



Colorado State Board of Education

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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS  
BEFORE THE  
COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION COMMISSION  
DENVER, COLORADO  
June 9, 2016, Public Comment, Board Reports, Adjourn

BE IT REMEMBERED THAT on June 9, 2016, the  
above-entitled meeting was conducted at the Colorado  
Department of Education, before the following Board Members:

Steven Durham (R), Chairman  
Angelika Schroeder (D), Vice Chairman  
Valentina (Val) Flores (D)  
Jane Goff (D)  
Pam Mazanec (R)  
Joyce Rankin (R)  
Debora Scheffel (R)



1                   CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Something resembles we're...  
2 all right. We're going to start with Item 6.01. Let's see.  
3 As soon as Dr. Schroeder returns, we'll have a motion.

4                   (Pause)

5                   CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Sorry for the delay. Item  
6 6.01. Dr. Schroeder, do you have a motion on this topic?

7                   MS. SCHROEDER: Sure. I move to approve  
8 Educational Testing Services, practices, exams, and the  
9 articulated cut (ph) scores, as the content exams for  
10 educator licensure and preparation endorsements as  
11 recommended by the stakeholder team.

12                  CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Is there a second to that  
13 motion? I'm seeing yes, Ms. Goff seconds the motion. Let  
14 me ask -- let me ask, Dr. O'Neill. First of all, I had a  
15 chance to review the materials. I think they're -- they're  
16 well-done and -- and self-explanatory, and -- and there is  
17 some urgency in getting this -- getting this approved so we  
18 can move forward with the exams. So let me start by asking  
19 the Board Members if they've had the chance to adequately  
20 review this segment, and do you have questions of -- of Dr.  
21 O'Neill or her team here? Yes, Dr. Schroeder?

22                  MS. SCHROEDER: So the -- I made the motion  
23 that I did because praxis covers the most areas, but what do  
24 we do in those few areas that are not covered? What's --



1 what's our process for, I don't know ten areas that are not  
2 covered by that testing group?

3 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Dr. O'Neill?

4 MS. O'NEILL: They're -- Thank you, commissioner,  
5 or Commissioner Durham. I just saw -- switched you --

6 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: I got -- I got a promotion.

7 MS. O'NEILL: -- and Dr. Anthes. I'll continue  
8 to do that if -- if there's anybody who wants to volunteer  
9 for that. Dr. Schroeder --

10 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: It's big salary increase  
11 with it, so...

12 MS. O'NEILL: I'll see if I can get this  
13 right. Dr. Schroeder, I'm going to try to address your  
14 question. I think there are actually six test areas  
15 specifically that ETS doesn't cover today. Those areas  
16 would be developed. A couple of those areas are also  
17 program-only areas that actually do not require a content  
18 assessment at this time. So those are definitely to be  
19 determined. They are very low test areas such as Russian.  
20 So we are not concerned about those areas today. Those can  
21 be by program. The endorsements for those can be by program  
22 only today.

23 MS. SCHROEDER: Okay. Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Okay. Any other questions?

25 The committee -- this was I thought the explanation was



1 well-done, and the work appears to be well-done in this  
2 area. Do you need the full briefing, or is that -- are the  
3 Members prepared to vote on this motion?

4 MS. GOFF: I'm not sure if --

5 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Ms. Goff?

6 MS. GOFF: It could be done after the vote.

7 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Well, you can comment  
8 before, please.

9 MS. GOFF: I -- I just -- through colleagues  
10 in certain continuaries, Russian being one of them but not  
11 necessarily the content, I wanna -- I will -- I will convey  
12 that this -- this is great news for world language programs  
13 in general. I'm highlighting that particular area, and I --  
14 I thank you for the -- the work and the persistence, and  
15 people have come to appreciate that it is -- it's a -- it's  
16 a process that deserves its due time and patience and -- and  
17 examination, and it's very much appreciated. I think it's  
18 going to help us move forward, and reflects better what our  
19 teachers are set up to do now. So thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Ms. Rankin, did you have a  
21 comment?

22 MS. RANKIN: Are we going to go through the  
23 full presentation?

24 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: I -- I'd prefer not if you  
25 have enough information.



1 MS. RANKIN: If -- then I'd like to make a  
2 comment that -- we've talked a lot and spent a lot of money  
3 on third -- third grade and under reading. And I was  
4 looking at -- at this presentation, the last part where it  
5 says, "We set up a task force to evaluate the reading and --  
6 and make sure we're on the right track," because we have  
7 standards, and I -- I think we -- we emphasize the  
8 standards, work toward the standards, but we have to review  
9 them -- and to make sure we're pointed in the right  
10 direction. And reading is so important, that I -- I highly  
11 recommend that we continue to assess and reassess what we're  
12 doing, not what the students are doing, to make sure we're -  
13 - we're on track for reading. It's the most important thing  
14 we do.

15 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Okay.

16 MS. SCHROEDER: Yeah, I forgot about the  
17 recommendations. I really do encourage us to get some  
18 endorsements in some specific subjects, particularly in the  
19 elementary and middle schools, and that's about literacy,  
20 Joyce, but also about mathematics. I think we can see a  
21 dramatic change with an elementary math endorsement and  
22 outcomes.

23 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: I think that's a -- those  
24 are good observations. I think those two content areas are  
25 particularly important to reading in the -- the basic



1 elementary math so -- all right, further discussion from the  
2 members? Ms. Burdsall, would you call roll in the motion,  
3 please?

4 MS. BURDSALL: Thank you. Board Member Flores?

5 MS. FLORES: Yes.

6 MS. BURDSALL: Board Member Goff?

7 MS. GOFF: Yes.

8 MS. BURDSALL: Board Member Mazanec?

9 MS. MAZANEC: Yes.

10 MS. BURDSALL: Board Member Rankin?

11 MS. RANKIN: Yes.

12 MS. BURDSALL: Board Member Scheffel?

13 MS. SCHEFFEL: Yes.

14 MS. BURDSALL: Board Member Schroeder?

15 MS. SCHROEDER: Yes.

16 MS. BURDSALL: And Chairman Durham?

17 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Yes. That motion is adopted  
18 by a vote of seven to nothing.

19 MS. O'NEILL: Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: I'm sure you were all well-  
21 prepared to make a presentation. I hope you're as happy as  
22 we are that it was not necessary.

23 MS. O'NEILL: Mr. Chairman, I just for one  
24 moment.

25 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Please.



1 MS. O'NEILL: I just -- I want to thank Dr.  
2 Caroline Hough (ph) and Ty Valentine. They spent an  
3 enormous amount of time in a very concentrated three months  
4 with the team developing, digging, asking critical  
5 questions, talking with their stakeholders, bringing that  
6 back, making sure that all the questions are answered, and I  
7 just cannot thank them enough for their service, not only to  
8 students, but to the Colorado Department of Education and  
9 our teaching staff. So thank you very much for all of your  
10 work, and I appreciate it.

11 (Applause)

12 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Thank you. And I would say  
13 the results of the hard work are self-evident, and we  
14 appreciate it very much. Thank you.

15 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Thank you.

16 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: We'll move on now to Item 7,  
18 University of Phoenix Discontinuation of Colorado Campus and  
19 Principal Preparation Programs. Let's see, do we need a  
20 motion on that? It doesn't look like it, so Dr. O'Neill.

21 MS. O'NEILL: Absolutely. Thank you, Mr.  
22 Chair. The University of Phoenix is actually trying to get  
23 ahead of something that they're doing in the next several  
24 years. So they are closing their online programs that they  
25 are approved right now to be an educator preparation entity,



1 in both principal and teacher licenses. This is an  
2 informational item only, and I thought that it was important  
3 that we bring it to you just so that you know that there  
4 will be a teach-out plan for the University of Phoenix.  
5 They are keeping their ground-based folks, and they are  
6 very, very far ahead of the curve. So there's actually a  
7 seven-year teach-out plan for the University of Phoenix  
8 online program.

9 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Seven-year what?

10 MS. O'NEILL: Teach-out. Teach-out, I  
11 apologize. So basically, it will be ending the program  
12 within seven years. They are allowing anyone who is already  
13 in the program and anyone who will be enrolling until  
14 September in the program to complete the program, be  
15 approved, get their educator license in the State of  
16 Colorado, and then they will cease all online operations in  
17 Colorado. They will continue to run their site-based campus  
18 however, so I just thought it was really important that you  
19 know that that program is closing but they are very far  
20 ahead of the curve as opposed to at another university who  
21 closed its doors within three months here just in the last  
22 year. So I just wanted to give you a heads up and see if  
23 there were any questions or concerns.

24 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Questions from members of  
25 the Board? Seeing none. Thank you very much, Dr. O'Neill.



1 MS. O'NEILL: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

2 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Now, we'll proceed to Item  
3 8, which is the Application for Certification of Multi-  
4 District Online Schools, submitted by Las Animas School  
5 District on behalf of AIM Global and Immersion Schools for  
6 Science, Technology, and the Arts.

7 MS. SCHROEDER: Can I see the handouts?

8 MS. BURDSALL: Here. It'll take just -- just  
9 a moment as we have several guests joining us.

10 (Pause)

11 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: All right. Let's see. Dr.  
12 Schroeder, do you have a motion before we start here?

13 MS. SCHROEDER: Sure, I move to approve Las  
14 Animas's request for Certification of a multi-district  
15 online school on behalf of AIM Global Academy and Immersion  
16 School for Science, Technology, and the Arts.

17 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Is there a second to that  
18 motion? Ms. Goff seconds the motion. It's been moved and  
19 seconded. Commissioner, would you care to introduce the  
20 discussion?

21 MS. ANTHERS: Sure, I will call on Misti  
22 Ruthven to introduce the item, and then she will turn it  
23 over to Randy DeHoff, Summit Education Group, and Bob  
24 Gardner, Attorney Elsie Goines, the Superintendent from Las



1 Animas School District, and Tom Meardon, Secondary Principal  
2 there.

3 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Okay.

4 MS. ANTHES: Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Ms. Ruthven?

6 MS. RUTHVEN: Thank you. So Interim  
7 Commissioner Anthes did introduce our guest today, and I  
8 believe we also have a student that's joining us. Great,  
9 thank you. And your name is Sammy Lopez? Great. Thank you  
10 and welcome.

11 Just to give a brief overview of this item,  
12 you may know that the process for approving an online and  
13 blended school includes internal as well as external  
14 reviewers, that occurs within a 60-day period by staff, as  
15 well as external review. That did occur for the two schools  
16 that are being requested in this situation. You will see a  
17 rubric online in your Board docs that includes areas that  
18 initially, the applications did not meet, and then the  
19 applications were sent back, and we -- we were provided at  
20 the department with sufficient responses and follow-up, and  
21 both applications do now sufficiently meet the requirements  
22 that were provided on the rubric, and those are statutory  
23 requirements.

24 Just as a quick review for the three  
25 following criteria that the application must provide



1 evidence of, that the authorizer has resources and capacity  
2 to oversee the online school. Two, the authorizer has  
3 documented and verified that the online school meets an  
4 acceptable level of compliance with quality standards for  
5 online schools, and then three, the authorizer in multi-  
6 district online school have agreed on a plan for operating  
7 the online school. So with that, I'll leave it to our  
8 presenters today to outline any questions you might have  
9 additionally.

10 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Thank you. Questions from  
11 the Board before we start? Seeing none, who would like to -  
12 - yes?

13 MS. GOINES: I -- I will go first. I'm Elsie  
14 Goines from Las Animas School District. Now I'm glad I have  
15 the mic, so I can speak into it. One of the things I would  
16 share with you is -- and they would attest to this, too.  
17 From the very beginning in our numerous meetings that we  
18 have, we have a catchword -- is for me, and I get to be the  
19 bad guy today -- accountability. So from our very first  
20 conversation, that has always been a ringing tone with  
21 myself, with my school board, and what does that  
22 accountability look like?

23 And so our attorneys, my Board president,  
24 myself, we have scoured through the application. We've  
25 scoured through the statutes. We've looked over the



1 application to make sure it aligns, and I will assure you,  
2 and so will their attorney, that what you will probably see  
3 is we are gonna have what we call a small school touch to  
4 that in that we want to see more assurances on our end,  
5 because we know at the end of the day, we're on the hook.  
6 And Summit has always knows that, too, and that's been an  
7 ongoing conversation that we've had, and we'll continue to  
8 have.

9                   And so I want to share with you just a  
10 concept, you know, when I was a young girl, I had the  
11 privilege to have a grandmother who had an old-fashioned  
12 washing machine, and she turned that washing machine to  
13 wring out the clothes. And I loved watching that, and I  
14 knew that if she wasn't satisfied, she'd put those clothes  
15 back in, and she'd wring it again. And being a curious  
16 child that I was, I didn't think it was real powerful, so I  
17 actually stuck my finger in there, and yes, I realized that  
18 it hurt quite a bit. And I think that over the last 100  
19 days that is kind of what we have been going through. We've  
20 been going through a wringing effect with one another to  
21 say, "What does that accountability look like? How does that  
22 work, and how are we going to implement that?".

23                   And so I want to share real briefly with you  
24 what that looks like, and definitely that small school  
25 touch. So when we talk about Summit, and we talk about Las



1 Animas, you know, you're going to hear some conversations  
2 around what small school touch looks like.

3                   Number one, when I have a Board meeting, and  
4 Summit will be at those Board meetings because they -- they  
5 will be just as responsible as my principals to come. We  
6 present information. We're presenting information on  
7 financials. We're presenting information on evaluations.  
8 We're presenting information on student data. We're  
9 presenting information on attendance because that is a  
10 district goal. We're presenting information on policies,  
11 policy review, policy updates. We do quarterly financial  
12 work sessions, and we do those work -- and we do that work  
13 together.

14                   We also have -- I have weekly admin meetings,  
15 you know, that's the nice thing with having a small  
16 community, as we meet for an hour each week. And believe it  
17 or not, there is a lot going on in Las Animas, and sometimes  
18 we get that hour squeezed out. It takes a concerted effort,  
19 but we know that that hour meeting each week helps us to  
20 stay on top of little things. Because in a small community,  
21 little things turn really big, really fast, and so that's  
22 how we work on keeping on top of those things.

23                   We also have -- we're a four-day week school,  
24 but we also have monthly professional development. We have  
25 a professional development calendar. We bring staff



1 together. We train on specific goals and things that we  
2 want to achieve, improving instruction. You know, that's one  
3 of the quality standards, improve what it -- how you measure  
4 quality instruction. Well, that's an ongoing process. And  
5 for us, and it will be true for Summit, how do you train new  
6 teachers? How do you support new teachers? How do you get  
7 them to a place where they're being effective?

8 Well, that takes a lot of work, and we have  
9 BOCES principals PLC. Summit principals will be attending  
10 that PLC. And when you start getting educators and  
11 principals together, you know what, they really can solve  
12 the world if there's enough of them in one place. They may  
13 not always agree, but they definitely know what the issues  
14 are.

15 And so that's some of those pieces that when  
16 we talk about small school, yeah you know, this crowd that  
17 we have here today supporting us, guess what, they're going  
18 to be coming out to Las Animas, Colorado, and having these  
19 meetings and having these dialogues because, you know, my  
20 Board is adamant that we're going to have accountability.  
21 And so I get to talk about the ugly thing about  
22 accountability. And I think that when you think about  
23 online schools and you think about charter schools, that's  
24 always kind of the ringing tone that everybody talks about  
25 is accountability.



1                   And so we have really dug deep and pushed our  
2 boat down into the deep water to say, "How can we make this  
3 work with a proper amount of accountability?" And so you  
4 will be -- if this goes through, you will be seeing a lot of  
5 Summit folks in Las Animas as we continue to work together  
6 to grow this program.

7                   I'm going to turn the -- turn it over to Mr.  
8 Meardon real quick and have him talk a little bit about what  
9 is it like in Las Animas? Why would we want to do something  
10 like this? And before you do that, I don't want to forget  
11 two things I want to talk about. Unfortunately, this  
12 spring, we had a young man who put a shotgun in his mouth,  
13 and he passed away. And I wanted to say thank you to  
14 Melissa Colzman. She reached out to me on more than one  
15 occasion, and I just wanted me to make that -- say that out  
16 loud.

17                   MR. MEARDON: Thank you for your time.

18                   CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Mr. Meardon.

19                   MR. MEARDON: A couple of little things. As a  
20 principal, I get to deal with the day-to-day activities with  
21 the students, which is the part that I love. And after  
22 meeting with Summit and listening to their proposal, they  
23 really do care about at-risk students and gifted students.  
24 And being the principal at Las Animas and coming from  
25 another small district in Colorado that really didn't have



1 at-risk kids, Las Animas has a lot of at-risk kids. And two  
2 -- two or three examples that I can give. I had a couple of  
3 kids that were seniors this year that at the beginning of  
4 the year, I had problems with them last year, but the  
5 beginning of this year, they just didn't want to come to  
6 school, whether it's for behavior or attendance or whatever,  
7 but they just didn't fit. They decided to quit school. I  
8 have always kept in contact with these kids because we do  
9 have an A-plus Credit Recovery program to try to get them to  
10 get their diploma, get your diploma. If they want to go  
11 work, if they want to make a million dollars, but then they  
12 found out, "I can't get a job," so I've kept in contact with  
13 these kids, and in fact yesterday, I saw another one.  
14 They're working on their A-plus.

15                   And then we have Sammy here, who was a senior  
16 this year. He didn't quite make it. He's working this  
17 summer on an A-plus Credit Recovery, possibly Summit, to get  
18 his diploma because he understands how important an  
19 education is. And talking about at-risk students, I think  
20 the definition of at-risk is growing. It is getting bigger  
21 at what at-risk is, and I like Summit's definition. I like  
22 what they do with the wraparound, where it's unlike other  
23 online schools, where they have a life coach that is in  
24 contact with each kid every day. And I love that part, and  
25 that's what I don't like about A-plus, because we send a kid



1 on a computer and on a class and say, "Tell us when you're  
2 done."

3 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Okay.

4 MS. GOINES: So just a little story about  
5 Sammy. When Sammy was 16, he drank Drano and found himself  
6 almost losing his life and have had many numerous --  
7 numerous surgeries, and he got behind. He also had some  
8 struggles with family and moved and removed and so, you  
9 know, Sammy is just one of many stories that we have about  
10 our students at Las Animas.

11 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Okay.

12 MR. DEHOFF: Thank you. Just briefly, Summit  
13 Education Group was formed in 2011 and converted to a public  
14 benefit corporation in 2014 after the Colorado Legislature  
15 created that corporate entity and statute. Summit's focus is  
16 to work with education agencies, including local districts,  
17 BOCES, state agencies, charters, Boards, and others to  
18 provide successful education alternatives for students who  
19 are not well-served by the traditional public school  
20 structures. These alternative models are designed based on  
21 the extensive experience and licensed Summit leaders have  
22 gained through their many years of experience in online,  
23 blended, and alternative education.

24 The two applications you have before you  
25 today, AIM Global, is an alternative education campus model



1 designed to meet the needs of the more at-risk students at  
2 one end of the Bell Curve, while Immersion Schools for  
3 Science, Technology, and the Arts is designed for students  
4 who are trying to balance their education with an intense  
5 focus on their chosen career path.

6                   For example, in the dance immersion track of  
7 immersion schools, which will be our largest track with  
8 about 150 students next year, students attend a dance studio  
9 from 8:00 to 3:00 at least four days a week, with three and  
10 a half hours of professional dance instruction and arts  
11 immersion blended curriculum, such as anatomy and physiology  
12 of dance, history of dance, and project-based explorations,  
13 or the business of professional dance interspersed with time  
14 to work on their online academic curriculum in the presence  
15 of adult coaches and teachers. These students typically  
16 leave the studio in the afternoon, grab a quick bite of  
17 dinner, and go to their community dance studios for another  
18 three to four hours of instruction and practice.

19                   Online curriculum and other digital tools are  
20 essential components of these models, but that -- we all  
21 know that online doesn't work by itself. The key component  
22 of the Summit models is the enrichment life coach teacher.  
23 These are --

24                   (Meeting adjourned)



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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Kimberly C. McCright, Certified Vendor and Notary, do hereby certify that the above-mentioned matter occurred as hereinbefore set out.

I FURTHER CERTIFY THAT the proceedings of such were reported by me or under my supervision, later reduced to typewritten form under my supervision and control and that the foregoing pages are a full, true and correct transcription of the original notes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 25th day of October, 2018.

/s/ Kimberly C. McCright  
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