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any questions from any panel

1 members regarding this waiver request?

2 MS. SARACINI: Yes. I would like for them to  
3 confirm something.

4 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Yes, Ms. Saracini.

5 MS. SARACINI: Can you confirm you only have  
6 three teachers out of your 42 that are licensed?  
7 That's what I have on my information that I currently  
8 have, out of LEA Insights.

9 SUPT. ANDERSON: That is probably correct.

10 MS. SARACINI: So do you have some kind of plan,  
11 action plan, strategy plan for getting teachers more  
12 licensed? Because I guess I'm looking at your two  
13 D's and F's.

14 SUPT. ANDERSON: Uh-huh.

15 MS. SARACINI: So I'm just a little concerned,  
16 especially when you're asking for 10 years.

17 SUPT. ANDERSON: We're asking for 7.

18 MS. SARACINI: Okay.

19 SUPT. ANDERSON: But, uh-huh, we do have -- we  
20 have partnered with Arkansas Teacher Corp. We've  
21 also partnered with the Equity Program. And we also  
22 partnered with what is formerly the APPLE program and  
23 we have provided financial support to teachers to go  
24 ahead and get that license and Praxis support, test  
25 prep support. But we also provide a lot of

1 professional development as well to build their  
2 capacity. As I spoke about in our presentation, it  
3 is very challenging for us to attract top talent and  
4 there are not a lot of certified people graduating.  
5 Right now, we just got a list a few weeks ago that  
6 had about 20 people on it and only two were  
7 interested in working in Little Rock. So that's, you  
8 know, part of why we need the waiver so that we can,  
9 you know, continue to operate. But we also do have a  
10 plan of development of those teachers, as well as for  
11 them to gain those credentials needed.

12 MS. SARACINI: I would love it if you would  
13 reach out to me or my department. I mean, we sent  
14 that information to you because the things that  
15 you're talking about reside in my division. But we  
16 can really work with you because I have a whole  
17 recruitment and retention and they can work with you  
18 guys, come out and do a site visit. So please  
19 contact us.

20 SUPT. ANDERSON: Thank you. I appreciate that.

21 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any additional questions, Ms.  
22 Saracini?

23 MS. SARACINI: No.

24 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any additional questions from  
25 the Panel?

1 We'll continue.

2 SCHOOL COUNSELOR

3 MS. WAGNER: The next waiver topic is School  
4 Counselor, standards 4-E.1 and 4-E.2. And I have no  
5 concerns when paired with their new waiver request,  
6 number 1. Would the Panel like me to go over that,  
7 as well, or wait until we get to the new requests?

8 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Please, go ahead, Ms. Wright-  
9 McMurray.

10 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: That may help answer a  
11 question that I have --

12 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Okay.

13 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- if you wouldn't mind  
14 going through that.

15 MS. WAGNER: All right. So their new waiver  
16 topic request is Comprehensive School Counseling  
17 Programs, and it is Arkansas code annotated section  
18 6-18-2002(2)(a) and 6-18-2003(a)(2)(a).

19 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any questions or concerns,  
20 Panel Members? Does that answer your question, Ms.  
21 Wright-McMurray?

22 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I still have a question.

23 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Please.

24 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So in looking at your  
25 response to how you're going to address providing the

1 comprehensive guidance program, I do appreciate that  
2 you paid good attention to providing emotional  
3 intelligence supports for your students, and then  
4 also the mental health pieces. But in your response  
5 -- and I'm sorry if I'm missing it -- I'm not seeing  
6 where you are just going to address their career  
7 readiness needs or their guidance needs, post-  
8 secondary placement. I'm not seeing that outlined in  
9 how you're going to offer that and who's responsible  
10 for doing that.

11 SUPT. ANDERSON: We currently do offer that. We  
12 currently contract with a certified school counselor,  
13 guidance counselor. And we hope to be able to  
14 continue to do that, but that's not always -- you  
15 know, that's not always an option and a possibility.  
16 Those services will be provided through our SEI  
17 program for those students. Those staff members also  
18 have that training, that ability. We have a student  
19 support team; we have a student support service  
20 department that provides those comprehensive academic  
21 and, you know, program needs for students as far as  
22 career readiness, high school readiness. That's  
23 really one of our focuses.

24 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So I note that you do have  
25 grade 8 on your campus -- on one of your campuses?

1 SUPT. ANDERSON: Uh-huh.

2 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So who's responsible for  
3 making sure like student success plans and all those  
4 pieces are taken care of?

5 SUPT. ANDERSON: We have a student support  
6 service coordinator.

7 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

8 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any additional questions?

9 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Not right now.

10 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you.

11 All right. Let's continue with the waiver  
12 requests.

13 I'm sorry. I'm sorry, Ms. Coffman. Go ahead.

14 MS. COFFMAN: No worries.

15 Dr. Anderson, can you confirm that you will  
16 still submit a comprehensive counseling plan to the  
17 Department?

18 SUPT. ANDERSON: Yes, we will. Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you so much. Let's  
20 continue.

21 PERSONNEL POLICIES

22 MS. WAGNER: The next waiver topics are  
23 Personnel Policies. So at the pleasure of the Panel,  
24 I'll just go through all of them all together. All  
25 right. So Personnel Policy - Requirements, Arkansas

1 code annotated 6-17-201(c)(2); Personnel Policies -  
2 Committee on Personnel Policies, 6-17-203, 6-17-205;  
3 Policies Incorporated into a Teacher's Contract, 6-  
4 17-204; the Teacher Fair Dismissal Act, 6-17-1501 et  
5 seq.; the Public School Employees Fair Hearing Act,  
6 6-17-1701 et seq.; Classified Employees Minimum  
7 Salary, 6-17-2203 and 6-17-2403; and then the  
8 Classified Employees Personnel Policies, 6-17-2301,  
9 sections B through C and D-2, and 6-17-2303. Also  
10 added, the DESE rules governing Documents Posted to a  
11 School District and Educational Services  
12 Cooperative's Website, sections 5 and 6.

13 I would recommend to the Charter that they also  
14 get 6-11-129; that's for website postings.

15 MR. WALTER: Tripp Walter, APSRC.

16 On behalf of ScholarMade, we accept the DESE  
17 counsel's recommendation and ask for an additional  
18 waiver of Ark. code annotated 6-11-129.

19 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you.

20 Any questions regarding the requested waivers?  
21 Okay. Let's continue.

22 SCHOOL CALENDAR/SCHOOL START DATE

23 MS. WAGNER: Okay. Next up is School Calendar/  
24 School Start Date, Arkansas code annotated 6-10-106.

25 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Questions or comments regarding

1 School Calendar/Start Date?

2 Ms. Coffman.

3 MS. COFFMAN: Yes. If Dr. Anderson could give  
4 us an idea of what the calendar plan is?

5 SUPT. ANDERSON: I'm sorry. Can you repeat  
6 that?

7 MS. COFFMAN: When will you start school? Tell  
8 me why you need a waiver of School Calendar?

9 SUPT. ANDERSON: We offer a longer day and a  
10 longer year because the majority of our students come  
11 to us three and four grade levels behind and we need  
12 -- even pre-pandemic we needed the time. We already  
13 had this in our initial charter to address the -- you  
14 know, how the children needed to be able to  
15 accelerate and address the deficiencies that they  
16 come to us with. Since the pandemic, you know, of  
17 course that is -- it is even worse now. So we think  
18 it is in the best interest of our children to be able  
19 to offer additional instructional time and an  
20 extended school year/day. We actually start when --  
21 as state statute requires us to. We extend beyond  
22 the end of the year.

23 MS. COFFMAN: So in that case, if you're  
24 following a traditional calendar and you're just  
25 adding additional days, there is no requirement or no

1 need for a waiver of the calendar.

2 MR. WALTER: Mr. Chair, may I?

3 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Sure.

4 MR. WALTER: Tripp Walter, APSRC.

5 I think one thing I would add, in visiting with  
6 Dr. Anderson about her comments, is when the school  
7 year law change takes place next school year it is  
8 ScholarMade's intent to start at the same time. So  
9 they will, going forward, have an earlier start date  
10 than the districts will under 6-10-106. And I  
11 believe -- I won't speak for her, but it was my  
12 understanding that's the reason she wanted to  
13 maintain this waiver, because it will be relevant and  
14 applicable going forward when this new charter  
15 renewal period starts.

16 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you.

17 Any other questions or comments regarding this  
18 waiver?

19 Ms. Coffman, is that a satisfactory answer to  
20 your question?

21 MS. COFFMAN: No, it's not.

22 I'd like to know is Dr. Anderson anticipating  
23 starting a week earlier than the state start-date,  
24 two weeks earlier? I'm just trying to get a range.

25 SUPT. ANDERSON: Oh, I'm sorry; I didn't

1 understand that. Yes, we are intending to start --  
2 we normally would start a week earlier and go --  
3 extend a week later.

4 MS. COFFMAN: And is that your plan for the  
5 future?

6 SUPT. ANDERSON: That was our calendar prior to  
7 the pandemic and that is -- will be our plan for the  
8 future.

9 MS. COFFMAN: Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any additional questions?

11 Let's continue.

12 ALTERNATIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

13 MS. WAGNER: The next waiver topic is  
14 Alternative Learning Environment, Arkansas code  
15 annotated section 6-15-1005(b)(5), 6-18-  
16 503(a)(1)(c)(i), 6-48-102, 6-48-103, standards 2-I.1,  
17 and the DESE rules governing Student Special Needs  
18 Funding section 4.01.1. There were no legal concerns  
19 with this waiver request.

20 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any questions regarding this  
21 request from the Panel?

22 Seeing none, let's continue.

23 LIBRARY MEDIA SERVICES/LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALIST

24 MS. WAGNER: Next waiver request is Library  
25 Media Services and Library Media Specialist, Arkansas

1 code annotated section 6-25-103 and 6-25-104, and  
2 standards 4-F.1 and 4-F.2. There were no legal  
3 concerns.

4 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any questions from the Panel  
5 regarding this waiver request?

6 Ms. Coffman.

7 MS. COFFMAN: Yes. If Dr. -- if she would  
8 address how Library Media Services are being provided  
9 to the students?

10 SUPT. ANDERSON: Dr. Coffman, we provide those  
11 services through classroom libraries. We also have  
12 online libraries through Britannica which, of course,  
13 was amazing for our students who were learning in  
14 various methods that they could still access  
15 thousands of books that we would never be able to  
16 have onsite. Those media standards are taught  
17 through Crosswalks with English Language Arts,  
18 science, and through technology.

19 MS. COFFMAN: Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Seeing no additional questions,  
21 we'll continue.

22 RESCINDED WAIVERS

23 MS. WAGNER: The Charter is seeking to rescind  
24 two waivers: Required Instruction for 5-8, standard  
25 1-A.1.2; and Required Instruction 9-12, standard 1-A-

1 1.3.

2 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any questions from the Panel  
3 regarding those waivers seeking to rescind?

4 Okay.

5 MS. WAGNER: All right.

6 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you very much.

7 NEW WAIVERS

8 MS. WAGNER: And the Charter is actually  
9 requesting a couple of new waivers.

10 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Ah. Sorry about that.

11 COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM

12 MS. WAGNER: We already covered the  
13 Comprehensive School Counseling Programs; they are  
14 requesting that one.

15 GIFTED AND TALENTED

16 MS. WAGNER: They're also requesting Gifted and  
17 Talented, Arkansas code annotated 6-20-2208(c)(6), 6-  
18 49 -- excuse me -- 6-42-109, standard 2-G.1, and the  
19 DESE rules governing Gifted and Talented Program  
20 Approval Standards. And there were no legal concerns  
21 with that new waiver request.

22 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any questions regarding the new  
23 waiver requests?

24 Dr. Wright-McMurray.

25 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: In looking at the waiver

1 that's requested and then the explanation that was  
2 provided, I'm just trying to get a better sense of  
3 what is -- what's happening with that. Are you  
4 planning to offer GT services and want to do it in a  
5 different way? I'm just trying to get a sense of  
6 what you're wanting to have happen here.

7 SUPT. ANDERSON: We do plan -- we have a  
8 personalized learning plan that actually provides  
9 differentiated academic support for children  
10 regardless of the level that they're on. Those  
11 students that are beyond -- that would require Gifted  
12 and Talented services is those that are -- have  
13 students with disability. So we plan to continue.  
14 We believe that the program that we have, the  
15 comprehensive program that we have meets the needs of  
16 all of the children that we have. Right now, we do  
17 have a Gifted and Talented program. Our teachers are  
18 trained in Gifted and Talented. We did the laying-  
19 the-foundation training; they will be doing AP  
20 training; they will continue to be able to provide  
21 those services. Again, licensure is -- will always  
22 be an issue for us, for us to be able to find  
23 certified Gifted and Talented personnel. So we want  
24 to be able to provide those services -- continue to  
25 provide those services to students, but not

1 necessarily through a licensed Gifted and Talented  
2 staff member.

3 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. So that's what --

4 SUPT. ANDERSON: Uh-huh.

5 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- the waiver is mainly  
6 for, for that. Okay.

7 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any additional questions and/or  
8 comments?

9 CLASS SIZE AND TEACHING LOAD

10 MS. WAGNER: The next new waiver request is for  
11 Class Size and Teaching Load, Arkansas code annotated  
12 6-17-812, standards 1-A.5, 1-A.6, and the DESE rules  
13 governing Class Size and Teaching Load. There were  
14 no legal concerns with this waiver request.

15 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Questions or comments regarding  
16 this waiver?

17 Ms. Coffman.

18 MS. COFFMAN: So I'm going to look to my  
19 colleague Ms. Saracini on this one because their  
20 proposal is for Opportunity Culture Model. And so  
21 how do you do that without having -- kind of talk me  
22 through when you don't have a licensed teacher as  
23 your lead teacher?

24 SUPT. ANDERSON: Well, it's based on the  
25 framework of the Opportunity Culture where teachers

1 with license and expertise are leveraged to reach  
2 more students. So that is the rationale behind  
3 asking for the waiver of the Class Size so that we  
4 can utilize the teachers that we do have that are  
5 certified and have that expertise and extend that  
6 expertise to more students.

7 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Please, Ms. Saracini.

8 MS. SARACINI: Just to clarify, so you would be  
9 -- are you paying your master and lead teachers extra  
10 for that extra responsibility?

11 SUPT. ANDERSON: No.

12 MS. SARACINI: Help me --

13 SUPT. ANDERSON: Not right now.

14 MS. SARACINI: Okay.

15 MS. COFFMAN: So I have another clarifying  
16 question. So in the Opportunity Culture Model  
17 there's usually a lead teacher that is the person  
18 that the students are assigned to. And the other  
19 teachers are teachers, maybe novice teachers or  
20 teachers that may not have gained licensure. But if  
21 you have a waiver of Teacher Licensure, why would you  
22 need to assign them all to one teacher? I'm not  
23 understanding why the Class Size needs to be larger.

24 SUPT. ANDERSON: I believe the benefit is to the  
25 children. So it is not necessarily that particular

1 part of the Opportunity Culture around them leading  
2 other teachers, but to be able to extend teachers  
3 with expertise to more children. Does that --

4 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Ms. Saracini.

5 MS. SARACINI: So that we can clarify this for  
6 Ms. Coffman, I'm assuming that those few teachers you  
7 have that are licensed do you want to extend their  
8 reach so they may have more than 150 in a particular  
9 day? Is that --

10 SUPT. ANDERSON: That's correct. Thank you.

11 MS. SARACINI: I'm just trying to help clarify  
12 for her. Or you could have a few more in a  
13 particular class, specifically for your elementary.  
14 Instead of having 25, you might have 26 or 27. Maybe  
15 you have a certified person in math and you just want  
16 to extend that reach. I'm just trying to clarify  
17 that model --

18 SUPT. ANDERSON: You did it perfectly, and I  
19 appreciate it. Thank you.

20 MS. SARACINI: Okay. I just -- I understand it,  
21 but a lot of other people do not since it's coming  
22 out of my division. So I just wanted --

23 Does that help, Ms. Coffman?

24 MS. COFFMAN: I think I'm going to need to see  
25 it --

1 MS. SARACINI: Okay.

2 MS. COFFMAN: -- in action. So we may need to  
3 do a follow-up visit.

4 MS. SARACINI: Okay. I would love to see it.

5 SUPT. ANDERSON: Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: We'll continue.

7 PERSONNEL POLICIES

8 MS. WAGNER: The next few waiver requests is for  
9 Personnel Policies. It's Committee on Personnel  
10 Policies, 6-17-209. And I had no legal concerns  
11 about that.

12 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any questions regarding that  
13 waiver request?

14 Okay. Let's continue.

15 TEACHER LICENSURE

16 MS. WAGNER: And the last few waiver requests  
17 was the Teacher Licensure, adding the rules governing  
18 Educator Licensure section 7 to their Teacher  
19 Licensure request. And we've already covered that,  
20 and I had no issues.

21 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any questions regarding that  
22 last waiver request from the panel?

23 Okay. I'm not seeing any.

24 MS. WAGNER: That concludes my legal review.

25 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you so much.

1           At this time I'd like to invite Mr. Hoy [sic] to  
2 come up to discuss any remaining issues with the  
3 internal review from Staff.

4           MS. COFFMAN: Mr. Davis, we can't hear you.

5           CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you. We'll get that  
6 taken care of.

7           MR. COY: Good morning, Panel Members. Thomas  
8 Coy, Charter School Office.

9           You were provided with the internal review  
10 feedback; it's part of the agenda as a pdf. If you  
11 have any concerns about any remaining questions that  
12 our internal committee had, we have representatives  
13 here from that committee who can address any concerns  
14 that you all may have based on that internal  
15 feedback.

16          CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you.

17          Any questions [audio reverb] -- I'll just wait  
18 for a second.

19          Questions from the Panel regarding the internal  
20 review?

21          Okay. Thank you so much, Mr. Hoy [sic].

22                   GENERAL PANEL QUESTIONS

23          MS. COFFMAN: Mr. Davis, I do have a question  
24 about dyslexia.

25          CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Yes, please, go ahead, Ms.

1 Coffman.

2 MS. COFFMAN: Yes. So I'd received a note from  
3 our dyslexia specialist that the numbers identified  
4 at ScholarMade seemed very low. If they could  
5 address their dyslexia services?

6 SUPT. ANDERSON: Thank you again, Dr. Coffman,  
7 for that question. We have identified or in the  
8 process of identifying students, and we are providing  
9 -- as I said in my opening -- one of my opening  
10 statements, about 20% of our students are receiving  
11 reading intervention that have not been identified as  
12 dyslexia -- having characteristics of dyslexia.  
13 During the pandemic, all of that identification  
14 basically slowed up and we did not want to over-  
15 identify because, of course, of the learning loss for  
16 that. But we are -- definitely have about 20% that  
17 are now coded -- I think it was just a coding issue  
18 within eSchool -- that those students are receiving  
19 reading intervention. And we are identifying, right  
20 now, as we speak, students based on using the data  
21 that we have from the Spring, the Fall, and making  
22 sure that we're taking them through the process of  
23 appropriately identifying them for those services.

24 MS. COFFMAN: I think the confusion was when you  
25 mentioned reading intervention it wasn't specific to

1 -- that's 20% receiving dyslexia intervention?

2 SUPT. ANDERSON: That's -- yes, it's dyslexia  
3 intervention.

4 MS. COFFMAN: Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any additional questions?

6 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I do. Oh, sorry.

7 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Yes.

8 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: First, in looking at your  
9 outcomes for Ivy Hill, it looks like that you guys  
10 are doing a great job, especially comparable to your  
11 similar schools that are around your area. Just  
12 trying to get a sense of what's happening with -- is  
13 it Nichols?

14 SUPT. ANDERSON: Uh-huh. No.

15 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I was noticing that that  
16 one, this is even -- as we look at Prodigy, it's  
17 great that we perform this work at Ivy Hill, but it  
18 looks like Nichols continues to have challenges.

19 SUPT. ANDERSON: Ivy Hill represents the  
20 students that we've had the longest. Those are  
21 mostly -- those are the students that probably  
22 started with us in kindergarten. And so that's  
23 what's so exciting about that data is that it shows  
24 that, you know, the earlier we get them the better we  
25 do with them. With Nichols Intermediate, it is

1 definitely a situation that happened within that last  
2 school year where we lost a teacher, lost a math  
3 teacher, lost an ELA teacher, and, you know, just  
4 really struggled for instruction to continue  
5 throughout the year. And we saw that hit in our math  
6 scores, that dip; so that's basically what happened.  
7 But that was just, you know, for last year.

8 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Do you mind sharing what  
9 you guys have talked about as a team or what your  
10 plan is going forward to address the challenges that  
11 you see at Nichols because of the loss of the staff?  
12 Is there any type of interventions you guys plan to  
13 put in place to try to close those gaps?

14 SUPT. ANDERSON: Yeah. One of the things that  
15 we realized during the pandemic is that we cannot  
16 control who's going to be there from day to day and  
17 that instruction has to continue. And so that is  
18 what we definitely have put in place. That's part of  
19 John Hattie's framework is to make sure that we are  
20 increasing student agency and that we are making it  
21 possible for students, regardless of where they are  
22 -- if they're at home, if there's a teacher in the  
23 classroom -- that they can also take control of their  
24 learning, access the learning for themselves also, as  
25 well.

1           So we also have the extended day. We also have  
2 interventionists where students are being --  
3 receiving services in the classroom, as well as being  
4 pulled out for small group instruction; making sure  
5 that, you know, the teacher is able to work with a  
6 small group of children. We've identified the  
7 standards that students have not mastered and we've  
8 had a pacing guide or a plan to make sure that we're  
9 covering that, making sure that we're covering that  
10 -- those prerequisite standards that students need at  
11 that level.

12           Also, we get students who have not been with us;  
13 so we have students that transfer in from other  
14 schools who may not have necessarily been with us.  
15 And so it takes time to, you know, to work with them  
16 and address the gaps that they have.

17           I would also like to say -- and I would be  
18 remiss if I didn't -- what we found out during the  
19 pandemic is just the impact of parents. Actually,  
20 for us, our students did better for 20-21 than they  
21 did in 21-22, because the children were home with  
22 their parents and their parents were home. Last  
23 year, everybody went back to work; so students may  
24 still have been at home but the parents were at work.  
25 And so we saw really the impact of parental

1 engagement and parental support that we need in order  
2 to be able to move children forward.

3 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And I do have another  
4 question.

5 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Sure. Just before you get to  
6 that question, I think Mr. Hoy [sic] -- I think there  
7 are no questions in regards to your staff, so please  
8 feel free to be released.

9 I think we're at the general portion --

10 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

11 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: -- in regards to the questions.  
12 So, Panel, please feel free to participate.

13 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I was just confused.

14 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: That's okay. That's all right.  
15 Continue.

16 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. The other question,  
17 I was looking under the amendment requests section  
18 and you're planning to drop 9th grade -- and I assume  
19 you have that explanation. This says you're going to  
20 focus more on your early childhood program. So are  
21 you planning to go lower than K-8?

22 SUPT. ANDERSON: Uh-huh.

23 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

24 SUPT. ANDERSON: We're planning on opening a  
25 pre-K, 4, and 5 -- pre-K also. There are a number of

1 children who missed that August 1 deadline. In that  
2 particular area the access to early childhood  
3 education is limited. Most of the early childhood  
4 programs are in schools and those schools have long  
5 wait-lists, so a lot of our children come to us from  
6 home. And so we believe that it is essential that we  
7 get them earlier and that we can grow the children  
8 and address their gaps from the bottom. As to where  
9 -- when we have 9th grade it is really hard and  
10 challenging to address those academic gaps at that  
11 level.

12 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And so that would be an  
13 amendment to your overall --

14 SUPT. ANDERSON: It is.

15 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any additional questions from  
16 the Panel?

17 Ms. Saracini.

18 MS. SARACINI: And this may be Mr. Coy too. But  
19 I just wanted to make sure if the finance questions  
20 that was on the initial feedback were answered about  
21 the actual salaries not reflected in the budgeted  
22 amounts? Are there empty positions? I just wanted  
23 to clarify.

24 I'm kind of like Dr. McMurray; right? I just  
25 kind of want to make sure I'm asking them --

1 MR. COY: Yes.

2 MS. SARACINI: -- in the right place.

3 MR. COY: Thank you for that question. Well,  
4 that's why we have our representatives here; so we  
5 have someone in Finance here who can possibly address  
6 whether that was answered or not.

7 MS. QAZI: Saliha Qazi, Coordinator, Fiscal  
8 Services and Support.

9 We did not receive any correspondence on the  
10 questions that were posted in their internal review.

11 MS. SARACINI: Oh, so the questions have not  
12 been answered?

13 MS. QAZI: No. We did not receive any  
14 correspondence.

15 MS. SARACINI: Can maybe Dr. --

16 SUPT. ANDERSON: I'm not certain that I know the  
17 question.

18 MS. SARACINI: Well, some of the questions I  
19 guess that Finance reached out to you to clarify were  
20 -- is some of the Finance questions were actual  
21 salaries were not reflective of the budgeted amounts  
22 that were in your finance report. So were there  
23 empty positions and that's why the budget amounts did  
24 not match?

25 SUPT. ANDERSON: I am certain that that's

1 probably -- there are vacancies. We do have  
2 vacancies. I do not remember seeing that question.  
3 I would have responded to it. But --

4 MS. SARACINI: And then, also, another question  
5 was to explain the increase in budget from prior  
6 years for this line as well. Maybe that's something  
7 that you could put back to us in writing. Could we  
8 re-send these questions?

9 SUPT. ANDERSON: (Nodding head up and down.)

10 MS. SARACINI: Could we re-send them so that she  
11 could address them?

12 MS. QAZI: Yes, we can.

13 MS. SARACINI: Okay. Because there are a few  
14 things in the finance that -- I just wanted to make  
15 sure if they had been addressed or not.

16 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you.

17 Any other questions from Panel Members?

18 Please.

19 MR. BALDWIN: So I was glad to see your focus on  
20 emotional intelligence and personalized learning, and  
21 you mentioned that and talked about that in your  
22 introduction and prior to this question. If you  
23 could go a little bit deeper for me and kind of  
24 explain what that looks like in the classroom and how  
25 does the student get into that type of discussion

1 with the teacher and what the outcomes look like when  
2 that happens?

3 SUPT. ANDERSON: So we have taken the RULER  
4 framework, which is a program out of Yale, where our  
5 staff members are trained, as well as paired it with  
6 Conscious Discipline, which is a discipline framework  
7 that's also rooted in emotional intelligence and how  
8 emotions impact behavior. And so what that looks  
9 like on a day-to-day basis -- like what you saw -- if  
10 you go back to the beginning, you saw the chart, the  
11 feelings chart. And so what we teach children --  
12 first of all, what we started off with the first year  
13 is teaching them how to identify their feelings with  
14 a color. So you have green, you have yellow, you  
15 have blue, and you have red. Green is when you're  
16 serene; yellow is when you're operating at, you know,  
17 the optimum level; red is angry; and blue is sad.  
18 And so children, in the morning, have a morning  
19 meeting, a morning circle and they can say I'm red,  
20 I'm yellow, I'm green. They give the teacher  
21 information about the space that the child is in and  
22 how to deal with them. The second year we started to  
23 give them the vocabulary that went along with those  
24 colors, so we could increase their Lexicon so they  
25 could be able to say I'm peaceful, I'm grateful, you

1 know, I'm hopeful. And so they now say their color  
2 and their word. And we also do it with adults  
3 because we know that dis-regulated adults can't help  
4 regulate children. And so what it does is that then  
5 they give -- if they're into reading, and if they  
6 identified that I'm angry, then we ask them why. So  
7 we teach them to identify why they feel the way they  
8 feel. And once they identify why they feel the way  
9 they feel, then there's a pathway for them to move to  
10 another space. And so the staff members then know to  
11 pause, you know, acknowledge it, first of all. We  
12 have done a good job of just acknowledging and not  
13 suppressing feelings. We've all grown up being told  
14 -- children have been told, "Don't cry," you know,  
15 "Suck it up. You can do this." And we don't that.  
16 We allow children every feeling. It's valuable. We  
17 allow children to feel the way they feel, and then we  
18 try to take them through that process of moving them  
19 to where they need to be, and then to help them for  
20 them to be able to regulate their own emotion  
21 themselves. So as a result, the first year it was an  
22 emotionally charged community. Everybody was crying,  
23 everybody would be upset. And that was okay. And we  
24 had to learn to -- for that -- to normalize that. We  
25 had to learn to normalize that as well. So as the

1 children grow and they can tell you how they feel,  
2 they can regulate their emotions, then that allows  
3 them to better interact with each other; that  
4 increases empathy; that increases those core values  
5 that we're trying to teach in those children; and  
6 resilience. Those things can move forward beyond how  
7 they're feeling. So we have state lessons; we call  
8 them -- those socio-emotional intelligence lessons.  
9 So we have an Emotional Intelligence Program Manager  
10 that actually visits the classroom and teaches  
11 children lessons around a variety. So that's what it  
12 looks like.

13 MR. BALDWIN: Thank you.

14 MS. NEWTON: I have a comment.

15 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Yes, please.

16 MS. NEWTON: And I'd like to say congratulations  
17 on your achievements, and certainly we look forward  
18 to continued achievement.

19 In all of our -- without exception, in all of  
20 our renewal applications we've talked about mental  
21 health. And I'm especially pleased to hear you talk  
22 about adverse childhood experience, and you  
23 acknowledge that even before the pandemic, and the  
24 trauma informed care that comes as a result of it.  
25 Because we know that it produces PTSD and so many

1 other things in adults as well as children. So I'm  
2 especially impressed with your comment about making  
3 adjustments to what children need, because -- and I  
4 say that all in the context of education and having  
5 education be effective. Because until you do this  
6 and unless you do it, then you're always going to be  
7 behind the 8-ball, as the saying goes. So I think  
8 that's to be commended and not -- you know, I just --  
9 just the acknowledgement, and not that other folks  
10 don't realize adverse childhood experiences as an  
11 impacter of practically everything. But at the same  
12 time I'd like to say thank you for that.

13 I asked earlier -- and everybody has mentioned,  
14 without exception, the pandemic and Covid. And I'd  
15 like to ask you, what would you do differently? And  
16 not -- certainly not anticipating another pandemic,  
17 nut the reality of it is is things happen. So can  
18 you reflect on your experiences and how you had to  
19 stop and pivot and what that means and what time it  
20 takes and what that does to staff as well as the  
21 students?

22 SUPT. ANDERSON: Thank you so much. Thank you  
23 for your comments. I appreciate that. And I  
24 appreciate the opportunity to share that when we went  
25 into the pandemic, as every school did in the state,

1 we actually had two hours' notice -- I will forever  
2 remember that day -- to release children and for them  
3 to go home. And so for the remainder of that year we  
4 did everything that we could; we took packets to  
5 children's homes; we put homework in their mailboxes.  
6 We at that time didn't -- we were not -- had never  
7 intended to me a virtual school or to offer virtual  
8 education. We got Zoom accounts that were 40  
9 minutes; so we had -- those are the free accounts and  
10 so they were 40 minutes long. When we came back --  
11 we started off with seven achievement principles. We  
12 narrowed that down to two because of the pandemic;  
13 because we said we are going to have to be able to do  
14 two things, and that's meet the children where they  
15 are, personalizing that instruction, and make sure  
16 that we continue to understand and acknowledge that  
17 children who are not well mentally cannot learn. And  
18 so that is also going to always be -- even before the  
19 pandemic we knew that we were pulling from  
20 communities and schools where children may have --  
21 they had suffered trauma, and that we would have to  
22 be able to address that. I think that what we had to  
23 do, we had to shift our professional development  
24 because our teachers then had to teach kids that were  
25 in front of them, as well as students that were at

1 home; so they had to acquire an entire new set of  
2 skills. We didn't have the support because we were  
3 -- you know, people were home, people couldn't come  
4 into the school. There was a disconnect from our  
5 families; our families were not able to come into the  
6 school and to assist us. And so there were days when  
7 we were just happy to make it through the day. And  
8 when I look at the data and when I started to analyze  
9 the data, I am very encouraged and I am very proud  
10 that even in the pandemic our children have continued  
11 to grow.

12 And so what we would do differently is what  
13 we're doing. We're trying to increase student  
14 agency, as I said earlier, so that students will --  
15 the instruction will be more student directed. So  
16 children will know what the criteria for success is;  
17 they will know what they need to do in order to meet  
18 that criteria; and they will know when they have not  
19 met that criteria yet and so that they can go back  
20 and do more of what they need to do. We've acquired  
21 instructional resources that they can access, no  
22 matter where they are. We always said that learning  
23 can take place anywhere, but the pandemic made it  
24 real for us, that learning must take place anywhere.  
25 And so we work with our parents to make sure that

1 they have the resources that they need in order to  
2 make their home an extension of the learning  
3 environment. So our families are 94% economically  
4 disadvantaged, and so many of them may not have had  
5 connectivity. The state did a great job of getting  
6 us devices so that we could get those to those  
7 parents so that they could have the connectivity. We  
8 invested in Chromebooks. Students had a Chromebook  
9 at home, as well as a Chromebook at school. We had  
10 flexibility; our virtual program was flexible. If  
11 students needed to be virtual for a week because they  
12 were quarantining, that was an option for them. We  
13 did not say, "Oh, if you're virtual you have to stay  
14 virtual for the semester;" it was based on what their  
15 needs were.

16 So those are the things we learned around being  
17 flexible, having that flexibility, being able to  
18 shift on a dime if we need to, because we don't know  
19 -- even right now we're experiencing a rise in Covid  
20 cases since Thanksgiving. So I don't ever want us to  
21 think that Covid is behind us, because, as you said,  
22 it's Covid, then it's the flu or it could be  
23 something else that will interrupt. So this is our  
24 new normal. We cannot go back to thinking that we're  
25 going to have 25 kids sitting in front of us and

1 we're going to be able to teach them in that way. So  
2 we have to be flexible in making sure that we meet  
3 the needs of children, whatever those needs are and  
4 however they present themselves to us in that given  
5 moment.

6 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you. Any additional  
7 questions, Ms. Newton?

8 MS. NEWTON: No.

9 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any additional questions from  
10 panel members?

11 Ms. Coffman.

12 MS. COFFMAN: Dr. Anderson, thank you for your  
13 presentation. I have a couple of questions.

14 So when you marked Hybrid on your model, is that  
15 what you meant that kids are -- wherever the kids are  
16 and you're going to educate them, or do you have  
17 something else in your mind?

18 SUPT. ANDERSON: Yes, that's -- that is hybrid.  
19 Some were at home two days a week and onsite, so that  
20 was the hybrid. But if a child was sick, they could  
21 still access -- you know, access the instruction,  
22 even if they were home for a day.

23 MS. COFFMAN: Okay. And my second question, you  
24 mentioned that you were adding a pre-K. And is that  
25 pre-K a part of your funding model? Is it being

1 funded by separate sources? Has it -- is it an ABC  
2 approved program? Can you tell us a little bit more  
3 about that?

4 SUPT. ANDERSON: We are launching -- we are  
5 launching that program hopefully at the top of the  
6 year, with the hopes to become an ABC program over  
7 the next few months, however long it takes. It's a  
8 -- it is a process to become -- to get the Better  
9 Beginning rating so that we can qualify for an ABC  
10 grant. But that's the goal.

11 MS. COFFMAN: So currently it won't be funded  
12 with state funds until there's an approval?

13 SUPT. ANDERSON: It will be funded with private  
14 funds.

15 MS. COFFMAN: Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you, Ms. Coffman.

17 I have a couple of questions, as well.

18 I do want to thank you, Dr. Anderson, for the  
19 work that you do, how you shine light in your school  
20 and staff shine light on social-emotional  
21 intelligence and the importance of that. Because we  
22 all know that it's critical coming -- or as we  
23 transition and figure out what this new normal is,  
24 considering Covid. I think we've all been -- those  
25 of us who were a little bit skeptical, when we had to

1 sit at home for a little bit I think we understood  
2 what folks meant by that.

3 I do want to dig into the data a little bit and  
4 align around a couple of things.

5 SUPT. ANDERSON: Uh-huh.

6 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Because it appears to me -- and  
7 you've talked about potentially the impact of Covid,  
8 and we see that at the Prodigy location where there  
9 were significant drops in proficiency from 2021 --  
10 from 2020 to 2021 -- from '21 to '22. Right? But  
11 you also had gains at certain places.

12 SUPT. ANDERSON: Uh-huh.

13 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Right? So it wasn't as if we  
14 saw drops across-the-board. Right? At Prodigy,  
15 there were gains in reading, for example. And then  
16 when you go to Ivy Hill, in regards to proficiency,  
17 math, science and reading grew. So on one hand I'm  
18 hearing the desire to explain the drops around Covid,  
19 but you have some data here during the same time  
20 period that tends to indicate some different outcomes  
21 at a different location. And I'm just trying to  
22 glean sort of the learning from that to see if that's  
23 something -- as we think about additional schools, is  
24 that something we should think about in our toolbox  
25 --

1 SUPT. ANDERSON: I think that --

2 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: -- on how that --

3 SUPT. ANDERSON: I think that --

4 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: -- comes about?

5 SUPT. ANDERSON: The explanation I was talking  
6 about earlier, a lot of that has to do with the  
7 teacher in Prodigy. We lost our math teacher  
8 midyear.

9 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Okay.

10 SUPT. ANDERSON: You know, and I also feel like  
11 that it was -- we studied that, around whether or not  
12 there was a true curriculum alignment, with the  
13 curriculum we were using, to the standards. You  
14 know, we had some students that were enrolled -- 8th  
15 grade students that were enrolled in Algebra I, and  
16 also, you know, them taking 8th grade -- being  
17 measured on 8th grade math standards, that gap there.  
18 So wherever we saw a drop there was an explanation  
19 for it, you know. And, of course, like I said, like  
20 we have one teacher -- one math teacher that teaches  
21 7th, 8th and 9th grade. So the impact and the effect  
22 on the entire school was felt.

23 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Okay. Thank you for that.

24 The other question I have is -- I mean, directly  
25 the question is how do we -- how are you thinking

1 about growth? When I look at the ESSA and I look at  
2 -- when I look at the growth indication, it obviously  
3 is something that needs some additional work. And  
4 I'm always concerned about growth because, of course,  
5 growth is what happens when the student is with us  
6 from year-to-year.

7 SUPT. ANDERSON: Uh-huh.

8 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: And obviously as growth  
9 continues to lag, students tend to get further and  
10 further behind. So what are you thinking in regards  
11 to how to address that issue? It may be what you've  
12 just indicated, a staffing issue. But how much of  
13 the idea of growth as opposed to proficiency, where  
14 we've seen some great gains in a couple of places --  
15 how are we thinking about that?

16 SUPT. ANDERSON: Well, I think our index scores  
17 have grown every year. So that was part of what we  
18 -- part of what I, you know, pointed out, especially  
19 for those populations that are most at risk -- for  
20 African American students, for Students with  
21 Disabilities, and for children with economic -- that  
22 are economically disadvantaged. Those index scores  
23 have grown since we first opened for those children,  
24 and for Ivy Hill it has grown every year; so we've  
25 seen those index ratings increase. I think that

1 there are so many variables, and until we can  
2 stabilize -- keep stabilized and have families that  
3 are not highly mobile -- we still have families --  
4 even when we're serving so many families that are  
5 economically disadvantaged, they are highly mobile;  
6 their situation changes. During the pandemic we had  
7 one child that was with their aunt in a whole other  
8 state that was continuing to try to -- a whole other  
9 part of the state that was continuing to try to get  
10 their education with ScholarMade.

11 And so I think that once we -- that is part of  
12 why we need the renewal years that we've asked for,  
13 because we need some stability. We're acknowledging  
14 that we've only had two years -- we've only had two  
15 years, and those two years -- we only had one year  
16 before we were interrupted, and we've only had two  
17 years of consecutive data. So, you know, we're  
18 acknowledging that we need more time to really  
19 stabilize, stabilize our staff, stabilize our student  
20 body, to be able to really evaluate whether or not  
21 the program that -- you know, whether or not the  
22 resources -- whether the resources we're using are  
23 working for this particular population. We need more  
24 time to be able to do what we said we were going to  
25 do, because what I said in the video was that if we

1 are successful we know that our children will grow.  
2 And in my mind, I don't feel -- I'm not standing here  
3 before you telling you that we've been successful  
4 with everything that I envisioned when I stood here  
5 in 2017. In many ways I feel cheated because all of  
6 the things that we felt like we would be able to do,  
7 we had one year before we were not able to do any of  
8 those things. And so we are -- you know, we are  
9 researching, we are working, we are attending  
10 conferences, we are figuring out -- we are connected  
11 to other schools nationally, we're seeing what other  
12 schools are doing, how they are addressing the needs  
13 of the population that we serve. And so that's how  
14 we, you know, plan to grow and we're just really  
15 honestly attacking every issue that comes our way,  
16 you know. So --

17 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you for that.

18 Remind me again, I know the cap on enrollment is  
19 520. Remind me what the enrollment is?

20 SUPT. ANDERSON: Our cap was 520 --

21 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Okay.

22 SUPT. ANDERSON: -- but the building would never  
23 hold that many.

24 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Okay.

25 SUPT. ANDERSON: So we actually started off with

1 -- intentionally with those upper grades lower  
2 because we knew that they would have more needs in  
3 those upper grades. And so we're at 400 -- I think  
4 we're like a little bit over 400 students.

5 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Okay.

6 SUPT. ANDERSON: Even with dropping 9th grade we  
7 will have the capacity of 444.

8 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Okay. 444 in the building?

9 SUPT. ANDERSON: Uh-huh.

10 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any additional questions from  
11 Panel Members?

12 Okay. Ms. Coffman.

13 MS. COFFMAN: I think that brings up an  
14 interesting conversation of charters with a cap and  
15 then the real capacity in their buildings, when those  
16 are not adjusted to match the real capacity. Because  
17 I guess if the full number of students wanted to come  
18 the school would have to provide it -- provide seats.

19 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Hmmm. Yeah, that's a great  
20 question that I think we need to think about as a  
21 panel, if a facility is unable to hold the cap, then  
22 what should happen in that situation. I think that  
23 might be for another day; that's not your issue.

24 Any additional questions or comments?

25 MS. SARACINI: I would like to make a comment.

1 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Yes.

2 MS. SARACINI: I just want to commend you again  
3 for your Ivy Hill because you are really making a  
4 difference there. And I look forward to seeing how  
5 that can work across your others. And so I know we  
6 don't acknowledge sometimes, so I wanted to make  
7 sure.

8 SUPT. ANDERSON: Thank you. I appreciate that.

9 MS. NEWTON: And just to say what I said again,  
10 the holistic approach is so important. And it's one  
11 of the things I know that has to be a continuum so  
12 you don't leave any of it out as it relates to  
13 challenges or issues around the children and their  
14 lives that impact -- ultimately impact education,  
15 ultimately impact juvenile justice -- you know, all  
16 the things -- economic changes and positive things  
17 happening. So I think it's a continuum that's very  
18 clear to us. Thank you.

19 MR. BALDWIN: Yeah, I just wanted to say -- I'm  
20 not an educator up here and so there's a lot of  
21 things that these folks know that I don't know. But  
22 I do know a good application when I see one and you-  
23 all turned in a good application. I liked the fact  
24 that you took responsibility for your situation and  
25 you had a plan -- have a plan to deal with that. And

1 in my experience that's the difference between  
2 success and failure is having the right vision for  
3 turning it around. So, thank you.

4 SUPT. ANDERSON: Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: I think we're ready for a  
6 motion.

7 MS. NEWTON: I'm prepared to move that we  
8 approve the renewal of application for ScholarMade.

9 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Second.

10 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: There's been a motion and a  
11 second. All those in favor do so by stating "aye."

12 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

13 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any opposition?

14 Motion passes.

15 Panel Members, I ask that you record your vote  
16 and we will go around and speak to that vote.

17 And congratulations.

18 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

19 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: We will -- why don't we start  
20 with Ms. Coffman.

21 Ms. Coffman, how did you record your vote and  
22 your statement?

23 I think she's giving me the one-minute -- the  
24 "hold on just a second" signal.

25 MS. COFFMAN: Too many pages in front of the

1 mute button. Sorry.

2 I recorded my vote as I voted for the 7-year  
3 renewal. Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: And let's continue -- or let's  
5 continue here to my left. Ms. Newton.

6 MS. NEWTON: I voted yes. And my statement is  
7 that ScholarMade provides a comprehensive approach to  
8 learning, emphasizing the priority needs of their  
9 population. As a result, education is positively  
10 impacted and growth continues.

11 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Mr. Baldwin.

12 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I voted yes for the 7-year  
13 renewal. I think you-all have a unique educational  
14 model and I look forward to in seven years seeing  
15 student success from that.

16 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: I voted for as well,  
17 considering the unique socio-emotional approach to  
18 students and the success garnered during this short  
19 period of operations. I look forward to the learning  
20 and growth of students in the future.

21 Ms. Saracini.

22 MS. SARACINI: I support the renewal of  
23 ScholarMade for 7 years; looking forward to seeing  
24 you replicate your success at Ivy Hill across all  
25 other schools.

1 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Ms. Wright-McMurray.

2 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I voted for. I support  
3 the motion. ScholarMade has demonstrated success at  
4 Ivy Hill Elementary. They have evaluated and  
5 identified challenges at their other campuses and  
6 have a plan to address those concerns. I look  
7 forward to their continued influence and success as  
8 they educate our students most in need.

9 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you so much.

10 Panel Members, why don't we take a 5-minute  
11 break, allow the other group to get set-up, and we  
12 will start at 10:35. So 5 minutes just to stretch  
13 our legs. Thanks.

14 (BREAK: 10:29 A.M. - 10:39 A.M.)

15 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: We'll go ahead and begin.

16 Thank you all for returning.

17 2) BAUXITE MINER ACADEMY DISTRICT CONVERSION RENEWAL  
18 APPLICATION

19 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: If I could ask everyone who  
20 will be presenting on behalf of Bauxite Miner Academy  
21 to please -- or have the potential to, could you  
22 please rise, please raise your right hand. Do you  
23 swear to affirm that the testimony you're about to  
24 give shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing  
25 but the truth?

1 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

2 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Please, be seated. Thank you  
3 so much.

4 At this time I'd like to call Ms. Wagner up to  
5 talk to us about the process.

6 MS. WAGNER: Good morning. Now that everyone  
7 has been sworn in, the next step in the process is  
8 Bauxite gets 20 minutes to present. We have received  
9 no opposition, so that should be all there is. And  
10 then we'll start the legal review. And then after  
11 legal review is when CAP has a chance to question  
12 everything in the application.

13 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you so much for that.

14 With that being said, we can start the 20-minute  
15 presentation.

16 SUPT. DONAGHY: Good morning, Panel. My name is  
17 Matt Donaghy. I'm the Superintendent of the Bauxite  
18 Public School District. And I wanted to thank you  
19 for your time today and for considering our charter  
20 renewal, which we call Miner Academy. And I wanted  
21 to very briefly tell you that it's very important to  
22 our school district.

23 I believe it's our job to remove hurdles that  
24 are in front of our students to get them prepared for  
25 college and/or career, and Miner Academy definitely

1 allows us to do this.

2 We are a 33% school choice district, so that  
3 means we have a lot of people coming to look at our  
4 district, lots of students and parents. And so  
5 during my nine years of superintendent there lots of  
6 tours have been highlighted by Miner Academy; they're  
7 always very interested in what that is and how that  
8 can fit their student's individual needs and learning  
9 styles. We also have lots of school districts that  
10 want to try to replicate what we're doing and they  
11 come for tours as well.

12 Ms. Newton, we were honored to have her visit a  
13 couple of years back. And so I'd like to invite any  
14 of you who would like to come check us out; we'd be  
15 happy to show off what we're doing and show you that  
16 it's not just a plan on paper but see it in action.

17 I also believe that a plan and a program are  
18 only as good as the people that are making it happen,  
19 so it's my privilege to introduce our leadership team  
20 that's getting this done. And we have Mr. Michael  
21 Driggers, the High School Principal; Dr. Leann  
22 Pinkerton, who is our Director of Academic Affairs  
23 and Curriculum; and Ms. Webb, who will be presenting  
24 today -- she helped transition from a successful run  
25 as our Bauxite High School Principal to Miner Academy

1 Principal a couple of years ago. So I think her  
2 passion for the program and her students is about to  
3 shine through and we're excited to have you guys  
4 listen. Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you.

6 MS. WEBB: Good morning, and thank you. My name  
7 is Ann Webb, and I'm the Principal at Bauxite Miner  
8 Academy.

9 We are here today to apply for a charter  
10 renewal. Miner Academy has been in existence since  
11 2013, and we are requesting a second renewal. The  
12 first one was done in 2017-18. This will be our  
13 second time for renewal that we are requesting.

14 Bauxite Miner Academy sits on the same campus as  
15 our middle school and our high school. We actually  
16 sit adjacent to our high school cafeteria. Students  
17 walk back and forth from Miner Academy to the high  
18 school and middle school for classes.

19 Miner Academy enhances the educational  
20 experience of our students because we allow them to  
21 have opportunities to choose -- choose to take credit  
22 recovery at Miner Academy, choose to take electives  
23 at Miner Academy, choose to take core classes, choose  
24 to graduate early. We allow a student to make that  
25 choice, along with our counselors and our high school

1 principal. We sit with those students and create a  
2 plan.

3 The biggest innovation for Miner Academy is  
4 flexibility and pace and the ability for our students  
5 to still be a part of a traditional high school  
6 setting. To be a full-time Miner Academy student, if  
7 you are a -- we're on an eight-period day, so we have  
8 an advisory. So a student takes seven classes; three  
9 of those classes must be core classes and taken at  
10 Miner Academy to be a Miner Academy student -- full-  
11 time Miner Academy student. That means that they can  
12 take those three cores, or more, at Miner Academy and  
13 take classes at the high school. If they are a  
14 senior needing five or fewer classes, two of those  
15 classes have to be through Miner Academy to be a  
16 full-time student. Student schedule changes are done  
17 each semester, except if a student is entering or  
18 exiting ALE (or alternative leaning environment).

19 We have a full-time principal; we have five  
20 classroom teachers; and we have several teachers that  
21 move in and out from the -- from our high school  
22 also. We also have three support staff.

23 The high school principal and the counselors and  
24 I, we develop the master schedule each year. We  
25 place the four cores, along with fine arts, career

1 tech ed., special education, and elective classes,  
2 within that master schedule for students to choose  
3 from. We work together to place students in classes  
4 based on their career action plan, which we hold in  
5 March of each year.

6 Our mission: Prepare students for college and  
7 career. Our students can attend the career -- the  
8 Saline County Career and Technical Campus where they  
9 can take part in automotive, welding, CNA or health  
10 classes, HVAC, construction, cyber security,  
11 networking. They can also take AP and college  
12 classes. They can take computer science and business  
13 classes. And a fact here is that when we started  
14 computer science our female rate of attendance -- or  
15 our female rate to take those classes was 9%, and  
16 this year we're up to 30.7% of females in computer  
17 science. They can also take computer -- family and  
18 consumer science, which we've received grants for --  
19 and it's state-of-the-art family and consumer  
20 science. We put that back in after it being gone for  
21 about three years. We also schedule special  
22 education classes, credit recovery classes. We work  
23 with those students to plan a course of action to  
24 move them forward. They can also participate in  
25 athletics, e-sports.

1           About Bauxite Miner Academy, again, we were  
2 established in 2013. We were renewed in 2017-18.  
3 We're an online -- we offer an online curriculum; we  
4 use Edgenuity, Virtual Arkansas, and Google  
5 Classroom. We serve students in 6th through 12th  
6 grades. Currently, we have 54 full-time Miner  
7 Academy students, 32 of which are seniors; the other  
8 142 make up Bauxite High School and Bauxite Middle  
9 School students. We take -- they take one, two, or  
10 more classes at the Academy.

11           Our demographics are we have 8% Gifted and  
12 Talented students, 15% special ed. students, 17% of  
13 our students are 504, and 4% are ESL. We currently  
14 have three students that are in dyslexia. We also  
15 have three virtual students at this time because of  
16 medical conditions. We also house our 6-12 ALE in  
17 Miner Academy also.

18           In 2013, we had a -- when Miner Academy was  
19 established we had a goal of 80% of all Miner Academy  
20 students to be proficient in literacy and math. Due  
21 to the pandemic and a decade of change in  
22 assessments, we realized this goal has been  
23 unrealistic. Our target goals are to raise our ESSA  
24 scores, which we have gone since the pandemic; focus  
25 on moving students across levels so that our weighted

1 achievement continues to grow up -- to go --  
2 continues to go up; continue our graduation rate to  
3 be 90% of above; also monitor our students who take  
4 our educational behavior assessments every 9 weeks to  
5 see if their goals have changed; flexible, caring  
6 environment while being a safe environment for our  
7 students; and change the mindset by emphasizing  
8 careers that may -- that these students may be  
9 interested in; and offering our career tech, computer  
10 science, business certifications, and the AP tech  
11 courses to our students.

12           These are data revisions on page 5 of our  
13 application. I actually misread this when I was  
14 filling this out on the application. I was -- did  
15 not know that under My School Info that it was a year  
16 behind -- it was a year behind before they actually  
17 put in their scores. So those are the new scores  
18 there. But you see in 20-21, our four-year  
19 graduation rate was 100%. We had less than 10 in our  
20 five-year cohort. Our high school graduation rate  
21 was 92.3 that year. In 21-22, we had 68%, but in our  
22 five-year we had 100%. So we've recouped some of the  
23 kids that did not graduate within the four-year  
24 cohort.

25           This is our ESSA Index comparison with other

1 Saline County schools. We have had a grade of C  
2 since 2018, since the last renewal. Then, Covid hit  
3 and we took a dip. And then we have bounced back and  
4 we are very proud of that score coming back up after  
5 two Covid years.

6 This is a comparison with other conversion  
7 charter schools that are nearby. Again, we compare  
8 relatively the same as several of these charter  
9 schools.

10 About Miner Academy's ESSA data, our growth has  
11 been mainly in the 70s and 80s -- and I know y'all  
12 spoke about growth earlier. We want our growth to be  
13 in the 80s, 80 or above each year. I know several  
14 years that we've dipped in different areas, such as  
15 science, and our English we have dipped and we tried  
16 to come back up in our 9th grade and our 10th grade  
17 years. And our 6th -- or 7th and 8th grade years, in  
18 math, they've done quite well. We dipped slightly in  
19 our 10th grade year. And this was as of 2021 data.  
20 2022 data, 6th, 7th and 8th grade, the numbers on the  
21 -- in the parenthesis represent the number of kids  
22 that were actually tested; so we were below 10. So  
23 all we could get was if they were close, in need of  
24 support or ready or exceeding. In 9th grade, our  
25 target score for math -- well, our actual benchmark

1 was 15.4, and so our target rate for 2023 in math  
2 will be 30%. Our target rate in English, we were at  
3 46.2. We would like to see that go up to 55% for the  
4 20 -- this year, this current year, 22-23. And our  
5 benchmark in science was 30.8 and we are looking at  
6 35% to 40% growth on that; that's for our 9th graders  
7 going into our 10th grade.

8 The attendance/enrollment comparison of Saline  
9 County schools -- we took a dip in -- right after  
10 Covid, but we have bounced back and our attendance  
11 rate has gone back up into the 90% range. And that's  
12 comparable to the other schools in Saline County.  
13 And this is the comparison with conversion charter  
14 schools that are near us.

15 Addressing learning loss -- we use Edgenuity and  
16 Virtual Arkansas for our Tier 1. We also use ACT  
17 Aspire Academy where we have students that will stay  
18 after school. We provide snacks and transportation  
19 for those students who need extra help in hopefully  
20 closing that gap so that they will do well on that  
21 summative test, and that's done anywhere from four  
22 weeks to -- two to four weeks prior to the summative  
23 testing. We also use intervention programs, such as  
24 the Sondag System for our dyslexia intervention and  
25 products from the Imagine Learning for our math

1 intervention. We also use paraprofessionals to help  
2 out with interventions with ESL, dyslexia, 504,  
3 special ed. students, for tutoring, and closing those  
4 gaps. We work with The Point Behavioral who is  
5 onsite at our middle school and they also have a site  
6 at the elementary school; they work with our  
7 students. And we also work with the Counseling  
8 Clinic out of Benton for the socio-emotional support  
9 of our students. We have several students who will  
10 change over to The Point from Counseling Clinic if  
11 they're not already court-ordered to go to the  
12 Counseling Clinic through the juvenile services. We  
13 also offer summer school for our students.

14 Our ESSER funds -- we have curriculum purchases  
15 for all grade levels there. We also are giving a  
16 \$5,000 and a \$2,000 bonus this year for all teachers  
17 and staff, and that will be coming out of our  
18 operating fund.

19 Miner Academy was recognized as a School on the  
20 Move for our ESSA score improvements. We improved by  
21 six points there. We are proud of that. We will  
22 celebrate this accomplishment and we continue to set  
23 goals to build on this. I recognize our teachers and  
24 our paras have done an outstanding job working with  
25 students on a daily basis.

1           Also, the other one is a weighted achievement  
2 increase. We've gained 10 points. Coming off of  
3 Covid, we are -- I was elated to see this. And,  
4 again, I recognize our teachers and our paras for  
5 doing an outstanding job day-in and day-out with  
6 these kids. We're trying to close gaps and trying to  
7 get these achievement scores up, as that's the main  
8 part -- one of the main parts of our ESSA scores.

9           This is our challenge. The way we educate  
10 students has to be appropriate for students of today,  
11 not students of yesterday. So we've got to move  
12 forward. Hopefully, things will get back to normal  
13 and we're hoping for the best moving forward.

14           Thank you.

15           CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you so much for the  
16 presentation.

17           As was indicated by Ms. Wagner, this would be a  
18 time for opposition. There are no oppositions to the  
19 application. And so we will move forward with the  
20 legal review.

21                           LEGAL REVIEW

22           MS. WAGNER: Good morning. This will be a very  
23 short legal review.

24                           CLOCK HOURS

25           MS. WAGNER: So the first waiver topic that

1 Bauxite is requesting to continue is Clock Hours,  
2 standard 1-A.2. And there were no legal concerns  
3 with this request.

4 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any questions or concerns  
5 regarding this waiver request from the Panel?

6 Seeing none, let's continue.

7 PERSONNEL POLICIES

8 MS. WAGNER: The next topic is Personnel  
9 Policies, Employment of Licensed Personnel, Arkansas  
10 code annotated 6-17-301(a) and (b). There are no  
11 legal concerns with this request.

12 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any questions or concerns from  
13 the Panel regarding this waiver request?

14 Hearing none, we'll continue.

15 TEACHER LICENSURE

16 MS. WAGNER: The next waiver request is Teacher  
17 Licensure, Arkansas code annotated section 6-17-902,  
18 6-17-919, 6-17-401, 6-17-309, and 6-15-1004, standard  
19 4-D.1, and the DESE rules governing Educator  
20 Licensure section 7. There were no legal concerns.

21 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Questions or concerns regarding  
22 this waiver request?

23 Seeing none, we'll continue.

24 TEACHER SALARIES (VOC-AGRI TEACHERS)

25 MS. WAGNER: The last one is Teacher Salaries -

1 12-Month Contracts for Vocational Agri Teachers,  
2 Arkansas code annotated 6-17-802. And there were no  
3 legal concerns with that request.

4 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Questions or concerns regarding  
5 this request?

6 Seeing none --

7 MS. WAGNER: Those are all the waivers that  
8 Bauxite Miner Academy requests to continue.

9 RESCINDED/NEW WAIVERS

10 MS. WAGNER: Now there is a long list that  
11 they've requested to rescind, the first one being  
12 their Library Media Services, which is standard 2-  
13 D.1; their Class Size and Teaching Load, Arkansas  
14 code annotated 6-17-812 and standards 1-A.5 and 1-  
15 A.6; the Instructional Day, which was standard 1-  
16 A.4.2; the Library Media Specialist and Library Media  
17 Services, Arkansas code annotated 6-25-103, 6-25-104,  
18 and standards 4-F.1 and 4-F.2; the Personnel Policies  
19 - Duty-Free Lunch, Arkansas code annotated 6-17-111;  
20 the Principal, Arkansas code annotated 6-17-302 and  
21 standard 4-D.1; the School Calendar/School Start  
22 Date, Arkansas code annotated 6-10-106 and standard  
23 1-A.4; the Comprehensive -- excuse me --  
24 Comprehensive School Counseling --

25 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: For the record -- for the

1 record, the School Calendar rescind got a thumbs-up  
2 from Ms. Coffman. Sorry to cut you off. I wanted  
3 that noted. Continue.

4 MS. WAGNER: The Comprehensive School Counseling  
5 Plan and School counselor, Arkansas code annotated 6-  
6 18-2003 and standard 4-E.1; the Flexible Schedule,  
7 which was Arkansas code annotated 6-16-102 and  
8 standards 1-A.4.2 and 1-A.4.1; and then the  
9 Superintendent, Arkansas code annotated section 6-13-  
10 109 and 6-17-427, as well as standard 4-B.2.

11 They asked to rescind all of those and they  
12 sought no new waivers.

13 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you so much.

14 Any questions in regards to the waivers that are  
15 being rescinded?

16 Thank you.

17 INTERNAL REVIEW/REMAINING ISSUES

18 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: At this time I'd like to ask  
19 Mr. Hoy [sic] to come up. And, Mr. Hoy, can you  
20 please provide to the Panel any sort of assessment on  
21 the internal review and any remaining issues that  
22 exist?

23 MR. COY: Thomas Coy, Charter Office.

24 Again, just like the last item, you all received  
25 the feedback that was provided to the school on their

1 internal review. We also took time to visit with the  
2 school about any remaining issues. We have folks on  
3 the line, if you have any questions from any of those  
4 particular units or any follow-up.

5 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: I do have a quick question. Is  
6 it Coy?

7 MR. COY: Coy.

8 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you so much. Sorry about  
9 the mispronunciation.

10 MR. COY: I thought you were trying to make me  
11 into the --

12 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Yeah.

13 MR. COY: -- (inaudible).

14 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Coy.

15 Any questions for Mr. Coy and his team?

16 Okay. We'll go to general questions from the  
17 Panel.

18 GENERAL PANEL QUESTIONS

19 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Panel, any questions that you  
20 may have in regards to the Bauxite Miner Academy  
21 application, how they institute their educational  
22 pedagogy, and the difference that they're making in  
23 the lives of students?

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

25 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Yes. Please, go ahead, Ms.

1 Wright-McMurray.

2 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: First, thank you for your  
3 presentation and giving us an overview of what you  
4 guys have accomplished and what you are wanting to do  
5 going forward.

6 I will say I have not had a chance to visit the  
7 campus, so I'm not as familiar with the structure.  
8 So would you say that the campus is more of a virtual  
9 option or is it in-person? I'm trying to follow when  
10 -- especially when you mentioned there were so many  
11 online options that were available to students.

12 MS. WEBB: Yes, ma'am. Miner Academy is in-  
13 person. Now we do have a virtual component for  
14 students that -- we have a committee that actually  
15 votes -- that determines if a student can be virtual  
16 or not, based off of health problems most of the  
17 time. And the three that are out have -- that's the  
18 circumstance with those students. It's a school-  
19 within-a-school and that's the way it was presented  
20 back in 2013, and it's still that way today. We have  
21 -- we offer electives; we offer credit recovery; we  
22 offer classes for students who want to graduate early  
23 along with working with the high school and the high  
24 school counselors; we -- students will flow in and  
25 out. If I had an elective class that I wanted to

1 take through Miner Academy, I could do that; I could  
2 put that on my course request and I could take that  
3 class, or I could take core classes down there. If I  
4 needed credit recovery, I could take credit recovery  
5 through Miner Academy. It's -- students flow in and  
6 out throughout the day. If you were to visit, you'll  
7 see when the bell rings -- we follow the same bell  
8 schedule as the high school and the middle school.  
9 Kids will flow in and out and take a course down  
10 there with us should they want to.

11 Now online learning is not for everybody. Some  
12 kids don't want to do that. Some kids want to try  
13 one and then -- I think we get them hooked a little  
14 bit though. So, and they see the flexibility and  
15 that they can work at their own pace. And that's the  
16 biggest innovation for these students. And then when  
17 these students go on to -- let's say to a two-year  
18 college, four-year college, they may end up taking  
19 those same type of courses online.

20 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And so just, you know, my  
21 area is -- I'm in with the Division of CTE. So when  
22 you start mentioning some of the pieces that you guys  
23 have, offering there, that's going to peak my  
24 interest also. So you've chosen to focus at the  
25 Miner Academy on Family and Consumer Sciences? The

1 Family and Consumer Sciences, is that what you've  
2 chosen to focus on at the Miner Academy? Is that  
3 where that is offered? Are students -- are they  
4 taking some courses at the traditional high school --

5 MS. WEBB: Yes.

6 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- and then taking the  
7 maybe upper level at the Miner Academy? How is that  
8 laid out? Because I did notice one of the waivers  
9 that you had in place was in relation to the  
10 agriculture; so I'm assuming that's because that's  
11 not offered there -- maybe not offering that one?

12 MS. WEBB: We actually offer agri classes.

13 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: At the Miner Academy?

14 MS. WEBB: At Miner Academy, yes.

15 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

16 MS. WEBB: So, we have an agri teacher that  
17 covers those.

18 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

19 MS. WEBB: They don't have like a farm or  
20 anything like that; it's mostly agri business that  
21 they -- that he does. He also does plant science,  
22 animal science, those classes. So he covers those.

23 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. Can I just -- two  
24 more follow-up?

25 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Please. Please, take your

1 time.

2 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And I was just curious,  
3 how many of your students are you connecting with  
4 Saline County Career Technical?

5 MS. WEBB: How many do we send?

6 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Uh-huh.

7 MS. WEBB: 21 at this time.

8 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

9 MS. WEBB: We have a cap in certain areas. If  
10 kids want to take -- a lot of kids -- several  
11 students want to take automotive or welding, and they  
12 fill up fast. We have students out there who -- we  
13 have one that's already a CNA and she's in her last  
14 year of that health program, so she is looking  
15 forward to starting her LPN license. We don't have  
16 that many in networking or cyber security; we have  
17 one in cyber security, one in networking. But most  
18 of them are -- automotive, CNA, welding are the main  
19 ones.

20 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. And then I was just  
21 curious, you said you had significant growth in the  
22 amount of female students that were wanting to get  
23 into computer science. Why did you guys do in  
24 particular -- was there something specific you guys  
25 did? Was there a targeted approach or --

1 MS. WEBB: We have a great teacher.

2 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

3 MS. WEBB: Please don't take her. She is great,  
4 I'm telling you -- Carol Anderson. And Valerie  
5 Bryant, we stole her from Harmony Grove.

6 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

7 MS. WEBB: She -- both of those ladies have made  
8 it fun, have made it interesting. They do the e-  
9 sports, they do FBLA. Their numbers are up in FBLA.  
10 I think this year they have 65 -- 63 or 65, I'm not  
11 sure on that, but I have that here. And kids -- the  
12 kids love it. The kids love them and they love the  
13 program, they love -- we have -- this year we'll have  
14 -- last year we had one course for computer science,  
15 this year we'll have six.

16 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

17 MS. WEBB: So we have students in year-three.

18 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

19 MS. WEBB: So it's been great.

20 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And I would just -- a  
21 recommendation, I would say -- because you're saying  
22 you also house your ALE on that campus -- and I did  
23 check and it doesn't look like you guys have a JAG  
24 program there.

25 MS. WEBB: We don't.

1 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: But that is something I  
2 think could help to benefit those students also,  
3 especially when you mentioned that they're seeking  
4 credit recovery. That's kind of built into that  
5 program and then it also builds a lot of those skills  
6 that maybe are causing them to be in ALE. So I would  
7 recommend you reaching out to our office and maybe  
8 talk about options there.

9 MS. WEBB: Okay. Thank you. Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you for the questions.

11 Any other questions from Panel Members?

12 Mr. Baldwin.

13 MR. BALDWIN: Thank you for the presentation.

14 MS. WEBB: Yes, sir.

15 MR. BALDWIN: And I don't really have any  
16 substantive questions but I do have a structure  
17 question.

18 MS. WEBB: Yes, sir.

19 MR. BALDWIN: So it looks like the students flow  
20 freely between the high school and the Academy, back  
21 and forth. Is -- when a student graduates do they  
22 graduate from the high school or --

23 MS. WEBB: Yes, sir.

24 MR. BALDWIN: And so they don't graduate from  
25 the Academy?

1 MS. WEBB: No, sir.

2 MR. BALDWIN: They go back into the high school.  
3 Okay.

4 MS. WEBB: They may be -- in eSchool they're  
5 under Miner Academy, but we all graduate under  
6 Bauxite High School.

7 MR. BALDWIN: Okay. Thank you.

8 MS. NEWTON: I have one.

9 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Yes, Ms. Newton.

10 MS. NEWTON: I did have an opportunity to visit  
11 the campus and I was pleasantly surprised at the  
12 culture of the campus. And I think probably most  
13 people in their applications they -- "we're going to  
14 do this, everybody loves everybody, and everybody --  
15 everything goes smoothly, teachers are involved and  
16 encouraging." And I found all that to be the  
17 situation. But I was especially impressed by the  
18 fact that you don't know a conversion student from  
19 another student.

20 MS. WEBB: Right.

21 MS. NEWTON: When bells ring young people move.  
22 And it was very impressive in terms of the individual  
23 attention that the students got from their  
24 instructors. And I, you know, went as far as to  
25 interview some of the students and they gave the same

1 information that the administration gave.

2 So like I said, I think the culture of the  
3 school, the culture of this charter is a reason that  
4 it's having the success, is because you guys have got  
5 everybody mingled in and nobody -- it's like, you  
6 know, a tapestry; nobody knows what thread -- where  
7 it starts and where it ends, but you end up at the  
8 same place.

9 MS. WEBB: Yes. Thank you. Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any other --

11 MS. SARACINI: I have a comment.

12 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Please, do.

13 MS. SARACINI: I don't have a question; I just  
14 have a comment. It's just nice to see that you're  
15 providing options, because I think we learned with  
16 Covid and the pandemic that traditional doesn't  
17 always work with everyone. So it's nice to see that  
18 this option is working for you. And it's just --  
19 it's like Ms. Newton said, we don't always get to see  
20 it in your application, but your presentation -- it  
21 just bled through and we can see it. So I want to  
22 commend you for that.

23 MS. WEBB: Thank you.

24 MS. NEWTON: And as Ms. Saracini said, you know,  
25 what you put on paper oftentimes is not what you

1 actually find. But that's what I found and I  
2 thought, "Hmm, this is unique." And so I left there  
3 telling other districts that would listen about the  
4 unique partnership. And I think it's probably one of  
5 the reasons a lot of children don't excel in school,  
6 because they're not a part of the system; they're in  
7 this room or that room or this program or that  
8 program. But that's a very good concept.

9 MS. WEBB: Thank you. Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: If there are no other --

11 I think, Ms. Coffman, did you have a question or  
12 comment?

13 MS. COFFMAN: I have a comment. I wanted to  
14 thank Ms. Webb for a very thorough presentation that  
15 answered all my questions before I had to ask them,  
16 and most especially thoughtful review of your  
17 waivers. And the waivers that you've requested make  
18 sense and I appreciate the waivers that you have  
19 rescinded. So I just wanted to commend you on that  
20 work.

21 MS. WEBB: Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Fantastic. If there are no  
23 additional questions, I'd like to entertain a motion.

24 MS. SARACINI: I make a motion that we recommend  
25 the renewal for five years for Bauxite Miner Academy.

1 MS. NEWTON: Second.

2 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: There's been a motion and a  
3 second. All those in favor indicate by stating  
4 "aye."

5 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

6 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any opposed?  
7 Motion passes. Congratulations.

8 MS. WEBB: Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: I'm going to ask panel members  
10 to take a minute or two to record their vote, and  
11 then we will go around.

12 Thank you so much. Congratulations. Great,  
13 great work.

14 MS. WEBB: Thank you.

15 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

16 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: All right. Why don't we start  
17 on the right with Ms. Wright-McMurray. How did you  
18 vote and your statement?

19 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I voted for. I support  
20 the motion. Bauxite Miner Academy is providing an  
21 innovative option for students to explore, develop  
22 and grow. I'm impressed with their strong inclusion  
23 of CTE in the learning environment. I encourage them  
24 to seek implementation of a JAG program to better  
25 support [clearing throat] -- excuse me -- ALE

1 students. I look forward to their continued success.

2 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Ms. Saracini.

3 MS. SARACINI: I support the five-year renewal  
4 of Bauxite Miner Academy. Student success is  
5 evident. I'm looking forward to seeing the impact in  
6 the future.

7 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: I also support the renewal,  
8 considering the innovative approach to the students  
9 and the success already garnered. I look forward to  
10 learning more about the success of students in the  
11 future.

12 MR. BALDWIN: I voted for the five-year renewal.  
13 I think you guys have a unique and innovative program  
14 that has strong student success.

15 MS. NEWTON: I voted for the renewal also, as  
16 Miner Academy continues to move the concept of  
17 blended students to enhance educational opportunities  
18 forward.

19 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: And, Ms. Coffman.

20 MS. COFFMAN: I voted for the five-year renewal.  
21 The presentation was complete and the thoughtful  
22 review of waivers was appreciated and student focus  
23 was evident.

24 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Fantastic. Congratulations.

25 MS. WEBB: Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: At this time I ask, what's the  
2 request of the Panel? There is another presentation  
3 and charter renewal application that we still have to  
4 review. I'm looking at 11:15. I think we have a  
5 couple of options: obviously, take a break, a short  
6 break, come back and review; take a break, go to  
7 lunch, and then come back to review. What is the  
8 pleasure or recommendation of the Panel? Or we can  
9 continue without a break and move right into it.

10 MS. NEWTON: That's fine with me.

11 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I'm fine with that.

12 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Okay. I'm seeing most folks  
13 say yes. So why don't we just go ahead and continue.  
14 Thank you so much again.

15 MR. BALDWIN: Congratulations.

16 MS. SARACINI: Thank you.

17 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Thank you.

18 3) POLK COUNTY VIRTUAL ACADEMY (MENA) DISTRICT CONVERSION  
19 RENEWAL APPLICATION

20 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: The next application and  
21 renewal is for Polk County Virtual Academy. I will  
22 ask them to move forward and let's get their  
23 application and their presentation loaded up. That  
24 would be great.

25 Before you sit, folks at -- with the Polk County

1 Virtual Academy, I ask that you stand and let's go  
2 ahead and swear you in if you plan on presenting or  
3 there's a possibility that you will be called to the  
4 podium to present. If you can, raise your right  
5 hand. Do you swear and affirm that the testimony  
6 you're about to give shall be the truth, the whole  
7 truth and nothing but the truth?

8 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

9 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you. Have a seat,  
10 please.

11 At this time I'd like to call forward Ms. Wagner  
12 to go over the order for this presentation, or the  
13 application rather.

14 MS. WAGNER: Now that Polk County has been sworn  
15 in, the next step is for them to do their  
16 presentation. We have received no opposition. So,  
17 therefore, after their presentation we will start the  
18 legal review. And then after that you'll ask for  
19 general questions.

20 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Fantastic. Thank you so much.  
21 Are we ready to load?

22 Good morning. I think the floor is all yours.  
23 Thank you for being with us today.

24 SUPT. SMITH: Thank you. I appreciate the Panel  
25 having us today on our request for renewal. I'm Lee

1 Smith, Superintendent of Mena Public Schools. And I  
2 have with me Bridget Buckley, our Assistant  
3 Superintendent and former director of PCVA, and  
4 Teresa Warner, Assistant Middle School Principal and  
5 current director of PCVA. And they've done all the  
6 work, but I'm here just to tell you that on behalf of  
7 my self and the Board of Education at Mena Public  
8 Schools we fully support the renewal of PCVA. Coming  
9 out of the pandemic we have a new perspective about  
10 virtual learning, and also going through a transition  
11 with new leadership in the district we have a new  
12 respect among leaders in the community. And I think  
13 these two ladies will outline that mission very well  
14 for you. Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you so much.

16 MS. BUCKLEY: Thank you. I am Bridget Buckley  
17 and I serve currently as the Assistant Superintendent  
18 for the school district.

19 And while I was not a part of the initial  
20 charter application process, I did have the privilege  
21 of being the Director during the 2020 and 2021 school  
22 years, two very difficult years. And I've continued  
23 to work with the curriculum enrollment for the  
24 program and our team has worked together to develop  
25 and renew our goals. We know that our mission and

1 vision in this renewal process needed to be relooked  
2 at. What we started -- or what was started in the  
3 2018 school year has changed and it is a little bit  
4 different because our world is a little bit different  
5 right now.

6 So PCVA was initially developed as an  
7 opportunity for students who were not current public  
8 school students to have high-quality instructional  
9 services offered to them through a virtual program.  
10 The hope was that they would then engage with social  
11 activities that we would offer, that they would  
12 engage with those opportunities in the community, and  
13 that by doing that they would want to become more of  
14 a part of the school community. There have been both  
15 successes and challenges in that process. And we  
16 have determined a need to make some adjustments to  
17 our goals, looking more towards that flexibility  
18 choice and then the careers for our students.

19 So, the successes and challenges that we have  
20 faced -- our first year was 2019, and we met our goal  
21 of 25 students. We were set up on an incremental  
22 enrollment increase; so the first year 25 students,  
23 the second year we would be allowed 50 students, and  
24 so on. And so our weighted achievement score that  
25 year was above the state average. Our school quality

1 and student success indicators exceeded the state  
2 average. We had one graduate that first year, which  
3 we thought was very exciting to begin that way. In  
4 the second year of the program we did increase our  
5 initial enrollment up to 50, and we had students that  
6 joined the program, but they did drop back and we  
7 ended with less than 30 students at that time. While  
8 it was an advantage for our students during that year  
9 to have been virtual already, when Covid hit it still  
10 presented challenges. And some of the things that  
11 were written into what we were going to do with  
12 students we were unable to do during that and that  
13 did keep us from moving students forward as we had  
14 hoped to.

15 The start of the '21 school year, that school  
16 year saw a drastic increase for us. Our cap was at  
17 100 that year and we hit that very quickly. However,  
18 our school district decided that because we were  
19 going to hit that cap we needed another option and so  
20 we also offered in the school district a blended  
21 option. And so we had students that chose that  
22 because they either couldn't get into the program,  
23 because we had hit our cap, or because they wanted to  
24 have more onsite options as well. I'm sorry. Our  
25 ability to offer tutoring was limited to those

1 students then because they were fully virtual. Many  
2 students and families did choose that digital option  
3 because they did not want to be on campus with us;  
4 they wanted to keep their children at home, and we  
5 understood that, and that's what our program was able  
6 to offer them that year. However, whenever it came  
7 time for them to have the option to come back to the  
8 school they were ready to go. And so those blended  
9 students that our school district had had, they were  
10 able to stay blended; our students, then we lost  
11 several of those and we ended the year at 68. We  
12 didn't lose the students; they just went back to our  
13 regular school program, which was part of what we  
14 wanted. We want our kids to know that they have that  
15 place in our campus too.

16 In hindsight, we very likely should have come  
17 back and asked if we could increase our cap at that  
18 point, because we knew we needed that, and then we  
19 would've had a different approach that we could've  
20 taken. We understand better now what our flexibility  
21 and options are with this conversion charter.

22 Overall, though, our ESSA score was just below  
23 the state average, but our SQSS indicators have  
24 managed to remain above the state average.

25 During the five-year period we've seen success

1 with our students in their participation and  
2 activities in the school outside of that '21 and '22  
3 school year, those limitations that they had. As  
4 they could, our students used the library services,  
5 they used our tutoring services before and after  
6 school, they participated in school dances and club  
7 activities that we have. We just had one of our PCVA  
8 students who was elected to the homecoming court.  
9 And so we were -- we have been excited that our  
10 students understand that they are a part of the  
11 school district.

12 Each year our PCVA students that are seniors  
13 graduate with our Mena High School students. They  
14 are Mena High School graduates, and we see them as  
15 part of the school. We've been successful in  
16 assisting students who need to recover credits and  
17 we've been successful in working with students who  
18 want to accelerate. It's been an option that the  
19 supported student -- we offer a variety of  
20 opportunities to our students.

21 There have been challenges and these challenges  
22 have caused PCVA to have some setbacks. Many of our  
23 families who chose the digital -- fully digital  
24 option, they were surprised at the difficulty and  
25 challenge that can come with digital education. In

1 the very beginning, we had some home school families  
2 that chose to use our resources. However, the  
3 flexibility that they were used to with their  
4 traditional home school model wasn't the same with  
5 our digital model and we didn't know as much then as  
6 we know now. The time constraints have been a  
7 deterrent at some opportunities because there is  
8 still the need to spend time with your studies to  
9 complete and make sure that you are being successful.

10 We have learning to do in understanding what  
11 could work and how we could be successful. And one  
12 of our initial goals was participation in service  
13 learning. Covid really took a hit with us on that.  
14 And even now, we are just now able to get back into  
15 the nursing home that is one of our greatest  
16 supporters for our service learning with our  
17 students. And we're thankful for that to be able to  
18 get back into that opportunity, but that does cause  
19 us to go backwards and have to re-look at things and  
20 how we can grow.

21 Another challenge that we've had to learn  
22 through is adds and drops. With virtual learning, no  
23 one is looking at you. The student doesn't have to  
24 look you in the face necessarily. It becomes much  
25 more easy for them to drop. So we have had to

1 address that and we have a plan in place where we now  
2 have an ability for our facilitator and our school  
3 counselor that's going to be working with these  
4 students, effectively communicating on a regular  
5 basis with them rather than them being so digital  
6 that they don't get that human element and that  
7 communication.

8 Measuring attendance before, during and after  
9 Covid, that has been difficult. We had to take some  
10 time and effort and some trial and error to figure  
11 out what works for determining a student's attendance  
12 when they are digital.

13 So the original mission and goal for PCVA was to  
14 provide a viable, flexible option of education for  
15 students in and around Polk County. And that's still  
16 our mission. Initially, the goals of the program  
17 included community service, career exploration, and  
18 citizenship readiness -- all goals that are still at  
19 the forefront of what we feel our community and  
20 students deserve and need for this program. But in  
21 the renewal process we have seen the need to pivot  
22 our methods and make some changes there to be more  
23 student-focused and to take the challenges we face to  
24 heart, the things that we know have made it  
25 difficult; not giving up on what we know our

1 community needs; and to move forward in a way that is  
2 going to give students and families support and  
3 structure that was a struggle to provide throughout  
4 the pandemic.

5 The three goals that we have seen are in need in  
6 our community are acceleration, recovery, and career  
7 exploration. Both acceleration and recovery can  
8 benefit from the concurrent credit options that are  
9 offered through our partnership with the University  
10 of Arkansas at Rich Mountain and through our virtual  
11 short semesters where our students can complete fewer  
12 classes at a time and get more authentic learning  
13 experiences with that content. We see this in higher  
14 education models right now where they're doing those  
15 shorter semesters and it's proven to be very  
16 successful.

17 Our career focus adds vocational courses that  
18 allow our students to earn certifications and enter  
19 into concurrent vocational courses with our  
20 partnership with UARM. And our students can receive  
21 credit for internships and work, as well as  
22 experiencing job shadowing and mentor opportunities.

23 Service learning is that enhanced and encouraged  
24 method of learning that we value for all of our  
25 students in the Mena School District, and that is a

1 part of PCVA as well.

2 And in our goals student choice and flexibility  
3 have to be our guiding principles, and we know that.

4 In developing our goals, we determined that we  
5 have to have a dedicated guidance counselor. That  
6 was one of the things that we saw as a change that  
7 would be positive for our students and would promote  
8 student success. Counseling services and standards  
9 instruction is going to be provided virtually, but  
10 she also offers face-to-face virtual counseling or  
11 virtual counseling that the students can request,  
12 because we feel that is going to be a huge benefit to  
13 our program.

14 We also have a team of support now that we have  
15 relooked at what is needed and what is going to work.  
16 And that team does include Dr. Smith and myself, our  
17 current director Ms. Warner. We also have an  
18 elementary certified teacher, a technology  
19 representative, a parent, community business partner,  
20 a communications director for our district who is an  
21 integral part of what we do with the virtual, and the  
22 counselors from each building that have to understand  
23 what we are doing so that they know whenever a  
24 student may need some of our services as well.

25 Learning loss -- PCVA has implemented several

1 resources designed to address learning loss with our  
2 students. The students do have access to onsite  
3 tutoring that they can access, but they also have  
4 virtual options with their Ed Options Academy  
5 teachers through Edmentum. Tutoring sessions can  
6 focus on current assignments or on their gaps in  
7 learning. Depending on the student needs and their  
8 request, intervention services are provided through  
9 multiple options, including virtually through two  
10 programs that are offered with Edmentum Study Island  
11 and Exact Path. Both of these programs assess where  
12 the student is at the time and then provides them a  
13 pathway for them to address those needs. Students  
14 can also participate though face-to-face on our  
15 campus in the intervention programs that we offer, if  
16 that is their parent choice.

17 We are providing a facilitator locally who  
18 communicates with them via phone, text, or in-person  
19 to review their student success plans, to go over  
20 their schedules and their four-year plans and their  
21 assessment data. These meetings each semester, to  
22 review their progress and plan for the student, is  
23 consistent and ongoing progress monitoring that's  
24 going to insure that the students stay on track and  
25 know who to reach out to when they have concerns or

1 needs.

2           And then, again, those engagement opportunities  
3 -- we know that engaged students are much more likely  
4 to succeed, they're more likely to recover their  
5 learning loss if they are involved. And so we  
6 continue to offer those opportunities for students to  
7 be involved in band, in choir, in our robotics  
8 program, in our arts, in our clubs -- anything that  
9 they would like to be involved in we encourage that.

10           Student IEPs and 504s, those are also addressed  
11 through our PCVA opportunities. Students with IEPs  
12 can complete their courses through inclusion  
13 digitally and receive their minutes then with one of  
14 our staff -- on-staff special education teachers that  
15 are certified and hold their folder. They may do  
16 that personally or virtually, whichever way the  
17 student chooses. We can also provide them with their  
18 minutes with that teacher as well, as they choose to  
19 do that, rather than doing it with inclusion in our  
20 -- with Options Academy staff.

21           We have had students do both of these things and  
22 they have been successful. We've had students start  
23 one way and realize that they need to switch to the  
24 other, and that also works.

25           504 accommodations are provided to our virtual

1 teachers. They implement those and then we review  
2 those annually, as needed, or earlier, if that is  
3 necessary.

4 Overall, our ESSA scores have dropped and we do  
5 know that we are facing a challenge. We have seen  
6 that. Our number of students tested has also dropped  
7 and that's going to -- that's going to be something  
8 that affects the growth that we see as well. We do  
9 see some highlights in our program though, such as  
10 our weighted achievement score has increased, as has  
11 our school value-added growth score, and our grade  
12 level reading is above the state average.

13 Attendance measures did cause us some difficulty  
14 at first. And as I stated, we have adjusted our  
15 policy to make sure that we understand how to take  
16 attendance for a virtual student. Through Covid that  
17 was a little bit difficult, but we've managed to make  
18 a way that's going to still hold students accountable  
19 but offer them the flexibility that digital was  
20 supposed to do.

21 Comparing to our traditional options, we are the  
22 only fully digital option conversion charter in our  
23 area. However, they -- our students are going to  
24 have access to K-12 Academy, they're going to have  
25 Connections Academy. They have other virtual

1 options. So, why choose us? And so we have to make  
2 sure that they see and that we promote that we are a  
3 unique option. Not only are we a choice and we're  
4 flexible, more so than traditional options, but we  
5 also offer a human element to the option that you're  
6 not going to get with one of those other programs.  
7 We are making sure that we connect and build  
8 relationships with our families and we have that plan  
9 in place.

10 The vision that we have of our program is to  
11 integrate technology, career focus, and academics,  
12 with choice for a family who may be looking for the  
13 ability to be more engaged with their child's  
14 education while still offering them some  
15 opportunities to experience certain aspects of the  
16 public school education. These things may be ones  
17 that appeal to them individually, in pieces, and we  
18 understand that.

19 Within our program we can offer that human  
20 element with pieces, such as mentorship and the  
21 conferencing that we do, as well as our counselor  
22 availability for our students, and our academics.  
23 And that gives our staff the opportunity to actually  
24 engage with our families. And it also makes it where  
25 our Edmentum staff, our Ed Options Academy staff is

1 fully focused on the academics of our students. We  
2 take on the personal element then.

3 In comparison with our nearby traditional  
4 options outside of the district, there are two close  
5 school districts, with five buildings between the two  
6 of them. Three of those -- two of those schools, we  
7 have a higher SQSS indicator than and two of those  
8 schools we are within one point of.

9 So while we know we have challenges and we have  
10 to get our score where we want it to be, we also know  
11 that we are a viable option and a good option for  
12 students in our area.

13 One of our unique aspects is that we do offer a  
14 variety of ways that students can experience  
15 activities and opportunities. It could either be  
16 onsite or in a way that works for them, such as  
17 volunteering or the community service activities; the  
18 business partnerships that they can actually seek out  
19 close to home -- so if they do a school transfer or a  
20 school choice for us and they're not right in our  
21 community, we can work with them to build those  
22 relationships in their own community. We also  
23 encourage our students to utilize the opportunities  
24 to have music lessons within the community, dance  
25 lessons. Maybe they participate with extension

1 services and do 4H; we are able to have some  
2 flexibility there that the traditional options cannot  
3 have. And this oftentimes gives parents some  
4 confidence that what I'm doing with my child outside  
5 of a public school setting is valuable and has merit,  
6 and we want them to know that.

7 ARP and CARES Act funds were used to enhance  
8 materials and resources for our students. Initially,  
9 we had to provide our students with refurbished  
10 devices that had been in our school. And then we --  
11 when we took them out, that was what we had initially  
12 used. So we were able to purchase new devices so our  
13 students all had a device that was going to give them  
14 access to their learning needs. We were also able to  
15 purchase hotspots and that was a huge piece for us.  
16 Because while a student -- all students have access  
17 to the program, not all students could afford  
18 internet or have access to internet. So that's an  
19 important piece. And by providing those hotspots we  
20 opened up how many students could be involved there.  
21 We purchased manipulative kits for all of our  
22 students with CARES Act and ARP funds so that they  
23 would be able to have workbooks, they have math kits  
24 -- math and science manipulatives, and they are able  
25 to have the books that go with the literature part of

1 their program. And then Smart data was also provided  
2 in 2020, for our staff so that they could have the  
3 immediate attention to accessing information about  
4 their students.

5 Implementation of our program -- it has been a  
6 challenge and Covid did create a massive increase in  
7 the '21 school year, and that did kind of send us  
8 haywire for just a little while, and a drastic drop.  
9 But it's been our goal in this renewal process to  
10 relook at our why -- why do we need to keep this  
11 program, why do we not want to lose this, why is it  
12 important for our community. We know that this  
13 avenue of learning has value. It's choice. It's  
14 flexibility. We're able to offer some things that  
15 are going to continue to be important to our  
16 community in the coming years. And we have relooked  
17 at our methods and how we can offer the charter in  
18 different ways to our students, still virtually.

19 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: I just want to stop you for a  
20 second. I want to make sure your slides that you're  
21 showing -- is that where you want it to be?

22 MS. BUCKLEY: Yes.

23 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Okay.

24 MS. BUCKLEY: Yes. I just --

25 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: I just wanted to make sure. I

1 want to make sure folks online have the opportunity -

2 -

3 MS. BUCKLEY: I'm sorry.

4 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: No, that's fine.

5 MS. BUCKLEY: I was just wrapping up.

6 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: That's perfect.

7 MS. BUCKLEY: We are just -- that choice and  
8 flexibility is what we want to make sure that we hone  
9 in on, we focus on that, and that's the important  
10 piece of Polk County Virtual Academy. Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you so much for the  
12 presentation.

13 As I mentioned before, there doesn't appear to  
14 be any opposition to the application renewal.  
15 Therefore, we will continue and move toward the legal  
16 review. Ms. Wagner.

17 LEGAL REVIEW

18 INSTRUCTIONAL DAY

19 MS. WAGNER: We'll start with waiver topic  
20 number one, Instructional Day, Arkansas code  
21 annotated section 6-16-102 and standard 1-A.4.2. I  
22 have no legal concerns.

23 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any questions?

24 Yes, Ms. Coffman.

25 MS. COFFMAN: Yes. This question is for Ms.

1 Buckley. In their application they had mentioned  
2 Driven Virtual Academy, and if she could address that  
3 on that waiver request?

4 MS. BUCKLEY: Yes. When we -- when I updated  
5 our application I had seen that. One of the things  
6 that I had done whenever I was working on this is I  
7 had looked at other virtual academies and how they  
8 were putting in things. And whenever I wrote it I  
9 accidentally did that; that was a mistake on my part.  
10 But I did fix it whenever I re-did the application.  
11 And I apologize for that.

12 MS. COFFMAN: Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Are there any other questions  
14 regarding this waiver request?

15 Let's continue.

16 CLOCK HOURS

17 MS. WAGNER: Next waiver topic is Clock Hours,  
18 standard 1-A.2. And I have no legal concerns.

19 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Questions regarding this waiver  
20 topic?

21 Let's continue.

22 ATTENDANCE

23 MS. WAGNER: Next one, Attendance, Arkansas code  
24 annotated section 6-18-213(a)(2). And I have no  
25 legal concerns.

1 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Questions regarding this waiver  
2 topic?

3 Continue, please.

4 GIFTED AND TALENTED

5 MS. WAGNER: Gifted and Talented, Arkansas code  
6 annotated 6-20-2208(c)(6) and 6-42-101, standard 2-  
7 G.1, and the DESE rules governing Gifted and Talented  
8 Program Approval Standards. And I have no legal  
9 concerns.

10 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Questions regarding --

11 Yes, Ms. Coffman.

12 MS. COFFMAN: In your application you explained  
13 that students come onsite. Could you speak to that?  
14 So if a student is identified for GT services are  
15 they receiving them any other way if they're not able  
16 to come onsite?

17 MS. BUCKLEY: Yes. They can also receive them  
18 virtually if they prefer that. Our GT Coordinator  
19 will communicate with them and provide them with  
20 specific activities. Or, they can also do that  
21 through their coursework and she will work with their  
22 virtual teachers to do that as well. And then she  
23 also makes sure that their virtual teachers can do  
24 referrals, but also making sure their parents know  
25 that they can do referrals as well.

1 MS. COFFMAN: Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any additional questions  
3 regarding this waiver request?

4 Okay. Let's continue.

5 HEALTH SERVICES - SCHOOL NURSE

6 MS. WAGNER: Next is Health Services - School  
7 Nurse, Arkansas code annotated section 6-18-706 and  
8 standard 2-E.1. I have no legal concerns.

9 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Questions regarding this  
10 waiver?

11 Seeing none, let's continue.

12 HEALTH SERVICES - EYE & VISION SCREENING

13 MS. WAGNER: Next is the Health Services - Eye  
14 and Vision Screening, Arkansas code annotated 6-18-  
15 1501 and 6-18-1502, and the DESE rules governing Eye  
16 and Vision Screening Report in Arkansas Public  
17 Schools. No legal concerns.

18 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Questions regarding this  
19 waiver?

20 Seeing none, we'll continue.

21 LIBRARY MEDIA SERVICES & LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALIST

22 MS. WAGNER: Okay. Library Media Services and  
23 Library Media Specialist will all be together.  
24 Arkansas code annotated 6-25-103 and 104, and  
25 standards 2-D.1, 4-F.1 and 4-F.2. I have no legal

1 concerns.

2 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Questions regarding any one of  
3 those waiver requests?

4 Seeing none, we can continue.

5 FLAG

6 MS. WAGNER: Next is the Flag, Arkansas code  
7 annotated 6-16-105 and 6-16-106. No legal concerns.

8 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Questions from Panel?

9 Let's continue.

10 PERIOD OF SILENCE

11 MS. WAGNER: Next is the Period of Silence,  
12 Arkansas code annotated 6-10-115. I have no legal  
13 concerns.

14 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Questions regarding this  
15 request?

16 Seeing none, we'll continue.

17 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

18 MS. WAGNER: Next is Pledge of Allegiance,  
19 Arkansas code annotated 6-16-108. And no legal  
20 concerns.

21 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Questions?

22 Continue, please.

23 REPORT CARDS

24 MS. WAGNER: Next is Report Cards, Arkansas code  
25 annotated 6-15-903(a)(2). And I have no legal

1 concerns.

2 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Questions from the Panel?

3 Seeing none, we'll continue.

4 CREDIT FOR COLLEGE COURSES

5 MS. WAGNER: Last requested waiver is Credit for  
6 College Courses, Arkansas code annotated 6-18-223.

7 And I have no legal concerns.

8 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Questions regarding this  
9 requested waiver?

10 Seeing none, let's continue.

11 RESCINDED WAIVERS

12 MS. WAGNER: Okay. They have a list of waivers  
13 that they wish to rescind. The first list would be  
14 Guidance Counselor Services. And I believe they're  
15 talking about the actual plan, the 6-18-1001 section.  
16 And then they have a Teacher Licensure section; then  
17 they have Class Size and Teaching Load; Food  
18 Services. And that was it.

19 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any questions regarding the  
20 waivers that they wish to rescind?

21 Ms. Wright-McMurray.

22 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I have a question about  
23 the Guidance. So you said which sections are we  
24 requesting to rescind and which sections are they  
25 wanting to keep?

1 MS. WAGNER: So they have listed 6-18-101, and  
2 then in the keeping topic they didn't ask to keep any  
3 of those. So I'm assuming that you're rescinding all  
4 of that all together?

5 MS. BUCKLEY: Yes.

6 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

7 MS. WAGNER: Would you just confirm that for the  
8 Panel?

9 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Yes. Can you come forward to  
10 the mic and confirm that that's what you're wishing  
11 to do?

12 MS. BUCKLEY: So, yes, we do need to rescind our  
13 Guidance Counselor Services waiver.

14 MS. WAGNER: Okay.

15 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And -- sorry, I have a  
16 question. And so is that because the students, as  
17 you detailed in your presentation, will have access  
18 to the other school counselor that is --

19 MS. BUCKLEY: She will be devoted to these kids.  
20 She will not have counseling services in any of the  
21 other buildings to do; she will just focus on this  
22 group of students.

23 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. And this is a  
24 licensed school counselor?

25 MS. BUCKLEY: Yes, she's a licensed counselor.

1 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. All right. Thanks.

2 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any other questions about any  
3 of the waivers they wish to rescind?

4 Okay. Let's continue.

5 NEW WAIVERS

6 MS. WAGNER: The charter is requesting two  
7 additional waivers.

8 NATIONAL ANTHEM

9 MS. WAGNER: They're requesting waiver of the  
10 National Anthem, 6-10-136. And I have no legal  
11 concerns.

12 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Questions regarding this  
13 waiver?

14 Okay.

15 RECESS

16 MS. WAGNER: They're also requesting a waiver of  
17 Recess; the standard is 1-A.4.3 and the DESE rules  
18 governing Nutrition and Physical Activity and Body  
19 Mass Index for Age Assessment Protocols in Arkansas  
20 Public Schools, Section 7.11. And this is only for  
21 their virtual program.

22 Will you confirm that for the CAP?

23 MS. BUCKLEY: Yes. That is only for our virtual  
24 students.

25 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you.

1 Any questions or comments?

2 Hearing none --

3 MS. WAGNER: That concludes my legal review.

4 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you so much.

5 REMAINING ISSUES

6 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Next, we will have -- if we can  
7 get Mr. Coy to the microphone to discuss any sort of  
8 remaining issues with the application and provide the  
9 opportunity in regards to the application for Panel  
10 Members to ask a couple of questions, if necessary.

11 MR. COY: Thomas Coy, Charter Office.

12 Again, you all have the internal review. There  
13 are a couple of points of clarification that we are  
14 seeking from the application. So I'll invite any  
15 member of their team that's here to speak.

16 First question is about Concurrent Credit  
17 Offerings Below Grade 9. Would you care to address  
18 how you're going to handle concurrent credit  
19 offerings? Because I think (inaudible, mic cut out).

20 MS. COFFMAN: Ms. Davis, we're unable to hear  
21 the people at the podium.

22 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Okay. Let's -- is the mic  
23 turned on?

24 MR. COY: Yes.

25 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: And you can't hear them at all,

1 Ms. Coffman?

2 MS. COFFMAN: It's very jumbled.

3 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Okay. We may need to get  
4 another mic. Just give us one second.

5 And just to repeat the question while they're  
6 doing that, there was some question around the issue  
7 of Concurrent Credit Below Grade 9. It appears that  
8 the application indicated that that would be offered.  
9 And it's been brought to our attention that rules  
10 indicate that concurrent credit offers start in grade  
11 9; therefore, there was a question about how will --  
12 how any concurrent credit can and will be offered if  
13 it's below grade 9.

14 MS. BUCKLEY: Our understanding there for what  
15 we want --

16 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Just one second. Can you hear  
17 now, Ms. Coffman?

18 MS. COFFMAN: Yes. If she gets close, it will  
19 be better.

20 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Okay. Thank you.

21 MS. BUCKLEY: So, for instance, an 8th grade  
22 student that would like to take concurrent classes to  
23 accelerate through, because they are wanting to move  
24 faster towards graduation, they would have -- we  
25 would want them to be able to have that as an option

1 so that they could also get credit for their school  
2 classes as well. As long as they take the placement  
3 test for the college, they will allow them to do  
4 that. So for them to not get credit for those  
5 classes with us seems a little bit unfair. So we  
6 would like for them to be able to have that credit.

7 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Okay.

8 MS. COFFMAN: Mr. Davis?

9 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Yes.

10 MS. COFFMAN: Is Amy Counts available to speak  
11 to that?

12 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: She is. She's making her way  
13 to the podium.

14 MS. COUNTS: Amy Counts, Director of Curriculum  
15 Projects.

16 So the question really was about that  
17 determining of qualified students, and I believe you  
18 addressed it. So, from my understanding it's the  
19 placement test that they would take and it's through  
20 that university or your partner that they would be  
21 able to do that.

22 MS. BUCKLEY: Yes. Yes.

23 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Ms. Coffman, did you hear that  
24 response?

25 MS. COFFMAN: It was in and out. But I thought

1 -- the reason I was hoping Amy would address it is I  
2 thought there was already a process by which a school  
3 sought approval, not having to go through a waiver  
4 process.

5 MS. COUNTS: Mr. Coy may be able to speak to  
6 this even better than I. So there is an approval  
7 process for course approval process where you can  
8 approve in order to offer a class that's  
9 traditionally 9-12 in the lower grades. I'm not sure  
10 how that would apply with getting concurrent credit  
11 or college. That's the piece that I'm not  
12 necessarily for certain if that would apply to that.  
13 I would have to do some more research on that.

14 MR. COY: And it's my understanding -- I think  
15 Ms. Buckley kind of zeroed in on what I was thinking  
16 as well, just -- it was -- they want their students  
17 at their school to receive the high school credit for  
18 it. I don't believe there's anything that would  
19 prohibit a qualified student from going to a college  
20 campus or taking a concurrent credit. It was just  
21 simply our rules, Ms. Coffman, that were 9-12; it's  
22 kind of how our rules read for concurrent credit and  
23 high school graduation -- high school graduation  
24 credit.

25 But I think her intent is just if a student is

1 qualified at 8th grade and do the work and meets the  
2 requirements of the college, I think she's asking if  
3 they -- if the school would be able to award high  
4 school credit for that. Is that correct?

5 MS. BUCKLEY: Yes.

6 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Can you just step to the mic  
7 and verify that that's what you're --

8 MS. BUCKLEY: Yes. If they are in 8th grade or  
9 in a lower grade and they are taking a college class  
10 and can receive concurrent through the college, we  
11 want them to be able to get that high school credit  
12 for that course.

13 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you.

14 MS. COFFMAN: Thank you for that clarification.

15 MS. COUNTS: We have some additional information  
16 that Ms. Grayer may want to share just so that the  
17 school district is aware.

18 MS. GRAYER: Tiffani Grayer, Coordinator of  
19 School Performance.

20 Part of the ESSA School Index business rules,  
21 schools are not going to get credit in SQSS if the  
22 course completion and credit data from Cycle 7  
23 certified submission is not done within the four  
24 years of high school for the current grade 12  
25 students for the concurrent credits. So I just want

1 the school to be mindful of that as they consider  
2 this waiver. Thank you.

3 MR. COY: All right. I believe there's one  
4 other point of clarification that we would like from  
5 the school. It mentions Science of Reading  
6 synchronous instruction for K-2. Would you tell us a  
7 little bit more about how you're doing that Science  
8 of Reading instruction for K-2?

9 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Mr. Davis --

10 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Before you do that, I think  
11 there is a question from --

12 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So I guess just for my  
13 knowledge, after you received this clarification  
14 about that, do you guys have any other questions or  
15 are you still wanting to move forward with that plan  
16 as it relates to concurrent for below 9th grade? I'm  
17 just wanting -- I didn't know if you guys had --

18 SUPT. SMITH: I mean, we want to just do what's  
19 best for the student. You know, if we take a knee  
20 for it, so be it.

21 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. I didn't know if we  
22 needed to have them to say, yes, we want to move  
23 forward with that.

24 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Yeah. Thank you for that.

25 MS. SARACINI: Just acknowledge.

1 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Yeah.

2 MS. BUCKLEY: So for our K-2 we use Calvert  
3 Learning. It's who Edmentum uses for their K-5  
4 learning. And in that, our reading -- their reading  
5 program is -- does address the Science of Reading; it  
6 does address those needs. They are Arkansas  
7 certified teachers. And for them to be able to renew  
8 their Arkansas certification they're going to have to  
9 be able to show their Science of Reading to be able  
10 to have that renewal. So that gives us confidence in  
11 those teachers as well. We also have also involved  
12 in our team an elementary certified teacher who is  
13 Science of Reading proficient.

14 So we are making sure on our end -- we look at  
15 the curriculum, we know what's there, we know what's  
16 being offered to our students, but then also making  
17 sure that the staff who is implementing that is  
18 knowledgeable in the Science of Reading and is  
19 implementing it, not just meeting the standard.

20 MS. COUNTS: There is a process by which  
21 districts can use a foundational literacy program for  
22 K-6 that's not on the state approved list. And they  
23 would submit a research rationale and then the DESE  
24 would then review that program and whether, yes, it  
25 aligns with Science of Reading or not and then to

1 give permission to that district to utilize that  
2 program. From my knowledge of our current list, that  
3 program is not currently approved through our Ed  
4 Reports process or through our literacy process that  
5 we went through in 2020. So I would just encourage  
6 the district to file that research rationale moving  
7 forward so that it can be reviewed and vetted by  
8 DESE.

9 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: And just a couple more  
10 questions on that.

11 And so if it's not approved what are the  
12 ramifications of that for the district?

13 MS. COUNTS: If it's not approved, the district  
14 is encouraged to utilize an alternative program  
15 that's on our approved list. And because they're not  
16 in coordinated support, they're not -- if they're in  
17 coordinated support, they're required to choose from  
18 the list, no matter what. Again, if they're not,  
19 they can submit that research rationale. If it  
20 doesn't get approved, if it doesn't, you know, align,  
21 then we would just highly encourage them not to use  
22 it, and then they might be monitored, you know,  
23 moving forward.

24 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Yeah.

25 MS. COUNTS: And we do have Dallas Henderson

1           who's on the line as well, who can also speak to that  
2           foundational case that it's program reviewed to, if  
3           you have any additional questions for her.

4           CHAIRMAN DAVIS: And the other question I would  
5           have is just talk a little bit -- because I want the  
6           district to have the information they need, if they  
7           decided to move forward. So if they were to move  
8           forward, how long does the review process take? What  
9           type of information do they need to submit? I don't  
10          want students --

11          MS. COUNTS: Oh, yeah.

12          CHAIRMAN DAVIS: -- to be in a process that  
13          hasn't been approved, and it doesn't get approved,  
14          and then there are ramifications on that end.

15          MS. COUNTS: So there is -- on our Science of  
16          Reading website there is a form, the Research  
17          Rationale Request Form, that the district would  
18          submit and then send to us. We would then reach out  
19          to the program provider and request information from  
20          that program provider where they would submit all the  
21          grade 1 materials and -- like we would receive those  
22          in the mail and then have access to all K-6 materials  
23          digitally. Our -- then, our team here at DESE, the  
24          literacy team would review those -- that program and  
25          then determine, yes, it aligns or, no, it doesn't.

1 The process can take anywhere between -- depending  
2 upon how quickly the program provider provides  
3 materials, the communication timeline, it could take  
4 anywhere between two to six months to get that final  
5 approval. Once that approval is approved, then the  
6 district receives notification that, yes, that  
7 program is approved for literacy and does align, and  
8 then they can move forward with using it. If it  
9 doesn't approve, we -- we have not had a situation  
10 where it didn't get approved. We've actually only  
11 had one district move forward with this process and  
12 it was approved. It would be highly encouraged that  
13 they look at the approval list and purchase from that  
14 list. It's very important that for K-2 that those  
15 kids get that synchronous instruction, and so that  
16 would definitely be one thing that we would be  
17 looking at if we were reviewing that program. And if  
18 you have any questions about the importance of that,  
19 Dallas is on the line to speak to that.

20 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you.

21 MR. COY: I think that addressed the two  
22 remaining concerns that our staff had at this point.

23 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you so much. It sounds  
24 like there's some additional conversation that the  
25 school needs to have in regards to this last piece

1 here; right?

2 MR. COY: (Nodding head up and down.)

3 PANEL QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

4 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Okay. Let's move to general  
5 questions or comments from the Panel.

6 Thanks to Staff. Thanks for the information.

7 Who would like to start?

8 All right. Let's go for it. Ms. Wright-  
9 McMurray.

10 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I feel like I always  
11 start.

12 Thank you for your presentation and providing  
13 more information on your academy. Again, I haven't  
14 had a chance to come see you or talk with you guys,  
15 so getting a chance to hear how it's implemented is  
16 helpful, rather than just looking at documentation.  
17 I still have -- had a question about what -- how many  
18 students do you anticipate that are going to continue  
19 to utilize this model immediately, say going into the  
20 fall of 2024?

21 MS. BUCKLEY: We are hopeful that we will get  
22 back to a number closer to our -- we have a cap of  
23 200. We would like to see 50 students at this point  
24 so that we can better be serving our students. What  
25 we are seeing right now is a need to offer students

1 who can do both, who may be doing some onsite  
2 schooling and some virtual, and then also our  
3 students who do fully virtual. So in the fall that's  
4 our hope is to get back to that beginning number.

5 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So you do anticipate that  
6 -- you know, we all hesitate to say post-Covid, but  
7 now that we're in some respect of being post-Covid  
8 there would still be that high interest for students  
9 and families to want to continue to utilize this  
10 model that you've established?

11 MS. BUCKLEY: I think what we initially  
12 established as being fully virtual, completely off-  
13 campus, I think that that has lost ground through  
14 Covid. So what we see as being appealing to families  
15 is some control of their own, some choice of their  
16 own, and being an integral part of their child's  
17 education. But still being able to -- and they can  
18 do that through that virtual piece so that they still  
19 have more hands-on with them. But giving them still  
20 an opportunity to have human contact, to have access  
21 to what we offer through the school buildings, and  
22 being a part of the day-to-day activities. There's  
23 still a need for that. And so I see it -- I think  
24 our team sees that we've got to pivot this, turn it a  
25 little bit. And virtual in and of itself being

1 completely disconnected may not be the healthiest  
2 thing for all children.

3 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. So -- sorry, I have  
4 a follow-up.

5 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Please.

6 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So you said "pivot a  
7 little bit." What does that -- I'm trying to get a  
8 picture of what does that look like if you're moving  
9 -- if you're going to be moving away from the virtual  
10 option? It sounds like you're going more to a hybrid  
11 option. So what does that hybrid look like?

12 MS. BUCKLEY: Of course, the student that wants  
13 to still be fully virtual is more than welcome to do  
14 that. Our support staff communicating with them back  
15 and forth and making sure that they're finding  
16 success, that will continue. But we also have  
17 students who may need a part of the day virtual and  
18 part of the day where they are on-campus getting a  
19 piece of their education. And so we want to  
20 acknowledge that. Our school district found some  
21 success in that blended model during Covid, and our  
22 students were doing -- we're doing blended in our  
23 school district rather than with PCVA. And so with  
24 our change, we didn't go with a digital learning  
25 plan; we feel like that that's the piece that PCVA

1 can come alongside the school building and come  
2 alongside the parents and help. So we have -- we  
3 have seen students who have various medical issues,  
4 maybe something physical, and so that works; that  
5 helps. They might not be a candidate for an  
6 alternative education program, but this may be a way  
7 to help them. But we also see that there are  
8 students, they have access to our JAG program. We  
9 have two JAG facilitators on our campus and we feel  
10 like they're a huge benefit to our students. So they  
11 can do that JAG program through the school but do  
12 their core content virtually with PCVA.

13 So that's what I mean by pivot, just kind of  
14 turn our eyes a little bit and see that this ability  
15 to not hold our-self in a box. We kind of saw that  
16 we were over here in this virtual learning land where  
17 kids can't come onsite and do some classes with us  
18 too. And we feel like with this opportunity that we  
19 can mesh that. Also, Melody Morgan with APSRC has  
20 offered to come in and help us some as well with some  
21 of our vocational connection there as well.

22 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. And you did touch  
23 on one of my other questions. So you said you guys  
24 opted not to do a digital learning plan, or you do  
25 have the digital learning plan?

1 MS. BUCKLEY: We do not have a digital learning  
2 plan this year. We just have PCVA.

3 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. And my other  
4 clarification, when students opted to the virtual  
5 option and it's not working --

6 MS. BUCKLEY: Yes.

7 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- what are your steps to  
8 correct that to get them back on track or determine  
9 that virtual option is not for you, you need to be  
10 in-person?

11 MS. BUCKLEY: My director is here. Can I have  
12 her speak to that?

13 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Sure.

14 MS. BUCKLEY: I think she would --

15 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Name and title, please.

16 MS. WARNER: Teresa Warner, and I am the PCVA  
17 Director.

18 I stay in direct contact with the parents and  
19 the students, and so they're -- they are -- I meet  
20 with them in person, I talk to them on the phone, and  
21 I email or text with them often. I check with them  
22 -- I check on them virtually, weekly, just by looking  
23 at their progress. And if I see that they have not  
24 -- that they are somehow falling behind -- sometimes  
25 it's across-the-board and sometimes it is in one

1 class. And when I -- I just reach out specifically  
2 for that purpose, what's going on in his classroom --  
3 "you haven't been in there or you haven't completed  
4 anything in a week," and we'll have that  
5 conversation. And sometimes it is the class, they  
6 don't like the class and we talk through that. We --  
7 if it's across-the-board, sometimes it's the fact  
8 that -- most of our students come to us for a reason;  
9 we have medical issues that keep them at home, we  
10 have pregnancies, we have students that travel with  
11 their parents. So sometimes it is that, it's related  
12 to that, and we make adjustments. Sometimes they've  
13 been sick -- they got sick and they just weren't able  
14 to do it. Whatever the case is, we come back around  
15 and we find a solution. We offer tutoring; we have  
16 tutoring offered virtually. If that is not working  
17 for them, we invite them on campus. We -- they can  
18 come during the day on campus or they can come before  
19 or after school, because we offer all three of those  
20 options. We even offer at the high school level a  
21 Saturday option.

22 And then, if all of that fails and we sit back  
23 down at the table -- student, parents, myself -- and  
24 that -- and they are failing, we go back to that  
25 classroom. We say, "If this is not -- if this is not

1 best for the student, then that's not our option."  
2 We don't ever say you're in this for the semester or  
3 anything like that. We -- if they come back in, so  
4 what's going to make that student grow?

5 Did I answer?

6 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Yes.

7 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any additional questions?

8 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Not right now. Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any other questions or comments  
10 from the Panel?

11 Ms. Coffman.

12 MS. COFFMAN: I have a couple of questions.

13 You asked for a waiver of Library Media Services  
14 and Specialist. So could you speak to how the  
15 students are being provided the necessary -- meeting  
16 the necessary standards and receiving the necessary  
17 materials?

18 MS. BUCKLEY: So all of our students have access  
19 to come onsite and receive the library services at  
20 school, if they choose to, if they want to. We also  
21 have purchased a program called Learning Ally that  
22 has thousands and thousands of books available to  
23 students, and so that has been a good resource for  
24 our students. And then they receive those -- those  
25 learning standards are integrated into their English

1 Language Arts classes virtually.

2 MS. COFFMAN: And my other question really is  
3 for Mr. Smith. I just wanted to confirm that all of  
4 the students that are enrolled live within the  
5 district boundary or have some type of legal school  
6 choice or transfer?

7 SUPT. SMITH: Yes.

8 MS. COFFMAN: Okay.

9 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any additional questions, Ms.  
10 Coffman?

11 MS. COFFMAN: That's all of the ones I have  
12 written down.

13 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Okay.

14 MS. COFFMAN: Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Ms. Saracini.

16 MS. SARACINI: Thank you for your presentation.  
17 Just a quick question, I just want to confirm  
18 are there currently eight students?

19 MS. WARNER: There are nine.

20 MS. SARACINI: There are nine?

21 MS. WARNER: Yes.

22 MS. SARACINI: Okay.

23 MS. WARNER: Yes.

24 MS. SARACINI: Well, I was just -- the different  
25 numbers and I just wanted --

1 MS. WARNER: Yes.

2 MS. SARACINI: -- to confirm that. So my  
3 understanding is, I guess clarification, this just  
4 gives you that option when kids need a different  
5 environment, yet they're not ready for ALE? This is  
6 kind of that go-between, catches those that are  
7 falling through the crack and you're really more  
8 focused on middle and high and not elementary? I'm  
9 assuming that by reading -- or I'm inferring that.

10 MS. BUCKLEY: That is kind of what has happened  
11 this current school year.

12 MS. SARACINI: Okay.

13 MS. BUCKLEY: We saw that. Covid hurt us, it  
14 hurt the image of digital education, and it caused us  
15 to relook and rethink. We see the value of kids  
16 having the virtual option. And we talked through the  
17 return of the charter and not continuing the program,  
18 and we fortunately -- I feel like as a team we sat  
19 down together and we said that's not going to benefit  
20 our staff and students. We do need this. So now  
21 we've got to look at, okay, so here's where we are,  
22 and we know it's not the -- we're not the highlight;  
23 we don't have several hundred students. We know  
24 that. We also know that there is a place for this,  
25 and flexibility and choice is what our students in

1 Arkansas want and it's what our families are looking  
2 for. And so by us saying we're willing to come  
3 alongside you, we just want to be an option for you.  
4 We don't have any elementary students right now. And  
5 to be honest with you, I was okay with the fact that  
6 we didn't have especially that lower level right now  
7 because we do know that we need to do that reading  
8 piece and right for that. But it's hard. It is very  
9 difficult for a parent to do virtual learning with  
10 their student. However, if they're not getting  
11 anything, that's even worse. So we see the value and  
12 we see what it can do.

13 We also have that vision with our Communications  
14 Director. He has already started helping us to  
15 reinforce "here's what PCVA, Community; here's what  
16 it can do for you. Reach out to us and let us know."  
17 And just in a handful of days, because we do that  
18 between semesters -- in a handful of days Ms. Warner  
19 and I have both been reached out to by parents whose  
20 kids are not currently in our school district. So  
21 we're not taking kids out of our classrooms and  
22 putting them in PCVA. They are saying, "What we're  
23 doing right now is not working and we need that."  
24 Most of the time it's that human element that they're  
25 missing.

1                   So we see us growing, but we also want to make  
2                   sure that we maintain that opportunity for students.  
3                   She mentioned that she has a couple of young ladies  
4                   who are pregnant. We never discourage our girls who  
5                   are having babies from coming to school. But we also  
6                   want to come alongside them, and if they need  
7                   something different because it's what works for them  
8                   that we have that access. We have a great  
9                   alternative environment that they could do, but now  
10                  with them having to be 20% on campus that doesn't  
11                  work when you're in the midst of having a little one.  
12                  And so we actually provide those mommas with some  
13                  local opportunities to help them learn to be a mommy;  
14                  they actually get some work credit for that. And so  
15                  we are trying to find the niches, but then also we  
16                  want to turnaround and we want to grow.

17                  MS. SARACINI: Thank you. Because sometimes  
18                  your story doesn't come through in your application  
19                  or even in your presentation. So, thank you.

20                  MS. WARNER: Can I add something to that?

21                  MS. SARACINI: Yes.

22                  MS. WARNER: Our of our current students --

23                  CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Get a little closer to the mic,  
24                  please. Thank you.

25                  MS. WARNER: Out of the current students, six of

1           ours are seniors. And if we didn't have this program  
2           we would have lost them. They would have dropped  
3           out. Most of them probably would have gone and got  
4           their GED, but they would not have graduated  
5           traditionally, every single one of those.

6           CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Anything else, Ms. Saracini?

7           MS. SARACINI: No. Thank you.

8           CHAIRMAN DAVIS: I do want to -- I want to  
9           commend you for the ability to look at what you were  
10          providing and make that pivot. I think we all heard  
11          about the challenges around purely virtual  
12          instruction. In all of my conversations about  
13          education, I have not heard one individual who has  
14          come forward coming out of this to say virtual was  
15          the way to go for all of our kids. And I've heard  
16          more folks say that that human element, that sort of  
17          being on a campus or having the opportunity to be at  
18          some portion of the day on the campus -- so I really  
19          do appreciate you recognizing that and you  
20          acknowledging that and then making the change.

21          My one encouragement is always going to be  
22          around the issue of growth for our students. It's  
23          one thing for students to start behind, but as you  
24          know if we are not able to maintain a certain amount  
25          of growth with those students they continue to fall

1 behind. And, granted, our goal is not to keep them  
2 behind, but we don't want them to fall further  
3 behind. So just all students that are enrolled in  
4 this program, please, please, please -- and I say  
5 this to all folks I talk to -- we need to be very  
6 thoughtful and very diligent about looking at student  
7 growth and figuring out how we can insure that  
8 students aren't falling further behind as they sort  
9 of progress through our system. So, thank you.

10 Mr. Baldwin, any questions?

11 MR. BALDWIN: No questions.

12 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Ms. Newton, any questions?

13 MS. NEWTON: (Shaking head from side to side.)

14 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Okay. I think we're ready for  
15 a motion.

16 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I move we approve the  
17 renewal request from Polk County Virtual Academy for  
18 another five years.

19 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: It has been motioned. Is there  
20 a second?

21 MS. NEWTON: Second.

22 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Motioned and seconded. All  
23 those in favor do so by stating "aye."

24 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

25 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any opposition?

1 Motion passes. Congratulations.

2 I'm going to ask Panel Members to take a few  
3 moments and record their vote and then we will read  
4 out.

5 And as a reminder as you're doing that, we still  
6 have a couple of items in regards to Calendar and  
7 Application Timeline that we need to discuss.

8 You are free to go. Oh, well, let's hear the  
9 comments.

10 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

11 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Let's go ahead and start with  
12 Ms. Coffman. Ms. Coffman, how did you vote?

13 MS. COFFMAN: I voted in favor of the renewal  
14 for five years. The Charter is making adjustments as  
15 needed to meet the needs of students.

16 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you.

17 Ms. Newton.

18 MS. NEWTON: I voted in favor of the renewal for  
19 the Charter. The flexibility this Charter allows for  
20 adjustments and innovations that aid student learning  
21 and growth.

22 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Mr. Baldwin.

23 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I voted in favor. I think  
24 this is a good option for at-risk students.

25 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: I voted in favor. I support

1 the charter renewal to provide additional unique  
2 options to students in the surrounding areas.

3 Ms. Saracini.

4 MS. SARACINI: I support the renewal of Polk  
5 County Virtual for five years. I appreciate the  
6 flexibility you're providing for students.

7 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Ms. Wright-McMurray.

8 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I voted for. I said I  
9 support the motion. Polk County Virtual Academy is  
10 providing an additional education option for  
11 students, especially those who may not complete high  
12 school otherwise.

13 MS. BUCKLEY: Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you so much.  
15 Congratulations again.

16 MS. BUCKLEY: Thank you all.

17 CONSIDERATION OF THE 2023 CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL MEETING  
18 DATES

19 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: There are two items, Panel  
20 Members, that we will move to. You should have  
21 received a proposed calendar for meetings next year.  
22 I would love to know if there is any feedback in  
23 regards to those calendars. I don't know if you've  
24 looked at them, compared to the four other calendars  
25 that are currently out there that, you know, Ms.

1 Coffman loves to reference. Just jokes there.

2 [LAUGHTER]

3 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: But are there any issues with  
4 the calendar and the dates that have been offered?

5 MS. SARACINI: No, sir. Do we need to make a  
6 motion?

7 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Ms. Wagner, do we need to make  
8 a motion in regards to the acceptance of the calendar  
9 or what does the process look like for that, as well  
10 as for the application timeline?

11 MS. WAGNER: Yes. You'll need to do a motion,  
12 second, and any discussion, and then do your vote.

13 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Okay. Can I get a motion,  
14 please?

15 MS. SARACINI: I make the motion that we approve  
16 the calendar.

17 MR. BALDWIN: Second.

18 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: It's been motioned and  
19 seconded. Any conversation?

20 All those in favor do so by stating "aye."

21 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

22 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any opposed?

23 Motion passes.

24 CONSIDERATION OF THE 2023 CHARTER APPLICATION AND RENEWAL  
25 TIMELINE

1 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: The next item on the list is  
2 the Application Timeline.

3 Mr. Coy, I see you standing before us. I'm  
4 assuming that there is some information you'd like to  
5 bring forward or --

6 MR. COY: No, I'm just -- I was asked to present  
7 these items and you're taking care of it for me.

8 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Well, please, go ahead. I am  
9 not as --

10 MR. COY: No.

11 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Please, go ahead with the  
12 application timeline.

13 MR. COY: We're just asking that you approve the  
14 application timeline. We use this internally to help  
15 us decide how we communicate not only internally and  
16 with our internal review, but also with panel  
17 members. So --

18 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Is there a motion in regards --  
19 we'll motion, second, and then have conversation.

20 Is there a motion in regards to the application  
21 timeline?

22 MS. NEWTON: I move that we accept the  
23 application timeline.

24 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: It's been moved.

25 MS. SARACINI: Second.

1 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: And seconded. Any discussion  
2 in regards to the application timeline?

3 There doesn't appear to be any discussion.  
4 We'll move to the vote.

5 All those in favor of the application timeline  
6 presented indicate by saying "aye."

7 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

8 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Any opposition?

9 The ayes have it. Thank you so much.

10 MR. COY: Thank you.

11 ADJOURNMENT

12 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Can I get a motion to adjourn  
13 the meeting?

14 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So moved.

15 MR. BALDWIN: Second.

16 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Moved and seconded. Meeting  
17 adjourned.

18  
19  
20  
21  
22 (The meeting was concluded at 12:17 p.m.)  
23

## 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 December 14, 2022; 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: January 3, 2023.

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