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

1  
2 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Good morning. The June 14,  
3 2022 meeting of the Charter Authorizing Panel is  
4 called to order. I'd like to welcome you all to the  
5 ADE auditorium and ask that you please silence all of  
6 your devices.

7 Today, we have the special pleasure of welcoming  
8 a new Charter member to our team, Mr. Mark Zellner.  
9 Welcome.

10 MR. ZELLNER: Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: We look forward to --  
12 (ZOOM MESSAGE: "Recording in progress.")

13 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: We look forward to serving  
14 with you. Do you want to just briefly tell a little  
15 bit about yourself so our members --

16 MR. ZELLNER: Sure. I am Mark Zellner. I work  
17 at Southwest Power Pool, here in Little Rock, as the  
18 Lead Cybersecurity Supply Chain Analyst. Previously,  
19 in a previous life I served on the other side as a  
20 board member of an Arkansas charter. So I've seen it  
21 from that side and I know the preparation that was  
22 needed in order to come before this Panel, and I  
23 appreciate the thoroughness of the Panel and the  
24 panel members during those interactions. And I look  
25 forward to continuing the -- to help with the

1 integrity of the process and make sure that we serve  
2 the state and our students as well as we can.

3 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you so much.

4 Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Davis are joining us  
5 virtually today. Ms. Sonja Wright-McMurray is here  
6 in the office -- auditorium with us.

7 So with that, let's get started and look at our  
8 agenda.

9 CONSENT AGENDA

10 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Panel Members, on our consent  
11 agenda today we have our minutes from May 12th and  
12 then we have two items that are kind of clean-up  
13 items. But -- and you've never seen these on the  
14 consent agenda before, but we felt like we need to  
15 put these on there for the official record. And that  
16 is Osceola STEM Academy is rescinding their charter  
17 -- that's their choice, but when you rescind the  
18 charter you rescind all of the waivers that went with  
19 that charter. And then Blytheville High School A New  
20 Tech is also requesting to rescind their charter, and  
21 therefore they would be giving up their waivers. And  
22 the reason we've never had those before is because  
23 we've never had that situation where charters  
24 rescinded by their own admission to do that, and so  
25 we just needed to put that somewhere in the public

1 record.

2 Any questions?

3 If not, I'll accept a motion.

4 MR. BALDWIN: I make a motion to approve the  
5 consent agenda.

6 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Second.

7 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: So I have a motion by Mr.  
8 Baldwin and a second by Dr. Wright-McMurray to  
9 approve the consent agenda as presented.

10 All those in favor?

11 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

12 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Motion passes. Okay.

13 MS. JAMES: We have eight total members?

14 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Uh-huh.

15 MS. JAMES: Eight total members?

16 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Yes.

17 MS. JAMES: Okay. Then in order to have a  
18 quorum we've got to have five votes.

19 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: I vote to --

20 MS. JAMES: Okay.

21 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: -- pass.

22 MS. JAMES: Okay.

23 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: I vote yea.

24 Now we have a motion passed.

25 All right. Thank you.

## ACTION AGENDA

1) CONSIDERATION OF ARKANSAS MILITARY AND FIRST RESPONDERS  
ACADEMY AMENDMENT REQUEST

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. Action Agenda, and the first item -- Ms. Summons, if you will come up.

MS. SUMMONS: Good morning. DESE Charter Office. Consideration of Arkansas Military and First Responders Academy Amendment Request.

The Arkansas Military and First Responders Academy is requesting to change the opening date from August 2022 to August 2023. We have representatives from that charter -- excuse me -- Dr. Don Hall, who's the superintendent; Dr. Michael Bakalis, who's the CEO of AQS; and also Mr. Paul Vallas from Arkansas Military, he's the CEO. And they are on -- well, Dr. Hall is on at this time.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you. Dr. Hall --

DR. HALL: Yes, ma'am.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: -- and if you have any of your other members that are with you, if you will raise your right hand. Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you're about to give shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

DR. HALL: I do.

1 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. Thank you.  
2 And do we have any opposition to this?

3 MS. SUMMONS: No, ma'am.

4 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Okay. All right.  
5 Dr. Hall, we'll turn it over to you.

6 DR. HALL: Okay. Again, it's good to be in  
7 front of you all and we are really excited to still  
8 be a part of this process. The biggest change for us  
9 -- I guess is for me I now live in Little Rock and  
10 have for that past several months. As I shared with  
11 the Panel when we originally came to you, I would be  
12 relocating here, and I have done that.

13 And the reason we're before you today though, as  
14 we started going through the planning process it  
15 became very apparent, and very quickly, that as we  
16 were doing due-diligence on one potential site that  
17 -- as we started that around January, that there was  
18 no way we were going to be able to open in August of  
19 2022, because of the number of life safety issues on  
20 the site we were going to be working on and so-forth  
21 because of supply constraints. We were working with  
22 the State, we were also working with our construction  
23 management firm, we were working with APSRC, we were  
24 working with a number of different organization, and  
25 the back-order log for like even fire rated safety

1 doors was significant -- and we found that with  
2 ordering furniture for the classrooms, technology for  
3 the classrooms. And we just felt like rather than  
4 risk opening poorly we wanted to go ahead and say  
5 let's move it back a year, to August of 2023, and to  
6 make sure that we weren't going to put the students'  
7 opening day experience at risk. And that's really  
8 the primary reason we're here today.

9 We are currently working with the Walton  
10 Foundation KLS group, which is the construction  
11 management arm for them, and the Walton personal  
12 philanthropy group, as they're working together to  
13 help us with site selection and finalizing where we  
14 could go. So over the next 14 months they're going  
15 to be helping us with that process, so that not only  
16 will they help us find an appropriate site but  
17 they're going to help us with the construction  
18 management arm. They have obviously a very deep  
19 bench of resources available to them that we wouldn't  
20 have if we go out to the standard open market. And  
21 we felt much more comfortable with that than going  
22 out and what we had been able to do on our own.

23 So I have a presentation prepared but it's  
24 really the same presentation I gave when we appeared  
25 to you-all a year ago. So the model hasn't changed,



1 the budget hasn't changed, the governance really  
2 isn't much different. And I'm willing to go through  
3 that, if you want; I'm also willing to answer any  
4 questions. But the bottom-line is this is really  
5 about the fact that any construction improvement and  
6 facility improvement and being able to equip the  
7 school in a four- to five-month time period was not  
8 practical, given the fact we honestly could not get  
9 the resources. And both our local building and  
10 engineering firm, as well as our national  
11 construction management firm, both told us over and  
12 over, "It's just not feasible. You cannot get the  
13 equipment in this timeframe."

14 So I will leave it up to the Panel what else you  
15 want me to do. But that's really what it boils down  
16 to today.

17 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you, Dr. Hall. Just  
18 for clarification, by delaying your start, then in  
19 23-24 you had originally planned to have 9th and  
20 10th. Are you planning to shift your progressive cap  
21 exactly as you had presented where you will have 9th  
22 graders only, starting next year, with a cap of 200  
23 and then build that up?

24 DR. HALL: Yes, ma'am.

25 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Okay.

1 DR. HALL: Our intent is to shift the entire  
2 model out one year, so that in 23-24 we would open  
3 with 200 9th graders, and then each year we would  
4 continue with the original model. So in the five-  
5 year model, in the fifth year we would've had -- in  
6 the fourth year we would've had the 800 9-12, and the  
7 fifth year 800 9-12. Now, in the fifth year is the  
8 first year we would be 9-12. So it just basically  
9 pushes everything back one year, but it doesn't  
10 change the total cap, it doesn't change the grade  
11 level.

12 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: And also, Dr. Hall, it  
13 doesn't change the expiration day on the charter?

14 DR. HALL: That is correct.

15 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Okay.

16 DR. HALL: That's one -- again, the entirety of  
17 the model, the entirety of the cap, the entirety of  
18 the grade level, and the entirety of the budget --  
19 everything was intact. It was -- again, this is  
20 really just a response to the market conditions.

21 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: I understand.

22 Mr. Davis, any questions?

23 MR. DAVIS: No questions from me.

24 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. Baldwin?

25 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. You know, I think this is a

1 prudent option that you're taking on here and it does  
2 sound like you're working with some great  
3 organizations, with APSRC and the Walton team.

4 The only question I have really is as it relates  
5 to the budget. I mean not only is there supply chain  
6 challenges in just getting stuff; there's also some  
7 serious price chains from cost of things. And,  
8 honestly, you know, some of it is going up and some  
9 of it is coming down. I saw recently that the price  
10 of wood is now half what it was last year. It's a  
11 challenging time to build something. Are you all  
12 going to update your budget? And how will those cost  
13 changes affect your budget? And then maybe you've  
14 done that already. So, just really a budget  
15 question.

16 DR. HALL: Right. The budget we resubmitted --  
17 that we submitted this time is an updated budget to  
18 try to take into account those adjusted costs. So we  
19 did go back in and look at those. So we have worked  
20 with the Walton Foundation on that, to look at what  
21 kinds of costs there would be in there. A lot of the  
22 capital costs though would be part of a construction  
23 budget that would -- so it helps absorb some of those  
24 costs of it, increases as well as decreases. So it's  
25 a little bit different. And a lot of your

1 operational costs, those go up, so we did adjust for  
2 that. And another thing you'll notice in the budget,  
3 that we actually did -- we do have an actual grant  
4 that we've already received, so that's money that's  
5 in there rather than anticipated. So that's money we  
6 actually have in the budget at this point.

7 MR. BALDWIN: Okay. And then you all are not  
8 incurring any debt, so the Federal Reserve's increase  
9 in interest rates doesn't affect you?

10 DR. HALL: Correct.

11 MR. BALDWIN: Okay.

12 DR. HALL: Correct.

13 MR. BALDWIN: All right. Thank you.

14 DR. HALL: Sure.

15 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Dr. Wright-McMurray?

16 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Thank you again for being  
17 very thoughtful in wanting to make sure that students  
18 have a good start and a good experience and you guys  
19 get it right. So I do appreciate that.

20 One question I did have, and just for a point of  
21 clarification, in your opening comments you mentioned  
22 that the governments -- governance is going to be  
23 pretty much the same. So do you anticipate that  
24 there will be any changes to what you originally  
25 submitted or is it going to be exactly the same

1 structure that you guys came to us before with?

2 DR. HALL: The governance internally is all  
3 exactly the same. The only change that we see coming  
4 down the road, we're -- AMFRA is a part of AQS and  
5 we're using their 501(c)(3) status. Our intent is  
6 that after the first year we are -- we have formed  
7 another entity called AMFRA, Inc. And we are having  
8 it file for its own 501(c)(3) status so that it can  
9 be an independent entity and that wouldn't require  
10 then a -- to be associated with AQS and it can  
11 operate as an individual Arkansas entity. And that's  
12 really, again, designed to make sure that this is an  
13 Arkansas entity independent of any kind of external  
14 equity. But we know it will take about six to eight  
15 months to receive -- potentially up to nine months,  
16 based on what we've been told so far, to receive that  
17 501(c)(3) status. And so once that occurs, then AQS,  
18 which is the organization out of Illinois, would no  
19 longer be associated with AMFRA; so it would be a  
20 standalone Arkansas entity. That's the only change.  
21 But, again, it's more of the behind-the-scenes kind  
22 of thing and it is designed to allow us to operate as  
23 an independent entity in Arkansas.

24 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Thank you for that  
25 clarification.

1 DR. HALL: No problem.

2 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. Zellner?

3 MR. ZELLNER: So, Dr. Hall, really in parallel  
4 with Mr. Baldwin's question, one of the things I  
5 heard you say is you're still working on site  
6 selection. So I'd like to understand what's your  
7 confidence level that the amount of time you're  
8 asking for is going to be sufficient? And, you know,  
9 where I'm coming from is if you don't have a site  
10 selected yet, you know, are you sure of the materials  
11 you're going to need, and then, you know, the runway  
12 that's going to be required for those to come in and  
13 be utilized?

14 DR. HALL: Basically at this point working with  
15 KLS, the Walton group, they've told us that we need  
16 at least nine months in order to have any kind of  
17 practical timeline for being able to do life safety  
18 -- and that's the primary thing we're considering,  
19 the life safety improvements or any kind of capital  
20 improvements in the building. So we're looking right  
21 now at -- we've got about 15 months, so we've got six  
22 months to secure a site that we feel is appropriate.  
23 We had a site, and we're looking at still trying to  
24 figure out the financing around one site, but we  
25 haven't finalized that one. So we haven't let go of

1           it yet, but we are working around the financing of  
2           that one potential site. But KLS, again, the Walton  
3           arm, is helping us look at some other potential  
4           sites, so we hope to have that in just the next three  
5           to four months. But we've got about six months in  
6           order -- working with them. And, again, by using  
7           their resources we feel much more confident about  
8           being able to narrow in on a site within that  
9           timeframe, and then they have built-in that latter  
10          part for the construction management. Again, using  
11          their resource pool we feel much more confident about  
12          that. We didn't -- we weren't able to engage them  
13          until March of this year, so once we were able to do  
14          that it really significantly changed the trajectory  
15          of our entire project.

16                 MR. ZELLNER: Thank you.

17                 DR. HALL: You're welcome.

18                 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Dr. Hall, you had previously  
19          submitted an LEA request to start the new school.  
20          And can we consider this your official decline of  
21          that request? So --

22                 DR. HALL: That is correct.

23                 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. And Michelle --

24                 DR. HALL: And we have contacted -- I'm sorry,  
25          go ahead.

1           CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: And Michelle may need to send  
2 you an email to get you to confirm that, just so we  
3 will have it in writing. But then once the school is  
4 ready to open, you know, we will go back through that  
5 procedure with you to get your LEA number, once  
6 you're up and ready to start.

7           DR. HALL: Right. We have contacted the State  
8 Department and DESE and told them this already, so  
9 they have that information.

10          CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Okay. And then once your  
11 501(3)(c) status is adjusted and changed, then we'll  
12 need that communication as well to go into your file.

13          DR. HALL: Correct. Correct.

14          CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. James, any other  
15 concerns?

16          MS. JAMES: No, ma'am.

17          CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. Any other from  
18 any panel member?

19          All right. With that -- get back to my page --  
20 and I'll accept a motion.

21          DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I move that we approve the  
22 request to change the start date to the fall of 2023.

23          MR. ZELLNER: Second.

24          CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: I have a motion by Dr. Sonja  
25 Wright-McMurray and a second by Mr. Zellner to



1 approve the amendment request as presented.

2 Any discussion?

3 All those in favor?

4 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

5 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Motion passes unanimously.  
6 Thank you.

7 Thank you, Dr. Hall. We appreciate everything  
8 that you're doing and we appreciate a careful  
9 approach so that we have a successful start. Thank  
10 you so much.

11 DR. HALL: Well, thank you to the Panel. Again,  
12 we're very excited about the process and we enjoy  
13 working on it with you.

14 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.

15 2) CONSIDERATION OF IDEA PUBLIC SCHOOLS ARKANSAS AMENDMENT  
16 REQUEST

17 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. Item number 2,  
18 Ms. Summons.

19 MS. SUMMONS: The second item is Consideration  
20 of IDEA Public Schools Arkansas Amendment Request.  
21 IDEA Public Schools Arkansas is requesting to change  
22 the opening date from 2023 to 2024. And we have Mr.  
23 Daniel Fishman who is representing IDEA Public  
24 Schools.

25 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. Fishman, if you will

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

4 MR. FISHMAN: I do.

5 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.

6 All right, Mr. Fishman.

7 MR. FISHMAN: Yes, ma'am.

8 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Any presentation? You want  
9 to kind of go over what you're needing?

10 MR. FISHMAN: Yes, ma'am. And I appreciate the  
11 time, Panel Members. It's good to see y'all again.  
12 My name is Dan Fishman. I am with IDEA Public  
13 Schools. I am our Senior Vice President for Growth,  
14 so I lead our growth into new regions, and that  
15 includes Arkansas. We're before you today to ask for  
16 a one-year delay in the start and a one-year delay in  
17 the expiration of our charter, to 2024. We're doing  
18 so for some of the same reasons you just heard from  
19 Dr. Hall.

20 IDEA has a very tried and true model we've used  
21 to launch successfully in over 10 regions. And to do  
22 that we need to have facilities lined up by a certain  
23 time and we need to have an Executive Director lined  
24 up by a certain time, and both of those have proven  
25 more challenging than in any of our previous launch

1 efforts. So we do not have an Executive Director to  
2 lead the region as of yet, and we also have only one  
3 of our two sites identified and there for us. We're  
4 in the process of appraising a set of sites that  
5 could be our second site. But we just don't have  
6 enough time to get an Executive Director trained in  
7 the IDEA model and ready to launch IDEA schools at  
8 the bar that we insist on. And we won't have the two  
9 school sites secured and our facilities ready in time  
10 to launch in fall of '23.

11 So we're requesting a one-year delay, to '24, so  
12 that we can have that leadership in place and  
13 therefore have our principals ready to launch those  
14 schools on day one, and also have school sites in the  
15 locations that we put before you previously, ideally  
16 in Arkansas -- excuse me -- in Little Rock and in  
17 North Little Rock to serve the population which we've  
18 committed to serve. And we do feel that with this  
19 delay, you know, we can work towards that.

20 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. Fishman, in your one-year  
21 delay in start, then that will just shift over your  
22 start for K, 1, and 2 and 6th grade?

23 MR. FISHMAN: Yes, ma'am. To be clear, nothing  
24 else in our program would change. So we still would  
25 launch K, 1, 2, 6; we still would launch K, 1, 2, 6

1 on two separate campuses and everything else in our  
2 application remains constant.

3 There was an excellent question by one of the  
4 panel members about how budgets are impacted by this.  
5 We build -- we built a fairly conservative facilities  
6 assumption at the time. We do need to revisit it;  
7 however, I think it's pretty close to where we will  
8 be given the costs that we've seen for some of the  
9 other facilities that we're working on around the  
10 area. So we -- you know, we resubmitted the  
11 application in whole and did not make numerous  
12 changes because very little of what we're doing is  
13 changing, other than the start date.

14 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: I think the other thing that  
15 we'll need to revisit once you nail down your two  
16 facilities is the actual -- once you have your  
17 facilities and know what your space allows for, then  
18 to come back and have the conversation about what the  
19 building caps will be. So your charter cap is 1,000  
20 seats for that first year of K, 1, 2 and 6. So I'm  
21 assuming you're putting K-2 in one building and 6th  
22 grade in your second campus. And we'll need to have  
23 building caps so that you can advertise  
24 appropriately.

25 MR. FISHMAN: So we will actually launch,

1 Chairman Coffman, with K, 1, 2 and 6 on one campus.  
2 So on each of those campuses you'll see K, 1, 2, 6  
3 and [Zoom audio disruption]. So for two years we'll  
4 have (inaudible) and then K, 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 on one  
5 campus. We'll add a Phase 2 to our campus in the  
6 following year, the third year; we'll have K, 1, 2,  
7 3, 4, and in a separate building 6, 7, 8. So you'll  
8 see that on both campuses.

9 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: So will you actually in the  
10 end have four buildings -- is that what you're saying  
11 to me -- two at each site?

12 MR. FISHMAN: They're connected. We speak of it  
13 as though they're separate buildings. They're  
14 connected. So it's physically one plant, but we talk  
15 about it as an academy and a college prep and we  
16 don't build it all at once, as a cost-saving measure.

17 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: So that's something that  
18 we'll need to bring back to the Panel and put it all  
19 out there, because in accountability --

20 MR. FISHMAN: Okay.

21 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: -- it makes a big difference.  
22 So we will need to be very clear about campuses,  
23 buildings, LEA numbers, how many principals are  
24 required -- all of those kinds of state  
25 accountability and federal accountability. So once

1           you've secured your campuses, then we'll probably  
2           need to come back and just put that conversation on  
3           the record.

4           MR. FISHMAN: Yes, ma'am. We will do that.

5           CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. Mr. Davis, would  
6           you like to start our questions?

7           MR. DAVIS: Sure. And thank you for being so  
8           very, very thoughtful about this. And sort of  
9           following, talk to me a little bit about -- obviously  
10          I know that there are issues in regards to the  
11          necessary costs and materials. You sort of mentioned  
12          this idea of capacity and finding the right director.  
13          Can you talk just a little bit more about that or can  
14          you go into detail about that? What's your process?  
15          And give us a better understanding of, as you've gone  
16          out and tried to locate that person, where are you  
17          having some challenges around that?

18          MR. FISHMAN: Sure. And it's good to see you,  
19          Mr. Davis. We -- IDEA typically hires Executive  
20          Directors two-and-a-half years, sometimes three years  
21          before the launch of a region. And we do that  
22          because they're responsible for hiring the founding  
23          principals who launch their school and helping to  
24          train those principals; they're responsible for  
25          building community support for the work we're doing;

1 they're responsible for recruiting students into  
2 those schools. And, of course, they have a team  
3 around them for all of this, but they have quite a  
4 few responsibilities that they own. And we also  
5 consider it very important that they do all this  
6 within the IDEA model.

7 So the reason we're excited to come to Arkansas,  
8 and I believe the reason some of the CAP members and  
9 others are excited to have us, is we do have a model  
10 we've spent now 22 years honing that's proven  
11 successful. It's important we hire this Executive  
12 Director far enough out that they can spend lots of  
13 time in our schools and with our best leaders  
14 learning this. Conversely, we could hire an internal  
15 leader, which we sometimes do, who would move to  
16 Arkansas; they would learn Arkansas, but they would  
17 know IDEA. So we're open to both; however, we act on  
18 the timeline as though we're going to have to hire an  
19 external leader because we need more time and we want  
20 to be conservative in doing so. So we need that time  
21 to make sure they can spend six to eight months at  
22 least really embedded in our schools in our region,  
23 learning the work before they have to move to  
24 Arkansas, at 24 months out, and begin some of that  
25 other work that we just talked about.

1           So we typically do a national dragnet. We've  
2 looked at candidates from as far as Connecticut and  
3 Southern California; we've looked at candidates from  
4 Arkansas, from Florida, from Texas. So we've  
5 conducted a number of interviews, we've taken folks  
6 out to Arkansas to get them excited about the work,  
7 but it's been -- candidly, it's just been a very,  
8 very tough year to hire leaders, and it's not just in  
9 Arkansas where we're seeing this.

10           So we've never asked for a delay like this  
11 before and we do it as a last resort. But we have  
12 not been able to find the leader we need and we need  
13 to buy ourselves some time to find that leader.

14           MR. DAVIS: Yeah. I really appreciate you, you  
15 know, raising up and highlighting the importance of a  
16 leader.

17           Can you give me -- and I'm assuming that this  
18 process is based upon either what you've seen in the  
19 broader field around, leaders coming in with a  
20 shorter timeline or what you might've experienced  
21 doing it a different way. By shortcutting that  
22 process, can you tell me what are some of the dangers  
23 that you could potentially encounter? I think this  
24 is an interesting learning opportunity when we start  
25 talking about identifying leadership for public



1 charters in the state of Arkansas. You know, your  
2 model, once again, is a three-year model out kind of  
3 approach, and I'm wondering what have you found if  
4 that was circumvented, if you attempted to do that  
5 with only a year? Outside of just learning your  
6 model, what are some of the other challenges that you  
7 think a leader could potentially face?

8 MR. FISHMAN: Yes, sir. We have done this  
9 shorter timeline and our schools opened -- the  
10 culture is not IDEA culture and the results don't  
11 tend to be at the bar of -- the sort of IDEA bar that  
12 we set. So what we find is leaders -- and this is  
13 totally understandable -- they will default to  
14 whatever they learned and however they learned to run  
15 a school, if they don't have the time to understand  
16 how we do it at IDEA. And that means -- it may not  
17 necessarily be a bad thing if they were a very  
18 successful school leader and manager of principals  
19 before they came to IDEA. But it means what you're  
20 getting isn't something that IDEA knows how to  
21 quickly fix when things are not working. And all the  
22 resources we can typically throw at schools to help  
23 them improve when they need help that really doesn't  
24 work when we have a leader who has come in on a very  
25 short timeline and what they're doing doesn't look

1 anything like IDEA. So we do this because we've  
2 learned the hard way that if we try to do this  
3 quickly and keep our focus around timing, rather than  
4 quality, we usually end up sacrificing quality,  
5 because what you get is not in fact IDEA; its  
6 whatever that particular leader went through and they  
7 will build around that.

8 MR. DAVIS: Thanks for that. No more questions.

9 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. Baldwin?

10 MR. BALDWIN: Yeah. Thank you. So, a little  
11 bit of a question. Like Mr. Davis said, I think it's  
12 interesting to talk about leadership and also talk  
13 about teacher staffing. And one of the things you  
14 read about a lot now is the challenge of hiring  
15 teachers, nurses -- you know, basically all types of  
16 professional positions. And I'm -- I guess I'm  
17 asking it not necessarily from an Arkansas  
18 perspective, but as you all are staffing your schools  
19 out across the nation what are you finding right now  
20 as far as staffing high-quality teachers? Is that a  
21 challenge or is that something you have under control  
22 and you expect to see that same challenge in  
23 Arkansas, as you jump into us?

24 MR. FISHMAN: Yes, sir. It's a good question,  
25 Mr. Baldwin. I'll do my best to answer it.

1           The first part I feel more comfortable  
2           answering. We -- IDEA sets a goal of retaining at  
3           least 85% of its teacher, and in a number of the  
4           previous years we've hit that. And that may not  
5           sound like a particularly high number to you, but  
6           that actually is quite high in the high-performing  
7           charter sector. And we've been able to do that  
8           because we -- you know, we believe we treat teachers  
9           differently, and the intent is the salaries, the  
10          retention, everything is aligned to keep great  
11          teachers and to keep them in the classrooms. They  
12          feel like they can progress to that building and your  
13          administration. This year, it's very unlikely we'll  
14          hit that number. So it has been a much tougher year  
15          to retain our teachers and it's unlikely we're going  
16          to hit our goal, which in the past we've usually been  
17          very close to or have hit it around this time. So,  
18          yes, it's been harder for us this year.

19          In terms of how that would impact us in  
20          Arkansas, pushing this out to 24-25 it's hard to say.  
21          I don't know if the teaching profession will  
22          stabilize; I don't know if folks will feel less  
23          comfortable jumping into other professions or  
24          different schools and they'll want the stability of  
25          committing to an organization like IDEA. I hope

1 that's the case, but I think I would be -- I'd be  
2 making a promise I don't know if I can keep if I told  
3 you that's the case.

4 MR. BALDWIN: Thanks for that answer. I think  
5 that's an honest answer. It's hard to know what the  
6 future holds --

7 MR. FISHMAN: Yeah.

8 MR. BALDWIN: -- with this.

9 MR. FISHMAN: I sure hope so. It is not easy to  
10 keep the culture of a school building and to build on  
11 results when it's new staff every year.

12 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Dr. Wright-McMurray?

13 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Just thank you for being  
14 thoughtful and intentional in the implementation of  
15 your charter school here in the state. And I don't  
16 have any additional questions.

17 MR. FISHMAN: Thank you, ma'am.

18 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. Zellner?

19 MR. ZELLNER: Mr. Fishman, thanks for the  
20 information and thanks for your measured approach. I  
21 don't have any questions.

22 MR. FISHMAN: Thank you, sir.

23 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. Fishman, I don't have any  
24 questions either. I just want to clarify that the  
25 Charter Office will be reaching out to you to make

1 sure that we've put together a really good document,  
2 explaining your buildings and what LEAs you will be  
3 applying for next year so that -- we've gone through  
4 some of the accountability issues with you, so you'll  
5 be aware of all of those.

6 MR. FISHMAN: Yes, ma'am. And we'll make sure  
7 that it's crystal clear. We don't want this to be  
8 ambiguous either because surprises are not good for  
9 either of us. So we'll make sure that this is  
10 spelled out very clearly and you feel satisfied with  
11 what's in front of you.

12 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: That sounds great. Thank you  
13 so much.

14 All right. Unless there are --

15 MR. FISHMAN: Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: -- other questions -- if I  
17 can find my sheet -- I'll accept a motion regarding  
18 the IDEA Public School amendment request.

19 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I move that we approve the  
20 request, amendment request as submitted.

21 MR. DAVIS: I second that.

22 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: I have a motion by Ms. Wright  
23 -- Dr. Wright-McMurray and a second by Mr. Davis to  
24 approve the amendment request as discussed.

25 All those in favor?

1 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

2 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Motion passes.

3 MR. FISHMAN: Thank you, Panel Members.

4 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Congratulations, Mr. Fishman.  
5 And, of course, you know your expiration date on the  
6 charter remains the same. But we do appreciate a  
7 healthy decision about starting so that you're  
8 successful. So we really appreciate that.

9 MR. FISHMAN: Thank you, ma'am.

10 CLOSING COMMENTS

11 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. Charter Panel  
12 Members, we have a work session scheduled for our  
13 next meeting, in July. We may have a couple of items  
14 on the agenda. It looks like we may have a charter  
15 coming up with a renewal of a digital learning plan.  
16 You know, we move through those very quickly; they go  
17 through a very long review process, a very thorough  
18 review process here at the Department.

19 But, Ms. Summons, I know that you've been  
20 working on a list of items that people are suggesting  
21 for things that we'd like to discuss during our work  
22 session.

23 The work session will be here in the auditorium  
24 and we will record it. It still is a public meeting.  
25 But if there are any questions, anything that you

1 want to bring up at that time, it will just be an  
2 open conversation -- if there's any particular, "hey,  
3 Dorie, I want you to really go over this particular  
4 part of the process." And we have some panel members  
5 who have been through the entire process of seeing  
6 new applications and working through all of those  
7 components, but then there are many of us that have  
8 seen a lot of amendments, what are -- those kind of  
9 things. We also have a new charter team that is  
10 working, and so they are eager to learn. And I think  
11 it's an opportunity to look at the documents that are  
12 presented to you on the agenda and to look back at  
13 previous agendas and say what really worked, what do  
14 I wish I had, those kind of conversations. And so I  
15 think Ms. Summons is kind of planning probably just a  
16 morning, like 9:00 to 12:00 kind of plan.

17 MS. SUMMONS: Yes, ma'am.

18 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: And if we need further ones,  
19 we certainly will.

20 I'm going to be meeting with APSRC soon and  
21 we're going to be talking about authorizer training.

22 So I just wanted to kind of put that out there.  
23 Don't feel bad about letting Dorie know if you want  
24 to talk about something or just bring it up next  
25 month when we meet. But we will try to meet in

1 person so that we can engage in that kind of  
2 conversation.

3 Any questions or other comments from panel  
4 members?

5 Well, Mr. Zellner, it was a pretty easy first  
6 day.

7 MR. ZELLNER: Thanks for keeping the training  
8 wheels on.

9 ADJOURNMENT

10 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. I'll accept a  
11 motion to adjourn.

12 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So moved.

13 MR. ZELLNER: Second.

14 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. I have received a  
15 motion from Dr. Wright-McMurray and a second from Mr.  
16 Zellner to adjourn.

17 All those in favor?

18 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

19 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Meeting is adjourned. Thank  
20 you, everyone.

21  
22  
23  
24 (The meeting was concluded at 9:40 a.m.)  
25



## C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF ARKANSAS     )  
                                   ) ss.  
 COUNTY OF SALINE     )

I, SHARON K. HILL, CCR, a Certified Stenomask Reporter and Notary Public before whom the foregoing proceedings was taken, do hereby certify that the same is a true and correct transcription before the Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, Charter Authorizing Panel, in Little Rock, Arkansas, on June 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: June 20, 2022.

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SHARON K. HILL, CCR  
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