

ARKANSAS DIVISION OF  
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION  
CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL

November 14, 2023

9:00 a.m.

A P P E A R A N C E S

PANEL MEMBERS:

DR. MATTHEW SUTHERLIN, CHAIR - ADE Coordinator of Standards  
Systems Support

MR. PHIL BALDWIN Retired Bank Executive

DR. SONJA WRIGHT-McMURRAY Division of CTE Associate Director

DR. TINA MOORE Director, Workforce Development

MR. KIM DAVIS Sr. Advisor/Walton Family Foundation

ADE LEGAL COUNSEL:

MR. STEPHEN REYNOLDS

MS. KALEE HAYWOOD

ALSO APPEARING:

MS. DORIE SUMMONS DESE Charter Schools Director

LOCATION:

ARKANSAS DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

- Auditorium

#4 Capitol Mall

Little Rock, Arkansas

**Sharon K. Hill, CCR**

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

CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Good morning. The November 14, 2023 meeting of the Charter Authorizing Panel is now called to order. I'd like to welcome everyone to the Department of Education and ask that you please silence all your electronic devices. The goal is to facilitate a fair and responsible hearing; so therefore, I ask that each person speaking please state your name and title for the record. I ask that you continue to speak clearly into the microphone throughout your presentation for the benefit of the Panel, this audience, and the viewing audience. This meeting is being live-streamed and recorded, and a transcript of the meeting will be posted on the DESE website.

All right. Good morning, everybody. And good morning to our Panel Members. Thank you for being here.

We do have a Consent Agenda item before you today. And if there are no questions, then I'll accept a motion to pass the Consent Agenda.

DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So moved.

MR. BALDWIN: Second.

CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay. All those in favor?

(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

1 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Any opposed?

2 All right. The motion passes.

3 All right. Mr. Reynolds.

4 MR. REYNOLDS: Good morning. Stephen Reynolds,  
5 Staff Attorney for the Department.

6 First, Mr. Chair, I think your mic is on, on  
7 your laptop, and I think it's causing --

8 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: I just turned it off. I'm  
9 good.

10 MR. REYNOLDS: Okay.

11 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Thanks.

12 HEARING PROCEDURES

13 MR. REYNOLDS: All right. So I'll go over the  
14 procedures for the hearings.

15 Each charter is going to get 20 minutes to  
16 present its case. Any parties in opposition will  
17 also get 20 minutes. To my knowledge, there's nobody  
18 in opposition of these waivers.

19 The Chair needs to swear everybody in before we  
20 get started. And the Chair may grant additional  
21 time, as necessary. And then, anybody on the Panel  
22 can ask questions at any time.

23 So with that, I'll turn it over to Ms. Summons  
24 to introduce the first application.

25 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you very

1 much.

2 1) CONSIDERATION OF THE INSTITUTE FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS NEW  
3 OPEN ENROLLMENT PUBLIC SCHOOL CHARTER APPLICATION

4 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Ms. Summons.

5 MS. SUMMONS: Good morning. Dorie Summons,  
6 Office of Public Charter Schools.

7 The first applicant, Institute for the Creative  
8 Arts, has submitted an application to establish an  
9 open enrollment charter school, beginning in the 24-  
10 25 academic year. The charter will follow a  
11 performing and visual arts high school college and  
12 career prep education model. This applicant was  
13 asked to return with additional information.

14 We have Ms. Rosilee Russell and her team here as  
15 presenters.

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

18 Will all those who plan on testifying in support  
19 of the charter please stand and raise your right  
20 hand. Do you swear that the testimony you're about  
21 to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing  
22 but the truth?

23 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

24 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Thank you very much. You  
25 may begin.

1 DR. RUSSELL: Well, good morning. I'm Dr.  
2 Rosilee Russell, Executive Director of Community  
3 School of the Arts, the sponsoring entity. And as  
4 Dorie said, we're here to answer questions -- follow-  
5 up questions that were given to us in August when we  
6 appeared here.

7 I just want to introduce our K-12 consultant  
8 advisor, Dr. Jennifer Feeny. And if you'll remember,  
9 you asked us about K-12 and a consultant when we were  
10 here last. And so we have a wonderful consultant;  
11 very proud to have her on our team. And Dr. Jennifer  
12 Feeny has been before the Charter Panel before. She  
13 is part of a conversion -- district conversion start-  
14 up charter. And you can see -- let me get -- if I  
15 know what I'm doing here, get us to the page --

16 Jennifer, I may need your help on this because  
17 I'm not -- I'm trying to get us to the -- to our --  
18 there we go.

19 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: There we go.

20 DR. RUSSELL: Good. Technology is not my strong  
21 suit.

22 Dr. Feeny has a doctorate in Education. And you  
23 can see her credentials; she has 20 years of school  
24 experience. She's an outstanding educator and  
25 leader. And she's going to walk us through these

1 questions -- and this is a walk-through literally of  
2 questions that you all had last time. And so she's  
3 going to take us through that. She may be giving you  
4 some handouts, because of some technological issues  
5 going on here. So you may be getting some handouts  
6 as well.

7 So, Dr. Feeny.

8 DR. FEENY: Jennifer Feeny. I'm the K-12  
9 consultant for ICA.

10 Okay. It works better to stand here. It's not  
11 going.

12 All right. So you're well-versed in the mission  
13 of ICA. They were here back in August and kind of  
14 gave you the overview, and really the arts portion of  
15 what the school was. So, today, what I'm here to do  
16 is really explain how will academics go at the ICA  
17 Institute.

18 So primary questions that were asking when they  
19 were here last week were about Library Media -- or a  
20 few months ago, last charter meeting, was Library  
21 Media Specialist, what are classroom spaces, how will  
22 that look, will you provide transportation, what  
23 materials are you using, can you meet the needs of  
24 the 38 required courses, how will you provide  
25 tutoring when a lot of the students coming to you are

1 behind already, student services, professional  
2 development, who are your board members, and just  
3 governance in general. So those are the highlights  
4 of what we'll cover.

5 So the first thing, after I went back -- I was  
6 not onboard at the time in August -- was I watched  
7 the video of the Charter Panel probably three times.  
8 And one of the feedbacks -- big feedbacks for us was  
9 the Library Media Specialist. And after meeting and  
10 really discussing, we met with Ms. Barnett at the  
11 State Department and discussed, you know, what can a  
12 Library Media Specialist look like at ICA. And we  
13 decided we didn't need that Library Media waiver,  
14 that the Panel's -- what the Panel brought and the  
15 questions they asked were important. We don't really  
16 need that Library Media Specialist -- we decided that  
17 we should hire a Library Media Specialist. The thing  
18 with hiring a Library Media Specialist is we want  
19 that teacher to be co-teaching within the classroom  
20 and not just sitting in a library, you know, housing  
21 books. So the Library Media Specialist at ICA will  
22 be co-teaching in the English Language Arts classes  
23 for 9th grade; 10th grade will be in the History  
24 classes; 11th grade, Science; and the 12th grade,  
25 they will really work with the students on Capstone



1 projects, college and career readiness -- just the  
2 application process, whether they're going to work or  
3 whether they're going to college. And so the Library  
4 Media Specialist, we decided that's really a job that  
5 we need to have; so we decided we would get that  
6 Library Media Specialist.

7 The facility has come a long way since they were  
8 here in August. There is now concrete; no more dirt  
9 and nails in the drive. But the building is looking  
10 great. Mr. Baldwin had an opportunity last week to  
11 come and see the facility, and we've made a lot of  
12 progress.

13 So here's the first floor of the facility. You  
14 can see lots of classroom space, probably even more  
15 mechanical space, like every school. But lots of  
16 classroom space for teachers and students and staff.  
17 Here's our second floor; that's right above the other  
18 part of the first floor. Again, lots of classroom  
19 space, lots of unique rooms and designs that are  
20 needed for the Institute, but also can be easily used  
21 as a classroom. And then here is the auditorium  
22 space for the theater and dance department. Again,  
23 lots of classroom space, like the P.E. room, just a  
24 lot of places that can be flexible learning  
25 environments for our students.

1           So a big question that we had last year when we  
2           -- or in August when we came was about transportation  
3           and is transportation provided. We will have a  
4           waiver for transportation. Transportation will be  
5           provided within the city. The City of Fort Smith has  
6           added an additional bus stop for us at ICA. If  
7           you're not familiar down by the river in Fort Smith,  
8           it's also the U.S. Marshalls Museum. And there was  
9           no stop there for U.S. Marshalls Museum or us, so the  
10          mayor has graciously worked with the Transportation  
11          Department to add a stop. So the school will provide  
12          passes for any student in Fort Smith that needs a  
13          pass, and that will be our transportation plan for  
14          this first year.

15          So as a charter school we know that we want to  
16          provide high-quality opportunities for our students.  
17          That starts with our School of Academics, and that  
18          starts with making sure that we select instructional  
19          materials that are of high quality. So we'll go  
20          through and I'll show you the course catalog, course  
21          codes, our 38 required courses, and then explain that  
22          our focus is on high school graduation.

23          So being a new charter school, a new start-up,  
24          we have a unique opportunity to insure that we are  
25          selecting high quality instructional materials from

1 day-one. Unlike schools that maybe are open, they've  
2 been open for a while, it's a lot more difficult to  
3 select materials and encourage people to use those  
4 materials. As a new school, we have that opportunity  
5 from day-one selecting materials that are of high  
6 quality, materials that the State Department has  
7 already been through and insured that they are of  
8 high quality, and that's what our plan is. The great  
9 thing about these high-quality instructional  
10 materials that the State Department have already  
11 selected is that they have embedded teacher support.  
12 We never want to throw materials out to a teacher and  
13 expect them just to figure it out. And our high-  
14 quality instructional materials are already highly  
15 embedded with teacher support and they have inclusive  
16 practices. That's another thing that was brought up  
17 in August, is how are you going to reach those  
18 students that may be coming in behind. By selecting  
19 high-quality instructional materials and working with  
20 the State Department, we'll be able to insure that  
21 the inclusive practices are already built in and that  
22 we're teaching grade level standards.

23 For our materials for English, we've selected  
24 SpringBoard math, Illustrative math and science, BCSS  
25 biology. We are working with the State Department on

1 finishing up our science curriculum, but those are  
2 not -- all high-quality instructional materials have  
3 not been selected for all science areas. So we're  
4 just going to wait until a few more have been  
5 selected.

6 In the arts, we have lots of materials already  
7 selected. We're ready to go with all of our arts  
8 courses.

9 When we had Mr. Baldwin out last week at ICA,  
10 the big thing I think that we wanted to explain was  
11 that we are a high school. You know, so we may look  
12 different in how we offer courses, we may look  
13 different in how our students take electives, but at  
14 the end of the day our focus is high school  
15 graduation, just like any other high school. We want  
16 to insure that our students are receiving 22 high  
17 school credits aligned to the State Department  
18 standards. So at the end of the day, we want to make  
19 sure that all of our students meet these  
20 requirements.

21 So I came earlier and this table was not showing  
22 up. But what's on that blank screen, where it has  
23 the black square, is a teacher hub that we've  
24 created. And that teacher hub, we'll have that on  
25 our website and they have all of the standards for

1           their core content. So each of the different areas  
2           we have aligned to those standards. We want to make  
3           sure that we are day-one ready, that we are not  
4           having to create things after the fact. We want all  
5           of the standards, all the materials, all the  
6           resources in the hub for the teachers. In addition  
7           to that, we've posted on that blank square the  
8           document that shows what are students coming to you  
9           in 9th grade supposed to already know. So we put the  
10          learning targets for grades 3 through 8 -- because we  
11          know not all students will come in 9th grade ready  
12          and we want to make sure teachers have the resources  
13          available, if they need to go back a few years, maybe  
14          go back a year, go back two years, and have the  
15          resources at their hands and they're not trying to  
16          find them.

17                 So we have a course catalog that we've  
18          developed. If you'll pull that up for us over -- so  
19          in the course catalog, as he pulls that up, we have  
20          all the courses that we plan to offer, plus some  
21          additional ones that we'll offer in the future. All  
22          of our 38 required courses are in the catalog, in  
23          addition to any of our CTE courses that we plan to  
24          offer.

25                 We made copies for our technology issues. But

1 here's our course catalog. In the course catalog we  
2 tried to be as explicit as possible, again. We --  
3 once we hire teachers and you guys approve us today,  
4 we will obviously sit down and work with teachers to  
5 go through this course catalog and insure that it's  
6 also aligned to what the teachers have envisioned for  
7 their courses. But this has an opportunity to be  
8 ready for day-one and not be waiting for the first  
9 week of PD.

10 Will you click to the next one, please? Thank  
11 you.

12 All right. And so these are the required core.  
13 These do not include the arts courses that we'll  
14 offer. But we wanted to make sure that we could  
15 cover all of the required courses for accreditation  
16 purposes. And we've got all of our course codes, we  
17 have our courses, and a general outline of what class  
18 they may come in to take. We also know that just  
19 because you're a 10th grader doesn't mean you might  
20 be in 10th grade English; you may need to take a  
21 class, you know, below or above that. But these are  
22 general guidelines.

23 For our career and technical education, you  
24 really, when you think of an arts school, may not  
25 think that there's a whole lot of career and

1 technical classes involved in an arts school. That  
2 was definitely something I've learned in this  
3 process. To be honest, a lot of the classes are  
4 actually career and technical classes. We are  
5 aligned very much to career and technical courses.  
6 So in the first year, the plan is to have Advertising  
7 and Graphic Design. That will be a digital arts type  
8 program for us. Also the first year, Programming and  
9 Software; we'll meet the Computer Science requirement  
10 with the Game Design and Development One. So instead  
11 of offering just the traditional Computer Science  
12 class, we'd like to offer them Game Design and  
13 Development. Year two will be A/V Technology. Year  
14 two will also be Digital Cinema. The plan is for  
15 year three, Culinary Arts, and then Radio  
16 Broadcasting Technology. So we have a lot of  
17 programs of study that we really want to be able to  
18 offer these students, all within career and technical  
19 education.

20 So back in August, at the Charter Panel, a huge  
21 question was how are you going to support these  
22 students. I'm not -- I don't remember which panel  
23 member asked, but they said, When we look at your  
24 data, the students that would be possibly recruited  
25 into your school are coming in behind; because if you

1 looked at the scores of the schools where they would  
2 be coming from, they are behind. So for us, we did a  
3 lot of reflecting on that and what we decided is we  
4 needed a staff member to support those students. So  
5 we came up with a position for a Coordinator of  
6 Support Services. And the Coordinator of Support  
7 Services will make sure that we are providing a  
8 consistent advocate for students who may be behind or  
9 may need special services. So that Coordinator will  
10 do special education wraparound services; they will  
11 support our ELL students; they will insure that  
12 health services is communicating with all of those  
13 people; they'll support 504, dyslexia, and  
14 counseling. What happens is a lot of times in  
15 schools, my own school included, is there's not a  
16 whole lot of communicating between all of these  
17 different services that students need. And so it's  
18 important to us that there is a person in place that  
19 can be the person that is consistent and they're  
20 advocating for all of these different groups.

21 This kind of goes along with it: what was your  
22 plan for tutoring. That was kind of a big question.  
23 We will provide -- we will follow the RTI process to  
24 make sure that we are providing support for students.  
25 Again, like I said earlier, our biggest thing is that



1 we need to provide an instructional program that is,  
2 first and foremost, aligned to grade level standards.  
3 And we know if we don't select a curriculum that is  
4 aligned to the grade level standards that we've  
5 already messed up Tier 1. So we need to make sure  
6 that our Tier 1 instructional program is aligned to  
7 grade level essentials. And then, after that, we'll  
8 make sure that teachers are implementing with  
9 fidelity. And so the big question was, well, when  
10 will you provide these services to students. Well,  
11 we have an advisory time built-in that will also be  
12 RTI time. So it will be a flexible time throughout  
13 the day that students can be pulled; teachers can  
14 request certain students that they can work with, to  
15 insure that these students are getting the services  
16 they need. The Coordinator of Support Services will  
17 be the person that really makes sure that those are  
18 planned out and that we're communicating who needs  
19 what services at that time.

20 So when we think about the Coordinator of  
21 Support Services, it's kind of a full circle for us.  
22 They will be in charge of making sure that all  
23 students are receiving the services they need;  
24 whether that's health services, counseling, whether  
25 that's RTI, whether that's, you know, going back a

1           few years in instruction, we'll make sure that we  
2           have a person that can insure that's happening.

3           So not only do we want to make sure that our  
4           students have that opportunity to have a high-quality  
5           education, we want to make sure that when we look at  
6           hiring teachers that we are hiring teachers that have  
7           a professional community to work within.

8           We are requesting a waiver for Licensure. The  
9           goal of that waiver is to insure that we have some  
10          flexibility when working with arts instructors. The  
11          primary focus will be to use that licensure for that  
12          purpose.

13          We have high-quality instructional materials  
14          selected, so we know that we have embedded supports  
15          for that opportunity. And we also want to make sure  
16          that we're attracting new and experienced teachers to  
17          the school.

18          For our governance, we do have our board  
19          selected at this time.

20                If you'll click the Board of Directors for me?  
21                And I think this is in your packet, as well.

22          When we put this together, we only had the four  
23          board members selected. But we do have five board  
24          members selected. The goal, when we were looking at  
25          selecting board members, was to insure that we had a

1 variety of individuals and different needs that they  
2 could work with the school. We wanted to make sure  
3 we had someone with some public school experience on  
4 boards, and we have that with Ms. Cole. We wanted to  
5 make sure that we had some -- a few people with some  
6 financial background, so we insured that we had a  
7 couple of those. We have Dr. Foti, who was also a  
8 previous school administrator in Fort Smith, and we  
9 have Ms. JoAnne Lever, who has experience in start-up  
10 virtual schools in Fayetteville and has also worked  
11 at APSRC in just really helping schools get started  
12 in the whole process. So we feel really good about  
13 the board members that have been selected.

14 We have our board duties outlined. Again, we'll  
15 -- as we get approved, we'll continue to work on the  
16 board duties. And we also have board policies that  
17 we've worked on with APSRC.

18 I think that's pulling up. This is why we made  
19 copies.

20 So here are our board duties. It just kind of  
21 outlines a little bit of what the Board of Directors'  
22 duties will be and how we will move forward once we  
23 are approved.

24 All right. You can click over to the next  
25 slide.

1           So our governance hasn't changed a whole lot  
2           since we were here in August. We did add the  
3           Coordinator of Support Services to make sure that  
4           that position was in line with those that would work  
5           directly with them.

6           We have gone ahead and started the ICA website.  
7           We want to make sure, after today, that we are really  
8           ready to start. We want to start, you know,  
9           recruiting students and hit the ground running when  
10          we finish. So the ICA website, if you want to pull  
11          that up real quick, it is not a live-link for  
12          students or anybody else to access; but we've got a  
13          good start on it. We want to make sure that we have  
14          places for parents and staff, we have our state  
15          required information, and we are ready to start as  
16          soon as possible.

17          We have our job descriptions, and then the  
18          impacts of art on education.

19          And at this time, if Dr. Russell will come up,  
20          we have -- I believe Mayor McGill from Fort Smith  
21          wanted to share a few words on Zoom.

22          DR. PHILLIP RUSSELL: My name is Phillip Russell  
23          and I'm the Director of Development for Community  
24          School of the Arts. And it is my distinct pleasure  
25          to introduce Mayor George McGill, the mayor of Fort

1 Smith. He's been a longtime supporter of our efforts  
2 to reach young people for the arts. Actually, Mayor  
3 McGill has a real heart for young people and their  
4 education in general. In fact, before he was mayor  
5 -- many of you may know this -- Mayor McGill served  
6 in the Arkansas House of Representatives, I believe  
7 for three terms, where he was a member of the House  
8 Education Committee.

9 So if he's available, I'll turn it over to him.

10 MAYOR MCGILL: Well, good morning. Can you hear  
11 me?

12 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yes.

13 MAYOR MCGILL: Yes. Well, thank you. My name  
14 is George McGill and I'm the mayor of Fort Smith,  
15 Arkansas, and it's a pleasure to be with you today.

16 The reason for my coming before you is to share  
17 with you the economic impact the Community School of  
18 the Arts has already had on our city. Many of you  
19 may already know that the airbase here in Fort Smith,  
20 Arkansas, is an airbase that has been selected by the  
21 United States Military Air Force as the home of the  
22 Foreign Military Sales Mission. And what that means  
23 is that we will be training foreign allies here in  
24 Fort Smith on the latest aircraft in our Air Force,  
25 which is the F-35. And a big part of that

1 recruiting, we competed against California, Texas,  
2 Michigan, and Arizona, for this mission. And one of  
3 the things we shared with -- particularly with the  
4 delegation from Singapore, we talked about the  
5 education opportunities here in Fort Smith, Arkansas.  
6 And the one thing that captured those pilots'  
7 attention was the fact that we were going to have a  
8 Community School of the Arts, and they asked lots of  
9 questions about that. And so, in my mind, at the end  
10 of the day, the things that caused them to select our  
11 airbase as a training site was the fact that, number  
12 one, we've got a great Air Force, great airbase here,  
13 amazing facility for training, but even more so the  
14 educational facilities that we have available. The  
15 General said, We're concerned mainly about the  
16 education of our children and the medical facilities  
17 that you will have available to take care of our  
18 pilots and their families. And so I was able to show  
19 them the Community School of the Arts in the rough,  
20 and they were very, very excited about the  
21 opportunity of having their children attend that  
22 school.

23 But even more important, I know the leadership  
24 at Community School of the Art. I know Ms. Rosilee  
25 Walker, and she's been a pillar in our community when

1           it comes to providing top-notch education,  
2           particularly in the arts. Her name resonates across  
3           the community. And you could do no better than  
4           extend the opportunity for them to have this school.  
5           And the facility is simply amazing. I can't wait  
6           till it opens. I've had a chance to walk through it  
7           while it's been under construction, but the facility  
8           is simply amazing. And the thoughtful process of  
9           locating it along the Arkansas River, adjacent to the  
10          U.S. Marshalls Museum, adjacent to recreational  
11          activities is going to be -- it's an amazing piece.  
12          And, again, it's an economic driver. As mayor, I'm  
13          often asked by companies and families, Why should we  
14          come to Fort Smith, Arkansas. And Community School  
15          of the Arts is always mentioned as a great  
16          opportunity for education and it's a great economic  
17          development driver.

18                So with that said, I strongly encourage you to  
19                please allow them to open this school. And come and  
20                visit, not only to see the Community School of the  
21                Arts, but to see our great city that is beginning --  
22                as it's beginning to grow and prosper. And, again,  
23                thank you for the opportunity to visit today.

24                   CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

25                   DR. PHILLIP RUSSELL: Thank you, Mayor.

1 MAYOR MCGILL: Thank you.

2 DR. FEENY: Okay. So that concludes our  
3 presentation. And I know we'll probably have lots of  
4 questions.

5 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right. So we'll have  
6 our legal review now.

7 DR. FEENY: Okay.

8 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Mr. Reynolds.

9 LEGAL REVIEW

10 MR. REYNOLDS: I'm back for the fun part. So I  
11 think you guys got a legal review in August. But I'm  
12 just going to go back over for a refresher and if you  
13 need clarification on what was heard in the  
14 presentation. So I'm just going to go topic-by-  
15 topic.

16 Waiver topic number one is the Superintendent.  
17 And the charter is seeking to waive Arkansas Code  
18 Annotated 6-13-109, 6-17-427, Standard for  
19 Accreditation 4-B.1, 4-B.2, and the rules governing  
20 the Superintendent Mentoring Program. And we don't  
21 have any legal concerns with that.

22 Waiver topic number two is the Principal. The  
23 charter is seeking to waive Arkansas Code Annotated  
24 6-17-302 and Standard for Accreditation 4-C.2. And  
25 we don't have any legal concerns with that.



1           Waiver topic number three is Teacher Licensure.  
2           The charter is seeking to waive Arkansas Code  
3           Annotated 6-15-1004, 6-17-309, 6-17-401, 6-17-418, 6-  
4           17-902, 6-17-908, 6-17-919, Standard for  
5           Accreditation 4-D.1, and the rules governing Educator  
6           Licensure, Section 6 only.

7           Waiver topic number four --

8           CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Hold on just one second,  
9           Mr. Reynolds.

10          Dr. Wright-McMurray.

11          DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Before we move on to the  
12          next waiver or -- I have a question about the  
13          Licensure.

14          MR. REYNOLDS: Yeah.

15          DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Are you still -- I'm  
16          sorry.

17          MR. REYNOLDS: Yeah, there's some -- there's a  
18          few more to go through, but --

19          DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. Go ahead.

20          MR. REYNOLDS: Waiver topic number four is  
21          Gifted and Talented. It's Arkansas Code Annotated 6-  
22          20-2208(c)(6), 6-42-109, Standard for Accreditation  
23          2-G.1, and the rules governing Gifted and Talented  
24          Program Approval Standards. And we don't have any  
25          concerns with that.

1                   And we don't have any concerns with the  
2                   Licensure waiver.

3                   Waiver topic number five is --

4                   CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: One second, Mr. Reynolds.

5                   DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I do have a question about  
6                   the Licensure waiver. So during the presentation it  
7                   was stated that the intent was to insure the ability  
8                   to have flexibility when it comes to teachers that  
9                   are in the arts or those areas. Just wanting to get  
10                  clarification. Is the -- the way that it is being  
11                  requested, does it provide opportunity for that to go  
12                  into other areas, further along in the charter? So  
13                  specifically CTE teachers, is there the ability --  
14                  the way that the waiver is currently being granted  
15                  for there to be a flexibility in saying that they can  
16                  hire CTE teachers that are not licensed because of  
17                  the waiver? As an example.

18                 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yes. And, furthermore,  
19                 core teachers, as well?

20                 MR. REYNOLDS: I don't know the answer to that.  
21                 I can get it for you, though.

22                 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay.

23                 MR. REYNOLDS: All right. So waiver topic  
24                 number six is the Board of Directors. The charter is  
25                 seeking to waive Arkansas Code Annotated 6-13-608, 6-

1 13-611, 6-13-612(c), 6-13-615, 6-13-616(a), 6-13-617,  
2 6-13-618, 6-13-619(c)(1)(a) and 6-13-c-19 [sic] -- or  
3 6-13-c-19(d), 6-13-620(5)(a)(2), and 6-13-620(5)(b),  
4 6-13-630, 6-13-631, 6-13-634, 6-13-635, 6-14-101 et  
5 seq., 6-13-1303, and the rules governing  
6 Reimbursement by School Districts for Election  
7 Expenses.

8 Waiver topic number seven is the Library Media  
9 Specialist. And if I heard you guys correctly, you  
10 want to rescind that waiver request?

11 DR. FEENY: Yes.

12 MR. REYNOLDS: Okay. All right. I just want to  
13 clarify that for the record.

14 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: And can we get that on the  
15 record?

16 MR. REYNOLDS: Yeah.

17 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay.

18 MR. REYNOLDS: Do you want to clarify this on  
19 record, that you're --

20 DR. FEENY: Jennifer Feeny, ICA. We'll rescind  
21 Library Media Specialist licensure --

22 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay.

23 DR. FEENY: -- and waiver.

24 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you.

25 MR. REYNOLDS: Thank you.

1           Waiver topic number eight is the Personnel  
2 Policies, the Committee. And the charter is seeking  
3 to waive Arkansas Code Annotated 6-17-203, 6-17-205,  
4 and we don't have any concerns with that waiver.

5           Waiver topic number nine is the Personnel  
6 Policies, Incorporation into Contracts. The charter  
7 is seeking to waive Arkansas Code Annotated 6-17-204,  
8 and we don't have any concerns with that.

9           Waiver topic number ten is the Personnel  
10 Policies, the Grievance Procedure. The charter is  
11 seeking to waive Arkansas Code Annotated 6-17-208 and  
12 6-17-210, and we don't have any legal concerns with  
13 that.

14           Waiver topic number eleven is the Personnel  
15 Policies, Classified Employees. The charter is  
16 seeking to waive Arkansas Code Annotated 6-17-  
17 2301(c)(1) and 6-17-2301(d)(2), 6-17-2302, 6-17-2303,  
18 6-17-2304, and 6-17-2305. And we don't have any  
19 concerns with that.

20           Waiver topic number twelve is the Website  
21 Posting. The charter is seeking to waive Arkansas  
22 Code Annotated 6-11-129(a)(1)(b) and the rules  
23 governing Documents Posted to School District and  
24 Education Service Cooperative Websites, Section 6  
25 only. And we don't have any concerns with that.

1           Waiver topic number thirteen is the Counselor  
2 licensure. The charter is seeking to waive Arkansas  
3 Code Annotated 6-18-2003(a)(2)(a) and Standard for  
4 Accreditation 4-E.1. And we don't have any concerns  
5 with that.

6           And if I remember correctly, you guys wanted to  
7 add a waiver for transportation?

8           DR. FEENY: Yes.

9           MR. REYNOLDS: Okay. If you can confirm that on  
10 the record?

11          DR. FEENY: Jennifer Feeny, ICA. We would like  
12 to request a transportation waiver.

13          CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

14          MR. REYNOLDS: And that's Arkansas Code  
15 Annotated 6-19-101 et seq. And we don't have any  
16 concerns with that.

17          CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: And going back to the  
18 question on Educator Licensure, can we get on the  
19 record whether or not this waiver will apply to CTE  
20 courses and to other core subject areas?

21          DR. FEENY: Jennifer Feeny, ICA. So the primary  
22 goal of the waiver will be absolutely for the arts  
23 programs, not necessarily CTE or core. There will  
24 maybe be a limited situation where we couldn't find  
25 somebody for those positions. But the goal will be

1 for the arts programs, not for our math and science  
2 and CTE specific courses.

3 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Did you have a follow-up  
4 question, Dr. Wright-McMurray?

5 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So I'm getting stuck on  
6 "but the goal will be."

7 DR. FEENY: Uh-huh.

8 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Because then that, to me,  
9 provides the flexibility that then it will happen.  
10 So I guess I'm just needing a little bit more  
11 information on in what cases or instances would you  
12 feel like that you would need to utilize the waiver  
13 for -- and, again, I'm biased to CTE, and I know  
14 there's a question also about core. When would that  
15 be the case?

16 DR. FEENY: I would say only if we can't find  
17 somebody; I mean a very limited situation. We know  
18 in the arts it's going to be a little bit more  
19 difficult to find some instructors for some of the  
20 specific courses. However, in CTE and our core  
21 classes there are quite a few more teachers to hire  
22 in those areas. So I would not see us using that  
23 waiver unless you just could not find a staff person  
24 to hire that was already certified. Because the goal  
25 is absolutely to hire certified staff.

1 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. And do you mind  
2 just kind of giving a little bit more detail on what  
3 will be your process to effectively identify  
4 individuals that would qualify for those positions?

5 DR. FEENY: Yes. So we are really excited to go  
6 ahead and get our ICA website running. We want to  
7 start that process immediately. We already have our  
8 job descriptions primarily written. We'll have to  
9 tweak those specifically for some of the CTE courses  
10 and core subjects. But we're ready to get those  
11 posted and start selecting applicants at this time.  
12 It will be a committee decision. We will work with  
13 our board and current staff members to make sure we  
14 select individuals. But absolutely looking at hiring  
15 already certified staff.

16 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

17 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

18 DR. FEENY: Uh-huh.

19 MR. REYNOLDS: And I just wanted to clarify that  
20 the CAP could limit that waiver to those specific  
21 teachers, if it so chose. So, and I'm done with my  
22 legal review, so --

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

25 MR. REYNOLDS: Do y'all have any questions --

1 any other questions about the legal review?

2 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you.

3 MR. WALTER: Morning, Dr. Sutherlin, Members of  
4 the Charter Authorizing Panel. Tripp Walter, Staff  
5 Attorney, APSRC.

6 I just wanted to provide a little clarity around  
7 a couple of the waiver requests that were just  
8 discussed by Dr. Feeny.

9 First of all, as to the school counseling plan,  
10 just to remind the Panel that all that is doing is  
11 gives the flexibility, if needed, to hire an  
12 unlicensed counselor. It does not mean there's no  
13 waiver request for any diminution in the counselor  
14 ratio. And the school will provide a complete  
15 comprehensive school counseling plan, in accordance  
16 with statute.

17 As far as the transportation waiver, certainly I  
18 just want to impress upon the Panel that will not  
19 include transportation services for students who have  
20 transportation services as a related service in their  
21 IEP. And those students who are McKinney-Vento  
22 students or homeless and need transportation to get  
23 to the school.

24 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Thank you very much.

25 All right. Let's start down here.



1 DR. MOORE: So a few things, one about finding  
2 teachers. Other schools in the area have waivers for  
3 teachers. To say that there wouldn't be a challenge  
4 finding licensed CTE teachers or STEM teachers I  
5 think was very much an understatement. There's a  
6 challenge across our entire state to find those  
7 teachers. So just wanted to point that out.

8 So a few questions -- so the original  
9 application mentioned concurrent courses --

10 DR. FEENY: Uh-huh.

11 DR. MOORE: -- as an opportunity with UA-Fort  
12 Smith.

13 DR. FEENY: Yes.

14 DR. MOORE: But in the course codes and course  
15 listings I'm not seeing any course codes for  
16 concurrent.

17 DR. FEENY: Uh-huh.

18 DR. MOORE: So I'm just wondering if there's a  
19 plan in place --

20 DR. FEENY: Yes.

21 DR. MOORE: -- already for those concurrent  
22 classes, since those course codes aren't listed in  
23 the catalog?

24 DR. FEENY: Yes. So we focus primarily on the  
25 graduation requirements for the course catalog, to

1 start. But our plan is to offer concurrent classes  
2 through UAFS, through English, Comp I, Comp II,  
3 College Algebra, Trig, any of the courses that are  
4 our first-year courses. We also will partner with  
5 WATC or UAFS so they have opportunity to participate  
6 in WATC, the Peak Center, and all those things that  
7 are accredited.

8 DR. MOORE: Okay. Thank you.

9 And then another question about the HQIM, two  
10 pieces of HQIM -- one is the materials, the other  
11 piece is training teachers.

12 DR. FEENY: Yes.

13 DR. MOORE: I didn't see a plan for professional  
14 development for the High-Quality Instruction  
15 Materials, which especially a concern would be  
16 licensure waiver --

17 DR. FEENY: Yes.

18 DR. MOORE: -- and the Principal waiver of  
19 licensure.

20 DR. FEENY: Uh-huh.

21 DR. MOORE: So it really concerns me that  
22 there's not an instructional leader that's  
23 necessarily trained in HQIM. Which additionally is  
24 part of another question that says that the Principal  
25 will be the Science of Reading assessor, but yet, you

1 have a waiver for a Principal to even be licensed.  
2 So I'm just wondering how all that is going to work.

3 So lots of questions there --

4 DR. FEENY: That's okay.

5 DR. MOORE: -- about HQIM and training.

6 DR. FEENY: So the primary goal again with  
7 hiring a Principal or Superintendent is -- will be  
8 that they are licensed. And the waivers usually do  
9 cover for a charter school to have that option for a  
10 waiver. But the goal will always be to hire the  
11 certified staff over an uncertified staff member.  
12 They come with training, they come with Science of  
13 Reading assessor training, and they have the ability  
14 to do those things.

15 For the professional development, when I think  
16 about High-Quality Instructional Materials, those --  
17 the professional development is absolutely something  
18 that has to go with it. To just hand those materials  
19 to teachers is not fair. You know, the whole idea of  
20 High-Quality Instructional Materials is that we are  
21 highly training our staff members, in addition to  
22 providing grade level materials for those students to  
23 be participating in. So, absolutely, we've got to  
24 have professional development for those materials.  
25 They are not quality materials if we just give it to

1 a teacher.

2 DR. MOORE: Okay. Because especially I noticed  
3 Illustrative Math, which I think is --

4 DR. FEENY: Yes.

5 DR. MOORE: -- a great, great curriculum --

6 DR. FEENY: Yes.

7 DR. MOORE: -- to use. But it is not a very  
8 traditional curriculum.

9 DR. FEENY: That's correct. Yes.

10 DR. MOORE: Someone who's not been trained would  
11 really struggle to implement that, but --

12 DR. FEENY: Absolutely agree with you. I mean  
13 you really can't implement those without professional  
14 training by the Principal, bringing people in to  
15 provide that training.

16 DR. MOORE: And then -- and then, my very last  
17 question -- I'm sorry -- but you obviously bring a  
18 strong background and knowledge about academics and  
19 you've answered all the questions.

20 DR. FEENY: Uh-huh.

21 DR. MOORE: But I don't know if you're staying  
22 on past -- well, how long do you plan to stay on?  
23 And how can we insure sustainability of this academic  
24 focus and that it's not lost when you're no longer in  
25 the picture, if you're not planning on staying on?

1 DR. FEENY: So we've discussed this. I have  
2 been offered the position. However, since this is  
3 not an approved school yet, that's not really  
4 something that is really being discussed yet  
5 thoroughly. However, even if I am not the Head of  
6 School, I have agreed to stay on as a consultant,  
7 well past day-one of opening the school. I think  
8 that -- you know, I live in the River Valley, I grew  
9 up in Fort Smith, I live in Van Buren currently. So  
10 I'm very invested in that area, I'm invested in the  
11 community; so I'm not just, you know, an out-of-  
12 stater or, you know, way on the other side of the  
13 state person. I am invested in that area. So I  
14 would love to see this school be able to open and be  
15 successful, whether I'm the Head of School or whether  
16 I'm supporting on the outside.

17 DR. MOORE: All right. Thank you.

18 DR. FEENY: Uh-huh.

19 DR. MOORE: That's all my questions.

20 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right. Mr. Baldwin?

21 MR. BALDWIN: Thank you. And I think I had nine  
22 questions that Dorie emailed to you guys and y'all  
23 have answered all of those. I want to thank you for  
24 the hospitality that you showed me when I came to  
25 Fort Smith and toured the school. That was helpful

1 to not only see the building, but to also talk to you  
2 all about your plans and your vision in the academic  
3 curriculum, which was one of my big questions.

4 I think, Dr. Feeny, your involvement is key.  
5 And, you know, she did answer all the curriculum  
6 questions that I think I had and that we had as a  
7 board previously.

8 Mayor McGill, it's great that you joined us by  
9 video conference. I appreciate your words. And I  
10 think that we have Senator Boyd here also, and  
11 appreciate him very much. He was at the walk-through  
12 with us. So there's strong community support.

13 I don't really have any questions. I just  
14 wanted to say that. We had a chance for -- I think  
15 we were there about two hours, so I got everything  
16 resolved. But I did want to convey to the Charter  
17 Panel that I feel comfortable with where they're at  
18 and I feel like the curriculum -- the academic  
19 curriculum and standards have been addressed, at  
20 least to my satisfaction.

21 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

22 DR. RUSSELL: Thank you.

23 DR. FEENY: Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Mr. Davis?

25 MR. DAVIS: I want to, first of all, thank you

1 all for putting together what I think was a really  
2 direct presentation that responded to the questions  
3 of the Panel. And I appreciate, one, the  
4 thoroughness, and once again the directness and, you  
5 know, sort of saying the question asked, here's the  
6 question answered. I think that's critically  
7 important in not only the clarity, but it also speaks  
8 highly on how, you know, folks that are involved with  
9 this project plan to operate and partnership with the  
10 folks that are really concerned about education in  
11 the state of Arkansas. So I really want to elevate  
12 that and, you know, filling us in and doing that.

13 I do want to ask -- one quick suggestion: I  
14 don't want the importance of the arts to get lost in  
15 this. And as we think about traditional education  
16 metrics, I recognize in the application that the idea  
17 of students' postsecondary plans being sort of lumped  
18 together. I mean I might want to suggest that you  
19 think about those things separately, so how many  
20 students are -- what percentage of students will go  
21 off to pursue either additional training, whether  
22 that's in colleges and universities focused on the  
23 arts or career, versus students that are going to  
24 traditional higher education institutions. I think  
25 there's something to be said about where your focus

1 is and being able to track that, so that we have a  
2 clear understanding that this is what the institution  
3 is doing for students and families, and this is how  
4 students and families are continuing to pursue. So  
5 that's more of a suggestion.

6 I do have a question, and folks have asked,  
7 about what I think is critical, the math and science.  
8 But I'm interested in learning about the  
9 identification of individuals of quality in the field  
10 of arts that you'll put before students. How are you  
11 thinking about that? I know it mentions the idea of  
12 local artists and so-forth and so-on. But can you  
13 talk a little bit about the identification, the  
14 selection, and what that might mean for students that  
15 will be really pursuing these careers?

16 DR. FEENY: Yes. And I think you made a great  
17 point about insuring that we look at each child  
18 individually to insure what they do after high school  
19 is focused on. Because not all students will go to  
20 the arts, some will take a different avenue. And I  
21 think we can do a lot of that with our student  
22 success plans that we will have in place starting in  
23 9th grade as a -- 9th grade is the first year that we  
24 would have the students, and really kind of talking  
25 each year about how that will fit in with their



1 career goals. So I think that's a great point.

2 For the arts, you know, we already have the  
3 Community School of the Arts, which is just a  
4 nonprofit afterschool. So, currently, there are arts  
5 teachers that are already working through that  
6 process and through that Community School of the  
7 Arts. So there are already a few people in place.  
8 We plan to work with UA-Fort Smith to really be able  
9 to hopefully bring in some adjunct professors that  
10 can bring another layer, more of a college-bound  
11 layer for the arts. We want to make sure that our  
12 students are exposed to not only local artists, but  
13 professional artists and those in the area. We plan  
14 to advertise outside of Arkansas, in terms of hiring.  
15 We want to make sure that we are getting talented  
16 individuals that can bring in the creative arts to  
17 our school, not just local talent.

18 MR. DAVIS: Yeah. A follow-up on that: were  
19 there any conversations and discussion around artists  
20 in residence or anything along those lines, just out  
21 of curiosity, in the identification of talent? So  
22 the recruitment from outside or identifying a  
23 specific artist to come and providing them with  
24 housing for a semester or so, so that they can sort  
25 of add value to what's happening? I don't know if

1           that has been discussed, not that it needs to be  
2           discussed. But just interested, as we talk about  
3           sort of creating this fullness around where the  
4           school is focused.

5           DR. FEENY: So the whole -- have not talked  
6           about that. But the whole idea of having maybe a  
7           semester course around an artist that comes in from  
8           out-of-state and we really help support that person  
9           with lodging or whatever, that's fantastic. I mean  
10          that would be a really great experience for our  
11          students and our staff to really have that person  
12          come in. If you're not familiar with downtown Fort  
13          Smith, there are lots of artists that are coming in  
14          and out of the community, that don't necessarily live  
15          there. So truly a great opportunity for us to maybe  
16          bring in people that are already coming to the area.

17          Mayor McGill has been fantastic in insuring the  
18          arts is growing in downtown Fort Smith. So us  
19          working with the mayor to incorporate some of those  
20          people already coming in, into our school, would be  
21          fantastic.

22          MR. DAVIS: Okay. Not -- once again, there's a  
23          lot in opening a school --

24          DR. FEENY: There is. Yes.

25          MR. DAVIS: -- without someone saying --

1 DR. FEENY: Yes.

2 MR. DAVIS: -- Hey, what about this, what about  
3 this.

4 DR. FEENY: But it's a great idea, it really is.

5 MR. DAVIS: So, please, no need to kind of run  
6 with that.

7 There are no further questions from me.

8 DR. FEENY: Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay. Thank you.

10 Dr. Wright-McMurray?

11 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Again, thank you guys so  
12 much for going back and doing some additional work  
13 and bringing responses back to us and preparing this  
14 information. And to the Fort Smith community, as an  
15 Air Force brat, I'm extremely excited to hear great  
16 things happening at the Air Force Base, so it's going  
17 to be great for your community.

18 I do have a couple of questions. And the first  
19 one is more of a clarification in something that you  
20 said. So you said this is our transportation plan  
21 for the first year. So is there a different plan  
22 that's going to happen, you know, as the charter  
23 moves forward or was this just a one-year deal? I  
24 mean, what is the expectation for the public  
25 transportation to be used for students to come -- to

1 and from the school?

2 DR. FEENY: So we plan to provide those passes,  
3 you know, each year moving forward. Ideally, in a  
4 perfect world, we would like to have our own bussing  
5 system to really get out there and bring students in.  
6 You know, the first year, we know that's not -- we  
7 can't afford to have that option on the table,  
8 honestly. So finances will dictate after year-one  
9 whether or not we will be able to provide  
10 transportation outside of the city transportation.

11 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. Thank you for that.

12 DR. FEENY: Uh-huh.

13 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. Second question,  
14 looking at the CTE courses that you've chosen to  
15 offer, can you give me a little bit more detail on  
16 how you landed on those specific pathways?

17 DR. FEENY: So when we have our school -- each  
18 of our schools has a focus, whether it's dance,  
19 theater, AV. So when we looked at what courses we  
20 were already planning to offer in terms of schools,  
21 we started looking at our CTE courses and the  
22 standards aligned to it. And I'm a former CTE  
23 teacher. I was really surprised that there were so  
24 many courses within CTE that were already aligned to  
25 so many options that we have in the arts. That was

1 never a connection I made, and my training was in  
2 CTE. So the way we did it, we looked at standards,  
3 we looked at what course descriptions there were, and  
4 then we looked at what we were planning to offer, to  
5 try to marry those two together so that we would have  
6 a robust program, but also a program meeting all of  
7 our CTE needs.

8 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. Did you guys have  
9 an opportunity to get any community feedback, look at  
10 any labor market data to see if that was going to be  
11 good selection choices? Did you get a chance to look  
12 at pre-existing student success plans to see if the  
13 student interest is going to be there? Just can you  
14 give me a little bit more detail? Because, again,  
15 once you get the pathway started with students, you  
16 want to make sure that you're going to have students  
17 that are going to be able to move through all the  
18 levels of courses. So just trying to get a sense of  
19 that. And then, will there be those connective  
20 pieces in the community that can support that work?

21 DR. FEENY: Yes. So we cannot look at their  
22 student success plans because we don't have the  
23 students yet to look at. That would be great if we  
24 can. However, for us, I know Mayor McGill has  
25 already discussed he wants to come in and be part of

1 the AV technology part, come in and have an option to  
2 do that. But as far as offering CTE courses, we  
3 wanted to make sure we were offering something that  
4 not every high school in the area was offering. We  
5 wanted something that really brought us to look a  
6 little bit different than your local schools. I know  
7 Fort Smith has a great CTE program already embedded  
8 -- Greenwood, Van Buren. But the classes they don't  
9 have are some of the CTE courses that we've selected.  
10 So we want to make sure that we have something that  
11 sets us apart from these other high schools and is a  
12 part of the CTE programs of study.

13 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. And do you feel  
14 like the facilities that you guys have will support  
15 your culinary arts program?

16 DR. FEENY: Absolutely.

17 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

18 DR. FEENY: Absolutely.

19 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And then just one last  
20 question. Kind of connecting back to Mr. Davis's  
21 question that relates to career planning for these  
22 students -- because, again, we know that when we're  
23 talking about going into the arts that there is  
24 different conversations --

25 DR. FEENY: Yes.

1 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- that need to take place  
2 as relates to -- especially when we're talking about  
3 students moving through their high school experience  
4 and having opportunities to connect with industry  
5 partners and having that ability to really understand  
6 what the next steps look like for them. So I guess  
7 just wanted to get a little bit more detail in how  
8 you guys anticipate or see that taking place.  
9 Because that is going to be a huge piece for students  
10 that do choose to pursue the arts upon graduation,  
11 making sure that things are more specific to their  
12 needs and not traditional -- going to a four-year  
13 institution and pursuing something like a business or  
14 something like that.

15 DR. FEENY: I think for us the focus will be on  
16 the student success plans, really, you know, day-one  
17 having students start working on that student success  
18 plan so that we have an idea of what are their  
19 aspirations after high school. We don't want to  
20 assume they want to go to the arts; they may want to  
21 go to medical school, you know. And I think it's  
22 important -- you know, we have that advisory plan in  
23 place where we have advisory every day. We have the  
24 Coordinator of Support Services. We want to make  
25 sure that we're providing a wraparound type service

1 for all of these students so that, for example, if  
2 they don't want to go into the arts, then have a  
3 different plan. Maybe they want to just go to work;  
4 maybe they want to go to a four-year school; maybe  
5 they want to go to eight years of school and continue  
6 on. We want to make sure that we know these students  
7 as individuals and we don't just assume that because  
8 they're enrolled in an arts high school that that  
9 will be their primary focus when they leave. And  
10 that goes down to having advisory every day, having  
11 the counselor highly involved, and having that  
12 Coordinator of Support Services there to really  
13 support these students in that process.

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

15 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you.

16 I did have a comment from one of our Panelists  
17 online that I just wanted to put out there.

18 DR. FEENY: Yes.

19 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: And that is, she just  
20 wanted to make sure that you understood that there's  
21 no special education licensure waiver.

22 DR. FEENY: Yes.

23 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So there's no way that you  
24 can get a waiver for that.

25 DR. FEENY: Correct. Yes.



1 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So just to put that on the  
2 record.

3 I do want to say that I'm impressed with where  
4 you've -- where you were like, what, a year-and-a-  
5 half ago, two years ago, and where you are now. It's  
6 a big shift, so --

7 DR. RUSSELL: Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yeah. All right. Are  
9 there any other questions?

10 If there are not, I'll entertain a motion.

11 MR. BALDWIN: I'd like to make a motion to  
12 approve the Institute of the Creative Arts charter  
13 application as presented.

14 DR. MOORE: Second.

15 MR. DAVIS: Second.

16 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay. So Mr. Baldwin has  
17 made the motion and it was seconded by Dr. Moore and  
18 Mr. Davis.

19 All right. All those in favor?

20 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

21 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All those opposed?

22 All right. Congratulations.

23 DR. FEENY: Thank you very much.

24 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: We'll take just a few  
25 minutes to fill out our voting sheets and we'll get

back with you in just a few minutes.

(A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right. We'll start down here with Dr. Wright-McMurray.

DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I voted for. I support the Institute for Creative Arts application. I'm excited about the opportunity for students interested in the arts to have access to an academic and CTE focused education. This will serve as a great resource for these gifted students and allow them to explore their talents. I look forward to hearing about the progress and outcomes of this model.

CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Mr. Davis.

MR. DAVIS: I support the charter application for the Institute for Creative Arts. The opportunity to add an additional school model to the community is a value-add for families and students in an ever-emerging field in the state.

CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

Mr. Baldwin.

MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I vote in favor of the charter application. The Creative Arts charter school will provide a quality and unique education for students and will be an asset for the Fort Smith community.

1           CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Dr. Moore.

2           DR. MOORE: I voted for. I support the charter  
3 application for the Institute for Creative Arts in  
4 Fort Smith. The robust learning opportunities for  
5 fine arts was clearly apparent in the original plan  
6 and presentation and much needed in the area. And  
7 the follow-up presentation provided needed details  
8 related to core academics. In a fine arts-focused  
9 high school several students may desire to pursue  
10 postsecondary education at universities that require  
11 rigorous academic preparation. I encourage  
12 partnership with APSRC for PBL implementation of  
13 HQIM.

14          CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Thank you very much.

15          And then I voted for. I support the charter  
16 application for the Institute of the Creative Arts.  
17 I can tell that the feedback was internalized and  
18 reflected upon. And I'm excited about the direction  
19 the school -- of this school and look forward to what  
20 it has in store for the students of Arkansas.

21          Thank you very much. Congratulations.

22          DR. RUSSELL: Thank you so much. We just really  
23 appreciate it.

24          Okay. Now, we have one request: we want all of  
25 you -- since Mr. Baldwin has been up for a visit, we

want all of you to come visit and I hope you will.

CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yes, definitely.

DR. RUSSELL: Thank you very much. We're so excited.

DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Yeah. Congratulations.

CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

2) CONSIDERATION OF RESPONSIVE ED ARKANSAS DISTRICTS: PREMIER  
HIGH SCHOOL OF ARKANSAS AMENDMENT REQUEST

CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right. Ms. Summons.

MS. SUMMONS: Okay. Responsive Education Arkansas Premier High School of Arkansas is requesting to, number one, add two campuses to the charter, in the Fayetteville and Russellville communities; and, number two, increase the enrollment cap from 975 students to 1,225 students to reflect the expansion.

The new campuses will have the following enrollment cap in each building. In the Fayetteville campus, it will be 175 students; in Russellville, it's 75 students.

The charter was asked to provide additional information. So we have Mr. Dennis Felton, Junior here on behalf of Premier.

CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you very much.

1 Will everyone who is going to speak on behalf of  
2 the charter please stand and raise your right hand?  
3 Do you swear that the testimony you're about to give  
4 is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the  
5 truth?

6 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

7 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you very  
8 much. You may begin.

9 MR. FELTON: All right. Good morning. Thanks  
10 for having us back this morning. We just want to  
11 thank -- I know we've worked with the Department, the  
12 Charter School Office, and, Dr. Sutherlin, your team,  
13 as well as individuals like APSRC, in helping us get  
14 the data to be able to kind of tell our story. And  
15 so some of the information you've heard this morning  
16 I've shared in the previous hearing. And then we've  
17 added data to help tell our story, as requested from  
18 the Panel.

19 I'm Dennis Felton. I serve as the State  
20 Director of Premier High Schools here in Arkansas.

21 We have our team here, as well. I'm not going  
22 to go through all the individuals. But we continue  
23 to have our team to help support the day-to-day  
24 operations of the schools that we serve here in  
25 Arkansas, and excited about keep adding the expertise

1 to the team, as well as being able to expand in those  
2 roles to be able to support schools.

3 Here today we are requesting to add an  
4 additional campus in Russellville, Arkansas, as well  
5 as Fayetteville, Arkansas. And then increasing our  
6 enrollment cap from 975 to 1225, to be able to  
7 reflect that expansion.

8 At Premier we still continue to provide hope for  
9 students through a caring mastery-based blended  
10 learning option that promotes a free society and  
11 cultivates moral and academic excellence.

12 We continue to serve a very unique student  
13 population -- students who are seeking for a smaller  
14 environment, a personalized learning approach;  
15 students who have disengaged from the traditional  
16 high school setting; some students who have already  
17 dropped out of high school to get them back engaged;  
18 students who are working fulltime in the community;  
19 and students who already are parents in the community  
20 as well.

21 Here, I've added some data. It kinds of gives  
22 you a picture of the poverty at each campus, as well  
23 as our average population. And you can see that  
24 Premier continues to serve like high-poverty and  
25 high-at-risk student populations.

1           In Arkansas, we're currently serving the Little  
2 Rock community, North Little Rock community,  
3 Springdale, Fort Smith, Texarkana, and Premier High  
4 School Online.

5           We're seeking to add two campuses, one in  
6 Russellville and one in Fayetteville, for the 24-25  
7 school year.

8           As far as the district structure goes, the  
9 Premier High Schools of Arkansas entails Premier High  
10 School Little Rock, Premier High School Fort Smith,  
11 Premier High School Texarkana, and Premier High  
12 School Online. With the addition of the two  
13 campuses, we will add Premier High School of  
14 Fayetteville and Premier High School of Russellville  
15 under the Premier High Schools of Arkansas umbrella.

16           Here, you see a breakdown of our average daily  
17 membership per campus. And we're excited -- you  
18 know, the campuses that we've launched, even in Fort  
19 Smith and Texarkana, are continuing to see growth and  
20 interest in those campuses as well.

21           Here, I just kind of show where we hit our  
22 current enrollment cap and how many students we have  
23 in that current school. If you remember -- I know  
24 Dr. Sutherlin was around -- we kind of walked those  
25 enrollment caps back to make sure that we wasn't

1 asking for too many seats and it was more aligned to  
2 the enrollment that we have. And so you see here  
3 where we went to get to 1225 is just adding the  
4 Russellville and the Fayetteville campus enrollment  
5 caps.

6 Looking at 22-23 school year, we awarded 129  
7 high school diplomas; 42 of those students were  
8 dropout recovery students, 35 early graduates, 25  
9 students earning industry-based certifications, 65  
10 students earned credit through our JAG program, 34  
11 students participated in our work-based learning  
12 program, 32 community service learning hours. And  
13 then just added that note: in our graduation, across  
14 six graduations, over 1800 attendees.

15 Here, we have our average daily attendance  
16 breakdown by each campus as well. It continues to be  
17 a target for us, because we know a lot of our  
18 students that come to us have already struggled with  
19 the engagement; they've struggled with attendance.  
20 And so our campus is also working with the staff and  
21 students to development student attendance incentive  
22 plans to be able to kind of drive that engagement.

23 Just added some data here. Just wanted to note  
24 -- you can see we continue to strive to get our  
25 engagement up on our state assessment. And so you



1 can see campuses a few years ago, just like Little  
2 Rock and North Little Rock, we were testing about 50  
3 to 65 percent, and most of the Premier High Schools  
4 are testing either almost at 90 percent or above 90  
5 percent in testing.

6 And then virtual, of course, we're learning; the  
7 virtual testing is not as easy as brick-and-mortar,  
8 and continue to develop ways to be able to get those  
9 kids tested and on-site and get that taken care of,  
10 as well.

11 Here's a list of our overall ESSA Index score by  
12 each school and as well as our high school added --  
13 the high school value-added growth from the 22-23  
14 school year, as well. And as you know, the campuses,  
15 like Fort Smith, Texarkana, Springdale, they recently  
16 opened; so we don't have that data for some of those  
17 years.

18 This is a comparison we thought it would be  
19 interesting to show the Panel. When you look at  
20 Premier High Schools, which is a school that doesn't  
21 receive a letter grade, in comparison to the other  
22 schools in Arkansas that do not receive a letter  
23 grade -- when you look at the overall ESSA Index  
24 score, it seems like Premier is either performing  
25 equivalent or a little bit better than those. And

1       just students -- I do have Cabot Panther Academy down  
2       here; they actually go down to grade 5, so it does  
3       mix middle school in there, as well. And ALLPS,  
4       which kind of serves as a school of innovation, as  
5       well as an ALE program at Fayetteville.

6               Here, we have our graduation rate for -- when  
7       you look at -- North Little Rock is 42%, Little Rock  
8       is 40%, Springdale is 72% -- and then you compare  
9       those graduation rates amongst the other schools that  
10      don't receive a letter grade, once again it seems  
11      like Premier is performing either equivalent or  
12      better than some of those schools.

13             We wanted to highlight -- we're partnering with  
14      the state in the Peer Grant program. And so once of  
15      the things that we're doing in the Peer Grant program  
16      is be able to set NWEA Map goals. We like the  
17      interim assessment, knowing that we have a large  
18      number of our students come to us -- they are a  
19      couple of grade levels behind. And so the Map allows  
20      us to kind of measure one years' growth and be able  
21      to determine where those kids came to us and then  
22      where they were at the end of the year.

23             That's our NWEA Map -- Little Rock Map growth.  
24      This is our North Little Rock reading growth for the  
25      21-22 school year, 22-23 school year.

1           And so, then, we're a mastery-based model.  
2       Students have to score 70 or above to even go to the  
3       next unit. And then after you complete five units,  
4       you're able to earn your half-credit. And then after  
5       an additional five units you're able to earn your  
6       whole credit, if it's a whole credit course. And so  
7       here you see a breakdown of the mastery of units from  
8       the 22-23 school year for each campus.

9           So then we also pulled our course completions.  
10      We talk a lot about students completing courses, and  
11      some of these students that previously dropped out of  
12      high school leave in high school without a high  
13      school diploma because they haven't completed certain  
14      courses. And so here we took the breakdown on the  
15      different course completions for each campus, as  
16      well, which, of course, equivalates to credit.

17           We threw in some CTE data here as well; so you  
18      look at it for the 22-23 school year and the students  
19      that participated in industry-based certifications,  
20      and then compare that to our 23-24 school year. So  
21      you can see we continue to develop more partnerships.  
22      We continue to see an interest in students engaged in  
23      industry-based certifications. And our goal -- and I  
24      know we set this goal in our charter -- is that every  
25      graduate would also leave high school with a -- I

1 mean high school with a high school diploma, as well  
2 as an industry-based certification.

3 And so things we've been working on behind the  
4 scenes is working on our RTI program to be able to  
5 strengthen our performance in areas like reading and  
6 math. We're seeing those growths in the assessment  
7 of our NWEA Map, but we also want to see those  
8 results on the state assessment. We've worked to  
9 target goals to be able to increase the graduation  
10 rate, looking at our baseline data, as well as our  
11 student attendance and on-time credits, as well as  
12 looking at those things and those grade point  
13 averages; getting students to take the ACT  
14 assessment; and getting students the preparation and  
15 workshops they need for that assessment; and then  
16 also making sure students get those computer science  
17 credits and community service learning hours.

18 So one of the things we want to keep trying to  
19 do is our attendance recovery program and attendance  
20 incentive plan. We want to be able to continue to  
21 recruit dropouts and get them a high school diploma  
22 and an industry-based certification. We want to  
23 strengthen our targeted instruction, using our Map --  
24 the NWEA Map data, as well as our unit data -- unit  
25 test data and the state assessment data, to really

1 have teachers who will have more data-driven  
2 instruction to kind of close those learning gaps.  
3 And then to continue to provide that one-on-one small  
4 group and personalized approach, and then embed that  
5 with our character education and social-emotional  
6 learning approach.

7 We want to continue to support our schools, and  
8 so we've partnered with APSRC to provide our schools  
9 the literacy coaches and literacy specialists,  
10 meeting and speaking to our principals. In speaking  
11 to them as well, it seems like some really good  
12 support and work that's being done within the schools  
13 to help teachers, to help kids.

14 And then continue to practice Professional  
15 Learning Communities where everybody in the building  
16 -- since we are small, we are singletons, to get  
17 those individuals all working towards the common  
18 goal, all talking about the school-wide issues, and  
19 then putting a plan together that they address it  
20 together. And then that comes through your norms to  
21 collect the commitments and your goals that are set.

22 Continue to try to invest in our district  
23 support, with our district team. We're also  
24 partnering with education consultants to come in to  
25 help us with leadership and instructional coaching as

1           well.

2           We did seek some feedback from our parents, and  
3           80% of our parents believe our purpose statement is  
4           clearly focused on student success. Parents provide  
5           -- feel like they have a voice; in school decisions,  
6           they have a say-so. And students and parents are  
7           also satisfied with the level of communication and  
8           relationships between students and teachers, as well  
9           as parents and principal.

10          Just in close, we pull directly from our parents  
11          that we're able to have the kind of open response;  
12          it's just showing that a lot of our parents --  
13          sometimes this is just their last hope. For some of  
14          our parents and students, it gives them opportunities  
15          they didn't have in maybe the previous setting or  
16          maybe in their local community. And so we appreciate  
17          our parents as far as our support and the comments  
18          they made towards the work that we're doing.

19          I just wanted to share kind of putting you in  
20          the day of a couple of Premier students. We had one  
21          student that was 19 years old, that was a teen parent  
22          enrolled in Premier after dropping out of high school  
23          in the 21-20 school year, and they later would  
24          graduate in May and enroll in Pulaski Tech. We have  
25          another student that had actually dropped out of

1 school during Covid and hadn't returned to school,  
2 and they still was not only able to get back in  
3 Premier, earn a high school diploma, but also leave  
4 with a CNA license and able to enter the workplace  
5 immediately. And then we had another student that  
6 was incarcerated six months prior to being enrolled  
7 in Premier. And then this student is one of those  
8 students that, yeah, they've gotten behind within  
9 that year; that student was not only able to add --  
10 earn credit he was supposed to earn, but we saw huge  
11 gains in reading and math performance as well.

12 So we want to continue, when we look at  
13 Fayetteville and Russellville as a part of our five-  
14 year plan that's written through our CSP grants, to  
15 improve student outcomes by improving student  
16 experience, and then trying to sustain a high-quality  
17 model here in Arkansas. And so at Premier we  
18 continue to want to provide a personalized learning  
19 approach, engage in CTE programs, industry-based  
20 certifications, help students with post-secondary  
21 planning, as well as concurrent credit opportunities,  
22 providing some enrichment intervention programs, and  
23 providing that flexibility for students that need  
24 help in those nontraditional hours.

25 So, why Russellville and Fayetteville?

1           As we go into these communities, we continue to  
2       see a lot of parent interest and community interest  
3       in this type of model. People have heard about the  
4       work that Premier does because we've had an impact on  
5       different communities in Arkansas. And so continuing  
6       to provide intervention for those students at risk of  
7       dropping out of high school or who have dropped out  
8       of high school, students looking for that flexibility  
9       in a smaller school setting, as well as being able to  
10      maybe take on some of the tasks that they have as  
11      parents or as fulltime employees in the community.  
12      And then partnering, we think there's -- the heart of  
13      our work that we do is partnering with other  
14      nonprofits that serve the at-risk population. And so  
15      you think about your shelters or you have your  
16      programs that are geared as far as at-risk teens.  
17      We've seen those people to be huge partners in the  
18      community, because sometimes they know about these  
19      kids because they've already left the school district  
20      but they're still in the community and they're  
21      working with those individuals.

22           We're excited about the partnerships to  
23      potentially have at Arkansas Tech University Career  
24      Center, Northwest Arkansas Community College, ALLPS,  
25      NWTI. We currently have a partnership with



1 Springdale. And so you can even see, when you look  
2 at the campus size compared to -- a Premier High  
3 School in comparison to a Russellville High School or  
4 the size of Premier High School compared to a  
5 Fayetteville High School; and so to provide an  
6 alternate education option with an innovative  
7 academic model in Washington and Pope County. These  
8 areas were identified as we worked through our CSP  
9 grant as well as opportunity zones to be able to help  
10 a community in need as identified by the ROS and  
11 looking at the community partners.

12 And so you see we've continued to try to engage  
13 with those that work with delinquent juveniles. We  
14 continue to try to engage with the local public  
15 schools as much as we can, even local public charter  
16 schools. Because at the end of the day, we just want  
17 to save more students.

18 Long-term, you can see where we do plan to  
19 consolidate our other Premier High Schools under this  
20 district in Arkansas, as well as add two additional  
21 charters. You see where we have the 2026 goal of  
22 having the eighth school, which would include  
23 Russellville and Fayetteville. And then,  
24 potentially, by 2028, having ten Premier High Schools  
25 across the state of Arkansas.

1           We want to continue to build relations with  
2           community partners and the local school districts;  
3           continue to strive to meet all of our charter goals,  
4           as outlined to you-all, in the state of Arkansas; and  
5           provide quality assurance and adequate support for  
6           our schools that's located throughout Arkansas.

7           Both of these schools were awarded \$1.4 million  
8           in CSP federal grants, as going back to those  
9           opportunity zones. So we're excited to be able to  
10          have that grant to put emerging technology in  
11          students' hands, to be able to provide curriculum to  
12          students, to be able to get all the instructional  
13          supplies we need to get the school off and running.  
14          And then, most importantly, to provide those  
15          innovative things through the grant as well.

16          Here, I've just kind of got a timeline. Of  
17          course, for those who know, this was recently  
18          submitted, so I'm a little bit off at this point on  
19          my timeline. But we're in the process of basically  
20          finalizing a facility, and then any facility  
21          renovations that's needed. And then, of course,  
22          going through all the inspection permits process to  
23          get the building ready for next August.

24          Ultimately, we think parents, students and  
25          community would benefit from this. Additional seats

1 in these communities would give parents another  
2 option, would give them a smaller option, will give  
3 them an option that we've seen to be successful in  
4 other communities across the state, and have an  
5 impact in other areas in the state of Arkansas.

6 Also, I just want to throw in there that often  
7 when we're looking at this population we serve,  
8 there's a lot of finance that's involved with it as  
9 well. And so you can see in here what high school  
10 graduates on average can earn, up to \$9200 more a  
11 year than a high school dropout. There's more  
12 success there, talking about lifetime earnings, as  
13 well as the incarceration rate and the number of  
14 individuals incarcerated without having a high school  
15 diploma. And so we hope to think that -- you know,  
16 we're not only living out our mission and vision, but  
17 really being an asset to the community.

18 So we're excited this year. We're celebrating  
19 10 years, been serving the state of Arkansas. Just  
20 10 years ago, we graduated just 10 kids. We've  
21 awarded over 150 high school diplomas, and then  
22 looking at more than 300 graduates to date.

23 Just revisiting again, we're seeking to add a  
24 Premier High School in Russellville and Fayetteville  
25 for the 24-25 school year and increasing the

1 enrollment cap to reflect that expansion.

2 At Premier High School, we continue to keep  
3 students to the forefront of our mind and trying to  
4 be responsive to the needs of the communities in  
5 Arkansas.

6 Thank you, Dr. Sutherlin.

7 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

8 Dr. Wright-McMurray?

9 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. Thank you for your  
10 presentation and going to work on some pieces that  
11 were requested by the Panel. I do have a couple of  
12 questions on -- just clarification on some of your  
13 data pieces. And I'm trying to reconcile what I have  
14 here and then what was maybe up there; so I may have  
15 more questions. I'm hoping not.

16 So looking at the course completions for  
17 Springdale -- and it looks like, from what I can see,  
18 that there was a dip from 2021-22 to 22-23, for the  
19 course completions for credit.

20 MR. FELTON: I was trying to get my slide back  
21 up. I've got it right here. I don't know why it's  
22 --

23 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And my slides aren't  
24 numbered, so I'm sorry.

25 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: While he's looking, can you

1 tell us what those numbers were --

2 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

3 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: -- and where you see that  
4 dip?

5 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So what I'm looking at is  
6 -- so previous year was 1065, and there's -- it goes  
7 to 640. So just trying to get a sense of -- any  
8 explanation on that big of a drop from year-to-year  
9 for that specific school?

10 MR. FELTON: What I would say is it probably has  
11 to do with enrollment. I know enrollment does change  
12 year-to-year. And you're saying the previous year  
13 had more; right?

14 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Uh-huh.

15 MR. FELTON: And so that's what I would  
16 attribute it to, enrollment.

17 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Like almost 400 more. And  
18 then there was like a decline of like -- for the next  
19 year of like less, like almost 400. So I was just  
20 trying to get a sense.

21 And then while we're still on that same school,  
22 so then I was looking at your -- the certifications  
23 that were earned. And so for that same school, 22-23  
24 academic year was zero.

25 MR. FELTON: So that's a --

1 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I'm trying to figure out  
2 what's going on at Springdale's campus to where, one,  
3 there was a huge drop in the course completions, and  
4 then also in that same school there wasn't any  
5 certifications earned. And I guess what kind of  
6 stuck out to me is when I was looking at Fort Smith,  
7 which was not open the previous year; it actually  
8 outpaced Springdale, which had been open the previous  
9 year; so it actually had three students that earned  
10 certification. So I'm just trying to figure out  
11 what's going on for Springdale.

12 MR. FELTON: So in speaking to the  
13 certifications, we did just recently partner with  
14 NWTI. If you guys remember, Springdale hasn't been  
15 open long at all, as well. And sometimes in these  
16 communities -- we want to expedite and get these  
17 partnerships off the ground and running as soon as  
18 possible; a lot of times it doesn't always line up  
19 like that. And so we were able to get NWTI -- get an  
20 MOU going with them and we do have students enrolled  
21 in industry-based certifications. We were not  
22 successful last year, but we were successful with  
23 partnering with NWTI for the EAST program, which  
24 wouldn't register here on this industry-based  
25 certification. So we didn't get the industry-based

1 certification part until this upcoming -- this school  
2 year, right here. So, last year, they didn't earn  
3 any.

4 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So are you saying that  
5 your enrollment at Springdale drastically decreased  
6 from academic year '22 to academic year '23? Is that  
7 the explanation for the large drop in course  
8 completions?

9 MR. FELTON: No. And I don't want to give an  
10 explanation that's not data-driven. I mean looking  
11 at those two numbers, I was just speculating, saying  
12 that each year the enrollment does change, depending  
13 on the students enrolled and grade levels. And so I  
14 was saying it could be something with the enrollment,  
15 some kind of correlation with the enrollment. But  
16 I'd have to look into it deeper to see what would be  
17 the difference in the completion.

18 MR. DUVALL: Aaron Duvall, CTE Director.

19 So Springdale -- Mr. Felton talked about our  
20 EAST partnership with them. We didn't have any  
21 students who wanted to go to NWTI. And so to rectify  
22 that, we did an end-of-the-year fieldtrip to NWTI,  
23 trying to show the kids what's available to them.  
24 And so this year we do have three or four students  
25 there. We're really trying to strengthen that

1 partnership for this year and the years to come, in  
2 Springdale.

3 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. So I guess that  
4 brings me another question. So it is dependent upon  
5 whether or not students want to go to NWTI, whether  
6 or not you're going to have certifications at all for  
7 your students, or -- I'm just trying to get a sense  
8 of that process.

9 MR. DUVALL: For the CTE certifications, for the  
10 IBC's, they're offered at NWTI. Correct. So if we  
11 don't have students who are going there, on campus we  
12 offer internships. So we do more of the work-based  
13 learning than we do the CTE pathways. So if you  
14 looked at the internships, there were a lot of  
15 students who earned the internships at our campuses.  
16 All of those came from Springdale, because we did  
17 have I think 28 students enrolled in internships  
18 there.

19 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. And -- so just as a  
20 point of information, you know, our goal and desire  
21 is that students are enrolled in CTE pathways and  
22 with some type of certification in CTE. So when I  
23 see that there's zero, that kind of gives me a bit of  
24 pause.

25 MR. DUVALL: Yes. And that's why we've really



1           tried to strengthen that partnership with them,  
2           showing kids what's available to them, saying, We can  
3           -- you know, we can transport you here; this is an  
4           option for you, morning, PM session. And so that's  
5           why we've really tried to strengthen that, because  
6           we've identified that as well. And hopefully we have  
7           fixed that for this year.

8           DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

9           MR. DAVIS: Can I -- before you -- and I'll turn  
10          the mic back over to you, but it's on that same  
11          point.

12          Am I to assume that with an expansion into  
13          Fayetteville that same process would be with NWTI?

14          MR. DUVALL: (Nodding head up and down.)

15          MR. DAVIS: Okay. So this is --

16          MR. DUVALL: Correct.

17          MR. DAVIS: -- oh, we've seen this happen in  
18          Springdale; it potentially can be an issue with the  
19          Fayetteville campus as well, because that's where the  
20          partnership would be?

21          MR. DUVALL: Well, we wouldn't think it would be  
22          an issue. Hopefully, we've fixed this. Right? We  
23          understand what we need to do to get kids involved in  
24          this -- in CTE, and that's to show the kids what  
25          we're talking about. We can present -- you know,

1 say, Oh, you have an opportunity to do blank-blank-  
2 blank. But kids don't quite understand that until  
3 they go there and see, Oh, wow, I could be a diesel  
4 mechanic; I can actually, you know, become a welder  
5 right here. And we show them what's available. So  
6 we think we have, you know, remedied that situation.

7 DR. MOORE: So, Dr. Wright-McMurray, on his same  
8 question -- could you go to the slide that has this?  
9 Because that slide is not in our slides, because I  
10 had that same question. And could you go back to  
11 that slide that shows course completion?

12 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And as you're going back  
13 there -- so, again, just another point of information  
14 or just -- so has there been any conversations about  
15 utilizing like the ACT Work Keys or allowing students  
16 to earn CRC so they would have an opportunity to --  
17 because beyond going to NWI -- NWTI, there should be  
18 other options that your campus has available and  
19 students should be able to earn a certification.

20 MR. DUVALL: Correct. And so -- so to  
21 strengthen that, one thing we did do is partner --  
22 not exactly a CTE pathway, but we did partner with  
23 business and industry training. So we do have three  
24 students who are currently in more of a trade school  
25 while they're in high school. And then we have

1 implemented Work Keys and we're rolling that out this  
2 school year. We plan on -- while the Work Keys  
3 assessment is technically optional, right, we're not  
4 making that optional; we're going to administer the  
5 Work Keys assessment to all of our students and we  
6 are going to take them through the Work Keys  
7 curriculum as part of our college/career readiness  
8 course.

9 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So you say it's optional  
10 for --

11 MR. DUVALL: It's not optional.

12 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

13 MR. DUVALL: We will all -- all of our students  
14 will take the Work Keys assessment this year.

15 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. So then we're not  
16 looking at CTE as being optional?

17 MR. DUVALL: Correct.

18 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

19 MR. DUVALL: Yes.

20 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

21 DR. MOORE: So I've pulled the numbers; that's  
22 why I wanted to go back to this, the ADE My School  
23 Info. And the Springdale campus, in 21-22, had  
24 enrollment of 50 students, and then 22-23 had  
25 enrollment of 94 students. So it actually had almost

1 twice as many students, yet the course completions  
2 were tremendously less. So that's very counter-  
3 intuitive, why you would have half the number of  
4 students -- or twice as many students and almost like  
5 half of the course completion. So that is an area of  
6 concern, why they did not complete the courses.

7 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I guess I -- I guess I'm  
8 just trying to get -- has there -- have you guys had  
9 any discussions, as you have looked at this data,  
10 that can be shared on why you may think that this is  
11 the case from one year to the next there is such a  
12 huge drop for course completion? Because, again,  
13 this would be something I think would be of huge  
14 importance to move students forward. So I'm just  
15 wondering what conversations you guys may have had to  
16 -- when you looked at this data?

17 MR. FELTON: I'll say we have had some  
18 conversations. I think those conversations has led  
19 to decisions that have to be made as well. We're  
20 excited in the direction that we're going in  
21 Springdale. So we've had some staffing changes on  
22 that campus. We've addressed some issues as far as  
23 model implementation and doing things the Premier  
24 High School way. I think this team -- we're excited  
25 about the new staff and leadership that we have on

1           that campus. And so I will say there have been more  
2           than even conversations had, because we had to make  
3           certain decisions to make sure that this campus is  
4           going in the right direction as well.

5           DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

6           CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: And I'd like to note, too,  
7           that the presentation that we have online has  
8           completely different numbers for 22-23, than what are  
9           listed here. Because I had a specific question about  
10          North Little Rock and the 2,681 course completions,  
11          in relation to the Peer Grant where there was no  
12          award for growth but they had the highest number of  
13          completions for courses. So can you kind of talk me  
14          through that one?

15          MR. FELTON: Yeah. And I want to say North  
16          Little Rock had the highest enrollment last year, as  
17          well. And here is our mastery of units, and so this  
18          includes any core subject -- math, English, health,  
19          the electives, any course a student has completed.  
20          In NWEA Map, we're measuring math and reading. And  
21          so while North Little Rock didn't get the growth in  
22          the -- from the fall to the winter, they did get the  
23          growth in the winter to the spring. And then Little  
24          Rock got the growth for -- from fall to winter, as  
25          well as winter to spring.

1                   CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN:   Okay.

2                   MR. FELTON:   And if I'm being honest with y'all,  
3                   we were pulling data to help, again -- once again,  
4                   kind of tell the story through our model of students  
5                   completing units, students earning credit in order to  
6                   be able to earn a high school diploma. And then the  
7                   reason why we pulled NWEA Map, we are working with  
8                   the state; we have to set very rigorous goals for  
9                   NWEA Map, and then we have to meet those goals to be  
10                  able to even include it in that incentive. And so we  
11                  appreciate that work too, because it's a good interim  
12                  assessment of what we're doing in a year's time.

13                  CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN:   Mr. Baldwin?

14                  MR. BALDWIN:   So looking at the poverty rates --  
15                  and you did a good job, I think, of walking us  
16                  through those for Little Rock, Fort Smith, and  
17                  Texarkana -- Little Rock is 100%, Fort Smith is 70%,  
18                  and Texarkana is 41%. As you move into Fayetteville  
19                  and Russellville, do you see those poverty -- do you  
20                  see those schools serving the same level of poverty  
21                  that you serve elsewhere? And I guess the concern I  
22                  would have would be depending on where you locate  
23                  your school -- I know you don't have necessarily  
24                  spots yet, but, you know, Fayetteville is a fairly  
25                  wealthy community in a lot of spots, not in all

1 spots. And Russellville is the same way. So they're  
2 different -- it's a different environment maybe. So  
3 I guess the question is, is your intent to continue  
4 to serve high-poverty communities? And how do you  
5 intend to do that in Fayetteville and Russellville?

6 MR. FELTON: So our intent is to continue to  
7 serve a high-poverty, high at-risk population. A lot  
8 of that does go into the location of the school, we  
9 would think. And so you guys heard me talk about  
10 that opportunity zone. There are certain areas where  
11 -- that have been identified that have a high-poverty  
12 population that we're targeting as far as the  
13 location of the school. And then, of course, through  
14 our recruitment efforts; typically, once this  
15 population finds out about a school like Premier --  
16 not that -- you know, I have to be careful -- not  
17 that we're just literally going out to all kids that  
18 are poor and at-risk. But when you have  
19 conversations with people that work with those  
20 students and we target to try to get those students  
21 involved, I think that's when you continue to see the  
22 trend, even in a community like Fayetteville.

23 MR. BALDWIN: Well, I encourage you to do that  
24 because there's a lot of charter schools out there  
25 that are coming online that will not necessarily

1 focus on the poverty community.

2 And then the other comment I would say is as you  
3 all look at your growth plans in the future, ask --  
4 you know, look at south Arkansas and east Arkansas,  
5 because there's a lack of charter schools in those  
6 areas and someone needs to take some responsibility.  
7 And your model seems to be geared towards that.

8 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Mr. Davis, did you have any  
9 other questions?

10 MR. DAVIS: I do. It appears -- so there are  
11 two things we're talking about. Right? We're  
12 talking about the idea of the expansion into two  
13 other communities -- an additional community, to your  
14 point, Mr. Baldwin, in northwest Arkansas. And the  
15 enrollment cap. And so my question is around the  
16 enrollment cap.

17 All schools currently are under one charter. Is  
18 that correct?

19 MR. FELTON: Right now, I have three different  
20 charters. North Little Rock is by itself; Springdale  
21 is by itself; and then -- I think we're going to try  
22 to bring that slide back up.

23 MR. DAVIS: Yeah.

24 MR. FELTON: But Fort Smith, Texarkana, Online,  
25 and the virtual school are all under one district.



1           That would be the district that Fayetteville and  
2           Russellville would be under.

3           MR. DAVIS:   Okay.

4           MR. FELTON:   And then we'll be here -- back here  
5           soon, because we're going to be merging North Little  
6           Rock under that district as well.  Then the last  
7           addition will be Springdale.

8           MR. DAVIS:   Can you talk to me a little bit  
9           about how your -- I guess the pluses and minuses  
10          around the enrollment cap?  So based upon the  
11          enrollment cap and the number that you presented of  
12          individuals that are currently enrolled, there  
13          appears to be adequate space if you were to be under  
14          one charter, if the expansions were to happen for a  
15          Fayetteville and a Russellville -- under the total  
16          number now.  So isn't the easier approach just to  
17          solidify districts under one charter, that will then  
18          give you the expansion that is needed, if approved to  
19          do so, in regards to the enrollment cap?

20          MR. FELTON:   Yeah, I'm trying to make sure I  
21          understand your question correctly.  So you're saying  
22          if I went ahead and merged all of them --

23          MR. DAVIS:   Yes.

24          MR. FELTON:   -- now --

25          MR. DAVIS:   So, for example, you're asking to go

1 from the 875 to the 12; right?

2 MR. FELTON: Uh-huh.

3 MR. DAVIS: Y'all, pardon me on my math here.  
4 You're asking to go from the 875 to the 12, with a  
5 current enrollment of 513. If you were to add the  
6 175 for Fayetteville, and then you were to add the  
7 Russellville, you're still not at the 12-whatever  
8 you're asking for -- what you currently have. Right?  
9 Oh, your current enrollment cap is 875. You're still  
10 not at that 875. Right?

11 MR. FELTON: Yes.

12 MR. DAVIS: So I'm asking why not just  
13 consolidate under one charter, which then solves --  
14 you then have the enrollment cap space. Am I right  
15 in that?

16 MR. FELTON: Yeah. And I want to just back-up.  
17 We don't have any issue with it. Previously, if you  
18 guys remember, Ms. Coffman, she -- what she wanted us  
19 to is be able to -- instead of just saying we're  
20 going to enroll this many kids in the district, she  
21 was like, No, I need you to put a cap on each  
22 building, and then that cap is going to represent the  
23 district's cap. But us, we don't have a problem with  
24 having that 875. And as long as we're within that  
25 875 -- and when we get there, we need to get more

1 seats coming back. We were just only going off the  
2 guidance of the Panel.

3 MR. DAVIS: Yeah. And where my concern is --  
4 and this is -- you know, traditionally, we've seen  
5 enrollment caps lifted based upon demand and need.

6 MR. FELTON: Yeah.

7 MR. DAVIS: And when I look at the numbers that  
8 are currently presented here, there is not one  
9 institution that is currently at the enrollment cap  
10 that's there. So the idea of adding additional  
11 seats, when the current seats in each location have  
12 not been filled, is hard for me to wrap my head  
13 around.

14 MR. FELTON: I've got a question then for  
15 clarification. Does the charter have the discretion  
16 to be able -- so we're sitting here -- you know,  
17 we're looking at these building caps, and then we  
18 have the 875. If we have the ability to enroll up to  
19 875 and per-campus -- it doesn't matter what the cap  
20 is to be for a campus, I think we can do that without  
21 a problem at all.

22 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Well, I think what Mr.  
23 Davis is saying -- and maybe I'm wrong -- but --

24 MR. DAVIS: If it's good, I'm saying it; if it's  
25 not --

1 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Oh, okay.

2 MR. DAVIS: -- you're wrong.

3 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay. Is you could take  
4 some of those numbers from your other campuses and  
5 filter those into new campuses; not necessarily have  
6 just the 875 as a blanket number, but rather shift  
7 around some of those other numbers, because they're  
8 not at maximum yet.

9 MR. FELTON: Tell me this, would I need approval  
10 to move that number around?

11 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: That would be part of the  
12 amendment. Yeah.

13 MR. FELTON: Okay.

14 MR. DAVIS: But then, that way, we're not  
15 lifting --

16 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Right.

17 MR. DAVIS: -- a cap.

18 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Right.

19 MR. DAVIS: Right? So, yeah.

20 MR. FELTON: Okay.

21 MR. DAVIS: It's hard for me to wrap my head  
22 around additional seats, when there's availability  
23 within your current cap. So that's a bit challenging  
24 for me.

25 And then the other thing I will say, I have some

1 real concerns about the lack of alignment consistency  
2 and/or integrity around the data that's being  
3 presented. I'm not saying it's you, not saying it's  
4 the Department. But there clears to be -- there  
5 tears -- appears to be these questions around the  
6 data and insuring that the data is saying what we  
7 need it to say in order to make this decision.

8 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: And I will say that the  
9 data that Dr. Moore presented is provided by the  
10 charter itself. So they input all of that data.

11 MR. DAVIS: Okay.

12 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yeah.

13 MR. DAVIS: Okay. So what -- I just want to be  
14 clear. What you're saying is the data that has been  
15 identified is the data that has been provided by the  
16 charter and we are to assume that the data that's  
17 presented here is also the data that's provided by  
18 the charter. So there's some --

19 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Correct.

20 MR. DAVIS: -- sort of misalignment in regards  
21 to what's in the system and what's being presented.  
22 So just FYI on that -- which makes it a little  
23 complicated to then be able to provide full support  
24 when the data doesn't appear to be aligned.  
25 Specifically, more concerning is if it's coming from

1 the same place.

2 DR. MOORE: Well, I only shared the enrollment.  
3 I didn't share anything about course completion.

4 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Right. Right.

5 DR. MOORE: So, and that did not have anything  
6 -- there wasn't necessarily discrepancy in that.

7 MR. DAVIS: Okay.

8 DR. MOORE: I was just --

9 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: My question -- sorry.

10 DR. MOORE: Yes.

11 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: My question was more about  
12 the course completion and the drop there. And so  
13 just kind of going along with that, there -- my  
14 concern with that is that there is that huge drop,  
15 but I didn't really hear the plan to address that.  
16 And so that's why I kind of have challenges in then  
17 saying, Okay, well, then I'm okay with you doing  
18 these additional things if you haven't figured out  
19 what's happening there. So --

20 MR. FELTON: And I don't mind to speak to --

21 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- that question was more  
22 mine. I think that was Dr. Moore's question.

23 MR. FELTON: And I don't mind to speak to that  
24 plan. And so we had --

25 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And I'm sorry, and I don't

1 know --

2 MR. FELTON: Okay.

3 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- if you were done with  
4 your questions. I think we just kind of, you know,  
5 took over your whole question.

6 MR. DAVIS: No, no, no, no. That's fine. I  
7 think -- I mean, I've gotten some additional clarity  
8 and, yes, I'm okay. Please address.

9 MR. FELTON: I was going to say -- so, yes, we  
10 had discussions. We knew a lot of it was about  
11 training in the Premier model and providing  
12 additional support. So we talked about the literacy  
13 coaches coming in. We did make some leadership  
14 changes on that campus, as well as some personnel  
15 changes. We've provided the training and we got  
16 support. We've also engaged with a leadership  
17 consultant that's working with the Principal there,  
18 as well as our instructional coach as well. So we're  
19 excited about the plans that we have.

20 I'll tell you I've seen it. We've observed some  
21 changes. Our enrollment has dropped just a little  
22 bit on that campus. But we -- I like to speak to the  
23 good work that's being done and working with  
24 integrity. So --

25 MR. DAVIS: I'm sorry; I do have one additional

1 question, and it gets to what Mr. Baldwin was  
2 speaking about. This idea of two campuses in  
3 northwest Arkansas, how did you come to that  
4 decision, particularly in two communities that are  
5 adjacent to each other? Right? So it's not as if,  
6 you know, we're talking Fayetteville and then  
7 Bentonville. I mean, we're talking two communities  
8 adjacent to each other, particularly when your  
9 current location still has availability. So how did  
10 that decision get made in regards to Fayetteville?

11 MR. FELTON: So when we look at Fayetteville,  
12 it's just a satellite campus. We look at Springdale  
13 as kind of being your big main hub campus. As we've  
14 seen the interest in the Fayetteville community and  
15 engage with people around them, about what we're  
16 doing in Springdale, we seen that like it made a  
17 whole lot of sense. And so to just kind of  
18 reiterate, these are satellite campuses.

19 MR. DAVIS: Okay.

20 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Any other questions, Mr.  
21 Davis?

22 MR. DAVIS: No.

23 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Dr. Moore?

24 DR. MOORE: So I echo similar concerns that Dr.  
25 Wright-McMurray had regarding the drop in course



1 completions. That's a concern. And I'm wondering  
2 about transportation, if transportation -- is that  
3 the responsibility of the individual student to get  
4 to the campus?

5 MR. FELTON: So we have some campuses that we  
6 are providing transportation. The campuses that we  
7 don't provide transportation, we're partnering with  
8 the city transportation and they -- and most of our  
9 schools are right there; we have a route. And so we  
10 give them free bus bases to get to and from.

11 DR. MOORE: Is that what Fayetteville and  
12 Russellville will be?

13 MR. FELTON: Most likely, yes. Now, Springdale,  
14 we have a bus, and so we'll be able to provide  
15 transportation. But Russellville, looking at  
16 partnering.

17 DR. MOORE: Okay. Because -- and then I'm also  
18 wondering how that works with their partnership.  
19 Like if you're trying to get to NWTI --

20 MR. FELTON: Yeah.

21 DR. MOORE: -- there's quite a distance between  
22 Fayetteville and NWTI, and even more so to NWAC. So  
23 I'm just wondering how those opportunities for CTE is  
24 -- like if you're looking at often lower-income  
25 students who may not have their own transportation,

1           how are they going to get to that secondary career  
2           center? Because so often, our public schools that  
3           are not charters may provide transportation buses.  
4           So I know that's an additional challenge. So I'm  
5           just wondering what thought has gone into that -- and  
6           that may be --

7           MR. FELTON: And I can speak to that. You want  
8           to add anything, Duvall?

9           But we are providing transportation to NWTI, as  
10          well as the other partners we have in that community.

11          DR. MOORE: You will be providing  
12          transportation?

13          MR. DUVALL: Yes. We --

14          MR. FELTON: Yeah, we do. We currently provide  
15          transportation.

16          DR. MOORE: Okay. All right. And then along  
17          those same notes -- I know this is saying  
18          Fayetteville -- are students from like surrounding  
19          communities, like Greenland and Farmington --  
20          although their poverty rates aren't as high, they're  
21          only like five or six miles down the road and may  
22          have some students who may benefit from this, as  
23          well. Are they allowed to come or is it just for  
24          Fayetteville?

25          MR. FELTON: They are. We'll be open-

1 enrollment. So us trying to hangout in that south  
2 Fayetteville area, you're talking about kind of the  
3 more impoverished area. We're hoping to be able to  
4 track some individuals and make it more accessible as  
5 well for that population.

6 DR. MOORE: Okay. And then, what's your average  
7 age of students in Springdale? Do you have any idea?  
8 I know it's totally like random throwing it out  
9 there. I'm just curious, since you have so many  
10 students who may be returning to school. Do you have  
11 any idea?

12 MR. FELTON: No, I don't know that off the top  
13 of my head, the average age.

14 DR. MOORE: Okay. Well, I would just encourage  
15 -- and I'm sure Aaron probably knows this; we partner  
16 a lot on different CTE type things -- but it is  
17 National Apprenticeship Week. And I think these  
18 students may be just like perfect candidates to do  
19 pre-apprenticeships, enroll into apprenticeships, and  
20 do the earn-while-you-learn model so they can get a  
21 step ahead, and they're getting paid while they do  
22 it. So that may be -- since you're struggling on  
23 some of the CTE programs, as they finish it would be  
24 really great to roll into apprenticeships.

25 MR. FELTON: I'll tell you something else I can

1           add. We're really excited; we just started the EAST  
2           Initiative in Springdale. And so we haven't piloted  
3           that in other Premier High Schools, and so I'm  
4           excited to see that opportunity for students. It  
5           will also open the door for a lot of community  
6           partnerships as well. And so we launched that this  
7           year. And so if any of y'all do get a chance to  
8           visit that campus, we're excited to show you the EAST  
9           lab. And the students are very prideful of the work  
10          they're doing in the EAST lab on that campus.

11           MR. DUVAL: And then for the apprenticeship  
12          part, really excited in the Russellville community,  
13          the new carpenter/millwright center. I talked to  
14          Brian and he's excited to partner with us, with that  
15          as well. And so, you know, we're ready to rock-and-  
16          roll with that in the Russellville area, as well as  
17          the -- you know, the tech career center too, with --  
18          Pat Edmonds is all onboard. So I'm excited about  
19          those types of opportunities as well. And you're  
20          exactly right with the pre-apprenticeship model, and  
21          that's why we really try to push the work-based  
22          learning part. Because a lot of our students, they  
23          -- that's where -- I mean, they need the job, they  
24          need work. And so as -- you know, the CTE programs,  
25          that's one side of it. But the apprenticeships and

1 the work-based learning is probably more in tune with  
2 what our students need.

3 DR. MOORE: Well, and I did notice -- and it  
4 made me, and Dr. Wright-McMurray, I'm sure -- the JAG  
5 numbers were notable. So I applaud you on the  
6 students you have enrolled in JAG and I consider that  
7 to be much higher.

8 MR. DUVALL: Yes, for sure. Thank you.

9 MR. FELTON: One of the things I wanted to add  
10 too, Mr. Duvall has worked hard. For those familiar  
11 with Be Pro Be Proud -- or do you want to speak to  
12 some of that, on that?

13 We're excited. Each school this year is going  
14 to be participating in that draft day. For those  
15 that may not know about it, it's pretty much -- a lot  
16 of industry partners in the community -- our seniors  
17 have opportunity, not only to engage and learn some  
18 of these, you know, interview skill-setting, learning  
19 information about trades, but we're hoping that a lot  
20 of our seniors leave that draft day with a job. And  
21 so we're excited. I think Russellville this year,  
22 Little Rock, Fort Smith. And so we're excited to be  
23 engaged in that process as well, and really feel like  
24 it's going to give our students a leg-up that are  
25 seniors looking for employment opportunities.

1 DR. MOORE: That's all my questions.

2 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Any other questions?

3 MR. DAVIS: And, actually, not that this  
4 decision -- you know, it's obviously -- I don't think  
5 it's a decision that should be made now; it should be  
6 in conversation between the Department and the school  
7 in regards to that enrollment cap and what might be  
8 best. So if that's something that I think everyone  
9 could sort of coordinate around? I mean, obviously,  
10 I see some positives around keeping those charters  
11 separate, but I also see some complications around it  
12 as well. So I just think there needs to be some  
13 conversation about what's the best approach and how  
14 the Department thinks about it, how they would like  
15 individuals to move forward, and what's best in that  
16 aspect.

17 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: And I think -- you know,  
18 from the Department's perspective, I think what we  
19 are trying to do is get them under that one umbrella.  
20 But I think in Premier's case, they have grants that  
21 are still outstanding with North Little Rock and with  
22 Springdale. Right?

23 MR. FELTON: Just Springdale now.

24 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay.

25 MR. FELTON: So we're going to be working with

1           you and Dorie's office -- literally just decided like  
2           last week that North Little Rock would not have to do  
3           a renewal hearing, and it was more appropriate to do  
4           an amendment hearing. And so what we'll do, Mr.  
5           Davis, we'll engage with them as we come forward with  
6           that merger of putting North Little Rock under there  
7           and work that out.

8           CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: And so once the Springdale  
9           grant is up, then you'll be moving that underneath  
10          Premier High Schools of Arkansas. Correct?

11          MR. FELTON: That is correct.

12          MR. BALDWIN: Does that mean that you're not  
13          seeking the increased cap because of all this today?  
14          It seems like if we're going to work this out, you  
15          would not increase the cap today.

16          CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Right. We're going to have  
17          an amendment request, which would take -- if, you  
18          know, if approved, would take care of that cap  
19          situation.

20          MR. BALDWIN: Uh-huh.

21          DR. MOORE: Okay. I need more clarity on that,  
22          please. Because as I look at the charter amendment  
23          request, it has two parts.

24          CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Right.

25          DR. MOORE: So are we voting on both parts

1 today, or are we only going to vote on the campuses?

2 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So, Stephen?

3 MR. FELTON: So since I have to come back to  
4 change the cap anyway with North Little Rock, I am  
5 comfortable with sticking with the cap I have,  
6 because that allows me to continue with the expansion  
7 work under that cap. And then adhering to Mr.  
8 Davis's advice, when I get that demand, come back to  
9 the Panel with the data that shows the demand and the  
10 enrollment cap. So I don't know legally if I need to  
11 say anything to remove that from our amendment and  
12 then move forward with the expansion without --

13 MR. DAVIS: Well, and I want you -- I mean, give  
14 some thought, talk to folks about it. Right? I mean  
15 -- look, I'm a full transparent type of person.  
16 Right? I mean, there's a situation where if  
17 something is not going well in one school and they're  
18 all under one charter, right, the complication of  
19 dealing with that one school versus having to deal  
20 with the entire charter is something to think about.  
21 Right? So at one point I think there is something  
22 around alignment and creating some efficiencies under  
23 the one charter model. On the other hand, I also see  
24 that -- how it can create some complications, you  
25 know, when you run into some situations. So those



1 are things to think about. I don't know how we get  
2 past this moment, right now, but it is something I  
3 think you should take in and sort of weigh both the  
4 positive and negative. Now, obviously, if the  
5 Department comes back and says, No, this is what we  
6 suggest, I would go with what they say. But I would  
7 be a little restrained in kind of figuring out that  
8 right now on the spot.

9 MR. FELTON: Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So, Mr. Reynolds.

11 MR. REYNOLDS: So I guess we've got three  
12 options. The charter could vote on both amendments  
13 or both requests. They could vote on just to add the  
14 campuses and not to increase the enrollment cap. Or  
15 we could kick it out to December and converse with  
16 the charter and figure out what it is exactly that  
17 the charter wants to do, considering that they are  
18 also talking about amending the charter to include  
19 the North Little Rock campus. We could address all  
20 that at the December meeting.

21 MR. DAVIS: Quick question for you.

22 MR. REYNOLDS: Uh-huh.

23 MR. DAVIS: Where does the expansion -- where  
24 does the expansion request -- what charter does that  
25 fall under?

1 MR. REYNOLDS: So it would be -- the expansion  
2 request would be the -- is that the --

3 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Of Arkansas.

4 MR. REYNOLDS: Premier High Schools of Arkansas.  
5 So not the Springdale campus and not the North Little  
6 Rock campus.

7 MR. DAVIS: Okay.

8 MR. REYNOLDS: So it's the one that includes --

9 MR. DAVIS: So it is moving toward -- the one  
10 that has --

11 MR. REYNOLDS: Right.

12 MR. DAVIS: -- kind of most of the --

13 MR. REYNOLDS: Right.

14 MR. DAVIS: -- schools there?

15 MR. REYNOLDS: Right.

16 MR. DAVIS: Okay.

17 MR. REYNOLDS: So we can increase -- so we can  
18 add those -- the Fayetteville and Russellville  
19 campuses to that charter and not increase the  
20 enrollment cap. You can do -- vote on both, or we  
21 can kick it out to December and talk with the charter  
22 and see exactly what it is that they want to do  
23 moving forward. So, it's really up -- it's up to the  
24 CAP.

25 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: And then just to add a

1 point of clarity to why we've been doing building  
2 level caps, it is because we've had charters who've  
3 wanted to go above their actual capacity of their  
4 building, so their facilities. And so that's why  
5 we've been saying, You really need to have a building  
6 level cap, as well as, you know, an overall cap.

7 MR. DAVIS: Yeah.

8 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So that's just a point of  
9 clarification. But we could, you know, shift some of  
10 those numbers around. So that's always an option.

11 MR. BALDWIN: Well, to me, this is kind of an  
12 operational question, within the three options. What  
13 would the school -- I mean, I know you all are  
14 wanting to get some -- to start on Russellville and  
15 Fayetteville.

16 MR. FELTON: Yeah. I'd really recommend Option  
17 A, to go ahead and, you know, voting on the schools.  
18 And then we can work out the enrollment cap  
19 situation. Like Mr. Davis says, I'll have enough  
20 room right now to be able to operate. My concern,  
21 like you're saying, is I have been engaged with a lot  
22 of businessmen. As you guys remember, I originally  
23 submitted this in September, and so I would hate to  
24 put myself in jeopardy as far as timeline to be able  
25 to offer a high-quality product to these communities.

1           MR. DAVIS: And, just quickly, you know, I might  
2 want to -- well, I am -- I think that there's  
3 something we might want to think about, like the  
4 Department might want to think about in regards to  
5 the policy aspect of addressing both of those things  
6 you just mentioned. Right now, I feel as if we're  
7 placing it on the school and there is an internal  
8 sort of issue that we have here. So there might be a  
9 policy change or something that may be able to be  
10 introduced that then doesn't place it on the backs of  
11 each institution to deal with.

12           CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Well, and I would say too,  
13 there's a whole revision of the charter rules and  
14 process going on currently. And so I think a lot of  
15 those things will be addressed through that.

16           MR. DAVIS: Fantastic.

17           CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yeah. Any other questions?  
18 I'll entertain a motion.

19           MR. BALDWIN: Well, what are we -- what are we  
20 doing? I don't understand what our selections are.

21           CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So --

22           MR. REYNOLDS: So just to clarify -- so if the  
23 charter wants to rescind its request to increase its  
24 enrollment cap, they need to clarify that on the  
25 record. And then the motion will be to just approve

1 the application as amended. So it would be to -- I  
2 mean, what would effectively be being done would be  
3 we're just going to add these two campuses. So if  
4 that's what you guys want to do --

5 MR. FELTON: (inaudible, not at the mic)

6 MR. REYNOLDS: Okay.

7 MR. FELTON: The charter would like to rescind  
8 the request to increase the enrollment cap.

9 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Well, I --

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

11 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. The reason why I  
12 kind of went silent down here is because I was still  
13 trying to just kind of -- I'm still trying to  
14 understand that with you adding Fayetteville, that's  
15 going to be in the same geographic location of  
16 Springdale, which is currently a campus that when we  
17 look at the data is having some challenges, I'm just  
18 wanting to be comfortable before I move forward. And  
19 I'm just one. The processes that are in place are  
20 going to address what we saw at Springdale and we're  
21 not going to see it again at Fayetteville. Because  
22 it's -- from the description the challenges that you  
23 guys had there could very easily be replicated at  
24 Fayetteville's campus once it is operational. And  
25 the explanation I've received thus far, I'm just not

1 a hundred-percent comfortable that that's not going  
2 to be the case.

3 MR. FELTON: So I'll -- I don't mind speaking to  
4 that again. We definitely recognize some things that  
5 went discourse. We recognize the training that's  
6 needed in the role of the monitoring and making sure  
7 that we have the right people doing the right work.  
8 If I'm defending Springdale -- because I know we're  
9 looking at one datapoint on them, Springdale's  
10 graduation rate was higher than the other Premiers.  
11 Springdale ESSA score was higher than Springdale High  
12 School and Springdale's ALE involvement, which is  
13 Archer Learning Center. And so I see a lot of  
14 opportunity in Springdale. I know we're looking at  
15 one datapoint, but when you look at them in  
16 comparison to the schools in their community, they're  
17 outperforming them. And when you look at Springdale  
18 in comparison to other Premiers, they're  
19 outperforming them. So I know that datapoint is  
20 concerning, and we've addressed that and put some  
21 support and training together to make sure it doesn't  
22 happen again. And so, and I assure you it won't  
23 happen in Fayetteville. But we do want to see some  
24 of the good results we're seeing in Springdale.

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

1           CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: And I did have a comment  
2 online that I wanted to address, which is there are  
3 -- the comparison points, as far as the other schools  
4 that you're comparing against, are ALEs in some  
5 cases. And they have to follow the ALE rules. So  
6 why did you choose those particular schools as your  
7 comparison points?

8           MR. FELTON: The variable that was similar was  
9 because those schools did not receive letter grades.

10          CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay.

11          MR. FELTON: And I think when we look at the at-  
12 risk and population it's very similar to those in the  
13 ALE environment.

14          DR. MOORE: I have one additional question. I'd  
15 asked about the average age, because I was also  
16 curious -- in Springdale, there's now The Excel  
17 Center with Goodwill, which is -- has somewhat of a  
18 similar mission in terms of it's an adult high  
19 school, but age 19 and older. And I would think that  
20 that may even pull a little more from your enrollment  
21 in that area. So I'm just wondering if there have  
22 been any talks or plans to how to best partner to  
23 make sure the community is being served in that area,  
24 as not to cannibalize things. So, can you talk on  
25 that?

1 MR. FELTON: Yeah. We actually went to visit  
2 The Excel Center in Springdale. You remember Jay Key  
3 actually has worked with us over in the charter world  
4 a little bit, and so he's running that center. Those  
5 conversations are being had. I like to think all of  
6 us in the community want to see kids be successful,  
7 and so it's not all about, you know, which school  
8 kids go to versus do we catch all kids and are we all  
9 working together to catch all kids.

10 DR. MOORE: Okay.

11 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Any other questions?  
12 Are we ready to entertain a motion?

13 MR. DAVIS: Yeah. I move that we approve the  
14 amendment to add Fayetteville and Russellville  
15 campuses to the Premier Schools of Arkansas charter.

16 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Do I have a second?

17 MR. BALDWIN: I'll second.

18 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay. I have a motion by  
19 Mr. Davis and a second by Mr. Baldwin. All those in  
20 favor say aye.

21 MR. DAVIS: But before we do that --

22 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay.

23 MR. DAVIS: -- any other conversation before we  
24 get to vote --

25 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay.



1 MR. DAVIS: -- on the motion?

2 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: No.

3 DR. MOORE: No.

4 MR. BALDWIN: No.

5 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All those in favor?

6 (MAJORITY CHORUS OF AYES)

7 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All those opposed?

8 Aye.

9 The motion passes.

10 We're going to fill out our voting sheets.

11 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

12 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay. We'll start down  
13 here with Dr. Moore.

14 DR. MOORE: Sure. I approve the amendment  
15 request to add the Fayetteville and Russellville  
16 campuses to the Premier Schools of Arkansas charter.  
17 This type of charter provides a unique and needed  
18 option for at-risk students and those who have  
19 dropped out of high school. Despite my approval, I  
20 still have concerns about the drop in course  
21 completion at the Springdale campus. I encourage  
22 full attention to expansion of CTE opportunities from  
23 work-based learning to postsecondary training  
24 partnerships with local institutions.

25 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Mr. Baldwin.

1           MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I voted in favor of the  
2 expansion of Premier High School into Fayetteville  
3 and Russellville to provide greater opportunities for  
4 at-risk children.

5           CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Mr. Davis.

6           MR. DAVIS: I approve the amendment to add  
7 Fayetteville and Russellville satellite campuses to  
8 the Premier Schools of Arkansas charter, in an  
9 attempt to provide an additional option for students  
10 and families interested in the model to meet student  
11 needs.

12          CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Dr. Wright-McMurray.

13          DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I voted for. I support  
14 the charter's request to add Russellville and  
15 Fayetteville locations. I highly encourage the  
16 charter to review the data of Springdale's campus  
17 course completion and industry certification  
18 attainment and develop a comprehensive plan to  
19 address drops in completion and lack of attainment.  
20 The reported data reflects concerns that could occur  
21 at the Fayetteville campus, if not properly  
22 addressed.

23          CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: And I voted against the  
24 amendment to add the Fayetteville and Russellville  
25 campuses because I feel like more accurate data is

1 needed to make a solid determination. And I think  
2 that that's something that we need moving forward.

3 MR. FELTON: Thank y'all.

4 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: We're going to take a 5 --  
5 or 5, 10 -- 10-minute break.

6 (BREAK: 11:10 A.M. - 11:22 A.M.)

7 3) CONSIDERATION OF DISTRICT CONVERSION PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL  
8 APPLICATION - MOUNTAINBURG HIGH SCHOOL

9 MS. SUMMONS: Okay. Dorie Summons, Office of  
10 Public Charter Schools.

11 Mountainburg Public School District has  
12 submitted an application to convert Mountainburg High  
13 School to a district conversion charter school. The  
14 school will serve grades 9 through 12 with a career  
15 and technical focus.

16 We have representatives from Mountainburg here  
17 this morning.

18 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Good morning. So would  
19 everyone who's going to speak on behalf of the  
20 charter please stand and raise your right hand. Do  
21 you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and  
22 nothing but the truth?

23 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

24 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you very  
25 much.

1 MS. CRISTEE: Hi. Good morning. My name is  
2 Courtney Cristee. I'm the Principal of Mountainburg  
3 High School. With me today I have our  
4 Superintendent, Dr. Debbie Atwell; my Assistant  
5 Principal, Ms. Sarah Walker; Representative Chad  
6 Puryear. And Senator Petty was also here earlier and  
7 he had to step out for another meeting.

8 But we want to thank you for having us here  
9 today. And we are here to seek an opportunity to  
10 increase our course offerings for our students and  
11 expand career exposure.

12 Let's see if this thing works.

13 All right. So, who are we? Mountainburg High  
14 School is a small -- we're located in the small  
15 community of Mountainburg, with 552 residents. We  
16 are tucked away -- you see the dragon there -- at the  
17 halfway point between Fayetteville and Fort Smith.  
18 We have 185 students enrolled, with an average grade  
19 level size of 46 students. We are the largest  
20 employer in the community. And our average commute  
21 time for our families is about 32 minutes; so a lot  
22 of them go north or they go south.

23 We are here seeking opportunities because we  
24 don't want location and size to be a lack of  
25 opportunity for our students.

1           So at Mountainburg High School we honor our  
2 history through traditions and values. And you can  
3 see in the pictures up here, the background picture  
4 is our original structure. The front picture is our  
5 current campus, with some expansions. And so we  
6 thought it was important to our community that we  
7 keep our traditions alive. Recently, they also  
8 supported a millage for expansion of a student  
9 activity center. So we are continuing to grow.

10           Last year, we met with our students in small  
11 groups and we began creating a vision for the high  
12 school. The teachers had a vision: Learn Today, Lead  
13 Tomorrow. But we thought it was important for  
14 students to also have input. And so we met with them  
15 in small groups and we just asked, What do you value?  
16 What do you want to get out of your next four years  
17 at Mountainburg High School or your next three years  
18 or your next two years? One-hundred percent of our  
19 students had a goal to graduate, thank goodness. But  
20 they also were really excited and they wanted more  
21 course options; they didn't want to be limited. They  
22 wanted to have the same opportunities that state --  
23 that schools across the state have. And they also  
24 wanted to be college and career ready, and that was  
25 big coming from the high school students. Because a

1 lot of times you get in the day-to-day and you don't  
2 really understand their values. But when you sit  
3 down with them in small groups and they say, When we  
4 leave here we want to be ready -- and so, we took all  
5 of their responses and we crafted our student vision.

6 So at MHS we value making a difference by  
7 volunteering, being a family, and through teamwork.  
8 We value holding ourselves to high standards, to be  
9 college and career ready, CTE completers, and  
10 graduates with endless possibilities. And we value  
11 setting new records with a one-hundred percent  
12 graduation rate, state championship teams, and rising  
13 assessment scores. So it was really important -- one  
14 of the things that they said is, We want options and  
15 we want relevance, and CTE provides both of those.

16 We also build our presence through teamwork and  
17 collaboration. Mountainburg High School operates as  
18 a professional learning community and we believe that  
19 all means all. Our teachers take the time to look at  
20 our students, course-by-course, standard-by-standard,  
21 and then we have time built in throughout the day for  
22 enrichment and intervention. We have classes for  
23 Tier 3, critical reading, and essential algebra, and  
24 we are seeing some results from our work together as  
25 a team. We have a decrease in the number of students

1 in need of support in math and ELA on the recent ESSA  
2 scores. We also have increased numbers -- the number  
3 of students exceeding in math and ELA. We provide a  
4 guaranteed and viable curriculum and we use high-  
5 quality instructional materials. And some of our  
6 goals is to continue increasing those literacy and  
7 math skills.

8 And, finally, we create our future through  
9 creativity and innovation. So in collaboration with  
10 Dennis Williamson, Director of Western Arkansas  
11 Planning and Development, we want to build  
12 partnerships in the River Valley in order to increase  
13 student access and exposure to multiple businesses  
14 and industries in the career and technical education  
15 programs of study to make more -- learning more  
16 relevant and authentic for our students.

17 We are wanting to provide an expanded number of  
18 pathways students can choose to pursue, and we want  
19 to provide flexibility in scheduling so we can --  
20 sorry -- provide the flexibility in scheduling and  
21 still support our students.

22 Where we are located, there is not a career  
23 center in our backdoor. Our closest one would be our  
24 WATC program in the PEAK Innovation Center. It's  
25 about a 35-minute drive for our students. We

1 currently have students who attend the WATC program.  
2 We are seeing a lot of success with that and we're  
3 trying to building that program. But we also have  
4 students who do not have access to that because of  
5 its distance. We want to be a school of choice. We  
6 want to better prepare our students and prepare them  
7 for their exposure and increase their exposure.

8 So we have two programming options that we want  
9 to pursue: a career studies option and a flexible  
10 schedule option.

11 So after speaking with our community, our  
12 students, and studying data, our career studies  
13 opportunity -- we would start with students who are  
14 in the 9th grade. They would take a Level 1 CTE  
15 course onsite with our licensed teachers. And then  
16 after 9th grade, they could go into a pathway that  
17 may or may not be offered by onsite instructors.  
18 This would allow us to expand our offerings from --  
19 instead of five pathways up to 23 different pathways.

20 In 2023, 48% of our graduates were CTE  
21 completers. If you look at the data of our students  
22 who are involved in CTE, 96.3% of them were included  
23 in the four-year graduation rates, 78.05% had post-  
24 secondary placements, and 77.78% had industry  
25 certifications -- and we want to increase that.



1           Students who choose a flexible schedule would go  
2           into a hybrid model. They would be on campus at  
3           least two days per week and then work virtually three  
4           days per week. Students would receive support and  
5           intervention from our onsite teachers and their  
6           progress would be continuously monitored.

7           The reason we're asking for this, in the 22-23  
8           school year we had lost 12 students who went virtual  
9           or to home-school. In the 23-24 school year, our  
10          current school year we've lost nine students who have  
11          chosen a virtual or home-school option. And so when  
12          students choose to take that route, as a local  
13          district we are not able to support them in the ways  
14          that they need to be; whereas, a hybrid model would  
15          still allow them to remain our students so we can  
16          provide the intervention enrichment supports that  
17          they would need, along with any other special  
18          education supports, gifted and talented supports.

19          If a student chooses to enroll in a flexible  
20          schedule or the career studies option, either one,  
21          and they're not showing their program proficiency in  
22          the classes, then they would have to return on campus  
23          or we would look at changing our program options.

24          This is just a quick breakdown of the scheduling  
25          so you can see it visually. Students would not be

1       waived from any of the core requirements; this would  
2       be in addition to. So we picture a 9th grader coming  
3       in and taking one of our Level 1 CTE courses. That  
4       could be Survey of Business, it could be Survey of  
5       Agriculture, Family and Consumer Science. And then  
6       there's still room in their schedule for other  
7       courses.

8               As a 10th grader, they're going to continue with  
9       their core courses. And from there, they have an  
10      option to take another Level 1 CTE course to pursue  
11      other pathways or they may go into a Level 2  
12      Concentrator Practicum. And then, of course, there  
13      are other courses.

14             As 11th graders, we're continuing on that  
15      pathway there. If they choose a career study, then  
16      they would for sure go into a Level 2 or a Level 3,  
17      depending on what level on courses that they were  
18      enrolled in.

19             And then same thing for 12th grade. We're going  
20      to really try to get them into internships and work-  
21      based placements.

22             9th grade CTE courses are going to be based on  
23      student success plans, interest inventories, work  
24      with the parents, conversations with the students to  
25      get them into the areas that they are most interested

1 in and that they find relevant.

2 If a student chooses to take the career study  
3 pathway, we'll have checks in place to where we'll  
4 work with business partners to meet the criteria and  
5 to demonstrate student knowledge of Level 2 courses.  
6 We'll partner with CTE teachers, administration,  
7 business partners; we'll team together to create  
8 student-friendly career cards as the criteria for the  
9 course. Students will log their hours; there will be  
10 reflections, portfolios, and we want them to obtain  
11 industry certifications through their experiences.  
12 And then once they hit 11th and 12th grade, they will  
13 become mentors to younger students who may be  
14 following in that same pathway.

15 So the pathways that we could choose -- Survey  
16 of Agriculture is our Level 1 course. With Survey of  
17 Ag, we currently have two different pathways: the  
18 Agriculture Power Structural and Technical Systems  
19 and Animal Systems. So for those two, we offer all  
20 three course levels onsite with a licensed teacher.  
21 And we've had a lot of success in the ag industry.

22 With the grant -- if we -- when we receive the  
23 charter, we can offer up to like four different  
24 pathways. And so, for example, if a student takes  
25 Survey of Ag and they say, Yeah, power structure and

1 the animal systems is not really my thing, but plant  
2 science is, then we would partner with industries and  
3 businesses to get them the relationships with  
4 somebody who is in plant science. We have local  
5 berry farms; we have Parks Brothers, which provides  
6 the startup plants. And so that's one example of how  
7 this would work for those Level 2 and Level 3  
8 courses.

9 Family and Consumer Science is another Level 1  
10 course that we offer. Our course of study there is  
11 Food Production Management and Services. So they  
12 would take food safety and nutrition, and then food  
13 production management. There are up to four  
14 different pathways that we could add with Family and  
15 Consumer Science.

16 Survey of Business is a Level 1 course that we  
17 offer, but we do not currently have a program of  
18 study for Survey of Business. But this one could add  
19 up to 10 opportunities for our students in those  
20 pathways.

21 Media Communications is also another Level 1  
22 course that we offer that we do not have a pathway.  
23 We could have up to five programs of study here.

24 So if a student is on a flexible schedule -- I  
25 have an example student here; his name is Caleb and

1 he gave me permission to use him. But Caleb is a  
2 high school senior and through school he kind of  
3 said, I don't really know, school is not really for  
4 me, I'm not really sure what I want to do. And so  
5 through our college and career class that we have we  
6 were able to make some connections for Caleb with a  
7 medical professional. And so when Caleb met this  
8 medical professional, he built a relationship with  
9 him and this professional became a mentor for him.  
10 And so he invited him to be able to come in and  
11 shadow any time that he was available. And so Caleb  
12 now has meaning and is excited to graduate. He's  
13 really applied himself. He got involved in the WATC  
14 program. And what he's doing is, when we have --  
15 whenever we have school breaks, if the medical office  
16 is open he is taking his own time to go and observe  
17 and get his feet wet, so-to-say. And so Caleb would  
18 be a candidate for a flexible schedule. And so if he  
19 had a flexible schedule, he would be onsite two days  
20 a week, still receiving support from our teachers,  
21 and then three days a week he could complete his  
22 studies virtually, but also have more opportunity to  
23 intern and be available at that medical clinic,  
24 getting the experience. And so that's going to set  
25 him up once he graduates and he has the necessary

1           certifications and degrees. He's going to already  
2           have a connection for a career, but he also has  
3           knowledge and experience that a lot of high school  
4           students are not walking away with, because of his  
5           internship.

6           And this is Mitchell. Mitchell -- also I have  
7           permission to use him. But Mitchell is a very  
8           motivated, highly intelligent student. He is a 10th  
9           grader, currently taking concurrent level courses,  
10          and he's going to do great things. And having the  
11          opportunity for career studies, to be able to start  
12          looking into career opportunities that interest him,  
13          that are relevant to him, he's going to be able to  
14          expand his options. And so he would be capable to do  
15          independent studies, to learn from guest speakers, to  
16          partner with other business industries for Zoom  
17          sessions, and then also go out for on-the-job  
18          training. And so part of his learning for that Level  
19          2 course and Level 3 courses would be an internship,  
20          the completion of a portfolio, and mentoring.

21          Our current reality at Mountainburg High School  
22          -- if you look at our recent reports for the ACT  
23          Aspire, 42.6% of our students scored ready or  
24          exceeding in ELA. What you don't see on that screen  
25          is that 64.52% of students involved in CTE were ready

1 or exceeding; so around 22% more. 21.3% of our  
2 students scored ready or exceeding in math. 51.39%  
3 of CTE students scored ready or exceeding. 30.85% of  
4 students scored ready or exceeding in science. If  
5 they were involved in CTE, that raised their percent  
6 up to 61.62% of ready or exceeding in science.

7 We want to celebrate that 94.6% of our students  
8 received on-time credit in 2023. And we also want to  
9 celebrate that we are closing the ESSA gap on some of  
10 these areas. In 2018 to 2019, we were 5.79 points  
11 below the state average. In 2023, we were .96 points  
12 below the state average. So we are making gains, and  
13 this is one step forward.

14 Our value-added growth is above the state  
15 average. And then weighted achievement, less  
16 students are in need of support in ELA and math and  
17 more are exceeding.

18 Also part of our current reality, 89.36 of our  
19 2023 seniors received a national career readiness  
20 certificate. That was on the ACT Work Keys. We have  
21 incorporated the training into our college and career  
22 class and we are seeing great results from that.  
23 With this opportunity, we could expand that. And we  
24 have a goal that all of our students will have a  
25 silver rating or higher. 25.5% of MHS students were

1 high-risk for chronic absence, and 34.23% were at  
2 moderate risk. And then at MHS we have an 84.78  
3 four-year graduation rate. And I do want to point  
4 out that students involved in CTE, that was a 96.3%  
5 graduation rate. And when you think about our class  
6 sizes, with around 40 students, 46 students, that  
7 could be one kid. And we're not settling for that,  
8 but just to put numbers into perspective.

9 So our goals -- over the next five years, we  
10 want to increase student achieve in English Language  
11 Arts by at least 50%, and I can go through and  
12 clarify some of that. So we want to expand this out  
13 because it would be hard to make that jump. So if  
14 you look at 42.6% of our students were at ready or  
15 exceeding, if we want to increase that by 50%, then  
16 that would raise us up about 21%. And so we added  
17 time in there to be able to do that. We want to  
18 increase student achievement in math and science by  
19 at least 50%. I also have it over the next five  
20 years there, but I don't know that I can settle for  
21 five years to be able to raise that. And so we are  
22 working really hard; we've made some big changes in  
23 our math and science, so we will see that number  
24 increase quickly. We want to increase the number of  
25 students receiving on-time credits by at least 50%.



1 We have programs in place to be able to do this, as  
2 well. Increase the number of students receiving  
3 national career readiness certificates on the ACT  
4 Work Keys assessment. Increase the average student  
5 attendance from 92.61% to 95% or higher. And we want  
6 to increase our graduation rate to at least 98%.

7 And so when we get the charter, here's how we  
8 plan to meet these goals. We are going to increase  
9 our technical literacy and applied math in the  
10 content areas and in the CTE courses. We want to  
11 increase career exploration for students to provide  
12 relevance for them. We also want to increase student  
13 ownership; when they feel connected to a course or to  
14 their learning, they take ownership in that and they  
15 are willing to come to school, they are willing to  
16 learn. And when they understand more of what they  
17 are reading, that will also increase their reading  
18 scores.

19 We are going to partner with Sarah Draine, the  
20 Director of College Access Initiative at the U of A,  
21 to train teachers on how to incorporate ACT prep and  
22 provide a Seniors Rising summer camp.

23 We will expand teacher knowledge of how to  
24 bridge the gap between school and workforce; so  
25 incorporating some of that work -- the workplace

1 documents and the technical literacy and applied  
2 math.

3 We'll need to provide transportation to and from  
4 observations for students. We will provide more  
5 training for literacy in the content areas. And then  
6 we will provide student access for up-to-date  
7 technology equipment and to extend learning  
8 opportunities.

9 So our timeline for this, once granted the  
10 charter, we will in the spring of 2024 build our  
11 partnerships, working with Dennis Williamson to get  
12 us those connections. We're seeking opportunities  
13 for a career coach. I am happy to report that since  
14 creating this our board has approved for us to apply  
15 for the application for a new career coach. We will  
16 create the career cards that students would need to  
17 be able to follow the pathways and to meet the  
18 standards of the expected Level 2 courses. And then  
19 we would provide teacher training. In the fall of  
20 2024, we will have implementation. And in '25 and  
21 beyond, we will monitor our progress towards our  
22 goals and continue our cycle of improvement.

23 All right. With that, I thank you all for your  
24 time today. Let me know if there's any clarifying  
25 answers that I can provide, please.

1 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

2 Mr. Reynolds.

3 MR. REYNOLDS: I'm back. All right. So this is  
4 the same process over again. We're going to go over  
5 it, topic-by-topic.

6 Waiver topic number one is the Salaries and  
7 Compensation. The charter is seeking to waive  
8 Arkansas Code Annotated 6-17-807, 6-17-908, and 6-21-  
9 303(b). And I don't have any legal concerns with  
10 that.

11 Waiver topic number two is Teacher Licensure.  
12 The charter is seeking to waive Arkansas Code  
13 Annotated 6-15-1004, 6-17-309, 6-17-401, 6-17-418, 6-  
14 17-902, 6-17-908, 6-17-919, Standard for  
15 Accreditation 4-D.1, and the rules governing Educator  
16 Licensure. I do want to have one clarification: only  
17 Section 7 of the licensure rules can be waived. So I  
18 just want to make sure that you guys are comfortable  
19 limiting that.

20 MR. WALTER: Tripp Walter, Staff Attorney,  
21 APSRC. I'm going to be helping the district with the  
22 waiver piece. And on their behalf, I will agree to  
23 amend the request for the licensure -- Educator  
24 Licensure rules to just Section 7.

25 MR. REYNOLDS: All right. Waiver topic number

1 three is Professional Development. This charter is  
2 seeking to waive Arkansas Code Annotated 6-17-703, 6-  
3 17-704, 6-17-705, Standards for Accreditation 4-G.1,  
4 and the rules governing Professional Development.  
5 And I don't have any legal concerns with that.

6 Waiver topic number four is Instructional Day.  
7 The charter is seeking to waive Arkansas Code  
8 Annotation 6-16-102 and Standard for Accreditation 1-  
9 A.4. -- 1-A.4.2. And I don't have any legal concerns  
10 with that.

11 Waiver topic number five is the Personnel  
12 Policies, Daily Planning Period. The charter is  
13 seeking to waive Arkansas Code Annotated 6-17-114.  
14 And I wanted to clarify that this waiver is going to  
15 be narrowed to part-time teachers only?

16 MR. WALTER: Tripp Walter. We'll so clarify  
17 that the waiver will be limited to part-time teachers  
18 only.

19 MR. REYNOLDS: And then waiver topic number six  
20 is Personnel Policies, Duty-Free Lunch Period. The  
21 charter is seeking to waive Arkansas Code Annotated  
22 6-17-111. And the same thing, I wanted to clarify  
23 that this waiver is only going to be narrowed to  
24 part-time teachers only.

25 MR. WALTER: Tripp Walter. We'll so clarify

1           that the waiver will be limited to part-time teachers  
2           only.

3           MR. REYNOLDS: And then I do have one general  
4           concern. I spoke with someone from the charter and  
5           they clarified that this was -- they clarified this.  
6           But I wanted to get it on the record. I didn't see  
7           anywhere in the application where the Mountainburg  
8           School Board had approved the decision to seek the  
9           district conversion charter, and I just wanted to  
10          clarify that they had.

11          SUPT. ATWELL: The initial intent to apply was  
12          approved in the board initially. And then the  
13          charter and the application and waivers as submitted  
14          were approved by our board at the October board  
15          meeting.

16          CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

17          MR. REYNOLDS: And that's all I've got. Anybody  
18          have any questions?

19          CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Any questions concerning  
20          the waivers?

21          DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I do have a question on  
22          the licensure waiver. But I don't know if you want  
23          to talk --

24          CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: We can address that now.

25          DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. Get back to my

1 notes. Sorry. I'll go back to my notes on that one.

2 So just looking at the rationale that was listed  
3 for that waiver and just the way that it's worded, it  
4 seems as if that -- specifically for the CTE courses,  
5 that the expectation is that you will have a large  
6 number of teachers that are not licensed in their  
7 area still teaching CTE courses, just by the way that  
8 it's worded in the waiver rationale. Can you please  
9 provide a little bit more detail on what your plan is  
10 for that?

11 MS. CRISTEE: Yes, I sure can. So our Level 1  
12 teachers would be certified through the traditional  
13 certification process. The waiver -- the waiver  
14 request is for our Level 2 courses. But we will be  
15 partnering with businesses to bring in industries to  
16 work with our students. And so we wouldn't  
17 necessarily want to go through a licensure process  
18 for them, because it could be multiple people within  
19 the company and we wouldn't want to limit that to  
20 just one person. They may not be on campus every  
21 day; they could be doing Zoom sessions and things of  
22 that nature. And so we wanted to offer that.

23 We looked at the technical permit process. It  
24 is a great process for somebody who's going to be  
25 consistent, fulltime on campus. We went through that

1 process with our School Resource Officer this year,  
2 as we added the Criminal Justice program, and it was  
3 a lengthy process; it wasn't as straightforward as we  
4 expected. And so we want to eliminate any barriers  
5 that would discourage partners from coming to us --  
6 business partners.

7 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So just in looking at the  
8 pathways that you're offering it would seem that the  
9 majority of those pathways -- more than likely, you  
10 would not have been able to get a technical permit  
11 for those positions anyway. So that probably  
12 wouldn't have been as much of a concern. But even  
13 with your additional explanation, I still have some  
14 concerns that as students are moving into their  
15 upper-level courses, it sounds like that they will  
16 not have the benefit of a licensed teacher, from what  
17 you've shared. And so, that's a bit concerning.

18 MS. CRISTEE: So they would still have support  
19 from a licensed CTE teacher. So, for example, our  
20 Survey of Agriculture teacher, Mr. Hall, would still  
21 be overseeing any of the pathways that fall  
22 underneath that Level 1 course. And then we would  
23 create career cards that follow the CTE standards to  
24 make sure students are meeting those needs. The CTE  
25 teacher and a team of administrators, our counselor

1 and advisory teachers, would then also be overseeing  
2 these students as they hit those checkpoints, to make  
3 sure they're still getting the level of expectation  
4 -- they're hitting the level of expectation and  
5 proficiency. The benefit of them working with the  
6 business partner is that they are in the field and  
7 they're working in that area, and so they're going to  
8 get the hands-on experience that may not include the  
9 traditional classroom.

10 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

11 MS. CRISTEE: Does that answer your question?

12 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Slightly. I'll come back  
13 to that question --

14 MS. CRISTEE: Okay.

15 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- as we get more into the  
16 structure of it.

17 MS. CRISTEE: Okay.

18 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: But thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Dr. Moore.

20 DR. MOORE: Okay. I have a few questions. I  
21 believe that the CTE pathways were picked, it said,  
22 based upon local community partners. So am I to  
23 assume safely that you looked at industry demand in  
24 your area?

25 MS. CRISTEE: Yes, ma'am. So we looked at



1 industry demands, we looked at the courses that we  
2 also offer as Level 1 courses, and then we also had  
3 conversations with our students about what they were  
4 interested in and what would expand their  
5 opportunities.

6 DR. MOORE: Okay. And I could be overlooking  
7 it, but I didn't see anything for a Health Science  
8 pathway of any sort. And that seems to be a high-  
9 demand field in every part of Arkansas. So is there  
10 a reason that Health Science is not in here?

11 MS. CRISTEE: Yes. So we do not offer a Level 1  
12 Health Science course. And so without staffing to  
13 create a Level 1 course for that, we partner with  
14 WATC and the PEAK Center to be able to offer some of  
15 those resources. We do have a good anatomy class  
16 that is being taught, that will help students prepare  
17 for that. But right now, there is not a Health  
18 Science. In the future, we would like to expand that  
19 offering. But right now, that's not in the plan.

20 DR. MOORE: Okay. So WATC will still be an  
21 opportunity for students for programs that you do not  
22 offer?

23 MS. CRISTEE: Absolutely.

24 DR. MOORE: Okay.

25 MS. CRISTEE: Yes. And also offers those

1 concurrent level classes.

2 DR. MOORE: And that was my other question.  
3 Concurrent is not addressed much in the application.  
4 So I was wondering -- because, you know, you have  
5 concurrent for your core classes potentially; you  
6 know, that's probably in the -- you're already doing  
7 that. But I was wondering, that's the only  
8 withdrawal -- I have hesitation when the high school  
9 is offering everything without concurrent  
10 opportunities. So, like, is your pre-teacher -- pre-  
11 educator pathway going to be a concurrent one?

12 MS. CRISTEE: It is a concurrent course. We  
13 offer it through Virtual Arkansas. And so, we  
14 partner with Virtual Arkansas for our concurrent  
15 classes -- and Arkansas Tech. Right now, our pre-  
16 educator is online, and we want to continue that at  
17 this time.

18 DR. MOORE: Okay. And then I was wondering --  
19 it said open to all students. Is there any limit to  
20 capacity?

21 MS. CRISTEE: Not at this time.

22 DR. MOORE: And how do you determine who gets to  
23 participate and who doesn't?

24 MS. CRISTEE: We will have an application  
25 process where the students are going to have to

1 interview with our panel, which would be  
2 administration, CTE teachers, and our counselor. And  
3 they're going to have to prove that they're able to  
4 do that. We don't want to send students offsite, if  
5 they're not ready, and set them up for failure. And  
6 so there will be a process that they have to go  
7 through and we're in the works of creating that.

8 DR. MOORE: Okay. And then, I have some more  
9 questions. Do you want me to ask them now or just  
10 come back?

11 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Sure, if you've got the  
12 questions ready.

13 DR. MOORE: Okay. And in your outcomes of  
14 increasing by 50%, is that just looking at the  
15 students that are enrolled in this charter or just  
16 the entire high school in general?

17 MS. CRISTEE: That's for our entire high school  
18 in general. So, offering this program so students  
19 can see that relevance. It gives them something to  
20 work towards. And so we're building relevance and  
21 understanding within all of our courses.

22 DR. MOORE: Okay. So the students who are  
23 enrolled in this you expect to still see finish it?

24 MS. CRISTEE: Absolutely.

25 DR. MOORE: Okay.

1 MS. CRISTEE: Yes.

2 DR. MOORE: And then I would say two things on  
3 your outcomes. Within the application, it mentions  
4 the hundred-percent of the silver NCRC. But in the  
5 outcomes table it doesn't mention a hundred percent.

6 MS. CRISTEE: Correct. After our mock hearing  
7 that we were -- it was advised that maybe we drop  
8 that just a tad to make it more attainable. In my  
9 heart, it is still absolutely one-hundred percent.

10 DR. MOORE: Okay. Well, in the chart there's no  
11 number at all, and so there needs to be some  
12 quantifiable -- it just says increase --

13 MS. CRISTEE: Okay.

14 DR. MOORE: -- within the number of silver.

15 MS. CRISTEE: Okay.

16 DR. MOORE: And then -- and I'm maybe over-  
17 thinking it, but increasing 94.6% by 50%, I don't  
18 think is possible.

19 MS. CRISTEE: Okay.

20 DR. MOORE: Because 50% of 94.6 is going to put  
21 you over 100. But I could be over-thinking it, the  
22 way I'm doing that.

23 MS. CRISTEE: You're probably not over-thinking  
24 it. In my mind, to close that gap it's six points;  
25 so you would increase it by 50% -- so up three points

1           you'd be at 97%.

2           DR. MOORE: Right.

3           MS. CRISTEE: So I may have worded it  
4           incorrectly.

5           DR. MOORE: That's okay. Just looking at that  
6           --

7           MS. CRISTEE: Yeah.

8           DR. MOORE: -- that's just me being a stickler  
9           on it. Okay. I think that's mainly all my  
10          questions. Yeah, that's it.

11          CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right.

12          DR. MOORE: Thank you.

13          MS. CRISTEE: Thank you for asking.

14          CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Mr. Baldwin.

15          MR. BALDWIN: Yeah. Thank you. You mentioned,  
16          when you started out, that you were losing students  
17          to home-schooling and to remote educational  
18          opportunities. What do you think is causing that?  
19          As you guys talk about that --

20          MS. CRISTEE: Well, so --

21          MR. BALDWIN: -- do you have any reason?

22          MS. CRISTEE: -- coming off of Covid and  
23          students having a virtual option, they liked the  
24          flexibility. And then a lot of our students who went  
25          virtual or home-school this year, that was their

1           excuse; they wanted flexibility in their schedule and  
2           in their day. They could complete the classes when  
3           they wanted to and not necessarily on our time table.  
4           So my feeling is -- and feel free to input -- but our  
5           feelings is more so that they want the flexibility  
6           and the option to do as they need.

7           MR. BALDWIN: When you saw that trend begin, is  
8           that what prompted you to think about the conversion  
9           charter?

10          MS. CRISTEE: Uh-huh.

11          MR. BALDWIN: Can you respond to that?

12          MS. CRISTEE: Yes. And when I started looking  
13          at our graduation rates and our students who may not  
14          have received a diploma or who left our school, my  
15          concern is that we can't support them. Once they go  
16          virtual or once they go home-school, they're no  
17          longer our student, and so we can't support them;  
18          yet, we still have students who will call us and ask  
19          for help. And so my heart says I'm going to help  
20          them, but they need to still have that tangible  
21          person; they need to have that connection, and we  
22          want to be able to provide that to them. And so this  
23          just offers them some choice and some flexibility to  
24          still get a little bit of what they want, but for us  
25          to still be able to provide what they need.

1 MR. BALDWIN: Sure. So as you move into this  
2 concept and you have the Level 1 courses, which would  
3 be managed, I guess, by a certified teacher?

4 MS. CRISTEE: Uh-huh.

5 MR. BALDWIN: Would that be inside the school?

6 MS. CRISTEE: Yes.

7 MR. BALDWIN: Okay. And so then the older  
8 students would have the option to go outside the  
9 school and straight to the business or to the farm or  
10 something like that?

11 MS. CRISTEE: Correct.

12 MR. BALDWIN: As you talk with business owners  
13 and other folks, is that a contractual -- do you  
14 create a contractual relationship between the  
15 business and the school, or is it between the  
16 business and the student, or is it just a handshake  
17 agreement on what's going to happen with the student?

18 MS. CRISTEE: We would have some sort of  
19 contractual agreement. It may not be as formal as  
20 what you would see in a typical setting, as far as  
21 them being able to teach or -- but there would be an  
22 agreement for what the business would supply to the  
23 students and what the school would supply as well.  
24 It would be more than a handshake.

25 MR. BALDWIN: Yeah.

1 MS. CRISTEE: We want something in writing.

2 MR. BALDWIN: I think that's really important,  
3 because businesses will, you know, get busy, and I've  
4 seen students sitting in the waiting room not doing  
5 anything --

6 MS. CRISTEE: Yes.

7 MR. BALDWIN: -- because the doctor is too busy  
8 to really take care of it.

9 MS. CRISTEE: Uh-huh.

10 MR. BALDWIN: I used to run a bank and we had  
11 six or seven interns always, and some of my  
12 departments did a better job of managing the intern  
13 than others. And so I think the quality of education  
14 can be really different and the experience can be  
15 different if you're not -- if you don't really define  
16 it. Will the students be paid by the business for  
17 the work they do?

18 MS. CRISTEE: No, not necessarily.

19 MR. BALDWIN: Okay. How many hours will they  
20 work a day for the business? I know you may not have  
21 thought through some of that.

22 MS. CRISTEE: It could vary. We haven't defined  
23 that at this time. That will be part of our planning  
24 process, as we work with those partners to see what  
25 they think students need, as well as what meets their



1 needs to hit those requirements and standards.

2 MR. BALDWIN: I strongly support what you're  
3 doing. I think the hands-on experience of working is  
4 incredibly valuable. But I would not assume that it  
5 will be a good experience, if you don't really define  
6 for the business people what it is you expect from  
7 them.

8 MS. CRISTEE: Absolutely. And so looking at the  
9 workforce model for that -- the Level 3 CTE courses,  
10 we will work off of some of those requirements to  
11 partner with the businesses, so there is something  
12 clear there.

13 MR. BALDWIN: Okay. Is there a quality control  
14 that the school can have over the business? Do you  
15 go and audit the reality of what's happening there  
16 or, you know -- I mean, how do you know they're doing  
17 what they said they're going to do?

18 MS. CRISTEE: So part of that will come through  
19 the student responses and their portfolios they'll  
20 create -- be creating. We're also going to work with  
21 Dennis Williamson, so he'll help us -- he'll help us  
22 look at those businesses to make sure that they are  
23 quality and not something they say they are not. And  
24 then with our team we will also go out and monitor,  
25 and that way we can see for ourselves what is

1           happening. We won't just rely on student response or  
2           someone else's response.

3           MR. BALDWIN: Okay. That's good. So two days a  
4           week the students will be in the class, and I guess  
5           that's where they're being taught the core subjects  
6           that they need to learn. And then three days a week  
7           they're offsite?

8           MS. CRISTEE: Correct.

9           MR. BALDWIN: So they're going to be offsite  
10          more than they're in the school?

11          MS. CRISTEE: Uh-huh. So on the flexible  
12          schedule, they'll work with -- it would stay in  
13          virtual; it would be online. But their two days a  
14          week will give them support from an onsite teacher.  
15          And so everything they're doing may be virtual, but  
16          they will be onsite two days a week, sitting in a  
17          teacher's classroom. And that way, they're not going  
18          back and forth. But those two days that they are  
19          onsite is when the teacher will hit those personable  
20          points.

21          MR. BALDWIN: Okay. So --

22          MS. CRISTEE: So, here's what you need this  
23          week.

24          MR. BALDWIN: Okay. All right. I would  
25          encourage you to go into the details of all this, and

1 I know you're in the planning stages with that. And  
2 I think the devil is in the details.

3 MS. CRISTEE: Yes.

4 MR. BALDWIN: All right.

5 MS. CRISTEE: Absolutely. Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Mr. Davis.

7 MR. DAVIS: First, I want to thank my Charter  
8 Panel member Mr. Baldwin for centering the businesses  
9 as more of the problem in doing something like this,  
10 than the students. So I really appreciate it,  
11 because that's one part of this we never really  
12 discuss. Right? Insuring that we have some real  
13 clarity around the quality of what needs to be  
14 provided by the business partner, and not just, you  
15 know, how the student is performing and/or behaving.

16 You -- I think you touched on this a little bit  
17 when you talked about those students that have  
18 decided to go to home-school -- the absenteeism.  
19 What do you know, what are you hearing about the  
20 absenteeism in the school district and why is that of  
21 issue -- the percentage, the number? I mean --

22 MS. CRISTEE: I'm trying to make sure I'm  
23 following your question. So are you asking me why I  
24 have a high percentage --

25 MR. DAVIS: Yes.

1 MS. CRISTEE: -- of absenteeism?

2 MR. DAVIS: Yes.

3 MS. CRISTEE: Okay. I thought that's what you  
4 were asking.

5 MR. DAVIS: That's what I'm asking.

6 MS. CRISTEE: I just wanted to make sure. A lot  
7 of it, just in student conversations, comes back to  
8 relevance. Some of it comes back to school is not  
9 for us and so we're just going to go home-school and  
10 provide our own education, because it gives me more  
11 of what I need.

12 MR. DAVIS: Yeah.

13 MS. CRISTEE: Those are the responses that we  
14 have received in the conversations. Building student  
15 interest and relevance is important. Students going  
16 through high school, they need to see that there is  
17 more out there. And we are in a small limited  
18 community, but they don't necessarily see the big  
19 picture. And so a lot of our Level 1 courses, when  
20 we have limited them to just a couple of pathways,  
21 they don't know what else goes underneath it. I  
22 think back to the ADE conference this summer, and  
23 Mark Perna [ps] was a guest speaker and he has this  
24 beautiful CTE tree and all these things that go  
25 underneath it, and I said, Oh, I need that. But they

1 are limited, and so we want to create exposure for  
2 them, and that's on us. We have a supportive  
3 community, but the more that we can provide them at  
4 school so that they know that there is a future --  
5 they know there's a future, they just don't know what  
6 they want to do. And that's not necessarily a bad  
7 thing, but a lot of times we're graduating high  
8 school students who they don't know their career  
9 options or they don't know their college options;  
10 they feel like college is not an option for them  
11 because of financial reasons or -- or they don't want  
12 to be in school any longer. And so that starts  
13 trickling down at a very young age, especially if you  
14 have a high number of parents who don't have a  
15 college education, they don't have that support to be  
16 able to push them forward. And so we want to be that  
17 support for the students and provide that  
18 opportunity. But when it starts trickling down at a  
19 young age and they say, Well, school doesn't matter,  
20 so when I hit the dropout age I'm just going to go  
21 home-school, and it interprets to no school.

22 MR. DAVIS: Yeah.

23 MS. CRISTEE: And we're not okay with that.

24 MR. DAVIS: Last question from me. In regards  
25 to students who are selected to participate in

1 flexible scheduling, how have you thought about there  
2 will be challenges when things go awry and sort of  
3 pulling those students in? What does that look like?  
4 Have you had a conversation about what that tipping  
5 point is? Have you thought about, you know, saying,  
6 Okay, this option is no longer available due to what  
7 we're recognizing in regards to the inability for you  
8 to progress in whatever area?

9 MS. CRISTEE: Uh-huh. So we want to be really  
10 careful that they -- if they choose a flexible option  
11 and they are virtual, that they don't get too far  
12 behind and can't dig themselves out of the hole, so-  
13 to-speak. So we would monitor frequently. And if  
14 they're supposed to be learning virtually three days  
15 a week, and they aren't logging in and learning  
16 virtually, it's going to be a conversation with  
17 documentation. We'll say, Hey, what's going on. And  
18 maybe that week they had more internship hours,  
19 something to that effect, and they're making it up  
20 the next week. Or maybe they worked ahead. And so  
21 that will all come out through the monitoring  
22 process.

23 MR. DAVIS: Is that weekly, biweekly, monthly?

24 MS. CRISTEE: Weekly. We'll monitor weekly.

25 MR. DAVIS: Okay.

1 MS. CRISTEE: And then we will track it. And  
2 that's all part of our PLC process. And so we're  
3 already monitoring students, student-by-student,  
4 including their attendance rate. And so this would  
5 be another level for those conversations. And then  
6 we would have a team who can meet with them and have  
7 a relationship with the student, say, This is not  
8 working, your option is coming on campus more time or  
9 we're going to have to figure something out.

10 MR. DAVIS: Yeah.

11 MS. CRISTEE: So --

12 MR. DAVIS: Thank you.

13 MS. CRISTEE: Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Dr. Wright-McMurray.

15 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So just piggybacking a  
16 little bit on the question about the flexible  
17 schedule. So who is going to be the responsible  
18 party for monitoring all of the offsite work and  
19 activities for this process?

20 MS. CRISTEE: We'll have a team; so between  
21 myself, our counselor, our career coach that we are  
22 planning -- planning to get. And then I also have a  
23 para-pro that will help monitor that progress.

24 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. Okay. So a lot of  
25 my questions are around the scheduling, this slide.

1 I'll share from that one.

2 MS. CRISTEE: Okay.

3 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So just trying to get a  
4 sense of -- I guess some of it is like the language  
5 that you use for some of your courses, and then the  
6 language that we already currently use for the  
7 courses that we have in CTE.

8 MS. CRISTEE: Uh-huh.

9 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And so when -- and  
10 especially when we're looking at the word practicum  
11 -- so when we think about a practicum experience,  
12 that's traditionally going to happen for students  
13 when they're -- at least in their third, you know,  
14 fourth level courses. But you're using that term at  
15 the 10th grade level. So then that's something that  
16 kind of jumped out at me is are we -- I heard you  
17 say, and I did agree with that, you don't want to put  
18 students in situations where they're kind of almost  
19 putting the cart before the horse of getting their  
20 opportunity to be out in the field to get  
21 experiences, but they haven't really had the  
22 coursework to support those experiences.

23 MS. CRISTEE: Uh-huh.

24 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So I don't know if it is a  
25 matter of semantics on the words we're using, or is



1           that the intent of the schedule?

2           MS. CRISTEE: So I think it's semantics. We do  
3 not want to move the practicum course in place of the  
4 Level 2 course. So it's just worded for Level 2  
5 practicum. So if you look at -- I'll go back to  
6 plant sciences; the second level course is plant  
7 science. And so for that one, it would not -- it  
8 would still be plant science, but the way they learn  
9 it would be different. It wouldn't be necessarily in  
10 a traditional classroom. It could be through a  
11 series of observations, Zoom sessions, guest  
12 speakers, and independent study. And so then as a  
13 Level 3 --

14          DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Just a question here. And  
15 so -- and then all that work is being -- even though  
16 you may have industry partners that are coming in to  
17 maybe enhance certain sections --

18          MS. CRISTEE: Uh-huh.

19          DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- that are being  
20 instructed, there is a licensed ag teacher that is  
21 responsible for the course itself?

22          MS. CRISTEE: Correct.

23          DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

24          MS. CRISTEE: Yes.

25          DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. Okay. I'm sorry.

1 Go ahead.

2 MS. CRISTEE: I was trying to think of where I  
3 was at.

4 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Sorry.

5 MS. CRISTEE: No, you're okay. So after they  
6 complete that Level 2 practicum, then they can move  
7 into the Level 3, which would be one of the  
8 traditional CTE practicum internships, workplace  
9 study.

10 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. So then my next  
11 question, I guess, is what you're describing here and  
12 how you guys want to implement this model -- and this  
13 is more for my information than anything else --  
14 currently, how we have our pathways established and  
15 the different opportunities for work-based learning  
16 and the different opportunities for students to have  
17 engagement with industry partners, how do you feel  
18 that that couldn't occur currently in what is  
19 available, where you would need to do a conversion  
20 option?

21 MS. CRISTEE: So, currently, that's a Level 3  
22 course that we would have to go into that. And we  
23 want to be able to -- we want to be able to expand  
24 our Level 2 courses. And so, right now, unless I  
25 hire somebody to do plant science individually or do

1 fashion design individually, I can't offer those  
2 pathways. I can offer the internships for the  
3 current levels, the current CTE studies that we do,  
4 the current pathways, but I can't expand our  
5 offerings. And that's my goal, is to expand the  
6 offerings. And so that's why we would need the -- we  
7 would need the charter and the waivers, to be able to  
8 expand those Level 2 courses.

9 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. And then for your  
10 career practicum and other internship experiences, do  
11 you still plan to utilize the work-based learning  
12 coordinator? How do you plan to manage those  
13 options?

14 MS. CRISTEE: So that would be in partnership  
15 with our team, with the career coach, the  
16 administrator, the counselor, and then the CTE  
17 teachers.

18 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. So, currently,  
19 right now, courses that -- when students are enrolled  
20 in courses that use a work-based learning course  
21 code, such as pre-apprenticeship, career practicum  
22 internship, then the teacher that is the teacher-of-  
23 record for those courses is expected to have the 413  
24 endorsement to be able to do that. And so I'm just  
25 wondering if that's something that you guys

1 considered as a part of your plan? Because they  
2 would need to be identified to be the work-based  
3 learning coordinator so that you wouldn't get flagged  
4 --

5 MS. CRISTEE: Okay.

6 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- you know, for having a  
7 teacher that's not endorsed.

8 MS. CRISTEE: Okay. So I'm not quite sure how  
9 to answer that for you right now, because I don't  
10 currently offer those opportunities. Right now, the  
11 course -- the pathways that we have are the three  
12 levels that are onsite. We do not have students  
13 going out for the internships. So that is something  
14 that we will clarify and correct, as needed.

15 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. Sorry, I have to  
16 get back to my notes. Oh. I'm excited to hear that  
17 you are considering a career coach.

18 MS. CRISTEE: Thank you.

19 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So that's also something  
20 that falls under our area, so we always love to have  
21 expansion. I'm just curious which institution that  
22 you plan to partner with for that?

23 MS. CRISTEE: Arkansas Tech University.

24 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: On the Ozark campus or the  
25 --

1 MS. CRISTEE: Ozark campus.

2 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. That's my  
3 questions.

4 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: And I just had a question  
5 about -- because you currently have a district  
6 conversion charter, how will this sort of dovetail  
7 with that middle school experience?

8 MS. CRISTEE: Do you want to answer that one?

9 MS. WALKER: Yes. Sarah Walker.

10 So I am the Assistant Principal but I'm  
11 primarily housed at the middle school. So this is my  
12 first year as an administrator there; there was some  
13 staff change.

14 And I will say -- I just had to say this on  
15 record: from the time I got hired as an I.S., her  
16 goal was really to make Mountainburg High School  
17 career focused. And so I have a CTE background; I  
18 was an ag teacher for 11 years.

19 But as far as the charter at the middle school,  
20 I feel like this year we've really changed the  
21 students' self-efficacy. So when she talks about why  
22 kids are going to home-school, they don't see the  
23 relevance, and a lot of it had to do with Covid when  
24 we did allow them to go virtual.

25 And so as far as our charter, with our brain-

1 based academy and having Dragon fitness training,  
2 we've really pushed that hard this year. I've been  
3 in the district for three years and I've seen a full  
4 culture shift with the kids taking that ownership,  
5 getting their brains firing, meeting those fitness  
6 goals, and then applying that in the classroom. And  
7 so I just see the students' self-efficacy  
8 transitioning. And we have a solid foundation in the  
9 middle school and then they transition into the high  
10 school. I just feel really confident about this.

11 And I'd like to say, as an ag teacher, it's not  
12 very fun when you can only offer two pathways and you  
13 have kids that are interested in other pathways and  
14 they're restricted. I grew up in a small town like  
15 Mountainburg, I taught in the big city of Harrison;  
16 so I see both sides of it. And it's not fair that  
17 our smalltown kids are restricted to opportunity.  
18 They need that exposure. So --

19 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And I -- sorry.

20 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Go ahead.

21 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And so, you know, just  
22 full transparency, I'm working in CTE right now; so  
23 I'm extremely excited and supportive of any school  
24 that recognizes that that is the true pathway -- you  
25 know, because I'm very biased -- for students to be

1           successful. But just want to make sure that the  
2           processes in place for students to be able to have  
3           access to that is, one, that, you know, based off of  
4           best practices and information that we have would be  
5           the most successful for our kiddos. And so that's  
6           what we just want to insure.

7           But I did have one other question after digging  
8           through my notes. So Mountainburg is a part of  
9           Consortia or (inaudible) Perkins funding?

10          SUPT. ATWELL: Yes, ma'am.

11          DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. So have you had  
12          conversations from that standpoint of changing to  
13          this model, doing a different process? What is that  
14          going to look like for that piece of the information  
15          outcomes on the back-end when your data is being  
16          lumped in with others? Have you had talks with folks  
17          that are responsible for that piece?

18          SUPT. ATWELL: Debbie Atwell, Superintendent.

19          We lean heavily on Jennifer Turner, our  
20          specialist through the co-op, and she supports us  
21          with our CTE programming, our grants, our equipment.  
22          And we rely on her to help us navigate and see what  
23          other schools are doing and what we could do. We  
24          envision that Jennifer will be a part of our planning  
25          team in the spring, as we bring in our partnerships

1 with Wappadudi [ps] and as we try to tap into the  
2 local program. So, yes, we do work with Jennifer and  
3 appreciate her input into our work.

4 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. All right. Thank  
5 you.

6 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Other questions?

7 Dr. Moore.

8 DR. MOORE: Well, I would just -- reiterating a  
9 few things that they've said that just gives me  
10 pause. The flexible part is great; I think that's --  
11 because I understand a lot of our districts are  
12 losing students to virtual options that are being  
13 provided and -- so that's a need. But monitoring  
14 that -- so to see how students -- because we even see  
15 at the postsecondary level how many students think  
16 they want virtual and then they get in there and it's  
17 really hard to stay on-track. So really monitoring  
18 that so students don't end up falling behind and  
19 failing.

20 And then too, I'm not CTE, but I have become a  
21 CTE groupie, and Sonya can tell you that. I'm very  
22 engaged in their side of the house nowadays and see  
23 that value. And the work-based learning manual  
24 itself like really outlines very specific what has to  
25 be in each of those courses. And once you mentioned



1 Jennifer, I mean like she knows all of that and will  
2 make sure you're on the right path.

3 But coming back to Mr. Baldwin's point, this is  
4 industry partnerships. They end up just going there  
5 and they're not learning what they need to be  
6 learning, and then when they graduate you're like,  
7 Okay, well, you've had all this practicum work-based  
8 learning, but was it really valuable, did it really  
9 set you up for a job and to be able to enter the  
10 workforce. So that's just what's still giving me  
11 pause is the throwing around the word practicum for a  
12 Level 2 course and not having that all outlined. So  
13 I would need confirmation that that's going to take  
14 place and it's going to adhere to what our CTE folks  
15 have set up, to insure that's setting up for  
16 students, that they're getting that work-based  
17 learning that's meaningful.

18 MS. CRISTEE: Yes. So we do not want to do  
19 anything that's going to jeopardize our students.  
20 And there are going to be a lot of concerns when  
21 you're sending students offsite or your partnering  
22 with others that aren't with you every day, as an  
23 educator. And then, of course, we still have reading  
24 scores that we need to raise. And so I understand  
25 your concern. But we will vet our business partners

1 and we will be heavily involved to make sure our  
2 students are getting what they need and that their  
3 learning is valuable. And so I can say that of any  
4 of our content areas as well. We want to make sure  
5 students' learning is valuable, and so we will work  
6 with business partners. And if we need to make  
7 changes, we will. We will monitor and adjust.

8 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Other questions? Any  
9 discussion?

10 Okay.

11 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I guess I -- sorry. I  
12 guess I'd go back to -- sorry -- I go back to -- and  
13 we keep pointing to Mr. Baldwin, but he did bring up  
14 a very, very good point about the devil being in the  
15 details.

16 MS. CRISTEE: Yes.

17 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And so, although you have  
18 been able to thoroughly answer our questions with the  
19 information that we were presented, there just wasn't  
20 -- there wasn't as clear of a plan of how all this is  
21 -- was going to take place. And so I guess that's  
22 just where I'm just still not -- I've still not got  
23 my mind a hundred-percent wrapped around what is that  
24 day going to look like for that student; to make sure  
25 that there's just not a -- just for lack of a better

1 word, just a lot of looseness going on --

2 MS. CRISTEE: Sure.

3 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- with them, you know,  
4 saying, Oh, I'm -- you know, I'm doing this activity  
5 today. And they're kind of offsite and, you know, we  
6 may catch it later on in the week that they really  
7 didn't do that. So I'm just not as clear on how are  
8 we going to insure that every day that a kid is  
9 supposed to be in a learning environment that they're  
10 actually in a learning environment.

11 And back to Mr. Baldwin's point that well  
12 intentioned business and industry will say, Yes,  
13 definitely, we'd love to have kids come in and see  
14 what we do; but then, you know, all of us run into --  
15 our day blows up and I have tons of meetings that I  
16 didn't plan, and now I don't have that opportunity --  
17 but the kid was signed up to do that on that day.

18 MS. CRISTEE: Uh-huh.

19 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And just from what I'm  
20 sitting right here I'm just not a hundred-percent  
21 clear on how that's going to be avoided.

22 MS. CRISTEE: Yes.

23 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Does that make sense?

24 MS. CRISTEE: Yes, that sure does.

25 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

1 MS. CRISTEE: And from the time we wrote the  
2 application, to the planning process prior to the  
3 application, to now, we're continuing to evolve and  
4 articulate and really define this plan. And so just  
5 because a student in a Level 2 course is in that  
6 career pathway they're probably not going to be  
7 offsite every day. They're going to be connected to  
8 their CTE teacher and they may be Zooming with that  
9 professional. And if for some reason something  
10 happens, you have an unexpected meeting, there will  
11 be a plan in place. So that student is learning and  
12 not playing games on their phone, because the phone  
13 is the devil.

14 So we will continue to make sure that they are  
15 in a learning environment. We don't have time for  
16 downtime. We have scores to raise and we have  
17 students who they want to be connected. And so we  
18 will continue to refine that process and make sure it  
19 is very, very clear for the expectations, for both  
20 the student and the businesses.

21 I also appreciate, Mr. Baldwin, you putting the  
22 blame back on the business, because my students are  
23 absolutely perfect.

24 We will make sure that all of that is clearly  
25 defined on both -- all parties involved, including

1 the parents. The parents are going to have to have a  
2 big partnership with us, as well. I can't just say a  
3 kid is going into a Level 2 course and they're going  
4 to do this independent study and the parent say, Hold  
5 up. And so there will be a lot of partnership with  
6 all stakeholders involved.

7 DR. MOORE: So I'm wondering, in the past there  
8 have been other charters that like, Yes, this is a  
9 great idea, hundred-percent for it, but it lacked a  
10 few details being fleshed out; so we've paused and  
11 had them come back. Because I'm totally for this,  
12 like I love what you're doing, because it's something  
13 that's -- I'm always preaching about rural students  
14 not having opportunities that students in larger  
15 districts have. So I applaud your efforts. But  
16 there is so much that's not fleshed out right now and  
17 those details. So I'm just wondering if potentially  
18 -- I know that you need to do it in a certain amount  
19 of time to be able to get your ducks in a row.

20 MS. CRISTEE: Uh-huh.

21 DR. MOORE: So saying next like spring would not  
22 help you in any way. Would December even -- like do  
23 we have a time when we're meeting in December, that  
24 they could come back with more --

25 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yes. We have a December

1 meeting.

2 DR. MOORE: Okay.

3 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So --

4 DR. MOORE: I just wanted to throw that out  
5 there, because we've done that before when a school  
6 lacked the details. Because there's a lot of "we  
7 will" --

8 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Uh-huh.

9 DR. MOORE: -- and, you know, hope is not a  
10 plan.

11 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Right.

12 DR. MOORE: But I trust that you're being  
13 sincere about that.

14 MS. CRISTEE: Uh-huh.

15 DR. MOORE: And we have just done that with  
16 others when we need to see more details. So just  
17 throwing that out there.

18 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay.

19 MR. DAVIS: Well, you know, I will say at the  
20 same time, right, first of all, I don't know -- I'm  
21 not quite sure the responses and/or the specifics  
22 you're talking about in regards to being buttoned-up.  
23 And because I'm not clear on that, I am not sure if  
24 they will be able to do that by December. Right?

25 The other thing that I will say is, you know,

1           these things -- you do have to pivot and change.  
2           Right? There may be some conversations that happen,  
3           but there is a pivot and change that may happen as  
4           they continue to iterate. I like to think about the  
5           confidence in the individuals and their ability to be  
6           able to do that. And so just this is me; I don't  
7           have as much concern, because I think that the  
8           presentation and the application and how they've  
9           talked about addressing these things are things they  
10          understand that they may have to address as these  
11          things sort of happen. So that's just my take on the  
12          application. And, once again, I'm not -- if we are  
13          -- if there is a decision to go ahead and ask them to  
14          return in December, I think we need to be very  
15          specific about what we might want to see from them.  
16          Because they may have the answers in December, but  
17          come February that all may have changed too based  
18          upon additional conditions on the ground. So I just  
19          want to be thoughtful about that.

20                 DR. MOORE: Well, and to be clear, my concerns  
21          -- it seems like the CTE work-based learning manual  
22          is something that's not even been read. It doesn't  
23          seem like those requirements are -- and like I said,  
24          I'm not CTE, so I'm talking outside of my lane. But  
25          I would think that Dr. Wright-McMurray is seeing some

1 of those same concerns. Because you have to have a  
2 work-based learning coordinator who's overseeing  
3 that, not the Level 2 teacher overseeing it.

4 So there's lots of details that I feel that  
5 working with Jennifer Turner just over a few weeks  
6 you could easily get those details fleshed out. But  
7 right now, they don't seem to be fleshed out.

8 MS. CRISTEE: Okay. Okay. So what I asked Mr.  
9 Tripp is would the licensure waiver not cover that  
10 requirement, because I don't think I'm completely  
11 understanding that. And so he's advising that you  
12 would like to see a day-in-the-life of a student.  
13 Would that help clarify some of the questions that  
14 you're asking? Because I understand what you're  
15 saying about a licensure requirement. But we're also  
16 requesting a waiver for Licensure. Is that one of  
17 the ones that cannot fall under that --

18 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So I would --

19 MS. CRISTEE: -- waiver?

20 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- have to get --

21 MR. BALDWIN: I think what we're all feeling is  
22 a lack of clarity on what a day-in-the-life of a  
23 student would look like. And, you know, you're going  
24 to have I don't know how many businesses involved.  
25 So maybe it's a day-in-the-life of the student for



1 three or four different types of businesses.

2 Now, as far as how we act today, I don't know if  
3 you could provide that to the DESE staff. I mean, I  
4 don't -- I'm not -- I think I would feel comfortable  
5 if the DESE -- if -- is it Jennifer, the lady --

6 MS. CRISTEE: Jennifer Turner.

7 DR. MOORE: She's CTE. Yes.

8 MR. BALDWIN: Yeah. If you have someone from  
9 DESE that -- or --

10 DR. MOORE: The co-op.

11 MR. BALDWIN: -- that can help you -- the co-op  
12 -- you know, I could probably be convinced that you  
13 -- because I believe you're going to do the best for  
14 the students.

15 MS. CRISTEE: Uh-huh.

16 MR. BALDWIN: But I could also see you, you  
17 know, coming back in December with the life of a  
18 student examples, which would be more clarifying, I  
19 think, for us. And I don't know what your timeline  
20 is. I don't know how intense of pressure you feel --

21 MS. CRISTEE: Uh-huh.

22 MR. BALDWIN: -- to get going right now with  
23 everything.

24 MS. CRISTEE: Okay.

25 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: And I was just going to add

1 one thing, which is in thinking about what Dr.  
2 Wright-McMurray had said earlier, I think it's not  
3 only the life -- day-in-the-life-of-a-student, but  
4 it's also that accountability piece.

5 MS. CRISTEE: Uh-huh.

6 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So how are we going to  
7 insure that they're actually following through with  
8 that day in the life of a student, you know, every  
9 day and what are the checks and balances there. So I  
10 think there's two pieces there, at least from my  
11 perspective. I do want to see the day-in-the-life-  
12 of-a-student, but I also want to see, okay, who's  
13 overseeing these students, what qualifications do  
14 they have, those pieces. Because I know you did ask  
15 would the licensure waiver cover it, and I think Dr.  
16 Wright-McMurray had some questions regarding that.

17 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Yes, because -- so like  
18 the responsible parties that oversee a lot of the  
19 offsite or virtual opportunities -- so you'd named  
20 like the career coach as being one of those  
21 individuals. And I would caution against having them  
22 to do that role because there's going to be quite a  
23 bit of other expectations and responsibilities that  
24 they're going to have to meet as a career coach  
25 that's going to tie them to or tether them to your

1 campus to serve those students. So then to have  
2 additional responsibility to also oversee what's  
3 happening for the kids that are going off for these  
4 experiences may not be as effective. So I would just  
5 caution you on that.

6 And then, as it relates to the work-based  
7 learning coordinator -- so we do have the flexibility  
8 that you can have any licensure, but you do have to  
9 have the endorsement; and so the endorsement has to  
10 be tied to a license in order for you to be able to  
11 oversee work-based learning opportunities. Because  
12 of that, my fear is that you would get flagged in the  
13 system and then that would be a ding for your  
14 district that you have somebody that's overseeing  
15 this course that is not endorsed.

16 So those are just some pieces there.

17 And then like, again, with the language, just to  
18 not create confusion with other things that are  
19 happening within CTE, I would just encourage you to  
20 look at the language that you're using for some of  
21 the courses. Because there are some pieces like  
22 where you use practicum, and that's very well tied to  
23 a work-based learning experience, but does occur at  
24 the 3rd or 4th levels. When you have that showing at  
25 a 2nd level, then that creates that confusion on what

1 type of course this is, what are the expectations,  
2 what students should already have in place. And when  
3 you're doing that for the courses that you're going  
4 to be enrolling those students in, that may be an  
5 issue there.

6 So just -- there's just some pieces there  
7 outside of what does the day-in-the-life look like  
8 for a student, which I would like to see, but also a  
9 more defined person of who's going to be the one  
10 that's going to be overseeing those opportunities.  
11 Because having a team of people to do it I think is  
12 -- could be problematic. So that's just what I'm  
13 just seeing.

14 But, again, I'm extremely in support any time  
15 that we realize that CTE needs to be the central  
16 focus for our students. But just want to make sure  
17 that the model that's being developed --

18 MS. CRISTEE: Uh-huh.

19 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- is going to be the most  
20 effective and efficient for you, for the kiddos, and  
21 for everyone involved so that you don't have to make  
22 a lot of pivoting changes, that then becomes  
23 uncomfortable for the students, especially when  
24 they're moving through pathways.

25 MS. CRISTEE: Right. So can I provide a little

1 bit of clarification on what I think may be holding  
2 us up on, that I was not clear on to begin with.

3 So on our Level 2 course, like let's say a  
4 student takes Survey of Business, that's their Level  
5 1 course. So Level 2, they want to go into Retail  
6 Management -- that's their pathway -- and so the next  
7 level would be Retail Business. And so that student  
8 is still going to be connected to the Survey of  
9 Business teacher for the Level 2 course. But that  
10 Survey of Business teacher may not be providing all  
11 of the curriculum for them. That's where the  
12 business partner would come into play. And so they  
13 would still be assigned to the Survey of Business  
14 teacher who's the overall umbrella for that pathway.  
15 And when I say it's monitored by a team of people,  
16 that includes the CTE teachers. And so we're  
17 creating those career cards, the expectations for the  
18 student, for the business. So they're not -- it's  
19 not -- it's not the Level 3 permit yet, because right  
20 now we don't have that for our onsite classes  
21 anyways. And so this is for the Level 2 courses.  
22 They're still connected to a licensed CTE teacher;  
23 that's still their home-base, so-to-speak. And so  
24 each day, when they're on campus, they're going to  
25 that teacher's classroom. She's monitoring -- she or

1 he is monitoring that student's progress, and then as  
2 a team we're evaluating that student. And so it's  
3 not just left up to anybody. It's still somebody  
4 who's an expert in that field; they just don't have  
5 the capacity to be able to continue to offer all the  
6 different programs of study. And so the business  
7 partners is what allows us to have the capacity to  
8 expand those offerings.

9 MR. BALDWIN: So in the Level 2, is the business  
10 partner coming to the classroom and seeing they're  
11 just talking about stuff or are they Zooming in, or  
12 is the student going out to the business in the Level  
13 2 experience?

14 MS. CRISTEE: It could be a mixture. Some of it  
15 could be a Zoom, some of it could be the person  
16 coming onsite, especially if they have multiple kids  
17 within the same pathway, which we expect we will.  
18 They would work with that team of students and then  
19 they would have days where they could also go out to  
20 those businesses. They may not be out in those  
21 businesses every day, but we need that to be an  
22 opportunity for them.

23 MR. BALDWIN: I think it would be helpful for  
24 you to basically diagram that out. I think that  
25 would help you all and I think it would help us,

1 because I think the structure of the program -- the  
2 success of the program is based on the structure that  
3 you put in place.

4 MS. CRISTEE: Uh-huh.

5 MR. BALDWIN: And what is the expectation from  
6 y'all, who are educators, of all these other people  
7 who are not educators. And you're going to have to  
8 guide them, because they're not going to know -- you  
9 know, they're not going to know what works and what  
10 doesn't. And so I think that's what we're grasping  
11 for is more -- probably more structured --

12 MS. CRISTEE: Okay.

13 MR. BALDWIN: -- in that part of it.

14 DR. MOORE: And I would add to that, so with  
15 your Level 2 courses there are actual standards for  
16 that.

17 MS. CRISTEE: Uh-huh.

18 DR. MOORE: So that means that those business  
19 and industry partners are going to actually have to  
20 teach content, which is very different than a work-  
21 based learning experience where they're just going  
22 out and being like engaged in the work. Like they're  
23 responsible for specific standards.

24 MS. CRISTEE: Uh-huh. Well, when the career  
25 cards come into play -- we're going to use that

standards to create the career cards where the student is working with the business partner to gain that content. That's where the level of independent study also comes into play. And so when you look at the standards and you create the cards, it almost becomes like a checklist, for lack of better words, and that's where they're working with the business partners. So, yes, the business partner is teaching content, but it's content within that area, and so it builds the relevance for that student. It's not a general course; it's more specific.

DR. MOORE: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Other questions or comments?

If not, I'll entertain a motion.

DR. MOORE: I --

MR. BALDWIN: Go ahead.

DR. MOORE: I don't know exactly how to say it. I move that we have the group come back at our next meeting and provide more information. Otherwise, I would have to vote no today. So I vote that we move to -- I don't know the proper terms for doing that.

CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So you move that we defer till December, and you can come back with the information that we have requested, which includes



1 the student schedule, the diagram of structure, and  
2 then the oversight plan.

3 DR. MOORE: That is exactly what I move to do.

4 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yeah.

5 DR. MOORE: Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Do I have a second?

7 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Second.

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

10 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

11 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Any opposed?

12 All right. Motion passes.

13 MS. CRISTEE: Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: And we'll see you next  
15 month.

16 MS. CRISTEE: All right. Thank you.

17 DR. MOORE: And maybe we can provide some  
18 written feedback --

19 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yes.

20 DR. MOORE: -- that can be shared with them,  
21 just for --

22 MR. BALDWIN: Yes.

23 DR. MOORE: -- clarity.

24 MS. CRISTEE: That would be much appreciated.

25 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: And so we're going to fill

1 out the voting sheets now, and then we'll provide you  
2 with some feedback there. But we can provide you  
3 with more feedback as well.

4 MS. CRISTEE: All right. Thank you so much.

5 REPRESENTATIVE CHAD PURYEAR: May I make a  
6 comment?

7 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yes.

8 REPRESENTATIVE PURYEAR: These guys have worked  
9 really hard on this. Me and Senator Petty have the  
10 utmost confidence in these guys taking care of  
11 business. I would ask that maybe you revisit that,  
12 tell them what they need, and we trust that they  
13 would have that done. Because these guys come down  
14 last meeting; you guys had some sickness. And  
15 they've been down again today. So that, you know,  
16 drags this timeline out to the first of the year,  
17 going forward. And like you guys said, it is going  
18 to change with the partners.

19 So I'm not trying to get in your business. I've  
20 never been to one of these. Just thought maybe we  
21 can maybe reconsider that. Because, again, we have  
22 -- these guys are taking care of our kids and we  
23 trust them. So, thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So, Mr. Reynolds, since we  
25 have already --

1 MR. REYNOLDS: Since you've already taken a  
2 vote, you would have to vote to un-do your last vote  
3 and then re-vote on whatever the motion that a member  
4 --

5 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: If there is a new --

6 MR. REYNOLDS: If there is a new motion.

7 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Uh-huh.

8 MR. REYNOLDS: So --

9 DR. MOORE: Are they able to present via Zoom if  
10 we -- if they come back in December with information,  
11 as opposed to having to drive here?

12 MR. REYNOLDS: Yeah, I think so.

13 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yeah.

14 MR. REYNOLDS: Uh-huh.

15 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: There's not an issue with  
16 Zoom.

17 DR. MOORE: Okay. Just to eliminate one  
18 barrier.

19 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Right. Right.

20 DR. MOORE: Because that is ridiculous to have  
21 to drive back. They were here last time, and now,  
22 and a third time. It would still be before the end  
23 of the semester happens.

24 MR. BALDWIN: You know, my thought is -- and I  
25 appreciate what you said and I hear that they came

1 back, came down here last month and, you know, we  
2 didn't have a full schedule. I really think that  
3 what you're going to do between now and December is  
4 really important for you all. And, you know, we had  
5 a charter in here first thing this morning, the  
6 Creative Arts group, that went back and came back to  
7 us with something that is a lot better from their  
8 perspective. And so I think this will be beneficial  
9 to you all. I'm sorry that it's another trip.

10 REPRESENTATIVE PURYEAR: Oh, it's not about the  
11 trip. I just -- I'm just trying to say that we've  
12 got --

13 MR. BALDWIN: Yeah.

14 REPRESENTATIVE PURYEAR: -- confidence that  
15 these guys will get it done.

16 MR. BALDWIN: Well, and I will tell you --

17 REPRESENTATIVE PURYEAR: They'll add a trip  
18 (inaudible, not at the mic) and then it just --

19 MR. BALDWIN: Yeah.

20 REPRESENTATIVE PURYEAR: -- kind of -- you know,  
21 they could be -- they're going to have that pretty  
22 well mapped out as much as they can. They're --

23 MR. BALDWIN: Yeah.

24 REPRESENTATIVE PURYEAR: You know, the way -- I  
25 was at a career -- I was an ag teacher for eight

1 years, and so I did some of this concurrent stuff.  
2 So until they get with these partners and have it  
3 lined out --

4 MR. BALDWIN: Yeah.

5 REPRESENTATIVE PURYEAR: -- what they're going  
6 to be able to give you in February may change by  
7 March and April, when they grab another partner as  
8 their program expands. So --

9 MR. BALDWIN: And I agree. I think the example  
10 was important to us. I live in West Fork; I know  
11 what it's like in small towns. And I know -- I know  
12 how -- you know, how you work in a small town and --  
13 but I do think this is important. It's an important  
14 step. And we're all supportive, and I don't want you  
15 guys to leave, that you're thinking we're not  
16 supportive. But I think we as a group, based on our  
17 experience, feel like this is a needed step for you.

18 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Right.

19 MR. BALDWIN: My personal opinion.

20 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: And I think you make a good  
21 point. It's part of the process. And I think, you  
22 know, just like we had this morning with the open-  
23 enrollment charter, I think that it puts a little bit  
24 more onus on really fine-tuning it. And then when  
25 you come back in December, via Zoom -- I mean not in

1 person -- I think that will be very helpful for you,  
2 especially just kind of getting it all laid out  
3 before things get away from you, you know, with the  
4 rest of the year. So, I mean, I agree.

5 DR. MOORE: Because I would hope that it would  
6 be the work that you're going to be doing next  
7 anyway. Even if we said yes today, it's like what  
8 you would be doing next. So it's just doing that  
9 first to give more concrete form to your application.

10 SENATOR PETTY: May I speak-up? I echo a  
11 hundred-percent of what Representative Puryear said.  
12 I'm Senator Jim Petty. You guys are the experts.  
13 You guys have a whole lot more detail than two guys  
14 that are, you know, running around the Capital and  
15 going to meetings. But for me, I think it would be  
16 important to know the circumstance. And what I'm --  
17 and I'm not speaking for you, but what I'm reading is  
18 is we're just almost there. So if they can leave  
19 today knowing that they're essentially there, other  
20 than the specific details, that helps for her and her  
21 staff to go to those businesses that we're talking  
22 about and (inaudible, not at the mic). But if there  
23 is this Grinch who might steal Christmas thought in  
24 the back of our mind, which we all have, then I think  
25 that's -- that's an obstacle that we don't need to

1 leave here having today. So I'm reading between the  
2 lines here that it seems like everybody is  
3 supportive; we just need a few more details to get  
4 over the hump. But there's nothing that has been  
5 presented or that you guys have had access to that  
6 would present a problem that would keep the obstacle  
7 from coming. Because they're clearly very informed;  
8 they clearly have a staff -- I mean a consultant that  
9 -- at the co-op that is very well respected.

10 So I would just like to leave here knowing that  
11 we're almost there, and whether -- I mean I'm likely  
12 going to be here in December anyway, so whether we  
13 Zoom or not -- and I think Dr. Atwell and her staff  
14 will be here. But I would just like to kind of know  
15 that we're headed there in that right direction. And  
16 if there is a major concern, I'd like to know about  
17 it today, before we leave, so we have the details  
18 that we need in order to get over this hurdle.

19 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: I mean, I would say there's  
20 been a lot of great work done so far. And I think  
21 you're almost there. I just think that -- as Mr.  
22 Baldwin said, I think the process needs to play out  
23 and I think you need to just finish out those last  
24 little details. But that's just me speaking.

25 Anybody else have any comments?

1 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: No, I feel like that I --  
2 well, hopefully, in my comments that you were able to  
3 receive that I'm very supportive of what you guys are  
4 doing, what you have worked on thus far. Unless  
5 there is a mechanism that would say you can't move  
6 forward on these pieces, until we have a clearer  
7 understanding of the day-in-the-life and that you are  
8 a hundred-percent clear on what your expectations are  
9 for your work-based learning, without us asking you  
10 to come back -- because if we don't, then how are we  
11 able to review these pieces before then you're able  
12 to go forward and start to implement. And maybe  
13 there are some things, like that we shared today,  
14 that just need to be cleaned up so you can have a  
15 good implementation process.

16 So that's where my reservation comes from is  
17 that -- I definitely echo -- I feel like that you  
18 guys are almost there. But just some pieces that  
19 just need to be cleaned up in order for me to feel  
20 comfortable that when you start doing the work, even  
21 with having to make some adjustments, that they're  
22 not going to have to be major adjustments, like not  
23 being -- not including in there the -- I just keep  
24 going back to -- I just wouldn't want you to get a  
25 flag because you didn't realize that, Oh, we needed



1 to do this, and then you get reports from, you know,  
2 the Standards office and you're like, Oh, nobody told  
3 me this.

4 And so there's just some things I think that if  
5 you just had some more conversations with maybe our  
6 office to talk about -- work-based learning office to  
7 talk with our pathways advisors that can help you  
8 understand how that rolls out, then you could start  
9 off with a far stronger plan to move forward that  
10 would prevent you from having the hiccups along the  
11 way. And that's just what -- from my standpoint, I'm  
12 just wanting to make sure that takes place.

13 And so, I'm with Dr. Moore. I don't think that  
14 you would have to come back down to Little Rock. I  
15 think that that would be something that could be done  
16 through a Zoom to provide that information so that --  
17 because, again, I am also aware that -- you know, I  
18 went to University of Arkansas at Fayetteville; I  
19 remember passing Mountainburg all the time. So  
20 that's not the closest drive, and so it wouldn't be  
21 effective to do that.

22 DR. MOORE: Yeah. And I would agree. And when  
23 I provide feedback -- I didn't mention this today,  
24 but I will provide feedback. I didn't see, except  
25 for the graphic from CTE's diagram, much about

1 industry-recognized certifications. So that would be  
2 something that would really speak volumes too,  
3 because part of the reason you go through all these  
4 pathways is so you can graduate ready to go in the  
5 workforce. And I know that as we develop the career  
6 diploma as part of LEARNS that's going to be a big  
7 piece as well. So in your planning you might want to  
8 think about that as well, because that's going to be  
9 a part of the career diploma.

10 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right. So we'll go  
11 ahead and fill out our voting sheets and then provide  
12 feedback.

13 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

14 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Dr. Wright-McMurray.

15 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I voted for. I support  
16 the motion to ask the Mountainburg administration to  
17 return with additional information at the December  
18 meeting. This information should include an outline  
19 of the student's day, consideration of work-based  
20 learning requirements, and review of naming of  
21 courses to reduce confusion. They have a strong  
22 foundation for a CTE model that can provide enhanced  
23 resources for our students in rural communities that  
24 will be improved with additional discussions and  
25 planning.

1 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Mr. Davis.

2 MR. DAVIS: I support the motion to have the  
3 Mountainburg School District clarify certain aspects  
4 of the application and return to present the update  
5 to seek approval.

6 A point of clarification: will they have access  
7 to the voting sheet, therefore enabling them to  
8 understand exactly what we're asking them to do?

9 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: We can. And what we can  
10 also do is provide any other feedback that the Panel  
11 may have.

12 MR. DAVIS: Yeah. And I would just offer up the  
13 idea that when you return that you specifically speak  
14 to those things, with the recognition that there may  
15 be some additional panel members who aren't here  
16 today. All right. And so, I don't want you to go  
17 down sort of a murky road of opening up other things  
18 that others -- I mean, it could get -- so just  
19 respond to what's being asked.

20 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Mr. Baldwin.

21 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I support the motion to  
22 allow the Mountainburg education team to have more  
23 time to develop specifics of the Level 2 and 3  
24 education plans that you all talked about with us  
25 today; develop plans presenting examples of a day in

1 the life of a student and accountability standards  
2 for business partners -- just examples; it doesn't  
3 have to be tied down, but just, you know, a few  
4 examples for us to see -- with that information  
5 presented at the December CAP meeting.

6 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Dr. Moore.

7 DR. MOORE: I support the motion for  
8 Mountainburg to bring back additional information for  
9 consideration during the December meeting. Further  
10 details are needed related to the day-in-the-life of  
11 students, how oversight with business and industry  
12 partners will be handled, and plans for following CTE  
13 pathways, including the standards, industry  
14 recognized credentials, and work-based learning  
15 guidelines. We will provide written feedback to the  
16 district for clarity on what additional insight is  
17 needed. I applaud and am in strong favor of such an  
18 opportunity for rural students and appreciate the  
19 innovative thinking and leadership demonstrated.

20 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: And then I voted in support  
21 of the motion to have the Mountainburg School  
22 District provide further information on the -- if my  
23 thing will quit jumping around -- on the structure of  
24 the flexible school day outside of the school and its  
25 oversight. I'm looking forward to seeing this plan

1 in its entirety and excited about the possibilities.

2 Okay. Thank y'all very much.

3 MS. CRISTEE: Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: I think what we'll do now,  
5 if everybody is in favor, is we'll break for lunch.  
6 Does that sound good?

7 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Yeah, sure.

8 DR. MOORE: I know Newport is really happy they  
9 got here before 9 a.m., so --

10 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yeah. And let's -- when do  
11 we want to return? 1:30, is that --

12 DR. MOORE: Yeah. That should give them time to  
13 go through and grab something.

14 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Let's shoot for 1:30.

15 (LUNCH BREAK: 12:51 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.)

16 4) CONSIDERATION OF DISTRICT CONVERSION PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL  
17 APPLICATION - THE ACADEMIES AT NEWPORT HIGH SCHOOL

18 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right. The meeting is  
19 called to order. Ms. Summons.

20 MS. SUMMONS: Good afternoon. Dorie Summons,  
21 Office of Public Charter Schools.

22 The Newport School District has submitted an  
23 application to convert Newport High School to the  
24 Academies of Newport High School. The school will  
25 serve grades 8 through 12 and follow a traditional

1 college prep, career and technical, with a virtual  
2 option educational model.

3 We have several representatives from Newport who  
4 are here to speak on their behalf.

5 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Thank you very much.

6 Will all those who plan on speaking on behalf of  
7 the Newport charter school please stand and raise  
8 your right hand. Do you swear that the testimony  
9 you're about to give is the truth, the whole truth,  
10 and nothing but the truth?

11 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

12 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you very  
13 much. You may begin.

14 SUPT. BRADLEY: Jon Bradley, Superintendent.

15 First, let me apologize for the collective groan  
16 that went out a while ago for the lunch announcement.  
17 So I apologize.

18 First thing I want to do is -- we've obviously  
19 brought quite a few people with us for support; so  
20 I'd kind of like to run through those real quick, if  
21 I can. Mr. Bo Reynolds, from Trane; Lieutenant  
22 Tarwater and Callahan, from Newport Fire Department;  
23 Ms. Kay Pate is one of our board members; Michelle  
24 Brimm from Unity Health; I'm not sure if Mr. Davis is  
25 still here, ICEV rep; our mayor, Mr. Derrick

1 Ratliffe; Grover Welch is our district testing  
2 coordinator; Joey McKnight, technology coordinator;  
3 Candace Long is our high school counselor; Mr.  
4 Richard Greer, our high school principal; Heather  
5 Graham is our LEA special ed. director; Dr. Nancy  
6 Churchwell is our financial director; also, Matt  
7 Duvall is our SRO at the high school; and Dr. Jerry  
8 Bryant from Arkansas State University-Newport. And  
9 then my other two colleagues, they will present;  
10 they'll announce themselves.

11 So, okay. First, my job is to give you a little  
12 background information about Newport, and then also a  
13 little bit of the rationale in our decision to apply  
14 for this charter and kind of the vision, before they  
15 go in -- more in-depth with the actual numbers and  
16 the plan.

17 So a little bit of history about our community:  
18 Newport is a rural community in northeast Arkansas,  
19 population a little less than 8,000 people. Our  
20 district covers over 330 square miles. The median  
21 household income is just below \$38,000 and 23.8% of  
22 our people in the district have an income below the  
23 poverty line. The graduation rate -- and this is a  
24 five-year average -- is between 78 and 80 percent.  
25 Only 11.3% of people in our district have a

1 Bachelor's degree or higher. So all of these were  
2 among the determining factors when we decided to  
3 apply for the district conversion charter.

4 We believe that these opportunities that we're  
5 going to create through this will be true advantages  
6 for our students in Newport School District once they  
7 graduate.

8 And as you see right there, it says we know that  
9 what we're doing is not working for all our students.  
10 Right now, there seems to be a trend to de-value  
11 traditional education and to see the benefit of it.  
12 And so we've seen some of that with some of our  
13 students and through either attendance or our  
14 graduation rate, specifically. So we know that we  
15 need to innovate.

16 Some of the rationale -- we want to raise our  
17 graduation rates. We are a rural location, but we're  
18 also an economic hub for the county that we're in.  
19 We're kind of the largest town in our county and a  
20 lot of things do happen there. We also want to  
21 promote workplace literacy. What we've found --  
22 literacy is one of the things that we are really  
23 approaching heavily in our district. But we found  
24 that our students in the CTE programs are -- perform  
25 much better with technical manuals and reading



1 technical manuals for literacy reasons. We also have  
2 the PD, the Seven Cs for Educational Resources. We  
3 want to improve our career and college pathways,  
4 apprenticeships, and work-based learning. We  
5 obviously want to improve our school letter grade.

6 And then the next stat is something that we've  
7 really discussed a lot in our community. We have  
8 more than 3,000 workers that drive into our county  
9 every day for work that do not live in our district.  
10 One of the reasons is we do not have the qualified  
11 employees to work, to do those jobs. So we've really  
12 reached out to our community to try to find out the  
13 needs that we have.

14 We want to offer our students the opportunity to  
15 have earlier experiences in workforce development.  
16 And obviously there's some finances involved with the  
17 need for training and our partnerships and programs.  
18 But this is a community involvement and we want to  
19 promote our service learning.

20 The mission statement that we have: Academies at  
21 Newport will educate, empower, and assist our  
22 students to excel in the academic setting that will  
23 prepare them to be successful in all areas of life.  
24 We will provide personalized learning that leads to  
25 real world experiences and opportunities that prepare

1       our students for college and/or career excellence.  
2       And it's -- we're really focusing on the personalized  
3       learning part of it.

4               We will educate our students with highly  
5       qualified instructors in high wage, high demand, high  
6       skilled areas. We'll also offer concurrent credit,  
7       AP courses, and technical programming through our CTE  
8       programs, as well as using ASU-Newport and other  
9       online options to best meet the needs of our  
10      students. We are using a combination of the Career  
11      Academy model and college preparatory model.

12             We want to empower our students, no matter what  
13      field, career, or pathway they choose, utilizing our  
14      school counselors, career coach, and teachers to  
15      assist students in their chosen area. We will mentor  
16      and guide our students to become successful and well-  
17      rounded. Through the experience of community  
18      service, work-based learning, internships, and  
19      guidance, these students will gain valuable on-the-  
20      job training, as well as the soft skills that they  
21      need to be successful in the real world.

22             We want to empower our students through advising  
23      and counseling, using Xello as student success plans;  
24      host job fairs -- we currently host one of these  
25      every year and we would like to do more of that and

1 involve -- to expand the region that we use for that  
2 for our students; creating mock interviews; give them  
3 experience through certifications, concurrent credit,  
4 advanced placement opportunities; ASU IGNITE is a  
5 good program that we -- that our school is involved  
6 in with our students to work through with the college  
7 certifications, concentrator and completer status  
8 through our CTE programs -- and we have a very  
9 extensive CTE program, we offer more than many  
10 schools around us, whether they're much bigger than  
11 us or not -- so we have a big CTE program and we feel  
12 like we can expand on that; college and career ready  
13 for all students enrolled in the Academies; and then  
14 our lunch-and-learn sessions with local businesses  
15 and colleges that are presenting.

16 We want our students to excel in all areas.  
17 With the help of all involved, our students will be  
18 given the opportunity through various student  
19 organizations, competitions, and community service  
20 learning to be well-prepared to enter the workforce  
21 or go on to college. Students will have acquired all  
22 the content knowledge in their classes, have test  
23 scores and certifications needed for their field, and  
24 have the soft skills, study skills, and communication  
25 skills necessary for their success.

1           The Academies at Newport High School will  
2 provide students an opportunity to complete various  
3 CTE pathways, AP classes, and concurrent college  
4 credit. By relying on students' interests and the  
5 needs of our community business and industry leaders,  
6 new and innovative pathways are emerging during this  
7 planning process. This charter will allow students  
8 to choose various pathways, to include medical,  
9 firefighter, aviation, digital marketing, plant  
10 science, agri power and technical structures, food  
11 production, robotics, cybersecurity, JAG, work-based  
12 learning, apprenticeships, and JROTC, along with  
13 advanced placement, IGNITE and concurrent courses.

14           And I'm going to turn it over to our CTE Program  
15 Coordinator.

16           MS. BROGDON: Okay. We have ongoing meetings  
17 with our local business and industry, as well as  
18 community, parents, students. We do this all the  
19 time. We talk with our advisory council members, and  
20 then with the completion of the comprehensive local  
21 needs assessment done on an annual basis. We update  
22 that constantly. So we've done that and we've seen  
23 some areas that we could add that would actually  
24 assist the workforce and also help our kids enter  
25 those highway high-skill jobs. We always utilize a

1 needs assessment and we're always looking at work-  
2 based learning opportunities and internship  
3 experience for students within the workforce. And  
4 then we are always looking for vertical alignment  
5 with postsecondary institutions.

6 One apprenticeship that -- internship that  
7 popped up the other day was we just started a new  
8 construction addition to our cafeteria. I was in a  
9 meeting, Think Tank, at Jonesboro, and Nabholz was  
10 there. And I just said, Hey, we've got some JAG  
11 students that might benefit -- and sure enough, we're  
12 going to work that out with them. So it's  
13 opportunities for our students.

14 Our current CTE programs include JROTC. Last  
15 year, we piloted the first CERT certifications in the  
16 state that were offered through FEMA, and we were  
17 actually awarded an award through FEMA for that  
18 certification. We have JAG and work-based learning,  
19 a total of 53 kids in those classes, and I believe 37  
20 completed the ACT NCRC work exam last year. Digital  
21 Marketing is new this year. She offers MOS  
22 Specialist and Everfi for certifications. Food  
23 production, we actually have a café on campus where  
24 the students serve meals; lots of community members  
25 come in. She does ServSafe Food Handler and ServSafe

1           Manager. We have a great Computer Science teacher  
2           who's offering Comptia for the first time in school  
3           history. We have Agri Power and Technical Structures  
4           who does OSHA 10. Plant Science -- OSHA 10 and  
5           Master Gardener. Pharmacy Tech -- on campus she does  
6           First Aid CPR and First Aid. If you'll notice at the  
7           bottom of that picture, for the 21-22 school year we  
8           had 25 certifications. We upped that number to 130  
9           last year and that took some work. But I think that  
10          after speaking -- my ROTC First Sarge had to leave;  
11          he drives a bus in the afternoon -- but we had our  
12          planning meeting and he said, How many certifications  
13          do you want -- CERT certifications. The more kids  
14          that can get that certification and be prepared the  
15          better off we are. I think he said he had 134 kids  
16          between him and Colonel Jones -- he said, 134, that's  
17          what we're going to do, so just in JROTC. So we're  
18          going to probably double that number of  
19          certifications for this year. And then last year,  
20          for the 2022-23 school year we had 126 concentrators  
21          and we expect that to be up as well.

22                Okay. Getting students involved in classes and  
23                student organizations lead to a higher success rate  
24                in the academic setting. Kids become part of  
25                something and this is through the career and

1 technical student organizations. We currently have  
2 FBLA, FCCLA, HOSA, TSA, and JAG, and JROTC on our  
3 campus. The majority of the community service hours  
4 performed by our district are performed by students  
5 in those CTE programs of study, those clubs. So it  
6 really does help to get the kids involved.

7 This -- I love data. We do use data to drive  
8 our programming and instruction, so this is very  
9 important. This information was pulled from the 2022  
10 CTE Single LEA Report on Performance Measures for  
11 Concentrators, Graduation Rates. If you'll notice,  
12 starting with 2019, 91.25% is well above the state  
13 target; 2020, 95%; 2021, we were down 89.09; 2022, we  
14 were 95%. That's for CTE concentrators. On My  
15 School Info for the same year, the high school  
16 graduation rate was 76%. That is a 19-point  
17 difference. So kids involved in CTE organizations,  
18 classes, and clubs are outperforming their peers in  
19 the overall school numbers.

20 This is a Single LEA Report on Performance  
21 Measures for Concentrators, Academic Proficiency in  
22 Reading, Language Arts. If you will notice, for the  
23 years 2019 through '22, we are above all state  
24 targets in all areas.

25 2022 Academic Proficiency in Math, 2019 through

1           2022, we are above state targets in all areas.

2           2022 Academic Proficiency in Science, again  
3           above targets for all areas, 2019 through '22.

4           The overall school is actually below -- overall  
5           numbers are below all targets. So, CTE is above;  
6           overall school was below.

7           Okay. Some additional programs of study that we  
8           are looking at and have partnered with some local  
9           business and industry to really look at, and this  
10          includes labor market growth projections, which we  
11          know are very important. Emergency Medical  
12          Technician is showing growth of 5%, the 10-year  
13          projected growth; firefighter, 12.3; Criminal Justice  
14          growth 11.4 -- we do have two prisons in Newport,  
15          along with a city and county police department;  
16          Aviation Drones -- that was a hard one to find, but  
17          that growth rate is at 10%; Pre-Educator, we all know  
18          we're in short supply -- the growth there was 12.3%.  
19          And other areas we are looking at include HVAC,  
20          Plumbing, Electrical, Real Estate, and Court  
21          Reporting. And those numbers did come, I'm sorry,  
22          from the U.S. Department of Labor statistics and Mr.  
23          John Chadwell from the Newport Economic Development  
24          Council.

25          MS. THAXTON: Good afternoon. Amy Thaxton. I'm



1 the Director of Curriculum, Federal Programs, and I  
2 work with AP and Honors and several other little  
3 random things in our district. So it's a pleasure to  
4 be here with you today.

5 I'm going to talk about concurrent credit, to  
6 start with. Some of our goals and some of the  
7 reasons why we feel that we need this charter is that  
8 we want to raise ACT scores, Accuplacer scores, and  
9 other college entry exams. As you can see by those  
10 statistics there, we are below the state average at  
11 Newport High School and -- however, just like in  
12 other places, CTE tends to do better. And so we want  
13 to be able to provide more supports for our students  
14 through a variety of programs, such as more ACT boot  
15 camps, using ontocollege. And we have started doing  
16 a few of those things now, but we want to have the  
17 ability to push those on and forward. We want to be  
18 able to, when we meet with our students and we -- as  
19 we move forward, we want to help look at scores, look  
20 at super scores, and how can we help students get to  
21 where they need to be so they can be where they need  
22 to in the future. We want to provide more  
23 opportunities for those exams. We have a lot of  
24 students who do not take ACT until in the 11th grade,  
25 and we want to be able to push those tests down and

1 have the support and the encouragement for those  
2 students through mentorships with teachers and  
3 through relationships, so that we can boost our  
4 students up. And we want to increase the number of  
5 students enrolled in concurrent courses. What we  
6 have found is that we don't have as many students in  
7 concurrent courses right now because we don't have  
8 students who have the scores to be in concurrent  
9 courses. So one of our goals for this charter is to  
10 (a) raise those scores through different programs so  
11 that we can (b) raise those concurrent numbers and  
12 get our students ready for the future.

13 Advanced Placement -- we want to promote more  
14 Advanced Placement in our district. We currently  
15 offer the four requirements and we also offer three  
16 additional courses. But we want to be able to offer  
17 additional courses for students as well. And we plan  
18 to do that through -- excuse me -- virtual learning  
19 and some other options.

20 One thing we've talked about through this  
21 process is that we've identified that some of our  
22 Special Education students are not being in CTE  
23 courses as much as we would like for them to. And so  
24 we want to help promote those students through early  
25 intervention and through mentorships with teachers

1 and building those relationships and letting them see  
2 those pathways so that we can promote and push those  
3 students in areas that they are interested in. We've  
4 also met with some other sources, like ASU-Newport's  
5 IGNITE program, and we've talked about -- we have a  
6 lot of students who would like to go into the medical  
7 area and they have had a hard time passing the CNA  
8 coursework, but the test at the end. But they do  
9 really well in phlebotomy, which does not require a  
10 test at the end. And so how can we reach these  
11 students who can be productive citizens and how can  
12 we better them for the future through pathways such  
13 as that.

14 Community Partners -- this, like we said, is a  
15 service learning model and we would want to work with  
16 our community and we've been meeting with them. And  
17 we know that we are producing a future workforce for  
18 our community. Like Mr. Bradley said, we're the  
19 anchor for our county. We have lots of people who  
20 drive in. And we want to share with our students the  
21 opportunities that are right here at home and how  
22 they can become productive citizens and make a very  
23 good and livable wage right here in Newport.

24 As you will also see on Community Partners,  
25 we've been working to really build our community

1 service hours. As you'll see, it says 2,102 during  
2 the 22-23 school year. And this year, when we built  
3 this slideshow, it was at 1377. As of yesterday, it  
4 was at 2,222 hours. So we have already surpassed  
5 last year and we are not even halfway through the  
6 school year. So those are things that we're working  
7 on now and we want to continue to work on in the  
8 future.

9 And then these next slides are really important.  
10 We want to talk about what does it look like for a  
11 day in the life of a student at the Newport  
12 Academies. And so we wanted to kind of start what  
13 does it look like for a junior high student, an 8th  
14 grade student or under. And so this is our vision  
15 for that: we -- we -- how is that schedule going to  
16 look different? Well, we're going to push some  
17 career courses down, some of the very basic courses.  
18 We know we can't push all CTE courses the first year  
19 down. We're going to push a couple of those down so  
20 that they can begin to get their feet wet in career  
21 pathways and opportunities. We're going to offer  
22 more college and concurrent pathways, and we're going  
23 to show the students what that looks like at an  
24 earlier age. We want students to be provided with a  
25 variety of opportunity and experiences. We want them

1 to be paired with mentors. We plan to partner with  
2 Educational Elements to help us train all staff on  
3 the ability to understand where are we wanting to go  
4 as a district, where are we wanting to go in this  
5 building, and how are we going to get our kids into  
6 those career and technical pathways and that college  
7 readiness, and how can we be efficient and effective  
8 at that. And then we want to push down as they get  
9 older some of that other coursework -- and we'll see  
10 that here.

11 So a day in the life of a student who's 9  
12 through 12 -- the mentoring will continue. The  
13 mentors will become more focused and more in their  
14 focus area. We will emphasize personal learning.  
15 And we realize that if we have Student A, Student B,  
16 and Student C that their days may look very  
17 different. One student could be on a regular school  
18 pathway; just they want to graduate high school, meet  
19 the requirements that we're currently at, and move  
20 on. One student may be taking AP coursework in 9th  
21 and 10th grade so that then we can help them through  
22 ASU and concurrent courses, put them into more of an  
23 Associate's degree type program during their junior  
24 and senior years. Another student may be wanting to  
25 become a firefighter, and so we will work with our

1 local fire department to bring in someone to help  
2 teach those courses; they may do that in their 11th  
3 and 12th grade year, in the morning for a few hours,  
4 and then have regular coursework in the afternoon.  
5 So we want to really be able to build those  
6 internships in, the work-based learning in, and those  
7 opportunities for community service learning projects  
8 in -- within our school day.

9 And these are just some great pictures and some  
10 examples of some of our really awesome kiddos.

11 And then just to hit really briefly the waivers  
12 that we are requesting will be Flexible Scheduling  
13 and will be Teacher Licensure. Under Flexible  
14 Scheduling, we just want to allow ample time for  
15 students to be able to explore, to shadow, to intern,  
16 or to meet the requirements for graduation, as well  
17 as meet their CTE and career and technical goals.  
18 And then, under Teacher Licensure, we want to be able  
19 to bring in teacher -- community partners as  
20 instructors and -- because we know they're experts in  
21 their field. And we have brought some in already  
22 through the traditional pathway, but we also realize  
23 that these are people who are in high demand jobs and  
24 they don't always have the flexibility to go back to  
25 school and take additional coursework to meet

1 training requirements for the state. And so,  
2 sometimes we may need some more options.

3 And so, in conclusion, we are wanting to create  
4 an educational model based upon the needs of our  
5 community and our students, with personalized  
6 learning that creates individual pathways that leads  
7 to future success. We want to help students create  
8 outputs and growth emphasized learning.

9 And we are very thankful for you today.

10 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

11 MS. THAXTON: Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Ms. Haywood.

13 MS. HAYWOOD: Hi. Good afternoon. I'm Kaylee  
14 Haywood. I am one of the attorneys here for the  
15 Department of Education.

16 And I went over the waiver requests that Newport  
17 is requesting today, and so I was just going to do  
18 the legal review for that.

19 Their first waiver request is, as she stated,  
20 the Flexible Schedule, school schedule.  
21 Specifically, they're requesting to waive statute 6-  
22 16-102. And I have no concerns with that at all --  
23 no legal concerns there.

24 The second topic request that they are asking to  
25 waive is Teacher Licensure. And specifically they

1 had asked to waive Arkansas Code Annotated 6-17-401  
2 et seq., 6-17-918, and 6-17-9108, as well as the  
3 Standards for Accreditation 4-D.1, and the Educator  
4 Licensure rules. Just to clarify -- and I believe  
5 that they are going to modify, it's my understanding.  
6 And they are asking to modify that to specifically  
7 request a waiver of 6-17-401 and 6-17-418 only, not  
8 the entire 401 statutes; so that would be modified.  
9 And also it was my recommendation -- and I believe  
10 they're accepting this recommendation as well -- that  
11 they add waivers of Arkansas Code Annotated 6-15-  
12 1004, 6-17-309, 6-17-902, 6-17-908, as well as 6-17-  
13 919. And it's my understanding that they are  
14 accepting that recommendation to add those statutes  
15 in, as well, in order to fully effectuate the waiver.

16 And, lastly, the two statutes that they had  
17 referenced, 6-17-918 and 6-17-9108, are actually not  
18 relating to Teacher Licensure. I think that may have  
19 been just typographical errors. And so they are --  
20 my understanding is they are accepting my  
21 recommendation to withdraw the request for those  
22 particular statutes.

23 (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: Mr. Tripp Walter speaks  
24 briefly with Ms. Haywood).

25 MS. HAYWOOD: Oh, okay. Not -- okay. It's my



1 understanding, Mr. Walter told me they are not  
2 withdrawing their request on 6-17-918. He's going to  
3 explain that particular waiver --

4 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay.

5 MS. HAYWOOD: -- we would request. And then,  
6 lastly, they're -- I believe that they're accepting  
7 my recommendation to correct -- just to specify that  
8 the name of the rule they're specifically wanting to  
9 waive is DESE Rules Governing Educator Licensure.

10 And so I believe that is all I have for the  
11 legal review.

12 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you very  
13 much.

14 MS. HAYWOOD: You're welcome.

15 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Mr. Walter.

16 MR. WALTER: Good afternoon. Tripp Walter,  
17 Staff Attorney, APSRC.

18 I agree with all the legal comments and on  
19 behalf of Newport we'll accept those, with the  
20 exception of 6-17-918. That is the Teacher Licensure  
21 waiver. In this respect, if a school is unlicensed  
22 and hires unlicensed teachers, then 6-17-918 talks  
23 about the ability of paying only licensed teachers.  
24 So this would give the district the ability to pay  
25 any unlicensed teachers out of the usual teacher

1 salary fund.

2 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right. Thank you.

3 MR. WALTER: Yes. Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right. Questions?

5 Dr. Wright-McMurray.

6 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Thank you for your  
7 presentation and providing -- sorry, everybody just  
8 started moving at once. So I did have a couple of  
9 questions as it relates to -- I'm trying to get back  
10 to the slide and I don't quite know how to tell you  
11 to get there; my slides aren't numbered. But when it  
12 speaks to -- on the day in a life of a student, 8th  
13 and under, you're mentioning pushing down certain  
14 courses but you don't really specify what those --  
15 which courses those would be. So I just kind of  
16 wanted to get a clearer understanding of what your  
17 plan is for that.

18 MS. BROGDON: So our understanding is that there  
19 are some math courses moving down. We know that we  
20 can move some CTE courses, not by us, by the State.

21 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Yeah.

22 MS. BROGDON: But we can move some CTE courses  
23 down as well, so that the kids that are ready to take  
24 those can. We don't want to move them all down, by  
25 any means, because we don't feel like all of them

1 need to be moved down. But we may move Survey of Ag  
2 down, Survey of Business down. I think that the Food  
3 Production teacher did not want hers moved down  
4 because of the knives and some things like that. But  
5 --

6 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

7 MS. BROGDON: -- just flexibility there.

8 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. That's where I was  
9 a little unclear, on exactly what your plan is for  
10 that. And typically we would kind of see that kind  
11 of laid out, especially when you've already  
12 identified which pathways you're wanting to use --  
13 more laid out, especially on the pathway, what your  
14 plan was for those courses. But you're going to move  
15 down the Level 1 courses, but you're going to move  
16 down from the Freshmen year to the 8th grade year.

17 MS. BROGDON: Well, and we're waiting to see  
18 what happens between now and December with the career  
19 diploma, as well.

20 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

21 MS. BROGDON: So we're waiting on some of those  
22 updates.

23 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. And then just --

24 SUPT. BRADLEY: Can I add --

25 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I'm sorry. Go ahead.

1           Yeah.

2           SUPT. BRADLEY: Yeah. We're also looking at  
3 possibly moving down some of the core classes -- so  
4 Algebra moving down, geometry possibly moving down --  
5 to create some space later in their upper grade  
6 levels for them to be able to take some of these  
7 pathways. That's kind of what we're looking at.

8           DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. And then -- I'm  
9 trying to get back to -- and I think what's mentioned  
10 under Student Services and this item 13 on my page --  
11 I'm not quite sure if that's the same on your page.  
12 Just for clarification, where it speaks to "we will  
13 have three counselors on staff, two will be Newport  
14 School District employees and one will be a career  
15 coach."

16          MS. BROGDON: Yes.

17          DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So just wanting to make  
18 sure that you are not potentially counting that  
19 career coach as school counseling staff. Because,  
20 you know, we typically -- we don't require them to  
21 have a counseling degree or training. And so  
22 although they may do quite a bit of the career and  
23 college planning, we just don't have the expectation  
24 that schools would include that as a way to address  
25 the ratio number for students --

1 MS. BROGDON: No. We have --

2 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- that are served.

3 MS. BROGDON: We have two that will cover the  
4 numbers. That's a bonus. But I wanted --

5 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

6 MS. BROGDON: The career coach is so critical to  
7 our school and our students that I wanted to be sure  
8 and include that there.

9 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. All right.

10 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: All right. Mr. Davis.

11 MR. DAVIS: Just a couple of questions from me.  
12 How did you -- you've talked a little bit about  
13 what courses -- it sounds as if you said may or may  
14 not move. Right?

15 MS. BROGDON: Uh-huh.

16 MR. DAVIS: How did you determine what that  
17 courses were? So, for example, you just mentioned,  
18 you know, a teacher who wasn't comfortable with  
19 moving a course because of the equipment that's being  
20 used. Right? Is there something that you can show  
21 us exactly which courses will be moved? It sounds  
22 like some of them are core courses, some of them are  
23 CTE courses. Do we have real clarity about what that  
24 looks like?

25 MS. BROGDON: So I am the CTE Director and have

1 met with my CTE teachers and I've gotten feedback  
2 from them. We've put nothing in writing. And we are  
3 actually -- Ms. Candace Long, our School Counselor,  
4 will come and speak to this.

5 MR. DAVIS: Okay.

6 MS. LONG: Candace Long. I'm the high school  
7 counselor.

8 Some of the things that we have talked about  
9 specifically with those courses that we are wanting  
10 to look to move down -- Algebra I and geometry are on  
11 the table right now to be moved down to the 7th and  
12 8th grade level. Per the State, that is something  
13 that we are looking at. We do not know fully yet how  
14 our students are going to respond to that. There are  
15 some things that we want to discuss and make sure  
16 that our elementary also knows that there are  
17 standards and expectations that they would have to be  
18 able to do. But that option is there to be able to  
19 move that Algebra I down to 7th grade. That would  
20 move our geometry down to the 8th grade level, which  
21 would open up our Algebra II to be at 9th grade,  
22 which would open our trig and pre-cal to 10th grade,  
23 which that would give your 11th and 12th grade  
24 courses the ability to then use those CTE -- they  
25 could use those for the CTE slots, which is what

1 we're trying to do to get them career ready for once  
2 they graduate. We've also looked at the possibility  
3 of -- there is something I remember about the AP  
4 courses; they are able to be able to move down to the  
5 9th and 10th grade level. That is something that we  
6 are also discussing. That also is going to come with  
7 criteria, teacher recommendation, looking at student  
8 test scores, before we would allow those courses to  
9 be just anybody to take, basically. We have looked  
10 at moving our JROTC 1 down to --

11 MR. DAVIS: Looked at or will be moving?

12 MS. LONG: Will be moving.

13 MR. DAVIS: Okay.

14 MS. LONG: Those, we will be moving.

15 MR. DAVIS: Yeah.

16 MS. LONG: JROTC, Survey of Ag -- hang on,  
17 because I have a little schedule -- Survey of Ag,  
18 Robotics I, Cybersecurity, which would cover for them  
19 to be able to get their Computer Science course  
20 credit out of the way, needed for graduation. We are  
21 also going to move Art 1 down as well for our 8th  
22 grade course. And we are going to -- I believe we  
23 are going to move our P.E. and Health down as well to  
24 our 8th grade.

25 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: And you're aware you have

1 to go through the course approval process --

2 MS. LONG: Yes.

3 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: -- for all of that?

4 MS. LONG: Yes.

5 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay. Just --

6 MS. LONG: And we are --

7 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Just making sure.

8 MS. LONG: We are -- we are in the process --

9 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay.

10 MS. LONG: -- of that right now as well.

11 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay. Perfect.

12 MS. LONG: Yes.

13 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

14 MR. DAVIS: And do you have an idea on what may  
15 be -- you mentioned the idea of CTE sort of  
16 backfilling some of those --

17 MS. LONG: Yes.

18 MR. DAVIS: -- in the upper grades. What if a  
19 student decides not to do the CTE? Then, what are  
20 their options?

21 MS. BROGDON: Okay. So it could be -- and like  
22 I said, Student A, Student B, Student C -- it could  
23 be they enroll in the IGNITE program at ASU-Newport.  
24 It could be that they enroll in concurrent courses.  
25 Or it could be that that student wasn't ready for



1 Algebra in the 7th grade or in the 8th grade, and  
2 they are on a traditional path where they may be  
3 taking Algebra in 9th grade and filling their day  
4 with just general regular education courses. So we  
5 are not planning on scrapping all of the old. We  
6 realize that that shoe fits some students. But we  
7 want the opportunity for those who are ready and for  
8 those who are on go to be able to move forward.

9 MR. DAVIS: Yeah, I appreciate that. With that  
10 always come the complication of scheduling.

11 MS. BROGDON: Yes. Yes.

12 MR. DAVIS: So talk to me a little bit like what  
13 that looks like.

14 MS. BROGDON: Okay.

15 MR. DAVIS: Or do you have an idea on --

16 MS. BROGDON: Well --

17 MR. DAVIS: -- you know, how you manage all of  
18 that?

19 MS. BROGDON: We do. We've met and we've talked  
20 about that. We know that --

21 MR. DAVIS: You've thought about it --

22 MS. BROGDON: -- it may not be easy.

23 MR. DAVIS: -- and you've cried about it?

24 MS. BROGDON: We did.

25 MR. DAVIS: You celebrated about it?

1 MS. BROGDON: And we've had some dirty looks  
2 across tables.

3 MR. DAVIS: Yeah.

4 MS. BROGDON: We've done some interesting  
5 things. We know that if we push -- if you -- if we  
6 push Algebra down to -- when we do to 7th grade that  
7 that's going to open up that teacher or some later --  
8 or either some upper math later on or free them up to  
9 offer that course again for a specific group of  
10 students. And I understand there's going to be some  
11 trigger to that, because we may have 10th, 11th and  
12 12th graders in that classroom together. So there  
13 will be some inventive scheduling to make this all  
14 work.

15 MR. DAVIS: Uh-huh.

16 MS. BROGDON: And we're ready to put in that  
17 work.

18 MS. LONG: We would -- we would be working as a  
19 team, all together, to insure that we -- we had a  
20 schedule that fits what our students need and what we  
21 are trying to accomplish.

22 MR. DAVIS: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. There was -- go  
23 ahead.

24 MS. BROGDON: I do want to just insert that we  
25 have three teachers that are certified with the 413

1 endorsement. I have four scheduled to go through  
2 that training in January. If those students chose  
3 not to do true CTEs/concurrent, there's always work-  
4 based learning internships. And we've got some great  
5 things going on in this right now.

6 And then we did include scheduling with the  
7 college and career academies. This is like flying to  
8 the moon; none of us have done it. We admit we need  
9 some help with scheduling, and thought that would be  
10 a great place to insert that training and  
11 professional development for administrators and  
12 counselors.

13 MR. DAVIS: Something else that was mentioned --  
14 and maybe we're touching on it here -- the idea of  
15 the mentorships, the flexible school schedule. Like  
16 what does that look like? I'm trying to get a better  
17 idea around what that -- when you talk about  
18 mentorship, is that a student going to someone,  
19 someone -- I think you mentioned someone coming to  
20 the school.

21 MS. THAXTON: So part of why we've brought so  
22 many people with us is that we have received a lot of  
23 buy-in from outside of our building, in the  
24 community. And so that will look like several  
25 different things. And I know that seems broad, but

1 we want to personalize the learning for each student.  
2 So for one student it may be that they are doing  
3 firefighter and EMT, and so they may be on campus  
4 working. There are required hours that they will  
5 have to get that require them to go out and do some  
6 internship work and those kind of things. And there  
7 will be, like she said, multiple people trained on  
8 our campus to help assist with those type of things.  
9 I don't know if I'm answering your question fully, so  
10 --

11 MR. DAVIS: I think you are.

12 MS. THAXTON: Okay.

13 MR. DAVIS: I mean I --

14 MS. THAXTON: Yeah.

15 MR. DAVIS: I think you're attempting to answer  
16 the question.

17 MS. BROGDON: We are using Xello and the student  
18 success plans, which are required. We are really  
19 giving that the shot in the arm and getting teachers  
20 excited about what we're doing with this -- with  
21 these programs.

22 MR. DAVIS: Uh-huh.

23 MS. THAXTON: We do have an advisory period also  
24 built into our day now and we will continue to have  
25 that. And during that time there will be times when

1 students will meet with their advisors and their  
2 mentors and they will hash out some of those future  
3 plans. What we hope to do and what we will do when  
4 we leave here today is that we know that we're going  
5 to have to be on go; we're going to have to get  
6 ready. We've already discussed moving up our  
7 meetings for those students this year in late  
8 January, early February, so that we can adequately  
9 plan that schedule to meet the appropriate needs of  
10 all of our students, instead of possibly waiting  
11 until March or April, like you typically do, to kind  
12 of finalize some of those things.

13 MR. DAVIS: Uh-huh.

14 MS. THAXTON: We know we're going to have to  
15 jump and start getting ready. So we'll be planning,  
16 pre-planning before the pre-planning phase even  
17 starts.

18 MR. DAVIS: Uh-huh.

19 MS. BROGDON: And we --

20 MS. THAXTON: And we know about that.

21 MS. BROGDON: We have implemented lunch-and-  
22 learns this year. I've got -- actually got a group  
23 of four young men from the EAST program that are  
24 inviting businesses and individuals in to speak to  
25 our students. They grab their lunch and they come

1 and hear these career opportunities, different career  
2 fields. And some of those just happen to be what  
3 we've included in the charter. So we're gauging  
4 interest and getting kids excited about what could be  
5 happening in Newport.

6 MR. DAVIS: No more questions right now.

7 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: We actually have a question  
8 from someone who's on the Charter Panel but can't be  
9 here physically today. And she just wants to know  
10 why are you going the Teacher Licensure route with a  
11 waiver instead of technical permits?

12 MS. BROGDON: So we actually are utilizing  
13 technical permits. However, I included court  
14 reporting. We know how important this job is. There  
15 is not a technical permit for court reporting. Our  
16 first lunch-and-learn that my employees in this EAST  
17 group planned to share was real estate. I had my  
18 real estate license at 18. Why could we not do that?  
19 But there's not a tech permit for that. There are  
20 other options, but we wanted not to leave those  
21 important careers out of the conversation.

22 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So I guess her next  
23 question would probably be, knowing her, those areas  
24 that you can obtain technical permits in would you  
25 seek to obtain those technical permits?

1 MS. BROGDON: I am the expert at obtaining  
2 technical permits. In fact, my School Resource  
3 Officer and school nurse already have those, because  
4 I anticipated they would probably help out with some  
5 classes.

6 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

7 Mr. Baldwin.

8 MR. BALDWIN: All right. Thank you. It's good  
9 to see everybody here and I think that says a lot  
10 about Newport, that you all have come. I like seeing  
11 firemen and police officers and everybody else  
12 because a lot of this is tied to how well the  
13 community participates, and it's got to be a  
14 partnership between lots of different folks.

15 So going back to your day-in-the life-of -- and  
16 I commend you all for doing that. That's very  
17 helpful to us. And so you had -- you had two days in  
18 the life. You had one that was younger -- a younger  
19 child -- was that 9th grade or --

20 MS. THAXTON: 8th or 9th.

21 MR. BALDWIN: 8th and 9th. So the -- going back  
22 to Mr. Davis's question about the mentors, so you had  
23 mentorship in that 8th and 9th grade student. Would  
24 that be -- tell us who the mentors would be for that  
25 level of child?

1 MS. THAXTON: Yes. So our plan is that every  
2 staff member at the school will have to help with  
3 that because we do not want one person to have 30  
4 people they are mentoring --

5 MR. BALDWIN: Yeah.

6 MS. THAXTON: -- and one person to have five.  
7 So it would be a shared wealth across the whole  
8 entire campus. At the younger grades it would just  
9 be more of a divide. And as they hit that transition  
10 between 8th into 9th grade, then their mentor could  
11 change into a more focused person. So say we have  
12 someone who is more medical-driven; they want to go  
13 into the medical field. Then we would do our best to  
14 put all of those students with our CTE teacher who  
15 teaches med-pro and so that that person could help  
16 guide those students. Now we know that there are  
17 going to be kids -- because there are adults who  
18 change their mind; so there are going to be kids who  
19 change their mind. So we know we're going to have to  
20 have a little bit of flexibility with that, with our  
21 staff and for them to understand that we may have to  
22 shift and change. And then part of our charter  
23 application, we went with Educational Elements to  
24 bring in some PD to help the whole entire staff  
25 understand that and to help us make sure we have all



1 of our bases covered.

2 MR. BALDWIN: Okay.

3 MS. THAXTON: Okay.

4 MR. BALDWIN: So the mentors for the younger  
5 children will be professional teachers?

6 MS. THAXTON: Yes.

7 MS. BROGDON: Yes.

8 MS. THAXTON: Yes.

9 SUPT. BRADLEY: Yes.

10 MR. BALDWIN: Okay. So, and then the mentorship  
11 will be on campus?

12 MS. THAXTON: Yes.

13 SUPT. BRADLEY: Yes.

14 MR. BALDWIN: Yeah.

15 MS. BROGDON: And then, though, the counselor  
16 will be like the supervisor. We're all her helpers.

17 MR. BALDWIN: Okay.

18 MS. BROGDON: She's going to oversee it; we're  
19 going to implement it with the students.

20 MR. BALDWIN: Gotcha.

21 MS. BROGDON: Yes.

22 MR. BALDWIN: So as the --

23 MR. GREER: I'm Richard Greer. I'm the high  
24 school principal.

25 So the current model is we will find every

1 student a mentor. They start their day with their  
2 mentor. Under the advisory -- the career coach and  
3 the counseling we keep tabs to help them goal-set and  
4 plan and make -- you know, stay the course on their  
5 direction. So we want that process to continue. As  
6 students get older, we can be more strategic about  
7 who their mentor is. As they're younger, we need to  
8 make sure those licensed teachers are building  
9 relationships, goal-setting, planning, making sure  
10 those students are on direction and target towards  
11 going somewhere. We are also planning on some events  
12 this year for our younger kids to get them excited  
13 about CTE, where we can do -- where they will take  
14 two different CTE programs we offer and those  
15 teachers and students can do activities so the  
16 students have an idea when they start planning  
17 forward. Sometimes 7th grade students, 8th grade  
18 students don't know exactly what they're planning  
19 for; so we ask them what they want to do and what  
20 direction they want to go. So we're going to try to  
21 give them a lot more exposure so they have more  
22 conversations they can have with those mentors.  
23 Thank you.

24 MR. BALDWIN: Yeah. That's helpful.

25 So, and for us up here, I think we like the

1 younger kids being mentored by professional teachers

2 --

3 MR. GREER: Absolutely.

4 MR. BALDWIN: -- at the school. As kids grow  
5 and they become interested, say, in being a fireman,  
6 at some point you will place them with a fireman  
7 mentor, is what I understand. Would that mentorship  
8 be at the school or would it be possibly at the fire  
9 station?

10 MR. GREER: So they will always have a teacher  
11 mentor, as well as a partnership with those outside  
12 entities. Because, once again, every day those  
13 students will be assigned to those areas where you  
14 have teacher guidance, but we don't want to limit  
15 that exposure; we want them to connect with  
16 firefighters, if that's what they want to go into.  
17 But the teacher helps facilitate those relationships.  
18 Does that make sense?

19 MR. BALDWIN: Would you ever get to the point in  
20 this process where the student would be spending time  
21 at the fire station, you know, a couple of days a  
22 week or would this be always more of a mentorship?

23 MS. BROGDON: So I'm just going to tell you,  
24 this is my second year back at Newport. I started  
25 there many years ago. Lieutenant Tollwater [ps] is

1 my neighbor; he's a firefighter. We've had  
2 discussions about workforce shortages and he said, Is  
3 there any way? I said, There is always a way,  
4 always. I need for you to advisory meetings; I need  
5 for you to come and talk to my students. We can make  
6 this happen.

7 So they would spend some time at the fire  
8 department, and our hope is that we are producing the  
9 workforce for our own community. And when we looked  
10 at labor market data, we looked at local area, we  
11 looked at regional, as well as state. So something  
12 like firefighting is not just a shortage in Newport;  
13 it's statewide. Education is statewide. So we  
14 really focused in on those areas that were shortage  
15 areas.

16 MR. BALDWIN: Okay. And that makes -- that  
17 makes sense. And I think you have other businesses  
18 probably also. I know Greenway is based in Newport.

19 MS. BROGDON: Yes.

20 MR. BALDWIN: And there's, you know, sales jobs  
21 in that organization; there's service technicians;  
22 there's all kinds of opportunities there. And it  
23 looks like you all have a lot of history of doing  
24 this already, even before you come to get a charter  
25 for it.

1           My last question would be to explain to me the  
2           relationship with ASU-Newport. And it sounds like  
3           you have a current relationship with them. And just  
4           tell us about how that works and what you expect and  
5           they expect from that?

6           DR. BRYANT: Dr. Jeri Bryant, Dean for Academic  
7           Success, Arkansas State University-Newport.

8           Under my office is the Early College programs.  
9           And so that includes our career coaches, that  
10          includes our concurrent program, and that includes  
11          our secondary science. And so we have an established  
12          relationship with Newport in all of those capacities,  
13          have been maintaining that, and we have an active  
14          partnership where we work to develop, with  
15          consideration of the community, where our main campus  
16          is. And so they have available all of the things  
17          that they said to them because they participate in  
18          that way, the same way we offer those services to  
19          other schools.

20          CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

21          MR. BALDWIN: Thank you. That's all I have.

22          CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Dr. Moore.

23          DR. MOORE: Sure. So speaking of the Early  
24          College, is there going to be a lot of opportunity or  
25          any opportunity for concurrent credit for the CTE

1 pathways? I know that y'all are doing concurrent  
2 otherwise. Because that's something in our recent  
3 CTE audit from the State, from a third-party vendor.  
4 We saw that we do not have as many opportunities for  
5 concurrent and CTE as we need to.

6 MS. BROGDON: So we were just approved for the  
7 Digital Marketing state start-up this year. Our  
8 teacher is teaching it currently and can teach it  
9 concurrently. Our main problem is our students don't  
10 have test scores. But we are moving towards that  
11 model. Because I think it is critical to get these  
12 kids credit where we can get them credit and also  
13 have those highly-qualified teachers, because the  
14 teacher with a Master's degree has more education.  
15 And the student is still going to get the  
16 certification. But we are moving towards that. Yes.

17 DR. MOORE: Good. And just a reminder for the  
18 CTE programs of study, if it's an actual CTE course,  
19 the 19 does not apply. That's for the core courses.

20 MS. BROGDON: And then another one we're working  
21 on -- it's on our approved list, but we don't  
22 currently have anyone in it -- is Pre-Educator. And  
23 I feel like if we had one of our own teachers -- you  
24 know, Grow Your Own -- recruiting our own students,  
25 we would do better. So we're looking at our own

1 faculty and staff and seeing who has those  
2 established relationships with our students and we  
3 want to pull them in and make them a part of that  
4 program to build it.

5 DR. MOORE: Okay. And then on your application  
6 I noticed that 100% virtual was checked, that box.  
7 But I didn't see a lot in the application about that.  
8 Can you speak to what that was referring to?

9 MS. THAXTON: Sorry. Sorry. So I am -- I am  
10 the homeschool person too for our district. And we  
11 have seen a trend over the last several years of an  
12 improvement -- well, I shouldn't say improvement -- a  
13 rise in enrollment in homeschool since Covid because  
14 of several factors that I'm sure you have heard  
15 multiple times -- they find it easier; some students  
16 just don't want to come to school anymore. And so we  
17 have looked at several virtual options to -- even  
18 through APSRC, to offer as well. We don't have a  
19 virtual option at Newport right now and part of that  
20 has been because it's not very cost-effective for us.  
21 We have a very -- our range is very wide K through  
22 12, and with the requirements we would have to have a  
23 teacher that is K through 12 certified to be there  
24 and offer those things. And so we wanted to make  
25 sure that we have the ability to offer some virtual

1 programs through some additional programs, like I  
2 said, through APSRC or those kind of things, bringing  
3 that in for students.

4 DR. MOORE: So this application is to also have  
5 a 100% virtual option?

6 MS. THAXTON: To have an option. Correct.

7 DR. MOORE: I just couldn't -- I hadn't seen  
8 anything else in the application about it.

9 MS. BROGDON: For one class.

10 MR. GREER: We won't ever get 100%.

11 MS. BROGDON: Yeah. It's not 100%. But like  
12 this year we have one student that wanted a class we  
13 did not offer. So we scrambled and what we did was  
14 found an online class for that student.

15 DR. MOORE: Does the application say that  
16 anywhere? I mean, did y'all --

17 MS. BROGDON: That actually happened into --

18 DR. MOORE: -- fill out the application --

19 MS. BROGDON: I think that happened during the  
20 application process. Could we find it?

21 DR. MOORE: Okay.

22 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So, and for that you  
23 wouldn't necessarily need any kind of waiver or any  
24 designation to do that. You can just offer that.

25 MS. BROGDON: Okay.



1 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yeah.

2 MS. BROGDON: Okay.

3 MR. BALDWIN: My thought when I saw that was  
4 that it was just a mistake --

5 MS. BROGDON: Just take it out. Okay.

6 MR. BALDWIN: -- that you checked it.

7 DR. MOORE: So if you're not wanting to offer  
8 like a complete separate --

9 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Right.

10 DR. MOORE: -- online school, I think that may  
11 not be part of this application.

12 MS. BROGDON: Right.

13 MS. THAXTON: Gotcha. And that is part of like  
14 the AP that I was talking about. Clearly, they don't  
15 have the staff to offer every AP class that's  
16 available. But we may have a student who wants a  
17 particular class -- and that's what happened this  
18 year.

19 DR. MOORE: Right.

20 MS. THAXTON: And so I went out, I found a  
21 resource that could offer that virtually, and then we  
22 offered that class just to those students who were  
23 interested.

24 DR. MOORE: Yeah.

25 MS. THAXTON: And we --

1 DR. MOORE: So that doesn't require a waiver.

2 MS. THAXTON: So, okay.

3 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: No. That does not.

4 MS. THAXTON: Okay.

5 MR. GREER: But on your first question you asked  
6 about the CTE classes, the concurrent. We also have  
7 a night program with ASU; so we currently have  
8 students -- 18, I believe -- right now enrolled in  
9 concurrent CTE classes.

10 DR. MOORE: Okay. That's what I was -- I was  
11 hoping to -- yeah.

12 And then -- let me see -- could you speak just a  
13 little more -- and I applaud your efforts to offer  
14 all these opportunities. Just like we told the last  
15 group, when you're a rural school it's so important  
16 that students have opportunities. So I just was in  
17 Newport yesterday, at ASU-Newport for a meeting; so  
18 I'm very familiar with the area, grew up in  
19 Batesville, and I'm glad to see those students have  
20 opportunities.

21 And you do have the day-in-the-life. But even  
22 reading the day-in-the-life I'm still not real clear.  
23 You've applied for a couple of waivers. But just in  
24 the broad scheme of things, I don't see how things  
25 are different much than just a regular traditional

1 school. Like could you explain a little more of what  
2 you're doing that is different than what the current  
3 CTE standards and pathways do not allow with work-  
4 based learning classes that they have? I'm just  
5 trying to understand it better.

6 SUPT. BRADLEY: Yeah. The difference is is when  
7 we talk about wanting to be involved for our kids,  
8 more opportunities, we have some things that we  
9 obviously can't do that we need some help with to be  
10 able to bring some people in to enhance the programs  
11 that we already have, that we wouldn't be able to do  
12 without this charter. And I think that's the way  
13 that we're looking at it -- you know, moving those  
14 classes down to create more opportunities and space  
15 for kids to take things. Even having the ability to  
16 change, because there will be some flexibility in  
17 their schedule and to have kids that can be on and  
18 off campus. And I don't mean on and off in a sense  
19 of like what we looked at before with another school,  
20 with certain days on, certain days off. They will be  
21 on campus with us every day. But there will be  
22 things that they need to be doing off campus as well  
23 that we can't offer right now. And so that's the  
24 difference in how we looked at it, is the sense that  
25 we need to be able to offer some more opportunities

1           for our kids that we can't in the traditional  
2           setting. Does that make sense?

3           DR. MOORE: It does. But like I'm sure Amanda  
4           is familiar with what Dr. Wright-McMurray talked  
5           about earlier, like the three different courses,  
6           whether it's career practicum, pre-apprenticeship, or  
7           -- what did I leave out?

8           DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Internship.

9           DR. MOORE: Yeah, internship. Would those -- so  
10          you're saying those would not meet the needs of your  
11          students right now, using those courses?

12          SUPT. BRADLEY: I think some of those courses  
13          meet the needs of our students. But when we're --  
14          you know, our model is to be more personalized to  
15          individual kids, and so we know that we need to be  
16          able to broaden that. And one of the things I think  
17          -- and I kind of skipped over it when I first started  
18          talking, and I probably should've -- you know,  
19          graduation rate for us and attendance rate is  
20          something that we feel like that we really need to  
21          address to get our students more engaged. And to be  
22          able to do that we need to broaden the spectrum of  
23          what we offer for our kids and to be able to engage  
24          them and get them to school. And I know everybody is  
25          having that issue. But, you know, when we look at

1           our -- when we look at our scores as a school,  
2           attendance and graduation rate affect us quite a bit.  
3           And we know that we have students that are interested  
4           in these pathways and we know that we can get them on  
5           campus and get them back involved.

6           DR. MOORE: Right. Thank you.

7           MR. DAVIS: I actually have a --

8           CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Sure.

9           MR. DAVIS: -- a couple more. One is -- and you  
10          wouldn't know this, and pardon my inability to know a  
11          lot of the legal numbers and policy numbers -- but  
12          we're not attempting to waive any sort of  
13          accountability standards for students?

14          MS. BROGDON: No.

15          SUPT. BRADLEY: No.

16          MS. BROGDON: Absolutely not.

17          MR. DAVIS: Okay. I just want to make sure that  
18          that is the case.

19          And the second question I had was around the  
20          courses and being pushed down. Is that something  
21          that you plan to do -- you -- a couple of times you  
22          sort of said, Well, we're waiting to see with the  
23          State and with the decision. But do you plan to do  
24          that regardless of what's happening? And maybe, you  
25          know, is that part of the reason why you are looking

1 to do the charter? Is that flexi- -- that wouldn't  
2 be allowed if the State, for whatever reason, decided  
3 not to move certain courses?

4 MR. WELCH: Robert Welch. I'm an Instructional  
5 Facilitator at the high school and Testing  
6 Coordinator.

7 So part of the training that we're looking at  
8 through Ed. Elements and bringing in PD for our staff  
9 is to change pedagogically our approach starting with  
10 7th grade and 8th grade to what a student looks like.  
11 And pedagogically we want our teachers embracing more  
12 project-based learning, more personalized learning.  
13 And these are all skills that we want to push those  
14 classes down to 7th and 8th grade so that we can open  
15 up teachers to bring in people from the community to  
16 do a project or to do work in a classroom. That will  
17 be outside of what a traditional classroom looks  
18 like. So we're working very hard on trying to  
19 develop a sense of -- like a basis in 7th and 8th  
20 grade and an interest, and then free those teachers  
21 in the high school to really kind of embrace the  
22 things that we know will make kids excited about  
23 learning.

24 MR. DAVIS: Okay.

25 MR. WELCH: Does that answer that?

1 MR. DAVIS: Yes. I mean I think -- I think what  
2 I heard was, Yes, we do plan on insuring that these  
3 courses will be offered.

4 MS. GREER: And I'll say emphatically, yes, the  
5 plan is to move it down. We've already -- we've  
6 already started scheduling on that. We know in order  
7 to create those opportunities for our students to get  
8 more than, you know, a year two or year three CTE  
9 experience -- we know we've got to create that  
10 opportunity for them to have that time at the top.  
11 So we're moving those things down that we can move  
12 down. We're having conversations on how to make sure  
13 those students are prepared, putting a system in  
14 place so we can monitor what they need. Because any  
15 time you have a system shift there's going to be some  
16 things we have to keep a close eye on to make sure we  
17 give them the support. That's where the training  
18 comes in that he's talking about, is making sure  
19 those teachers have the support they need to be  
20 successful. Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: And I do think that what  
22 we're talking about here is not necessarily  
23 indicative of the charter. Because if you're -- if  
24 you're putting in those course approvals, we have a  
25 course approval system and so they have to put in to

1 move those courses down. So it's not necessarily  
2 part -- I mean it is in terms of the structure of how  
3 they'll make that space. But it's not part of  
4 waivers or any of that, because they're going through  
5 the course approval process.

6 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So I guess that's -- well,  
7 I'm still trying to get my head wrapped around the  
8 entire process. Because kind of going back somewhat  
9 to what Dr. Moore brought forward, as I'm trying to  
10 understand the need for the conversion charter  
11 application -- because -- and I will say that I did  
12 greatly appreciate you providing your existing data  
13 and letting us know where you were with your CTE  
14 students and your students that are non-CTE, because  
15 that did give me a bit of a sense of where you  
16 currently are sitting. But as I'm sitting here  
17 listening to your presentation, I'm still trying to  
18 see the things that you're wanting to do and that you  
19 are proposing to do, which are all great things. I  
20 just don't see how you can't do those things now. So  
21 that will be -- I guess I would just need a little  
22 bit more -- and if I'm -- I may be completely missing  
23 it.

24 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Oh, no, no, no. I think --  
25 you know, just in hearing what you're saying, I'm



1 hearing the need for the Teacher Licensure waiver.

2 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Uh-huh.

3 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: I'm still having trouble  
4 with the Flexible Schedule. Because when we look at  
5 what CTE has in place and the flexibility that's  
6 already there, I guess I'm trying to wrap my head  
7 around what's going to be so much different from what  
8 we already have.

9 MR. GREER: So --

10 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And then, also --

11 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Yeah, go ahead.

12 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And then, also, as we're  
13 thinking about that, I'm still a bit stuck on the  
14 full structure for just like -- like if we're looking  
15 at it like a body and just the skeleton for every  
16 student, what that day looks like, knowing that it  
17 may be different for different students because they  
18 may have different, you know, goals or desires or  
19 whatnot -- but what is the skeleton that's going to  
20 be for every student that comes through the doors,  
21 based on their grade level?

22 MR. GREER: So our skeleton, one, everyone who  
23 wants to provide -- we want to provide an opportunity  
24 for mentorship. We already have that model. Okay.  
25 But our schedule looks -- we're trying to get that

1 information to them a little bit earlier, so we can  
2 make their end productive and they can leave with  
3 additional certifications. The pathways aren't as  
4 confusing if -- I look at it like this: you have the  
5 traditional student who's going to go through the  
6 traditional classes, who may want AP classes; you  
7 have some students who want to go ahead and get an  
8 Associate's degree while they're in school, and we  
9 can assume that cost and we can pay and we've already  
10 got the relationship with ASUN to do that. And then  
11 you have the other kids that people struggle with,  
12 because they disengaged. Well, let's connect them  
13 with not only a career pathway, but once they get  
14 their level -- the year-two, year-three classes out  
15 of the way -- once they become the completers, then  
16 let's connect them with things that they're engaged  
17 with, like firefighters where they can actually get  
18 -- what, three certifications? Is that right? So  
19 they can get three certifications, so when they come  
20 out of school they're ready to go. We want to create  
21 valuable time for everybody. Where we're lacking at  
22 is the flexibility to meet the needs of everybody,  
23 and that's why we put the flexibility waiver in. So  
24 for the student who's wanting to go through the  
25 Associate path, that's not a big issue for us because

1 we can create the opportunity with ASUN to -- for  
2 them to get that. The bigger issue is the students  
3 we need to make sure like they've got their  
4 completers, they're really engaged and going through  
5 this pathway; how do we create opportunity for them  
6 to do that and without the flexibility. Because  
7 what's going to happen is he's going to bring in  
8 someone who can get them to be licensed when they  
9 graduate high school, but that means they will have a  
10 block of time, three hours, that I'm going to have to  
11 be -- make them flexible in, and then I've got -- I  
12 may have to give them a class outside of the  
13 traditional block. So we're going to have to have a  
14 little bit of flexibility on how we get those kids  
15 certified. But when they graduate -- and better yet,  
16 while they're doing that, how do we get them the  
17 classes that they still need to get their 20 -- the  
18 required 38, their 22 -- the 22 to graduate. So  
19 that's why we put the flexibility waiver. There's  
20 going to be places when we schedule these things  
21 where we know we can give them those pathways and  
22 those licensures, but we're going to have to get  
23 creative on how to give them some of the other  
24 things. It may not fall into a traditional master  
25 schedule, is what I'm saying. So --

1 MR. DAVIS: So I think the question still stands  
2 around is a conversion charter needed or is there the  
3 flexibility through waivers to be able to do these  
4 things?

5 MS. BROGDON: There are no waivers available for  
6 court reporting or real estate.

7 MR. DAVIS: Hmmm.

8 MS. BROGDON: None. We met with Greenway  
9 Tuesday night; they want to be a part of this. I  
10 don't know about ag mechanics or what they would want  
11 to do. But we're looking at some things that are  
12 very much needed in our community workforce, Newport  
13 and the region. We will not be able to do these  
14 without the waivers -- without this conversion  
15 charter, basically.

16 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So what's the difference, I  
17 guess, in this and asking for 1240 waivers? Because  
18 for the 1240 waivers you could get a Teacher  
19 Licensure waiver; you could possibly get an  
20 Instructional Day waiver. How -- how -- I guess I'm  
21 just asking how is it different?

22 MS. BROGDON: I think this is different because  
23 it includes the whole CTE program and the whole  
24 school. It's a school-within-a-school. There's a  
25 real buy-in by the school and the community. I think

1 if you just got a 1240 waiver you don't have that  
2 buy-in. I mean, honestly, we moved away from 1240  
3 waivers a long time ago because they were not  
4 effective for us. We stay away from those.

5 MR. BALDWIN: So to ask the same question from a  
6 different way, so I'm also -- I lived in Batesville  
7 for a while. I actually lived in Rosie. I could  
8 actually see Newport across the fields.

9 So what you're telling us is that you already  
10 have a very effective CTE program that has a lot of  
11 partners already working with you on it. But that to  
12 reach the -- to reach what you want to reach you need  
13 the conversion waiver -- or a conversion charter.  
14 And so we're asking why -- why. But I guess I'll  
15 take the position that I kind of believe you all that  
16 you wouldn't ask for it if you didn't need it. So  
17 just in a one sentence or two sentence word tell us  
18 why do you need this, other than just kind of doing  
19 what you're successfully doing already?

20 SUPT. BRADLEY: I think we're -- like I said,  
21 we're trying to offer our kids the best opportunities  
22 that we can give them to graduate and keep all our  
23 kids engaged. But we also want to be able to enhance  
24 the programs we already have. And so being able to  
25 use these to work through the current programs we

1 have is a way for us to even get more kids involved,  
2 and I think that's part of it too.

3 MR. BALDWIN: Okay. Does it give you more clout  
4 in the community to say that you have a conversion  
5 charter school?

6 SUPT. BRADLEY: I don't know that that's -- I  
7 mean that's not really the reason we went into it.  
8 But I think that's -- in the region or in our area I  
9 think it would also be a draw for other students --

10 MR. BALDWIN: Yeah.

11 SUPT. BRADLEY: -- quite honestly.

12 MR. BALDWIN: So I know that Helena -- I mean I  
13 know that Batesville has a -- Batesville High is a  
14 conversion charter.

15 SUPT. BRADLEY: Yes.

16 MR. BALDWIN: South Side is a conversion  
17 charter.

18 SUPT. BRADLEY: Yes.

19 MR. BALDWIN: We all approved those.

20 SUPT. BRADLEY: Cave City, I know. Yeah.

21 MR. BALDWIN: Yeah. Yeah. Okay.

22 SUPT. BRADLEY: Yeah. But in our county there's  
23 nothing like what we're proposing to offer. So, I  
24 mean, that's kind of -- that's kind of the reason we  
25 went that direction.

1 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I'm sorry. Go ahead.

2 DR. MOORE: Well, my question is just a weird  
3 random one. The Library Media Specialist was on  
4 there before, and then it wasn't. But then under  
5 Flexible Schedule it mentions without Library Media  
6 Specialist flexibility students may have trouble  
7 completing their program of study. Is there a waiver  
8 for Library Media or not?

9 MS. THAXTON: There is -- there is not.

10 DR. MOORE: Okay.

11 MS. THAXTON: There initially was, based on some  
12 conversation we had. And then we decided that we  
13 could do that anyways --

14 DR. MOORE: Okay.

15 MS. THAXTON: -- and we did not need the Library  
16 Media Specialist.

17 DR. MOORE: Okay.

18 MS. THAXTON: Yes.

19 DR. MOORE: Thank you. I just wanted to make  
20 sure.

21 MS. THAXTON: Yeah.

22 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So a couple -- a couple of  
23 questions. One, like I said, I'm trying to go back  
24 through my notes. And so looking under Flexible  
25 Schedule, and it speaks about students having the

1 opportunities for internships and apprenticeships,  
2 and just kind of quoting the language here --  
3 instruction may be provided in less than six hours  
4 per day or 30 hours per week. Is there a way you can  
5 better explain the thinking along that line? And  
6 it's in reference to with options for competency-  
7 based learning, acceleration, enrichment, in addition  
8 to internships and apprenticeships; instruction may  
9 be provided in less than six hours per day or 30  
10 hours per week. So I'm just trying to get a sense of  
11 --

12 MS. BROGDON: So can you start over and read  
13 from the beginning for me, please?

14 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Yeah. So it's under -- on  
15 my paper it's under Flexible Schedule.

16 MS. BROGDON: Okay.

17 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So it's back under the  
18 waivers, and it was one that I missed. So I  
19 apologize for coming back to that one. But it's  
20 where you're asking for the waiver for a flexible  
21 schedule. And in part of your rationale, which kind  
22 of jumped out at me, but I just needed a little bit  
23 more clarification on, is when you speak to -- in  
24 referencing to the competency-based learning and it  
25 says acceleration, enrichment, in addition to



1 internships and apprenticeships -- which definitely  
2 peaked my interest -- and that instruction may be  
3 provided in less than six hours per day or 30 hours  
4 per week. So there's like a --

5 MS. BROGDON: Yeah.

6 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- huge gap there in time  
7 periods. I'm just trying to get a sense of what was  
8 the thinking there for that rationale to be included.

9 MS. BROGDON: Go ahead.

10 MS. THAXTON: So I wrote this in my notes. I  
11 tried not to read straight from my notes earlier.

12 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

13 MS. THAXTON: But so -- and that was my portion.  
14 So it's to allow students ample time to explore,  
15 shadow, intern, and to meet their requirements for  
16 graduation as well. So they may only be there six  
17 hours that day -- six hours. But then they may be at  
18 their intern for their particular area or they could  
19 be job-shadowing or -- and those type of things.  
20 That's what that is talking about, I think.

21 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: So more than the six hours,  
22 is that what we're saying? So you're having a six-  
23 hour day at -- on campus?

24 MS. THAXTON: I'm talking about six class  
25 periods.

1 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay.

2 MS. THAXTON: I should clarify that.

3 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay.

4 MS. THAXTON: I'm sorry.

5 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay.

6 MS. THAXTON: Yes. Yes.

7 MS. BROGDON: That last part, that was  
8 backwards.

9 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay. So was the waiver  
10 request for 1-A.4.2?

11 MS. BROGDON: I'll consult with our lawyer. 6-  
12 16-102.

13 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: And then, also, you would  
14 need a waiver of 1-A.4.2, if it's less than six hours  
15 a day or 30 hours per week.

16 MS. HAYWOOD: That is correct. And it looks  
17 like they did not specify that in their application;  
18 so I would recommend that they just note on the  
19 record today if they want to add that.

20 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Mr. Walter.

21 MR. WALTER: Tripp Walter, APSRC. I can, on  
22 behalf of the district, request the accompanying  
23 standard.

24 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay. Thank you.

25 MR. WALTER: Thank you.

1 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: And so I do have another  
2 question. So in thinking about -- so there's already  
3 established on your campus, it sounds like, for the  
4 other pathways that you're wanting to offer. But  
5 then you also mentioned real estate and court  
6 reporting. So what -- how is that going to look  
7 like? How is that going to be laid-out for students  
8 that are interested in that? And then, what is the  
9 expectation once they complete that secondary piece?  
10 What are they leaving your schools with?

11 MS. BROGDON: Okay. The real estate piece would  
12 be they could take the classes their senior year --  
13 really, their junior or senior year -- probably in a  
14 semester or less. But they would have to be 18 to  
15 sit for the exam. I believe I've got it in my notes.  
16 I talked to the Real Estate School of Arkansas  
17 broker. His wife is actually a former high school  
18 principal. She thought this was the best thing since  
19 sliced bread, was very excited about it. We talked  
20 about different ways that we could do it. I told her  
21 I did not -- I wasn't sure we could or if we would  
22 get the waiver. She's on my advisory council. She's  
23 in the application. Same thing with court reporting;  
24 there are different ways you can do that. There's  
25 actually a school in Quitman, Arkansas. There are

1           some options online. We may have someone -- she may  
2           want to come teach for us. I don't know. We're  
3           going to have to sit down and plan that out. But  
4           until you tell me I can do that -- I've gathered my  
5           information and planned it; but until I get approval,  
6           there is an implementation phase on this and that's  
7           when I was going to get it hammered out hard.

8           DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

9           CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Any other questions down  
10          here?

11          DR. MOORE: I would just like -- because I don't  
12          think we like put it on the record that you're not  
13          applying to be an online school, because we talked  
14          around it. But if you --

15          MS. BROGDON: We are not applying to be an  
16          online school. We -- this -- most of this is  
17          project-based hands-on learning. That's how we want  
18          it with them, in person, face-to-face. Yes.

19          CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: And I guess I have one more  
20          question, which has to do with oversight of the  
21          locations that these students are going to. So who  
22          will be overseeing the individual locations?

23          MS. BROGDON: So currently our JAG instructor  
24          has about 53 students. She and myself go and visit  
25          those students when they're supposed to be at work,

1 and we've caught a few of them that weren't where  
2 they were supposed to be when they were supposed to  
3 be there -- and that's why we do that. Yes, we have.  
4 And we also have their supervisors email us on a  
5 weekly basis. So we are in constant contact with  
6 them. And as those numbers increase -- our hope is  
7 to have someone, like Lieutenant Tollwater, come onto  
8 campus and teach; so then he's on campus, we're  
9 seeing him face-to-face. But we're also in contact  
10 with him as well. And those kids may be going to the  
11 fire department. If they're doing EMT, they may be  
12 working with the hospital or the ambulance service,  
13 getting their ride hours in.

14 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. So that brings me  
15 back to a question then.

16 MS. BROGDON: Oh, and I do have three people  
17 with the 413 and one more adding.

18 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. So are the  
19 individuals that are going to receive the endorsement  
20 going to be responsible for that piece, or is the JAG  
21 Specialist going to be responsible for that piece?  
22 And just like the previous group, that gives me pause  
23 when we provide -- when we ask additional things to  
24 be added on to an individual that they have a --  
25 they're responsible for this here, and now you're

1 adding this over here. I think that creates an  
2 opportunity for there to be some things to fall  
3 through the cracks and just not be done as  
4 effectively.

5 MS. BROGDON: It will be individuals.  
6 Currently, our JAG Specialist does do the work-based  
7 learning and that's all she -- oops -- all she does.  
8 And it goes together very, very well.

9 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

10 MS. BROGDON: Come on.

11 MR. GREER: And for us, we're not looking to  
12 allow people off-campus; we're looking for people to  
13 come on campus to -- like you said, to make our  
14 programs better. We do realize there is a certain  
15 place when a student -- you know, when you've got a  
16 senior, then there's some mentoring and some job-  
17 shadowing and some things that probably need to  
18 happen at the end, at that time. And we have the  
19 resources to do that. But, predominantly, we try to  
20 make our programs better. We just want to make sure  
21 students have different certifications and licenses  
22 so when they leave our school they're prepared to be  
23 effective in the workforce. So --

24 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Any other questions,  
25 discussion?

1                   Then I'll entertain a motion.

2                   DR. MOORE: I move that we approve the charter  
3 request for Newport High School.

4                   MR. BALDWIN: And I'll second.

5                   CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay. So it's been -- a  
6 motion has been made by Dr. Moore and seconded by Mr.  
7 Baldwin. All those in favor?

8                   (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

9                   CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Any opposed?

10                  All right. The motion passes. Congratulations.  
11 Give us just a few minutes to fill out our  
12 voting sheets.

13                  (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

14                  CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Okay. We'll start with Dr.  
15 Wright-McMurray.

16                  DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I voted for. I support  
17 the CTE Academies at Newport High School district  
18 conversion charter application. This will provide an  
19 opportunity for students to have access to expanded  
20 CTE and work-based learning opportunities. I look  
21 forward to hearing about the gains and outcomes for  
22 their students.

23                  CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Mr. Davis.

24                  MR. DAVIS: Yeah. For, to approve students with  
25 relevant work experience through flexible scheduling

1 and expansion of CTE pathways. I support the charter  
2 application for Newport schools in order to prepare  
3 students for postsecondary exploration.

4 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Mr. Baldwin.

5 MR. BALDWIN: I'm in favor of the conversion  
6 charter for the Academies at Newport High. This  
7 approval provides the structure and flexibility  
8 needed for the school -- for school success and  
9 builds off the currently effective CTE program.

10 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Dr. Moore.

11 DR. MOORE: I support the charter conversion  
12 application from Newport High School to expand in  
13 specialized learning opportunities based upon student  
14 interest and postsecondary plans. While much of the  
15 application speaks to innovative programs that are  
16 currently possible through existing DESE and CTE  
17 structures, additional waivers are indeed needed to  
18 provide learning opportunities to students. I  
19 recommend that Newport High School leadership work  
20 closely with the Division of Career and Technical  
21 Education staff to insure appropriate steps are taken  
22 and procedures followed related to career pathways  
23 and work-based learning. Additionally, the attention  
24 to core courses must remain at the forefront to  
25 insure students are prepared for the postsecondary



1 for students.

2 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

3 I support the Academies at Newport district  
4 conversion charter and its multi-tiered approach to  
5 providing students pathways to graduation,  
6 certifications, and concurrent credit. I look  
7 forward to hearing about your successes.

8 Congratulations.

9 SUPT. BRADLEY: Thank you all very much. We  
10 appreciate it. It's a great day for our kids.

11 MR. DAVIS: I make a motion -- make a motion to  
12 adjourn.

13 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Ready to adjourn. Okay.

14 DR. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Second.

15 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: We have a motion to  
16 adjourn. All those in favor?

17 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

18 CHAIRMAN SUTHERLIN: Thank you.

19  
20  
21 (The meeting was concluded at 3:00 p.m.)  
22  
23  
24  
25

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

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 November 14, 2023; that the said proceedings was reduced to typewritten form by me or under my direction and supervision; and that the foregoing pages constitute a true and correct transcription of all proceedings had in said matter.

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

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

WITNESS, MY HAND AND SEAL, THIS DATE: November 25, 2023.

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