

**In The Matter Of:**

*DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION  
CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL*

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*December 18, 2019*

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ARKANSAS DIVISION OF  
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL

DECEMBER 18, 2019

A P P E A R A N C E S

PANEL MEMBERS:

DR. IVY PFEFFER	Chairperson/DESE Deputy Commissioner
MR. GREG ROGERS	DESE Asst. Commissioner - Fiscal and Admin. Services
MR. MIKE WILSON	Attorney & Education Advocate
DR. NACCAMAN WILLIAMS	Past State Board of Ed. Member
MR. PHIL BALDWIN	CEO, Citizens Bank
DR. ANGELA KREMERS	Deputy Director - CTE/Ark. Dept. of Career Ed.

ADE LEGAL COUNSEL:

MS. MARY CLAIRE HYATT DESE Attorney

ALSO APPEARING:

MS. TRACY WEBB	DESE Coordinator of Monitoring and Systems Support
MS. KELLY McLAUGHLIN	DESE Public School Program Advisor

LOCATION:

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

TIME: 9:01 a.m. - 2:42 p.m.

## I N D E X

	Page
Preliminary Matters . . . . .	3
A-1: Arkansas Virtual Academy . . . . .	3
A-2: Capital City Lighthouse . . . . .	65
Hearing Procedures . . . . .	114
A-3: Southeast Arkansas Preparatory HS . . . . .	115
A-4: Pine Bluff Lighthouse Academy . . . . .	192
Adjournment . . . . .	226
Court Reporter's Certificate . . . . .	231

## E X H I B I T S

## A-1: ARKANSAS VIRTUAL ACADEMY

EXHIBIT ONE (1)  
Desegregation Analysis

## A-2: CAPITAL CITY LIGHTHOUSE

EXHIBIT ONE (1)  
Desegregation Analysis

EXHIBIT TWO (2)  
Summit Learning Report

EXHIBIT THREE (3)  
Letter in Support from Senator Jane English  
(12/17/19)

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
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8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
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16  
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P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Good morning, everyone. The December 18, 2019 Charter Authorizing Panel meeting is now called to order. I would like to welcome everyone here today. As Chair of the Charter Authorizing Panel it's my goal to facilitate a fair and responsible hearing.

I ask that each person speaking in the microphone speak clearly and state your name and title for the record. This meeting is being live-streamed, so this will benefit our viewing audience, as well as our court reporter, Miss Sharon Hill, who will be providing a transcript of the meeting and it will be posted to the Division's website.

A-1: HEARING FOR OPEN-ENROLLMENT CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL APPLICATION - ARKANSAS VIRTUAL ACADEMY

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So we have I believe four items on our Action Agenda today. And we will go ahead and get started with the first one, which is the hearing for the open-enrollment public charter school renewal application for Arkansas Virtual Academy.

Ms. Webb: Good morning. Tracy Webb, Charter Unit.

Arkansas Virtual Academy is an open-enrollment

1 charter that was initially authorized in October of  
2 2001. They currently serve students in grades K-12  
3 and have an enrollment cap of 3,000. They're  
4 requesting a renewal of their charter for five years,  
5 ending in 2025.

6 And today we have several representatives from  
7 Arkansas Virtual. They are Joel Edel, who's a board  
8 member; Amy Johnson, who is the head of the school;  
9 Kristin Allen, the academic administrator; Amanda  
10 Sullivan, Special Programs; Mandy Felton, high school  
11 principal; Laura Davidson, assistant high school  
12 principal; Lisa Short, CTE administrator; Ashley  
13 Holder, middle school principal; Jessica Stack,  
14 elementary principal; Gina Moore, family engagement  
15 and support administrator; and Michelle Newman,  
16 federal program coordinator and RTI coordinator.

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And can you clarify  
18 that the renewal will go through what year?

19 MS. WEBB: 2025.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

21 MS. WEBB: Yeah. That's a misprint on there.

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

23 MS. WEBB: 2025, for five years.

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And -- okay. Yeah, I wanted  
25 to make sure; so appreciate you.

1           Okay. Will the representatives of the charter  
2 and anyone speaking in opposition please stand to  
3 receive the oath? Okay. Do you swear or affirm that  
4 the testimony you're about to give shall be the  
5 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

6           (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

7           CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. You all can come  
8 forward. I don't know who's speaking at what time,  
9 but anybody that may be speaking, if you want to sit  
10 on the front row. And you'll have 20 minutes for  
11 your presentation, if -- and if you'll state your  
12 name and title for the record you're recognized.

13          MS. JOHNSON: All right. Amy Johnson, Head of  
14 School for Arkansas Virtual Academy.

15          Madam Chair and Members of the Panel, thank you  
16 for your time and consideration of our renewal today.  
17 One year ago, I was a month old in the Head of School  
18 position here at ARVA. And one of the things that I  
19 really wanted to do was to begin conversations with  
20 our leadership team about where our school was  
21 headed, where are pain points, where are the things  
22 that we need to concentrate on for improvement. And  
23 in those conversations came sort of a mantra, or a  
24 filter, if you will, as to how we've made decisions  
25 over the last year and will continue in the future --

1 and that is that we're not necessarily interested in  
2 what is easy; we're dedicated and focused on what is  
3 right for students. In our environment that's not  
4 always easy and we're willing to take on that  
5 challenge.

6 So in our planning for this school year, even  
7 before summatives were held and grade cards were  
8 released, we were looking at what is our sense of  
9 urgency, what does our area of focus need to be. And  
10 while it might seem a bit abrupt, we would like to  
11 start with where our biggest area of passion and  
12 biggest area of urgency is, and that's with our  
13 academics.

14 You'll see that the elementary school has been a  
15 "D" school for three years; the middle school has  
16 been a "C" school with a slight drop this last spring  
17 to a "D," and similar results at the high school. In  
18 looking at our ESSA results we recognize that  
19 weighted achievement is the largest gap that we have  
20 in all three schools, and a similar gap for  
21 elementary and middle school and value-added growth,  
22 while all three schools are at or above state average  
23 in SQSS. We're currently receiving Level 2 support  
24 for reading. But, again, we would be remiss to not  
25 share with you that that doesn't mean that we have

1 this solved. We have 36% of our students that are  
2 Needs Improvement in reading and we feel that that is  
3 a dangerous percentage and that's a piece that we're  
4 hedging and really improving our -- the strength of  
5 our literacy plan in order to improve that for our  
6 students. We are currently Pending Accredited in --  
7 with the Standards of Accreditation, and this is  
8 important to us. We're fond of the color green and  
9 we've worked very proactively with the Department in  
10 insuring that we keep those pieces of compliance in  
11 order.

12 In looking at this data, it was also important  
13 for us to note and recognize the challenge that 61 to  
14 64 percent of our new students that come to us come  
15 to us as Needs Improvement in all subject areas. So  
16 they're coming to us with those gaps to fill in.  
17 That changes the course of action that we need to  
18 take.

19 So in creating this urgency of action we wanted  
20 to really bucket the items that we wanted to tackle  
21 for this school year, and we launched all of these  
22 things at the beginning of the school year again  
23 before we even received the results of our ESSA  
24 score. Now we know that the buckets affect one  
25 another; weighted achievement positively affects

1 value-added growth, and vice-versa. But our plan of  
2 action has been to increase teacher effectiveness.  
3 We're observing our teachers at a minimum of monthly,  
4 and every single teacher meets with their principal  
5 in a one-on-one quarterly, not only to look at post-  
6 data but also to plan for the coming quarter. We are  
7 utilizing ACT Aspire interims twice a year. And  
8 while we know that there's a gap between the  
9 predictability of the Aspire interim and the  
10 summative assessment, what we're doing is utilizing  
11 this for two common purposes. One is a commonality  
12 of environment. Our students travel to test and so  
13 they don't get to sit in the room that they're used  
14 to; so being used to this platform is very helpful  
15 for them. The second piece is really doing some deep  
16 item analysis work where our teachers are digging  
17 into the DOK levels, how the test is constructed,  
18 what students mastered, what they didn't master, and  
19 informing their teaching.

20 We've made a pretty big switch this year to  
21 targeted small group instruction utilizing Zoom. In  
22 the past we used Blackboard, which is sort of a flat  
23 experience. You could hear voice via (inaudible).  
24 This year our classes are held 100-percent in Zoom,  
25 so students have the ability to interact through

1 video with their teachers. And additionally we've  
2 changed those instructional sizes down to no more  
3 than 20 students in a session at a time. We've also  
4 launched Mathematical Mindsets, which is a study to  
5 not only change the way teachers think and teach  
6 math, but also how students think about math and  
7 their ability to succeed. We're launching data-  
8 driven PLCs; we've been hosting those this year one  
9 hour each week. Our content teams meet to look at  
10 common assessment data, what students have achieved,  
11 how they're going to teach, re-teach, and reassess  
12 those skills. We're doing a tighter tracking of  
13 students' skill standards and mastery, not only state  
14 standards but also those ACT Aspire readiness skills.  
15 And then we've also added a growth monitoring tool  
16 because we know there's a gap between what the Aspire  
17 interim predicts and the summative. We're actually  
18 providing an assessment beginning, middle, and end of  
19 year so we can really acutely look at that growth.

20 We are completing our RISE training. Our  
21 teachers are going through that. We have a staff  
22 member that is training to be a trainer. So that's  
23 an important piece for us, especially with the Needs  
24 Improvement percentage we have for reading. We'll be  
25 taking advantage of all the observation evaluatory

1 pieces that come with RISE. And then we've also  
2 launched ARVA Reads, which is a school-wide program  
3 where we're really stressing the importance and  
4 inviting students to come in and read with us, not  
5 only reading for education purposes but for  
6 enjoyment, the importance of it.

7 We've increased reading instruction in all  
8 content areas, all grades, and we're observing for  
9 those instruction pieces. And then we have a tighter  
10 correlation for science; that was a growth area for  
11 us that we needed to fill that gap.

12 And we're really excited about the approval to  
13 offer a community service learning credit this year.  
14 And we're actually launching events all across the  
15 state where our students come together geographically  
16 and they're going into their communities to provide,  
17 you know, volunteer service in nonprofit  
18 organizations and community organizations.

19 We're also visiting with other schools. So  
20 we're looking at the list of schools that the ADE has  
21 submitted that created great growth in their grade  
22 cards. And we've also dug into My School Info to  
23 identify schools that have had either consistent  
24 growth or consistent success, and we start some of  
25 those observations and visits in the next month.

1 I'd also like to point out that the renewal  
2 application that you have attached to your agenda,  
3 the new goals there are -- have been shifted just a  
4 little bit. Prior in our renewal package we had set  
5 goals for the charter that were two or more year  
6 students, and we feel like every student needs to  
7 have the opportunity to grow. So for our new renewal  
8 period the goal is for every single student. And  
9 then the document that you have attached has a whole  
10 lot of percentage business where we're trying to  
11 forecast for state average, but we've actually  
12 modified that so that our checking each year is to be  
13 at state average.

14 So why does this matter? By the numbers, we  
15 serve some folks that it matters to. At the time of  
16 this we had 2,547 students currently enrolled; 67% of  
17 those are free-and-reduced lunch and 16.68% are  
18 special education, which I'm sure you'll know is 3%  
19 higher than the state. We have -- we are a CTE rich  
20 school and 84% of our students in grades 8 through 12  
21 are currently pursuing a pathway. We have 150 total  
22 staff; out of that staff 111 are instructional staff.  
23 All 111 are certified -- Arkansas certified teachers.  
24 We do hold a waiver of Licensure but we only employ  
25 that waiver in grades K through 8 for art, music, and

1 P.E., and then in just a couple of isolated courses  
2 at the high school and P.E.

3 We do have an extensive support staff, but in  
4 light of recent legislation it's important to note  
5 that we do have five certified school counselors and  
6 one licensed counselor on staff, and then, of course,  
7 supported by an administrative team.

8 So that's who we are by the numbers. But who  
9 are we really?

10 And this story is best told -- we've had three  
11 graduating classes at ARVA, and I think this story is  
12 best told by our first three valedictorians:

13 Our first valedictorian, on the left, is Laurel.  
14 Laurel came to us battling leukemia. She was an  
15 incredibly bright student. I had the opportunity to  
16 have her in class when I was teaching, and just very  
17 gifted. And had she been in a regular brick-and-  
18 mortar she would've likely been on a homebound  
19 program and certainly would not have had the ability  
20 to vie for valedictorian honors. Laurel actually  
21 passed away almost a year to the day after she  
22 graduated.

23 Grace is a high-flier. She was with us for  
24 several years; incredibly gifted, national merit  
25 scholar, athlete. And really we were able to help

1 change Grace's life because we were able just to take  
2 the chains off. She was able to travel with  
3 athletics, advance in courses as she wanted to.  
4 She's currently attending an in-state college on an  
5 athletic and academic full-ride scholarship.

6 And then on the right you have Kayla. Kayla was  
7 pregnant at 15. She was put into her school's ALE  
8 program. And when she discovered she couldn't take  
9 advanced courses she became very disheartened; she  
10 quit school. She was out of school for an entire  
11 year. And then she came to us; we were able to get  
12 her back on track and she graduated with honors. And  
13 now, in addition to raising her son she's seeking a  
14 Smart scholarship from the Government, which is a  
15 very specific scholarship for some very specific  
16 government positions.

17 And we're really so much more and I hope to have  
18 the opportunity to tell you so much more about our  
19 families. But with time, what I'd like to do is show  
20 you some of the students that we're changing their  
21 lives. Now you're getting ready to see a small clip  
22 from a special education classroom; it's the  
23 elementary special education classroom. You'll see  
24 an observer in the room. You're going to see some  
25 learning coaches in the background, and you're even

1 going to see -- because we didn't pull, you know, the  
2 most beautiful clip -- life happens, right -- you're  
3 going to see some classroom management and what that  
4 looks like in a virtual environment as well.

5 (WHEREUPON, a short video was shown; it may be  
6 viewed on the ADE website.)

7 MS. JOHNSON: All right. So you also saw  
8 clearly some dyslexia intervention there, breaking  
9 down those words, in just a short clip again of the  
10 lives that we're able to touch. And I think it's  
11 important to note that we're changing lives in the  
12 entire state. We currently have students enrolled  
13 from all 75 counties across the state of Arkansas.  
14 So the impact and the opportunity to have this sort  
15 of an option is important.

16 So where we're headed -- I mentioned earlier  
17 that we're CTE rich. This is a great sort of niche  
18 for our school. Many of our students are very  
19 interested in not only pursuing college, but also  
20 being career-ready. And so you see here on the left  
21 the current pathways that we have worked with the  
22 Division of Career Tech Ed. to be approved for, and I  
23 want to insure that we've worked very closely with  
24 the departments to make sure that we've employed  
25 these with fidelity, with the skills that students

1 really need. We are seeking some pathways for the  
2 future: one, family and community services, based on  
3 student request. We poll our students every year to  
4 find out what they're interested in. But then the  
5 other, two, because of the job futures in the state  
6 we try to look at where those job predictions are  
7 headed and make sure that we are planning accordingly  
8 to prepare our students. We think that CTE is  
9 important and will impact us academically because our  
10 CTE teachers are still teaching base content skills  
11 in English and math, but they're doing it in a  
12 relevant way that sticks with our students. And we  
13 find that students that have a pathway stay enrolled  
14 longer and do better academically. We are moving  
15 forward wisely in that planning. We have an advisory  
16 board that does counsel our CTE staff in the planning  
17 of our direction, and you can see the industries that  
18 are listed there. We have student resources that  
19 we're very excited about, which is a nationwide  
20 consortium of professionals that our students have  
21 access to -- Tallo, which is a student LinkedIn, and  
22 then Xello, of course, is a program that the state  
23 has suggested for monitoring and following those  
24 pathways. And then we're continuing to seek more and  
25 more certification opportunities for our students.

1 We currently offer several. We're building CTE into  
2 the middle school and elementary. We'll be into the  
3 6th and 7th grade by fall next year and then moving  
4 into the elementary. Our elementary teachers are  
5 already taking advantage of some of the resources,  
6 like Nepris and those things to create career  
7 awareness in their elementary classes.

8 Now keeping in mind that 84% of our students are  
9 following and seeking a pathway, we are really  
10 working to build out real world experiences. Now  
11 some of these numbers will seem a little low, based  
12 on 84% of our students, but I think you'll also see  
13 some evidence of growth as we're building out these  
14 programs. So nine students are currently working  
15 with five career centers -- and we try to partner  
16 with career centers for those things that are a  
17 little trickier to teach virtually. Welding  
18 virtually would be maybe a little bit of a stretch of  
19 the imagination, so we want to partner to be able to  
20 provide those opportunities for students. We do have  
21 a work program that 38 students across the state are  
22 working in various jobs. We have a teacher that  
23 actually travels the state and observes them in their  
24 workplace. And then our dual concurrent credit, we  
25 currently have 8 students -- but this is that example

1 of growth I was speaking about, that we have 22 that  
2 enrolled for January courses. So we're really  
3 working not only to make students aware but encourage  
4 them to take advantage of the opportunities.

5 We also are seeking opportunities to partner for  
6 the future. We've had some charters that have  
7 reached out to us to ask us about our pathways and  
8 how they might partner with us for their students to  
9 be able to take advantage of those opportunities.  
10 We're willing to seek smaller rural districts that  
11 maybe don't have the resources to be able to offer  
12 their students those opportunities. And then  
13 additionally I recently met with -- in the fall with  
14 Superintendent Poore, Little Rock School District, to  
15 talk about how we might be able to work together.  
16 And then we'll also be meeting with a superintendents  
17 group that's meeting quarterly in Pulaski County.

18 We do love to celebrate what our students are  
19 doing. And so our student groups are very exciting.  
20 This is where students are really getting hands-on  
21 opportunities and that career readiness that provides  
22 those skills that are tangible. So we're in our  
23 third year of DECA. We are recognized as the first  
24 virtual school in the country to compete nationally  
25 for DECA. We're in our second year of FFA, which is

1 very exciting for us. We were the first virtual  
2 chapter designated in the nation. We launched  
3 SkillsUSA this year and we have 6 team members  
4 already going strong there. And then we're  
5 investigating FCCLA with the pathways that we are  
6 hoping to launch in the fall. We have some students  
7 that are going to volunteer and observe some FCCLA  
8 events this spring to see a little bit more about  
9 what it's like.

10 We also had national presenters, in the bottom  
11 right-hand corner, just recently, at the beginning of  
12 December. Our CTE administrator traveled to Anaheim,  
13 California, for the National Association of Career  
14 Tech Ed conference. And on the screen, in that photo  
15 you actually see one of our students that they zoomed  
16 into the conference session and she was able to talk  
17 to the participants in California via Zoom about her  
18 experience virtually with career tech education.

19 So we're here asking the Panel's consideration  
20 for a five-year renewal, again with a deep focus on  
21 the improvement of our academic processes and  
22 outcomes for students.

23 We have also asked consideration for an  
24 enrollment increase. This is primarily located for 8  
25 through 12 where we are sort of busting at the seams

1 in those grades right now, even though we're under  
2 cap as a whole. We would like to increase this  
3 because we do feel that the CTE rich nature of our  
4 program is going to be one that students really  
5 gravitate to, especially students that come to us  
6 with discipline issues, you know, different  
7 difficulties in their backgrounds, really looking for  
8 those tangible skills.

9 And then we've also requested the waiver of  
10 Arkansas Code Annotated 6-16-102(a)(5), which is the  
11 code for the Recess requirements.

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. You still have a  
13 little bit of time left. Was there anybody else that  
14 you wanted to address the Panel?

15 MS. JOHNSON: I don't think so at this time.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

17 MS. JOHNSON: I think they're here for questions

18 --

19 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: For questions?

20 MS. JOHNSON: -- as needed.

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Hyatt, is there  
22 anyone here to speak in opposition?

23 MS. HYATT: So there are two people signed up  
24 and they said just comments. So maybe we should just  
25 check, because I'm not sure which thing they want to

1 give comments on.

2 Okay. Capital City, not ARVA.

3 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Okay. Then I think we  
4 are ready to get into the question timeline.

5 Actually, Ms. Hyatt, why don't we look at the  
6 legal review first before we start questions, because  
7 that seems to clear up questions a lot of times.

8 MS. HYATT: I'm not sure if they wanted to  
9 utilize it, but they do have an additional 5 minutes  
10 since there was no opposition --

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Oh, okay. I'd forgotten  
12 about that.

13 MS. HYATT: -- if they have anything.

14 MS. JOHNSON: No. I would just tell you stories  
15 about kids, but that's okay. Go right ahead.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

17 MS. HYATT: Okay. So like we saw yesterday,  
18 ARVA did submit some additional comments to the legal  
19 review after --

20 Hi, Dr. Williams, good to see you.

21 -- after the information was uploaded on the  
22 agenda. So, some of this is just going to be making  
23 sure that we have a clear record.

24 So the first area is on personnel policies. I'd  
25 asked some questions about waivers for 6-17-208 and

1           210, which has to do with grievance procedures. It's  
2           my understanding that ARVA wishes to rescind the  
3           waiver request for those two provisions, and I just  
4           need them to verify that for me.

5           MR. WALTER: Morning, Dr. Pfeffer, Members of  
6           the Panel. Tripp Walter, staff attorney, Arkansas  
7           Public School Resource Center on behalf of ARVA.

8           Yes, we do wish to rescind those two waiver  
9           requests.

10          MS. HYATT: The second is on attendance  
11          policies. So ARVA has held a waiver and asked to  
12          continue holding a waiver of 6-18-209(b), which  
13          states that the school has to develop strategies for  
14          promoting maximum student attendance, including but  
15          not limited to the use of alternative classrooms and  
16          in-school suspensions in lieu of suspension from  
17          school. The rationale provided is that because  
18          they're a virtual school they don't have the ability  
19          to adopt an alternative classroom model. My concern  
20          was that the law doesn't require you to do that; it  
21          requires you to consider that in the policy, but it's  
22          not limited to that. And so I would like to give  
23          ARVA an opportunity to explain exactly what they're  
24          doing to insure that they're promoting maximum  
25          student attendance for kids as part of the rationale

1 to maintain that waiver.

2 MS. JOHNSON: So our plans and actions for  
3 monitoring student attendance -- first of all, our  
4 attendance is gathered electronically from our system  
5 so we know when a student logs in, what they're  
6 doing, how long they're in a course; so we have a  
7 pretty good look. We have a team that supports our  
8 students; they're student champions. So every  
9 student has a single point of contact and those  
10 champions are checking daily, checking attendance  
11 daily, contacting students if they sort of are non-  
12 existent. But then we also have a three-tiered  
13 approach of what we call noncompliance and there's a  
14 set of agreements that our students and learning  
15 coaches agree to, and that is daily logging in,  
16 regular attendance, regular completion of lessons.  
17 So we move students up, tier one to tier three, as  
18 those situations escalate, and they can eventually be  
19 removed if, you know, we're not really seeing them  
20 latch onto the program itself. But also clearly  
21 following all of the truancy regulations -- 10 days,  
22 no log-in -- those are removals for us.

23 MR. WALTER: Tripp Walter, APSRC.

24 In Ms. Hyatt's comment she also noted that the  
25 statute says that the school shall develop policies

1 for promoting maximum student attendance, including  
2 but not limited to the use of alternative classroom  
3 and in-school suspensions in lieu of suspension from  
4 school. So just to build on what Ms. Johnson said,  
5 the waiver request we tried to narrowly tailor it to  
6 those situations that would be unique to the virtual  
7 school. And those two things -- alternative  
8 placement and alternative classroom, or ALE, and in-  
9 school suspension -- are things that are not going to  
10 be possible in a virtual setting. And hopefully you  
11 understand from what Ms. Johnson said that certainly  
12 they are doing; they're not going without a policy.  
13 They are very concerned about it. But they have  
14 developed a policy that they believe works well for  
15 their unique student population.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Do you all have any questions  
17 regarding that?

18 So can I just make sure I'm clear? So there  
19 still are attendance policies; the school will still  
20 make sure that their policies promote student  
21 attendance and to address when students are not  
22 attending per the policy?

23 MS. HYATT: (Nodding head up and down.)

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So this does not  
25 change requirements for students to adhere to --

1 MS. HYATT: (Shaking head from side to side.)

2 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

3 MS. HYATT: Right. And Tripp is absolutely  
4 correct. They did narrowly tailor it just to the  
5 provision that talked about ALE and in-school  
6 suspension. But I just thought it would be  
7 beneficial to explain the rationale behind that to  
8 the Panel.

9 The next is on discipline. I believe -- so they  
10 requested 6-18-511, which says that a teacher may  
11 remove students from the classroom if they're  
12 misbehaving. I believe that they are intending to  
13 rescind that waiver request as the law is permissive,  
14 not -- it doesn't say must do anything; it just says  
15 they may, they have the ability to do it. So it was  
16 my opinion that they did not need that waiver. I  
17 believe their intention is to rescind it.

18 MR. WALTER: Tripp Walter, APSRC.

19 That is correct and we do rescind it based on  
20 legal comments and discussion.

21 MS. HYATT: Again, close to the end. The next  
22 is on Library/Media. So it is very common for  
23 Library/Media waivers, especially in the virtual  
24 context. A couple of comments on theirs -- the first  
25 I believe has been resolved, which is that they

1 requested a waiver of 2(d)(1) in the Standards which  
2 only requires the District to budget and expend  
3 sufficient resources to maintain an appropriate  
4 balance of print/non-print and electronic media. It  
5 was my opinion that they didn't need that waiver and  
6 I believe they intend to rescind that piece of this  
7 request. If I could just have someone confirm that  
8 for me?

9 MR. WALTER: Tripp Walter, APSRC.

10 I do wish to confirm that. But if I can add  
11 just a little to this -- again, this is one of those  
12 situations or subject areas that's unique in virtual,  
13 opposed to a brick-and-mortar. I just wanted to  
14 assure the Panel -- I think the comments bare that  
15 out, but there is -- there are provisions for  
16 providing adequate materials. This does not mean  
17 this -- the part of the waiver that exists and will  
18 stay in place and that we've asked for is not an  
19 attempt to remove it completely, but again tailor it  
20 to the needs of students and staff in a virtual  
21 setting.

22 MS. HYATT: The second part of the Library/Media  
23 was a request for 6-25-101 et seq. There are  
24 provisions of that that absolutely make sense that  
25 have to do with licensure and ratio. The part I

1 think that's still kind of concern for me is 6-25-  
2 105, which is that every school must have written  
3 policies for the selection, removal and retention of  
4 media and a policy on how they deal with challenges  
5 to materials that they select. And then 6-25-106,  
6 which is to provide resources that contribute to  
7 lifelong learning while accommodating differences in  
8 instructional method, interest and capabilities -- I  
9 was unclear why those waivers were necessary, as even  
10 in the virtual context it seems like they could  
11 comply with those two requirements. They did provide  
12 -- I asked the question do they have these policies,  
13 and the response I received was they do not. ARVA  
14 does not have policies addressing retention of  
15 Library/Media materials, selection, removal, nor  
16 addressing challenged materials. So I'd like them  
17 maybe to explain a little bit about how they do that  
18 selection process and why they need a waiver of these  
19 provisions in order to continue operating.

20 MS. JOHNSON: Certainly. So our library  
21 resources are largely second-party virtual library  
22 resources. So while certainly a student can bring a  
23 local -- or family could bring a local concern that,  
24 you know, "I found this book in this virtual  
25 library," and make us aware, and we could make the

1 provider aware. Because we don't solely own the  
2 rights or the organization of those second-party  
3 virtual libraries, if you will, resource centers,  
4 it's more difficult for us to be able to create a  
5 policy where we can directly react to a concern. Now  
6 if we have something within our curriculum or, you  
7 know, a certain text that a teacher has suggested,  
8 certainly we have policies where, you know, our  
9 families can reach out and make -- sort of express  
10 those concerns and we react to those. But I think  
11 our concern with the waiver was that those resources  
12 that we use, sometimes our kids are using local  
13 libraries geographically; sometimes they're using  
14 virtual libraries and resources that, while we do  
15 provide for them because that's part of our budget  
16 and part of our resources for our students, we don't  
17 actually own them to be able to modify what the  
18 selections would include.

19 MS. HYATT: I do think that that is an  
20 appropriate rationale for 6-25-105. It still doesn't  
21 really explain to me the rationale behind 6-25-106,  
22 which simply says that they have to provide resources  
23 that contribute to lifelong learning while  
24 accommodating differences in instructional method,  
25 interest, and capabilities. I think that's something

1           that the school could absolutely do, even in the  
2           model that they just explained. So if they would  
3           like to continue with that waiver request, I'd just  
4           like to note that I don't believe that it's  
5           necessary. Of course, it's up to the Panel and the  
6           applicant to decide.

7           MR. WALTER: I understand Ms. Hyatt's comments  
8           and concerns. We would ask to keep it. I mean it's  
9           part -- sometimes we need to realize that the waivers  
10          are not just break-apart pieces in a sense, but part  
11          of a whole policy and way of doing things. Again,  
12          while being mindful of what she said, this is part of  
13          a policy that ARVA has worked under for quite  
14          sometime. It has worked well. I don't know of any  
15          issues with it. I would like to be able to ask the  
16          Panel to continue on with the waiver at this point,  
17          unless there are any serious concerns about it.

18          CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Did you have a question, Dr.  
19          Williams?

20          DR. WILLIAMS: I need to understand this waiver  
21          a little bit more. You know, I listened to each one  
22          of you; each one of you makes sense, you know. So  
23          what is the State's primary concern with this?

24          MS. HYATT: So based on what they've said today,  
25          I don't have any remaining concerns with any of the

1           Library/Media waivers, except 6-25-106. And that is  
2           like a two-line statute and all it says is you must  
3           provide materials that promote lifelong learning and  
4           have a variety -- or I'm not -- I don't have the  
5           exact wording written down -- but cater to the  
6           interests and the different abilities of your  
7           students in different instructional methods. I don't  
8           think it's a very heavy-handed law.

9           DR. WILLIAMS: Right.

10          MS. HYATT: I think it's relatively simply,  
11          especially given the explanation that they gave today  
12          that says that they have a variety of ways that  
13          students can access materials. And probably more so  
14          than a traditional public school because they have  
15          these partnerships with libraries and online virtual  
16          libraries. So I guess my concern is I don't think  
17          that it's been the practice of this Panel to grant  
18          waivers unless they're necessary for the operation of  
19          the school, and I think that's a good practice. And  
20          so when we grant waivers to schools obviously there  
21          are the 1240 consequences of that, which open it up  
22          to other schools to get it. So I think it's a good  
23          practice to make sure that we're giving waivers that  
24          are necessary for schools to be able to do. Of  
25          course, making sure they have flexibility in that but

1 I -- because this law is so light-handed --

2 DR. WILLIAMS: And I'm with you. Do you have a  
3 rebuttal? Because what she -- it makes perfect sense  
4 that if there's no need for a waiver, why should we  
5 grant a waiver? And by the fact that you all are  
6 working with all these different libraries and have  
7 access for your students, why not?

8 MR. WALTER: We will go ahead in light of the  
9 comments then, Dr. Williams, and rescind the waiver  
10 request. However, I would like to state, again, this  
11 is I guess what -- and I won't take up too much more  
12 of the Panel's time -- this is what I guess the  
13 Division now calls an expiring waiver. This is not a  
14 new request. This is something that the school has  
15 had for years, and it's just some -- it's not an  
16 attempt to try and diminish access to resources, nor  
17 limit in any way. It's just an opportunity to not be  
18 -- even though it's not a heavy constraint, to have  
19 something additional put on for practice that's gone  
20 on for a decade or more. And I just -- that's really  
21 --

22 DR. WILLIAMS: And that makes --

23 MR. WALTER: And I just wanted to make the  
24 comment; I'm not going to --

25 DR. WILLIAMS: Oh, absolutely.

1 MR. WALTER: -- beat this into the ground  
2 anymore, but --

3 DR. WILLIAMS: The school and your  
4 representation of them are all for the right reasons,  
5 absolutely.

6 MR. WALTER: Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Well, and if I could comment  
8 on that, I think that speaks to kind of the maturing  
9 of the charter process.

10 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes.

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I think when waivers had been  
12 granted previously -- and I think 2001 is when ARVA  
13 started -- you know, I think at that time it was  
14 unknown, you know, how -- what is going to be the  
15 impact of waivers, what's going to be necessary,  
16 what's going to not be necessary. And I think now,  
17 as processes have matured and we've learned a lot,  
18 laws have changed in light of the successes we've  
19 seen from charters; we see other schools that are  
20 benefitting from the pioneer work that charters have  
21 done early on. And I think now it's appropriate to  
22 say, "yeah, maybe in light of this there are certain  
23 codes that we don't need waivers from because this is  
24 what we do anyway." And so I don't take it as trying  
25 to be limiting on charters; I think it's more of we

1 realize now where we are and, you know, there's  
2 always the opportunity to come back if something is  
3 getting in the way. So we appreciate your  
4 perspective on that.

5 MR. WALTER: Thank you.

6 MS. HYATT: The next remaining issue is on  
7 defibrillators and CPR. I believe -- so I asked the  
8 question whether -- so ARVA requested it because  
9 they're a virtual school, they don't have a  
10 traditional school campus. I asked the question did  
11 they have an administrative building and did that  
12 building have a defibrillator. The response I  
13 received was they do not have a defibrillator at the  
14 admin building; therefore, they would like to  
15 maintain the waiver. I don't have a legal concern  
16 with them maintaining the waiver, and so that issue  
17 in my mind has been resolved. I don't need them to  
18 say anything yet, unless you want to.

19 (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: Mr. Walter spoke  
20 quietly with Ms. Hyatt.)

21 MS. HYATT: Oh, yeah, okay. Thanks, Tripp.

22 One of my recommendations was that they add 6-  
23 10-122 to their request. That's the statutory piece  
24 that goes with the rules. They have asked to add  
25 that piece. So can you just confirm that for me?

1 MR. WALTER: Yes. Based on Ms. Hyatt's  
2 comments, we do ask for an additional request of  
3 Arkansas Code Annotated Section 6-1 -- pardon me --  
4 10-122 to effectuate the waiver.

5 MS. HYATT: Okay. And the last one is nutrition  
6 and physical activity requirements. They had  
7 originally requested Sections 5.02.1, which has to do  
8 with vending machines in schools, and Sections 7  
9 through 11. Section 7 is P.E. requirements; Section  
10 8 is food and beverages; Section 9 is the nutrition  
11 standards; Section 10 is nutrition education; and  
12 Section 11 is access to food and beverages in  
13 schools. They have asked to rescind the waiver of  
14 5.02.1 because -- since they don't have a traditional  
15 campus those vending -- they don't have vending  
16 machines. Right? So if they could confirm that  
17 rescission for me.

18 MR. WALTER: On behalf of ARVA I will confirm  
19 the rescission.

20 I would just add one other thing too. If you'll  
21 note in the comments in one of the discussions, I  
22 think a comment from Ms. Hyatt was trying to insure  
23 that in this piece -- in this block of statutes and  
24 rules that we're seeking to waive that there are  
25 federal guidelines. And I wanted to make very clear

1 that there is -- there was no attempt to ask for a  
2 waiver of any of those.

3 MS. HYATT: And they've also verified that they  
4 know that they have to meet the graduation  
5 requirements for P.E. and health. And so even though  
6 they will be getting a waiver of some of these  
7 standards they know that they have to meet the  
8 requirements for the graduation requirements for  
9 those in 9 through 12.

10 That's it, unless there are questions.

11 DR. KREMERS: Madam Chair, I have one, if that's  
12 okay.

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Uh-huh.

14 DR. KREMERS: Did you address the distance  
15 learning? Because I do want to hear the response on  
16 that particular one.

17 MS. HYATT: Sure. So I did not, and the reason  
18 was because they had provided some rationale. But  
19 I'd be happy to.

20 So on distance and digital learning ARVA has a  
21 waiver of the rules governing distance and digital  
22 learning. I asked what the rationale behind the  
23 waiver was and they only want to maintain a portion  
24 of the waiver, which is Section 10 which outlines the  
25 need for all of the digital learning courses and

1 providers to go through the approval process. So my  
2 response to that was what process does ARVA have in  
3 place to insure that all digital learning courses and  
4 providers are non-sectarian, non-discriminatory,  
5 which is some of the things that is in Section 10 of  
6 those rules, and have successful experience in  
7 furnishing digital learning courses and providing  
8 services that meet or exceed the minimum curriculum  
9 standards in Arkansas. And they did provide some  
10 additional response, and I'll let them explain that  
11 to you guys.

12 MS. JOHNSON: So one of the reasons for our  
13 request of this waiver is that, first of all,  
14 everything we do is digital learning. So to take  
15 that through that approval process would be sort of a  
16 daunting piece for us, every time we, you know,  
17 change a course. Our curriculum is provided by K12,  
18 which has a long history of providing digital  
19 curriculum and digital learning opportunities. Those  
20 -- our agreement with K12, in that much curriculum  
21 agreements are, is that they will provide a  
22 curriculum that has been vetted by all of their legal  
23 processes. But also in our agreement with them they  
24 are to provide us curriculum that is aligned to the  
25 Arkansas state standards. And so they do make those

1 provisions for us. And then obviously in all good  
2 stewardship our teachers and our teams are also  
3 mapping those curriculum pieces to insure that if  
4 there are any gaps that we're addressing them, we're  
5 letting K12 know, and they're reacting to that. So  
6 it's a pretty multi-layered process already as it  
7 exists. So our interest in this waiver is just to  
8 try to keep what already is sort of a pretty dense  
9 process to get a good product in front of our  
10 students, to narrow it as much as possible.

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Additional questions  
12 on that?

13 DR. KREMERS: I would just say -- so K12 then  
14 would be -- follow those guidelines, K12 as a whole?

15 MS. JOHNSON: Yes. We make them aware of what  
16 is required of us legally within the state. A great  
17 example of that is the upcoming need for the improved  
18 reading curriculum. So they've already received the  
19 estate requirements for what we'll need to build into  
20 our reading curriculum and we'll be seeking approval  
21 specifically for that, because it is such an  
22 important legislative piece and important piece for  
23 our students. But we work hand-in-hand with them to  
24 insure that they know what our requirements are. And  
25 they actually have a team that stays abreast of the

1 legal changes here in the state so that they can  
2 react to them accordingly.

3 DR. KREMERS: Okay.

4 MS. HYATT: And, additionally, the non-sectarian  
5 and the non-discriminatory, although that's contained  
6 in this section, there are also provisions in the  
7 charter law and the charter rules that say that they  
8 can't offer religious programs and that kind of  
9 thing. So they're covered in other areas of law and  
10 rule for those I think really important pieces of  
11 Section 10. That's why it wasn't as much of a  
12 concern for me because they still have to follow  
13 those requirements.

14 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right.

15 MS. HYATT: Any other questions for me?

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Thank you, Ms. Hyatt.

17 Okay. We'll go ahead and open it up to panel  
18 member questions. Start with Mr. Wilson.

19 MR. WILSON: Thank you. Are there areas of the  
20 state that you would like to serve that you think are  
21 underserved now? And why would those areas be  
22 underserved? Is it the internet service maybe?

23 MS. JOHNSON: So internet service is a challenge  
24 for us. It is a requirement, an agreement that our  
25 families make to have in place when they come to us.

1 We do try to work with local libraries opportunities,  
2 RNKV for those students. We're getting ready to  
3 launch a program there where hopefully we're going to  
4 be able to provide them with some hotspots that they  
5 can check out to remove that barrier for them. I do  
6 think that the internet does cause issues in some of  
7 our rural areas. I think really as far as  
8 underserved would be more -- coming to ARVA would be  
9 more for a variety of educational opportunities, more  
10 rural areas where schools are smaller, maybe they  
11 don't have the resources or the variety of courses  
12 that they can access. And so, you know, we are --  
13 our population does come from where the areas are  
14 heavily populated in the state. Naturally, those are  
15 sort of our hotspots on our heat map. But, again, we  
16 do have students from all over. So the smaller  
17 districts I think we would really like to reach out  
18 and have conversations with them even to be able to  
19 provide resources and to try to help those districts.  
20 So we haven't really identified any specific areas.  
21 Of course, there's several smaller districts in the  
22 southern part of the state that I think would be --  
23 you know, it would be pretty advantageous for us to  
24 be able to help them. But it is definitely what  
25 we're building toward.

1 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Williams.

3 DR. WILLIAMS: Oh yes. Boy, you all provide a  
4 great service to -- and access for students who  
5 normally wouldn't have an opportunity. So my primary  
6 concern is the academic side.

7 MS. JOHNSON: Absolutely.

8 DR. WILLIAMS: And you talked a little bit about  
9 it. What can you all do to improve the academic  
10 piece? I was looking through the list that you  
11 listed for us. Increase teacher effectiveness -- I'm  
12 going to get in the weeds here -- how do you plan on  
13 going about that? Because that -- to me, that's the  
14 most -- out of everything you have on the list that's  
15 the most critical piece there.

16 MS. JOHNSON: Absolutely. So we actually  
17 launched a three-tier system for our teachers.  
18 They're designated level 1 through level 3, level 1  
19 being highest performing. And we -- it's what we  
20 call a growth model, an opportunity growth model. We  
21 track our teachers throughout the year. So at their  
22 summative meeting they receive their track for the  
23 coming year, and based on their track is the support  
24 level they receive. So level 1 teachers are clearly  
25 our team leaders; they are probably our department

1 chairs, we're leaning into them. Our level 3  
2 teachers, we're providing more support; they're  
3 getting observed more often, they're having more  
4 regular meetings with their administrative team; we  
5 provide some instructional coaching for them as well.  
6 And so each quarter when our principals are meeting  
7 with those teachers they're talking about what has  
8 happened in the prior quarter, giving feedback, and  
9 then setting goals for that next quarter as to how  
10 they can move up or grow up through those tracks.  
11 And so we've really created a tier system of support  
12 for our teachers. And part of what leads into their  
13 track, a fourth of their track is their TESS  
14 observation data, where they're scoring there, what  
15 we're seeing in their classrooms. One piece of that  
16 is student growth, are their students growing; it's a  
17 flat data piece. We have a professionalism indicator  
18 because in a virtual environment the way you answer  
19 an email or a phone call is crazy important; it's a  
20 much higher level of need for professionalism. And  
21 then we have a data-driven component that goes into  
22 that leveling as well -- are they looking at their  
23 data, do we see evidence of that in their classroom,  
24 are they monitoring and changing their instruction.  
25 So we've really done a deep-dive to really have

1 granular quality conversations with our teachers, not  
2 only about where they are but where they're headed  
3 and what we need to see as far as their growth.

4 DR. WILLIAMS: And the actual execution of the  
5 teaching itself, do you provide any training, any  
6 support in that area? The things you talked about  
7 are just, you know --

8 MS. JOHNSON: Yeah.

9 DR. WILLIAMS: -- almost tacit things that you  
10 --

11 MS. JOHNSON: Sure.

12 DR. WILLIAMS: Uh-huh.

13 MS. JOHNSON: Yeah, absolutely. So we have a  
14 monthly professional development. Professional  
15 development is not something that our hours -- it's  
16 not something our teachers struggle for; they get  
17 almost double of everybody else in the state.  
18 Sometimes they're coming in face-to-face in Little  
19 Rock. All of our teachers from across the state  
20 drive in. We do offer some virtual opportunities for  
21 professional development as well. But those  
22 professional developments are on things like Science  
23 of Reading and utilizing reading strategies. We just  
24 did one for our high school teachers because that's  
25 -- I'm a former high school English teacher; it's a

1 little bit of a foreign language to us, so -- so  
2 we're really building into those monthly professional  
3 developments to bring teachers in. We've worked  
4 hand-in-hand with the APSRC to come in and do some  
5 presentations for some academic pieces as well. So  
6 we're really diving into those professional  
7 development opportunities to really equip our  
8 teachers with the tools they need to improve.

9 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Follow-up: the elementary  
10 is -- for the last three years have been consistently  
11 a "D."

12 MS. JOHNSON: Uh-huh.

13 DR. WILLIAMS: And I noticed the middle is a  
14 "C," barely a "D" last year, and same thing with the  
15 high school. What's going on at the elementary level  
16 to be consistently a "D?"

17 MS. JOHNSON: Yeah.

18 DR. WILLIAMS: Where the kids starting from or  
19 --

20 MS. JOHNSON: So there's some elements in the  
21 elementary and, honestly, in all three of our  
22 schools. Some might say, "Oh, gosh, aren't you  
23 concerned about the middle school and high school  
24 falling to a "D?" Well, certainly, I am. But the  
25 highest level of priority for us is our elementary

1 school because that's where it is sort of stagnated.  
2 One of the elements that we have to address, and are  
3 addressing, is the fact that at elementary level  
4 we're relying on that learning coach or that parent  
5 much more greatly than we are at the middle and high  
6 school level. Those kiddos aren't reading yet; so to  
7 be able to interact with curriculum and those sorts  
8 of things is a little bit of a larger stretch.

9 So we've actually started now training our  
10 learning coaches. We just started this year. We  
11 actually have several different days throughout the  
12 year where the students come in and -- in different  
13 geographical spots around the state, and we do  
14 enrichment activities with them. You know, maybe  
15 we're doing -- building volcano or a solar system,  
16 something we can't quite do tangibly in a virtual  
17 environment. And we're pulling those learning  
18 coaches aside and we're doing learning coach training  
19 with them. This is what this looks like.

20 We're also holding homerooms just for our  
21 learning coaches in our elementary, especially in  
22 grades K through 2 this year to really help them  
23 understand what's coming up in the learning for the  
24 students, where the students might trip up, and give  
25 them some resources and some opportunities to improve

1           how they're assisting their student at home. So we  
2           really feel like that that is a gap that we have to  
3           address and we have started really bringing those  
4           learning coaches in, really in some ways for their  
5           own professional development, to help us close those  
6           gaps in our elementary students.

7           DR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

8           CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Kremers.

9           DR. KREMERS: For the increase in enrollment  
10          request, 30 students in online is a little trickier.  
11          I've taught and been a participant, both ways. So in  
12          the example, you know, it was a very small group,  
13          and, of course, they were younger as well. But even  
14          at grade 8 to 12 the in-class experience of 30  
15          students is a lot different than a Zoom classroom  
16          with 30. So have you done surveys with the parents,  
17          students to see how they feel about that increase in  
18          the class size?

19          MS. JOHNSON: The increase in the class size or  
20          the decrease in the class size?

21          DR. KREMERS: Well, from my understanding you  
22          went -- you were going from 25 to 30. So did I  
23          misread that?

24          MS. JOHNSON: For our targeted sessions?

25          DR. KREMERS: No. The enrollment increase.

1 MS. JOHNSON: Oh.

2 DR. KREMERS: So that would mean 30 students --  
3 because if you have -- well, I guess it's by grade,  
4 but you're also going to increase the students within  
5 each class setting?

6 MS. JOHNSON: No, just by grade. So our class  
7 sizes would stay the same. It would just be that  
8 total number per grade that we would be able to  
9 serve.

10 DR. KREMERS: Okay.

11 MS. JOHNSON: So we certainly would not tamper  
12 with what we think is -- has been a very helpful and  
13 wise move academically to keep those class sessions  
14 with 20 or less.

15 DR. KREMERS: Okay.

16 MS. JOHNSON: So that will stay intact --

17 DR. KREMERS: Okay.

18 MS. JOHNSON: -- for certain.

19 DR. KREMERS: Okay. Because that was my -- just  
20 making sure I read it and understood that correctly.  
21 Because I know that is really a challenge when you  
22 try to increase the number of students in an online  
23 course.

24 MS. JOHNSON: Yes. And especially with the  
25 video component, which is another one of the reasons

1           that we felt it was important to move the class size  
2           down. I feel like the importance of the video  
3           component is so great. But if you get more than, you  
4           know, 20 of those little faces in there it starts to  
5           get really difficult to know are they getting it, are  
6           they with me, and so you sort of lose the value of  
7           being able to see them if you get too many. So we'll  
8           definitely hold to that.

9           DR. KREMERS: And I agree with Dr. Williams on  
10          the concerns for the academics. I know you're  
11          working with a high risk -- it's not always, but  
12          there are some high risk populations that are doing  
13          online; that's why they're steered towards that to  
14          begin with. So -- but also on the other end I'd like  
15          to commend you on the work that you're doing; you  
16          guys have been a pacesetter on some things, like the  
17          student leadership hands-on opportunities.  
18          Nationwide it's a struggle for a CTE to be in the  
19          virtual environment. And so, you know, I'm not  
20          surprised that they're having you go present  
21          nationally because people are still trying to figure  
22          out what this looks like. Because, of course, what  
23          we do is a lot of hands-on component and you guys are  
24          kind of navigating through that process. So I think  
25          the most important thing is getting the academics to

1 match the richness of what you have going on, the  
2 great things with CTE student opportunities, but the  
3 academics are a really, really important component.  
4 And so I kind of had the same thought, you know, just  
5 is that plan solid on getting the academics to  
6 increase. But I definitely commend you on the other  
7 components as well.

8 MS. JOHNSON: Thank you. And we definitely  
9 agree. I mean it's our sense of urgency; it's what  
10 we talk about consistently and move to action  
11 consistently with our staff. So we're working the  
12 academic side wholeheartedly and quickly.

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Baldwin.

14 MR. BALDWIN: Thank you.

15 So I think I'll continue on the academic  
16 question a little bit. I have three questions.

17 Talk to us a little bit about teacher turnover.  
18 Do you have teachers that are -- that have been doing  
19 this a long time, or is that a challenge to keep  
20 educators in the classroom, the virtual classroom?

21 MS. JOHNSON: It can be. So I know that the  
22 data that's included with the agenda shows a  
23 longevity or average years of teaching I think of  
24 about 1.6. It's actually a data-push issue that we  
25 solved this year. We couldn't -- we had some

1 difficulties figuring out where that was pulling  
2 from. So if you look for the 19-20 the average years  
3 of experience I believe is 8.6, 8.9, something like  
4 that.

5 We do have some turnover in teaching honestly  
6 because virtual teaching is just not for every  
7 teacher. It's -- we have a lot of teachers that come  
8 to us thinking this is going to be an easy  
9 environment, a flexible environment, "I can do this  
10 and do this at the same time." And so we really have  
11 to train and hone in our teachers on the front-end to  
12 understand that this is still a school and it's still  
13 an all-day event and you're still pouring into these  
14 students. So I think we're winning that battle more  
15 now than we did in our early years because we're  
16 doing a better job on the front-end when we hire  
17 teachers.

18 We do have some turnover, and I wouldn't say  
19 that it's extensive. Last year, with our letters of  
20 intent to return I think we were at about 96%  
21 returning teachers. You know, we've had a few with  
22 some life situations that have happened this fall  
23 that have resigned with us. But for the most part  
24 our teachers are happy to be with us; they're about  
25 75 to 80 percent satisfied with their workplace and

1 say their morale is good, which is pretty good in a  
2 virtual environment when they're working in isolation  
3 all across the state, except for once a month. So I  
4 think we're winning that war a bit, and I do think  
5 that that longevity is helpful for us. Some of our  
6 most fantastic teachers are actually brand-new  
7 teachers because they don't have their mindset  
8 charted yet. And so they come to us and they  
9 recognize and are a little bit more open to the  
10 possibilities of what we do, so -- but it is  
11 definitely something that we monitor and we take care  
12 of.

13 MR. BALDWIN: I was just curious if that was  
14 maybe one of the reasons for the letter grades and  
15 especially the decrease in grades in the middle  
16 school and high school.

17 Looking at your video that you showed I was  
18 looking at the faces of the students, and it seemed  
19 like the young man on the lower right-hand side was  
20 maybe not as engaged. When you see a student that's  
21 maybe not as engaged, is there a way to -- you know,  
22 in some of the other charters where it's a physical  
23 charter they can take them and put them into a  
24 special help program. Is that possible with the --

25 MS. JOHNSON: Yes. So we tackle our less-

1 engaged students a variety of ways. So the student  
2 champions, that I mentioned earlier, also monitor  
3 engagement; and so they're reaching out, they're  
4 calling families, they're trying to find out what the  
5 situations surrounding those students are; you know,  
6 what's happening with them, especially if there's  
7 been a life-change event. So they're in constant  
8 contact. A teacher, such as in the situation that  
9 you saw, if she saw that the student was less engaged  
10 she's likely turning right around after that class  
11 and connecting with that student; "Hey, thank you for  
12 what you did share, but I didn't -- I couldn't really  
13 tell if you understood the context. So can you meet  
14 me again and let's you and I just go through and make  
15 sure that you understand what we went through -- what  
16 we did in class?" So --

17 MR. BALDWIN: So there's a process?

18 MS. JOHNSON: There is a process.

19 MR. BALDWIN: All right. Final question: in  
20 looking at your grades do you all quantify your  
21 improvement levels? So do you say to yourself in  
22 elementary I want to move from a "D" to a "C" in how  
23 many years? I guess I'd be interested in knowing  
24 where your expectations are for the future.

25 MS. JOHNSON: Yes. So we definitely put goals

1 out in front of our teachers and they actually build  
2 -- they build goals for themselves, what are our  
3 leading measures going to be to moving our ESSA  
4 grade. We always put in front of our teachers to  
5 improve a grade in the coming year. Certainly,  
6 that's attainable for our middle school and high  
7 school, that it's just slightly below. The middle  
8 school, we'll still shoot for that next grade level  
9 up; but in reality, it may take a couple of years  
10 because of the combination of the training of the  
11 parents and then where we see our scores coming in  
12 with reading and math. Another thing that's  
13 important to remember is that, you know, often our  
14 students don't stay with us; so they're with us for a  
15 short time because they have a specific need. Maybe  
16 it's a life event. I talked to a great family who  
17 said -- was leaving us and said, "Hey, we love ARVA.  
18 It's just that we're here because our son broke his  
19 leg, and so we schooled him at home this year; but  
20 now his leg is good and he's going back to his  
21 regular school so he can play football again." We're  
22 like, "Okay, good. Glad that we can -- glad that we  
23 can help." So that's something that we battle as  
24 well is that year-to-year growth sometimes is more  
25 difficult for us to chart because of the reasons that

1 students come and go for us. So --

2 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So I have a couple of  
3 questions. The first one -- and it does kind of go  
4 back to the academic part. It looks like that you're  
5 serving about 65 dyslexic students?

6 MS. JOHNSON: Uh-huh.

7 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So that's a pretty small  
8 percentage I think out of the overall number. So I  
9 was wondering what you use for screening and how are  
10 you using your data in your upper grades? You know,  
11 you mentioned you had 30-something percent of your  
12 students were scoring in the lowest category of ACT  
13 Aspire. Are you looking at the older students as  
14 well? Because I'm thinking if you're consistently  
15 lower achieving at the elementary level, and if your  
16 middle and high school are now dropping, you know,  
17 are there issues that maybe aren't being detected in  
18 terms of student needs if --

19 MS. JOHNSON: Sure.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So could you talk a little  
21 bit about that?

22 MS. JOHNSON: Absolutely. So we run an RTI  
23 program in all grade levels, so that does help us to  
24 identify some of those students that have those gaps  
25 in skills. And we hold those RTI sessions and work

1 to remediate those gaps. An interesting thing to  
2 your point is that our actual ACT scores for the 11th  
3 grade, this year we're just slightly below state  
4 average, but typically are at -- we're just above  
5 state average. So it's sort of an interesting  
6 juxtaposition for us that in 9th and 10th grade we're  
7 below state average, but then when we hit the ACT we  
8 seem to be, you know, pretty well on the mark. But  
9 we are definitely monitoring those students through  
10 dyslexia screeners, through RTI processes. And then  
11 we also just utilize our classroom teachers to really  
12 identify students that don't seem to have those base  
13 skills so that we can pull them out and work with  
14 them one-on-one.

15 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So what is your screening and  
16 your intervention?

17 MS. JOHNSON: I'm going to ask Kristin Allen,  
18 our academic administrator, to come up and address  
19 that. She's very close to our dyslexia program and  
20 has spent some time as an elementary principal.

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

22 MS. JOHNSON: So she's much more well-versed  
23 than I.

24 MS. ALLEN: Hi. Kristin Allen, academic  
25 administrator.

1                   For dyslexia, our screener, we use the CTOP  
2                   Level 2 screener and so work through the RTI process.  
3                   And then we progress monitor using Phonics First and  
4                   DIBLES.

5                   CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So my second question  
6                   -- or, yeah, I guess it's a question. You mentioned  
7                   you have -- you've reached out to the Little Rock  
8                   School District and talked about ways that maybe you  
9                   could partner. And thinking about that with other  
10                  school districts, what are you thinking that would  
11                  look like? What are some --

12                  MS. JOHNSON: Well, that's a great question.  
13                  Because we're so early we don't really know yet. So  
14                  what we'd like to do, if districts are interested and  
15                  they have -- don't have the ability to offer some of  
16                  the pathways that we can offer, what we would love to  
17                  do is be able to allow their students to take those  
18                  CTE courses that lead to that pathway with us.  
19                  That's what -- this sort of originally started out of  
20                  some conversations that other charters were having  
21                  with our CTE administrator because they didn't have  
22                  the resources to be able to do that and they were  
23                  wondering about those opportunities. So I certainly  
24                  recognize that that's a fine line and a careful  
25                  dance. But, again, in the light of not being as

1 concerned about what is easy is what is right for our  
2 students. If we can help to advance career readiness  
3 of students in the state of Arkansas, we certainly  
4 want to be a part of that.

5 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So I thought that was really  
6 interesting and I appreciate you for reaching out,  
7 because those are the ways we're going to see the  
8 benefits for students.

9 So just kind of asking those two questions, and  
10 going to what Dr. Kremers was asking as far as the  
11 enrollment cap, I think I would have concern based on  
12 the performance right now at your elementary levels  
13 and maybe the impact that it's having as far as an  
14 overall enrollment cap, but knowing at your upper  
15 grades -- when I'm looking at the enrollment it looks  
16 like 6th -- well, really 7th grade is where you have  
17 a big jump in your enrollment.

18 MS. JOHNSON: Yes.

19 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So if you needed more  
20 flexibility with the overall cap to move them by  
21 grade level, I don't know -- are you limited by grade  
22 level in terms of how many students you can have?  
23 Because I would like to see the elementary things get  
24 shored up. So continuing with your dyslexia, with  
25 making sure you're getting students identified if

1           there are issues with dyslexia, but also improving  
2           the core instruction around the Science of Reading.  
3           And I think as that improves then you're going to  
4           continue to see the improvement all the way through.  
5           But I think just doing a blanket enrollment cap, I  
6           don't know if getting more students right now is  
7           going to make it easier to make those improvements.  
8           So is that something that could be considered if we  
9           gave you -- do you need flexibility with the  
10          enrollment cap currently?

11                   MS. JOHNSON: So, yes and no. So basically  
12          we're holding our 8 through 12, not because the  
13          previous expansion was written in stone that we would  
14          have X-number of students at each grade level. But  
15          we did present as part of that expansion and approval  
16          a certain target number for each of those levels.  
17          And we're currently over that number at the high  
18          school. We've over-enrolled a little bit because we  
19          have students that come and go with us. But what we  
20          didn't want to do, in good faith with the Panel, was  
21          to just say, "Oh, we have, you know, these five, six  
22          hundred kids; we can just move that number up to the  
23          high school." So if that would be something that  
24          would meet the approval of the Panel, certainly that  
25          would be consideration for us. We would also

1 certainly welcome if we wanted to do that, because we  
2 are under-enrolled, pretty significantly in  
3 elementary --

4 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Right.

5 MS. JOHNSON: -- based on what we put forward.  
6 And if we -- if the expansion was what we wanted to  
7 move forward with, and we wanted to designate those  
8 only for 8 to 10, then we certainly -- or 8 to 12, we  
9 certainly would be appropriate and fine with that --  
10 or for just specific CTE seats as well, if you wanted  
11 to hold those for our students that were seeking  
12 that.

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Because on the information we  
14 have it looks like you've got 2474 students and you  
15 have the cap of 3000. So you still have plenty of  
16 room within that cap.

17 MS. JOHNSON: Uh-huh. Yes.

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So I don't know if anybody  
19 else has any thoughts, but to me, you know, bumping  
20 the cap on up even further is not -- you still have  
21 plenty of room there; it just may be flexibility in  
22 where those students are. So --

23 MS. JOHNSON: Right. Originally, in the  
24 expansion we requested approval for 960 at the high  
25 school.

1                   CHAIRMAN PFEFFER:   Okay.

2                   MS. JOHNSON:   And we're currently at 1,096, so  
3 we are over-enrolled.  But we do -- again, do that  
4 normally because we have quite a bit of cycling in  
5 and out.  So, again, we were -- even though the  
6 expansion wasn't hard-fast in that way, we wanted to  
7 make sure and honor what we had presented in front of  
8 the Panel as our goal for growth.

9                   CHAIRMAN PFEFFER:  Does anybody have any  
10 thoughts or comments on that?

11                  DR. KREMERS:  I like the idea of not increasing  
12 the overall cap, but giving the flexibility within  
13 what they have.  I like that.

14                  MR. ROGERS:  Some of the same things that you  
15 were saying, because when I was looking at My School  
16 Info last night it showed 2361 last year, which if we  
17 gave you the flexibility it would be around 639 more.  
18 And then if we also gave you the 750 that would be  
19 close to 1400 kids over the next five years.  Until  
20 the grades -- and working on that, getting better --  
21 I would have hesitation about increasing it right now  
22 as well.  So I'd be more comfortable with just  
23 overall flexibility within the cap.

24                  DR. WILLIAMS:  I actually had the same question  
25 I'd written down about the need for the increase

1           myself.

2                   CHAIRMAN PFEFFER:   Okay.

3                   DR. WILLIAMS:   So I agree with the flexibility  
4           within their cap.

5                   CHAIRMAN PFEFFER:   Okay.   Mr. Rogers, do you  
6           have questions?

7                   MR. ROGERS:   I don't have questions.   Along  
8           those same things, just comments about the ESSA Score  
9           Index, when I was looking at it it did bother me  
10          because over the last three years the overall trend  
11          has been going down.   And so that's just -- that was  
12          -- just kind of stuck in my thoughts last night with  
13          it, but I understand what you're trying to do with  
14          it.   And the -- when you look back at your teacher  
15          turnover from the years, it wasn't even -- before, I  
16          think last year it wasn't even a full year that you'd  
17          had teachers there.   So I understand that is a thing  
18          as well.   But given the not increasing the overall  
19          cap while we work on that, I'm more comfortable with  
20          that.

21                   CHAIRMAN PFEFFER:   Ms. Webb, there was a  
22          question about the Standards for Accreditation.   And  
23          anything pending?   Is there anything?

24                   MS. WEBB:   They are accredited.

25                   CHAIRMAN PFEFFER:   Okay.   Good deal.   All right.

1           So, you know, overall, from what I've heard  
2           today, you had a very good presentation. You know,  
3           when charters come back for renewal for me it's -- I  
4           want to see success and I want to see plans, you  
5           know, like forward-thinking; you know, what are going  
6           to be the next steps. And, you know, I think you're  
7           not able to show maybe the success that you know you  
8           need to, but you own that. But what I'm really  
9           encouraged by are the conversations around the  
10          partnerships, the positive movement with CTE  
11          students, more and more opportunities. Dr. Kremers  
12          seems to be very comfortable with that, so that's  
13          very, very encouraging. So I really do appreciate  
14          that. And the support for the coaches, I think that  
15          was another big thing and I'm hoping that our Family  
16          and Community Engagement team is able to think about  
17          this as part of maybe a different type of support  
18          that we could help investigate for, you know, for all  
19          schools that have some type of virtual component  
20          because it's going to be very difficult if students  
21          are just on their own with that. So --

22                 MS. JOHNSON: We'd love to partner --

23                 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yeah.

24                 MS. JOHNSON: -- with the Department. If we can  
25                 be of help at all, we certainly would be.

1                   CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yeah. So those were all  
2 things that I found very encouraging.

3                   Does anybody else have a question?

4                   DR. WILLIAMS: I just have a comment. I just  
5 appreciate the legal review from ADE and the response  
6 from Arkansas Virtual Academy. I thought that was --  
7 the record kind of sets a historical document on how  
8 we move forward in addressing these things in the  
9 future. So, just a note of appreciation for both  
10 parties here.

11                  CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Hyatt, are there  
12 any remaining issues or anyone that has signed up  
13 that hasn't gotten to speak?

14                  MS. HYATT: (Shaking head from side to side.)

15                  CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Okay. Panel, are  
16 there any conversations or --

17                  DR. WILLIAMS: Yeah. I have just a question. I  
18 was looking at what their request would be.

19                  CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

20                  DR. WILLIAMS: And the first request makes  
21 sense. I'm looking at their presentation, very last  
22 page. And the -- I think we addressed the waiver  
23 piece of that. The enrollment increase is kind of  
24 wanting to -- would that just be -- one, do we need  
25 to take these separately or can we take them all at

1 the same time? And I'm assuming that the second  
2 enrollment, based on what I've heard, would be denial  
3 on the increase. Am I reading this correctly?

4 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So, Ms. Hyatt, for the --  
5 because they've done a really good job of laying out  
6 what they're asking for, would a motion need to have  
7 separate provisions or could we do a motion to  
8 approve but modify the request for the enrollment  
9 increase, but instead to just give them flexibility  
10 within their current 3,000 student cap?

11 MS. HYATT: Yeah. I don't think you need to do  
12 it in separate motions.

13 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

14 MS. HYATT: I think you can make one motion and  
15 either approve it as it's presented or approve it  
16 with the modifications, similar to how you did  
17 yesterday when you limited the time and said "we  
18 approve except for a three-year renewal instead of  
19 five-year," whatever it was. So I think you can do  
20 one motion.

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. If there's not any  
22 additional questions, if someone has a motion --

23 DR. WILLIAMS: All right.

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Don't everybody grab the  
25 microphone at once.

1 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. I move that we approve  
2 their request as presented, with the exception of the  
3 enrollment increase.

4 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And we had discussed  
5 having -- allowing them the flexibility within that  
6 to enroll up to their current cap?

7 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes.

8 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So we have a motion.

9 MR. BALDWIN: Second.

10 MR. WILSON: Second.

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Motion and a second.

12 All those in favor say aye.

13 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

14 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Any opposed?

15 Okay. All right. We will record our votes and  
16 give you feedback in just a moment. Okay? All  
17 right.

18 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

19 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. Mr. Baldwin.

20 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I voted to approve the  
21 request. And personally I thought the focus --  
22 future focus on academics was important in my  
23 decision.

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Kremers.

25 DR. KREMERS: I approved the motion. There is a

1 thoughtful process for academic improvement through  
2 student-focused strategies and teaching improvement  
3 strategies. They are implementing CTE well and  
4 provide additional opportunities for students.

5 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Rogers.

6 MR. ROGERS: I voted for the motion. As I  
7 stated previously, the ESSA School Index is a  
8 concern. But I feel the charter is moving in the  
9 right direction to address those issues.

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Wilson.

11 MR. WILSON: I voted for the motion. I was  
12 satisfied that the plan and emphasis on academic  
13 improvement was sufficient.

14 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

15 MR. WILSON: Is sufficient.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Williams.

17 DR. WILLIAMS: I support the motion for a five-  
18 year renewal with the stated focus and the waiver.  
19 This will allow them to continue to serve a  
20 population of students to have access to education.

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. Thank you for  
22 being here today and we look forward to seeing good  
23 work with students.

24 Okay. All right. Does anyone need to take a  
25 break before we move to the next item?

1 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes, I do.

2 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So let's do a 5-minute  
3 break and we will come back and have the next -- our  
4 next hearing.

5 (BREAK: 10:20 - 10:30 A.M.)

6 A-2: HEARING FOR OPEN-ENROLLMENT CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL  
7 APPLICATION - CAPITAL CITY LIGHTHOUSE CHARTER SCHOOL

8 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. We're going to  
9 move on to Item Number 2 for our hearing on the  
10 charter school renewal application for Capital City  
11 Lighthouse.

12 MS. WEBB: Capital City Lighthouse is an open-  
13 enrollment charter that was initially authorized on  
14 October 15, 2014. The currently serve students in  
15 grades K-5 and have an enrollment cap of 750. They  
16 are requesting renewal of their charter for three  
17 years, through 2023, which there should be a  
18 correction on the agenda. They are currently  
19 accredited with Standards for Accreditation. And  
20 there are two individuals signed up to speak in  
21 support of Capital City Lighthouse.

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. You said they  
23 currently are accredited?

24 MS. WEBB: They are. Yes.

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. Will all

1 representatives of the charter and anyone speaking in  
2 -- did you -- sorry, did you need something else?

3 MS. WEBB: I was just going to announce the  
4 names, but --

5 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Oh, okay. I think we've got  
6 names here.

7 Okay. So representatives of the charter and  
8 anyone speaking in opposition please stand to receive  
9 the oath. Okay. Do you swear or affirm that the  
10 testimony you're about to give shall be the truth,  
11 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

12 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. So you  
14 have 20 minutes to give a presentation. And I'll let  
15 you all just flow through the presentation. As you  
16 come up to the microphone, just please state your  
17 name and title for the record and you're recognized.

18 MS. MHLANGA: All right. Good morning.

19 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Morning.

20 MS. MHLANGA: My name is Rosanna Mhlanga. I am  
21 the principal at Capital City Lighthouse Charter  
22 School.

23 Capital City Lighthouse opened its doors to  
24 families in 2015 with grades K-5. Currently, Capital  
25 City Lighthouse serves 167 scholars in grades K-5.

1 Previously, we served grades K-8 in 2018-2019, but  
2 due to the historical flood in May of 2019 we had to  
3 make an emergency change in location for Capital City  
4 staff and scholars. During the flood our upper  
5 academy that housed grades 3-8 was damaged; we were  
6 no longer able to have school on our campus. All  
7 scholars were transported to our Jacksonville  
8 Lighthouse campuses to complete the year with their  
9 teachers and peers. In the face of change, scholars  
10 and their families remained supportive. Since the  
11 change scholars in grades 6-8 were offered seats at  
12 our sister school in Jacksonville. Our families  
13 stayed with us and have shown that they support our  
14 education model.

15 We serve a unique demographic of scholars. Our  
16 student population consists of 87% African American,  
17 7% Hispanic or Latino, 4% are two or more races, and  
18 2% are Caucasian. Capital City Lighthouse currently  
19 serves 45 families. Every scholar that attends  
20 Capital City Lighthouse receives free breakfast and  
21 lunch daily, in addition to a healthy afternoon  
22 snack. 11% of the population is identified as  
23 students needing special services. 28.6% of the  
24 scholars in K-2 were identified as having dyslexia  
25 indicators; the students currently receive

1 interventions with the dyslexia interventionist.  
2 2.5% of the families identify as homeless. Less than  
3 1% of the population represent gifted and talented.  
4 72% of our families utilize our daily bus  
5 transportation -- this allows us to serve a wider  
6 array of families; many of these families have  
7 varying statuses ranging from special education to  
8 those families identifying as homeless.

9 Our model implements strong curriculum across  
10 the board in all subjects and grade levels. Capital  
11 City has a strong social and emotional program within  
12 our school. We have partnered with the People  
13 Advocating for Transition, also known as the P.A.T.  
14 Center. We have a licensed therapist that comes in  
15 daily and works with our scholars, either one-on-one  
16 or with small groups, based on the data.

17 We also offer a strong college-ready academic  
18 program. Grades K-4 participates in a RISE-based  
19 literacy block daily. Our RTI time is used to meet  
20 scholars where they are and take them above that  
21 level by providing them with strategies that work  
22 best for them. Daily, scholars receive reading RTI  
23 that focuses directly on their specified growth  
24 areas. Teachers are able to meet the scholars where  
25 they are and build upon their strengths and their

1 growth areas. This has helped tremendously.

2 And, lastly, grade 5 participates in a  
3 personalized platform through Summit Learning.

4 Capital City places a high emphasis on scholars'  
5 social and emotional needs. We continue to place  
6 attention on healthy relationships amongst teachers  
7 and scholars. Some of the modalities used to address  
8 school-wide social and emotional behaviors are  
9 morning meetings, which are done daily; town halls,  
10 which are held biweekly; and ACES core values, which  
11 is our Lighthouse model, as well as restorative  
12 practices which include small groups and one-on-one  
13 sessions with our culture coordinator.

14 Capital City Lighthouse has chosen to take a  
15 different approach as it relates to discipline. We  
16 have shifted to taking a more proactive approach by  
17 dealing with the issues before they arise. We do  
18 this by intentionally building relationships and  
19 trust with our scholars. Currently, we have 11% of  
20 our scholars that receive mental and behavioral  
21 services with the P.A.T. Center. There is a high  
22 need to teach scholars how to respond to their peers  
23 and adults when they are frustrated, upset, sad,  
24 and/or confused. In addition to the mental and  
25 behavioral health services, Capital City has a

1 culture coordinator. Our culture coordinator helps  
2 many of our scholars work through their actions and  
3 feelings through restorative circles, small group,  
4 and individualized one-on-one sessions. He is able  
5 to meet with parents and scholars to help bridge that  
6 gap between home and school.

7 Capital City has placed a huge emphasis on  
8 healthy relationships amongst staff, students,  
9 parents, and the community. Teachers have actively  
10 participated in trainings, such as Restorative  
11 Classroom, which houses our morning meetings, trauma  
12 trainings, and restorative circles, to name a few.  
13 Every morning scholars and staff participate in  
14 morning meeting. During this time scholars and staff  
15 are able to express in a safe environment how they  
16 feel, their challenges, their joys, and encourage one  
17 another. This is also the time scholars take to  
18 team-build and truly get to know one another. The  
19 intentional time and space for morning meeting has  
20 truly built a sense of family throughout grade levels  
21 and classrooms, and created a calm and safe  
22 environment. Our restorative approach promotes  
23 resolving conflict in a constructive manner,  
24 ultimately leading to increased learning  
25 opportunities. As a result of having this model, we

1 have been able to keep a 1% or less suspension rate.  
2 With such a huge emphasis on culture with the  
3 scholars we have insured that our staff feels  
4 empowered to better handle social and emotional  
5 issues that arise.

6 Based on an ongoing needs assessment, we  
7 determined the learning focus of our teaching and  
8 learning needed customization. Currently, our focus  
9 is culture-based. Our culture coordinator attended  
10 the Trauma Informed training and conducts ongoing  
11 trainings with the staff on how to successfully work  
12 with scholars who have experienced some form of  
13 trauma. All staff went through the initial framework  
14 for Understanding Poverty training with a Ruby Payne  
15 consultant. Trainings continue during grade level  
16 meetings.

17 Capital City has also partnered with the  
18 Arkansas Department of Education by taking part in  
19 the Solution Tree Coaching Academy on professional  
20 learning communities. We understand that  
21 professional learning communities at work in our  
22 building will result in a greater understanding for  
23 teachers, yielding a great outcome in intentional  
24 teaching and learning.

25 As mentioned previously, we dedicate a large

1 amount of time in our schedule to incorporate the  
2 Science of Reading. We utilize Core Knowledge and  
3 Heggerty in grades K-2 and Expeditionary Learning and  
4 Word Study in grades 3 and 4 to support the Science  
5 of Reading. 5th grade uses Summit Learning.

6 Capital City is very deliberate in insuring  
7 there is a strong small group focus each day for  
8 every scholar. Teachers are able to work with  
9 scholars on that level with a given standard, while  
10 other scholars work within small group focus areas.  
11 In these areas scholars may utilize technology, work  
12 on a writing standard, or work through a task  
13 directly connected to the focus standard. Currently,  
14 we have four teachers going through RISE training,  
15 six teachers going through BRAINSread training --  
16 training -- excuse me -- with Dr. Howard. We are  
17 committed to insuring our entire staff K through 5th  
18 grade are equipped to support scholars in their  
19 reading growth.

20 We have a newly-hired dyslexia interventionist  
21 who works directly with all scholars who have  
22 indicators for dyslexia, along with a dedicated  
23 paraprofessional who works with small groups of  
24 scholars daily. We will continue to use evidence-  
25 based programs from the Orton-Gillingham based

1 system.

2 MS. OSBORN: Good morning. My name is John  
3 Osborn. I serve as the assistant principal of  
4 instruction for Capital City Lighthouse.

5 We have shown increases in our math achievement  
6 over the four years of our charter and we will  
7 continue to do so, focusing on the following areas:

8 Eureka Math is a math curriculum that focuses on  
9 components of fluency, conceptual understanding, and  
10 application to create a rigorous and strong learning  
11 experience for all of our scholars grades K through  
12 4. This curriculum is completely aligned with the  
13 Arkansas state standards. We use MobyMax in all  
14 grades to support fluency and conceptual  
15 understanding. Small group instruction during  
16 regular math class is a required component of daily  
17 instruction and lesson planning. Teachers are able  
18 to truly break apart the content and construct  
19 students' understanding of a concept. This insures  
20 we're meeting all students where they are. All staff  
21 went through Eureka Math training this summer with  
22 Great Minds. Currently, we have Eureka Math coaches  
23 who come in and work with our teachers. The coaches  
24 do pre-sessions, observations, and post-sessions to  
25 work in planning sessions with the teachers. We have

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support from APSRC math specialists.

Last year, my role with Arkansas Lighthouse was the math specialist for the district, but this year my entire time is dedicated to Capital City.

We utilize investigations and open-ended response content analysis tasks. This has forced our scholars to be critical and perceptive thinkers. We are committed to not only improving the education of our scholars, but of our staff as well. Summit Learning is a personalized learning platform that helps scholars connect their long-term goals to their daily actions. Much like a textbook all curriculum is housed online, and with daily goal-setting it allows scholars to move through the platform at an appropriate pace for them. A highly-qualified licensed teacher leads the class by teaching habits of success, the use of small group instruction, and individual mentoring. This program was highly successful to the culture and scores of our 6th graders last year, as you can see on the handout that you received. Currently, Summit is being used with our 5th graders. Again, if you refer to the handout it shows a data comparison of the 6th grade cohort when they were 5th graders in the 17-18 year compared to when they were 6th graders in the 18-19 year, and

1 of the 6th grade class in 17-18 compared to the 6th  
2 grade class in the 18-19 school year. As noted  
3 earlier, 100 percent of our teachers and  
4 administrators are either RISE trained, going through  
5 RISE, or going through BRAINSread training. Our  
6 district dyslexia interventionist provides  
7 professional development with teachers before and  
8 after school on strategies to use in the classroom.

9 At Capital City we know it takes a village to  
10 support and educate our children. With this in mind  
11 we've begun to build even stronger supports for and  
12 connections with our families. Capital City now  
13 hosts parent universities monthly. Parent  
14 universities are evenings where parents have the  
15 opportunity to engage in their scholars' classroom  
16 environment. Parents and guardians learn concepts  
17 that are currently being taught in the classroom,  
18 alongside their child. They are able to engage in  
19 collaborative conversations with their children and  
20 their teachers.

21 In addition to helping our families understand  
22 how to academically support our scholars while at  
23 home, we also provide additional resources to help  
24 our families become and remain strong for their  
25 children. Understanding that many of our families

1 and scholars have dealt with some form of trauma, we  
2 find it equally important that the P.A.T. Center is  
3 available as a resource for families, not just  
4 scholars. Over the course of our charter our family  
5 satisfaction has been at an average of 86%, based on  
6 annual surveys. Our results have increased by 15%  
7 over the course of our charter, showing that families  
8 are increasingly satisfied. Through intentional  
9 small group instruction, clear vertical alignment,  
10 and professional development catered toward teaching  
11 specific teaching strategies we have improved due to  
12 our efforts.

13 The Office for Educational Policy has awarded us  
14 with the Beating the Odds Statewide ELA Growth - High  
15 School school level and Beating the Odds High ELA  
16 Growth - High School Level, Central Region awards,  
17 and recognized us for high ELA growth. Even though  
18 we serve an extremely high population of free and  
19 reduced lunch, we were one of only 10 schools to  
20 receive this award.

21 Our school is making improvements on all  
22 academic ESSA indicators, with great gains in our  
23 priority area which is reading. Being a data-driven  
24 school allows us to make timely and beneficial  
25 decisions for our scholars. Teachers and admin are

1           able to analyze data and create plans of action that  
2           we can immediately implement.

3           The following data shows the improvements we  
4           have made in just one year by altering our academic  
5           focus and our strategies. Achievement has increased  
6           in every subject from the 17-18 to the 18-19 school  
7           year. Our overall reading readiness level increased  
8           by almost 9%. Our overall English readiness level  
9           increased by almost 11%, and our overall math  
10          readiness level on ACT Aspire increased by almost  
11          12%. We are showing clear improvements in every  
12          subject across the school.

13          Based on our ESSA report, we did improve from  
14          the 17-18 to the 18-19 school year in weighted  
15          achievement and value-added growth, thus showing our  
16          scholars are improving in their learning. We're  
17          showing growth. But in order to accelerate even  
18          greater lengths we are focused on science, grade  
19          level reading, and attendance.

20          In analyzing our SQSS score it was determined  
21          that Capital City had 58 scholars that represented 19  
22          families; 38 of those scholars with those 19  
23          families, they were chronically absent over 10% of  
24          their time at Capital City, which attributed to a  
25          24.66% chronically absent rate. We also determined

1 with a decrease of 3% in science achievement and a  
2 10% decrease in science growth our SQSS was affected  
3 even more. This led to our proactive approach to our  
4 current school year to focus on science and  
5 attendance. We infused science into our math classes  
6 and have provided additional resources and training  
7 to teach science. We've incorporated reading and  
8 interpreting graphs and tables in math and science  
9 classes. We focus heavily on the measurement data  
10 standards in math and we provide investigations open-  
11 ended content response tasks for science and math.

12 For attendance we have actively implemented a  
13 school-wide plan for individual scholars and  
14 families. We meet with parents on a consistent basis  
15 when we know they struggle with attendance or their  
16 scholars are chronically absent. With this focus, we  
17 now have attendance meetings with the families of a  
18 scholar who's showing chronically absent. We've  
19 implemented our attendance team made up of teachers  
20 and administrators that go out for home visits. We  
21 run an additional bus route every morning to go back  
22 and pick up those scholars who might've missed the  
23 bus the first time around. In addition, while  
24 focusing on families and scholars with chronic  
25 attendance, we also celebrate and recognize school-

1 wide for all families and scholars who are attending  
2 school on a consistent basis. Each month a class is  
3 awarded with the Traveling Attendance Award.

4 We've also analyzed the data for students who've  
5 spent at least three years with us at Capital City.  
6 Every single cohort has increased their scale score  
7 in reading, with the 8th grade cohort increasing the  
8 most by over six scale points in their time at  
9 Capital City. Students who stay with us show growth  
10 in their reading. Capital City also uses the  
11 National NWEA assessment to determine specific levels  
12 of need as related to RTI and other reading/math  
13 based interventions.

14 We expect our students to perform above the  
15 norm. We expect our students to grow by at least  
16 1.25 years every year. For two years, we've exceeded  
17 our charter goal of 1.25 years of growth and over our  
18 four years we've shown an average growth of 1.2 years  
19 in reading every year -- well above the average  
20 growth of students across the country. Last week we  
21 took the winter portion of NWEA and already, when you  
22 compare our current scores to our scores at this time  
23 last year 13% more scholars are meeting their growth  
24 and 11% overall more growth is being met now. On  
25 NWEA math we have shown over a year growth average

1 over our four-year charter, with 1.1 years of growth  
2 again above the national average. For two years in  
3 our charter we exceeded the 1.25 year goal and in  
4 three of the years we met or exceeded a full year of  
5 growth. This data allows us to place scholars in RTI  
6 and provide specific interventions based on their  
7 lacking skills.

8 MS. MNHLANGA: My name is Rosanna Mhlanga.  
9 We have truly developed a foundation of success.  
10 Upon revealing the data and demographics of our  
11 scholars from 2015 until current, there has been a  
12 significant gain in the number of scholars receiving  
13 free and reduced lunch. We went from 77% to  
14 currently 100% of our scholars identifying in the  
15 category of free and reduced lunch. Also, our  
16 special education demographic has increased vastly.

17 Implementing research-based RISE instruction,  
18 research-based RTI instruction, and Summit Learning  
19 we have truly began the work that focuses on what our  
20 scholars need.

21 And, lastly, bridging the gap between school and  
22 family, our healthy relationship design element, and  
23 providing our families with the support needed has  
24 truly shifted the culture for Capital City. As you  
25 can see, we are pushing in the right direction for

1 greater expectations by leading and learning as a  
2 community. Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Is there anyone to  
4 speak in opposition, Ms. Hyatt?

5 MS. HYATT: There are several people that signed  
6 up. I don't believe any of them intend to speak in  
7 opposition. But if anyone is here to speak in  
8 opposition, now is the time.

9 (MOMENT OF SILENCE)

10 MS. HYATT: Okay. I think they signed up not to  
11 speak during the next five minutes but to speak in  
12 support of the school. So if you would like to allow  
13 public comment after the end of the five additional  
14 minutes that they have, you just need to vote to hear  
15 it and then you can allow those that signed up.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So does the school --  
17 do you wish to use the additional five minutes to add  
18 anything additional? Okay.

19 MS. ROBERTS: Good morning. Lenisha Roberts,  
20 Executive Director for Capital City Lighthouse.

21 First of all, I would like to thank you, Panel  
22 Members, for taking time out of your busy schedule to  
23 come and visit our campus to see the great work that  
24 is happening. When you visited our campus you saw  
25 the authentic version of what happens every day at

1 Capital City. We hope you witnessed high level  
2 student engagement and saw that our scholars want to  
3 be there.

4 Now you have heard with great conviction from  
5 our school leaders the hard work and dedication that  
6 the staff has poured into the school and of the  
7 academic successes and challenges. The work that is  
8 happening is intentional and deliberate. We know  
9 that with the strong social and emotional learning  
10 environment that has been created the commitment of  
11 the school staff and faculty, support from our  
12 stakeholders, and the improvement of academic  
13 performance, we know that Capital City Lighthouse is  
14 headed in the right direction to move the school  
15 forward. Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Thank you.

17 So, Panel, seeing that we do have several who've  
18 signed up for public comment, would you like to hear  
19 public comment?

20 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes, I would.

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So we need to do a  
22 motion. Okay, so we'll need a motion for that.

23 DR. WILLIAMS: So moved.

24 MR. ROGERS: Second.

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I have a motion and a

1 second.

2 Should we discuss how long public comment will  
3 be or any --

4 MS. HYATT: So the default is that everyone that  
5 signed up -- and there are two -- will have three  
6 minutes to give public comment. If you're fine with  
7 that, you don't need to change it. If you'd like to  
8 alter it, the Chair can always allow additional time  
9 for someone to finish their comment.

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So we have a motion  
11 and a second to hear public comment, and that will  
12 afford everybody three minutes each.

13 All those in favor say aye.

14 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

15 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. We will do  
16 -- so our first one is -- is it Patrice Howard?

17 MS. HOWARD: Good morning.

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: If you'll just state your  
19 name for the record, you're recognized.

20 MS. HOWARD: My name is Patrice Howard. And I'm  
21 the mother of three scholars that attends Capital  
22 City in North Little Rock, and I'm very pleased and  
23 happy.

24 To make a long story short, before my scholars  
25 started going to Capital City I called around, you

1 know, trying to find a better school for my kids --  
2 and Capital City, they was there for me and my kids.  
3 And when I say -- they're doing such a wonderful job.  
4 I mean over wonderful; it's marvelous. I'm so happy  
5 with everything that they does for my three that  
6 attends, but for me and for my other children. I  
7 don't -- I'm extremely, extremely, extremely happy  
8 with Capital City, the team members and all. When I  
9 say -- I was going through so much at the previous  
10 school, I didn't know where to go. I went to several  
11 schools trying to get my kids out of one school and  
12 into another; all of them turned me down. But when I  
13 called Capital City they told me to come on in; I  
14 filled out the application for all three of my  
15 scholars, and ever since then -- when I say -- it's  
16 so amazing. It's a blessing from God that I found  
17 this school and they is willing to help me. And I  
18 don't -- they're so amazing; they is so amazing with  
19 everything that they do -- everything.

20 My kids -- my youngest son Roger, when he first  
21 attended he was very quiet. He didn't even know how  
22 to write his name. My son is now doing whole  
23 sentences -- whole sentences -- and I thank Capital  
24 City. My son Marquis, I did not know that he needed  
25 services. When I say -- they're doing all that they

1 can -- all. They're going overboard and beyond with  
2 all type of services for my kids. I have a son  
3 that's bipolar schizophrenic and when I say the  
4 school that used to go to -- the only thing that they  
5 would do is kick my son out of school. But there  
6 comes --

7 [TIMER BELL RINGS]

8 -- Capital City; instead of them sending my son  
9 home -- because he's missing out on his education,  
10 they choose to help him, and help me with my son,  
11 instead of sending him home. Like I told Boone Park,  
12 you know, my son is not getting no education if he's  
13 constantly being sent home. So therefore, ever since  
14 my son has been going to Capital City it's been so  
15 amazing and I want to thank everybody that's at  
16 Capital City, and I wouldn't have it no other way.  
17 They're the best school that my kids has ever went  
18 to. My kids are happy. I don't have no complaints  
19 at all of Capital City at all. I am more than  
20 grateful for Capital City.

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Thank you. And we appreciate  
22 you being here.

23 MS. HOWARD: Yes, ma'am. I appreciate you  
24 listening to me. Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. The next one is Kylie

1 -- and I don't want to mispronounce the last name.  
2 Somebody, can you help me?

3 MS. KINECKY: Kinecky [ps].

4 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Kinecky. You can look at my  
5 last name and know that I have to spell it a lot, so  
6 -- Kinecky.

7 MS. KINECKY: My name is Kylie Kinecky. And I  
8 am the occupational therapist and I serve at the  
9 Lighthouse Charter Schools. I am here today in  
10 support of the renewal for the school. There's three  
11 things I want to talk about.

12 As an occupational therapist we focus on the  
13 child's occupations: play, self-care, going and being  
14 social and being involved in school, and handwriting,  
15 and all those aspects that come together. So what I  
16 have seen in my time at these schools is the culture  
17 of the school -- the first thing when you walk in the  
18 door you feel love -- immediately feel loved. And  
19 that's what these students need. They need to know  
20 that we need them just as much as they need us.

21 The consistency of the school is important.  
22 Sometimes they don't have the consistency in their  
23 lives that we're able to provide as being active  
24 participants in their life. But it goes further than  
25 that. We hug, we share them -- tell them how much we

1 care about them, how much we want them to be  
2 successful. I serve -- as Ms. Patrice that just  
3 spoke -- her children, and the difference I've seen  
4 in just the time I've worked with them is just  
5 tremendous, coming out of their shell and wanting to  
6 grow.

7 Something that we're doing and that I've been  
8 helping with at the school is building a food pantry,  
9 a clothes pantry. The community outings that we've  
10 done, we have gone on a fieldtrip to a Christmas tree  
11 farm, we went to CiCi's Pizza, and we were able to  
12 get the trip fully funded for these children to have  
13 an experience that -- many of them have never crossed  
14 over the Arkansas River, and it was incredible to see  
15 their faces and talk about this experience. And  
16 these types of things are incentives so that we can  
17 boost the attendance. So if we can get these kids  
18 attending school and making it worthwhile, then  
19 they're going to come back; they're going to keep  
20 coming for more. And we're going to create more  
21 opportunities coming this spring and in the future  
22 years to get these kids there so that they see the  
23 importance and that we want them there and we want  
24 them to experience that.

25 Also, tomorrow we're hosting a fully funded

1 family feast for these students and their families to  
2 come eat a Christmas meal as a family. We're going  
3 to have someone dressed up as Santa and they're going  
4 to get to experience getting presents. And it's  
5 going to be a time for them to experience community,  
6 something that many of them might not get. And I'm  
7 super excited to be a part of working with Lighthouse  
8 Schools to enjoy this. Some of the things that I  
9 work with have also been wrapping presents. So  
10 understanding that you don't always get to receive,  
11 but sometimes we have to give -- that we have to  
12 learn the importance of giving and being grateful for  
13 what we do have.

14 I've seen academic improvements in the time I've  
15 worked with them. The teachers are coming to the  
16 speech language pathologist and myself and telling us  
17 about the improvement that one of the children had on  
18 their reading or their science or their math, and  
19 they're proud to tell us. And it goes to show that  
20 what we're doing, we're just reiterating the  
21 importance of what's important in the classroom. So  
22 they're reading --

23 [TIMER BELL RINGS]

24 -- they're writing, and they're problem-solving  
25 skills are improving.

1                   And then we also want to make sure that they  
2 know that we're going to meet the basic needs of  
3 these students and that they can attend and come back  
4 to school. We want them to have those needs met so  
5 that they can be successful in the classroom.

6                   And last thing is, you know, we want to involve  
7 the families so that we can break the cycle. It's  
8 really important that we teach the families the  
9 importance of education, as well as the students, so  
10 that they can grow up and achieve great things. They  
11 talk about what they want to be when they grow up and  
12 we want them -- those dreams to become reality.

13                   So, thank you.

14                   CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Thank you very much.

15                   Panel, we've typically gone to the legal review  
16 first before individual questions. Are you good to  
17 do that?

18                   DR. WILLIAMS: Yes.

19                   CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So, Ms. Hyatt, it  
20 looks like there may be a couple of things.

21                   MS. HYATT: Mary Claire Hyatt with the Division.

22                   Yes, ma'am, there's just a few remaining  
23 concerns; hopefully won't take too long.

24                   The first on the Board of Directors waivers,  
25 they've had these for awhile but they are missing a

1 piece that they need to effectuate some of the  
2 waivers. So they have a waiver of how they appoint  
3 board members, which is really common. But there is  
4 a section in the law which is at 6-13-612 which deals  
5 with if someone is convicted of a felony or a crime  
6 they are removed. They don't have a waiver of that  
7 part, but there is one section in that law that says  
8 they have to fill the vacancy caused by that removal  
9 the same way that the other laws require you to fill  
10 vacancies. They need a waiver of 6-13-612(c) in  
11 order to make sure that they can fill that vacancy  
12 the way that they normally fill positions.

13 MR. WALTER: Tripp Walter, APSRC on behalf of  
14 Capital City Lighthouse.

15 We would ask to add a waiver of Arkansas Code  
16 Annotated Section 6-13-612(c) in response to Division  
17 Legal comments.

18 MS. HYATT: The next is -- and we've seen this  
19 earlier today -- in the personnel policy sections  
20 they've requested waivers of 6-17-208 and 6-17-210.  
21 6-17-208 says that the school must have a grievance  
22 procedure for teachers, and 6-17-210 says that  
23 teachers are allowed to have a witness or a  
24 representative at any disciplinary or grievance  
25 matter. I'd just like them to give you a little bit

1 of the rationale behind those waiver requests so that  
2 you can insure that teachers are getting due process.

3 MR. WALTER: Capital City Lighthouse does have  
4 extensive personnel policies in place to allow for  
5 proper due process in teacher and other staff's  
6 rights. Again, this is kind of a charter unique  
7 thing. As you may know, Capital City Lighthouse has  
8 waivers from Teacher Fair Dismissal Act and Public  
9 Employee Fair Hearing Act, which means that all their  
10 staff, regardless of what the job function or  
11 certification, are at-will employees. And the main  
12 reason they do not have the grievance and other  
13 procedures is just because they are incompatible with  
14 an at-will system of employment and termination and  
15 firing and hiring.

16 MS. HYATT: So I don't have any remaining legal  
17 concerns on that, as long as you guys are fine with  
18 the rationale.

19 The next, this is a set of new waivers that  
20 they're requesting. So they asked for three waivers  
21 at 6-17-111, 6-17-114, and 6-17-117, which are Duty-  
22 Free Lunch, Daily Planning Period, and Non-  
23 Instructional Duties. So the Non-Instructional  
24 Duties law says they can only have so many minutes of  
25 non-instructional duties per day without being

1 compensated. The Daily Planning Period law says that  
2 they should receive 40 minutes of planning period per  
3 day. And then Duty-Free Lunch, they should be able  
4 to have some time for lunch with no assigned duties.

5 My questions really weren't legal in nature, but  
6 more if -- with the combination of those things how  
7 do they plan to insure that teachers aren't being  
8 overloaded, that they have adequate planning time and  
9 can adequately prepare to educate all of their  
10 students and have breaks and time to eat. And so I'd  
11 like them to just give a little bit of information to  
12 the Panel on how they plan to insure those things.

13 MR. WALTER: With the Panel's indulgence I'd  
14 like to do this one in two pieces. I'll set the  
15 legal framework, and then Ms. Roberts can give you  
16 specific examples of how it works to address Ms.  
17 Hyatt's concern about teacher overwork and those kind  
18 of things.

19 First of all, on the Planning Period I want to  
20 be clear that Capital City is not requesting a waiver  
21 of the 20 minutes -- pardon me -- the 200-minute per  
22 week requirement for planning period. As you're  
23 probably aware, there's a second component of that  
24 statute and that is the 200 minutes have to be given  
25 in blocks or increments of at least 40 minutes. And

1 that's one thing that the -- that Capital City, due  
2 to their educational system, wishes to have the  
3 flexibility to, again, give at least 200 minutes a  
4 week but not necessarily in 40-minute pieces.

5 All teachers will continue to receive duty-free  
6 lunches with an occasional exception to accommodate  
7 for student learning, taking into account the  
8 school's staffing.

9 And that's kind of the legal framework, and then  
10 Ms. Roberts will address the specific personnel  
11 issues.

12 MS. ROBERTS: Good morning. Lenisha Roberts  
13 again.

14 So just to I guess piggyback on what Tripp said,  
15 we do not plan on taking away planning periods at  
16 all. This is on an as-needed if-we-need to use this.  
17 I can tell you we haven't had to use it -- we can  
18 probably count on our hands, but some days -- for  
19 instance, the PLC training, we have five staff out of  
20 the building. We may have to -- if we can't get  
21 enough subs -- because subs are hard to find now,  
22 especially highly qualified subs -- we try to make  
23 sure that our students are still receiving a quality  
24 education. So we may rotate teachers in, but they'll  
25 get their planning period at a different time. We

1 don't want to give a set time on those days. As I  
2 stated, we haven't had those issues a lot, but just  
3 in case because of staffing we may need to use that  
4 at some point. As well as duty-free lunches -- they  
5 get a lunch every day duty-free. But we may need to  
6 switch it around, like versus you going at 10:45 you  
7 may have to go at 12:45 today. So we just want that  
8 flexibility to be able to do those things; not asking  
9 for anything else. Sometimes with the planning  
10 period if we need to allow them to do their planning  
11 period during non-student instructional time, during  
12 their contract time, we may use that. But as I  
13 stated before, it's very seldom, very rare. I don't  
14 think Ms. Mhlanga has had to use that this year. But  
15 we do want that flexibility to have that in place if  
16 that situation arises.

17 MS. HYATT: If you take my paper I might not  
18 know what to say.

19 The last thing I'd just like to clarify for the  
20 record -- I think we've got it clear in the legal  
21 review, but I just want to make sure. In the  
22 Guidance Counselor waivers they originally asked for  
23 a waiver of the entire guidance counselor new law. I  
24 think they have narrowed it just to the two small  
25 provisions they need, 6-18-2003(a)(2)(a) which is the

1 Guidance Counselor Licensure, and 6-18-3004 which is  
2 the 90-percent 10-percent Guidance Counselor/ Student  
3 Direct versus Indirect Services Ratio. As long as --  
4 and they provided a really, really lengthy  
5 explanation in the legal review; I'm sure they'd be  
6 happy to share it with you now. But I just want to  
7 make sure that those are the only two provisions that  
8 they are requesting so that we have a clear record.

9 MR. WALTER: On behalf of Lighthouse I will  
10 confirm that. And just to kind of wrap up the third  
11 piece is the comprehensive counseling plan itself.  
12 And by not seeking a waiver of that we've verified  
13 that that plan and all the components of it will be  
14 provided by Lighthouse counselors.

15 MS. HYATT: That's all.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Are there any questions,  
17 Panel Members, on the review?

18 Okay. All right. Thank you.

19 And just to clarify before we move to individual  
20 questions, the hearing today, is that for the K-5  
21 campus?

22 MS. ROBERTS: Yes, ma'am.

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: That's what we're looking at;  
24 correct? K-5.

25 So just really quick, Mr. Osborn, the data that

1           you were showing, is that data reflective of K-5 or  
2           is that also including the upper academy? Was the  
3           data you were showing, was that just for K-5?

4           MR. OSBORN: Yes, ma'am. That was for the  
5           elementary campus.

6           CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. Okay.  
7           Thank you.

8           All right. We'll start with Mr. Baldwin. Do  
9           you have questions?

10          MR. BALDWIN: Yes. Thank you.

11          So the -- I appreciate the additional  
12          information about the improvement in the achievement  
13          of the scholars, and I think that's real good.

14          Going back to your application, I did have a  
15          question on what you all call mobility, and that is  
16          the students that have multiple homes, that move  
17          around. Is that still something that you have to  
18          deal with? And then also in that same paragraph you  
19          talked about childhood trauma; I just wanted you to  
20          expand on that a bit.

21          MS. ROBERTS: Lenisha Roberts again.

22          So the mobility rate is -- has been students  
23          that's in and out, like moving out of the school,  
24          then maybe coming back a year later or within the  
25          middle of the year. We have so many students that

1 transition out, but then we have another group that  
2 may transition in. It's just a highly mobile area.

3 As it relates to the trauma, we do have many of  
4 our families that deal with a lot of trauma. And  
5 that was the one thing that we did the end of last  
6 year, like how do we get to the root causes so we can  
7 get to the academic piece. And we have to be able to  
8 really be able to support our scholars. So we did a  
9 lot of intensive training with our staff because part  
10 of it is that they didn't know how to deal with some  
11 of the situations. And so just partnering with the  
12 P.A.T. Center has been helpful. We attended -- they  
13 had two trauma-informed trainers -- trainings that  
14 they attended and it was really an eye-opener on how  
15 to respond to those scholars in their need. So  
16 that's really been the basis of our focus is that  
17 trauma-informed, just building healthy relationships,  
18 and that knowing how to navigate and communicate with  
19 scholars that deal with so much.

20 MR. BALDWIN: Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Kremers.

22 DR. KREMERS: Is there any midterm assessment  
23 data for 19-20, kind of looking how things look so  
24 far for this year?

25 MR. OSBORN: John Osborn.

1           Yes, ma'am. So we took the NWEA, which is the  
2           national assessment we used for our charter, for read  
3           -- for math scores they were consistent with where we  
4           were at this time last year; so still showing growth,  
5           about 1% higher now than then. For reading, that's  
6           where we saw the biggest change so far. We have 13%  
7           more students than we did last year meeting their  
8           goal. NWEA says that about this time you should have  
9           about 30-something, 35% meeting it. Last year at  
10          this time we had 29% meeting it in reading. As of  
11          last week we have 42% meeting it. For overall growth  
12          being met, last year at this time we had 60% of the  
13          growth being met. At the same time this year we have  
14          71% growth being met in reading.

15                 DR. KREMERS: Because it's nice to see the huge  
16                 steps that are happening. What would you say were  
17                 all attributed to such large increases across the  
18                 board?

19                 MR. OSBORN: That's a --

20                 MS. MHLANGA: Just to speak to some of the  
21                 things -- Rosanna Mhlanga. Sorry.

22                 Just to speak to some of the things that  
23                 attributed to the growth, intentional PDI; so we have  
24                 what we call Professional Development Institutes that  
25                 we hold once a month. But in addition to that, we

1 have live coaching sessions; so that's where myself  
2 and Mr. Osborn actually go into the classrooms. So  
3 anything that has been rolled out in reading or math  
4 we're actually able to go in and work side-by-side  
5 with the teachers, as well as conducting professional  
6 learning communities every week with teachers. And  
7 that's where we can have that intimate space to roll  
8 out different strategies that will work for students  
9 or different things that are coming down that we know  
10 will help with those scholars -- building in time  
11 where teachers are actually doing re-alouds, where  
12 students are able to give feedback on what they're  
13 learning or specific comprehension questions, being  
14 very intentional during that RTI time. All of our  
15 scholars participate in RTI every morning, and so  
16 we're able to really dive into the Science of Reading  
17 during that time as well as having those specific  
18 blocks during the day.

19 DR. KREMERS: That's great. Thank you. And I  
20 think your comprehensive approach -- you know, you're  
21 meeting social, emotional, you know, and the academic  
22 pieces. So there's kind of a multipronged strategy,  
23 because really you have to come at it from many  
24 different angles --

25 MS. MHLANGA: Yes.

1 DR. KREMERS: -- when you're working with the  
2 population that needs additional support.

3 So that's good. Thank you.

4 MS. MHLANGA: Thank you.

5 DR. WILLIAMS: You know, I think my -- this is  
6 more of a comment than really a question. Mr.  
7 Baldwin and I had an opportunity to go out and do a  
8 visit -- and I get to visit a lot of schools and have  
9 been a teacher myself and so-forth. There's -- I try  
10 to triangulate things when I go out to a school to  
11 determine what is really happening, and that is what  
12 I see, and what I hear -- I think we went into nearly  
13 every classroom to observe -- and what is said by  
14 those that are presenting and the actual test scores.  
15 So looking at those three things there, I will just  
16 sum it up and say I was extremely impressed. I don't  
17 know how -- I was very concerned about the "F" letter  
18 grade; I mean I can't help but be concerned about  
19 that. When I looked at the population of students  
20 and I observed how hard the teachers were working, I  
21 look at all the things that are around -- surrounding  
22 the students to support the students, I look at the  
23 growth that you are achieving. A lot of students --  
24 a lot of schools with this population are not  
25 achieving the growth that you all are achieving.

1           Also, I noticed the -- I can go back here to page --  
2           I think it was 17, the awards that you received based  
3           on growth from the University of Arkansas there. So  
4           I think you all are -- you're onto something here.  
5           Teaching and learning was taking place, kids were  
6           engaged, I mean in every classroom. You know, you're  
7           always looking for that little group -- I've got two  
8           grandsons, 4 and 5 years old; so I'm looking for the  
9           little group of boys over there that's just not --  
10          just, you know, they're there but they're not just  
11          totally -- like the little fellow on the screen up  
12          there, boys are boys. Everybody was engaged;  
13          teachers were doing an outstanding job of teaching.  
14          So I think somehow or another from ADE's perspective  
15          we need to be able to capture when things are  
16          happening right. And what I mean by that, the letter  
17          grade is an "F" but there is growth coming along.  
18          Now where they are would not be -- because the kids  
19          are coming in where they are, you know. We used to  
20          say in education, probably still say it -- make the  
21          statement that parents send you the best that they  
22          have, and the best that they have is wherever they're  
23          at. And you all are taking the students where  
24          they're at and they are improving. I can't add  
25          anything -- I mean as a parent, as a former teacher,

1 that's what I'm looking to see.

2 So that's just my comments. I didn't really  
3 have a question -- because I ask a lot of questions  
4 -- because I was actually on-site.

5 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yes. Okay. Go ahead.

6 MR. BALDWIN: I'd like to add onto Dr. Williams'  
7 comments about the visit we made, and I can't do any  
8 better than what he just said. But I want you guys  
9 to know -- you all saw me take a picture of the  
10 leadership wall that you had, which I have used at  
11 our bank's board of directors strategic retreat  
12 because it was so good, and it was a 5th grade class  
13 teaching a bunch of older bankers how to lead. So it  
14 was really well-done.

15 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Good. And to your point, I  
16 think one of the things that we've tried to start  
17 doing is featuring Schools on the Move and looking at  
18 -- and so that's why I think that slide 22 caught my  
19 attention. I asked to make sure that the data was --

20 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes.

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- capturing, because what  
22 that's showing is the three-year cohort data. So the  
23 students who have enrolled in the school and are  
24 staying with the school are demonstrating the  
25 improvements that you're talking about. And we can't

1 always capture every single school, but we are  
2 looking more and more at those schools that either  
3 their achievement or their growth or their graduation  
4 rate or their -- another component in their ESSA  
5 School Index is really a stand-out. We're looking at  
6 that because we know within that SQSS those  
7 improvements drive --

8 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes.

9 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- the achievement and  
10 growth. And we know that, you know, the growth  
11 drives the achievement. So you are correct in what  
12 you say; so that's something to continue to work on.

13 DR. WILLIAMS: And now, we don't want them to  
14 rest on their laurels now.

15 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: No.

16 DR. WILLIAMS: I mean, you know --

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: No. Because it is still a  
18 concern when you see performance over time that  
19 hasn't moved to the point where we know you want to  
20 be.

21 My question is when I look -- I just pulled it  
22 up on My School Info -- when I look at the  
23 information page, there's a place where we can  
24 capture if there are before school or after school  
25 programs, summer programs, weekend programs. And

1           it's showing though all across the board and it's  
2           also showing that you're not participating in any of  
3           the breakfast or lunch programs, like CEP or  
4           Provision II or Breakfast After the Bell or anything  
5           like that. So I don't know whether that's just not  
6           being captured here or if those are some things that  
7           maybe you could speak to?

8           MS. ROBERTS: Yes. Lenisha Roberts.

9           We actually did have afterschool. Because so  
10          many of the families have -- the kids have so many  
11          responsibilities sometimes after school it's a  
12          struggle to get that group that we need there. But  
13          we did have afterschool last year between January and  
14          March, through spring break, where we targeted kids  
15          to make sure that we were closing the gap on -- and  
16          some of those kids that were right there at the cusp  
17          -- and I think that's why you saw the achievement  
18          that you saw -- the achievement rise, because we had  
19          some kids that were close that we moved to ready. We  
20          are intending on applying for the 21st century grant  
21          this year. Our Pine Bluff school has it. So we're  
22          going to apply for that to make sure that we can  
23          really offer a robust afterschool -- before and after  
24          school program, because we think it will be needed.

25          CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Well, do you -- what is your

1 school day? What is it?

2 MS. ROBERTS: It's from 7:45 to 3:45. But the  
3 kids -- you know, the bus routes start early.

4 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Sure.

5 MS. ROBERTS: Yeah.

6 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Sure. But, you know, I know  
7 a lot of times that -- especially if your model is  
8 designed to serve students who have needs that maybe  
9 need to be met outside the traditional school day I  
10 know like an extended day model, extended year models  
11 can be good. So, you know --

12 MS. ROBERTS: Yeah. And we do have 190 days as  
13 well for our students. So they go --

14 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So your students go 190 days?

15 MS. ROBERTS: Uh-huh.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

17 MS. ROBERTS: Uh-huh. So it's an extended year.

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So you do have an extended  
19 year. Okay.

20 MS. ROBERTS: Yes. And we also are participants  
21 in CEP.

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. We just need to make  
23 sure that then gets captured on My School Info. So,  
24 thank you.

25 DR. WILLIAMS: I noted the same thing on free

1 and reduced lunch. But yet, they said that they had  
2 free --

3 MS. ROBERTS: Yes.

4 DR. WILLIAMS: -- lunch and breakfast also.

5 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yeah.

6 MS. ROBERTS: Uh-huh.

7 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Questions, Mr. Rogers?

8 MR. ROGERS: I don't have any questions. I went  
9 out to the school too and did see the -- well, I  
10 guess I do have some questions on it. But so what is  
11 that teacher turnover like now?

12 MR. OSBORN: John Osborn.

13 So this year we have had the lowest amount of  
14 teacher turnover we've had in the history of the  
15 charter, with over 80% retention.

16 MR. ROGERS: And then some of the other things  
17 we'd talked about was the changes that you've done in  
18 school culture, and I didn't know if you talked about  
19 it in your presentation; I stepped out. But I just  
20 wanted you to kind of touch on that, the difference  
21 then from the year before to this -- the last year,  
22 the changes that y'all have done in school culture  
23 that have changed the way you operate your school.

24 MR. OSBORN: Yes. So with school culture we  
25 have a fulltime culture coordinator. As we

1 mentioned, we still use the restorative practice that  
2 have been -- that has been in place for awhile; so we  
3 -- our goal to reduce suspensions -- reduce -- or  
4 actually eliminate expulsions, and we do more  
5 restorative morning meetings, restorative circles  
6 where we repair anything that's happened. Our  
7 culture coordinator has been with Lighthouse for the  
8 last, I believe, eight or nine years in a culture  
9 coordinator position. Now we have myself and Ms.  
10 Mhlanga, who have both been trained in the  
11 restorative practices, so -- and then with this --  
12 with such a higher rate of returning teachers the  
13 majority of our teachers have had now extensive  
14 practice and understanding and training of what we're  
15 trying to do with that. And as a whole, it's changed  
16 our culture from "if you do this, here's your  
17 consequence" to "this has happened, let's figure out  
18 why it's happened and how we can fix it." And so as  
19 a whole you can see that happening in the school, I'd  
20 say mainly because of consistency we now have.

21 MR. ROGERS: And the reason I asked that is  
22 because I want -- the last thing -- the last question  
23 I have is how -- I just want to talk about how you've  
24 improved attendance. Because when we were there,  
25 that was one of the things we'd talked about is that

1 really hurts your ESSA School Index --

2 MR. OSBORN: Yes.

3 MR. ROGERS: -- is because the attendance gets  
4 low, because they talked about the kids are coming in  
5 and out. So I just wanted you to touch on how you've  
6 improved attendance as well.

7 MR. OSBORN: So there is an overall feeling now  
8 of excitement. As was mentioned earlier, scholars  
9 want to be at the school, they want to be at the  
10 building. Not only are we providing those extra  
11 resources, such as the additional bus route, the  
12 attendance team with home visits, the continuation of  
13 meeting with parents, but there's also a lot of --  
14 lot more positive celebrations for scholars that are  
15 there continuously. So we have in the hallway, I  
16 believe it was there, listed the percent rate of  
17 every single classroom and where they are. We have a  
18 trophy that the class with the highest attendance  
19 each month gets. We celebrate individual scholars  
20 every morning with a free jean pass or a celebration.  
21 We'll sing their name out to the whole school,  
22 recognize them for perfect attendance or for high  
23 attendance. We -- during the summer we went outside  
24 and created a long row of everyone side-by-side and  
25 let students run through and celebrate for being

1 there with high attendance. We've reduced our  
2 overall trending toward chronically absent; and then  
3 when you compare month-by-month we are showing higher  
4 percentages than we did last year, every single  
5 month.

6 MR. ROGERS: Okay. That's it.

7 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

8 MR. WILSON: That just answered my question that  
9 I had. But let me follow-up -- follow that up.

10 Do you have some idea how your attendance rates  
11 compare to the traditional public schools in the  
12 area? Does anybody know that? I expect what you  
13 have told us today that your attendance rates are  
14 much better than anybody else's or comparable to  
15 schools around because of the effort you go to to get  
16 those kids in school -- and it's paying off, it  
17 sounds like.

18 MR. OSBORN: I don't have a hard answer for yes  
19 or no. But I would strongly assume that yes, we do.

20 MR. WILSON: Go fetch them, get them there.

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Are there any  
22 remaining questions?

23 MR. ROGERS: So on the renewal it's asking for  
24 a four-year?

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Three years.

1 MR. ROGERS: Three years. Okay.

2 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Three years.

3 DR. WILLIAMS: I think that's kind of the right  
4 -- given that it is an "F" school in the grade, I  
5 think -- and the fact that they are -- growth is what  
6 we're hanging our hat on here, so we don't want the  
7 growth to slack off any now. Three years I think is  
8 probably that right number. I don't think it should  
9 be any longer.

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Did you have a  
11 question?

12 MR. BALDWIN: I was going to ask about the  
13 waivers. There seemed to be a number of different  
14 waivers passing through; maybe get those summarized  
15 --

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

17 MR. BALDWIN: -- by somebody.

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Ms. Hyatt, on the waivers --  
19 on their application they had everything listed. I'm  
20 assuming most of those are waivers that they had  
21 already had in place. And the legal review were just  
22 waivers that they had -- you had questions about; is  
23 that correct?

24 MS. HYATT: Yes, ma'am. So on the application,  
25 part of the application is they have to list every

1 single waiver that they currently hold that they wish  
2 to keep, as well as any new waivers. The legal  
3 review is only those that I had concerns about;  
4 otherwise, we would be here for days. So I think  
5 they only asked for a couple of new waivers that we  
6 kind of went over -- the Guidance Counselor and then  
7 the Duty-Free Lunch. The other waivers they've had.  
8 They pared down some of them because it used to be  
9 the Panel's practice to kind of give large blocks of  
10 waivers, and that's kind of -- as Dr. Pfeffer said,  
11 as the Panel has matured we've started narrowing the  
12 scope of those. So I'm happy to send you some  
13 additional documentation after today with that, but  
14 you can see it in the application.

15 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Were there any  
16 remaining legal issues or anything, Ms. Hyatt, that  
17 we needed to look at?

18 MS. HYATT: No, ma'am.

19 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. Well, if  
20 there isn't anything further, I will accept a motion  
21 on Capital City Lighthouse.

22 MR. WILSON: I move the approval of the  
23 application for the period of three years.

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So I have --

25 DR. KREMERS: Second.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I have a motion and a  
2 second to approve the renewal for three years.

3 All those in favor say aye.

4 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

5 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Any opposed?

6 Okay. Congratulations. And if you'll give us a  
7 moment to record our feedback, we will -- we'll share  
8 our thoughts with you.

9 DR. WILLIAMS: You know, while we're typing  
10 here, just a comment, you know, about that facility.  
11 I wish you had a better facility. You know, and I  
12 was out there, especially after the flooding. But at  
13 the same time, the facility looks like it's located  
14 in the right location to serve the community that  
15 it's serving also. So there's kind of that balance  
16 there. But it also goes to show you that it's not  
17 necessarily the facility; it's about what goes on  
18 inside of the facility -- and that's not only with  
19 the teachers, administrators, and students, but with  
20 the parents supporting their students too.

21 So with that said, I really want to say thank-  
22 you to Ms. Howard for coming out and saying what you  
23 said today.

24 MS. HOWARD: Thank you.

25 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. We'll just start with  
2 Mr. Wilson and let everybody go down the row and  
3 mention anything they want to add.

4 MR. WILSON: I voted for the motion. I'm very  
5 impressed with the effort of the applicant to get the  
6 youngsters in school. And it's proved out by growth,  
7 and that's impressive. Keep doing it.

8 MR. ROGERS: I voted for the motion. I do have  
9 concerns with the ESSA School Index. I understand  
10 the school has a lot of issues to overcome. I know  
11 they're making improvements on the culture, the  
12 teacher turnover, and attendance. But that is -- I  
13 voted for it, but I'm still concerned about it being  
14 an "F" school and hope that we see the improvement  
15 soon.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

17 DR. WILLIAMS: I support the motion. The school  
18 is demonstrating student growth at all grade levels.  
19 Also, they are continuing to work on improving  
20 science scores and attendance.

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Go ahead.

22 DR. KREMERS: I voted to approve the motion to  
23 renew for three years. The plan is comprehensive,  
24 addressing the whole child, and academic growth is  
25 happening.

1 MR. BALDWIN: I voted to approve the motion. I  
2 specifically liked the improvement in school culture  
3 that you all are creating, which ties into teacher  
4 retention and then also ultimately student  
5 performance and improvements that we see in that.

6 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. Thank you  
7 very much. We appreciate everyone being here. And  
8 look forward to working with you.

9 All right. Panel, we have lunch here. Would  
10 you all like to take about a 30-minute break before  
11 we hear the last two? The last two are review  
12 hearings, so --

13 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

14 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- they may take a little  
15 while to go through everything.

16 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes.

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Do you want to say --  
18 what time? You think 12:00? 12:00, okay. So we  
19 will come back at 12:00 and begin with item number 3.

20 (LUNCH BREAK: 11:34 A.M. - 12:06 P.M.)

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I think we're all back  
22 and ready to move on to our third agenda item for  
23 today, which is a review hearing for Southeast  
24 Arkansas Preparatory High School. And before we get  
25 started, if Ms. Hyatt can walk us through the

1 procedures since this is a review hearing, not a  
2 renewal; we want to make sure that there's not  
3 anything different in terms of the format or anything  
4 we need to do.

5 MS. HYATT: Mary Claire Hyatt with the Division.

6 So it's a very similar format to what you saw  
7 this morning. You'll need to swear anyone that's  
8 planning on providing testimony, other than the  
9 attorneys. They will have 20 minutes to give their  
10 presentation based on the information you asked for  
11 last month. Anyone opposed will have 20 minutes. I  
12 don't believe we have anyone signed up, but I'll  
13 double-check. And then they'll have 5 -- an  
14 additional 5 minutes. Following that, you can ask  
15 questions of the Division staff, of the applicant, of  
16 anyone, and then you can issue a final decision. And  
17 at that point if you have questions about your  
18 authority to do a variety of things I'm happy to  
19 answer questions about that.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Well, we will -- we'll  
21 call you back up after the Q-and-A.

22 A-3: REVIEW HEARING FOR SOUTHEAST ARKANSAS PREPARATORY HIGH  
23 SCHOOL

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So, Ms. Webb, will you  
25 introduce our item for us, please?

1 MS. WEBB: Yes. So the first review is  
2 Southeast Arkansas Prep.

3 In the packet that I've placed before you the  
4 first page is a review page from things that we  
5 looked at last month, and I've kind of put those in  
6 order. Mr. Rogers was interested in those that are  
7 before you -- 50% in need of support in reading; so  
8 that's how those are organized, just for your overall  
9 review.

10 Then the second page is an update of the  
11 Southeast Arkansas Prep information that was provided  
12 last month. Some updates include they are now  
13 accredited -- they have one issue remaining; I'm  
14 sorry -- it is a background check. They're waiting  
15 to clear for one of their employees. But other than  
16 that, all Standards for Accreditation have been met.

17 Our district support team met with the  
18 superintendent, Jeremy Cegers, last week to go over  
19 the district support plan, and so they are currently  
20 working on that. It has not been submitted and  
21 approved yet.

22 Child Nutrition claims are current as of today.  
23 And the school has submitted their statement of  
24 assurance for constitutionally protected prayer, but  
25 are still missing the minority teacher and

1 administrator recruitment plan that was due on  
2 October 15th. There are still several issues I think  
3 with special ed. services and finance. And there are  
4 representatives here today from those two units, as  
5 well as child nutrition, if you have any questions.

6 From Southeast Arkansas Prep we have  
7 Superintendent Jeremy Cegers; Pat Hart, a school  
8 board -- the school board president; Kinsel [ps]  
9 Branch, LEA supervisor; Shanna Parker, a parent  
10 involvement coordinator; and Karshina Best, a parent.

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Will all  
12 representatives of the charter and anyone speaking in  
13 opposition please stand to receive the oath? Okay.  
14 If you'll raise your right hand -- do you swear or  
15 affirm that the testimony you're about to give shall  
16 be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the  
17 truth?

18 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

19 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.

20 And who will be starting off the presentation?

21 Okay. If you want to go ahead and come to the  
22 microphone and state your name and position for the  
23 record, you'll be recognized. And you have 20  
24 minutes.

25 SUPT. SEGERS: Yes, ma'am. My name is Jeremy

1 Cegers. Good afternoon to each of you. Thank you  
2 for having me today. I'm Jeremy Cegers and I have  
3 the privilege of being able to serve as the  
4 superintendent and principal of Southeast Arkansas  
5 Preparatory High School in Pine Bluff, Arkansas.

6 I understand the concerns that are in question  
7 today and I am extremely thankful for the opportunity  
8 to come in and present necessary information to  
9 demonstrate that we are a positive component in the  
10 community of Pine Bluff, Arkansas.

11 Upon my hiring on July 1, 2019, there were  
12 several opportunities for growth that were determined  
13 in my research of the school. The major  
14 opportunities for growth that had to be addressed  
15 immediately were arranged into the following three  
16 categories: finances, student achievement/special  
17 education, certified/qualified staffing. It was  
18 imperative to address these issues immediately and  
19 continue to work on others as well. These  
20 opportunities for growth have a -- they coincide with  
21 many of the concerns that were raised by you all  
22 today and will be addressed during our presentation.

23 Is this how I go forward?

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Oh, sorry. I believe it is.  
25 We're going to get somebody to -- yeah.

1 SUPT. CEGERS: Okay. Thank you.

2 Southeast Arkansas Preparatory High School  
3 serves 9th through 12th graders in the Pine Bluff  
4 community. In 2018 through 2019, we served 83  
5 students; 70% of those students were qualified for  
6 free or reduced lunch; 93% of those students were  
7 black; 95% of those students were qualified as  
8 minority. On October 1, 2019, we had 107 students;  
9 93% of those students qualified for free or reduced  
10 lunch; 99% of those students were black; 99% of those  
11 students qualified as minority. I would like to  
12 point out that as of this morning we had 116 bodies  
13 on our campus in terms of students, and we are  
14 growing daily. In comparison to the other schools in  
15 Pine Bluff, Arkansas, we have the highest percentage  
16 of minority students.

17 SAPHS is not only proud to mention that we had  
18 an increase in enrollment from the 2018-2019 school  
19 term, we're extremely proud to mention that we had  
20 the highest increase in comparison to the other three  
21 schools in the Pine Bluff area. We had 83 students  
22 during the 2018-2019 school term; we increased to 107  
23 as of October 1, 2019. As of this morning we have a  
24 total of 116 active students. We also have three  
25 students that have already submitted packets of

1 registration within the last week that are pending  
2 packet completion, grades, disciplinary records, and  
3 a verification from their previous schools. Our  
4 enrollment is increasing without transportation and  
5 an athletic program that is in its infancy stages.  
6 That speaks volumes about our culture and climate of  
7 the school.

8 The 2018-2019 school term served as the baseline  
9 year in terms of the academic performance there. And  
10 according to our initial charter, the 2018-2019  
11 school term will provide us with the data that we  
12 will use to increase from each year. The area that  
13 we are to increase in or to be measured on is the ACT  
14 Aspire. The four categories that are on the ACT  
15 Aspire that we are to increase in are reading,  
16 mathematics, science, and English. An agreement with  
17 our charter -- we are to increase our 2018 to 2019  
18 scores by 5% in each category each year until we  
19 reach 89%. Once we reach 89% we are then to increase  
20 our scores by 2% each year until we reach 95%. The  
21 2018-2019 ACT Aspire data served as our baseline data  
22 and we are currently in the first year; we are  
23 expected to increase our scores by 5%.

24 This is a snapshot of our 2018-2019 ACT Aspire  
25 data. This snapshot compares SAPHS to Pine Bluff

1 Dollarway High School, Pine Bluff High School, and  
2 Watson Chapel High School. These four high schools  
3 represent all of the high schools in Pine Bluff,  
4 Arkansas. Our 9th graders had the highest percentage  
5 of students to meet readiness in math, science, and  
6 the second highest percentage of students in ELA.  
7 Our 10th graders are an area of concern for us at  
8 SAPHS and we are working adamantly to change the  
9 results of our 2018-2019 school term. We have  
10 already identified several students and barriers that  
11 potentially prevented us from scoring as well as they  
12 -- as well as we could have. One of those barriers  
13 is that we simply did not take the ACT Aspire last  
14 year in terms of interim. We have begun to take the  
15 interim ACT Aspire assessment during the 2019-2019 --  
16 2019-2020 school year. We also use data from these  
17 assessments to form future plans and activities for  
18 our students.

19 This is the data from the 2018-2019 ACT Aspire  
20 for the math section. This test was administered in  
21 the spring of 2019 to the 9th and 10th graders.  
22 SAPHS is proud to have the highest percentage of  
23 2018-2019 9th graders -- 9th grade students that  
24 scored in the ready or exceeding categories in  
25 mathematics in Pine Bluff -- in the Pine Bluff area.

1 While we are proud to have the highest percentage of  
2 ready or exceeding students in mathematics in the  
3 Pine Bluff area, we do acknowledge and accept the  
4 challenge that there is still more to be done. Our  
5 10th grade math scores are an area of concern. Zero  
6 percent of the 10th grade students met the readiness  
7 benchmark in math on the 2018-2019 ACT Aspire. We  
8 are currently working on plans to get that corrected.

9 This data is from the 2018-2019 ACT Aspire test  
10 in English. This data is from the English section.  
11 SAPHS had the third highest percentage of 9th grade  
12 students to meet or exceed the readiness benchmark on  
13 English in the Pine Bluff area. As with the other  
14 sections on ACT Aspire, we still have work to be done  
15 and we gladly accept the opportunity. 10th grade  
16 English is also another area of concern for us at  
17 SAPHS. Only 5% of our 10th graders met or exceeded  
18 the readiness benchmark in English on the 2018-2019  
19 ACT Aspire.

20 This data is from the 2018-2019 ACT Aspire; this  
21 data is from the reading section. SAPHS is proud to  
22 state that we have the highest percentage of 9th  
23 grade students that met or exceeded the readiness  
24 benchmark on reading. While we have the highest  
25 percentage of 9th graders that met or exceeded the

1           readiness benchmark on reading, we're still not  
2           satisfied. We are putting things in place to  
3           increase our achievement. We also have another area  
4           of concern with our 10th grade students' scores in  
5           reading. Zero percent of our 10th graders scored  
6           ready or exceeding in reading.

7                        This data is from the 2018-2019 ACT Aspire; this  
8           data is from the English -- this data is from the  
9           science section. The 9th grade students at SAPHS  
10          were one percentage point away from meeting the Pine  
11          Bluff area 9th graders in meeting or exceeding the  
12          readiness benchmark on science on the 2018-2019 ACT  
13          Aspire. The 10th grade students are a population of  
14          concern in terms of ACT Aspire science.

15                      The ESSA comparison -- the ESSA comparison shows  
16          a comparison of all of the Pine Bluff high schools  
17          that are in Pine Bluff. We received a letter grade  
18          of "F" for the 2018-2019 school term. All of our  
19          numbers contributed to this score and we are taking a  
20          focused approach on improving our total numbers. I  
21          have designed time for Mrs. Gina Williams of APSRC to  
22          come in and work with the staff so that they can gain  
23          a greater understanding of how everything we do will  
24          impact our ESSA score. Ultimately, we understand  
25          that student achievement is the driving force in

1 improving in this category and that is our greatest  
2 concern.

3 Achievements -- The Beating the Odds in ELA  
4 award means a lot to us at SAPHS. We're striving to  
5 improve in all phases of education, and it shows to  
6 know -- and it is good to know that we are -- that  
7 it's being recognized. This Beating the Odds in ELA  
8 is the first award that we have received this year.  
9 We were awarded this for having one of the highest  
10 percentages of 9th grade students to meet or exceed  
11 standards in the following categories on the ACT  
12 Aspire. In literacy, our Caucasian population; in  
13 math, our economically disadvantaged; also in math,  
14 male and combined population; in science, our African  
15 American, Caucasian, economically disadvantaged, and  
16 male populations; and in reading, African American,  
17 Caucasian, economically disadvantaged, male, and  
18 combined population. This award serves as proof that  
19 our students rise to the occasion and perform when  
20 given the opportunity.

21 Although we are extremely proud of our  
22 achievement on the ACT Aspire in terms of receiving  
23 the Beating the Odds award, this slide shows that we  
24 still have a tremendous amount of work to do. We  
25 have far too many students that are below benchmark

1 on the 2018-2019 ACT Aspire and we are working  
2 diligently to correct these issues. These scores  
3 serve as our baseline numbers due to 2018-2019 being  
4 our first year in existence. We are working  
5 tirelessly to correct these numbers and aiding our  
6 students to success.

7 Upon my arrival on July 1, 2019, we had 10% of  
8 our SAPHS teaching staff certified by the State of  
9 Arkansas. As of today, we have 25% of our SAPHS  
10 teaching staff certified by the State of Arkansas.  
11 And beginning in the summer of 2020, 50% of our  
12 current teaching staff will be certified by the State  
13 of Arkansas.

14 While we are -- while we were given waivers, our  
15 push is to certification and to show that we are  
16 dedicated to do all that we can for the sake of our  
17 students. We also are pushing Tier 1 improvements  
18 with the assistance of APSRC. We are fortunate  
19 enough to have Mrs. Earline Collins of APSRC to come  
20 in regularly and assist new hires with various test  
21 components and areas of behavior management. We have  
22 created a plan of action with Mrs. Gina Williams of  
23 APSRC and will continue -- and will begin to increase  
24 our support for Tier 1 instruction, data  
25 desegregation, TESS, and ESSA under -- under and --

1           ESSA understanding -- excuse me -- through the  
2           professional development scheduled with her and  
3           APSRC. I have reached out to Kelly Stone of the co-  
4           op in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, about some Science of  
5           Reading training for the staff. Although we have  
6           high school students, we agreed that it would be a  
7           good idea for us to begin with some RISE training due  
8           to a variety of our students coming to high school  
9           with reading levels below 6th grade. I will begin my  
10          training on January 7th to be in position to lead the  
11          training in the building. We will also continue with  
12          our weekly professional learning communities where we  
13          desegregate data pertaining to the ACT Aspire, our  
14          practice ACT assessments, focus standards, Tier 1  
15          improvements, and instructional strategies.

16                 We realize that 65.91% of our students did not  
17          meet the readiness benchmark in reading. However, we  
18          provide 100% of our students with an academic  
19          intervention block every day. Academic intervention  
20          is a 45-minute block designed to provide Tier 2 and  
21          Tier 3 assistance to our students. During academic  
22          intervention we use small group instruction, as well  
23          as individualized instruction to get to the root  
24          cause of the issues. Some of the assistance we  
25          receive during academic intervention is through

1 Cantrell and Waller, an ACT preparation company that  
2 presented at an AEA conference. We are looking into  
3 purchasing a Wilson reading system once reimbursement  
4 and student growth funding is applied. They provide  
5 various tips and strategies to our juniors and  
6 seniors to provide assistance in increasing ours  
7 cores on the ACT. We also have been in contact with  
8 Ms. Tammy Lambert of SEARK College, Community  
9 College, and have a plan in place for her to come in  
10 and provide reading assistance to students that are  
11 identified as in need of support. We also have been  
12 in talks with Mrs. Mary Ladell with the Retired  
13 Teachers Association about arranging intervention  
14 support with our struggling readers as well.

15 Finance -- we began the fiscal year with  
16 \$69,447.43. We're fortunate enough to receive an  
17 additional 39 students above our three-quarter ADM.  
18 However, with us receiving so many students over our  
19 three-quarter ADM we are currently operating a school  
20 with 117 students while using a three-quarter ADM of  
21 approximately 79.

22 Financial Solutions -- there have been  
23 adjustments made to be able to function with the  
24 beginning balance of \$69,447.42. We were overstaffed  
25 at the beginning of the year and had to make

1 adjustments to staffing. We also had to make  
2 budgetary adjustments due to previous projections not  
3 equating to reality. This month we have also  
4 switched our finance department to APSRC for  
5 financial bookkeeping services. With the assistance  
6 of APSRC, coding issues are being corrected. We are  
7 set to receive growth funding payments in January,  
8 March, and May. Along with our coding issues, we are  
9 set to receive approximately \$38,000 in federal  
10 reimbursement this month. Another thing that we are  
11 extremely happy about is our initiation of the ARMAC  
12 program through Mrs. Renee McComb. We'll be able to  
13 receive reimbursements for many of our special  
14 services that we are providing. We have experienced  
15 some child nutrition reporting problems as of today,  
16 but as of today we are caught up on and on schedule  
17 with the claims. We are on pace to end the year with  
18 a balance above \$100,000 this school term.

19 Missed Reports and Standards for Accreditation  
20 -- under my leadership we had missed some reports and  
21 documents to the State. Simply put, I will do  
22 better. I own the problems and will be sure that  
23 they do not take place in the future. I am working  
24 diligently with APSRC and the staff to come up with a  
25 better system to insure that we are timely on all

1 reports. I also do not hesitate to contact anyone  
2 from the State Department if assistance is needed. I  
3 understand and accept that it is my responsibility to  
4 be sure that things are done in a timely fashion, and  
5 I am working to continue this practice. There have  
6 been some challenges that have impeded this progress,  
7 but this is not an attempt to make an excuse. Since  
8 I came onboard July 1, 2019, it was not possible to  
9 recruit qualified/certified staff after that date.  
10 If staff members are not qualified or certified, they  
11 require a lot of on-the-job training. Since July 1,  
12 2019, we've had three office managers at SAPHS, as  
13 well as lost other staff members due to qualification  
14 /certification deficiencies. However, in spite of  
15 the turnover we are current on our State submissions  
16 today.

17 Actions to Address Concerns -- we have made many  
18 adjustments to address the concerns of our financial  
19 state. We have transitioned to APSRC as our  
20 financial department. I meet face-to-face weekly  
21 with APSRC to plan and discuss next-steps pertaining  
22 to coding and budgeting. I speak over the phone  
23 daily with APSRC as well. We also have begun to use  
24 APSRC more frequently in terms of academics. I have  
25 met face-to-face with Mrs. Gina Williams and we have

1 created a plan of action with professional  
2 development and other items planned. I also have  
3 begun to know who the contact people are in terms of  
4 the State. I also have no problem reaching out to  
5 all of them as well. This past month alone I have  
6 spoken with several individuals from the State  
7 Department daily to get things fixed. We also are  
8 very happy to be in the process of recruiting and  
9 retaining qualified/certified staff members for the  
10 2020-2021 school term.

11 Thank you all for your concerns, and thank you  
12 for the opportunity to be able to speak.

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Is there anyone else  
14 to speak here?

15 SUPT. CEGERS: No, ma'am.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And I don't think we  
17 had anybody signed up?

18 MS. HYATT: (Shaking head from side to side.)

19 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So you do -- you still  
20 have a few minutes, your additional 5 minutes. Is  
21 there anyone else from your school that you would  
22 like to speak?

23 SUPT. CEGERS: Yes, ma'am. Ms. Shanna Parker,  
24 our Parental Involvement Coordinator.

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And if you'll state

1 your name and title for the record, you'll be  
2 recognized.

3 MS. PARKER: Good morning. Shanna Parker,  
4 Parental Involvement Coordinator.

5 I began working with Mr. Cegers when he took the  
6 position this year. We've done collaborations with  
7 the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff; we've  
8 worked with the STEM program. And what we're doing  
9 is we're trying to bridge the gap with our high  
10 school students and give the parents a great  
11 understanding under Title I what's required, what  
12 Title I is. We're working with our parents to close  
13 the achievement gap, even though we're working with  
14 high school students. You know, at this age parents  
15 tend to take the backseat and let the children lead;  
16 but we want the parents to continue to understand  
17 that they are a vital piece, the piece that they play  
18 in their child's education and what is needed from  
19 them. We collaborate with our parents. We've done  
20 our parenting surveys; we've received that  
21 information back, and what we did with that  
22 information is we've created our parenting team. And  
23 we do have our board and we have meetings planned; we  
24 have trainings planned for our parents. We have on-  
25 site community leaders who come in and they work with

1 our parents; they provide the trainings to the  
2 parents that are of interest to the parents and not  
3 what we feel the parents need.

4 We do have a mental health specialist through my  
5 organization -- well, with the organization at the  
6 University, and what they do is they not only provide  
7 a service to those children but, if the parents need  
8 it, referrals are able to be written. And the school  
9 is in direct collaboration with the mental health  
10 services in the area, so they're onboard; they know  
11 what's taking place. They have an open-door policy.  
12 The school has allowed us to come in; we work with  
13 the parents, as I stated. Parents pretty much  
14 control that.

15 We're working on getting the lab, computer lab  
16 set up; hopefully by the end of the school year we'll  
17 have that fully up and operational.

18 The Parent Resource Center under Title I was  
19 required. We're working to get that information  
20 place in the resource center as well.

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. Thank you.

22 MS. PARKER: Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Still a little bit of time.

24 Any remaining remarks?

25 SUPT. CEGERS: Ms. Karshina Best, a parent.

1                   CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

2                   MS. BEST: Karshina Best. I'm a parent of a 17-  
3 year old junior at Southeast Arkansas Prep. My son  
4 Jabien [ps] has gone to two other high schools in the  
5 Pine Bluff area. He sees a therapist that is --  
6 excuse me -- that is allowed to come into the school  
7 and work with him. He suffers from anxiety and  
8 depression. Working with Mr. Cegers, my son no  
9 longer dreads school. He was a victim, I guess, of  
10 bullying. I would receive phone calls almost every-  
11 other-week from the previous high schools and every  
12 time the school number showed up on my phone it was  
13 bad news, we were probably having to visit a  
14 hospital. He has not had any of those. The teachers  
15 at the school reach out to me. He has been supported  
16 at Southeast Arkansas Prep; his grades are better.  
17 He's been supported academically, socially,  
18 emotionally. When I receive a call from Mr. Cegers  
19 now, it's not always bad news. Jabien is thriving at  
20 Southeast Arkansas Prep. I don't have to dread the  
21 phone calls now. His needs are being met, like he's  
22 a happy -- I'm not going to say happy; he's a  
23 functioning -- he's a functioning teenager and it  
24 says -- it's a lot for him not to complain to me  
25 about going to school every day. He feels

1 comfortable, he feels safe. He can always talk to  
2 Mr. Cegers. I can go in his office whenever I have a  
3 concern.

4 [TIMER BELL RINGS]

5 MS. BEST: And I'm just -- I'm glad that they  
6 gave my son a second chance. We were under the  
7 impression at the end of last year that homeschool  
8 was going to be his only option. And Mr. Cegers  
9 encouraged me to bring him in and give this one more  
10 try, and so far Jabien has been successful at  
11 Southeast Arkansas Prep.

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Thank you very much for  
13 sharing that.

14 MS. BEST: Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

16 MS. HYATT: There are two people that signed up  
17 to give comments, and they may have already spoken  
18 because when I went out to get those sign-in sheets  
19 it may have been the people that just talked. So  
20 Shanna Parker and Karnisha Best -- have either of you  
21 guys talked?

22 (BOTH SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

23 MY HYATT: Okay. So I think we're fine then.

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So we will go ahead  
25 and move into questions. Would you rather do

1 questions from the Panel first or would you rather --  
2 I know we had kind of three areas -- special  
3 education, finance, and child nutrition still have  
4 concerns that they wanted to talk about. So we can  
5 either do -- you all could do the questions first and  
6 then we bring up ADE -- what would be your  
7 preference?

8 MR. WILSON: I think ADE first. We might learn  
9 more about it.

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. ADE first?

11 MR. WILSON: I would.

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

13 DR. WILLIAMS: I agree.

14 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

15 DR. WILLIAMS: It might save some questions.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So -- and also legal  
17 issues. So let's do this: we had a handout here from  
18 -- I believe from Finance. So can we start with --  
19 is it good to start with Finance? And so if our ADE  
20 folks will state your name and title for the record,  
21 you'll be recognized. And as you have questions  
22 related to finance, feel free to ask them. Okay.

23 MS. BARRETT: Hi.

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Hi.

25 MS. BARRETT: Heather Barrett, Fiscal Services

1 and Support.

2 I've given you projections that everyone  
3 should've received. Right now, at this point,  
4 provided that everything was to clear the bank and  
5 all the invoices that are outstanding were to be  
6 paid, I'm coming up that there would be a negative  
7 \$22,146.69.

8 Some of the issues that I've identified were  
9 that there was too low of budgets for the year.  
10 We've had --

11 DR. WILLIAMS: I'm sorry. Can you repeat that?  
12 I didn't understand that.

13 MS. BARRETT: I'm sorry. Do I need to move that  
14 microphone?

15 DR. WILLIAMS: No, I was just distracted with  
16 trying to read and listen. I'm getting old and  
17 multi-tasking here.

18 MS. BARRETT: Sorry. There's too low of budgets  
19 were projected for the year. One of the major issues  
20 we had was with Food Services.

21 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

22 MS. BARRETT: At this point none of the food  
23 services invoices have been paid. The food services  
24 has been billed, but none of those invoices have been  
25 paid; so they're still outstanding. And as of right

1 now -- now this is from August through the end of  
2 November -- that's \$33,259.10 that still is  
3 outstanding. There was not a food service contract  
4 signed, and actually I understand that was signed  
5 yesterday; so since the beginning of the school year  
6 there has not been a signed food services contract.

7 Some of the other issues -- there's no workers  
8 comp budgeted. The Arkansas Teachers Retirement  
9 surcharge is not being paid. The month of November,  
10 there were quite a few outstanding invoices that were  
11 not paid. They didn't have -- their rent wasn't  
12 paid; the internet service wasn't paid; water wasn't  
13 paid; waste management was actually paid in December,  
14 on the 11th of December; there was -- janitorial  
15 services were paid in December; the benefits for the  
16 November 29th payroll had not been paid yet.

17 And so if you look at the projections, where  
18 they are as of the end of the month of November,  
19 there was \$50,356.04 in the bank. I did get a copy  
20 of the December bank statement as of the 13th of  
21 November, which was Friday. They had \$25,041.41 in  
22 the bank. If you look at all of these outstanding  
23 invoices that were not paid in November, and  
24 everything that should be paid for December, that  
25 brings it up to a total of the bank would have

1           \$7,257.83, but that's not counting any of the  
2           outstanding checks they have at this point, which is  
3           \$29,229.00. So that's why the projection would be  
4           that they would close the end of December at  
5           \$22,146.69.

6           Some of the other issues that I was having --

7           CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Can we pause there for just a  
8           minute, because --

9           MS. BARRETT: Sure.

10          CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So that's one. So just  
11          knowing that that projection is there to end the  
12          month in a negative balance, and then I want to even  
13          go back to like Teacher Retirement --

14          MS. BARRETT: Yes.

15          CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- surcharges not being paid,  
16          you talked about IRS payments not being made on time.  
17          Is any of that accounted -- that's not accounted for  
18          either? I mean that's just stuff that's -- yeah.

19          MS. SMITH: Cindy Smith, Fiscal Services  
20          Coordinator.

21          So the IRS, that actually will be in the  
22          outstanding checks because when you run payroll that  
23          all accumulates, and so that should be part of the  
24          outstanding. But the November -- the first payroll  
25          in November, it was the end of November before taxes

1 and benefits were paid. And then that second -- as  
2 of the first of November -- of December, we had not  
3 seen that paid.

4 And then as far as the child nutrition contract  
5 goes, they did sign with Pine Bluff Public School  
6 yesterday to provide that. And of my understanding,  
7 that contract is for 85 meals a day. So if they have  
8 to start providing more for the enrollment that they  
9 are talking about, then that will go up  
10 substantially.

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And then on the Teacher  
12 Retirement, like what's the impact from the surcharge  
13 not being paid?

14 MS. SMITH: That is supposed to be good faith;  
15 they don't really know what you're doing on that.  
16 But when you outsource anywhere you are supposed to  
17 pay on those employees, and that's at 2% right now.

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Did you have anything  
19 to say or do you want Ms. Heather to go ahead?

20 MR. ROGERS: Yeah. I mean, well, first of all,  
21 that food service contract has been signed for 85 is  
22 a big deal since we're talking that the enrollment is  
23 supposed to be 117.

24 MS. SMITH: Correct.

25 MR. ROGERS: So that would be short; so that

1 would be another expense that they would have to --

2 MS. SMITH: Yes.

3 MR. ROGERS: -- renegotiate with Pine Bluff.

4 MS. SMITH: Yes.

5 MR. ROGERS: But the bigger issue I have right  
6 now with the whole thing with Pine Bluff, which is a  
7 school that's been designated in fiscal distress,  
8 they have not paid the \$33,400 to Pine Bluff yet,  
9 which has --

10 MS. SMITH: Right.

11 MR. ROGERS: -- in good faith paid -- provided  
12 those lunches to them.

13 MS. SMITH: Yes.

14 MR. ROGERS: So that's one major concern of mine  
15 that that has not been paid yet. I'd like to get  
16 that paid as soon as we could.

17 The other one is the payroll taxes are being  
18 paid late with the IRS. That surcharge that comes on  
19 there, that's additional penalties they're not having  
20 to pay. And I've looked at the bank statements,  
21 looked at what Heather has given me, and it looks  
22 like the checks are being put into eFinance but  
23 they're not being sent until they have assured  
24 there's money in their bank account. So that's  
25 another issue that I have too is that -- I don't want

1 to say they're trying to fake me out, but it kind of  
2 feels like it. Because if you run it off the  
3 eFinance, it shows you have a positive balance; but  
4 those checks haven't been released to the bank yet.  
5 Because of the bank balance, that doesn't give me a  
6 good feeling about it. So that's my -- that's  
7 another issue I have. But anyway, I'll let Heather  
8 finish.

9 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

10 MS. BARRETT: Yes, that's what I understand as  
11 well. The checks are being cut, but they're not  
12 being mailed; they're being held until they do  
13 receive the revenue.

14 One of the other issues was the -- there's an  
15 email that's attached in the packet and it's -- Mr.  
16 Cegers had taken a temporary salary reduction, and  
17 this was done on the 25th of October. When we  
18 visited on the 31st of October we talked with him  
19 about his financial issues and he expressed that he  
20 had some concerns, but he didn't disclose this at  
21 that time. He gave us the impression that they were  
22 working on things, and then later, when we were  
23 actually doing some reconciliation, we came across it  
24 ourselves. So that was kind of -- should've been  
25 brought to our attention I think sooner than it was.

1           The -- I think that's really -- I think that was  
2 really all the main issues that I had. Did you have  
3 any other specific questions on -- I tried to do a  
4 rough estimate. These are not going to be the actual  
5 amounts of their monthly invoices. I've taken the  
6 projections based upon what they've had each month  
7 for the year and done an average of those, so --

8           CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yeah. So, Mr. Rogers, what  
9 are the implications for a school that has a negative  
10 balance at the end of a -- at a particular point?

11           MR. ROGERS: Obviously, it depends on if we're  
12 talking about, like we were talking about, a paper  
13 balance or an actual balance. What Heather is  
14 showing here is probably going to be a paper balance  
15 because they're not going to run checks that they  
16 don't have the funds for. But with this continuing  
17 pattern it does show a cash-flow problem and a  
18 continuing cash-flow problem. And if it's not  
19 addressed quickly, it could snowball and be a very --  
20 I believe there's already fiscal integrity issues  
21 with this school and that's one of the indicators of  
22 fiscal distress for our traditional public schools,  
23 which is why I wanted this full review. So that's my  
24 issue is that there is a cash-flow problem here and  
25 that's what that's really indicating to you, showing

1 that negative-22 right now. So I'm saying there is a  
2 negative-22 in the bank account right now, but it is  
3 showing a cash-flow issue.

4 DR. WILLIAMS: You know, I kind of want to cut  
5 to the chase here. Are you all going to be  
6 financially solvent at the end of the academic year?  
7 I guess Mr. Cegers or someone can address that.  
8 Because this -- if we can't get there, then it's  
9 going to answer a lot of questions.

10 MR. RICH: Ken Ridge, Director of Finance  
11 Services with the Arkansas Public School Resource  
12 Center.

13 And that is a good question. I agree with Mr.  
14 Rogers. There's been -- the cash-flow has been low.  
15 I think Mr. Cegers has realized that. He reached out  
16 to us a couple of weeks ago, our first involvement  
17 with Southeast Prep, and we made some quick  
18 calculations our-self. We're still determining --  
19 we're in the determination point of how much we don't  
20 know versus what we do know at this point.

21 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

22 MR. RICH: But I do want you to understand this:  
23 we are working with Mr. Cegers and the school to make  
24 sure that they have -- they make the corrections they  
25 need to make to end this school year with a positive

1 cash balance. They're a small charter school. It's  
2 always difficult for a small charter school when they  
3 start off, especially when they're not adding a grade  
4 each year. Those charters that are adding a grade  
5 each year have the advantage of being on their, you  
6 know, current year funding. And so they're waiting  
7 until January to start to receive growth funding.  
8 Once that growth funding comes in, assuming the  
9 numbers stay where they're at, that will ease some of  
10 the burden. I believe we can go in and make some  
11 changes, and it's our commitment to work with them,  
12 to help them finish in a positive balance. If they  
13 can't, then this Panel and the Department of  
14 Education will be the first to know from us if that  
15 can't be done.

16 While I'm here I want to explain one more thing  
17 on the food service. There was -- my understanding  
18 is in October -- they just got the agreement signed  
19 yesterday with Pine Bluff School. Pine Bluff School  
20 had been providing food. An outstanding invoice that  
21 was in October was paid yesterday, \$16,000 of that  
22 \$33,000, about half of it. And then the newest  
23 invoices were two months and it was sent in December;  
24 so that'll be paid next month. So those will be  
25 addressed, those two things.

1           Obviously, there's a lot of work for the school,  
2           a lot of work for us. Mr. Cegers had contracted with  
3           someone else -- or someone else had contracted with  
4           Ms. Sergeant last year and we officially will take  
5           over this role actually on January 1st, but we've  
6           been working with them daily over the last two weeks.  
7           So you just have our commitment we'll work with them  
8           as best we can.

9           CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

10          DR. WILLIAMS: So, you know, usually when you  
11          all get involved it's usually a good thing in working  
12          with schools. So I'm making an assumption here --  
13          and you correct me if I'm wrong -- that you feel  
14          comfortable enough that you all can work through to  
15          get them to the end of the academic year --

16          MR. RICH: Yeah. I'm confident in our team and  
17          I think our past work will speak for itself, as you  
18          mentioned, and that as of right now, yes, I am. As  
19          we still gain information over the next few weeks,  
20          like I said, you'll be the first to know if we didn't  
21          think we could.

22          MR. BALDWIN: Let me add -- let me add --

23          DR. WILLIAMS: Uh-huh.

24          MR. BALDWIN: So the trend line shows that the  
25          school district is burning through about \$20,000 a

1 month in deficit spending. And I guess ADE is  
2 projecting a \$22,000 negative if you paid everything.  
3 Of course, you won't pay everything, so you're  
4 relying on your vendors to basically carry the  
5 school. It would be helpful if you all, as you look  
6 at this -- and I guess one of my questions is what  
7 happens in January? Is there some inflow of cash  
8 that helps this, or is it another \$20,000 burn of  
9 cash?

10 MR. RICH: They'll have some enrollment growth  
11 funding. That's 40-something -- 40-something  
12 thousand dollars.

13 MR. BALDWIN: Okay.

14 MR. RICH: It would be helpful. Yes.

15 MR. BALDWIN: Okay. So it would be helpful to  
16 have some type of a six-month cash projection.

17 MR. RICH: Yeah.

18 MR. BALDWIN: Because we shouldn't get down to  
19 the surprise when we run out of cash. It should be  
20 -- and I know -- I'm not -- I mean I know you guys  
21 know that. But that would be helpful to see the next  
22 six months, through maybe June of 2020 --

23 MR. RICH: Yeah.

24 MR. BALDWIN: -- and see what happens.

25 MR. RICH: Absolutely. And we had put together

1 a projection and Mr. Cegers used some of those  
2 numbers in the projection. Obviously, those are not  
3 absolutely correct based upon new information that's  
4 came forward in the last week. But based on what we  
5 know now I think we can put one together for a  
6 positive balance at the end of this school year.

7 MR. BALDWIN: Yes, sir.

8 DR. WILLIAMS: And is that growth funding that  
9 you're referring to an increase over what they  
10 already get on a per-pupil --

11 MR. RICH: Yeah, it's just -- it's just an  
12 installment payment based on their growth in the  
13 first quarter of this year over the three-quarter ADM  
14 of last year.

15 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

16 MR. RICH: If they continue to stay at 117  
17 students, then there would be two more of those  
18 payments throughout the year.

19 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Uh-huh.

20 MR. ROGERS: Yes, it would, if that holds true.  
21 But I talked to -- I asked Child Nutrition to look at  
22 claims and they're only averaging 62 claims a month.  
23 The highest month that they've -- that Pine Bluff has  
24 ever provided lunch is 85 this year. So when -- and  
25 when they did a fiscal count of the students that

1 were there it was only averaging between 70 and 80  
2 kids. So I don't know where the other 40, 50 kids  
3 are. I don't understand. That's -- that is my  
4 concern is that they're not showing it as attendance  
5 and we're not seeing it in meal counts; we're not  
6 seeing how that's going in there. So that student  
7 growth payment that's being made, if the next quarter  
8 isn't that much then that payment is dropped and we  
9 net against what the students are to make sure that  
10 we end the year based off how much the actual  
11 enrollment -- the three-quarter ADM is. And so  
12 that's a concern of mine is that we don't get too far  
13 out paying student growth, but then there's a  
14 repayment issue with the school district has to repay  
15 student growth to us, because that's another fiscal  
16 constraint that would be put on that school district  
17 to try to pay it.

18 MR. RICH: I'll let Mr. Cegers address that.  
19 We're not involved with the eSchool side of the  
20 program; just the eFinance. But I do plan to go to  
21 the school and make a visit as well. I just haven't  
22 had time in the last week.

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Cegers, do you  
24 want to address that? And then after that, if we  
25 could have Child Nutrition come and do a little more

1 in-depth on the concerns there.

2 SUPT. CEGERS: Jeremy Cegers.

3 Mrs. Dill came down and spoke with us on several  
4 times and she did a physical count of students and  
5 she counted during the end of the day. We are one of  
6 the only schools in Pine Bluff, Arkansas that have a  
7 lot of our students are participating in internships.  
8 So when she did the count a lot of students were  
9 already gone to their internships and she couldn't  
10 count them because they weren't there. They were --

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Are they not there during  
12 mealtime?

13 SUPT. CEGERS: Yes, they are there during  
14 mealtime. But she counted during the end of the day,  
15 after mealtime.

16 MR. ROGERS: And, well, that's why I added on  
17 there the contract to provide food service from Pine  
18 Bluff was just for 85.

19 SUPT. CEGERS: Yes, sir.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Right. So, yeah, that's our  
21 question: why are we only serving 85 -- you're  
22 contracting to serve 85 meals, if you have 117  
23 students?

24 SUPT. CEGERS: With a high school they just --  
25 they really don't eat, I mean to put it mildly.

1 They'll show up; they just don't eat in the cafeteria  
2 -- and that's a problem that we're trying to address.  
3 But if they aren't hungry, they just don't get a  
4 tray.

5 MR. ROGERS: I guess I would feel better if your  
6 contract was for it so we could just make sure those  
7 students down there are having a lunch provided for  
8 them. Because -- and I just -- help me understand.  
9 But what I think I just heard from you is that "since  
10 about 50 students don't eat anyway we don't even  
11 provide a lunch for them?"

12 MR. CEGERS: We adjusted --

13 MR. ROGERS: And if that's true, then we have --  
14 then I have other questions about that.

15 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yeah. So let's get Ms.  
16 Chastain to address that part too.

17 SUPT. CEGERS: Okay.

18 MS. CHASTAIN: Sheila Chastain. I'm the  
19 associate director with the Child Nutrition Unit at  
20 the Department of Education, Division of Elementary  
21 and Secondary Education.

22 Fifty percent participation at a high school is  
23 pretty standard statewide. So I don't think that  
24 that is too much difference, to address your  
25 question, Mr. Rogers. The school did have initially

1 115 meals per day delivered from Pine Bluff. But  
2 when we observed there at the beginning of the school  
3 year there was quite a lot of food left over. And  
4 this particular contract, which was, I guess, a  
5 gentlemen's agreement between Mr. Cegers and Pine  
6 Bluff High -- Pine Bluff School District, they had  
7 agreed that they would send 115. But when we saw so  
8 much food left over that students weren't using, we  
9 advised Mr. Cegers to check with Pine Bluff and see  
10 if he could reduce that amount. And they have not  
11 run out of food on any times that we've been there to  
12 observe, if that addresses that.

13 Did you have some questions about the count that  
14 Ms. Dill did? She's here to address that, if you do.

15 MR. ROGERS: No. I think I understand what you  
16 were saying.

17 MS. CHASTAIN: Okay. There were -- and I'll  
18 speak for Nancy; tell me if I'm putting words in your  
19 mouth. But there were what I understand kids kind of  
20 moving from place to place at times, and it was very  
21 difficult to get a real accurate count; so if that  
22 helps.

23 MS. DILL: Can I speak for a minute?

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Uh-huh.

25 MS. DILL: When I went and --

1                   CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Go ahead and state your name  
2 for the record.

3                   MS. DILL: Nancy Dill, Department of Ed., Child  
4 Nutrition. I'm assistant director.

5                   I was asked to get a headcount in the  
6 classrooms, and I did that at 2:00 in the afternoon  
7 because I was working on some of my stuff. At that  
8 time I believe there was an assembly being held in  
9 their gymnasium, so the classes -- I did not get to  
10 observe every one of those classrooms. And I wrote  
11 down -- I think I sent those numbers to Ms. Smith. I  
12 was able to go into about six different classrooms.  
13 But the majority of those students were in the gym at  
14 that time; they were having some type of assembly in  
15 there. I did not get a headcount in the gym.

16                  CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. From a Child Nutrition  
17 perspective with regards to finances though and the  
18 claims that -- we were having an issue with claims,  
19 if I recall, before.

20                  MS. CHASTAIN: Yes, ma'am.

21                  CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And so we've gotten caught up  
22 on those. Can you describe what that process has  
23 been and --

24                  MS. CHASTAIN: Yes, ma'am.

25                  CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- kind of where things are

1 now?

2 MS. CHASTAIN: The beginning of the school year  
3 the district was at a risk of not being paid for  
4 their child nutrition lunch claims. That continued  
5 through October. They did submit their October claim  
6 and it has been paid, and they have already submitted  
7 their November claim. So they are caught up at this  
8 time. The money may not have been all processed by  
9 ADE Finance; one of those payments was pulled on  
10 Monday of this week for the November claim. So it  
11 will probably be within the district this week,  
12 probably Thursday or Friday, I would expect, is the  
13 general time. At that time they will have received  
14 \$8,257 in reimbursement for August through November.  
15 And you've heard about their invoices. So there is  
16 --

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So --

18 MS. CHASTAIN: -- quite a bit difference there  
19 in the amount that they're receiving versus paying  
20 out. And that is one of our big concerns that they  
21 are -- you know, their revenue and their expenses  
22 aren't anywhere close to equal, but neither do we  
23 think that Pine Bluff is over-charging them either.  
24 They have a very good competitive price for the  
25 services and the meals that are being provided.

1                   CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So do we have any options for  
2 them that would help them in this regard?

3                   MS. CHASTAIN: That would help the charter?

4                   CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Uh-huh.

5                   MS. CHASTAIN: As you probably know, the child  
6 nutrition program is a USDA federally funded  
7 reimbursement program. It's like all federal  
8 programs; it's highly regulated and requires a lot of  
9 paperwork and regulation following. And the charter  
10 and Mr. Cegers have had quite a lot of turnover,  
11 which basically has resulted in the person  
12 responsible for the paperwork part of child nutrition  
13 has needed a lot of assistance -- and she does seem  
14 receptive, she does seem willing to try to do that.  
15 She is doing -- you know, she's doing well for the  
16 experience and everything that she has.

17                   We would like to let you know that we will be  
18 required to go back and do another formal monitoring  
19 review for this charter because we were not able to  
20 close the last one within an acceptable time period  
21 for USDA; so that triggers automatically a second  
22 review. We'll be doing that this spring semester.  
23 In that review we look at all different things, from  
24 their finances to their student eligibility and how  
25 they count and claim those meals, if they're meeting

1 the meal pattern. So it's quite an in-depth review  
2 and will require some technical assistance and  
3 training from our staff to the charter, I'm sure, in  
4 various areas. But it will also require quite a lot  
5 of policy development and, you know, thought process  
6 being put into giving a good-faith effort for  
7 spending federal tax dollars. So that is one thing  
8 that will happen this spring. We do recommend -- and  
9 as a result of those two reviews, we'll require  
10 someone from the charter to go through some  
11 additional training this summer that will be coming  
12 up.

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Today, do you have concerns  
14 about the charter's capacity to continue this, the  
15 child nutrition?

16 MS. CHASTAIN: It will be hard for them to  
17 financially afford it. Yes, ma'am.

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Okay.

19 MS. CHASTAIN: I know that the students are  
20 being fed and they are receiving meals. I've  
21 observed that. But I think financially this  
22 situation that they have now will be very hard for  
23 them to continue long-term.

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

25 MS. DILL: I wanted to just add -- as far as

1           their reimbursement every month, one of the things  
2           that lowered the reimbursement that they were  
3           receiving was that their meal applications were not  
4           signed. And we had -- they weren't, so they weren't  
5           valid. And that was one of the things that we were  
6           trying to get accomplished and get done. They did  
7           have a substantial number of students that were  
8           directly certified to receive meals at the free rate,  
9           which is about 10 times more reimbursement than you  
10          get for a paid meal. It really is. It's like 31  
11          cents versus \$3.50, \$3.60. I don't know just off the  
12          top of my head. We have gotten all of those  
13          applications signed and validated as of October 31st.  
14          So they -- many, many, many more meals would've been  
15          claimed at the free rate. So the reimbursement would  
16          not have been enough to cover all of the costs from  
17          Pine Bluff, because I think their contract is for  
18          \$4.50 for a meal but that's delivering it, serving  
19          it, providing personnel to come out there with it.  
20          And their free reimbursement is going to be somewhere  
21          around \$3.65 maybe. So it won't look -- there could  
22          have been more money coming into them. It wouldn't  
23          have covered it because they're -- you know, Pine  
24          Bluff is about 30 cents more per meal, 40 cents more  
25          per meal than their actual reimbursement would be.

1 But something that is going to help a little bit is  
2 if they can for most of those meals get the maximum  
3 reimbursement now that we have the meal applications  
4 signed and determined.

5 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So, Mr. Cegers, do you want  
6 to provide some input here?

7 SUPT. CEGERS: Earlier, you asked if we had -- I  
8 think you were asking --

9 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Will you pull the microphone  
10 up closer?

11 SUPT. CEGERS: I'm sorry.

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yeah.

13 SUPT. CEFERS: I think your question was similar  
14 to if we had another alternative to Pine Bluff School  
15 District. I know at point of arriving in July I  
16 tried to contact a variety of different food  
17 providers. I contacted Aramark, Preferred Meals -- a  
18 variety of places. With our small number of students  
19 no one would take us on.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And mine was not an  
21 alternative to what you're doing with Pine Bluff. I  
22 don't have any concerns there. What mine is, you  
23 know, was about the direct --

24 SUPT. CEGERS: Yes, ma'am.

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- you know, why -- you know,

1 why have we not gotten all of that figured out with,  
2 you know, students and what they -- if you've got --  
3 I don't remember; I think you said 87% of your  
4 students qualify for free and reduced lunch maybe?

5 SUPT. CEGERS: Yes, ma'am.

6 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: If I've got that number  
7 right, why aren't we seeing higher rates of  
8 reimbursement? That's what I'm trying to figure out.  
9 Why weren't the meal applications signed? So my  
10 question was more along the lines of why haven't we  
11 looked at CEP, why are we not, you know, looking at  
12 some type of special meal provision? Because, you  
13 know, you're two years into a school year and you're  
14 not getting the reimbursements that could take this  
15 burden off of you and your students.

16 SUPT. CEGERS: I literally called Mrs. Dill and  
17 -- was it Mrs. Howard? -- and Mrs. Howard this week  
18 to ask about CEP. We missed the deadline, which was  
19 in April. I have spoken to them about applying for  
20 next year already. But it was in April.

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. If you need to add  
22 something else, that's fine. But we need to move on  
23 to special education because that's --

24 MS. CHASTAIN: I would like to just add one more  
25 thing. The charter is serving all of the students

1 without charge; so no parent actually pays. It's as  
2 if they were on one of those special provisions, but  
3 they don't really receive the benefit of that. So  
4 that would probably be worth them considering for  
5 next year.

6 What goes along with that too is that at times  
7 the adults are eating also without paying, and that  
8 could potentially be an IRS issue with the charter.  
9 So we need to consider that. And I'm not sure who  
10 would be the person to provide that guidance and  
11 technical assistance, but as a benefit of employment  
12 that could be an issue for them in the future.

13 The contract that they just signed does have a  
14 provision in it that the meals can be adjusted up and  
15 down with notice. So that's a good benefit for both  
16 Pine Bluff and the charter.

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.

18 MS. SMITH: Cindy Smith, Fiscal Services.

19 We looked at our projection for June that you  
20 asked about. And if we did not include student  
21 growth they would be closing with a negative  
22 \$206,000. If they actually got the full \$142,500,  
23 they would still close it looks like with a negative  
24 \$64,000, from our projections.

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I believe there were

1 also some special education concerns. Please state  
2 your name and title for the record.

3 MS. HUGHES: Hi. Kristin Hughes, Program  
4 Advisor, Special Education Unit.

5 There was a special education monitoring on  
6 November 13th. There were some issues that came up  
7 that will require some training and also some  
8 submission of updated evidence. Also there were  
9 policies and procedures that needed to be provided  
10 that have not been provided yet. However, most  
11 concerning was while the team was on-site it was  
12 reported that students who have IEPs are not  
13 receiving services outlined on their IEP due to the  
14 lack of a special education teacher. So we are going  
15 to need for them to provide evidence of hiring a  
16 licensed special education teacher. They also stated  
17 that they had a plan to provide compensatory  
18 education that would begin in January. We've asked  
19 for what that plan looked like, and to my knowledge  
20 we have not received that plan yet.

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And what would be the amount?  
22 Do we know an amount that would be required?

23 MS. HUGHES: I do not have that information  
24 right now. I know that we looked and there were 11  
25 students active in eSchool on December 1st that were

1 on IEPs at their school.

2 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So, I mean are we saying that  
3 those 11 students have not since the beginning of the  
4 year been receiving the special education services as  
5 outlined on their IEP?

6 MS. HUGHES: To my knowledge.

7 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Can you speak to that?

8 SUPT. CEGERS: Jeremy Cegers.

9 Ms. Kinsel Branch is our LEA supervisor. She's  
10 here.

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

12 SUPT. CEGERS: And she was hired in November.  
13 So that's our --

14 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Can she speak? Can  
15 she come and speak then to the concerns that were  
16 shared then? Because you said you did the special  
17 ed. monitoring in November 13th?

18 MS. HUGHES: (Nodding head up and down.)

19 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Yes.

20 MS. BRANCH: Kinsel Branch, LEA Supervisor for  
21 Southeast Arkansas Preparatory High School.

22 I was officially hired on contract on November  
23 21st of this school year. Prior to that I served as  
24 a contract person on the campus and I assisted with  
25 correcting the folders and providing those special

1 services for those students, since October the 4th of  
2 this school year.

3 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So are you saying then  
4 that the students went from the first day of school  
5 till October 4th --

6 MS. BRANCH: Without a certified special  
7 education teacher on campus -- yes, ma'am.

8 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So were they receiving their  
9 special education services as outlined on their IEP  
10 or is that the time period that we would be looking  
11 at --

12 MS. BRANCH: That's the time period for  
13 compensatory services.

14 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: For 11 students?

15 MS. BRANCH: Correct.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I'm not sure  
17 monetarily what that comes out to, but that could --  
18 we could probably add that to the list of financial  
19 things.

20 Okay. Ms. Hughes, is there -- are there some  
21 additional things?

22 SUPT. CEGERS: We are applying -- we've already  
23 applied for ARMAC with Ms. Marie McCullom [ps] and  
24 that is a reimbursement for special services. So  
25 that is something that we are going to utilize for

1 special services this year.

2 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Hughes, are there  
3 some other --

4 MS. HUGHES: (Shaking head from side to side.)

5 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And so I'm assuming  
6 we'll be doing follow-up?

7 MS. HUGHES: Yes.

8 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: What's the next step that --

9 MS. HUGHES: Yes.

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: What does that look like?

11 MS. HUGHES: After our special education  
12 monitoring, from the date of the letter that was  
13 mailed they have 90 days to provide any corrective  
14 actions, and that 90 days will be up on March 15,  
15 2020.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So is that to tell us what  
17 the corrective action will be or is that to correct?

18 MS. HUGHES: To correct.

19 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: To correct. Okay. And you  
20 said it was, what, March?

21 MS. HUGHES: March 15th.

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Is there anything else  
23 that we would need to know regarding special  
24 education then? I feel like I'm probably not  
25 equipped to ask all of the right questions.

1 MS. HUGHES: No. That is what I see reported in  
2 our letter that went out on December 16th.

3 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So I think we also had  
4 some legal issues that Ms. Hyatt wanted to share with  
5 us.

6 MR. ROGERS: I just had a -- on the SPED thing,  
7 so they'd have to have IEP meetings for each of their  
8 students to determine how much that the education  
9 service would've cost, and then they would provide it  
10 as well as the regular services? Is that how that  
11 works?

12 MS. HUGHES: In addition to.

13 MR. ROGERS: Okay. So they've got to double-up  
14 to get whatever in their IEP is by March 15th. Is  
15 that right?

16 MS. HYATT: They have to have the corrective  
17 action. But they -- yeah, they can do -- the  
18 compensatory services don't have to be provided by  
19 them, but they have to have a plan to do it. And I  
20 think one of the big concerns is compensatory ed.  
21 doesn't take the place of their regular ed. that they  
22 should be receiving.

23 MR. ROGERS: Right.

24 MS. HYATT: So on top of the regular school day  
25 they're going to have to figure out how to offer

1           these kids compensatory education for two months or  
2           two-plus months of school that they weren't receiving  
3           the services in their IEP. And that kind of ties  
4           into one of the things I was going to say is it also  
5           puts their federal funding at risk for not following  
6           IDEA. One of the other things -- can I transition?  
7           Did I answer your question?

8           MR. ROGERS: (Nodding head up and down.)

9           MS. HYATT: Okay. One of the other things I  
10          think that puts their federal funding at risk is  
11          Section 9-5-2-4 of ESEA requires that as a condition  
12          of receiving federal funds that every school,  
13          including open enrollment charters, have to certify  
14          that they have no policy that prevents or otherwise  
15          denies participation in constitutionally protected  
16          prayer. This has been a requirement since 2003.  
17          September 15th is the deadline for that report. Our  
18          Equity Division reached out to Southeast Arkansas  
19          Prep at least twice; did not receive it. We had to  
20          submit information to the Feds saying that they were  
21          the only school that we did not receive the assurance  
22          from. They did finally provide it, but it was on  
23          November 25th -- so two months after it was due and  
24          after we had already had to notify the Feds that they  
25          had not provided it.

1 Another report, 6-17-1901, Arkansas statute  
2 requires any school that has 5% African American or  
3 other minority population must provide a recruitment  
4 and retention plan for minority teachers and  
5 administrators. That law is from 1991, so not new.  
6 That was due October 15th. Our Equity Assistance  
7 Division has reached out to the school multiple  
8 times, I believe the Charter Unit has reached out to  
9 them at least once, and that report has not been  
10 provided to date.

11 One of the concerns I think I have, after I did  
12 a review of their waivers, is that -- and I think we  
13 heard in their presentation that the superintendent  
14 came in and had a lot of hurdles to kind of get over  
15 at the beginning of the year. They do have a waiver  
16 of their superintendent mentoring program; so I think  
17 that's something that could be helping this school  
18 that they're not utilizing.

19 Equity also wanted me to point out that they  
20 have received at least one, if not two, reports and  
21 done investigations on discipline matters that are  
22 being handled incorrectly in the school, including  
23 reports that the school is counseling kids out of the  
24 school rather than going through the correct  
25 expulsion and suspension processes, which makes it

1 really complicated when the kid then tries to go  
2 enroll in a different school.

3 And, lastly, as of October 30th the student  
4 handbook was not posted on the website, which is a  
5 requirement in standards and also Equity checks. I  
6 checked this morning and it is posted on the website  
7 now, but I think that's just, you know, one other  
8 thing that is not really being followed that should  
9 be being followed.

10 One of the recommendations that Equity has is  
11 that the Panel mandate 504 training for the school  
12 because there seems to be issues complying with  
13 Section 504. As Kristin was speaking about special  
14 ed., I wanted to make sure that the Panel knows -- I  
15 don't have the number in front of me, but I'm sure  
16 that the school has at least one student that has a  
17 504 plan. If services weren't being provided to kids  
18 with an IEP, it's very likely that services weren't  
19 being provided to kids with a 504 plan, as a lot of  
20 times those services overlap. So it might be  
21 beneficial for Mr. Cegers or their new special ed.  
22 coordinator to kind of speak about what they're  
23 planning to do about those kids.

24 MS. BRANCH: We are planning to begin providing  
25 those services to our special ed. students, to

1 outsource for OT/PT. And they've already been  
2 receiving their accommodations in the classrooms. As  
3 of October 15th, they were receiving those  
4 accommodations; they were given to the teachers. And  
5 I've also provided some of those accommodations. And  
6 we're also going to have someone to come in to  
7 provide OT/PT and speech for those students, in  
8 January. And we're also going to begin having  
9 compensatory services on the week -- we offered them  
10 after school and on the weekends for those students  
11 who did not receive their services from the beginning  
12 of the school year until I arrived in October.

13 CHAIRMA PFEFFER: And I think Ms. Hyatt was  
14 speaking about 504. Do you have students that have  
15 504 plans in place?

16 MS. BRANCH: We do have one student that has a  
17 504 plan in place and he has been receiving services  
18 since I arrived.

19 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

20 SUPT. CEGERS: Jeremy Cegers. We -- I am  
21 unaware of any disciplinary action of someone  
22 receiving counseling outside or leaving the campus  
23 for counseling. What we do provide at Southeast  
24 Arkansas Prep is a restorative justice program. And  
25 students that are identified as potentially violent

1 or any other thing that may need counseling services  
2 we do have someone to come in, Reform, Incorporated,  
3 and they help with our students there. It's not in  
4 lieu of discipline though.

5 MS. HYATT: Sorry; I don't think I was clear. I  
6 didn't mean counseling services. I meant that there  
7 have been reports that the school itself is  
8 counseling students to withdraw from the school as  
9 opposed to expelling them or suspending them,  
10 following Arkansas law and rules about discipline,  
11 which then makes it hard when the student is  
12 attempting to enroll in another school because  
13 there's some sort of confusion around "well, was the  
14 student expelled?" Because other schools have rights  
15 to deny students when they're expelled from another  
16 Arkansas school. So I didn't mean that they were  
17 receiving counseling, because that would be a  
18 wonderful thing; I meant they're being counseled out  
19 of the school by school administration as opposed to  
20 following discipline procedures.

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And I think -- and that would  
22 be something that our Equity Office would continue to  
23 work with the school on if --

24 MS. HYATT: Yes. And I believe they have had  
25 conversations with Mr. Cegers, as well as -- you

1 know, I don't think it's one-sided; I think there's  
2 been some issues with Pine Bluff School District as  
3 well. And our Equity Assistance Center has worked  
4 with both schools to try and insure that there is  
5 clear processes in place when kids are moving between  
6 schools.

7 SUPT. CEGERS: I'd just like to clear that up.  
8 There is one student in question and that parent  
9 chose to withdraw her student in lieu of being  
10 expelled. And I spoke to -- I forget her name. But  
11 we have had extensive conversations about it.

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Okay. Panel Members,  
13 do you have questions for ADE staff or for the school  
14 -- or time for discussion?

15 DR. WILLIAMS: Time for discussion.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Discussion?

17 MR. WILSON: I'm sorry to say this, but it  
18 sounds to me like Southeast Prep is not capable of  
19 being saved. Even if the additional money comes in  
20 in the next 60 or 90 days, it sounds to me like even  
21 at best there's going to be a deficit at the end of  
22 this year that cannot be sustained. And as badly as  
23 I know Pine Bluff needs this institution and the kids  
24 need it, the numbers -- the arithmetic just doesn't  
25 work.

1           CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I think mine -- I mean what's  
2 really raised my concern is the special education and  
3 the compensatory education -- you've got speech,  
4 you've got PT, you've got OT. I don't -- you know,  
5 we don't even know how much money that's going to  
6 involve right now. We don't know what that's really  
7 looking like. You know, you combine that with  
8 several of the other things and I think what you said  
9 is right. Our staff has had to stay on top of things  
10 continuously and even then, you see the issues that  
11 are going on, and that is not the way to run a  
12 school.

13           DR. WILLIAMS: And I had -- you know, just my  
14 question in general is really to ADE staff. And is  
15 this -- is there a recommendation of where we go from  
16 here? I listened to everything and I don't -- I'm  
17 trying to find a path forward, you know, and I don't  
18 have one basically. So is there another way, other  
19 than the path that's kind of laid out before us? I'm  
20 with Mr. Wilson that things are -- the numbers are  
21 just not adding up. If that's the case, if we move  
22 in that direction, I think the next priority then are  
23 the kids, you know, and how would that be addressed.

24           So my first question, back to -- is there a path  
25 forward other than -- is there a phase-down model?

1 Do we think they can be financially made viable? Is  
2 there a timeline in which we would have better  
3 information to decide how to approach that? I'll be  
4 honest about it -- you know, just hearing the initial  
5 financial report and seeing that there would be a  
6 deficit, and then listening to "well, there's  
7 possible growth funds coming," but then not really  
8 sure the count is there for the growth funds, and  
9 then to think about all the other things that need to  
10 be added for services to be provided and that's going  
11 to cost -- and I give Mr. Cegers credit, he's already  
12 adjusted his salary down trying to make things work.  
13 All that said, I'm just not sure that they're going  
14 to be financially viable. Uh-huh.

15 MR. BALDWIN: Is there any emergency funding  
16 available?

17 SUPT. CEGERS: May I approach?

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: We're going to have  
19 discussion first.

20 SUPT. CEGERS: All right.

21 MR. ROGERS: No. The Department doesn't have  
22 any -- there's not any law or statute that allows for  
23 any kind of situation like that.

24 DR. KREMERS: Well, I think it's not just about  
25 the money; it's also the academics, being an "F"

1 school; it's the transparency; it's the amount of  
2 work -- because, you know, even in the report back  
3 it's "we've submitted all of our reports," and then  
4 there's still a report not submitted. So I think  
5 it's either confusion or transparency, but I think  
6 there's places potentially where it's not full  
7 transparency. And it has to be a collaborative thing  
8 to make it kind of work. And then, you know, saying  
9 they only reached out starting a few weeks ago when  
10 it -- you know, being onboard from July and then just  
11 now reaching out, you know, that's kind of a flag to  
12 me. And then also like in their budget they have  
13 \$30,000 set aside for accounting and they've only  
14 used \$10,000, knowing that that's one of the primary  
15 issues that we were bringing up. Whether there's  
16 just bills not paid yet, I don't know, you know, if  
17 that's why it's not expended yet. But, you know,  
18 knowing that that's a major issue and not even using  
19 fully the full budget you have to do everything you  
20 can do to start addressing some of that and reaching  
21 out -- you know, there's a lot of pieces of it -- not  
22 signing a federal document, which, you know, federal  
23 -- you know, federal you sign everything twice. And  
24 so I think there's a lot of major concerns to -- you  
25 know, to not, you know, address it.

1 MR. ROGERS: And I think that's some of my  
2 concerns, you know, last month when we had Child  
3 Nutrition here saying they were five hours away from  
4 not being eligible for that child nutrition fund.  
5 And then there had to have been from Fiscal Service,  
6 Legal, SPED, Child Nutrition -- all those that had to  
7 have multiple calls to multiple different people to  
8 try to even get things turned in to keep it going.  
9 So I know that Fiscal Services Support has met with  
10 the previous superintendent about fiscal issues  
11 before, so this isn't new, something that -- he  
12 didn't -- I don't believe he caused this; it's been  
13 an ongoing issue with this school -- that I don't --  
14 I think I agree with everyone else, I don't see a  
15 path fiscally forward with it, and that was my  
16 concern with it when we've been looking at it.

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So I think the biggest  
18 challenge we have is what action do we take and what  
19 is the timeline.

20 DR. WILLIAMS: What are our options?

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Ms. Hyatt.

22 MS. HYATT: Mary Claire Haytt with the Division.

23 You have pretty broad authority here. You can  
24 do nothing. You can place probation requirements,  
25 reporting requirements, anything like that on the

1 school. You can revoke immediately; you can revoke  
2 at the end of the school year. You can require them  
3 to come back in next month if you want additional  
4 information. So you have pretty broad authority.

5 One thing I did want to say, because Mr. Rogers  
6 touched on it, is I want to make sure I didn't throw  
7 Mr. Cegers under the bus, because this -- these  
8 issues, at least the legal issues and some of the  
9 financial issues, did not start with him. I was part  
10 of a meeting with Finance and with the attorney that  
11 works on licensure and background checks and myself,  
12 Pat Hart, who I believe is the board president,  
13 another board member last year, at the beginning of  
14 the year when they had just hired their second  
15 superintendent. And we talked about all these kind  
16 of same things then. So I wanted to make sure that I  
17 was being fair to Mr. Cegers in my comments and make  
18 sure you know that it wasn't -- he didn't come in and  
19 --

20 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes.

21 MS. HYATT: -- cause all this, so --

22 DR. WILLIAMS: Uh-huh.

23 MR. BALDWIN: Can I ask a question? If the  
24 charter is revoked, what happens to the kids?

25 MS. HYATT: So it kind of depends. If you

1           revoke the charter immediately, I mean that provides  
2           a much larger obstacle for the kids to find immediate  
3           placement. They can obviously go to any traditional  
4           public school that they're zoned for. It's kind of  
5           too late for school choice. Some open-enrollment  
6           charters might allow them. I think most of their  
7           students are Pine Bluff School District students. I  
8           think like 100 are for Pine Bluff School District; so  
9           they could return there. They have a couple from  
10          Watson Chapel, a couple from Dollarway, and a couple  
11          from White Hall; so they would return to their  
12          district. If you waited until the end of the school  
13          year, they could remain at Southeast Arkansas Prep  
14          through the end of this school year and then utilize  
15          school choice, enroll in another open-enrollment, or  
16          go to their zoned school for the next school year.

17                 DR. WILLIAMS: From a financial standpoint, if  
18                 we let them continue to operate and they run a  
19                 deficit what happens with the deficit? Who is  
20                 responsible for paying the deficit?

21                 MS. HYATT: Yeah, that's a great question. So  
22                 I'll kind of give the legal standpoint, and then if  
23                 someone from Finance wants to come and talk.

24                 So Arkansas law provides that no debt of an  
25                 open-enrollment charter school is a debt of the

1 State; so it does not fall to the State of Arkansas  
2 to pay the debt. As I'm sure you are familiar with  
3 the two schools we've revoked in the past couple of  
4 years, I mean we're still paying debts of those  
5 schools from funds that we have gotten from accounts  
6 receivable, and some of the debts did go unpaid. I  
7 know with Rockbridge, I mean they have tax debt --  
8 enormous tax debt that went unpaid because of simply  
9 the funds of the school right now. I know with  
10 Covenant Keepers, you know, we still have lots of  
11 vendors and tax debt left to pay there. So I think  
12 it goes unpaid if the funds of the school are  
13 inadequate.

14 Typically what happens is that once the Panel  
15 votes to revoke and the State Board approves it, the  
16 Department -- sorry -- the Division steps in and  
17 immediately starts handling kind of the wind-down of  
18 the school, including helping them manage the  
19 finances, making sure vendors are being paid. The  
20 charter rules do set out a preference for how vendors  
21 are paid, starting with, you know, teachers,  
22 benefits, child support, state and federal taxes, and  
23 then other types of vendors. So they would be paid  
24 in that order.

25 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. So a little bit on timing

1           -- if we act on this, whatever we do, it has to go  
2 before the State Board which is part of the process.  
3 When would the State Board meet again? Just -- it  
4 would be their January meeting or --

5           CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Would there be time to have  
6 it on the January agenda, State Board?

7           MS. HYATT: I think -- yes, I think we can get  
8 it on January. So that's a really good point because  
9 if you were to revoke it immediately it would have to  
10 still go to the State Board; so then it wouldn't be  
11 final if they didn't review until January. So the  
12 kids would've come back from Christmas break and be  
13 at the school for a couple of weeks and then  
14 potentially the school could no longer exist.  
15 Obviously, the State Board can issue a right-of-  
16 review, which might push it into even February. So  
17 just take that into consideration when you do that.  
18 But January, we could get it on January.

19           DR. WILLIAMS: In thinking about the timing, I'm  
20 trying to figure out what would be best for parents  
21 and kids to be able to make a decision and have some  
22 time to -- let me just -- maybe I can think backwards  
23 here and do a little bit of backward mapping.

24           The ideal situation would be to make it to the  
25 end of the academic year. Uh-huh. And that way

1 decisions can then -- there's plenty of time for  
2 parents to make decisions and so-forth. If we go  
3 that route -- and you all correct me if you think  
4 differently or see something I am missing -- there's  
5 the potential for a deficit, a strong likelihood of a  
6 deficit that the state would have to address.

7 If we move it -- start moving back this way,  
8 you're probably looking at March, April timeframe to  
9 give parents enough time to come back. I hate for  
10 them to come back from Christmas break and have a  
11 couple of weeks and then, you know, the school no  
12 longer exists. Would it be worth -- and please  
13 pushback on this because I'm trying to struggle  
14 through it --

15 MR. BALDWIN: What I'm thinking --

16 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

17 MR. BALDWIN: -- is the six-month projection, is  
18 maybe show that month-by-month and let's see what the  
19 deficit is at January 30, February 30, March 30, and  
20 maybe -- you know, maybe we can see where the lines  
21 cross.

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And, Mr. Baldwin, I would --  
23 I'd be inclined to agree with you to take a wait  
24 approach if it weren't for the special education  
25 issues and the child nutrition issues compounded with

1 the fiscal issues and the lack of response to just  
2 outright directives from ADE for information. So in  
3 terms of just saying we're not sure what we're going  
4 to do until we see another couple of months of  
5 financial projections, I think this goes much deeper  
6 than just financial projections.

7 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes.

8 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I think this goes into not  
9 having the structure, the capacity for the systemic  
10 operations that have to go.

11 So I'm more inclined to think like you're  
12 thinking as far as I think that -- I don't think this  
13 school is going to be able to continue beyond the  
14 year. But with the timelines I hate to have students  
15 have to switch in the middle of a semester. Some  
16 parents might want to say -- maybe after spring break  
17 they might say, you know, finish out a school year  
18 somewhere. But, you know, options with school choice  
19 are going to be limited until July. So -- but, you  
20 know, that's -- that is something to consider as far  
21 as students, so --

22 DR. WILLIAMS: So what about -- I'm kind of  
23 going out on a limb here -- getting a report for the  
24 next two months, with the intent would be to kind of  
25 identify what would be a good time for this to

1           happen, kind of like the spring -- I want to give  
2           parents time enough to digest what's happening and to  
3           make decisions along the way instead of one day  
4           you're showing up and then the next day the school is  
5           no longer operating. When is spring break? When is  
6           it?

7           DR. KREMERS: The 22nd through the 27th.

8           CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Of March.

9           DR. KREMERS: March.

10          DR. WILLIAMS: March -- of March. Uh-huh. One,  
11          I think we need to get reports -- for whatever --  
12          ever how we move forward we probably need --

13          CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Monthly reports.

14          DR. WILLIAMS: -- monthly reports, would be a  
15          start. And to -- would there be a recommended phase-  
16          down? I'm trying -- I guess I'm asking ADE, someone  
17          from staff to kind of give us some guidance.

18          MS. HYATT: Sure. So with any school that's  
19          closing voluntarily or by revocation, the Charter  
20          Unit has a really thorough set of procedures for  
21          winding down the school.

22          DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

23          MS. HYATT: We have a little bit more control  
24          when it's revoked just because the rules and the law  
25          do give the Commissioner responsibility for insuring

1 that state funds are used properly. And as we've  
2 seen in the past, you know, that's a really big  
3 concern and responsibility. So typically what  
4 happens is the Charter Office will help the school  
5 notify parents of the decision and of their options  
6 of where the kids can go, about school choice, notify  
7 the staff about when the school would be closing,  
8 help wind-down the financials including identifying  
9 what are the accounts receivable, what are the  
10 accounts payable, what debts are going to be owed,  
11 are there debts that are illegitimate debts of the  
12 schools, which ones are legitimate debts of the  
13 school, that kind of stuff. And then begin doing an  
14 inventory of all of their assets, their fixtures. I  
15 don't believe they have any real property, but that's  
16 included in the closing procedures. So pretty much  
17 once the decision is made and affirmed by the State  
18 Board it becomes really hands-on by ADE to help wind-  
19 down the school. I think it's really important, and  
20 I think the Charter Unit takes it really seriously,  
21 that we want to make sure that all of the students  
22 know what's going on and their families know what are  
23 the options, as well as the staff.

24 DR. WILLIAMS: And when you say "wind-down," how  
25 long does that normally take? I mean it's not like

1 all of a sudden the school no longer exists for the  
2 students and the parents?

3 MS. HYATT: Sure. There are -- I mean there are  
4 timelines in the rules. Like the school has to  
5 provide certain information within 15 days; some of  
6 the stuff has to be done within 30 days. It kind of  
7 depends on the timeline until it's fully wound-down.  
8 I'm still doing IRS work for Rockbridge and that was  
9 over a year ago, maybe over two years ago. I'm still  
10 doing work with Covenant Keepers, which was almost a  
11 year ago.

12 DR. WILLIAMS: Well, let me -- sorry to  
13 interrupt, but let me -- the point I'm really trying  
14 to get to on the wind-down is for when does -- when  
15 do they close the doors for students? On those other  
16 two previous schools that you mentioned, did we go to  
17 the end of May -- I mean the end of --

18 MS. HYATT: Sure. So with Rockbridge, I believe  
19 they continued operating until the end of the school  
20 year. With Covenant Keepers, the circumstances were  
21 a lot different and that was an immediate revocation.

22 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

23 MS. HYATT: So --

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: They were absorbed.

25 MS. HYATT: Yes, they were absorbed.

1                   CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: They were absorbed into a new  
2 school.

3                   MS. HYATT: Yes. So I mean it honestly just  
4 depends on what the Panel chooses, because you can  
5 choose today; you can choose spring break; you can  
6 choose the end of the school year. It's really up to  
7 the Panel. And then based on whatever timeline we  
8 have we'll begin work immediately.

9                   DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

10                  MR. ROGERS: I was thinking immediate.

11                  DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

12                  MR. ROGERS: Honestly what I was thinking.

13                  DR. WILLIAMS: All right.

14                  MR. ROGERS: But based off the discussion that  
15 you're having, if you wanted to come to some kind of  
16 thing then I would suggest monthly reports, and only  
17 because they're working with APSRC and we can get  
18 good reports from APSRC. And we could partner with  
19 them and if anything changed financially, SPED, at  
20 that time, then I would still look at immediate.

21                  DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

22                  MR. ROGERS: But right now I'm thinking  
23 immediate, get it to the State Board, get some  
24 decisions made, get going just because the SPED issue  
25 is stuck in my craw now. Because there weren't kids

1 getting those services they needed until --

2 DR. WILLIAMS: Good point.

3 MR. ROGERS: -- until November. Now they have  
4 to make up till October, but I didn't even know that  
5 at first until that came out today. And that's just  
6 bugging me that those 11 kids weren't getting the  
7 education they needed. And that's some of the same  
8 issues that we started having with some of the other  
9 charters that came around, and that was just like the  
10 first page it seemed like, and then the financial  
11 issues; that there was just -- I'm worried with the  
12 way the cards are falling here --

13 DR. WILLIAMS: Yeah.

14 MR. ROGERS: -- which is why I'm thinking  
15 immediate.

16 MR. BALDWIN: If we vote for immediate, it goes  
17 to the State Board next; so that's next month?

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Uh-huh.

19 MR. BALDWIN: So it's not like it's going to  
20 happen tomorrow. So then they vote for it, and then  
21 there's the wind-down process.

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Uh-huh.

23 MR. BALDWIN: So it sounds like there is a --  
24 there's some period of time when things happen after  
25 this.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So --

2 DR. WILLIAMS: When you stop serving kids is the  
3 wind-down.

4 MS. HYATT: Right. So if you vote to  
5 immediately revoke, then basically they'll have until  
6 the State Board hears it to continue with their doors  
7 open. Once the State Board votes to review or not  
8 review, if they vote to not review, that decision  
9 becomes final and the doors would close that day. If  
10 they vote to review it, then it would go to February;  
11 so they would be open during that period too, for a  
12 full hearing in front of the State Board.

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Unless they had a review  
14 meeting in advance of February; correct?

15 MS. HYATT: That's right. So the State Board --  
16 thank you. The State Board can schedule a special  
17 board meeting. In fact, with Covenant Keepers it was  
18 -- we had to do that in order to be able to make sure  
19 that those kids could go somewhere else. So it is  
20 possible that if they voted to review they could hear  
21 it sooner than February, sometime in January.

22 MR. WILSON: Question. May I ask a question,  
23 Mary Claire? In the event that the Panel adopts the  
24 motion to revoke the charter immediately, does that  
25 action preclude a savior from coming into Pine Bluff

1 and taking over the school for -- from Southeast  
2 Prep?

3 MS. HYATT: So if the Charter Panel votes to  
4 revoke today, if the Panel -- sorry -- if the State  
5 Board voted to approve, yes, it would. If they voted  
6 to do a hearing and then additional evidence was  
7 presented at the hearing that someone wanted to come  
8 in, the State Board can take that into consideration,  
9 but it would be up to them. So I don't -- I don't  
10 know.

11 MR. WILSON: There's time, in other words.

12 DR. KREMERS: And, Greg, I'm on the same line as  
13 you are. I really feel like we're more of an  
14 immediate type of situation. And I think if there  
15 were a special hearing that could happen sooner, it  
16 would kind of allow those spots of time where we do  
17 have larger pockets for families to have and  
18 students, such as spring break, whenever that might  
19 be.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Ms. Coffman.

21 MS. COFFMAN: Deborah Coffman, Public School  
22 Accountability.

23 I'd like to speak on behalf of kids. So for  
24 students we need to consider that if they are going  
25 to apply to another charter school that that timeline

1 for lottery is in the spring. So parents would need  
2 to begin thinking about that and go ahead and get  
3 their applications into additional charters, other  
4 charters if they plan to apply for that. If they  
5 plan to apply for school choice, that closes May 1st,  
6 but they can also begin to get those applications in  
7 at any time period to that. Testing window is April  
8 to May and we certainly need kids settled, wherever  
9 that is, during that testing cycle. So I just wanted  
10 to kind of give you some of those important date as a  
11 part of your decision-making. Thank you.

12 MR. ROGERS: I have a question on that. So, but  
13 any other charter in the area that didn't have a  
14 waiting list they could go ahead and take them?

15 MS. COFFMAN: They could take them immediately.

16 MR. ROGERS: Okay. But if they didn't, then  
17 they would have to go back into their wait for --

18 MS. COFFMAN: Into the pool for the lottery.

19 MR. ROGERS: Okay.

20 MS. COFFMAN: And it -- that could be at  
21 different charters based on --

22 MR. ROGERS: Right.

23 MS. COFFMAN: -- grade level, whether or not  
24 that grade level is full; a different grade level  
25 could be open, and if they had siblings or something

1 like that.

2 MR. ROGERS: But then you also have Pine Bluff  
3 and Dollarway that are there.

4 MS. COFFMAN: Traditional schools are always  
5 open and willing to take children.

6 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Are we ready to move forward  
7 with a motion?

8 MR. WILSON: Madam Chairman, I move revocation  
9 of the charter effective immediately.

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I have a motion for  
11 revocation effective immediately.

12 MR. BALDWIN: Second.

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And a second.

14 Any discussion?

15 All those in favor say aye.

16 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Any opposed?

18 Okay. So we have a unanimous vote for an  
19 immediate revocation of the charter.

20 And Ms. Hyatt stepped out, I guess?

21 MS. HYATT: No, I'm right here.

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Oh, there you are. Okay.

23 Is there anything else then that we need to --

24 MS. HYATT: So if you will fill out your voting  
25 sheets -- and what I will do is after the Panel

1 adjourns for the day I will visit with Gina Windle,  
2 who does the coordinating -- the -- you know -- you  
3 guys know who she is, the Chief of Staff for the  
4 Division -- to visit about getting this placed on the  
5 agenda for January, if not before then, so that we  
6 can get some resolution for the school and for the  
7 kids. And the school will receive notification from  
8 the Division about what happened today, as well as  
9 all of the relevant timeline information. And we  
10 will begin working with the school, even before the  
11 State Board hears the matter, just to insure that  
12 everything is going according to timelines.

13 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

14 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Well, I think everyone  
15 has stated their reasons. We'll go ahead with the  
16 formal responses from everybody. Start with Mr.  
17 Baldwin.

18 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I vote to immediately revoke  
19 the charter. The school is financially insolvent and  
20 unable to continue in that regards, as well as  
21 currently operating in violation of many ADE  
22 requirements.

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Kremers.

24 DR. KREMERS: I voted to approve the motion for  
25 immediate revocation of the charter. The information

1 presented were all very serious and concerning.

2 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Williams.

3 DR. WILLIAMS: I support the motion due to both  
4 financial concerns and lack of services for students.

5 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Rogers.

6 MR. ROGERS: I voted for the motion, as stated  
7 from everyone else, given the financial concerns, the  
8 concerns with the child nutrition payments, and  
9 especially the SPED concerns. The communication --  
10 the lack of communication between ADE has given me  
11 further indication that this probably is something  
12 that will continue.

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Wilson.

14 MR. WILSON: I voted for the motion. The  
15 financial situation is impossible.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Cegers and  
17 everyone that's here, thank you for being here today.  
18 And we do want to reiterate this is -- we know this  
19 isn't something that has just begun recently; it has  
20 been an ongoing situation. So we don't take our  
21 responsibility here lightly. It's a very difficult  
22 decision. But we do have to insure that the needs of  
23 students are being met. So thank you for being here.

24 We're going to take a break until 2:00 and we'll  
25 hear our final item at 2:00.

1 (BREAK: 1:46 - 2:00 P.M.)

2 A-4: REVIEW HEARING FOR PINE BLUFF LIGHTHOUSE ACADEMY

3 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: We're going to go ahead and  
4 have our final review hearing. It'll be Pine Bluff  
5 Lighthouse Academy. I know several of you have been  
6 here all day with us and I appreciate it. I know  
7 you're tired. So we will go ahead and get going.  
8 And, yes, Ms. Webb.

9 MS. WEBB: So the next review is Pine Bluff  
10 Lighthouse charter. They are meeting Standards for  
11 Accreditation. We don't have any issues from any of  
12 the other units in the Division. I do want you to --  
13 I want to explain what's in your handout about the  
14 schools in the surrounding area. So the data that  
15 the Department collects on charter school students is  
16 the district in which they live; so it doesn't tell  
17 me which school exactly they would've -- they would  
18 attend, and so in some of the districts there are  
19 multiple schools.

20 So on the chart for Pine Bluff Lighthouse the  
21 first one is Dollarway. So they have two  
22 elementaries -- I'm sorry -- they have an elementary  
23 and a middle. And it will tell you that there are 20  
24 students enrolled in Pine Bluff Lighthouse charter  
25 that could have attended Dollarway Elementary, and

1           there's one from the middle school.

2                   Same thing for Pine Bluff. There are multiple  
3           elementaries. We don't collect data on the  
4           individual schools, and so there are 159 students  
5           that attend Pine Bluff elementary schools. But again  
6           I don't know which one, so that's why all that -- all  
7           the schools are listed with their letter grades.

8                   From Pine Bluff Lighthouse we have Lenisha  
9           Roberts and her team to do their presentation.

10                   CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So can we get all  
11           representatives of the charter and anyone speaking in  
12           opposition to stand to receive the oath? Okay. If  
13           you'll raise your right hand -- do you swear or  
14           affirm that the testimony you're about to give shall  
15           be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the  
16           truth?

17                   (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

18                   CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And, Ms. Roberts, are  
19           you going to begin?

20                   MS. ROBERTS: Okay. Good afternoon again.

21                   CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Good afternoon.

22                   MS. ROBERTS: Lenisha Roberts, executive  
23           director.

24                   We are here today to provide a progress update  
25           on our school's enrollment, academic performance,

1 reading interventions, and our standards and  
2 accreditations. Pine Bluff Lighthouse charter school  
3 currently has 256 scholars enrolled in grades K-8;  
4 203 scholars are in the lower academy, grades K-6;  
5 and 53 scholars are in the college prep academy,  
6 grades 7 and 8.

7 The demographic of scholars we serve is very  
8 unique. Our student population consists of 96%  
9 African American, 1% Caucasian, less than 1% Hispanic  
10 and Asian, and 1% of two or more races.

11 Every scholar that attends Pine Bluff Lighthouse  
12 receives free breakfast and lunch daily, in addition  
13 to a healthy afternoon snack. Eight percent of the  
14 population is identified as students needing special  
15 services; 13% of scholars in grades K-2 are  
16 identified as having dyslexia indicators; 3% of  
17 families identify as homeless; 7% represent gifted  
18 and talented; and 66% of our families utilize our  
19 daily bus transportation. Pine Bluff currently  
20 serves 153 families.

21 Our enrollment -- due to a decrease in the  
22 city's overall population, both Pine Bluff Lighthouse  
23 and Pine Bluff School District have seen a decrease  
24 in enrollment over the years. Our decrease since  
25 2016 is at 26% and the local district is at 30%.

1 Even with this decline in enrollment we have still  
2 maintained a secure and sound financial status with a  
3 balanced budget to maintain a viable and fully  
4 staffed school for our students.

5 MS. CROWDER: Good afternoon. I'm Amanda  
6 Crowder; I'm the regional academic director for  
7 Lighthouse Academies of Arkansas.

8 Today, as we start to talk about our academic  
9 performance, we will begin with a breakdown of our  
10 ESSA scores. Based on our school ESSA report for the  
11 upper academy, we did improve from the 2017-2018  
12 school year to the 2018-2019 school year in our  
13 weighted achievement and value-added growth. In  
14 analyzing the SQSS score it was determined that Pine  
15 Bluff had 12 scholars that were chronically absent  
16 over 10% of their enrollment that attributed to the  
17 32.43% of students having chronic attendance.

18 Pine Bluff Lighthouse upper academy had an  
19 increase of 4% in science achievement and a 10%  
20 increase in science growth. We are showing growth,  
21 but in order to accelerate the growth to even greater  
22 lengths we are currently focused on reading and  
23 attendance.

24 As you see, Pine Bluff Lighthouse lower academy  
25 had a slight decrease in overall ESSA score of 1.5

1 points. The change in the overall ESSA score can be  
2 attributed to scholars' reading levels, math  
3 achievement in 3rd grade, and attendance. While our  
4 scholars are making gains, they have not yet met the  
5 threshold for achievement as set by ACT Aspire or the  
6 State. The overall weighted achievement is  
7 calculated based on each scholar's achievement status  
8 in math and ELA -- and as you know, math and ELA  
9 consist of the reading and the writing and the  
10 English component.

11 Pine Bluff Lighthouse had a 6.5% increase in the  
12 number of students scoring ready or exceeding from  
13 2018 to 2019, according to in ELA. As you see, Pine  
14 Bluff Lighthouse elementary continues to outperform  
15 the local school districts and schools who serve the  
16 same grade span as we do.

17 The following data shows the improvements we  
18 have made in just one year by altering our academic  
19 focus and strategies. Achievement has increased in  
20 4th grade reading by 15% from 2017-18 school year to  
21 the 2018-19 school year. Our overall ELA readiness,  
22 as we talked about, has increased almost 7% and our  
23 math readiness has increased in 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th  
24 grade. We're showing clear improvements in several  
25 subject and grade levels across the school. We have

1 also analyzed the ELA data for our scholars who have  
2 spent four or more years with us at Pine Bluff  
3 Lighthouse. The scholars had an average increase of  
4 6.25 scale points. Every cohort increased in their  
5 scale score, with the 6th grade cohort increasing 8  
6 scale points. Scholars who are staying with us are  
7 showing significant growth in their reading. The  
8 average scale point increase for scholars who've been  
9 at Pine Bluff Lighthouse school for four or more  
10 years in math was 4 scale points.

11 Through the continuous implementation and focus  
12 on the Science of Reading our school was recognized  
13 with the University of Arkansas Office of Education  
14 Policy for Beating the Odds statewide ELA growth in  
15 middle level and Beating the Odds statewide math  
16 growth in middle level. This award recognized us  
17 both for high ELA and math growth, even though we  
18 serve a high free-and-reduced lunch population.

19 Our school is on track to meeting the  
20 expectations of the state.

21 A vast amount of our time is dedicated in our  
22 schedule to incorporate the Science of Reading during  
23 English Language Arts block. We utilize Core  
24 Knowledge and Heggerty in grades K-2, Expeditionary  
25 Learning and Word Study in grades 3-6 to support the

1 Science of Reading. Due to the academic success that  
2 we've had with the Personalized Learning Platform at  
3 our sister site in North Little Rock, Capital City,  
4 we've implemented Summit Learning platform for our  
5 7th and 8th grade scholars this school year at Pine  
6 Bluff Lighthouse.

7 MS. ROBERTS: Lenisha Roberts, executive  
8 director.

9 So I wanted to take a brief moment to talk about  
10 what we discussed in February at our renewal hearing,  
11 where we presented our three-year plan for moving  
12 forward. Here is an update as to where we are and  
13 how things are going. In many of the areas listed  
14 below, we are ahead of our projected plans.

15 Attendance -- we have successfully put in place  
16 an active at-risk taskforce and attendance taskforce  
17 that works closely with the school on battling  
18 attendance and any major issues hindering scholar  
19 academic success. This committee meets biweekly with  
20 the school leader and newly-hired family coordinator.  
21 We also have in place a family resource center to  
22 support the wellness of our families holistically.  
23 This center includes access to technology, a washer  
24 and dryer, toiletries, a clothes closet, literacy  
25 resources, just to name a few. As it relates to our

1 communication efforts, our office provides daily  
2 contact to parents of scholars who are absent.  
3 Student support team meetings with scholars and  
4 families who have missed three or more days happen  
5 every Thursday with the school leader. Attendance  
6 incentives for scholars and parents are in place.  
7 These efforts have caused us to see a decrease in the  
8 amount of chronic attendance. In the area of  
9 communication, weekly school-to-home communication  
10 consistently happens every Sunday. Teacher and  
11 parent communication contact occurs on a daily basis  
12 through the use of Class DoJo and Remind. Lastly  
13 with attendance, we aligned our 2019-2020 school  
14 calendar with Pine Bluff School District to insure  
15 parents are working on one schedule if they had kids  
16 in multiple districts. We are tracking ahead with  
17 our attendance goals.

18 As for our instructional design, we have insured  
19 that all teachers have and are receiving ongoing  
20 Science of Reading training. We redesigned our  
21 intervention program. Pine Bluff Lighthouse charter  
22 school utilizes levelized literacy intervention in  
23 grades 3-8. This is an intensive literacy program  
24 that deepens and expands comprehension with closed  
25 reading. We also have the support of two district

1 instructional specialists who provide weekly support  
2 to teachers and we now have employed a district  
3 dyslexia interventionist. We have implemented, as  
4 Ms. Crowder stated earlier, Summit Personalized  
5 Learning in grades 7th and 8th. Again, we are  
6 tracking ahead of what we had planned in our  
7 instructional design.

8 Teacher capacity and retention -- we are happy  
9 to say that we have retained all but one staff member  
10 since the beginning of the school year. Some of the  
11 things we've done to support our current teacher  
12 retention and staffing: one, retention bonuses for  
13 all returning school personnel. We increased our  
14 base salaries for 19-20 to attract highly qualified  
15 staff. We have employed a locally based recruitment  
16 and retention specialist who focuses on partnerships  
17 with the universities, staff morale, and marketing  
18 our school vacancies. We all know that the most  
19 important thing in retaining staff is making sure our  
20 teachers are academically prepared by focusing on  
21 their teaching and learning. We have embedded  
22 monthly professional development days for our staff  
23 and we have focused heavily on Science of Reading,  
24 Eureka Math training with Great Minds, and Summit  
25 Learning. We are proud to say we have met our goals

1 for year-one and are tracking ahead of schedule in  
2 the implementation of year-two for all areas.

3 As promised at our renewal hearing, we conducted  
4 our first official academic partnership with Pine  
5 Bluff School District with our Summer Start program  
6 to develop a literacy-based summer program for three  
7 weeks to focus on literacy skills that are deficient.  
8 The districts decided to target 5th grade scholars,  
9 as both districts had significant decreases in  
10 literacy scores in 5th grade on the norm growth test.  
11 As a result of the program, Pine Bluff Lighthouse  
12 charter school students that attended the program had  
13 an 8 percentile increase from spring 2019 to fall  
14 2019. We also implemented our Smart Start program  
15 for all new scholars to Pine Bluff, in August. A  
16 vital piece of this initiative was to pre-assess  
17 scholars' foundational and reading skills, their  
18 comprehension, and their writing ability. Our  
19 mission was to get a head-start to identify their  
20 needs to achieve academic success in order to begin  
21 instruction on day-one.

22 Lastly, we have continued our strong partnership  
23 with the Boys and Girls Club of Jefferson County with  
24 our 21st Century Before and After School Program.  
25 This program serves 98 scholars. As part of the

1 program scholars receive additional literacy  
2 intervention before and after school. As a component  
3 of the program, scholars utilize the instructional  
4 technology platform of MobyMax. MobyMax enriches  
5 learning gaps with the power of personalized  
6 learning. MobyMax's adaptive curriculum creates an  
7 individualized education plan for each scholar,  
8 allowing gifted scholars to progress as quickly as  
9 they like and also insuring that scholars get the  
10 extra instruction they need.

11 MS. CROWDER: Again, Amanda Crowder.

12 We've touched on our overall academic program.  
13 Now I'm going to talk specifically about our reading  
14 interventions.

15 Each grade level receives 60 minutes of small  
16 group instruction in which 40 minutes is allotted to  
17 targeted intervention and 20 minutes within their  
18 Tier 1 instruction. All K-2 scholars were assessed  
19 using Dibels to gather preliminary data about their  
20 foundational reading skills. During the Tier 1  
21 instruction students received small group instruction  
22 to target areas of growth for individual scholars in  
23 phonemic awareness, segmentation of words to include  
24 nonsense words, as well as oral reading. We targeted  
25 scholars in grades 3-8 who exhibited significant

1 difficulties in literacy and need intensive  
2 intervention in addition to core instruction.  
3 Interventions are aligned with the core instruction,  
4 support instructional and independent reading  
5 practices, comprehension, vocabulary expansion, and  
6 intentional lessons in the foundation of reading. To  
7 support our foundational reading skills in grades 3-8  
8 we use the phonics component of 3-6 RISE. The school  
9 has a literacy intervention that -- interventionist  
10 that also supports scholars and staff. The  
11 interventionist works with -- weekly with classroom  
12 teachers and support staff in order to support  
13 scholars through model teaching, one-on-one coaching,  
14 assisting with planning and instruction, as well as  
15 the data analysis of our formative assessments.

16 Pine Bluff Lighthouse charter school continues  
17 to use the evidence-based program of Orton-Gillingham  
18 based systems, Barton Reading and Spelling Systems,  
19 and small group intervention to address the growth  
20 areas of scholars that are exhibiting the  
21 characteristics of dyslexia. During the 2019-20  
22 school year six scholars attending Pine Bluff  
23 Lighthouse are receiving the Tier 2 dyslexia  
24 intervention services from our trained dyslexia  
25 interventionist.

1 Pine Bluff Lighthouse charter school also has  
2 fully implemented the Science of Reading in  
3 kindergarten through 6th grade. All grade levels  
4 have a set daily schedule that implements the  
5 components of the Science of Reading. We have 13  
6 teachers that are currently in the Science of Reading  
7 training through Arkansas RISE, BRAINSread with Dr.  
8 Leann Howard from Harding University, or Arkansas  
9 IDEAS. Two teachers have completely -- have  
10 completed the pathway in full. The literacy  
11 interventionist also provides professional  
12 development monthly on the components of Science of  
13 Reading as well.

14 MS. ROBERTS: Lenisha Roberts again.

15 So as you look at this slide, you will see that  
16 it's not a clear representation of our standards and  
17 accreditation as of today. We have zero exceptions.  
18 When we submitted this we had four and they were in  
19 the area of human capital with the background checks.  
20 So we are fully accredited as of today.

21 And I just want to -- just a special thanks to  
22 Mr. Causbie and Ms. Webb for their support through  
23 this process, because they were great to work with  
24 and they assisted us with getting those taken care of  
25 immediately.

1 MS. GALLAGHER: Good afternoon. My name is  
2 Sarah Gallagher and I'm the chief academic officer  
3 for Lighthouse Academies.

4 Ten months ago, the State Board of Education  
5 granted Pine Bluff Lighthouse charter school with a  
6 three-year charter renewal. At that time the Board  
7 deeply considered the current outcomes of our school,  
8 the needs of the scholars that we serve, the  
9 financial and operational health of our school, and  
10 the similar metrics of the surrounding schools that  
11 our scholars might otherwise attend. Ten months ago,  
12 we shared our strong financial and organizational  
13 outlook, our strong work on school culture and  
14 climate, shared academic growth metrics for our  
15 scholars, and we laid out a plan for increasing the  
16 academic outcomes for our scholars. The Board noted  
17 that the academic outcomes were not where the  
18 scholars of Pine Bluff need to be, but they also  
19 indicated that school change takes time. With an  
20 understanding that the foundations were in place,  
21 they granted us three years to make those changes.

22 As you heard earlier in our presentation, we are  
23 on track to execute our three-year plan.

24 As we all know, attendance is a critical  
25 component to learning and to school improvement.

1           Knowing this, we have put in place an attendance  
2           taskforce and work to insure that our scholars are  
3           with us each and every day. Our plan is working.  
4           This time last year our average daily attendance was  
5           hovering at or just above 90%, between 90 and 91.  
6           Today, our average daily attendance is 95% and it has  
7           been 95% or higher every month since September.  
8           Additionally, we have nearly cut in half our number  
9           of chronically absent scholars, those who have missed  
10          more than 10% of the school year, from 60 scholars  
11          last year to just 31 this year. With our  
12          interventions and family resources now in place we  
13          will continue to improve upon these outcomes moving  
14          forward.

15                 The second key to our success in academic  
16                 improvement is improving teacher capacity. As you  
17                 have heard, we have worked hard to increase -- to  
18                 insure that our teachers are masters of their content  
19                 with routine weekly support from a former Department  
20                 of Education trainer, Mrs. Elizabeth Shock.  
21                 Additionally, we have continued to support our  
22                 teachers through RISE training. Two of our teachers  
23                 have currently fully completed RISE training and 13  
24                 more are on the way. Additional training for math  
25                 has also been provided and we will be increasing this

1 training, and our science support, over the course of  
2 our charter in accordance with that three-year plan.

3 The final key to our academic improvement plan  
4 is targeted support for our scholars. Our leadership  
5 team is constantly reviewing the data on our scholars  
6 to insure that those who need substantive support  
7 receive it and to insure that that support is aligned  
8 to the data we have on their skill areas. These  
9 efforts are having a significant and measurable  
10 effect on the scholars at Pine Bluff Lighthouse  
11 charter school. We recently concluded our first  
12 round of annual ACT Aspire interim assessment  
13 testing. These interim assessments are aligned with  
14 the state tests, and if the interims are predictive  
15 our results indicate that only four short months into  
16 this school year 8% more of our scholars are already  
17 on track to meet state expectations than met state  
18 expectations in the spring of last year. We know  
19 that as we continue to implement our teacher capacity  
20 plans and our scholars' support plans this number  
21 will continue to rise and have a notable impact on  
22 our state test results this year. Similarly, we know  
23 that as we continue this work we will be on track to  
24 meet the full expectations of the State of Arkansas  
25 over the course of the charter term. While we are

1           only 10 short months into our three-year renewal, we  
2           are confident that the progress we have shown to date  
3           demonstrates tremendous potential for what lies ahead  
4           in the remaining two years and beyond. We look  
5           forward to continuing this trajectory of accelerated  
6           success over the remainder of our charter term.

7           Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you  
8           today and we look forward to further discussion.

9           CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. There's still a couple  
10          of minutes left in your 20 minutes, if there's  
11          anybody else.

12          Okay. I think we do have someone who had signed  
13          up for public comment. Was there any additional --

14          MS. HYATT: (Nodding head up and down.)

15          CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And would we have to vote  
16          again on taking public comment or does our earlier --

17          MS. HYATT: So I only have one name, Donna  
18          Roberts.

19          CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yes.

20          MS. HYATT: And I'm not sure if she was  
21          intending to give public comment or speak -- no,  
22          they're telling me it's not clear on the form. Is  
23          she in the room?

24          MS. DONNA ROBERTS: I am.

25          MS. HYATT: Are you wishing to give public

1 comment?

2 MS. DONNA ROBERTS: Yes.

3 MS. HYATT: Okay. So I think your earlier vote  
4 can handle it, if you'd like to let her speak now.

5 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Yes.

6 MS. DONNA ROBERTS: Good afternoon. I'm Donna  
7 Roberts. I am a parent at Lighthouse. I'm also a  
8 board member.

9 I'm coming to speak to you all about the 10  
10 months that we have been able to keep with the three  
11 years that we were given. Lighthouse has made a  
12 really drastic change with their teachers in their  
13 school. My son -- I'm speaking as a parent, so I'm  
14 speaking frankly, one hundred. The teachers, they  
15 have really did a round-about turn. They are -- they  
16 have heart and that's what we need in our teachers  
17 today. They have heart and they are -- they're there  
18 not for just the check, but they're there for those  
19 students. I know how I am about mine and I want him  
20 to get the best. I don't see that in Dollarway or  
21 Watson Chapel. My son is in Watson Chapel School  
22 District, but I thank God for Lighthouse.

23 And speaking as a board member for the school  
24 itself, it's consistent now. You have consistent  
25 with -- consistency with the teachers as far as being

1           there for the students. Now I will tell you this,  
2           going back to being a parent -- it takes parental  
3           involvement for our schools to prosper, and we are  
4           prospering. But you've got to consider the fact that  
5           the teachers are there for eight hours with those  
6           kids, where they have to go home and then they come  
7           back. So I want you to keep that in mind. But  
8           they're doing an awesome job and I love them. And I  
9           think they're going to keep on prospering. Thank  
10          you.

11           CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. Thank you.

12           Okay. Is there anyone else -- did you want to  
13          add anything? You still had five minutes.

14           MS. LENISHA ROBERTS: No.

15           CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: No. Okay. All right.

16           Well, we will open it up to Panel questions.

17          Dr. Kremers, I'll start with you, if you have  
18          anything.

19           DR. KREMERS: I was just going to ask -- I  
20          noticed on the math and English, the benchmarks,  
21          there's a pretty significant decrease. And I know in  
22          the narrative it speaks to the teacher turnover and  
23          whatnot from 18-19. So are these numbers posted  
24          since -- like your plan on interventions, have those  
25          started quite a while ago? Like when did those

1 implement compared to what the number changes are? I  
2 don't know if I asked that clearly or not.

3 MS. CROWDER: So I think you're asking about our  
4 ACT Aspire summative data.

5 DR. KREMERS: Uh-huh.

6 MS. CROWDER: So the implementations we're  
7 talking about for reading intervention, we started  
8 back in May looking at the data from the norm growth,  
9 because we took the NWEA in doing that. And that's  
10 when we implemented the partnership with Pine Bluff  
11 School District, April and May, and developed that,  
12 because our 5th graders at that time in both school  
13 districts were showing a decrease in their norm  
14 reference. Their growth from August to May was not  
15 where we wanted it on either schools. And so we met  
16 with Dr. Owoh and his team and also developed a  
17 literacy plan. And our literacy interventionist  
18 worked with their teachers as well; so we had  
19 teachers from both schools doing that. So that was  
20 the start of it, doing that. But then all summer  
21 long, working on what we need to do, and then when we  
22 got back the data as well and looking at individual  
23 students. We have a high mobility in Pine Buff, so  
24 looking at the students that we actually received in  
25 August, that's why it was very important for us to do

1 the start program for new students coming in, so we  
2 could see those foundational skills. Some of those  
3 students come in with no test scores as well, so to  
4 do that. So that was part of our --

5 DR. KREMERS: Thank you.

6 DR. WILLIAMS: Could you all talk to me a little  
7 bit about -- what's the yearly growth? I see the  
8 scale score, the ELA scale score and some others, but  
9 to put this in plain English for me. And I like the  
10 one from Capital City where it was this much of a  
11 year's growth over a year's time. Can anyone speak  
12 to that?

13 MS. CROWDER: So Mr. Cosio [ps] is our data  
14 person, so he can correct me if I'm wrong. But when  
15 you look at NWEA growth for each student, Pine Bluff  
16 Lighthouse has not completed their winter yet; so we  
17 don't have the data that Cap. City has. They have a  
18 couple of students that are still make-up testing.

19 DR. WILLIAMS: Right.

20 MS. CROWDER: So we're working on that. But an  
21 overall average, we meet or exceed the average for  
22 our grade levels that the norm reference test sets.  
23 So it's over a year's growth.

24 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

25 MS. CROWDER: We meet it. Okay.

1 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Good.

2 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Mr. Rogers.

3 MR. ROGERS: I'm trying to pull it back up.

4 So on the reading, you inputted your -- the RISE  
5 and everything this year. Because when I -- or  
6 because when I was looking at the reading scores it  
7 looked like '18 we were going up and then '19 the  
8 bottom fell out again. And so I was just kind of  
9 wanting to -- maybe if you could talk about that a  
10 little bit more.

11 MS. ROBERTS: Lenisha Roberts.

12 So, yes, we did take a decrease this past  
13 testing year. And as you all know, last year around  
14 this time there was a lot of uncertainty about where  
15 we would be this year. We ended up losing four  
16 teachers between December, after the hearing, and  
17 January, and they were all in those testing grades.  
18 So for the families and for the staff it was tough to  
19 try to even get through the year and keep the  
20 teachers' morale up because they didn't know what was  
21 going to happen. So we did lose teachers like  
22 immediately in those testing grades, and it happened  
23 to be all the testing grades. So the information and  
24 the data that talks about the grades that took the  
25 biggest hits is where we lost those teachers. So it

1 was unfortunate, but we're back on track. We  
2 retained 70% of the staff from last year that we  
3 wanted to keep. So we're excited about that and the  
4 work -- and they're committed. I mean like this is  
5 the first year -- like to lose one teacher in Pine  
6 Bluff from the start of school until now is  
7 phenomenal for us. It's like a record, to be honest.  
8 So we're excited and the staff is just in a whole  
9 different place in the work that they're trying to do  
10 now.

11 MR. ROGERS: Can I ask one more?

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: (Nodding head up and down.)

13 MR. ROGERS: And you'd mentioned earlier about  
14 your collaboration with Dr. Owoh at Pine Bluff.  
15 Could you talk a little bit more about that?

16 MS. ROBERTS: Sure. So immediately after our  
17 hearing in February, Valentine's Day -- yes, I can  
18 remember that -- we actually set up a meeting with  
19 Dr. Owoh and his academic team. It was myself, Ms.  
20 Crowder, Ms. Shock, who is our literacy person. I  
21 mean we had a full team in the boardroom at Pine  
22 Bluff School District. And we just went through and  
23 just hashed out what we wanted to work on, and that  
24 was the one thing we said we want to start small,  
25 with something small, not too big. Because we were

1 all there doing some restructuring this year and we  
2 didn't want to do anything too massive, but wanted to  
3 start that partnership. So we met I think twice, and  
4 then Ms. Shock took over meeting with the Pine Bluff  
5 team afterwards. But we agreed to split teachers and  
6 -- we were still in school; so what we did was bus  
7 our 5th graders, because it was -- we was -- it was  
8 June. And so we bused our 5th graders, during the  
9 time it started, over to Pine Bluff and the teachers  
10 went too and started the program. So I mean it was  
11 successful. We do have a meeting coming up in  
12 January to do some reflections to start planning like  
13 what it will look like moving forward. You know, Dr.  
14 Owoh and I both know that it needs some work; so we  
15 want to get ahead of the game. We actually talked  
16 yesterday via email, and so we're just waiting on the  
17 date now. But, yes.

18 MR. ROGERS: Thank you.

19 MR. WILSON: No questions.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And one of the things  
21 that I've looked at is, again, your cohort  
22 performance. So the students -- so I think seeing  
23 that's over six points in ELA and over four points in  
24 math, and that's for your 5-8 students -- do you have  
25 that same data for your K-4 students?

1 MS. CROWDER: We won't have that data because  
2 they don't test, so --

3 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: But do you have for like 3rd  
4 and 4th grade, like does that -- that 5-8 -- you've  
5 got your 4th grade coming in. Do you take it down to  
6 3rd grade?

7 MS. CROWDER: Well, we can do -- we have our --  
8 I can look up our 3-4. We do have it, but we don't  
9 have anything for 3rd grade. I'll look it up.

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. That's just -- I mean  
11 that's just interesting. And I think it would also  
12 be good too thinking ahead, because from -- let me  
13 look back here. So it's your K -- okay, so you're K-  
14 6 and 7-8, is how you're configured there. Okay. So  
15 the K-6 is the lower performing?

16 MS. ROBERTS: Yes.

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So just even thinking back to  
18 how -- when you look at your K-2 results how are  
19 those K-2 results informing, you know, as they're  
20 getting into the 3rd and 4th grade? And how much  
21 transition do you have in students at the -- maybe at  
22 that younger grade versus as they get older? Do you  
23 have more stability in your --

24 MS. ROBERTS: Yes.

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- student population?

1 MS. ROBERTS: So, Lenisha. I will briefly speak  
2 on that. Yes, we do, because, you know, Friendship  
3 is there now; so we do have a lot of transition  
4 because there are new schools in the area, and they  
5 have the K-2 right now. So it's more options and  
6 more choices. But the transition normally happens in  
7 those lower grades. If they stay with us like 3rd  
8 grade, we normally will keep them all the way to the  
9 end. That's why you see the strong data in those  
10 grades at the end.

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

12 MS. ROBERTS: But, yes.

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And I guess that's  
14 what -- I'm looking at the slide. So this cohort  
15 data that you have -- okay, I was looking here. So  
16 you say the average scholar who has been with your  
17 school for four or more years -- so that 5th grade is  
18 representative of --

19 MS. ROBERTS: Yes.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- the prior four grades.

21 MS. ROBERTS: Yes.

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I just didn't ask the  
23 question very well.

24 MS. ROBERTS: Yes.

25 MS. CROWDER: I also want -- that is correct.

1           And one of the things that -- where we see the growth  
2           that we need to make is our transition from 2nd to  
3           3rd grade. We do get a lot of new scholars in at 3rd  
4           grade. And one of the datapoints that we looked at  
5           was we had an increase last year at our 3rd grade  
6           level of 23% of the -- all the new scholars coming in  
7           were in Needs Support when they came to us based on  
8           the 20th percentile on the NWEA. So they were in the  
9           20th percentile or below on NWEA in 2nd grade when  
10          they started with us in 3rd grade. So we're starting  
11          behind with them, trying to get them caught up. And  
12          so that's where we see our overall dramatic issue is  
13          with that transition there.

14                 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And I guess just from  
15          -- you know, as part of being on the Panel and  
16          looking at this and, you know, when you see where  
17          there, you know, is low performance, but then the  
18          performance improves, I think that's what helps us is  
19          to be able to -- for you to say "these are the  
20          specific actions we take and these are the positive  
21          results;" so now it becomes a "okay, how do we really  
22          help and intervene earlier." But it also is helpful  
23          to know that maybe you don't -- maybe it's 3rd grade  
24          where you start getting a lot of students and where  
25          they're starting from. I think that is not always

1 something that's evident in the data, but is very  
2 helpful in the story. So, okay.

3 MS. CROWDER: And to answer your prior question,  
4 Mr. Cosio looked it up. And when they -- for two  
5 years, 3rd to 4th grade, it's a 4-point increase in  
6 ELA.

7 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. Does that  
8 help out too with your questions on growth?

9 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am.

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

11 DR. WILLIAMS: Absolutely. Yes, it does.

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. Any other  
13 questions?

14 DR. WILLIAMS: Yeah, I saved it for discussion  
15 when we get to that part.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. Well, I  
17 think we are ready for discussion. Is there anybody  
18 from ADE that has anything that they wanted to share?

19 Okay. Go ahead.

20 DR. WILLIAMS: You know, I was -- you know, in  
21 looking at this, this is good. I just wish that the  
22 letter grades could be more reflective of what's  
23 going on inside the school. I've said this before.  
24 You know, the "F" grade sends a major, you know --

25 MR. WILSON: It's psychological.

1 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes. Uh-huh. And we do need to  
2 look at it. But at the same time, there needs to be  
3 some type of a balance in this.

4 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And Ms. Coffman may want to  
5 come up here and speak on that. I do think that  
6 that's why we want the ESSA School Index to really be  
7 part of the conversation, to get in and look at those  
8 things. I found myself looking at their attendance  
9 and noticing, you know, that they -- and as I was  
10 looking at it, they addressed, you know, about a  
11 third of their students last year had high risk for  
12 chronic absences and another third were medium to  
13 high. So two-thirds of their students were medium to  
14 high absences last year. And so the fact that they  
15 were on it to address that tells you something, but  
16 it's not the first piece of data that you see.

17 DR. WILLIAMS: Absolutely. But also it might be  
18 helpful for us in the future -- if there's an "F"  
19 grade if there's some way that it could be  
20 highlighted; what are some of the key aspects that  
21 led to that "F" grade so that we can kind of go --  
22 instead of kind of digging through, wading through  
23 this, I'm looking for teaching and learning is what  
24 I'm hanging my hat on. But chronic absenteeism, you  
25 probably can't learn if you're not there; so that's

1 something that we really need to look at, but it's  
2 not obvious there for us. All I see is that big "F."

3 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yes.

4 MS. COFFMAN: We're required to make the letter  
5 grade large. We've been given directions to do that  
6 -- not our idea, but we were given directions to do  
7 that.

8 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes. Uh-huh.

9 MS. COFFMAN: Deborah Coffman.

10 So the ESSA School Index is that summative  
11 review of a school as required under state and  
12 federal requirements. What I think is important to  
13 note is as you look through the elementary scores for  
14 2019 their overall ESSA School Index score is below  
15 the 5th percentile.

16 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

17 MS. COFFMAN: So I want to put it kind of into  
18 context. They are two standard deviations away from  
19 the mean with their overall score. So that -- and  
20 those are just the facts.

21 DR. WILLIAMS: And I will say that's very  
22 helpful. I wish there was a way that we can get that  
23 in some of the key pieces in our report.

24 MS. COFFMAN: We can make that happen.

25 DR. WILLIAMS: Uh-huh.

1 MS. COFFMAN: A couple of other things I want to  
2 bring to your attention is it's important for them to  
3 use their interim assessments, like NWEA, to help  
4 them map their progress. I would also encourage them  
5 to put it into the context of the overall ESSA School  
6 Index because the growth in the elementary is 76.69,  
7 which is at the 10th percentile and it's more than a  
8 standard deviation below the mean.

9 DR. WILLIAMS: The mean.

10 MS. COFFMAN: However, in their middle school or  
11 their grades 7-8 -- 6-8 --

12 MS. ROBERTS: 7-8.

13 MS. COFFMAN: -- 7-8 their growth is 80.99,  
14 which is above the 50th percentile. In fact, they're  
15 above the mean. And so that growth tells us that the  
16 kids are growing as expected, but they were not  
17 growing in the elementary as expected. So it's  
18 important to kind of watch both things. It's  
19 important to use your interim assessments to look at  
20 growth, but not to rely totally on that and say, "Oh,  
21 we're in good shape," when in reality your data is  
22 not showing that.

23 DR. WILLIAMS: Absolutely. That -- thank you,  
24 that's very helpful.

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Any other discussion?

1 All right. Well, if there -- so, Ms. Hyatt,  
2 what would be -- since we are having a hearing here,  
3 you want to go back over how we should proceed?

4 MS. HYATT: Absolutely. Again, you have broad  
5 authority for what you want to do. It can go  
6 anywhere from revocation, which you did on the last  
7 case, to just accepting the report as it was given  
8 today. You can also require them to come back with a  
9 report at a time -- on a timeline that you establish  
10 today. I think the next time you will hear them, if  
11 you don't do that -- Tracy, tell -- interrupt me if  
12 I'm wrong -- is December of 2021.

13 MS. WEBB: Yes.

14 MS. HYATT: December of 2021 you will hear a  
15 review -- you'll do a review for their renewal. So  
16 they will be in front of you then. If you don't want  
17 to take any other action, you can just move to accept  
18 the report and that's all you have to do.

19 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

20 DR. WILLIAMS: I'm inclined to accept the  
21 report. Anyone else? Should we do anything  
22 differently or --

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And I think what that would  
24 do is we would have at least -- is it two more years  
25 of data by then? Three? At least two more years of

1 data by then. So the things that they have started  
2 this year, by then there should be results from their  
3 efforts.

4 MR. ROGERS: And I would -- we've asked the  
5 Charter Unit to give us reports on those schools that  
6 are "F" schools. So even in between then the Charter  
7 Unit will bring it to us, if they're still remaining  
8 an "F," in between that time too.

9 DR. WILLIAMS: Perfect. Perfect. Uh-huh.

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

11 DR. WILLIAMS: Ready?

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Ready.

13 DR. WILLIAMS: I move that we accept the report  
14 as presented.

15 MR. WILSON: Second.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I have a motion and a  
17 second to accept the report as presented.

18 All those in favor say aye.

19 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Any opposed?

21 All right. Congratulations.

22 MS. ROBERTS: Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And thank you for hanging  
24 with us. If you want to wait for any specific  
25 feedback, we'll share out individual thoughts.

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(A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Since it's the last one of the day, if it's okay with the Panel I'll summarize your --

DR. WILLIAMS: Yes.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- feedback.

I think that we've given you quite a bit of feedback. But I think that the Panel is comfortable with the actions that you are taking. We realize that the data we get lagged from the previous year. So I think we feel comfortable you have put in place the instruction, ways to focus on students, and that in a couple of years you will be coming back to share some positive results with us.

So, thank you and wish everybody a Very Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays. Thank you for spending time with us today. Happy New Year.

MS. ROBERTS: Thank you.

MR. ROGERS: Do we need a motion to adjourn?

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: We will do that.

When is our next meeting? That way, before everybody gets away, if we can confirm our next meeting.

January 14th. Okay.

So is there anything else from the Panel?

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DR. WILLIAMS: No.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: No. All right. Do we have a motion to adjourn?

MR. ROGERS: So moved.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. We have a motion.

DR. WILLIAMS: Second.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Second.

Approved.

Thank you everybody. Have a great day.

(The meeting was concluded at 2:42 p.m.)

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A-2: ARKANSAS VIRTUAL ACADEMY

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A-2: CAPITAL CITY LIGHTHOUSE

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A-2: CAPITAL CITY LIGHTHOUSE  
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A-2: CAPITAL CITY LIGHTHOUSE  
EXHIBIT THREE (3)

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

STATE OF ARKANSAS     )  
   ) ss.  
 COUNTY OF SALINE     )

I, SHARON K. HILL, CCR, a Certified Stenomask Reporter and Notary Public before whom the foregoing proceedings was taken, do hereby certify that the same is a true and correct transcription before the Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, Charter Authorizing Panel, in Little Rock, Arkansas, on December 18, 2019, that the said proceedings was reduced to typewritten form by me or under my direction and supervision; and that the foregoing pages constitute a true and correct transcription of all proceedings had in said matter.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this action.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I have no contract with any parties within this action that affects or has a substantial tendency to affect impartiality, that requires me to relinquish control of an original transcript or copies of the transcript before it is certified and delivered to the custodial agency, or that requires me to provide any service not made available to all parties to the action.

WITNESS, MY HAND AND SEAL, THIS DATE: January 6, 2020.

---

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

	<b>162:23;212:13</b> [TIMER (3) 85:7;88:23;134:4	<b>220:17;222:23;223:4</b> absorbed (3) 183:24,25;184:1	<b>15:7;37:2</b> account (3) 93:7;140:24;143:2	<b>47:10;77:1;125:22; 130:1;163:17; 164:17;168:21; 174:18;186:25; 223:17</b>
\$	<b>A</b>	<b>academic (46)</b> 4:9;13:5;18:21; 39:6,9;42:5;47:12, 15;52:4;53:18,24; 64:1,12;68:17;76:22; 77:4;82:7,12;88:14; 97:7;99:21;113:24; 120:9;126:18,19,21, 25;143:6;145:15; 178:25;193:25; 195:6,8;196:18; 198:1,19;201:4,20; 202:12;205:2,14,16, 17;206:15;207:3; 214:19	<b>Accountability (1)</b> 187:22 <b>accounted (2)</b> 138:17,17 <b>accounting (1)</b> 173:13 <b>accounts (3)</b> 177:5;182:9,10 <b>Accreditation (7)</b> 7:7;59:22;65:19; 116:16;128:19; 192:11;204:17 <b>accreditations (1)</b> 194:2 <b>Accredited (6)</b> 7:6;59:24;65:19, 23;116:13;204:20 <b>accumulates (1)</b> 138:23 <b>accurate (1)</b> 151:21 <b>ACES (1)</b> 69:10 <b>achieve (2)</b> 89:10;201:20 <b>achieved (1)</b> 9:10 <b>achievement (23)</b> 6:19;7:25;73:5; 77:5,15;78:1;96:12; 103:3,9,11;104:17, 18;123:3,25;124:22; 131:13;195:13,19; 196:3,5,6,7,19 <b>achievement/special (1)</b> 118:16 <b>Achievements (1)</b> 124:3 <b>achieving (4)</b> 52:15;100:23,25, 25 <b>acknowledge (1)</b> 122:3 <b>across (12)</b> 10:14;14:13;16:21; 41:19;49:3;68:9; 77:12;79:20;98:17; 104:1;141:23;196:25 <b>ACT (34)</b> 8:7;9:14;52:12; 53:2,7;77:10;91:8,9; 120:13,14,21,24; 121:13,15,19;122:7, 9,14,19,20;123:7,12, 14;124:11,22;125:1; 126:13,14;127:1,7; 178:1;196:5;207:12; 211:4 <b>Action (14)</b> 3:18;7:17,19;8:2;	<b>actions (7)</b> 22:2;70:2;74:12; 129:17;163:14; 218:20;225:9 <b>active (4)</b> 86:23;119:24; 160:25;198:16 <b>actively (2)</b> 70:9;78:12 <b>activities (2)</b> 43:14;121:17 <b>activity (1)</b> 33:6 <b>actual (7)</b> 41:4;53:2;100:14; 142:4,13;148:10; 156:25 <b>actually (32)</b> 9:17;10:14;11:11; 12:20;16:23;18:15; 20:5;27:17;36:25; 39:16;43:9,11;47:24; 49:6;51:1;58:24; 99:2,4,11;102:4; 104:9;107:4;137:4, 13;138:21;141:23; 145:5;159:1,22; 211:24;214:18; 215:15 <b>acutely (1)</b> 9:19 <b>adamantly (1)</b> 121:8 <b>adaptive (1)</b> 202:6 <b>add (16)</b> 25:10;32:22,24; 33:20;81:17;90:15; 101:24;102:6;113:3; 145:22,22;155:25; 158:21,24;162:18; 210:13 <b>added (3)</b> 9:15;149:16; 172:10 <b>adding (3)</b> 144:3,4;171:21 <b>adding (9)</b> 13:13;67:21;69:24; 75:21;78:23;98:25; 164:12;194:12;203:2 <b>additional (32)</b> 20:9,18;30:19; 33:2;35:10;36:11; 62:22;64:4;75:23; 78:6,21;81:13,17,18; 83:8;96:11;100:2; 108:11;111:13;
\$10,000 (1) 173:14				
\$100,000 (1) 128:18				
\$142,500 (1) 159:22				
\$16,000 (1) 144:21				
\$20,000 (2) 145:25;146:8				
\$206,000 (1) 159:22				
\$22,000 (1) 146:2				
\$22,146.69 (2) 136:7;138:5				
\$25,041.41 (1) 137:21				
\$29,229.00 (1) 138:3				
\$3.50 (1) 156:11				
\$3.60 (1) 156:11				
\$3.65 (1) 156:21				
\$30,000 (1) 173:13				
\$33,000 (1) 144:22				
\$33,259.10 (1) 137:2				
\$33,400 (1) 140:8				
\$38,000 (1) 128:9				
\$4.50 (1) 156:18				
\$50,356.04 (1) 137:19				
\$64,000 (1) 159:24				
\$69,447.42 (1) 127:24				
\$69,447.43 (1) 127:16				
\$7,257.83 (1) 138:1				
\$8,257 (1) 153:14				
/				
/certification (1) 129:14				
[				
[ps] (5) 86:3;117:8;133:4;				

115:14;127:17; 130:20;140:19; 155:11;162:21; 170:19;175:3;187:6; 188:3;202:1;206:24; 208:13 <b>additionally (5)</b> 9:1;17:13;37:4; 206:8,21 <b>address (24)</b> 19:14;23:21;34:14; 43:2;44:3;53:18; 64:9;69:7;92:16; 93:10;118:18; 129:17,18;143:7; 148:18,24;150:2,16, 24;151:14;173:25; 179:6;203:19;220:15 <b>addressed (7)</b> 61:22;118:14,22; 142:19;144:25; 171:23;220:10 <b>addresses (1)</b> 151:12 <b>addressing (7)</b> 26:14,16;36:4; 43:3;61:8;113:24; 173:20 <b>ADE (17)</b> 10:20;14:6;61:5; 135:6,8,10,19;146:1; 153:9;170:13; 171:14;180:2; 181:16;182:18; 190:21;191:10; 219:18 <b>adequate (2)</b> 25:16;92:8 <b>adequately (1)</b> 92:9 <b>ADE's (1)</b> 101:14 <b>adhere (1)</b> 23:25 <b>adjourn (2)</b> 225:19;226:3 <b>adjourns (1)</b> 190:1 <b>adjusted (3)</b> 150:12;159:14; 172:12 <b>adjustments (4)</b> 127:23;128:1,2; 129:18 <b>ADM (5)</b> 127:17,19,20; 147:13;148:11 <b>admin (2)</b> 32:14;76:25 <b>administered (1)</b> 121:20 <b>administration (1)</b> 169:19	<b>administrative (3)</b> 12:7;32:11;40:4 <b>administrator (8)</b> 4:9,12,15;18:12; 53:18,25;54:21; 117:1 <b>administrators (4)</b> 75:4;78:20;112:19; 166:5 <b>adopt (1)</b> 21:19 <b>adopts (1)</b> 186:23 <b>adults (2)</b> 69:23;159:7 <b>advance (3)</b> 13:3;55:2;186:14 <b>advanced (1)</b> 13:9 <b>advantage (5)</b> 9:25;16:5;17:4,9; 144:5 <b>advantageous (1)</b> 38:23 <b>advised (1)</b> 151:9 <b>Advisor (1)</b> 160:4 <b>advisory (1)</b> 15:15 <b>Advocating (1)</b> 68:13 <b>AEA (1)</b> 127:2 <b>affect (1)</b> 7:24 <b>affected (1)</b> 78:2 <b>affects (1)</b> 7:25 <b>affirm (4)</b> 5:3;66:9;117:15; 193:14 <b>AFFIRMATIVELY (5)</b> 5:6;66:12;117:18; 134:22;193:17 <b>affirmed (1)</b> 182:17 <b>afford (2)</b> 83:12;155:17 <b>African (5)</b> 67:16;124:14,16; 166:2;194:9 <b>afternoon (9)</b> 67:21;118:1;152:6; 193:20,21;194:13; 195:5;205:1;209:6 <b>afterschool (3)</b> 104:9,13,23 <b>afterwards (1)</b> 215:5 <b>again (31)</b> 6:24;7:22;14:9;	18:20;24:21;25:11, 19;28:11;30:10; 38:15;50:14;51:21; 54:25;58:3,5;74:22; 80:2;91:6;93:3,13; 96:21;178:3;193:5, 20;200:5;202:11; 204:14;208:16; 213:8;215:21;223:4 <b>against (1)</b> 148:9 <b>age (1)</b> 131:14 <b>Agenda (8)</b> 3:18;11:2;20:22; 47:22;65:18;114:22; 178:6;190:5 <b>ago (9)</b> 5:17;143:16;173:9; 183:9,9,11;205:4,11; 210:25 <b>agree (8)</b> 22:15;46:9;47:9; 59:3;135:13;143:13; 174:14;179:23 <b>agreed (3)</b> 126:6;151:7;215:5 <b>agreement (6)</b> 35:20,23;37:24; 120:16;144:18;151:5 <b>agreements (2)</b> 22:14;35:21 <b>ahead (23)</b> 3:19;20:15;30:8; 37:17;102:5;113:21; 117:21;134:24; 139:19;152:1;188:2, 14;190:15;192:3,7; 198:14;199:16; 200:6;201:1;208:3; 215:15;216:12; 219:19 <b>aiding (1)</b> 125:5 <b>ALE (3)</b> 13:7;23:8;24:5 <b>aligned (6)</b> 35:24;73:12; 199:13;203:3;207:7, 13 <b>alignment (1)</b> 76:9 <b>all-day (1)</b> 48:13 <b>Allen (4)</b> 4:9;53:17,24,24 <b>allotted (1)</b> 202:16 <b>allow (9)</b> 54:17;64:19;81:12, 15;83:8;91:4;94:10; 176:6;187:16 <b>allowed (3)</b>	90:23;132:12; 133:6 <b>allowing (2)</b> 63:5;202:8 <b>allows (5)</b> 68:5;74:14;76:24; 80:5;172:22 <b>almost (9)</b> 12:21;41:9,17; 77:8,9,10;133:10; 183:10;196:22 <b>alone (1)</b> 130:5 <b>Along (7)</b> 59:7;72:22;101:17; 128:8;158:10;159:6; 181:3 <b>alongside (1)</b> 75:18 <b>alter (1)</b> 83:8 <b>altering (2)</b> 77:4;196:18 <b>alternative (7)</b> 21:15,19;23:2,7,8; 157:14,21 <b>although (3)</b> 37:5;124:21;126:5 <b>always (13)</b> 6:4;32:2;46:11; 51:4;83:8;88:10; 101:7;103:1;133:19; 134:1;144:2;189:4; 218:25 <b>Amanda (3)</b> 4:9;195:5;202:11 <b>amazing (4)</b> 84:16,18,18;85:15 <b>American (5)</b> 67:16;124:15,16; 166:2;194:9 <b>amongst (2)</b> 69:6;70:8 <b>amount (10)</b> 72:1;106:13; 124:24;151:10; 153:19;160:21,22; 173:1;197:21;199:8 <b>amounts (1)</b> 142:5 <b>Amy (2)</b> 4:8;5:13 <b>Anaheim (1)</b> 18:12 <b>analysis (3)</b> 8:16;74:6;203:15 <b>analyze (1)</b> 77:1 <b>analyzed (2)</b> 79:4;197:1 <b>analyzing (2)</b> 77:20;195:14 <b>and/or (1)</b>	69:24 <b>angles (1)</b> 99:24 <b>Annotated (3)</b> 19:10;33:3;90:16 <b>announce (1)</b> 66:3 <b>annual (2)</b> 76:6;207:12 <b>ANSWERED (6)</b> 5:6;66:12;109:8; 117:18;134:22; 193:17 <b>anxiety (1)</b> 133:7 <b>anymore (1)</b> 31:2 <b>apart (1)</b> 73:18 <b>applicant (3)</b> 28:6;113:5;115:15 <b>APPLICATION (13)</b> 3:16,21;11:2;65:7, 10;73:10;84:14; 96:14;110:19,24,25; 111:14,23 <b>applications (6)</b> 156:3,13;157:3; 158:9;188:3,6 <b>applied (2)</b> 127:4;162:23 <b>apply (4)</b> 104:22;187:25; 188:4,5 <b>applying (3)</b> 104:20;158:19; 162:22 <b>appoint (1)</b> 90:2 <b>appreciate (10)</b> 4:25;32:3;55:6; 60:13;61:5;85:21,23; 96:11;114:7;192:6 <b>appreciation (1)</b> 61:9 <b>approach (10)</b> 22:13;69:15,16; 70:22;78:3;99:20; 123:20;172:3,17; 179:24 <b>appropriate (5)</b> 25:3;27:20;31:21; 57:9;74:15 <b>approval (8)</b> 10:12;35:1,15; 36:20;56:15,24; 57:24;111:22 <b>approve (11)</b> 62:8,15,15,18;63:1, 20;112:2;113:22; 114:1;187:5;190:24 <b>approved (4)</b> 14:22;63:25;
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116:21;226:8 <b>approves (1)</b> 177:15 <b>approximately (2)</b> 127:21;128:9 <b>April (5)</b> 158:19,20;179:8; 188:7;211:11 <b>APSRC (20)</b> 22:23;24:18;25:9; 42:4;74:1;90:13; 123:21;125:18,19,23; 126:3;128:4,6,24; 129:19,21,23,24; 184:17,18 <b>Aramark (1)</b> 157:17 <b>area (26)</b> 6:9,11,12;10:10; 20:24;41:6;76:23; 97:2;109:12;119:21; 120:12;121:7,25; 122:3,5,13,16;123:3, 11;132:10;133:5; 188:13;192:14; 199:8;204:19;217:4 <b>areas (23)</b> 7:15;10:8;25:12; 37:9,19,21;38:7,10, 13,20;68:24;69:1; 72:10,11;73:7; 125:21;135:2;155:4; 198:13;201:2; 202:22;203:20;207:8 <b>arise (2)</b> 69:17;71:5 <b>arises (1)</b> 94:16 <b>arithmetic (1)</b> 170:24 <b>ARKANSAS (58)</b> 3:16,21,25;4:7; 5:14;11:23;14:13; 19:10;21:6;33:3; 35:9,25;55:3;61:6; 71:18;73:13;74:2; 87:14;90:15;101:3; 114:24;115:22; 116:2,11;117:6; 118:4,5,10;119:2,15; 121:4;125:9,10,13; 126:4;131:7;133:3; 16,20;134:11;137:8; 143:11;149:6; 161:21;165:18; 166:1;168:24; 169:10,16;176:13,24; 177:1;195:7;197:13; 204:7,8;207:24; 227:24 <b>ARMAC (2)</b> 128:11;162:23 <b>around (15)</b>	43:13;50:10;56:2; 58:17;60:9;78:23; 83:25;94:6;96:17; 100:21;109:15; 156:21;169:13; 185:9;213:13 <b>arranged (1)</b> 118:15 <b>arranging (1)</b> 127:13 <b>array (1)</b> 68:6 <b>arrival (1)</b> 125:7 <b>arrived (2)</b> 168:12,18 <b>arriving (1)</b> 157:15 <b>art (1)</b> 11:25 <b>Arts (1)</b> 197:23 <b>ARVA (18)</b> 5:18;10:2;12:11; 20:2,18;21:2,7,11,23; 26:13;28:13;31:12; 32:8;33:18;34:20; 35:2;38:8;51:17 <b>Ashley (1)</b> 4:12 <b>Asian (1)</b> 194:10 <b>aside (2)</b> 43:18;173:13 <b>as-needed (1)</b> 93:16 <b>aspects (2)</b> 86:15;220:20 <b>Aspire (28)</b> 8:7,9;9:14,16; 52:13;77:10;120:14, 15,21,24;121:13,15, 19;122:7,9,14,19,20; 123:7,13,14;124:12, 22;125:1;126:13; 196:5;207:12;211:4 <b>assembly (2)</b> 152:8,14 <b>assessed (1)</b> 202:18 <b>assessment (9)</b> 8:10;9:10,18;71:6; 79:11;97:22;98:2; 121:15;207:12 <b>assessments (6)</b> 121:17;126:14; 203:15;207:13; 222:3,19 <b>assets (1)</b> 182:14 <b>assigned (1)</b> 92:4 <b>assist (1)</b>	125:20 <b>assistance (12)</b> 125:18;126:21,24; 127:6,10;128:5; 129:2;154:13;155:2; 159:11;166:6;170:3 <b>assistant (3)</b> 4:11;73:3;152:4 <b>assisted (2)</b> 161:24;204:24 <b>assisting (2)</b> 44:1;203:14 <b>associate (1)</b> 150:19 <b>Association (2)</b> 18:13;127:13 <b>assume (1)</b> 109:19 <b>assuming (4)</b> 62:1;110:20;144:8; 163:5 <b>assumption (1)</b> 145:12 <b>assurance (2)</b> 116:24;165:21 <b>assure (1)</b> 25:14 <b>assured (1)</b> 140:23 <b>athlete (1)</b> 12:25 <b>athletic (2)</b> 13:5;120:5 <b>athletics (1)</b> 13:3 <b>at-risk (1)</b> 198:16 <b>attached (3)</b> 11:2,9;141:15 <b>attainable (1)</b> 51:6 <b>attempt (4)</b> 25:19;30:16;34:1; 129:7 <b>attempting (1)</b> 169:12 <b>attend (4)</b> 89:3;192:18;193:5; 205:11 <b>attendance (47)</b> 21:10,14,25;22:3,4, 10,16;23:1,19,21; 77:19;78:5,12,15,17, 19,25;79:3;87:17; 107:24;108:3,6,12, 18,22,23;109:1,10, 13;113:12,20;148:4; 195:17,23;196:3; 198:15,16,18;199:5, 8,13,17;205:24; 206:1,4,6;220:8 <b>attended (6)</b> 71:9;84:21;97:12,	14;192:25;201:12 <b>attending (5)</b> 13:4;23:22;79:1; 87:18;203:22 <b>attends (4)</b> 67:19;83:21;84:6; 194:11 <b>attention (4)</b> 69:6;102:19; 141:25;222:2 <b>attorney (2)</b> 21:6;175:10 <b>attorneys (1)</b> 115:9 <b>attract (1)</b> 200:14 <b>attributed (5)</b> 77:24;98:17,23; 195:16;196:2 <b>at-will (2)</b> 91:11,14 <b>audience (1)</b> 3:11 <b>August (5)</b> 137:1;153:14; 201:15;211:14,25 <b>authentic (1)</b> 81:25 <b>authority (4)</b> 115:18;174:23; 175:4;223:5 <b>authorized (2)</b> 4:1;65:13 <b>Authorizing (2)</b> 3:3,6 <b>automatically (1)</b> 154:21 <b>available (2)</b> 76:3;172:16 <b>average (21)</b> 6:22;11:11,13; 47:23;48:2;53:4,5,7; 76:5;79:18,19,25; 80:2;142:7;197:3,8; 206:4,6;212:21,21; 217:16 <b>averaging (2)</b> 147:22;148:1 <b>award (7)</b> 76:20;79:3;124:4, 8,18,23;197:16 <b>awarded (3)</b> 76:13;79:3;124:9 <b>awards (2)</b> 76:16;101:2 <b>aware (5)</b> 17:3;26:25;27:1; 36:15;92:23 <b>awareness (2)</b> 16:7;202:23 <b>away (6)</b> 12:21;93:15; 123:10;174:3;	221:18;225:22 <b>awesome (1)</b> 210:8 <b>awhile (2)</b> 89:25;107:2 <b>aye (5)</b> 63:12;83:13;112:3; 189:15;224:18 <b>AYES (5)</b> 63:13;83:14;112:4; 189:16;224:19
<b>B</b>				
<b>back (38)</b> 13:12;32:2;51:20; 52:4;59:14;60:3; 65:3;78:21;87:19; 89:3;96:14,24;101:1; 114:19,21;115:21; 131:21;138:13; 154:18;171:24; 173:2;175:3;178:12; 179:7,9,10;188:17; 210:2,7;211:8,22; 213:3;214:1;216:13, 17;223:3,8;225:13 <b>background (4)</b> 13:25;116:14; 175:11;204:19 <b>backgrounds (1)</b> 19:7 <b>backseat (1)</b> 131:15 <b>backward (1)</b> 178:23 <b>backwards (1)</b> 178:22 <b>bad (2)</b> 133:13,19 <b>badly (1)</b> 170:22 <b>balance (15)</b> 25:4;112:15; 127:24;128:18; 138:12;141:3,5; 142:10,13,13,14; 144:1,12;147:6; 220:3 <b>balanced (1)</b> 195:3 <b>Baldwin (34)</b> 47:13,14;49:13; 50:17,19;63:9,19,20; 96:8,10;97:20;100:7; 102:6;110:12,17; 114:1;145:22,24; 146:13,15,18,24; 147:7;172:15; 175:23;179:15,17,22; 185:16,19,23;189:12; 190:17,18 <b>bank (10)</b>				

136:4;137:19,20, 22,25;140:20,24; 141:4,5;143:2 <b>bankers (1)</b> 102:13 <b>bank's (1)</b> 102:11 <b>bare (1)</b> 25:14 <b>barely (1)</b> 42:14 <b>BARRETT (9)</b> 135:23,25,25; 136:13,18,22;138:9, 14;141:10 <b>barrier (1)</b> 38:5 <b>barriers (2)</b> 121:10,12 <b>Barton (1)</b> 203:18 <b>base (3)</b> 15:10;53:12; 200:14 <b>based (32)</b> 15:2;16:11;24:19; 28:24;33:1;39:23; 55:11;57:5;62:2; 68:16;71:6;72:25,25; 76:5;77:13;79:13; 80:6;101:2;115:10; 142:6;147:3,4,12; 148:10;184:7,14; 188:21;195:10; 196:7;200:15; 203:18;218:7 <b>baseline (3)</b> 120:8,21;125:3 <b>basic (1)</b> 89:2 <b>basically (5)</b> 56:11;146:4; 154:11;171:18;186:5 <b>basis (4)</b> 78:14;79:2;97:16; 199:11 <b>battle (2)</b> 48:14;51:23 <b>battling (2)</b> 12:14;198:17 <b>beat (1)</b> 31:1 <b>Beating (7)</b> 76:14,15;124:3,7, 23;197:14,15 <b>beautiful (1)</b> 14:2 <b>became (1)</b> 13:9 <b>become (2)</b> 75:24;89:12 <b>becomes (3)</b> 182:18;186:9;	218:21 <b>began (3)</b> 80:19;127:15; 131:5 <b>begin (17)</b> 5:19;46:14;114:19; 125:23;126:7,9; 160:18;167:24; 168:8;182:13;184:8; 188:2,6;190:10; 193:19;195:9;201:20 <b>beginning (14)</b> 7:22;9:18;18:11; 125:11;127:24,25; 137:5;151:2;153:2; 161:3;166:15; 168:11;175:13; 200:10 <b>begun (5)</b> 75:11;121:14; 129:23;130:3;191:19 <b>behalf (5)</b> 21:7;33:18;90:13; 95:9;187:23 <b>behavior (1)</b> 125:21 <b>behavioral (2)</b> 69:20,25 <b>behaviors (1)</b> 69:8 <b>behind (5)</b> 24:7;27:21;34:22; 91:1;218:11 <b>BELL (4)</b> 85:7;88:23;104:4; 134:4 <b>below (9)</b> 51:7;53:3,7; 124:25;126:9; 198:14;218:9; 221:14;222:8 <b>benchmark (8)</b> 122:7,12,18,24; 123:1,12;124:25; 126:17 <b>benchmarks (1)</b> 210:20 <b>beneficial (3)</b> 24:7;76:24;167:21 <b>benefit (4)</b> 3:11;159:3,11,15 <b>benefits (4)</b> 55:8;137:15;139:1; 177:22 <b>benefitting (1)</b> 31:20 <b>best (17)</b> 12:10,12;68:22; 85:17;101:21,22; 117:10;132:25; 133:2,2;134:5,14,20; 145:8;170:21; 178:20;209:20	<b>better (13)</b> 15:14;48:16;58:20; 71:4;84:1;102:8; 109:14;112:11; 128:22,25;133:16; 150:5;172:2 <b>beverages (2)</b> 33:10,12 <b>beyond (3)</b> 85:1;180:13;208:4 <b>big (9)</b> 8:20;55:17;60:15; 139:22;153:20; 164:20;182:2; 214:25;221:2 <b>bigger (1)</b> 140:5 <b>biggest (5)</b> 6:11,12;98:6; 174:17;213:25 <b>billed (1)</b> 136:24 <b>bills (1)</b> 173:16 <b>bipolar (1)</b> 85:3 <b>bit (30)</b> 6:10;11:4;16:18; 18:8;19:13;26:17; 28:21;39:8;42:1; 43:8;47:16,17;49:4, 9;52:21;56:18;58:4; 90:25;92:11;96:20; 132:23;153:18; 157:1;177:25; 178:23;181:23; 212:7;213:10; 214:15;225:7 <b>biweekly (2)</b> 69:10;198:19 <b>black (2)</b> 119:7,10 <b>Blackboard (1)</b> 8:22 <b>blanket (1)</b> 56:5 <b>blessing (1)</b> 84:16 <b>block (5)</b> 33:23;68:19; 126:19,20;197:23 <b>blocks (3)</b> 92:25;99:18;111:9 <b>Bluff (83)</b> 104:21;118:5,10; 119:3,15,21;120:25; 121:1,3,25,25;122:3, 13;123:11,16,17; 126:4;131:7;133:5; 139:5;140:3,6,8; 144:19,19;147:23; 149:6,18;151:1,6,6,9; 153:23;156:17,24;	157:14,21;159:16; 170:2,23;176:7,8; 186:25;189:2;192:2, 4,9,20,24;193:2,5,8; 194:2,11,19,22,23; 195:15,18,24;196:11, 14;197:2,9;198:6; 199:14,21;201:5,11, 15;203:16,22;204:1; 205:5,18;207:10; 211:10;212:15; 214:6,14,22;215:4,9 <b>board (36)</b> 4:7;15:16;68:10; 89:24;90:3;98:18; 102:11;104:1;117:8, 8;131:23;175:12,13; 177:15;178:2,3,6,10, 15;182:18;184:23; 185:17;186:6,7,12, 15,16,17;187:5,8; 190:11;205:4,6,16; 209:8,23 <b>boardroom (1)</b> 214:21 <b>bodies (1)</b> 119:12 <b>bonuses (1)</b> 200:12 <b>book (1)</b> 26:24 <b>bookkeeping (1)</b> 128:5 <b>Boone (1)</b> 85:11 <b>boost (1)</b> 87:17 <b>both (14)</b> 44:11;61:9;107:10; 134:22;159:15; 170:4;191:3;194:22; 197:17;201:9; 211:12,19;215:14; 222:18 <b>bother (1)</b> 59:9 <b>bottom (2)</b> 18:10;213:8 <b>Boy (1)</b> 39:3 <b>boys (4)</b> 101:9,12,12; 201:23 <b>BRAINSread (3)</b> 72:15;75:5;204:7 <b>Branch (9)</b> 117:9;161:9,20,20; 162:6,12,15;167:24; 168:16 <b>brand-new (1)</b> 49:6 <b>break (16)</b> 64:25;65:3,5;	73:18;89:7;104:14; 114:10,20;178:12; 179:10;180:16; 181:5;184:5;187:18; 191:24;192:1 <b>break-apart (1)</b> 28:10 <b>breakdown (1)</b> 195:9 <b>breakfast (5)</b> 67:20;104:3,4; 106:4;194:12 <b>breaking (1)</b> 14:8 <b>breaks (1)</b> 92:10 <b>brick-and- (1)</b> 12:17 <b>brick-and-mortar (1)</b> 25:13 <b>bridge (2)</b> 70:5;131:9 <b>bridging (1)</b> 80:21 <b>brief (1)</b> 198:9 <b>briefly (1)</b> 217:1 <b>bright (1)</b> 12:15 <b>bring (7)</b> 26:22,23;42:3; 134:9;135:6;222:2; 224:7 <b>bringing (2)</b> 44:3;173:15 <b>brings (1)</b> 137:25 <b>broad (3)</b> 174:23;175:4; 223:4 <b>broke (1)</b> 51:18 <b>brought (1)</b> 141:25 <b>bucket (1)</b> 7:20 <b>buckets (1)</b> 7:24 <b>budget (5)</b> 25:2;27:15;173:12, 19;195:3 <b>budgetary (1)</b> 128:2 <b>budgeted (1)</b> 137:8 <b>budgeting (1)</b> 129:22 <b>budgets (2)</b> 136:9,18 <b>Buff (1)</b> 211:23 <b>bugging (1)</b>
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185:6 <b>build (7)</b> 16:10;23:4;36:19; 51:1,2;68:25;75:11 <b>building (16)</b> 16:1,13;32:11,12, 14;38:25;42:2;43:15; 69:18;71:22;87:8; 93:20;97:17;99:10; 108:10;126:11 <b>built (1)</b> 70:20 <b>bullying (1)</b> 133:10 <b>bumping (1)</b> 57:19 <b>bunch (1)</b> 102:13 <b>burden (2)</b> 144:10;158:15 <b>burn (1)</b> 146:8 <b>burning (1)</b> 145:25 <b>bus (8)</b> 68:4;78:21,23; 105:3;108:11;175:7; 194:19;215:6 <b>bused (1)</b> 215:8 <b>business (1)</b> 11:10 <b>busting (1)</b> 18:25 <b>busy (1)</b> 81:22	<b>came (12)</b> 5:23;12:14;13:11; 129:8;141:23;147:4; 149:3;160:6;166:14; 185:5,9;218:7 <b>campus (11)</b> 32:10;33:15;67:6; 81:23,24;95:21;96:5; 119:13;161:24; 162:7;168:22 <b>campuses (1)</b> 67:8 <b>can (127)</b> 4:17;5:7;9:19; 15:17;22:18;23:18; 25:10;26:22;27:5,9; 29:13;32:25;37:1; 38:5,12;39:9;40:10; 47:21;48:9;49:23; 50:13;51:21,22,23; 53:13;54:16;55:2,22; 56:22;60:24;61:25; 62:14,19;74:20;77:2; 80:25;81:15;83:8; 85:1;86:2,4;87:16, 17;89:3,5,7,10;90:11; 91:2,24;92:9,15; 93:17,17;97:6;99:7; 101:1;103:23; 104:22;105:11; 107:18,19;111:14; 114:25;115:14,16; 123:22;125:16; 134:1,2;135:4,18; 136:11;138:7;143:7; 144:10;145:8,14; 147:5;151:23; 152:22;157:2; 159:14;161:7,14,14; 164:17;165:6;172:1; 173:20;174:23,24; 175:1,1,2,23;176:3; 178:7,15,22;179:1, 20;182:6;184:4,5,5, 17;186:16;187:8; 188:6;190:6;193:10; 196:1;209:4;212:11, 14;214:11,17;216:7, 8;220:21;221:22,24; 223:5,8,17;225:22 <b>Cantrell (1)</b> 127:1 <b>cap (18)</b> 4:3;19:2;55:11,14, 20;56:5,10;57:15,16, 20;58:12,23;59:4,19; 62:10;63:6;65:15; 212:17 <b>capabilities (2)</b> 26:8;27:25 <b>capable (1)</b> 170:18 <b>capacity (5)</b>	155:14;180:9; 200:8;206:16;207:19 <b>Capital (54)</b> 20:2;65:7,10,12, 21;66:21,23,24;67:3, 18,20;68:10;69:4,14, 25;70:7;71:17;72:6; 73:4;74:4;75:9,12; 77:21,24;79:5,9,10; 80:24;81:20;82:1,13; 83:21,25;84:2,8,13, 23;85:8,14,16,19,20; 90:14;91:3,7;92:20; 93:1;111:21;198:3; 204:19;212:10; 228:24;229:24; 230:24 <b>capture (3)</b> 101:15;103:1,24 <b>captured (2)</b> 104:6;105:23 <b>capturing (1)</b> 102:21 <b>cards (3)</b> 6:7;10:22;185:12 <b>care (3)</b> 49:11;87:1;204:24 <b>Career (8)</b> 14:22;16:6,15,16; 17:21;18:13,18;55:2 <b>career-ready (1)</b> 14:20 <b>careful (1)</b> 54:24 <b>carry (1)</b> 146:4 <b>case (3)</b> 94:3;171:21;223:7 <b>cash (5)</b> 144:1;146:7,9,16, 19 <b>cash-flow (5)</b> 142:17,18,24; 143:3,14 <b>categories (4)</b> 118:16;120:14; 121:24;124:11 <b>category (4)</b> 52:12;80:15; 120:18;124:1 <b>cater (1)</b> 29:5 <b>catered (1)</b> 76:10 <b>Caucasian (5)</b> 67:18;124:12,15, 17;194:9 <b>caught (5)</b> 102:18;128:16; 152:21;153:7;218:11 <b>Causbie (1)</b> 204:22 <b>cause (3)</b>	38:6;126:24; 175:21 <b>caused (3)</b> 90:8;174:12;199:7 <b>causes (1)</b> 97:6 <b>CEFERS (1)</b> 157:13 <b>Cegers (52)</b> 116:18;117:7; 118:1,2;119:1; 130:15,23;131:5; 132:25;133:8,18; 134:2,8;141:16; 143:7,15,23;145:2; 147:1;148:18,23; 149:2,2,13,19,24; 150:12,17;151:5,9; 154:10;157:5,7,11, 24;158:5,16;161:8,8, 12;162:22;167:21; 168:20,20;169:25; 170:7;172:11,17,20; 175:7,17;191:16 <b>celebrate (4)</b> 17:18;78:25; 108:19,25 <b>celebration (1)</b> 108:20 <b>celebrations (1)</b> 108:14 <b>Center (11)</b> 21:7;68:14;69:21; 76:2;97:12;132:18, 20;143:12;170:3; 198:21,23 <b>centers (3)</b> 16:15,16;27:3 <b>Central (1)</b> 76:16 <b>cents (3)</b> 156:11,24,24 <b>century (2)</b> 104:20;201:24 <b>CEP (4)</b> 104:3;105:21; 158:11,18 <b>certain (5)</b> 27:7;31:22;45:18; 56:16;183:5 <b>certainly (16)</b> 12:19;23:11;26:20, 22;27:8;42:24;45:11; 51:5;54:23;55:3; 56:24;57:1,8,9; 60:25;188:8 <b>certification (3)</b> 15:25;91:11; 125:15 <b>certified (9)</b> 11:23,23;12:5; 125:8,10,12;129:10; 156:8;162:6	<b>certified/qualified (1)</b> 118:17 <b>certify (1)</b> 165:13 <b>chains (1)</b> 13:2 <b>Chair (4)</b> 3:5;5:15;34:11; 83:8 <b>CHAIRMA (1)</b> 168:13 <b>CHAIRMAN (265)</b> 3:2,17;4:17,20,22, 24;5:7;19:12,16,19, 21;20:3,11,16;23:16, 24;24:2;28:18;31:7, 11;34:13;36:11; 37:14,16;39:2;44:8; 47:13;52:2,7,20; 53:15,21;54:5;55:5, 19;57:4,13,18;58:1,9; 59:2,5,21,25;60:23; 61:1,11,15,19;62:4, 21,24;63:4,8,11,14, 19,24;64:5,10,14,16, 21;65:2,8,22,25;66:5, 13,19;81:3,16;82:16, 21,25;83:10,15,18; 85:21,25;86:4;89:14, 19;95:16,23;96:6; 97:21;102:5,15,21; 103:9,15,17;104:25; 105:4,6,14,16,18,22; 106:5,7;109:7,21,25; 110:2,10,16,18; 111:15,19,24;112:1, 5;113:1,16,21;114:6, 14,17,21;115:20,24; 117:11,19;118:24; 130:13,16,19,25; 132:21,23;133:1; 134:12,15,24;135:10, 12,14,16,24;138:7, 10,15;139:11,18; 141:9;142:8;145:9; 148:23;149:11,20; 150:15;151:24; 152:1,16,21,25; 153:17;154:1,4; 155:13,18,24;157:5, 9,12,20,25;158:6,21; 159:17,25;160:21; 161:2,7,11,14,19; 162:3,8,14,16;163:2, 5,8,10,16,19,22; 164:3;168:19; 169:21;170:12,16; 171:1;172:18; 174:17,21;178:5; 179:22;180:8;181:8, 13;183:24;184:1; 185:18,22;186:1,13; 187:20;189:6,8,10,
<b>C</b>				
<b>cafeteria (1)</b> 150:1 <b>calculated (1)</b> 196:7 <b>calculations (1)</b> 143:18 <b>calendar (1)</b> 199:14 <b>California (2)</b> 18:13,17 <b>call (7)</b> 22:13;39:20;40:19; 96:15;98:24;115:21; 133:18 <b>called (4)</b> 3:4;83:25;84:13; 158:16 <b>calling (1)</b> 50:4 <b>calls (4)</b> 30:13;133:10,21; 174:7 <b>calm (1)</b> 70:21				

<p>13,17,22;190:14,23; 191:2,5,13,16;192:3; 193:10,18,21;208:9, 15,19;209:5;210:11, 15;213:2;214:12; 215:20;216:3,10,17, 25;217:11,13,20,22; 218:14;219:7,10,12, 16;220:4;221:3; 222:25;223:19,23; 224:10,12,16,20,23; 225:2,6,20;226:2,5,7</p> <p><b>chairs (1)</b> 40:1</p> <p><b>challenge (7)</b> 6:5;7:13;37:23; 45:21;47:19;122:4; 174:18</p> <p><b>challenged (1)</b> 26:16</p> <p><b>challenges (4)</b> 26:4;70:16;82:7; 129:6</p> <p><b>champions (3)</b> 22:8,10;50:2</p> <p><b>chance (1)</b> 134:6</p> <p><b>change (13)</b> 9:5;13:1;23:25; 35:17;67:3,9,11; 83:7;98:6;121:8; 196:1;205:19;209:12</p> <p><b>changed (5)</b> 9:2;31:18;106:23; 107:15;184:19</p> <p><b>changes (7)</b> 7:17;37:1;106:17, 22;144:11;205:21; 211:1</p> <p><b>changing (3)</b> 13:20;14:11;40:24</p> <p><b>Chapel (4)</b> 121:2;176:10; 209:21,21</p> <p><b>chapter (1)</b> 18:2</p> <p><b>characteristics (1)</b> 203:21</p> <p><b>charge (1)</b> 159:1</p> <p><b>chart (2)</b> 51:25;192:20</p> <p><b>charted (1)</b> 49:8</p> <p><b>Charter (78)</b> 3:3,5,15,20,23;4:1, 4;5:1;11:5;31:9;37:7, 7;49:23;64:8;65:6,7, 10,13,16;66:1,7,21; 73:6;76:4,7;79:17; 80:1,3;86:9;91:6; 98:2;106:15;117:12; 120:10,17;144:1,2;</p>	<p>154:3,9,19;155:3,10; 158:25;159:8,16; 166:8;175:24;176:1, 25;177:20;181:19; 182:4,20;186:24; 187:3,25;188:13; 189:9,19;190:19,25; 192:10,15,24;193:11; 194:2;199:21; 201:12;203:16; 204:1;205:5,6;207:2, 11,25;208:6;224:5,6</p> <p><b>charters (14)</b> 17:6;31:19,20,25; 49:22;54:20;60:3; 144:4;165:13;176:6; 185:9;188:3,4,21</p> <p><b>charter's (1)</b> 155:14</p> <p><b>chase (1)</b> 143:5</p> <p><b>Chastain (13)</b> 150:16,18,18; 151:17;152:20,24; 153:2,18;154:3,5; 155:16,19;158:24</p> <p><b>check (5)</b> 19:25;38:5;116:14; 151:9;209:18</p> <p><b>checked (1)</b> 167:6</p> <p><b>checking (3)</b> 11:12;22:10,10</p> <p><b>checks (9)</b> 138:2,22;140:22; 141:4,11;142:15; 167:5;175:11;204:19</p> <p><b>Chief (2)</b> 190:3;205:2</p> <p><b>child (22)</b> 75:18;113:24; 116:22;117:5; 128:15;135:3;139:4; 147:21;148:25; 150:19;152:3,16; 153:4;154:5,12; 155:15;174:2,4,6; 177:22;179:25;191:8</p> <p><b>childhood (1)</b> 96:19</p> <p><b>children (10)</b> 75:10,19,25;84:6; 87:3,12;88:17; 131:15;132:7;189:5</p> <p><b>child's (2)</b> 86:13;131:18</p> <p><b>choice (5)</b> 176:5,15;180:18; 182:6;188:5</p> <p><b>choices (1)</b> 217:6</p> <p><b>choose (4)</b> 85:10;184:5,5,6</p>	<p><b>chooses (1)</b> 184:4</p> <p><b>CHORUS (5)</b> 63:13;83:14;112:4; 189:16;224:19</p> <p><b>chose (1)</b> 170:9</p> <p><b>chosen (1)</b> 69:14</p> <p><b>Christmas (5)</b> 87:10;88:2;178:12; 179:10;225:16</p> <p><b>chronic (5)</b> 78:24;195:17; 199:8;220:12,24</p> <p><b>chronically (7)</b> 77:23,25;78:16,18; 109:2;195:15;206:9</p> <p><b>CiCi's (1)</b> 87:11</p> <p><b>Cindy (2)</b> 138:19;159:18</p> <p><b>circles (3)</b> 70:3,12;107:5</p> <p><b>circumstances (1)</b> 183:20</p> <p><b>City (54)</b> 20:2;65:7,10,12, 21;66:21,23,25;67:3, 18,20;68:11;69:4,14, 25;70:7;71:17;72:6; 73:4;74:4;75:9,12; 77:21,24;79:5,9,10; 80:24;81:20;82:1,13; 83:22,25;84:2,8,13, 24;85:8,14,16,19,20; 90:14;91:3,7;92:20; 93:1;111:21;198:3; 212:10,17;228:24; 229:24;230:24</p> <p><b>city's (1)</b> 194:22</p> <p><b>claim (4)</b> 153:5,7,10;154:25</p> <p><b>claimed (1)</b> 156:15</p> <p><b>claims (7)</b> 116:22;128:17; 147:22,22;152:18,18; 153:4</p> <p><b>Claire (4)</b> 89:21;115:5; 174:22;186:23</p> <p><b>clarify (3)</b> 4:17;94:19;95:19</p> <p><b>class (18)</b> 12:16;44:18,19,20; 45:5,6,13;46:1;50:10, 16;73:16;74:16;75:1, 2;79:2;102:12; 108:18;199:12</p> <p><b>classes (6)</b> 8:24;12:11;16:7;</p>	<p>78:5,9;152:9</p> <p><b>classroom (22)</b> 13:22,23;14:3; 21:19;23:2,8;24:11; 40:23;44:15;47:20, 20;53:11;70:11;75:8, 15,17;88:21;89:5; 100:13;101:6; 108:17;203:11</p> <p><b>classrooms (8)</b> 21:15;40:15;70:21; 99:2;152:6,10,12; 168:2</p> <p><b>clear (17)</b> 20:7,23;23:18; 33:25;76:9;77:11; 92:20;94:20;95:8; 116:15;136:4;169:5; 170:5,7;196:24; 204:16;208:22</p> <p><b>clearly (5)</b> 3:9;14:8;22:20; 39:24;211:2</p> <p><b>climate (2)</b> 120:6;205:14</p> <p><b>clip (3)</b> 13:21;14:2,9</p> <p><b>close (12)</b> 24:21;44:5;53:19; 58:19;104:19; 131:12;138:4; 153:22;154:20; 159:23;183:15;186:9</p> <p><b>closed (1)</b> 199:24</p> <p><b>closely (2)</b> 14:23;198:17</p> <p><b>closer (1)</b> 157:10</p> <p><b>closes (1)</b> 188:5</p> <p><b>closet (1)</b> 198:24</p> <p><b>closing (5)</b> 104:15;159:21; 181:19;182:7,16</p> <p><b>clothes (2)</b> 87:9;198:24</p> <p><b>Club (1)</b> 201:23</p> <p><b>co- (1)</b> 126:3</p> <p><b>coach (2)</b> 43:4,18</p> <p><b>coaches (9)</b> 13:25;22:15;43:10, 18,21;44:4;60:14; 73:22,23</p> <p><b>coaching (4)</b> 40:5;71:19;99:1; 203:13</p> <p><b>Code (4)</b> 19:10,11;33:3;</p>	<p>90:15</p> <p><b>codes (1)</b> 31:23</p> <p><b>coding (3)</b> 128:6,8;129:22</p> <p><b>Coffman (17)</b> 187:20,21,21; 188:15,18,20,23; 189:4;220:4;221:4,9, 9,17,24;222:1,10,13</p> <p><b>cohort (8)</b> 74:23;79:6,7; 102:22;197:4,5; 215:21;217:14</p> <p><b>coincide (1)</b> 118:20</p> <p><b>collaborate (1)</b> 131:19</p> <p><b>collaboration (2)</b> 132:9;214:14</p> <p><b>collaborations (1)</b> 131:6</p> <p><b>collaborative (2)</b> 75:19;173:7</p> <p><b>collect (1)</b> 193:3</p> <p><b>collects (1)</b> 192:15</p> <p><b>college (5)</b> 13:4;14:19;127:8, 9;194:5</p> <p><b>college-ready (1)</b> 68:17</p> <p><b>Collins (1)</b> 125:19</p> <p><b>color (1)</b> 7:8</p> <p><b>combination (2)</b> 51:10;92:6</p> <p><b>combine (1)</b> 171:7</p> <p><b>combined (2)</b> 124:14,18</p> <p><b>comfortable (7)</b> 58:22;59:19;60:12; 134:1;145:14;225:8, 11</p> <p><b>coming (30)</b> 7:16;8:6;38:8; 39:23;41:18;43:23; 51:5,11;87:5,20,21; 88:15;96:24;99:9; 101:17,19;108:4; 112:22;126:8;136:6; 155:11;156:22; 172:7;186:25;209:9; 212:1;215:11;216:5; 218:6;225:13</p> <p><b>commend (2)</b> 46:15;47:6</p> <p><b>comment (18)</b> 22:24;30:24;31:7; 33:22;61:4;81:13;</p>
---	--	--	--	---

82:18,19;83:2,6,9,11; 100:6;112:10; 208:13,16,21;209:1 <b>comments (17)</b> 19:24;20:1,18; 24:20,24;25:14;28:7; 30:9;33:2,21;58:10; 59:8;90:17;102:2,7; 134:17;175:17 <b>Commissioner (1)</b> 181:25 <b>commitment (3)</b> 82:10;144:11; 145:7 <b>committed (3)</b> 72:17;74:8;214:4 <b>committee (1)</b> 198:19 <b>common (4)</b> 8:11;9:10;24:22; 90:3 <b>commonality (1)</b> 8:11 <b>communicate (1)</b> 97:18 <b>communication (6)</b> 191:9,10;199:1,9,9, 11 <b>communities (5)</b> 10:16;71:20,21; 99:6;126:12 <b>communism (13)</b> 10:13,18;15:2; 60:16;70:9;81:2; 87:9;88:5;112:14; 118:10;119:4;127:8; 131:25 <b>comp (1)</b> 137:8 <b>company (1)</b> 127:1 <b>comparable (1)</b> 109:14 <b>compare (3)</b> 79:22;109:3,11 <b>compared (3)</b> 74:24;75:1;211:1 <b>compares (1)</b> 120:25 <b>comparison (6)</b> 74:23;119:14,20; 123:15,15,16 <b>compensated (1)</b> 92:1 <b>compensatory (7)</b> 160:17;162:13; 164:18,20;165:1; 168:9;171:3 <b>compete (1)</b> 17:24 <b>competitive (1)</b> 153:24 <b>complain (1)</b>	133:24 <b>complaints (1)</b> 85:18 <b>complete (1)</b> 67:8 <b>completed (3)</b> 204:10;206:23; 212:16 <b>completely (3)</b> 25:19;73:12;204:9 <b>completing (1)</b> 9:20 <b>completion (2)</b> 22:16;120:2 <b>compliance (1)</b> 7:10 <b>complicated (1)</b> 167:1 <b>comply (1)</b> 26:11 <b>complying (1)</b> 167:12 <b>component (14)</b> 40:21;45:25;46:3, 23;47:3;60:19;73:16; 92:23;103:4;118:9; 196:10;202:2;203:8; 205:25 <b>components (6)</b> 47:7;73:9;95:13; 125:21;204:5,12 <b>compounded (1)</b> 179:25 <b>comprehension (4)</b> 99:13;199:24; 201:18;203:5 <b>comprehensive (3)</b> 95:11;99:20; 113:23 <b>computer (1)</b> 132:15 <b>concentrate (1)</b> 5:22 <b>concept (1)</b> 73:19 <b>concepts (1)</b> 75:16 <b>conceptual (2)</b> 73:9,14 <b>concern (27)</b> 21:19;26:1,23; 27:5,11;28:23;29:16; 32:15;37:12;39:6; 55:11;64:8;92:17; 103:18;121:7;122:5, 16;123:4,14;124:2; 134:3;140:14;148:4, 12;171:2;174:16; 182:3 <b>concerned (6)</b> 23:13;42:23;55:1; 100:17,18;113:13 <b>concerning (2)</b>	160:11;191:1 <b>concerns (30)</b> 27:10;28:8,17,25; 46:10;89:23;91:17; 111:3;113:9;118:6, 21;129:17,18; 130:11;135:4; 141:20;149:1; 153:20;155:13; 157:22;160:1; 161:15;164:20; 166:11;173:24; 174:2;191:4,7,8,9 <b>concluded (2)</b> 207:11;226:13 <b>concurrent (1)</b> 16:24 <b>condition (1)</b> 165:11 <b>conducted (1)</b> 201:3 <b>conducting (1)</b> 99:5 <b>conducts (1)</b> 71:10 <b>conference (3)</b> 18:14,16;127:2 <b>confident (2)</b> 145:16;208:2 <b>configured (1)</b> 216:14 <b>confirm (7)</b> 25:7,10;32:25; 33:16,18;95:10; 225:22 <b>conflict (1)</b> 70:23 <b>confused (1)</b> 69:24 <b>confusion (2)</b> 169:13;173:5 <b>Congratulations (2)</b> 112:6;224:21 <b>connect (1)</b> 74:11 <b>connected (1)</b> 72:13 <b>connecting (1)</b> 50:11 <b>connections (1)</b> 75:12 <b>consequence (1)</b> 107:17 <b>consequences (1)</b> 29:21 <b>consider (5)</b> 21:21;159:9; 180:20;187:24;210:4 <b>consideration (6)</b> 5:16;18:19,23; 56:25;178:17;187:8 <b>considered (2)</b> 56:8;205:7	<b>considering (1)</b> 159:4 <b>consist (1)</b> 196:9 <b>consistency (4)</b> 86:21,22;107:20; 209:25 <b>consistent (7)</b> 10:23,24;78:14; 79:2;98:3;209:24,24 <b>consistently (6)</b> 42:10,16;47:10,11; 52:14;199:10 <b>consists (2)</b> 67:16;194:8 <b>consortium (1)</b> 15:20 <b>constant (1)</b> 50:7 <b>constantly (2)</b> 85:13;207:5 <b>constitutionally (2)</b> 116:24;165:15 <b>constraint (2)</b> 30:18;148:16 <b>construct (1)</b> 73:18 <b>constructed (1)</b> 8:17 <b>constructive (1)</b> 70:23 <b>consultant (1)</b> 71:15 <b>contact (8)</b> 22:9;50:8;127:7; 129:1;130:3;157:16; 199:2,11 <b>contacted (1)</b> 157:17 <b>contacting (1)</b> 22:11 <b>contained (1)</b> 37:5 <b>content (7)</b> 9:9;10:8;15:10; 73:18;74:6;78:11; 206:18 <b>context (5)</b> 24:24;26:10;50:13; 221:18;222:5 <b>continuation (1)</b> 108:12 <b>continue (32)</b> 5:25;21:12;26:19; 28:3,16;47:15;56:4; 64:19;69:5;71:15; 72:24;73:7;93:5; 103:12;118:19; 125:23;126:11; 129:5;131:16; 147:16;155:14,23; 169:22;176:18; 180:13;186:6;	190:20;191:12; 206:13;207:19,21,23 <b>continued (4)</b> 153:4;183:19; 201:22;206:21 <b>continues (2)</b> 196:14;203:16 <b>continuing (6)</b> 15:24;55:24; 113:19;142:16,18; 208:5 <b>continuous (1)</b> 197:11 <b>continuously (2)</b> 108:15;171:10 <b>contract (13)</b> 94:12;137:3,6; 139:4,7,21;149:17; 150:6;151:4;156:17; 159:13;161:22,24 <b>contracted (2)</b> 145:2,3 <b>contracting (1)</b> 149:22 <b>contribute (2)</b> 26:6;27:23 <b>contributed (1)</b> 123:19 <b>control (2)</b> 132:14;181:23 <b>conversion (1)</b> 220:7 <b>conversations (10)</b> 5:19,23;38:18; 41:1;54:20;60:9; 61:16;75:19;169:25; 170:11 <b>convicted (1)</b> 90:5 <b>conviction (1)</b> 82:4 <b>coordinating (1)</b> 190:2 <b>coordinator (15)</b> 4:16,16;69:13; 70:1,1;71:9;106:25; 107:7,9;117:10; 130:24;131:4; 138:20;167:22; 198:20 <b>copy (1)</b> 137:19 <b>core (6)</b> 56:2;69:10;72:2; 197:23;203:2,3 <b>cores (1)</b> 127:7 <b>corner (1)</b> 18:11 <b>corrected (2)</b> 122:8;128:6 <b>correcting (1)</b> 161:25
--	---	--	---	---



38:24;46:8;47:6,8; 49:11;50:25;53:9 <b>deliberate (2)</b> 72:6;82:8 <b>delivered (1)</b> 151:1 <b>delivering (1)</b> 156:18 <b>demographic (3)</b> 67:15;80:16;194:7 <b>demographics (1)</b> 80:10 <b>demonstrate (1)</b> 118:9 <b>demonstrates (1)</b> 208:3 <b>demonstrating (2)</b> 102:24;113:18 <b>denial (1)</b> 62:2 <b>denies (1)</b> 165:15 <b>dense (1)</b> 36:8 <b>deny (1)</b> 169:15 <b>Department (15)</b> 7:9;39:25;60:24; 71:18;128:4;129:2, 20;130:7;144:13; 150:20;152:3; 172:21;177:16; 192:15;206:19 <b>departments (1)</b> 14:24 <b>depends (4)</b> 142:11;175:25; 183:7;184:4 <b>depression (1)</b> 133:8 <b>describe (1)</b> 152:22 <b>desegregate (1)</b> 126:13 <b>desegregation (1)</b> 125:25 <b>design (3)</b> 80:22;199:18; 200:7 <b>designate (1)</b> 57:7 <b>designated (3)</b> 18:2;39:18;140:7 <b>designed (3)</b> 105:8;123:21; 126:20 <b>detected (1)</b> 52:17 <b>determination (1)</b> 143:19 <b>determine (3)</b> 79:11;100:11; 164:8	<b>determined (6)</b> 71:7;77:20,25; 118:12;157:4;195:14 <b>determining (1)</b> 143:18 <b>develop (3)</b> 21:13;22:25;201:6 <b>developed (4)</b> 23:14;80:9;211:11, 16 <b>development (13)</b> 41:14,15,21;42:7; 44:5;75:7;76:10; 98:24;126:2;130:2; 155:5;200:22;204:12 <b>developments (2)</b> 41:22;42:3 <b>deviation (1)</b> 222:8 <b>deviations (1)</b> 221:18 <b>Dibels (1)</b> 202:19 <b>DIBLES (1)</b> 54:4 <b>difference (4)</b> 87:3;106:20; 150:24;153:18 <b>differences (2)</b> 26:7;27:24 <b>different (24)</b> 19:6;29:6,7;30:6; 43:11,12;44:15; 60:17;69:15;93:25; 99:8,9,24;110:13; 115:3;152:12; 154:23;157:16; 167:2;174:7;183:21; 188:21,24;214:9 <b>differently (2)</b> 179:4;223:22 <b>difficult (7)</b> 27:4;46:5;51:25; 60:20;144:2;151:21; 191:21 <b>difficulties (3)</b> 19:7;48:1;203:1 <b>digest (1)</b> 181:2 <b>digging (2)</b> 8:16;220:22 <b>digital (8)</b> 34:20,21,25;35:3,7, 14,18,19 <b>diligently (2)</b> 125:2;128:24 <b>Dill (8)</b> 149:3;151:14,23, 25;152:3,3;155:25; 158:16 <b>diminish (1)</b> 30:16 <b>Direct (3)</b>	95:3;132:9;157:23 <b>direction (5)</b> 15:17;64:9;80:25; 82:14;171:22 <b>directions (2)</b> 221:5,6 <b>directives (1)</b> 180:2 <b>directly (5)</b> 27:5;68:23;72:13, 21;156:8 <b>Director (7)</b> 81:20;143:10; 150:19;152:4; 193:23;195:6;198:8 <b>Directors (2)</b> 89:24;102:11 <b>disadvantaged (3)</b> 124:13,15,17 <b>disciplinary (3)</b> 90:24;120:2; 168:21 <b>discipline (7)</b> 19:6;24:9;69:15; 166:21;169:4,10,20 <b>disclose (1)</b> 141:20 <b>discovered (1)</b> 13:8 <b>discuss (2)</b> 83:2;129:21 <b>discussed (2)</b> 63:4;198:10 <b>discussion (11)</b> 24:20;170:14,15, 16;172:19;184:14; 189:14;208:8; 219:14,17;222:25 <b>discussions (1)</b> 33:21 <b>disheartened (1)</b> 13:9 <b>Dismissal (1)</b> 91:8 <b>distance (3)</b> 34:14,20,21 <b>distracted (1)</b> 136:15 <b>distress (2)</b> 140:7;142:22 <b>District (28)</b> 17:14;25:2;54:8; 74:3;75:6;116:17,19; 145:25;148:14,16; 151:6;153:3,11; 157:15;170:2;176:7, 8,12;192:16;194:23, 25;199:14,25;200:2; 201:5;209:22; 211:11;214:22 <b>districts (12)</b> 17:10;38:17,19,21; 54:10,14;192:18;	196:15;199:16; 201:8,9;211:13 <b>dive (1)</b> 99:16 <b>diving (1)</b> 42:6 <b>Division (14)</b> 14:22;30:13;89:21; 90:16;115:5,15; 150:20;165:18; 166:7;174:22; 177:16;190:4,8; 192:12 <b>Division's (1)</b> 3:14 <b>document (3)</b> 11:9;61:7;173:22 <b>documentation (1)</b> 111:13 <b>documents (1)</b> 128:21 <b>DoJo (1)</b> 199:12 <b>DOK (1)</b> 8:17 <b>dollars (2)</b> 146:12;155:7 <b>Dollarway (6)</b> 121:1;176:10; 189:3;192:21,25; 209:20 <b>done (20)</b> 31:21;40:25;44:16; 62:5;69:9;87:10; 106:17,22;122:4,14; 129:4;131:6,19; 141:17;142:7; 144:15;156:6; 166:21;183:6;200:11 <b>Donna (5)</b> 208:17,24;209:2,6, 6 <b>door (1)</b> 86:18 <b>doors (4)</b> 66:23;183:15; 186:6,9 <b>double (1)</b> 41:17 <b>double-check (1)</b> 115:13 <b>double-up (1)</b> 164:13 <b>down (25)</b> 9:2;14:9;23:23; 29:5;46:2;58:25; 59:11;84:12;99:9; 111:8;113:2;146:18; 149:3;150:7;152:11; 159:15;161:18; 165:8;172:12; 181:16,21;182:19; 208:14;214:12;216:5	<b>Dr (154)</b> 20:20;21:5;28:18, 20;29:9;30:2,9,22,25; 31:3,10;34:11,14; 36:13;37:3;39:2,3,8; 41:4,9,12;42:9,13,18; 44:7,8,9,21,25;45:2, 10,15,17,19;46:9,9; 55:10;58:11,24;59:3; 60:11;61:4,17,20; 62:13,23;63:1,7,24, 25;64:16,17;65:1; 72:16;82:20,23; 89:18;97:21,22; 98:15;99:19;100:1,5; 102:6,20;103:8,13, 16;105:25;106:4; 110:3;111:10,25; 112:9;113:17,22; 114:13,16;135:13,15; 136:11,15,21;143:4, 21;145:10,23;147:8, 15,19;170:15; 171:13;172:24; 174:20;175:20,22; 176:17;177:25; 178:19;179:16; 180:7,22;181:7,9,10, 14,22;182:24;183:12, 22;184:9,11,13,21; 185:2,13;186:2; 187:12;190:23,24; 191:2,3;204:7; 210:17,19;211:5,16; 212:5,6,19,24;213:1; 214:14,19;215:13; 219:9,11,14,20; 220:1,17;221:8,16, 21,25;222:9,23; 223:20;224:9,11,13; 225:5;226:1,6 <b>dramatic (1)</b> 218:12 <b>drastic (1)</b> 209:12 <b>dread (1)</b> 133:20 <b>dreads (1)</b> 133:9 <b>dreams (1)</b> 89:12 <b>dressed (1)</b> 88:3 <b>drive (2)</b> 41:20;103:7 <b>driven (1)</b> 9:8 <b>drives (1)</b> 103:11 <b>driving (1)</b> 123:25 <b>drop (1)</b> 6:16
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<p><b>dropped (1)</b> 148:8</p> <p><b>dropping (1)</b> 52:16</p> <p><b>dryer (1)</b> 198:24</p> <p><b>dual (1)</b> 16:24</p> <p><b>due (16)</b> 67:2;76:11;91:2,5; 93:1;117:1;125:3; 126:7;128:2;129:13; 160:13;165:23; 166:6;191:3;194:21; 198:1</p> <p><b>dug (1)</b> 10:22</p> <p><b>During (26)</b> 67:4;70:14;71:15; 73:15;81:11;94:11, 11;99:14,17,18; 108:23;118:22; 119:22;121:15; 126:21,25;149:5,11, 13,14;186:11;188:9; 197:22;202:20; 203:21;215:8</p> <p><b>Duties (4)</b> 91:23,24,25;92:4</p> <p><b>Duty- (1)</b> 91:21</p> <p><b>Duty-Free (5)</b> 92:3;93:5;94:4,5; 111:7</p> <p><b>dyslexia (16)</b> 14:8;53:10,19; 54:1;55:24;56:1; 67:24;68:1;72:20,22; 75:6;194:16;200:3; 203:21,23,24</p> <p><b>dyslexic (1)</b> 52:5</p>	<p>88:2;92:10;149:25; 150:1,10</p> <p><b>eating (1)</b> 159:7</p> <p><b>economically (3)</b> 124:13,15,17</p> <p><b>Ed (10)</b> 14:22;18:14;117:3; 152:3;161:17; 164:20,21;167:14,21, 25</p> <p><b>Edel (1)</b> 4:7</p> <p><b>educate (2)</b> 75:10;92:9</p> <p><b>education (46)</b> 10:5;11:18;13:22, 23;18:18;33:11; 64:20;67:14;68:7; 71:18;74:8;80:16; 85:9,12;89:9;93:24; 101:20;118:17; 124:5;131:18;135:3; 144:14;150:20,21; 158:23;160:1,4,5,14, 16,18;161:4;162:7,9; 163:11,24;164:8; 165:1;171:2,3; 179:24;185:7; 197:13;202:7;205:4; 206:20</p> <p><b>educational (3)</b> 38:9;76:13;93:2</p> <p><b>educators (1)</b> 47:20</p> <p><b>effect (1)</b> 207:10</p> <p><b>effective (2)</b> 189:9,11</p> <p><b>effectiveness (2)</b> 8:2;39:11</p> <p><b>effectuate (2)</b> 33:4;90:1</p> <p><b>effort (3)</b> 109:15;113:5; 155:6</p> <p><b>efforts (5)</b> 76:12;199:1,7; 207:9;224:3</p> <p><b>eFinance (3)</b> 140:22;141:3; 148:20</p> <p><b>eight (3)</b> 107:8;194:13; 210:5</p> <p><b>either (11)</b> 10:23;62:15;68:15; 75:4;103:2;134:20; 135:5;138:18; 153:23;173:5;211:15</p> <p><b>ELA (16)</b> 76:14,15,17;121:6; 124:3,7;196:8,8,13,</p>	<p>21;197:1,14,17; 212:8;215:23;219:6</p> <p><b>electronic (1)</b> 25:4</p> <p><b>electronically (1)</b> 22:4</p> <p><b>element (1)</b> 80:22</p> <p><b>elementaries (2)</b> 192:22;193:3</p> <p><b>elementary (30)</b> 4:14;6:14,21; 13:23;16:2,4,4,7; 42:9,15,21,25;43:3, 21;44:6;50:22;52:15; 53:20;55:12,23;57:3; 96:5;150:20;192:22, 25;193:5;196:14; 221:13;222:6,17</p> <p><b>elements (2)</b> 42:20;43:2</p> <p><b>eligibility (1)</b> 154:24</p> <p><b>eligible (1)</b> 174:4</p> <p><b>eliminate (1)</b> 107:4</p> <p><b>Elizabeth (1)</b> 206:20</p> <p><b>else (20)</b> 19:13;41:17;57:19; 61:3;66:2;94:9; 130:13,21;145:3,3; 158:22;163:22; 174:14;186:19; 189:23;191:7; 208:11;210:12; 223:21;225:25</p> <p><b>else's (1)</b> 109:14</p> <p><b>email (3)</b> 40:19;141:15; 215:16</p> <p><b>embedded (1)</b> 200:21</p> <p><b>emergency (2)</b> 67:3;172:15</p> <p><b>emotional (6)</b> 68:11;69:5,8;71:4; 82:9;99:21</p> <p><b>emotionally (1)</b> 133:18</p> <p><b>emphasis (4)</b> 64:12;69:4;70:7; 71:2</p> <p><b>employ (1)</b> 11:24</p> <p><b>employed (3)</b> 14:24;200:2,15</p> <p><b>Employee (1)</b> 91:9</p> <p><b>employees (3)</b> 91:11;116:15;</p>	<p>139:17</p> <p><b>employment (2)</b> 91:14;159:11</p> <p><b>empowered (1)</b> 71:4</p> <p><b>encourage (3)</b> 17:3;70:16;222:4</p> <p><b>encouraged (2)</b> 60:9;134:9</p> <p><b>encouraging (2)</b> 60:13;61:2</p> <p><b>end (32)</b> 9:18;24:21;46:14; 81:13;97:5;128:17; 132:16;134:7;137:1, 18;138:4,11,25; 142:10;143:6,25; 145:15;147:6; 148:10;149:5,14; 170:21;175:2; 176:12,14;178:25; 183:17,17,19;184:6; 217:9,10</p> <p><b>ended (2)</b> 78:11;213:15</p> <p><b>ending (1)</b> 4:5</p> <p><b>engage (2)</b> 75:15,18</p> <p><b>engaged (6)</b> 49:20,21;50:1,9; 101:6,12</p> <p><b>engagement (4)</b> 4:14;50:3;60:16; 82:2</p> <p><b>English (14)</b> 15:11;41:25;77:8; 120:16;122:10,10,13, 16,18;123:8;196:10; 197:23;210:20;212:9</p> <p><b>enjoy (1)</b> 88:8</p> <p><b>enjoyment (1)</b> 10:6</p> <p><b>enormous (1)</b> 177:8</p> <p><b>enough (7)</b> 93:21;125:19; 127:16;145:14; 156:16;179:9;181:2</p> <p><b>enriches (1)</b> 202:4</p> <p><b>enrichment (1)</b> 43:14</p> <p><b>enroll (4)</b> 63:6;167:2;169:12; 176:15</p> <p><b>enrolled (7)</b> 11:16;14:12;15:13; 17:2;102:23;192:24; 194:3</p> <p><b>enrollment (28)</b> 4:3;18:24;44:9,25;</p>	<p>55:11,14,15,17;56:5, 10;61:23;62:2,8; 63:3;65:13,15; 119:18;120:4;139:8, 22;146:10;148:11; 165:13;193:25; 194:21,24;195:1,16</p> <p><b>entire (5)</b> 13:10;14:12;72:17; 74:4;94:23</p> <p><b>environment (13)</b> 6:3;8:12;14:4; 40:18;43:17;46:19; 48:9,9;49:2;70:15, 22;75:16;82:10</p> <p><b>equal (1)</b> 153:22</p> <p><b>equally (1)</b> 76:2</p> <p><b>equating (1)</b> 128:3</p> <p><b>equip (1)</b> 42:7</p> <p><b>equipped (2)</b> 72:18;163:25</p> <p><b>Equity (7)</b> 165:18;166:6,19; 167:5,10;169:22; 170:3</p> <p><b>escalate (1)</b> 22:18</p> <p><b>eSchool (2)</b> 148:19;160:25</p> <p><b>ESEA (1)</b> 165:11</p> <p><b>especially (13)</b> 9:23;19:5;24:23; 29:11;43:21;45:24; 49:15;50:6;93:22; 105:7;112:12;144:3; 191:9</p> <p><b>ESSA (23)</b> 6:18;7:23;51:3; 59:8;64:7;76:22; 77:13;103:4;108:1; 113:9;123:15,15,24; 125:25;126:1; 195:10,10,25;196:1; 220:6;221:10,14; 222:5</p> <p><b>establish (1)</b> 223:9</p> <p><b>estate (1)</b> 36:19</p> <p><b>estimate (1)</b> 142:4</p> <p><b>et (1)</b> 25:23</p> <p><b>Eureka (4)</b> 73:8,21,22;200:24</p> <p><b>evaluatory (1)</b> 9:25</p> <p><b>even (38)</b></p>
<b>E</b>				
<p><b>earlier (12)</b> 14:16;50:2;75:3; 90:19;108:8;157:7; 200:4;205:22; 208:16;209:3; 214:13;218:22</p> <p><b>Earline (1)</b> 125:19</p> <p><b>early (4)</b> 31:21;48:15;54:13; 105:3</p> <p><b>ease (1)</b> 144:9</p> <p><b>easier (1)</b> 56:7</p> <p><b>easy (4)</b> 6:2,4;48:8;55:1</p> <p><b>eat (5)</b></p>	<p>109:15;113:5; 155:6</p> <p><b>efforts (5)</b> 76:12;199:1,7; 207:9;224:3</p> <p><b>eFinance (3)</b> 140:22;141:3; 148:20</p> <p><b>eight (3)</b> 107:8;194:13; 210:5</p> <p><b>either (11)</b> 10:23;62:15;68:15; 75:4;103:2;134:20; 135:5;138:18; 153:23;173:5;211:15</p> <p><b>ELA (16)</b> 76:14,15,17;121:6; 124:3,7;196:8,8,13,</p>	<p>21;197:1,14,17; 212:8;215:23;219:6</p> <p><b>electronic (1)</b> 25:4</p> <p><b>electronically (1)</b> 22:4</p> <p><b>element (1)</b> 80:22</p> <p><b>elementaries (2)</b> 192:22;193:3</p> <p><b>elementary (30)</b> 4:14;6:14,21; 13:23;16:2,4,4,7; 42:9,15,21,25;43:3, 21;44:6;50:22;52:15; 53:20;55:12,23;57:3; 96:5;150:20;192:22, 25;193:5;196:14; 221:13;222:6,17</p> <p><b>elements (2)</b> 42:20;43:2</p> <p><b>eligibility (1)</b> 154:24</p> <p><b>eligible (1)</b> 174:4</p> <p><b>eliminate (1)</b> 107:4</p> <p><b>Elizabeth (1)</b> 206:20</p> <p><b>else (20)</b> 19:13;41:17;57:19; 61:3;66:2;94:9; 130:13,21;145:3,3; 158:22;163:22; 174:14;186:19; 189:23;191:7; 208:11;210:12; 223:21;225:25</p> <p><b>else's (1)</b> 109:14</p> <p><b>email (3)</b> 40:19;141:15; 215:16</p> <p><b>embedded (1)</b> 200:21</p> <p><b>emergency (2)</b> 67:3;172:15</p> <p><b>emotional (6)</b> 68:11;69:5,8;71:4; 82:9;99:21</p> <p><b>emotionally (1)</b> 133:18</p> <p><b>emphasis (4)</b> 64:12;69:4;70:7; 71:2</p> <p><b>employ (1)</b> 11:24</p> <p><b>employed (3)</b> 14:24;200:2,15</p> <p><b>Employee (1)</b> 91:9</p> <p><b>employees (3)</b> 91:11;116:15;</p>	<p>139:17</p> <p><b>employment (2)</b> 91:14;159:11</p> <p><b>empowered (1)</b> 71:4</p> <p><b>encourage (3)</b> 17:3;70:16;222:4</p> <p><b>encouraged (2)</b> 60:9;134:9</p> <p><b>encouraging (2)</b> 60:13;61:2</p> <p><b>end (32)</b> 9:18;24:21;46:14; 81:13;97:5;128:17; 132:16;134:7;137:1, 18;138:4,11,25; 142:10;143:6,25; 145:15;147:6; 148:10;149:5,14; 170:21;175:2; 176:12,14;178:25; 183:17,17,19;184:6; 217:9,10</p> <p><b>ended (2)</b> 78:11;213:15</p> <p><b>ending (1)</b> 4:5</p> <p><b>engage (2)</b> 75:15,18</p> <p><b>engaged (6)</b> 49:20,21;50:1,9; 101:6,12</p> <p><b>engagement (4)</b> 4:14;50:3;60:16; 82:2</p> <p><b>English (14)</b> 15:11;41:25;77:8; 120:16;122:10,10,13, 16,18;123:8;196:10; 197:23;210:20;212:9</p> <p><b>enjoy (1)</b> 88:8</p> <p><b>enjoyment (1)</b> 10:6</p> <p><b>enormous (1)</b> 177:8</p> <p><b>enough (7)</b> 93:21;125:19; 127:16;145:14; 156:16;179:9;181:2</p> <p><b>enriches (1)</b> 202:4</p> <p><b>enrichment (1)</b> 43:14</p> <p><b>enroll (4)</b> 63:6;167:2;169:12; 176:15</p> <p><b>enrolled (7)</b> 11:16;14:12;15:13; 17:2;102:23;192:24; 194:3</p> <p><b>enrollment (28)</b> 4:3;18:24;44:9,25;</p>	<p>55:11,14,15,17;56:5, 10;61:23;62:2,8; 63:3;65:13,15; 119:18;120:4;139:8, 22;146:10;148:11; 165:13;193:25; 194:21,24;195:1,16</p> <p><b>entire (5)</b> 13:10;14:12;72:17; 74:4;94:23</p> <p><b>environment (13)</b> 6:3;8:12;14:4; 40:18;43:17;46:19; 48:9,9;49:2;70:15, 22;75:16;82:10</p> <p><b>equal (1)</b> 153:22</p> <p><b>equally (1)</b> 76:2</p> <p><b>equating (1)</b> 128:3</p> <p><b>equip (1)</b> 42:7</p> <p><b>equipped (2)</b> 72:18;163:25</p> <p><b>Equity (7)</b> 165:18;166:6,19; 167:5,10;169:22; 170:3</p> <p><b>escalate (1)</b> 22:18</p> <p><b>eSchool (2)</b> 148:19;160:25</p> <p><b>ESEA (1)</b> 165:11</p> <p><b>especially (13)</b> 9:23;19:5;24:23; 29:11;43:21;45:24; 49:15;50:6;93:22; 105:7;112:12;144:3; 191:9</p> <p><b>ESSA (23)</b> 6:18;7:23;51:3; 59:8;64:7;76:22; 77:13;103:4;108:1; 113:9;123:15,15,24; 125:25;126:1; 195:10,10,25;196:1; 220:6;221:10,14; 222:5</p> <p><b>establish (1)</b> 223:9</p> <p><b>estate (1)</b> 36:19</p> <p><b>estimate (1)</b> 142:4</p> <p><b>et (1)</b> 25:23</p> <p><b>Eureka (4)</b> 73:8,21,22;200:24</p> <p><b>evaluatory (1)</b> 9:25</p> <p><b>even (38)</b></p>

6:6;7:23;13:25; 19:1;26:9;28:1; 30:18;34:5;38:18; 44:13;57:20;58:5; 59:15;16;75:11; 76:17;77:17;78:3; 84:21;131:13; 138:12;150:10; 170:19,20;171:5,10; 173:2,18;174:8; 178:16;185:4; 190:10;195:1,21; 197:17;213:19; 216:17;224:6	63:2;93:6 <b>exceptions (1)</b> 204:17 <b>excited (5)</b> 10:12;15:19;88:7; 214:3,8 <b>excitement (1)</b> 108:8 <b>exciting (2)</b> 17:19;18:1 <b>excuse (4)</b> 72:16;126:1;129:7; 133:6 <b>execute (1)</b> 205:23 <b>execution (1)</b> 41:4 <b>Executive (3)</b> 81:20;193:22; 198:7 <b>EXHIBIT (4)</b> 227:25;228:25; 229:25;230:25 <b>exhibited (1)</b> 202:25 <b>exhibiting (1)</b> 203:20 <b>exist (1)</b> 178:14 <b>existence (1)</b> 125:4 <b>existent (1)</b> 22:12 <b>exists (4)</b> 25:17;36:7;179:12; 183:1 <b>expand (1)</b> 96:20 <b>expands (1)</b> 199:24 <b>expansion (6)</b> 56:13,15;57:6,24; 58:6;203:5 <b>expect (4)</b> 79:14,15;109:12; 153:12 <b>expectations (6)</b> 50:24;81:1;197:20; 207:17,18,24 <b>expected (3)</b> 120:23;222:16,17 <b>Expeditionary (2)</b> 72:3;197:24 <b>expelled (3)</b> 169:14,15;170:10 <b>expelling (1)</b> 169:9 <b>expend (1)</b> 25:2 <b>expended (1)</b> 173:17 <b>expense (1)</b> 140:1	<b>expenses (1)</b> 153:21 <b>experience (12)</b> 8:23;18:18;35:6; 44:14;48:3;73:11; 87:13,15,24;88:4,5; 154:16 <b>experienced (2)</b> 71:12;128:14 <b>experiences (1)</b> 16:10 <b>expiring (1)</b> 30:13 <b>explain (7)</b> 21:23;24:7;26:17; 27:21;35:10;144:16; 192:13 <b>explained (1)</b> 28:2 <b>explanation (2)</b> 29:11;95:5 <b>express (2)</b> 27:9;70:15 <b>expressed (1)</b> 141:19 <b>expulsion (1)</b> 166:25 <b>expulsions (1)</b> 107:4 <b>extended (4)</b> 105:10,10,17,18 <b>extensive (5)</b> 12:3;48:19;91:4; 107:13;170:11 <b>extra (2)</b> 108:10;202:10 <b>extremely (9)</b> 76:18;84:7,7,7; 100:16;118:7; 119:19;124:21; 128:11 <b>eye-opener (1)</b> 97:14	82:11 <b>fair (4)</b> 3:6;91:8,9;175:17 <b>faith (3)</b> 56:20;139:14; 140:11 <b>fake (1)</b> 141:1 <b>fall (6)</b> 16:3;17:13;18:6; 48:22;177:1;201:13 <b>falling (2)</b> 42:24;185:12 <b>familiar (1)</b> 177:2 <b>families (39)</b> 13:19;27:9;37:25; 50:4;66:24;67:10,12, 19;68:2,4,6,6,8; 75:12,21,24,25;76:3, 7;77:22,23;78:14,17, 24;79:1;80:23;88:1; 89:7,8;97:4;104:10; 182:22;187:17; 194:17,18,20;198:22; 199:4;213:18 <b>family (13)</b> 4:14;15:2;26:23; 51:16;60:15;70:20; 76:4;80:22;88:1,2; 198:20,21;206:12 <b>fantastic (1)</b> 49:6 <b>far (14)</b> 38:7;41:3;55:10, 13;97:24;98:6; 124:25;134:10; 139:4;148:12; 155:25;180:12,20; 209:25 <b>farm (1)</b> 87:11 <b>fashion (1)</b> 129:4 <b>favor (5)</b> 63:12;83:13;112:3; 189:15;224:18 <b>FCCLA (2)</b> 18:5,7 <b>feast (1)</b> 88:1 <b>featuring (1)</b> 102:17 <b>February (7)</b> 178:16;179:19; 186:10,14,21;198:10; 214:17 <b>fed (1)</b> 155:20 <b>federal (13)</b> 4:16;33:25;128:9; 154:7;155:7;165:5; 10,12;173:22,22,23;	177:22;221:12 <b>federally (1)</b> 154:6 <b>Feds (2)</b> 165:20,24 <b>feedback (7)</b> 40:8;63:16;99:12; 112:7;224:25;225:6, 8 <b>feel (17)</b> 7:2;11:6;19:3;44:2, 17;46:2;64:8;70:16; 86:18,18;132:3; 135:22;145:13; 150:5;163:24; 187:13;225:11 <b>feeling (2)</b> 108:7;141:6 <b>feelings (1)</b> 70:3 <b>feels (4)</b> 71:3;133:25;134:1; 141:2 <b>fell (1)</b> 213:8 <b>fellow (1)</b> 101:11 <b>felony (1)</b> 90:5 <b>felt (1)</b> 46:1 <b>Felton (1)</b> 4:10 <b>fetch (1)</b> 109:20 <b>few (12)</b> 48:21;63:18;70:12; 89:22;112:25; 130:20;137:10; 145:19;173:9; 190:13;198:25;225:1 <b>FFA (1)</b> 17:25 <b>fidelity (1)</b> 14:25 <b>fieldtrip (1)</b> 87:10 <b>Fifty (1)</b> 150:22 <b>figure (5)</b> 46:21;107:17; 158:8;164:25;178:20 <b>figured (1)</b> 158:1 <b>figuring (1)</b> 48:1 <b>fill (7)</b> 7:16;10:11;90:8,9, 11,12;189:24 <b>filled (1)</b> 84:14 <b>filter (1)</b> 5:24
			<b>F</b>	
		<b>face (1)</b> 67:9 <b>faces (3)</b> 46:4;49:18;87:15 <b>face-to-face (3)</b> 41:18;129:20,25 <b>facilitate (1)</b> 3:6 <b>facility (5)</b> 112:10,11,13,17,18 <b>fact (7)</b> 30:5;43:3;110:5; 186:17;210:4; 220:14;222:14 <b>facts (1)</b> 221:20 <b>faculty (1)</b>		

<b>Final (7)</b> 50:19;115:16; 178:11;186:9; 191:25;192:4;207:3	174:15 <b>five (12)</b> 4:4,23;12:5;16:15; 56:21;58:19;81:11, 13,17;93:19;174:3; 210:13	20;196:17 <b>Follow-up (3)</b> 42:9;109:9;163:6	207:15;213:15; 215:23;217:17,20	35:7 <b>further (5)</b> 57:20;86:24; 111:20;191:11;208:8
<b>finally (1)</b> 165:22	<b>five- (1)</b> 64:17	<b>fond (1)</b> 7:8	<b>fourth (1)</b> 40:13	<b>future (11)</b> 5:25;15:2;17:6; 50:24;61:9;63:22; 87:21;121:17; 128:23;159:12; 220:18
<b>finance (11)</b> 117:3;127:15; 128:4;135:3,18,19, 22;143:10;153:9; 175:10;176:23	<b>five-year (2)</b> 18:20;62:19	<b>food (16)</b> 33:10,12;87:8; 136:20,22,23;137:3, 6;139:21;144:17,20; 149:17;151:3,8,11; 157:16	<b>four-year (2)</b> 80:1;109:24	<b>futures (1)</b> 15:5
<b>finances (4)</b> 118:16;152:17; 154:24;177:19	<b>fix (1)</b> 107:18	<b>football (1)</b> 51:21	<b>framework (3)</b> 71:13;92:15;93:9	
<b>Financial (18)</b> 127:22;128:5; 129:18,20;141:19; 162:18;172:5;175:9; 176:17;180:5,6; 185:10;191:4,7,15; 195:2;205:9,12	<b>fixed (1)</b> 130:7	<b>force (1)</b> 123:25	<b>frankly (1)</b> 209:14	<b>G</b>
<b>financially (7)</b> 143:6;155:17,21; 172:1,14;184:19; 190:19	<b>fixtures (1)</b> 182:14	<b>forced (1)</b> 74:6	<b>free (16)</b> 67:20;76:18;80:13, 15;91:22;105:25; 106:2;108:20;119:6, 9;135:22;156:8,15, 20;158:4;194:12	<b>gabs (1)</b> 52:24
<b>financials (1)</b> 182:8	<b>flag (1)</b> 173:11	<b>forecast (1)</b> 11:11	<b>free-and-reduced (2)</b> 11:17;197:18	<b>gain (3)</b> 80:12;123:22; 145:19
<b>find (8)</b> 15:4,13;50:4;76:2; 84:1;93:21;171:17; 176:2	<b>flat (2)</b> 8:22;40:17	<b>foreign (1)</b> 42:1	<b>frequently (1)</b> 129:24	<b>gains (2)</b> 76:22;196:4
<b>fine (6)</b> 54:24;57:9;83:6; 91:17;134:23;158:22	<b>flexibility (13)</b> 29:25;55:20;56:9; 57:21;58:12,17,23; 59:3;62:9;63:5;93:3; 94:8,15	<b>forgot (1)</b> 170:10	<b>Friday (2)</b> 137:21;153:12	<b>GALLAGHER (2)</b> 205:1,2
<b>finish (4)</b> 83:9;141:8;144:12; 180:17	<b>flexible (1)</b> 48:9	<b>forgotten (1)</b> 20:11	<b>Friendship (1)</b> 217:2	<b>game (1)</b> 215:15
<b>firing (1)</b> 91:15	<b>flood (2)</b> 67:2,4	<b>form (4)</b> 71:12;76:1;121:17; 208:22	<b>front (8)</b> 5:10;36:9;51:1,4; 58:7;167:15;186:12; 223:16	<b>gap (11)</b> 6:19,20;8:8;9:16; 10:11;44:2;70:6; 80:21;104:15;131:9, 13
<b>first (47)</b> 3:19;12:12,13; 17:23;18:1;20:6,24; 22:3;24:24;35:13; 52:3;54:3;61:20; 78:23;81:21;83:16; 84:20;86:17;89:16, 24;92:19;116:1,4; 120:22;124:8;125:4; 135:1,5,8,10;138:24; 139:2,20;143:16; 144:14;145:20; 147:13;162:4; 171:24;172:19; 185:5,10;192:21; 201:4;207:11;214:5; 220:16	<b>flow (1)</b> 66:15	<b>format (2)</b> 115:3,6	<b>frustrated (1)</b> 69:23	<b>gather (1)</b> 202:19
<b>fiscal (13)</b> 127:15;135:25; 138:19;140:7; 142:20,22;147:25; 148:15;159:18; 174:5,9,10;180:1	<b>fluency (2)</b> 73:9,14	<b>formative (1)</b> 203:15	<b>full (11)</b> 59:16;80:4;142:23; 159:22;173:6,19; 186:12;188:24; 204:10;207:24; 214:21	<b>gathered (1)</b> 22:4
<b>fiscally (1)</b>	<b>focus (21)</b> 6:9;18:20;63:21, 22;64:18;71:7,8; 72:7,10,13;77:5;78:4, 9,16;86:12;97:16; 126:14;196:19; 197:11;201:7;225:12	<b>former (3)</b> 41:25;101:25; 206:19	<b>front-end (2)</b> 48:11,16	<b>gave (6)</b> 29:11;56:9;58:17, 18;134:6;141:21
	<b>focused (5)</b> 6:2;77:18;123:20; 195:22;200:23	<b>fortunate (2)</b> 125:18;127:16	<b>frustrated (1)</b> 69:23	<b>general (2)</b> 153:13;171:14
	<b>focuses (4)</b> 68:23;73:8;80:19; 200:16	<b>forward (20)</b> 5:8;15:15;57:5,7; 61:8;64:22;82:15; 114:8;118:23;147:4; 171:17,25;174:15; 181:12;189:6; 198:12;206:14; 208:5,8;215:13	<b>fully (9)</b> 87:12,25;132:17; 173:19;183:7;195:3; 204:2,20;206:23	<b>gentlemen's (1)</b> 151:5
	<b>focusing (3)</b> 73:7;78:24;200:20	<b>forward-thinking (1)</b> 60:5	<b>function (2)</b> 91:10;127:23	<b>geographical (1)</b> 43:13
	<b>folders (1)</b> 161:25	<b>found (4)</b> 26:24;61:2;84:16; 220:8	<b>functioning (2)</b> 133:23,23	<b>geographically (2)</b> 10:15;27:13
	<b>folks (2)</b> 11:15;135:20	<b>foundation (2)</b> 80:9;203:6	<b>fund (1)</b> 174:4	<b>gets (4)</b> 105:23;108:3,19; 225:22
	<b>follow (3)</b> 36:14;37:12;109:9	<b>foundational (4)</b> 201:17;202:20; 203:7;212:2	<b>funded (3)</b> 87:12,25;154:6	<b>gifted (5)</b> 12:17,24;68:3; 194:17;202:8
	<b>followed (2)</b> 167:8,9	<b>foundations (1)</b> 205:20	<b>funding (10)</b> 127:4;128:7;144:6, 7,8;146:11;147:8; 165:5,10;172:15	<b>Gina (5)</b> 4:14;123:21; 125:22;129:25;190:1
	<b>following (13)</b> 15:23;16:9;22:21; 73:7;77:3;115:14; 118:15;124:11; 154:9;165:5;169:10,	<b>four (14)</b> 3:18;72:14;73:6; 79:18;120:14;121:2; 197:2,9;204:18;	<b>funds (8)</b> 142:16;165:12; 172:7,8;177:5,9,12; 182:1	<b>Girls (1)</b> 201:23
			<b>furnishing (1)</b>	<b>given (17)</b> 29:11;59:18;72:9; 92:24;110:4;124:20;

125:14;136:2; 140:21;168:4;191:7, 10;209:11;221:5,6; 223:7;225:7 <b>giving (5)</b> 29:23;40:8;58:12; 88:12;155:6 <b>Glad (3)</b> 51:22,22;134:5 <b>gladly (1)</b> 122:15 <b>goal (7)</b> 3:6;11:8;58:8; 79:17;80:3;98:8; 107:3 <b>goals (8)</b> 11:3,5;40:9;50:25; 51:2;74:11;199:17; 200:25 <b>goal-setting (1)</b> 74:13 <b>God (2)</b> 84:16;209:22 <b>goes (12)</b> 32:24;40:21;86:24; 88:19;112:16,17; 139:5;159:6;177:12; 180:5,8;185:16 <b>Good (53)</b> 3:2,23;20:20;22:7; 29:19,22;36:1,9;49:1, 1;51:20,22;56:20; 59:25;60:2;62:5; 64:22;66:18;73:2; 81:19;83:17;89:16; 93:12;96:13;100:3; 102:12,15;105:11; 118:1;124:6;126:7; 131:3;135:19; 139:14;140:11; 141:6;143:13; 145:11;153:24; 159:15;178:8; 180:25;184:18; 185:2;193:20,21; 195:5;205:1;209:6; 213:1;216:12; 219:21;222:21 <b>good-faith (1)</b> 155:6 <b>gosh (1)</b> 42:22 <b>governing (1)</b> 34:21 <b>Government (2)</b> 13:14,16 <b>grab (1)</b> 62:24 <b>Grace (1)</b> 12:23 <b>Grace's (1)</b> 13:1 <b>grade (82)</b>	6:7;10:21;16:3; 44:14;45:3,6,8;51:4, 5,8;52:23;53:3,6; 55:16,21,21;56:14; 68:10;69:2;70:20; 71:15;72:5,18;74:23; 75:1,2;77:18;79:7; 100:18;101:17; 102:12;110:4; 113:18;121:23; 122:5,6,11,15,23; 123:4,9,13,17; 124:10;126:9;144:3, 4;188:23,24,24; 196:3,16,20,24,25; 197:5;198:5;201:8, 10;202:15;204:3,3; 212:22;216:4,5,6,9, 20,22;217:8,17; 218:3,4,5,9,10,23; 219:5,24;220:19,21; 221:5 <b>graders (16)</b> 74:20,22,24,25; 119:3;121:4,7,21,23; 122:17,25;123:5,11; 211:12;215:7,8 <b>grades (45)</b> 4:2;10:8;11:20,25; 19:1;43:22;49:14,15; 50:20;52:10;55:15; 58:20;65:15;66:24, 25;67:1,5,11;68:18; 72:3,4;73:11,14; 120:2;133:16;193:7; 194:3,4,6,15;197:24, 25;199:23;200:5; 202:25;203:7; 213:17,22,23,24; 217:7,10,20;219:22; 222:11 <b>graduated (2)</b> 12:22;13:12 <b>graduating (1)</b> 12:11 <b>graduation (3)</b> 34:4,8;103:3 <b>grandsons (1)</b> 101:8 <b>grant (4)</b> 29:17,20;30:5; 104:20 <b>granted (3)</b> 31:12;205:5,21 <b>granular (1)</b> 41:1 <b>graphs (1)</b> 78:8 <b>grateful (2)</b> 85:20;88:12 <b>gravitate (1)</b> 19:5 <b>great (20)</b>	10:21;14:17;36:16; 39:4;46:3;47:2; 51:16;54:12;71:23; 73:22;76:22;81:23; 82:4;89:10;99:19; 131:10;176:21; 200:24;204:23;226:9 <b>greater (5)</b> 71:22;77:18;81:1; 123:23;195:21 <b>greatest (1)</b> 124:1 <b>greatly (1)</b> 43:5 <b>green (1)</b> 7:8 <b>Greg (1)</b> 187:12 <b>grievance (4)</b> 21:1;90:21,24; 91:12 <b>ground (1)</b> 31:1 <b>group (17)</b> 8:21;17:17;44:12; 70:3;72:7,10;73:15; 74:17;76:9;97:1; 101:7,9;104:12; 126:22;202:16,21; 203:19 <b>groups (4)</b> 17:19;68:16;69:12; 72:23 <b>grow (6)</b> 11:7;40:10;79:15; 87:6;89:10,11 <b>growing (4)</b> 40:16;119:14; 222:16,17 <b>growth (90)</b> 6:21;8:1;9:15,19; 10:10,21,24;16:13; 17:1;39:20,20;40:16; 41:3;51:24;58:8; 68:23;69:1;72:19; 76:14,16,17;77:15, 17;78:2;79:9,17,18, 20,23,24,25;80:1,5; 98:4,11,13,14,23; 100:23,25;101:3,17; 103:3,10,10;110:5,7; 113:6,18,24;118:12, 14,20;127:4;128:7; 144:7,8;146:10; 147:8,12;148:7,13, 15;159:21;172:7,8; 195:13,20,20,21; 197:7,14,16,17; 201:10;202:22; 203:19;205:14; 211:8,14;212:7,11, 15,23;218:1;219:8; 222:6,13,15,20	<b>guardians (1)</b> 75:16 <b>guess (18)</b> 29:16;30:11,12; 45:3;50:23;54:6; 93:14;106:10;133:9; 143:7;146:1,6;150:5; 151:4;181:16; 189:20;217:13; 218:14 <b>Guidance (7)</b> 94:22,23;95:1,2; 111:6;159:10;181:17 <b>guidelines (2)</b> 33:25;36:14 <b>guys (8)</b> 35:11;46:16,23; 91:17;102:8;134:21; 146:20;190:3 <b>gym (2)</b> 152:13,15 <b>gymnasium (1)</b> 152:9	185:20,24;187:15; 199:4;213:21;221:24 <b>happened (7)</b> 40:8;48:22;107:6, 17,18;190:8;213:22 <b>happening (9)</b> 50:6;81:24;82:8; 98:16;100:11; 101:16;107:19; 113:25;181:2 <b>happens (10)</b> 14:2;81:25;146:7, 24;175:24;176:19; 177:14;182:4; 199:10;217:6 <b>happy (16)</b> 34:19;48:24;83:23; 84:4,7;85:18;95:6; 111:12;115:18; 128:11;130:8; 133:22,22;200:8; 225:16,17 <b>hard (8)</b> 82:5;93:21;100:20; 109:18;155:16,22; 169:11;206:17 <b>hard-fast (1)</b> 58:6 <b>Harding (1)</b> 204:8 <b>Hart (2)</b> 117:7;175:12 <b>hashed (1)</b> 214:23 <b>hat (2)</b> 110:6;220:24 <b>hate (2)</b> 179:9;180:14 <b>Haytt (1)</b> 174:22 <b>head (13)</b> 4:8;5:13,17;23:23; 24:1;61:14;130:18; 156:12;161:18; 163:4;165:8;208:14; 214:12 <b>headcount (2)</b> 152:5,15 <b>headed (5)</b> 5:21;14:16;15:7; 41:2;82:14 <b>head-start (1)</b> 201:19 <b>health (5)</b> 34:5;69:25;132:4, 9;205:9 <b>healthy (6)</b> 67:21;69:6;70:8; 80:22;97:17;194:13 <b>hear (11)</b> 8:23;34:15;81:14; 82:18;83:11;100:12; 114:11;186:20;
<b>H</b>				
<b>habits (1)</b> 74:16				
<b>half (2)</b> 144:22;206:8				
<b>Hall (1)</b> 176:11				
<b>halls (1)</b> 69:9				
<b>hallway (1)</b> 108:15				
<b>hand (2)</b> 117:14;193:13				
<b>handbook (1)</b> 167:4				
<b>hand-in-hand (2)</b> 36:23;42:4				
<b>handle (2)</b> 71:4;209:4				
<b>handled (1)</b> 166:22				
<b>handling (1)</b> 177:17				
<b>handout (4)</b> 74:20,22;135:17; 192:13				
<b>hands (1)</b> 93:18				
<b>hands-on (4)</b> 17:20;46:17,23; 182:18				
<b>handwriting (1)</b> 86:14				
<b>hanging (3)</b> 110:6;220:24; 224:23				
<b>happen (8)</b> 155:8;181:1;				

<p>191:25;223:10,14 <b>heard (8)</b> 60:1;62:2;82:4; 150:9;153:15; 166:13;205:22; 206:17 <b>hearing (23)</b> 3:7,15,20;65:4,6,9; 91:9;95:20;114:23; 115:1,22;172:4; 186:12;187:6,7,15; 192:2,4;198:10; 201:3;213:16; 214:17;223:2 <b>hearings (1)</b> 114:12 <b>hears (2)</b> 186:6;190:11 <b>heart (2)</b> 209:16,17 <b>heat (1)</b> 38:15 <b>Heather (5)</b> 135:25;139:19; 140:21;141:7;142:13 <b>heavily (3)</b> 38:14;78:9;200:23 <b>heavy (1)</b> 30:18 <b>heavy-handed (1)</b> 29:8 <b>hedging (1)</b> 7:4 <b>Heggerty (2)</b> 72:3;197:24 <b>held (6)</b> 6:7;8:24;21:11; 69:10;141:12;152:8 <b>help (31)</b> 12:25;38:19,24; 43:22;44:5;49:24; 51:23;52:23;55:2; 60:18,25;70:5;75:23; 84:17;85:10,10;86:2; 99:10;100:18; 144:12;150:8;154:2, 3;157:1;169:3;182:4, 8,18;218:22;219:8; 222:3 <b>helped (1)</b> 69:1 <b>helpful (13)</b> 8:14;45:12;49:5; 97:12;146:5,14,15, 21;218:22;219:2; 220:18;221:22; 222:24 <b>helping (4)</b> 75:21;87:8;166:17; 177:18 <b>helps (5)</b> 70:1;74:11;146:8; 151:22;218:18</p>	<p><b>here's (1)</b> 107:16 <b>hesitate (1)</b> 129:1 <b>hesitation (1)</b> 58:21 <b>Hey (2)</b> 50:11;51:17 <b>Hi (5)</b> 20:20;53:24; 135:23,24;160:3 <b>high (53)</b> 4:10,11;6:17;12:2; 41:24,25;42:15,23; 43:5;46:11,12;49:16; 51:6;52:16;56:17,23; 57:24;69:4,21;76:14, 15,16,17,18;82:1; 108:22;109:1; 114:24;115:22; 118:5;119:2;121:1,1, 2,2,3;123:16;126:6,8; 131:9,14;133:4,11; 149:24;150:22; 151:6;161:21; 197:17,18;211:23; 220:11,13,14 <b>higher (7)</b> 11:19;40:20;98:5; 107:12;109:3;158:7; 206:7 <b>highest (14)</b> 39:19;42:25; 108:18;119:15,20; 121:4,6,22;122:1,11, 22,24;124:9;147:23 <b>high-flier (1)</b> 12:23 <b>highlighted (1)</b> 220:20 <b>highly (5)</b> 74:18;93:22;97:2; 154:8;200:14 <b>highly-qualified (1)</b> 74:15 <b>Hill (1)</b> 3:12 <b>hindering (1)</b> 198:18 <b>hire (1)</b> 48:16 <b>hired (3)</b> 161:12,22;175:14 <b>hires (1)</b> 125:20 <b>hiring (3)</b> 91:15;118:11; 160:15 <b>Hispanic (2)</b> 67:17;194:9 <b>historical (2)</b> 61:7;67:2 <b>history (2)</b></p>	<p>35:18;106:14 <b>hit (1)</b> 53:7 <b>hits (1)</b> 213:25 <b>hold (6)</b> 11:24;46:8;52:25; 57:11;98:25;111:1 <b>Holder (1)</b> 4:13 <b>holding (3)</b> 21:12;43:20;56:12 <b>holds (1)</b> 147:20 <b>Holidays (1)</b> 225:16 <b>holistically (1)</b> 198:22 <b>home (10)</b> 44:1;51:19;70:6; 75:23;78:20;85:9,11, 13;108:12;210:6 <b>homebound (1)</b> 12:18 <b>homeless (3)</b> 68:2,8;194:17 <b>homerooms (1)</b> 43:20 <b>homes (1)</b> 96:16 <b>homeschool (1)</b> 134:7 <b>hone (1)</b> 48:11 <b>honest (2)</b> 172:4;214:7 <b>honestly (4)</b> 42:21;48:5;184:3, 12 <b>honor (1)</b> 58:7 <b>honors (2)</b> 12:20;13:12 <b>hope (3)</b> 13:17;82:1;113:14 <b>hopefully (4)</b> 23:10;38:3;89:23; 132:16 <b>hoping (2)</b> 18:6;60:15 <b>hospital (1)</b> 133:14 <b>hosting (2)</b> 9:8;87:25 <b>hosts (1)</b> 75:13 <b>hotspots (2)</b> 38:4,15 <b>hour (1)</b> 9:9 <b>hours (3)</b> 41:15;174:3;210:5 <b>housed (2)</b></p>	<p>67:5;74:13 <b>houses (1)</b> 70:11 <b>hovering (1)</b> 206:5 <b>Howard (11)</b> 72:16;83:16,17,20, 20;85:23;112:22,24; 158:17,17;204:8 <b>hug (1)</b> 86:25 <b>huge (3)</b> 70:7;71:2;98:15 <b>HUGHES (15)</b> 160:3,3,23;161:6, 18;162:20;163:2,4,7, 9,11,18,21;164:1,12 <b>human (1)</b> 204:19 <b>hundred (2)</b> 56:22;209:14 <b>hungry (1)</b> 150:3 <b>hurdles (1)</b> 166:14 <b>hurts (1)</b> 108:1 <b>Hyatt (85)</b> 19:21,23;20:5,8,13, 17;21:10;23:23;24:1, 3,21;25:22;27:19; 28:24;29:10;32:6,20, 21;33:5,22;34:3,17; 37:4,15,16;61:11,14; 62:4,11,14;81:4,5,10; 83:4;89:19,21,21; 90:18;91:16;94:17; 95:15;110:18,24; 111:16,18;114:25; 115:5,5;130:18; 134:16,23;164:4,16, 24;165:9;168:13; 169:5,24;174:21,22; 175:21,25;176:21; 178:7;181:18,23; 183:3,18,23,25; 184:3;186:4,15; 187:3;189:20,21,24; 208:14,17,20,25; 209:3;223:1,4,14 <b>Hyatt's (4)</b> 22:24;28:7;33:1; 92:17</p>	<p><b>identified (10)</b> 38:20;55:25;67:22, 24;121:10;127:11; 136:8;168:25; 194:14,16 <b>identify (7)</b> 10:23;52:24;53:12; 68:2;180:25;194:17; 201:19 <b>identifying (3)</b> 68:8;80:14;182:8 <b>IEP (7)</b> 160:13;161:5; 162:9;164:7,14; 165:3;167:18 <b>IEPs (2)</b> 160:12;161:1 <b>if-we-need (1)</b> 93:16 <b>II (1)</b> 104:4 <b>illegitimate (1)</b> 182:11 <b>imagination (1)</b> 16:19 <b>immediate (10)</b> 176:2;183:21; 184:10,20,23;185:15, 16;187:14;189:19; 190:25 <b>immediately (18)</b> 77:2;86:18;118:15, 18;175:1;176:1; 177:17;178:9;184:8; 186:5,24;188:15; 189:9,11;190:18; 204:25;213:22; 214:16 <b>impact (7)</b> 14:14;15:9;31:15; 55:13;123:24; 139:12;207:21 <b>impeded (1)</b> 129:6 <b>imperative (1)</b> 118:18 <b>implement (3)</b> 77:2;207:19;211:1 <b>implementation (2)</b> 197:11;201:2 <b>implementations (1)</b> 211:6 <b>implemented (7)</b> 78:12,19;198:4; 200:3;201:14;204:2; 211:10 <b>implementing (2)</b> 64:3;80:17 <b>implements (2)</b> 68:9;204:4 <b>implications (1)</b> 142:9 <b>importance (7)</b></p>
			<b>I</b>	
				<p><b>idea (5)</b> 58:11;109:10; 126:7;165:6;221:6 <b>ideal (1)</b> 178:24 <b>IDEAS (1)</b> 204:9</p>

10:3,6;46:2;87:23; 88:12,21;89:9 <b>important (28)</b> 7:8,12;9:23;12:4; 14:11,15;15:9;36:22, 22;37:10;40:19;46:1, 25;47:3;51:13;63:22; 76:2;86:21;88:21; 89:8;182:19;188:10; 200:19;211:25; 221:12;222:2,18,19 <b>impossible (1)</b> 191:15 <b>impressed (2)</b> 100:16;113:5 <b>impression (2)</b> 134:7;141:21 <b>impressive (1)</b> 113:7 <b>improve (9)</b> 7:5;39:9;42:8; 43:25;51:5;77:13; 124:5;195:11;206:13 <b>improved (4)</b> 36:17;76:11; 107:24;108:6 <b>improvement (18)</b> 5:22;7:2,15;9:24; 18:21;50:21;56:4; 64:1,2,13;82:12; 88:17;96:12;113:14; 114:2;205:25; 206:16;207:3 <b>improvements (13)</b> 56:7;76:21;77:3, 11;88:14;102:25; 103:7;113:11;114:5; 125:17;126:15; 196:17,24 <b>improves (2)</b> 56:3;218:18 <b>improving (10)</b> 7:4;56:1;74:8; 77:16;88:25;101:24; 113:19;123:20; 124:1;206:16 <b>in- (1)</b> 23:8 <b>inadequate (1)</b> 177:13 <b>inaudible (1)</b> 8:23 <b>incentives (2)</b> 87:16;199:6 <b>in-class (1)</b> 44:14 <b>inclined (3)</b> 179:23;180:11; 223:20 <b>include (5)</b> 27:18;69:12; 116:12;159:20; 202:23	<b>included (2)</b> 47:22;182:16 <b>includes (1)</b> 198:23 <b>including (7)</b> 21:14;23:1;96:2; 165:13;166:22; 177:18;182:8 <b>incompatible (1)</b> 91:13 <b>incorporate (2)</b> 72:1;197:22 <b>incorporated (2)</b> 78:7;169:2 <b>incorrectly (1)</b> 166:22 <b>increase (36)</b> 8:2;18:24;19:2; 39:11;44:9,17,19,25; 45:4,22;47:6;58:25; 61:23;62:3,9;63:3; 119:18,20;120:12,13, 15,17,19,23;123:3; 125:23;147:9; 195:19,20;196:11; 197:3,8;201:13; 206:17;218:5;219:5 <b>increased (15)</b> 10:7;70:24;76:6; 77:5,7,9,10;79:6; 80:16;119:22; 196:19,22,23;197:4; 200:13 <b>increases (2)</b> 73:5;98:17 <b>increasing (9)</b> 58:11,21;59:18; 79:7;120:4;127:6; 197:5;205:15;206:25 <b>increasingly (1)</b> 76:8 <b>incredible (1)</b> 87:14 <b>incredibly (2)</b> 12:15,24 <b>increments (1)</b> 92:25 <b>independent (1)</b> 203:4 <b>in-depth (2)</b> 149:1;155:1 <b>Index (9)</b> 59:9;64:7;103:5; 108:1;113:9;220:6; 221:10,14;222:6 <b>indicate (1)</b> 207:15 <b>indicated (1)</b> 205:19 <b>indicating (1)</b> 142:25 <b>indication (1)</b> 191:11	<b>indicator (1)</b> 40:17 <b>indicators (5)</b> 67:25;72:22;76:22; 142:21;194:16 <b>Indirect (1)</b> 95:3 <b>individual (9)</b> 74:18;78:13;89:16; 95:19;108:19;193:4; 202:22;211:22; 224:25 <b>individualized (3)</b> 70:4;126:23;202:7 <b>individuals (2)</b> 65:20;130:6 <b>indulgence (1)</b> 92:13 <b>industries (1)</b> 15:17 <b>infancy (1)</b> 120:5 <b>inflow (1)</b> 146:7 <b>Info (4)</b> 10:22;58:16; 103:22;105:23 <b>information (22)</b> 20:21;57:13;92:11; 96:12;103:23; 115:10;116:11; 118:8;131:21,22; 132:19;145:19; 147:3;160:23; 165:20;172:3;175:4; 180:2;183:5;190:9, 25;213:23 <b>Informed (1)</b> 71:10 <b>informing (2)</b> 8:19;216:19 <b>infused (1)</b> 78:5 <b>initial (3)</b> 71:13;120:10; 172:4 <b>initially (3)</b> 4:1;65:13;150:25 <b>initiation (1)</b> 128:11 <b>initiative (1)</b> 201:16 <b>input (1)</b> 157:6 <b>inputted (1)</b> 213:4 <b>in-school (3)</b> 21:16;23:3;24:5 <b>inside (2)</b> 112:18;219:23 <b>insolvent (1)</b> 190:19 <b>installment (1)</b>	147:12 <b>instance (1)</b> 93:19 <b>in-state (1)</b> 13:4 <b>instead (6)</b> 62:9,18;85:8,11; 181:3;220:22 <b>Institutes (1)</b> 98:24 <b>institution (1)</b> 170:23 <b>instruction (25)</b> 8:21;10:7,9;40:24; 56:2;73:4,15,17; 74:17;76:9;80:17,18; 125:24;126:22,23; 201:21;202:10,16,18, 21,21;203:2,3,14; 225:12 <b>instructional (14)</b> 9:2;11:22;26:8; 27:24;29:7;40:5; 91:23;94:11;126:15; 199:18;200:1,7; 202:3;203:4 <b>insure (18)</b> 14:23;21:24;33:22; 35:3;36:3,24;91:2; 92:7,12;128:25; 170:4;190:11; 191:22;199:14; 206:2,18;207:6,7 <b>insured (2)</b> 71:3;199:18 <b>insures (1)</b> 73:19 <b>insuring (5)</b> 7:10;72:6,17; 181:25;202:9 <b>intact (1)</b> 45:16 <b>integrity (1)</b> 142:20 <b>intend (2)</b> 25:6;81:6 <b>intending (3)</b> 24:12;104:20; 208:21 <b>intensive (3)</b> 97:9;199:23;203:1 <b>intent (2)</b> 48:20;180:24 <b>intention (1)</b> 24:17 <b>intentional (7)</b> 70:19;71:23;76:8; 82:8;98:23;99:14; 203:6 <b>intentionally (1)</b> 69:18 <b>interact (2)</b> 8:25;43:7	<b>interest (4)</b> 26:8;27:25;36:7; 132:2 <b>interested (6)</b> 6:1;14:19;15:4; 50:23;54:14;116:6 <b>interesting (4)</b> 53:1,5;55:6;216:11 <b>interests (1)</b> 29:6 <b>interim (8)</b> 8:9;9:17;121:14, 15;207:12,13;222:3, 19 <b>interims (2)</b> 8:7;207:14 <b>internet (4)</b> 37:22,23;38:6; 137:12 <b>internships (2)</b> 149:7,9 <b>interpreting (1)</b> 78:8 <b>interrupt (2)</b> 183:13;223:11 <b>intervene (1)</b> 218:22 <b>intervention (16)</b> 14:8;53:16;126:19, 19,22,25;127:13; 199:21,22;202:2,17; 203:2,9,19,24;211:7 <b>interventionist (9)</b> 68:1;72:20;75:6; 200:3;203:9,11,25; 204:11;211:17 <b>interventions (8)</b> 68:1;79:13;80:6; 194:1;202:14;203:3; 206:12;210:24 <b>intimate (1)</b> 99:7 <b>into (50)</b> 8:17;10:16,22; 13:7;16:1,2,4;18:16; 20:4;31:1;36:19; 40:1,12,21;42:2,6; 48:13;49:23;78:5; 82:6;84:12;93:7; 99:2,16;100:12; 114:3;118:15;127:2; 133:6;134:25; 140:22;152:12; 155:6;156:22; 158:13;165:4; 178:16,17;180:8; 184:1;186:25;187:8; 188:3,17,18;207:15; 208:1;216:20; 221:17;222:5 <b>introduce (1)</b> 115:25 <b>inventory (1)</b>
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182:14 <b>investigate (1)</b> 60:18 <b>investigating (1)</b> 18:5 <b>investigations (3)</b> 74:5;78:10;166:21 <b>inviting (1)</b> 10:4 <b>invoice (1)</b> 144:20 <b>invoices (8)</b> 136:5,23,24; 137:10,23;142:5; 144:23;153:15 <b>involve (2)</b> 89:6;171:6 <b>involved (3)</b> 86:14;145:11; 148:19 <b>involvement (5)</b> 117:10;130:24; 131:4;143:16;210:3 <b>IRS (5)</b> 138:16,21;140:18; 159:8;183:8 <b>isolated (1)</b> 12:1 <b>isolation (1)</b> 49:2 <b>issue (19)</b> 32:6,16;47:24; 115:16;116:13; 140:5,25;141:7; 142:24;143:3; 148:14;152:18; 159:8,12;173:18; 174:13;178:15; 184:24;218:12 <b>issues (45)</b> 19:6;28:15;38:6; 52:17;56:1;61:12; 64:9;69:17;71:5; 93:11;94:2;111:16; 113:10;117:2; 118:18;125:2; 126:24;128:6,8; 135:17;136:8,19; 137:7;138:6;141:14, 19;142:2,20;160:6; 164:4;167:12;170:2; 171:10;173:15; 174:10;175:8,8,9; 179:25,25;180:1; 185:8,11;192:11; 198:18 <b>item (7)</b> 8:16;64:25;65:9; 114:19,22;115:25; 191:25 <b>items (3)</b> 3:18;7:20;130:2	<b>J</b> <b>Jabien (3)</b> 133:4,19;134:10 <b>Jacksonville (2)</b> 67:7,12 <b>janitorial (1)</b> 137:14 <b>January (21)</b> 17:2;104:13; 126:10;128:7;144:7; 145:5;146:7;160:18; 168:8;178:4,6,8,11, 18,18;179:19; 186:21;190:5; 213:17;215:12; 225:24 <b>jean (1)</b> 108:20 <b>Jefferson (1)</b> 201:23 <b>Jeremy (7)</b> 116:18;117:7,25; 118:2;149:2;161:8; 168:20 <b>Jessica (1)</b> 4:13 <b>job (8)</b> 15:5,6;48:16;62:5; 84:3;91:10;101:13; 210:8 <b>jobs (1)</b> 16:22 <b>Joel (1)</b> 4:7 <b>John (3)</b> 73:2;97:25;106:12 <b>Johnson (50)</b> 4:8;5:13,13;14:7; 19:15,17,20;20:14; 22:2;23:4,11;26:20; 35:12;36:15;37:23; 39:7,16;41:8,11,13; 42:12,17,20;44:19, 24;45:1,6,11,16,18, 24;47:8,21;49:25; 50:18,25;52:6,19,22; 53:17,22;54:12; 55:18;56:11;57:5,17, 23;58:2;60:22,24 <b>joys (1)</b> 70:16 <b>July (7)</b> 118:11;125:7; 129:8,11;157:15; 173:10;180:19 <b>jump (1)</b> 55:17 <b>June (3)</b> 146:22;159:19; 215:8 <b>junior (1)</b>	133:3 <b>juniors (1)</b> 127:5 <b>justice (1)</b> 168:24 <b>juxtaposition (1)</b> 53:6 <b>K</b> <b>K- (1)</b> 216:13 <b>K12 (5)</b> 35:17,20;36:5,13, 14 <b>K-12 (1)</b> 4:2 <b>K-2 (8)</b> 67:24;72:3;194:15; 197:24;202:18; 216:18,19;217:5 <b>K-4 (2)</b> 68:18;215:25 <b>K-5 (7)</b> 65:15;66:24,25; 95:20,24;96:1,3 <b>K-6 (2)</b> 194:4;216:15 <b>K-8 (2)</b> 67:1;194:3 <b>Karnisha (1)</b> 134:20 <b>Karshina (3)</b> 117:10;132:25; 133:2 <b>Kayla (2)</b> 13:6,6 <b>keep (16)</b> 7:10;28:8;36:8; 45:13;47:19;71:1; 87:19;111:2;113:7; 174:8;209:10;210:7, 9;213:19;214:3; 217:8 <b>Keepers (4)</b> 177:10;183:10,20; 186:17 <b>keeping (1)</b> 16:8 <b>Kelly (1)</b> 126:3 <b>Ken (1)</b> 143:10 <b>key (4)</b> 206:15;207:3; 220:20;221:23 <b>kick (1)</b> 85:5 <b>kid (1)</b> 167:1 <b>kiddos (1)</b> 43:6 <b>kids (50)</b>	20:15;21:25;27:12; 42:18;56:22;58:19; 84:1,2,11,20;85:2,17, 18;87:17,22;101:5, 18;104:10,14,16,19; 105:3;108:4;109:16; 148:2,2;151:19; 165:1;166:23; 167:17,19,23;170:5, 23;171:23;175:24; 176:2;178:12,21; 182:6;184:25;185:6; 186:2,19;187:23; 188:8;190:7;199:15; 210:6;222:16 <b>kind (55)</b> 26:1;31:8;37:8; 46:24;47:4;52:3; 55:9;59:12;61:7,23; 91:6;92:17;93:9; 95:10;97:23;99:22; 106:20;110:3;111:6, 9,10;112:15;116:5; 135:2;141:1,24; 143:4;151:19; 152:25;165:3; 166:14;167:22; 171:19;172:23; 173:8,11;175:15,25; 176:4,22;177:17; 180:22,24;181:1,17; 182:13;183:6; 184:15;187:16; 188:10;213:8; 220:21,22;221:17; 222:18 <b>kindergarten (1)</b> 204:3 <b>Kinecky (6)</b> 86:3,3,4,6,7,7 <b>Kinsel (3)</b> 117:8;161:9,20 <b>knowing (7)</b> 50:23;55:14;97:18; 138:11;173:14,18; 206:1 <b>Knowledge (4)</b> 72:2;160:19;161:6; 197:24 <b>known (1)</b> 68:13 <b>knows (1)</b> 167:14 <b>KREMERS (36)</b> 34:11,14;36:13; 37:3;44:8,9,21,25; 45:2,10,15,17,19; 46:9;55:10;58:11; 60:11;63:24,25; 97:21,22;98:15; 99:19;100:1;111:25; 113:22;172:24; 181:7,9;187:12;	190:23,24;210:17,19; 211:5;212:5 <b>Kristin (5)</b> 4:9;53:17,24; 160:3;167:13 <b>Kylie (2)</b> 85:25;86:7 <b>L</b> <b>lab (2)</b> 132:15,15 <b>lack (4)</b> 160:14;180:1; 191:4,10 <b>lacking (1)</b> 80:7 <b>Ladell (1)</b> 127:12 <b>lagged (1)</b> 225:10 <b>laid (2)</b> 171:19;205:15 <b>Lambert (1)</b> 127:8 <b>language (3)</b> 42:1;88:16;197:23 <b>large (4)</b> 71:25;98:17;111:9; 221:5 <b>largely (1)</b> 26:21 <b>larger (3)</b> 43:8;176:2;187:17 <b>largest (1)</b> 6:19 <b>last (59)</b> 5:25;6:16;33:5; 42:10,14;48:19; 58:16,16;59:10,12, 16;61:21;74:2,20; 79:20,23;86:1,5; 89:6;94:19;97:5; 98:4,7,9,11,12; 104:13;106:21; 107:8,22,22;109:4; 114:11,11;115:11; 116:5,12,18;120:1; 121:13;134:7;145:4, 6;147:4,14;148:22; 154:20;174:2; 175:13;206:4,11; 207:18;213:13; 214:2;218:5;220:11, 14;223:6;225:2 <b>lastly (5)</b> 69:2;80:21;167:3; 199:12;201:22 <b>latch (1)</b> 22:20 <b>late (2)</b> 140:18;176:5 <b>later (2)</b>
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<p>96:24;141:22 <b>Latino (1)</b> 67:17 <b>launch (2)</b> 18:6;38:3 <b>launched (5)</b> 7:21;9:4;10:2; 18:2;39:17 <b>launching (2)</b> 9:7;10:14 <b>Laura (1)</b> 4:11 <b>Laurel (3)</b> 12:13,14,20 <b>laurels (1)</b> 103:14 <b>law (16)</b> 21:20;24:13;29:8; 30:1;37:7,9;90:4,7; 91:24;92:1;94:23; 166:5;169:10; 172:22;176:24; 181:24 <b>laws (2)</b> 31:18;90:9 <b>laying (1)</b> 62:5 <b>LEA (3)</b> 117:9;161:9,20 <b>lead (4)</b> 54:18;102:13; 126:10;131:15 <b>leader (2)</b> 198:20;199:5 <b>leaders (3)</b> 39:25;82:5;131:25 <b>leadership (5)</b> 5:20;46:17;102:10; 128:20;207:4 <b>leading (3)</b> 51:3;70:24;81:1 <b>leads (2)</b> 40:12;74:16 <b>leaning (1)</b> 40:1 <b>Leann (1)</b> 204:8 <b>learn (4)</b> 75:16;88:12;135:8; 220:25 <b>learned (1)</b> 31:17 <b>learning (52)</b> 10:13;13:25;22:14; 26:7;27:23;29:3; 34:15,20,22,25;35:3, 7,14,19;43:4,10,17, 18,21,23;44:4;69:3; 70:24;71:7,8,20,21, 24;72:3,5;73:10; 74:10,10;77:16; 80:18;81:1;82:9; 93:7;99:6,13;101:5;</p>	<p>126:12;197:25; 198:2,4;200:5,21,25; 202:5,6;205:25; 220:23 <b>least (11)</b> 79:5,15;92:25; 93:3;165:19;166:9, 20;167:16;175:8; 223:24,25 <b>leaving (2)</b> 51:17;168:22 <b>led (2)</b> 78:3;220:21 <b>left (7)</b> 12:13;14:20;19:13; 151:3,8;177:11; 208:10 <b>leg (2)</b> 51:19,20 <b>legal (23)</b> 20:6,18;24:20; 32:15;35:22;37:1; 61:5;89:15;90:17; 91:16;92:5,15;93:9; 94:20;95:5;110:21; 111:2,16;135:16; 164:4;174:6;175:8; 176:22 <b>legally (1)</b> 36:16 <b>legislation (1)</b> 12:4 <b>legislative (1)</b> 36:22 <b>legitimate (1)</b> 182:12 <b>lengths (2)</b> 77:18;195:22 <b>lengthy (1)</b> 95:4 <b>Lenisha (11)</b> 81:19;93:12;96:21; 104:8;193:8,22; 198:7;204:14; 210:14;213:11;217:1 <b>less (5)</b> 45:14;50:9;68:2; 71:1;194:9 <b>less- (1)</b> 49:25 <b>lesson (1)</b> 73:17 <b>lessons (2)</b> 22:16;203:6 <b>letter (9)</b> 49:14;100:17; 101:16;123:17; 163:12;164:2;193:7; 219:22;221:4 <b>letters (1)</b> 48:19 <b>letting (1)</b> 36:5</p>	<p><b>leukemia (1)</b> 12:14 <b>Level (35)</b> 6:23;39:18,18,18, 24,24;40:1,20;42:15, 25;43:3,6,51:8; 52:15;54:2;55:21,22; 56:14;68:21;71:15; 72:9;76:15,16;77:7,8, 10,19;82:1;188:23, 24,24;197:15,16; 202:15;218:6 <b>leveling (1)</b> 40:22 <b>levelized (1)</b> 199:22 <b>levels (14)</b> 8:17;50:21;52:23; 55:12;56:16;68:10; 70:20;79:11;113:18; 126:9;196:2,25; 204:3;212:22 <b>libraries (7)</b> 27:3,13,14;29:15, 16;30:6;38:1 <b>library (3)</b> 26:20,21,25 <b>Library/Media (5)</b> 24:22,23;25:22; 26:15;29:1 <b>licensed (4)</b> 12:6;68:14;74:16; 160:16 <b>Licensure (4)</b> 11:24;25:25;95:1; 175:11 <b>lies (1)</b> 208:3 <b>lieu (4)</b> 21:16;23:3;169:4; 170:9 <b>life (5)</b> 13:1;14:2;48:22; 51:16;86:24 <b>life-change (1)</b> 50:7 <b>lifelong (3)</b> 26:7;27:23;29:3 <b>light (5)</b> 12:4;30:8;31:18, 22;54:25 <b>light-handed (1)</b> 30:1 <b>LIGHTHOUSE (57)</b> 65:7,11,12,21; 66:21,23,25;67:8,18, 20;69:11,14;73:4; 74:2;81:20;82:13; 86:9;88:7;90:14; 91:3,7;95:9,14; 107:7;111:21;192:2, 5,10,20,24;193:8; 194:2,11,22;195:7,</p>	<p>18,24;196:11,14; 197:3,9;198:6; 199:21;201:11; 203:16,23;204:1; 205:3,5;207:10; 209:7,11,22;212:16; 228:24;229:24; 230:24 <b>lightly (1)</b> 191:21 <b>liked (1)</b> 114:2 <b>likelihood (1)</b> 179:5 <b>likely (3)</b> 12:18;50:10; 167:18 <b>limb (1)</b> 180:23 <b>limit (1)</b> 30:17 <b>limited (6)</b> 21:15,22;23:2; 55:21;62:17;180:19 <b>limiting (1)</b> 31:25 <b>line (3)</b> 54:24;145:24; 187:12 <b>lines (2)</b> 158:10;179:20 <b>LinkedIn (1)</b> 15:21 <b>Lisa (1)</b> 4:12 <b>list (6)</b> 10:20;39:10,14; 110:25;162:18; 188:14 <b>listed (6)</b> 15:18;39:11; 108:16;110:19; 193:7;198:13 <b>listen (1)</b> 136:16 <b>listened (2)</b> 28:21;171:16 <b>listening (2)</b> 85:24;172:6 <b>literacy (15)</b> 7:5;68:19;124:12; 198:24;199:22,23; 201:7,10;202:1; 203:1,9;204:10; 211:17,17;214:20 <b>literacy-based (1)</b> 201:6 <b>literally (1)</b> 158:16 <b>little (39)</b> 11:4;16:11,17,18; 17:14;18:8;19:13; 25:11;26:17;28:21;</p>	<p>39:8;41:18;42:1; 43:8;44:10;46:4; 47:16,17;49:9;52:20; 54:7;56:18;83:22; 90:25;92:11;101:7,9, 11;114:14;132:23; 148:25;157:1; 177:25;178:23; 181:23;198:3;212:6; 213:10;214:15 <b>live (2)</b> 99:1;192:16 <b>live- (1)</b> 3:10 <b>lives (4)</b> 13:21;14:10,11; 86:23 <b>local (6)</b> 26:23,23;27:12; 38:1;194:25;196:15 <b>locally (1)</b> 200:15 <b>located (2)</b> 18:24;112:13 <b>location (2)</b> 67:3;112:14 <b>logging (1)</b> 22:15 <b>log-in (1)</b> 22:22 <b>logs (1)</b> 22:5 <b>long (11)</b> 22:6;35:18;47:19; 83:2,24;89:23;91:17; 95:3;108:24;182:25; 211:21 <b>longer (8)</b> 15:14;67:6;110:9; 133:9;178:14; 179:12;181:5;183:1 <b>longevity (2)</b> 47:23;49:5 <b>long-term (2)</b> 74:11;155:23 <b>look (40)</b> 8:5;9:9,19;15:6; 20:5;22:7;48:2; 54:11;59:14;64:22; 86:4;97:23;100:21, 22;103:21,22; 111:17;114:8; 137:17,22;146:5; 147:21;154:23; 156:21;163:10; 184:20;204:15; 208:4,8;212:15; 215:13;216:8,9,13, 18;220:2,7;221:1,13, 222:19 <b>looked (12)</b> 100:19;116:5; 140:20,21;158:11;</p>
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<p>159:19;160:19,24; 213:7;215:21;218:4; 219:4 <b>looking (42)</b> 6:8,18;7:12;10:20; 19:7;39:10;40:22; 49:17,18;50:20; 52:13;55:15;58:15; 59:9;61:18,21;95:23; 97:23;100:15;101:7; 8;102:1,17;103:2,5; 127:2;158:11; 162:10;171:7; 174:16;179:8;211:8, 22,24;213:6;217:14, 15;218:16;219:21; 220:8,10,23 <b>looks (10)</b> 14:4;43:19;46:22; 52:4;55:15;57:14; 89:20;112:13; 140:21;159:23 <b>lose (3)</b> 46:6;213:21;214:5 <b>losing (1)</b> 213:15 <b>lost (2)</b> 129:13;213:25 <b>lot (40)</b> 11:10;20:7;31:17; 44:15;46:23;48:7; 86:5;94:2;97:4,9; 100:8,23,24;102:3; 105:7;108:13,14; 113:10;124:4; 129:11;133:24; 143:9;145:1,2;149:7, 8;151:3;154:8,10,13; 155:4;166:14; 167:19;173:21,24; 183:21;213:14; 217:3;218:3,24 <b>lots (1)</b> 177:10 <b>lottery (2)</b> 188:1,18 <b>love (6)</b> 17:18;51:17;54:16; 60:22;86:18;210:8 <b>loved (1)</b> 86:18 <b>low (6)</b> 16:11;108:4;136:9, 18;143:14;218:17 <b>lower (6)</b> 49:19;52:15;194:4; 195:24;216:15;217:7 <b>lowered (1)</b> 156:2 <b>lowest (2)</b> 52:12;106:13 <b>lunch (24)</b> 11:17;67:21;76:19;</p>	<p>80:13,15;91:22;92:3, 4;94:5;104:3;106:1, 4;111:7;114:9,20; 119:6,10;147:24; 150:7,11;153:4; 158:4;194:12;197:18 <b>lunches (3)</b> 93:6;94:4;140:12  <b>M</b> <b>ma'am (17)</b> 85:23;89:22;95:22; 96:4;98:1;110:24; 111:18;117:25; 130:15,23;152:20,24; 155:17;157:24; 158:5;162:7;219:9 <b>machines (2)</b> 33:8,16 <b>Madam (3)</b> 5:15;34:11;189:8 <b>mailed (2)</b> 141:12;163:13 <b>main (2)</b> 91:11;142:2 <b>mainly (1)</b> 107:20 <b>maintain (5)</b> 22:1;25:3;32:15; 34:23;195:3 <b>maintained (1)</b> 195:2 <b>maintaining (1)</b> 32:16 <b>major (7)</b> 118:13;136:19; 140:14;173:18,24; 198:18;219:24 <b>majority (2)</b> 107:13;152:13 <b>makes (6)</b> 28:22;30:3,22; 61:20;166:25;169:11 <b>make-up (1)</b> 212:18 <b>making (11)</b> 20:22;29:25;45:20; 55:25;76:21;87:18; 113:11;145:12; 177:19;196:4;200:19 <b>male (3)</b> 124:14,16,17 <b>man (1)</b> 49:19 <b>manage (1)</b> 177:18 <b>management (3)</b> 14:3;125:21; 137:13 <b>managers (1)</b> 129:12 <b>mandate (1)</b></p>	<p>167:11 <b>Mandy (1)</b> 4:10 <b>manner (1)</b> 70:23 <b>mantra (1)</b> 5:23 <b>Many (25)</b> 14:18;46:7;50:23; 55:22;68:6;70:2; 75:25;87:13;88:6; 91:24;96:25;97:3; 99:23;104:10,10; 118:21;124:25; 127:18;128:13; 129:17;156:14,14,14; 190:21;198:13 <b>map (2)</b> 38:15;222:4 <b>mapping (2)</b> 36:3;178:23 <b>March (12)</b> 104:14;128:8; 163:14,20,21;164:14; 179:8,19;181:8,9,10, 10 <b>Marie (1)</b> 162:23 <b>mark (1)</b> 53:8 <b>marketing (1)</b> 200:17 <b>Marquis (1)</b> 84:24 <b>marvelous (1)</b> 84:4 <b>Mary (5)</b> 89:21;115:5; 127:12;174:22; 186:23 <b>massive (1)</b> 215:2 <b>master (1)</b> 8:18 <b>mastered (1)</b> 8:18 <b>masters (1)</b> 206:18 <b>mastery (1)</b> 9:13 <b>match (1)</b> 47:1 <b>materials (6)</b> 25:16;26:5,15,16; 29:3,13 <b>math (38)</b> 9:6,6;15:11;51:12; 73:5,8,8,16,21,22; 74:1,3;77:9;78:5,8, 10,11;79:25;88:18; 98:3;99:3;121:5,20; 122:5,7;124:13,13; 196:2,8,8,23;197:10,</p>	<p>15,17;200:24; 206:24;210:20; 215:24 <b>Mathematical (1)</b> 9:4 <b>mathematics (3)</b> 120:16;121:25; 122:2 <b>matter (3)</b> 11:14;90:25; 190:11 <b>matters (2)</b> 11:15;166:21 <b>matured (2)</b> 31:17;111:11 <b>maturing (1)</b> 31:8 <b>maximum (4)</b> 21:14,24;23:1; 157:2 <b>may (32)</b> 5:9;14:5;24:10,15; 51:9;57:21;67:2; 72:11;89:20;91:7; 93:20,24;94:3,5,7,12; 97:2;114:14;128:8; 134:17,19;153:8; 169:1;172:17; 183:17;186:22; 188:5,8;211:8,11,14; 220:4 <b>maybe (34)</b> 16:18;17:11;19:24; 26:17;31:22;37:22; 38:10;43:14;49:14, 20,21;51:15;52:17; 54:8;55:13;60:7,17; 96:24;104:7;105:8; 110:14;146:22; 156:21;158:4; 178:22;179:18,20,20; 180:16;183:9;213:9; 216:21;218:23,23 <b>McComb (1)</b> 128:12 <b>McCullom (1)</b> 162:23 <b>meal (11)</b> 88:2;148:5;155:1; 156:3,10,18,24,25; 157:3;158:9,12 <b>meals (11)</b> 139:7;149:22; 151:1;153:25; 154:25;155:20; 156:8,14;157:2,17; 159:14 <b>mealtime (3)</b> 149:12,14,15 <b>mean (34)</b> 6:25;25:16;28:8; 45:2;47:9;84:4; 100:18;101:6,16,25;</p>	<p>103:16;138:18; 139:20;146:20; 149:25;161:2;169:6, 16;171:1;176:1; 177:4,7;182:25; 183:3,17;184:3; 214:4,21;215:10; 216:10;221:19; 222:8,9,15 <b>means (2)</b> 91:9;124:4 <b>meant (2)</b> 169:6,18 <b>measurable (1)</b> 207:9 <b>measured (1)</b> 120:13 <b>measurement (1)</b> 78:9 <b>measures (1)</b> 51:3 <b>media (2)</b> 25:4;26:4 <b>medium (2)</b> 220:12,13 <b>meet (21)</b> 9:9;34:4,7;35:8; 50:13;56:24;68:19, 24;70:5;78:14;89:2; 121:5;122:12; 124:10;126:17; 129:20;178:3; 207:17,24;212:21,25 <b>meeting (32)</b> 3:3,10,13;17:16, 17;39:22;40:6;70:14, 19;73:20;79:23;98:7, 9,10,11;99:21; 108:13;123:10,11; 154:25;175:10; 178:4;186:14,17; 192:10;197:19; 214:18;215:4,11; 225:21,23;226:13 <b>meetings (9)</b> 40:4;69:9;70:11; 71:16;78:17;107:5; 131:23;164:7;199:3 <b>meets (2)</b> 8:4;198:19 <b>member (7)</b> 4:8;9:22;37:18; 175:13;200:9;209:8, 23 <b>Members (11)</b> 5:15;18:3;21:5; 81:22;84:8;90:3; 95:17;129:10,13; 130:9;170:12 <b>mental (4)</b> 69:20,24;132:4,9 <b>mention (3)</b> 113:3;119:17,19</p>
--	--	--	--	--

<b>mentioned (10)</b> 14:16;50:2;52:11; 54:6;71:25;107:1; 108:8;145:18; 183:16;214:13	<b>mindset (1)</b> 49:7 <b>Mindsets (1)</b> 9:4 <b>mine (6)</b> 140:14;148:12; 157:20,22;171:1; 209:19 <b>minimum (2)</b> 8:3;35:8 <b>minority (6)</b> 116:25;119:8,11, 16;166:3,4 <b>minute (2)</b> 138:8;151:23 <b>minutes (26)</b> 5:10;20:9;66:14; 81:11,14,17;83:6,12; 91:24;92:2,21,24,25; 93:3;115:9,11,14; 117:24;130:20,20; 202:15,16,17;208:10, 10;210:13 <b>misbehaving (1)</b> 24:12 <b>misprint (1)</b> 4:21 <b>mispronounce (1)</b> 86:1 <b>misread (1)</b> 44:23 <b>Miss (1)</b> 3:12 <b>missed (6)</b> 78:22;128:19,20; 158:18;199:4;206:9 <b>missing (4)</b> 85:9;89:25;116:25; 179:4 <b>mission (1)</b> 201:19 <b>MNHLANGA (1)</b> 80:8 <b>mobile (1)</b> 97:2 <b>mobility (3)</b> 96:15,22;211:23 <b>MobyMax (3)</b> 73:13;202:4,4 <b>MobyMax's (1)</b> 202:6 <b>modalities (1)</b> 69:7 <b>model (12)</b> 21:19;28:2;39:20, 20;67:14;68:9;69:11; 70:25;105:7,10; 171:25;203:13 <b>models (1)</b> 105:10 <b>modifications (1)</b> 62:16 <b>modified (1)</b> 11:12	<b>modify (2)</b> 27:17;62:8 <b>moment (4)</b> 63:16;81:9;112:7; 198:9 <b>MOMENTS (4)</b> 63:18;112:25; 190:13;225:1 <b>Monday (1)</b> 153:10 <b>monetarily (1)</b> 162:17 <b>money (6)</b> 140:24;153:8; 156:22;170:19; 171:5;172:25 <b>monitor (3)</b> 49:11;50:2;54:3 <b>monitoring (9)</b> 9:15;15:23;22:3; 40:24;53:9;154:18; 160:5;161:17;163:12 <b>month (26)</b> 5:17;10:25;49:3; 79:2;98:25;108:19; 109:5;115:11;116:5, 12;128:3,10;130:5; 137:9,18;138:12; 142:6;144:24;146:1; 147:22,23;156:1; 174:2;175:3;185:17; 206:7 <b>month-by-month (2)</b> 109:3;179:18 <b>monthly (10)</b> 8:3;41:14;42:2; 75:13;142:5;181:13, 14;184:16;200:22; 204:12 <b>months (12)</b> 144:23;146:22; 165:1,2,23;180:4,24; 205:4,11;207:15; 208:1;209:10 <b>Moore (1)</b> 4:14 <b>morale (3)</b> 49:1;200:17; 213:20 <b>more (83)</b> 9:2;11:5;13:17,18; 15:24,25;18:8;27:4; 28:21;29:13;30:11, 20;31:25;38:8,9,9; 40:2,3,3;43:5;46:3; 48:14;49:9;51:24; 53:22;55:19;56:6; 58:17,22;59:19; 60:11,11;67:17; 69:16;78:3;79:23,24; 85:19;87:20,20;92:6; 98:7;100:6;103:2,2;	107:4;108:14;122:4; 129:24;134:9;135:9; 139:8;144:16; 147:17;148:25; 156:9,14,22,24,24; 158:10,24;180:11; 181:23;187:13; 194:10;197:2,9; 199:4;206:10,24; 207:16;213:10; 214:11,15;216:23; 217:5,6,17;219:22; 222:7;223:24,25 <b>morning (23)</b> 3:2,23;21:5;66:18, 19;69:9;70:11,13,14, 19;73:2;78:21;81:19; 83:17;93:12;99:15; 107:5;108:20;115:7; 119:12,23;131:3; 167:6 <b>mortar (1)</b> 12:18 <b>most (12)</b> 14:2;39:14,15; 46:25;48:23;49:6; 79:8;110:20;157:2; 160:10;176:6;200:18 <b>mother (1)</b> 83:21 <b>motion (33)</b> 62:6,7,14,20,22; 63:8,11,25;64:6,11, 17;82:22,22,25; 83:10;111:20;112:1; 113:4,8,17,22;114:1; 186:24;189:7,10; 190:24;191:3,6,14; 224:16;225:19; 226:3,5 <b>motions (1)</b> 62:12 <b>mouth (1)</b> 151:19 <b>move (30)</b> 22:17;40:10;45:13; 46:1;47:10;50:22; 55:20;56:22;57:7; 61:8;63:1;64:25; 65:9;74:14;82:14; 95:19;96:16;102:17; 111:22;114:22; 134:25;136:13; 158:22;171:21; 179:7;181:12;189:6, 8;223:17;224:13 <b>moved (4)</b> 82:23;103:19; 104:19;226:4 <b>movement (1)</b> 60:10 <b>moving (11)</b> 15:14;16:3;51:3;	64:8;96:23;151:20; 170:5;179:7;198:11; 206:13;215:13 <b>Mrs (11)</b> 123:21;125:19,22; 127:12;128:12; 129:25;149:3; 158:16,17,17;206:20 <b>much (32)</b> 13:17,18;30:11; 35:20;36:10;37:11; 40:20;43:5;53:22; 74:12;84:9;86:20,25; 87:1;89:14;97:19; 109:14;114:7; 132:13;134:12; 143:19;148:8,10; 150:24;151:8;164:8; 171:5;176:2;180:5; 182:16;212:10; 216:20 <b>multi-layered (1)</b> 36:6 <b>multiple (7)</b> 96:16;166:7;174:7, 7;192:19;193:2; 199:16 <b>multipronged (1)</b> 99:22 <b>multi-tasking (1)</b> 136:17 <b>music (1)</b> 11:25 <b>must (5)</b> 24:14;26:2;29:2; 90:21;166:3 <b>myself (8)</b> 59:1;88:16;99:1; 100:9;107:9;175:11; 214:19;220:8
<b>N</b>				
			<b>name (24)</b> 3:9;5:12;66:17,20; 70:12;73:2;80:8; 83:19,20;84:22;86:1, 5,7;108:21;117:22, 25;131:1;135:20; 152:1;160:2;170:10; 198:25;205:1;208:17 <b>names (2)</b> 66:4,6 <b>Nancy (2)</b> 151:18;152:3 <b>narrative (1)</b> 210:22 <b>narrow (1)</b> 36:10 <b>narrowed (1)</b> 94:24 <b>narrowing (1)</b> 111:11	

<p><b>narrowly (2)</b> 23:5;24:4</p> <p><b>nation (1)</b> 18:2</p> <p><b>national (6)</b> 12:24;18:10,13; 79:11;80:2;98:2</p> <p><b>nationally (2)</b> 17:24;46:21</p> <p><b>nationwide (2)</b> 15:19;46:18</p> <p><b>Naturally (1)</b> 38:14</p> <p><b>nature (2)</b> 19:3;92:5</p> <p><b>navigate (1)</b> 97:18</p> <p><b>navigating (1)</b> 46:24</p> <p><b>nearly (2)</b> 100:12;206:8</p> <p><b>necessarily (3)</b> 6:1;93:4;112:17</p> <p><b>necessary (7)</b> 26:9;28:5;29:18, 24;31:15,16;118:8</p> <p><b>need (82)</b> 5:22;6:9;7:17; 15:1;21:4;24:16; 25:5;26:18;28:9,20; 30:4;31:23;32:17; 34:25;36:17,19; 40:20;41:3;42:8; 51:15;56:9;58:25; 60:8;61:24;62:6,11; 64:24;66:2;69:22; 79:12;80:20;81:14; 82:21,22;83:7;86:19, 19,20,20;90:1,10; 94:3,5,10,25;97:15; 101:15;104:12; 105:9,22;115:4,7; 116:7;127:11;132:3, 7;136:13;143:25; 158:21,22;159:9; 160:15;163:23; 169:1;170:24;172:9; 181:11,12;187:24; 188:1,8;189:23; 202:10;203:1; 205:18;207:6; 209:16;211:21; 218:2;220:1;221:1; 225:19</p> <p><b>needed (14)</b> 10:11;19:20;55:19; 71:8;80:23;84:24; 104:24;111:17; 129:2;131:18; 154:13;160:9;185:1, 7</p> <p><b>needing (2)</b> 67:23;194:14</p>	<p><b>Needs (20)</b> 7:2,15;9:23;11:6; 25:20;52:18;69:5; 71:6;89:2,4;100:2; 105:8;133:21; 170:23;191:22; 201:20;205:8; 215:14;218:7;220:2</p> <p><b>negative (6)</b> 136:6;138:12; 142:9;146:2;159:21, 23</p> <p><b>negative-22 (2)</b> 143:1,2</p> <p><b>neither (1)</b> 153:22</p> <p><b>Nepriis (1)</b> 16:6</p> <p><b>net (1)</b> 148:9</p> <p><b>new (20)</b> 7:14;11:3,7;30:14; 91:19;94:23;111:2,5; 125:20;147:3;166:5; 167:21;174:11; 184:1;201:15;212:1; 217:4;218:3,6; 225:17</p> <p><b>newest (1)</b> 144:22</p> <p><b>newly-hired (2)</b> 72:20;198:20</p> <p><b>Newman (1)</b> 4:15</p> <p><b>news (2)</b> 133:13,19</p> <p><b>next (35)</b> 10:25;16:3;24:9, 21;32:6;40:9;51:8; 58:19;60:6;64:25; 65:3,4;81:11;85:25; 90:18;91:19;144:24; 145:19;146:21; 148:7;158:20;159:5; 163:8;170:20; 171:22;175:3; 176:16;180:24; 181:4;185:17,17; 192:9;223:10; 225:21,22</p> <p><b>next-steps (1)</b> 129:21</p> <p><b>nice (1)</b> 98:15</p> <p><b>niche (1)</b> 14:17</p> <p><b>night (2)</b> 58:16;59:12</p> <p><b>nine (2)</b> 16:14;107:8</p> <p><b>Nodding (5)</b> 23:23;161:18; 165:8;208:14;214:12</p>	<p><b>non- (2)</b> 22:11;91:22</p> <p><b>noncompliance (1)</b> 22:13</p> <p><b>non-discriminatory (2)</b> 35:4;37:5</p> <p><b>none (2)</b> 136:22,24</p> <p><b>Non-Instructional (2)</b> 91:23,25</p> <p><b>nonprofit (1)</b> 10:17</p> <p><b>non-sectarian (2)</b> 35:4;37:4</p> <p><b>nonsense (1)</b> 202:24</p> <p><b>non-student (1)</b> 94:11</p> <p><b>nor (2)</b> 26:15;30:16</p> <p><b>norm (5)</b> 79:15;201:10; 211:8,13;212:22</p> <p><b>normally (6)</b> 39:5;58:4;90:12; 182:25;217:6,8</p> <p><b>North (2)</b> 83:22;198:3</p> <p><b>notable (1)</b> 207:21</p> <p><b>note (8)</b> 7:13;12:4;14:11; 28:4;32:19;33:21; 61:9;221:13</p> <p><b>noted (4)</b> 22:24;75:2;105:25; 205:16</p> <p><b>notice (1)</b> 159:15</p> <p><b>noticed (3)</b> 42:13;101:1; 210:20</p> <p><b>noticing (1)</b> 220:9</p> <p><b>notification (1)</b> 190:7</p> <p><b>notify (3)</b> 165:24;182:5,6</p> <p><b>November (19)</b> 137:2,9,16,18,21, 23;138:24,25,25; 139:2;153:7,10,14; 160:6;161:12,17,22; 165:23;185:3</p> <p><b>number (20)</b> 45:8,22;52:8; 56:16,17,22;65:9; 80:12;110:8,13; 114:19;133:12; 156:7;157:18;158:6; 167:15;196:12; 206:8;207:20;211:1</p> <p><b>numbers (13)</b></p>	<p>11:14;12:8;16:11; 123:19,20;125:3,5; 144:9;147:2;152:11; 170:24;171:20; 210:23</p> <p><b>nutrition (22)</b> 33:5,10,11;116:22; 117:5;128:15;135:3; 139:4;147:21; 148:25;150:19; 152:4,16;153:4; 154:6,12;155:15; 174:3,4,6;179:25; 191:8</p> <p><b>NWEA (10)</b> 79:11,21,25;98:1, 8;211:9;212:15; 218:8,9;222:3</p>	<p>166:6;167:3;168:3, 12;185:4</p> <p><b>Odds (7)</b> 76:14,15;124:3,7, 23;197:14,15</p> <p><b>off (10)</b> 13:2;109:16;110:7; 117:20;141:2;144:3; 148:10;156:11; 158:15;184:14</p> <p><b>offer (10)</b> 10:13;16:1;17:11; 37:8;41:20;54:15,16; 68:17;104:23;164:25</p> <p><b>offered (2)</b> 67:11;168:9</p> <p><b>Office (7)</b> 76:13;129:12; 134:2;169:22;182:4; 197:13;199:1</p>
<b>O</b>				
<p><b>oath (4)</b> 5:3;66:9;117:13; 193:12</p> <p><b>observation (2)</b> 9:25;40:14</p> <p><b>observations (2)</b> 10:25;73:24</p> <p><b>observe (4)</b> 18:7;100:13; 151:12;152:10</p> <p><b>observed (4)</b> 40:3;100:20;151:2; 155:21</p> <p><b>observer (1)</b> 13:24</p> <p><b>observes (1)</b> 16:23</p> <p><b>observing (2)</b> 8:3;10:8</p> <p><b>obstacle (1)</b> 176:2</p> <p><b>obvious (1)</b> 221:2</p> <p><b>obviously (7)</b> 29:20;36:1;142:11; 145:1;147:2;176:3; 178:15</p> <p><b>occasion (1)</b> 124:19</p> <p><b>occasional (1)</b> 93:6</p> <p><b>occupational (2)</b> 86:8,12</p> <p><b>occupations (1)</b> 86:13</p> <p><b>occurs (1)</b> 199:11</p> <p><b>October (19)</b> 4:1;65:14;117:2; 119:8,23;141:17,18; 144:18,21;153:5,5; 156:13;162:1,5;</p>	<p><b>officer (1)</b> 205:2</p> <p><b>official (1)</b> 201:4</p> <p><b>officially (2)</b> 145:4;161:22</p> <p><b>often (2)</b> 40:3;51:13</p> <p><b>old (4)</b> 5:17;101:8;133:3; 136:16</p> <p><b>older (3)</b> 52:13;102:13; 216:22</p> <p><b>on- (1)</b> 131:24</p> <p><b>onboard (3)</b> 129:8;132:10; 173:10</p> <p><b>once (10)</b> 49:3;62:25;98:25; 120:19;127:3;144:8; 166:9;177:14; 182:17;186:7</p> <p><b>one (105)</b> 3:19;5:17,18;7:24; 8:11;9:8;12:6;15:2; 18:15;19:4;22:17; 25:11;28:21,22; 32:22;33:5,20,21; 34:11,16;35:12; 40:15;41:24;43:2; 45:25;49:14;52:3; 61:24;62:14,20; 70:16,18;76:19;77:4; 83:16;84:11;85:25; 88:17;90:7;92:14; 93:1;97:5;102:16; 107:25;116:13,15; 121:12;123:10; 124:9;134:9;136:19; 138:10;140:14,17; 141:14;142:21;</p>			

144:16;146:6;147:5; 149:5;152:10;153:9, 20;154:20;155:7; 156:1,5;157:19; 158:24;159:2; 164:20;165:4,6,9; 166:11,20;167:7,10, 16;168:16;170:8; 171:18;173:14; 175:5;181:3,10; 192:21;193:1,6; 196:18;199:15; 200:9,12;208:17; 209:14;212:10; 214:5,11,24;215:20; 218:1,4;225:2; 227:25;228:25	<b>OPEN-ENROLLMENT (7)</b> 3:15,20,25;65:6; 176:5,15,25 <b>operate (2)</b> 106:23;176:18 <b>operating (5)</b> 26:19;127:19; 181:5;183:19;190:21 <b>operation (1)</b> 29:18 <b>operational (2)</b> 132:17;205:9 <b>operations (1)</b> 180:10 <b>opinion (2)</b> 24:16;25:5 <b>opportunities (23)</b> 15:25;16:20;17:4, 5,9,12,21;35:19;38:1, 9;41:20;42:7;43:25; 46:17;47:2;54:23; 60:11;64:4;70:25; 87:21;118:12,14,20 <b>opportunity (16)</b> 11:7;12:15;13:18; 14:14;21:23;30:17; 32:2;39:5,20;75:15; 100:7;118:7;122:15; 124:20;130:12;208:7 <b>opposed (8)</b> 25:13;63:14;112:5; 115:11;169:9,19; 189:17;224:20 <b>opposition (9)</b> 5:2;19:22;20:10; 66:8;81:4,7,8; 117:13;193:12 <b>option (2)</b> 14:15;134:8 <b>options (6)</b> 154:1;174:20; 180:18;182:5,23; 217:5 <b>oral (1)</b> 202:24 <b>order (12)</b> 3:4;7:5,11;26:19; 77:17;90:11;116:6; 177:24;186:18; 195:21;201:20; 203:12 <b>organization (3)</b> 27:2;132:5,5 <b>organizational (1)</b> 205:12 <b>organizations (2)</b> 10:18,18 <b>organized (1)</b> 116:8 <b>originally (4)</b> 33:7;54:19;57:23; 94:22 <b>Orton-Gillingham (2)</b>	72:25;203:17 <b>OSBORN (14)</b> 73:2,3;95:25;96:4; 97:25,25;98:19;99:2; 106:12,12,24;108:2, 7;109:18 <b>OT (1)</b> 171:4 <b>OT/PT (2)</b> 168:1,7 <b>others (2)</b> 118:19;212:8 <b>other-week (1)</b> 133:11 <b>otherwise (3)</b> 111:4;165:14; 205:11 <b>ours (1)</b> 127:6 <b>our-self (1)</b> 143:18 <b>ourselves (1)</b> 141:24 <b>out (86)</b> 11:1,22;13:10; 15:4;16:10,13;17:7; 25:15;27:9;38:5,17; 39:14;46:22;48:1; 50:3,4;51:1;52:8; 53:13;54:7,19;55:6; 58:5;62:5;78:20; 81:22;84:11,14;85:5, 9;87:5;93:19;96:23, 23;97:1;99:3,8; 100:7,10;106:9,19; 107:17;108:5,21; 112:12,22;113:6; 119:12;126:3;130:4; 133:15;134:18; 141:1;143:15; 146:19;148:13; 151:11;153:20; 156:19;158:1,8; 162:17;164:2,25; 165:18;166:7,8,19, 23;169:18;171:19; 173:9,11,21;177:20; 178:20;180:17,23; 185:5;189:20,24; 205:15;213:8; 214:23;219:8;224:25 <b>outcome (1)</b> 71:23 <b>outcomes (5)</b> 18:22;205:7,16,17; 206:13 <b>outings (1)</b> 87:9 <b>outlined (3)</b> 160:13;161:5; 162:9 <b>outlines (1)</b> 34:24	<b>outlook (1)</b> 205:13 <b>outperform (1)</b> 196:14 <b>outright (1)</b> 180:2 <b>outside (3)</b> 105:9;108:23; 168:22 <b>outsource (2)</b> 139:16;168:1 <b>outstanding (10)</b> 101:13;136:5,25; 137:3,10,22;138:2, 22,24;144:20 <b>over (45)</b> 5:25;38:16;56:17; 58:19;59:10;73:6; 76:4,7;77:23;79:8,17, 25;80:1;84:4;87:14; 101:9;103:18; 106:15;111:6; 116:18;127:18; 129:22;145:5,6,19; 147:9,13;151:3,8; 166:14;183:9,9; 187:1;194:24; 195:16;207:1,25; 208:6;212:11,23; 215:4,9,23,23;223:3 <b>overall (27)</b> 52:8;55:14,20; 58:12,23;59:10,18; 60:1;77:7,8,9;79:24; 98:11;108:7;109:2; 116:8;194:22; 195:25;196:1,6,21; 202:12;212:21; 218:12;221:14,19; 222:5 <b>overboard (1)</b> 85:1 <b>over-charging (1)</b> 153:23 <b>overcome (1)</b> 113:10 <b>over-enrolled (2)</b> 56:18;58:3 <b>overlap (1)</b> 167:20 <b>overloaded (1)</b> 92:8 <b>overstaffed (1)</b> 127:24 <b>overwork (1)</b> 92:17 <b>owed (1)</b> 182:10 <b>own (6)</b> 27:1,17;44:5;60:8, 21;128:22 <b>Owoh (4)</b> 211:16;214:14,19;	215:14 <hr/> <b>P</b> <hr/> <b>pace (2)</b> 74:15;128:17 <b>pacesetter (1)</b> 46:16 <b>package (1)</b> 11:4 <b>packet (3)</b> 116:3;120:2; 141:15 <b>packets (1)</b> 119:25 <b>page (7)</b> 61:22;101:1; 103:23;116:4,4,10; 185:10 <b>paid (32)</b> 136:6,23,25;137:9, 11,12,12,13,13,15,16, 23,24;138:15;139:1, 3,13;140:8,11,15,16, 18;144:21,24;146:2; 153:3,6;156:10; 173:16;177:19,21,23 <b>pain (1)</b> 5:21 <b>Panel (39)</b> 3:3,6,5:15;19:14; 21:6;24:8;25:14; 28:5,16;29:17;37:17; 56:20,24;58:8;61:15; 81:21;82:17;89:15; 92:12;95:17;111:11; 114:9;135:1;144:13; 167:11,14;170:12; 177:14;184:4,7; 186:23;187:3,4; 189:25;210:16; 218:15;225:3,8,25 <b>Panel's (4)</b> 18:19;30:12;92:13; 111:9 <b>pantry (2)</b> 87:8,9 <b>paper (3)</b> 94:17;142:12,14 <b>paperwork (2)</b> 154:9,12 <b>paragraph (1)</b> 96:18 <b>paraprofessional (1)</b> 72:23 <b>pardon (2)</b> 33:3;92:21 <b>pared (1)</b> 111:8 <b>parent (15)</b> 43:4;75:13,13; 101:25;117:9,10; 132:18,25;133:2;
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<p>159:1;170:8;199:11; 209:7,13;210:2 <b>Parental (3)</b> 130:24;131:4; 210:2 <b>parenting (2)</b> 131:20,22 <b>parents (34)</b> 44:16;51:11;70:5, 9;75:14,16;78:14; 101:21;108:13; 112:20;131:10,12,14, 16,19,24;132:1,2,2,3, 7,13,13;178:20; 179:2,9;180:16; 181:2;182:5;183:2; 188:1;199:2,6,15 <b>Park (1)</b> 85:11 <b>Parker (6)</b> 117:9;130:23; 131:3,3;132:22; 134:20 <b>part (32)</b> 21:25;25:17,22,25; 27:15,16;28:9,10,12; 38:22;40:12;48:23; 52:4;55:4;56:15; 60:17;71:18;88:7; 90:7;97:9;110:25; 138:23;150:16; 154:12;175:9;178:2; 188:11;201:25; 212:4;218:15; 219:15;220:7 <b>participant (1)</b> 44:11 <b>participants (3)</b> 18:17;86:24; 105:20 <b>participate (2)</b> 70:13;99:15 <b>participated (1)</b> 70:10 <b>participates (2)</b> 68:18;69:2 <b>participating (2)</b> 104:2;149:7 <b>participation (2)</b> 150:22;165:15 <b>particular (3)</b> 34:16;142:10; 151:4 <b>parties (1)</b> 61:10 <b>partner (7)</b> 16:15,19;17:5,8; 54:9;60:22;184:18 <b>partnered (2)</b> 68:12;71:17 <b>partnering (1)</b> 97:11 <b>partnership (4)</b></p>	<p>201:4,22;211:10; 215:3 <b>partnerships (3)</b> 29:15;60:10; 200:16 <b>pass (1)</b> 108:20 <b>passed (1)</b> 12:21 <b>passing (1)</b> 110:14 <b>passion (1)</b> 6:11 <b>past (6)</b> 8:22;130:5;145:17; 177:3;182:2;213:12 <b>PAT (6)</b> 68:13;69:21;76:2; 97:12;117:7;175:12 <b>path (4)</b> 171:17,19,24; 174:15 <b>pathologist (1)</b> 88:16 <b>pathway (5)</b> 11:21;15:13;16:9; 54:18;204:10 <b>pathways (6)</b> 14:21;15:1,24; 17:7;18:5;54:16 <b>Patrice (3)</b> 83:16,20;87:2 <b>pattern (2)</b> 142:17;155:1 <b>pause (1)</b> 138:7 <b>pay (6)</b> 139:17;140:20; 146:3;148:17;177:2, 11 <b>payable (1)</b> 182:10 <b>paying (6)</b> 109:16;148:13; 153:19;159:7; 176:20;177:4 <b>payment (3)</b> 147:12;148:7,8 <b>payments (5)</b> 128:7;138:16; 147:18;153:9;191:8 <b>Payne (1)</b> 71:14 <b>payroll (4)</b> 137:16;138:22,24; 140:17 <b>pays (1)</b> 159:1 <b>PDI (1)</b> 98:23 <b>PE (4)</b> 12:1,2;33:9;34:5 <b>peers (2)</b></p>	<p>67:9;69:22 <b>penalties (1)</b> 140:19 <b>Pending (3)</b> 7:6;59:23;120:1 <b>people (8)</b> 19:23;46:21;68:12; 81:5;130:3;134:16, 19;174:7 <b>per (8)</b> 23:22;45:8;91:25; 92:2,21;151:1; 156:24,25 <b>percent (9)</b> 7:14;48:25;52:11; 75:3;108:16;122:6; 123:5;150:22;194:13 <b>percentage (13)</b> 7:3;9:24;11:10; 52:8;119:15;121:4,6, 22;122:1,11,22,25; 123:10 <b>percentages (2)</b> 109:4;124:10 <b>percentile (6)</b> 201:13;218:8,9; 221:15;222:7,14 <b>perceptive (1)</b> 74:7 <b>perfect (4)</b> 30:3;108:22;224:9, 9 <b>perform (2)</b> 79:14;124:19 <b>performance (10)</b> 55:12;82:13; 103:18;114:5;120:9; 193:25;195:9; 215:22;218:17,18 <b>performing (2)</b> 39:19;216:15 <b>period (16)</b> 11:8;91:22;92:1,2, 19,22;93:25;94:10, 11;111:23;154:20; 162:10,12;185:24; 186:11;188:7 <b>periods (1)</b> 93:15 <b>permissive (1)</b> 24:13 <b>per-pupil (1)</b> 147:10 <b>person (6)</b> 3:8;154:11;159:10; 161:24;212:14; 214:20 <b>personalized (5)</b> 69:3;74:10;198:2; 200:4;202:5 <b>personally (1)</b> 63:21 <b>personnel (6)</b></p>	<p>20:24;90:19;91:4; 93:10;156:19;200:13 <b>perspective (3)</b> 32:4;101:14; 152:17 <b>pertaining (2)</b> 126:13;129:21 <b>PFEFFER (267)</b> 3:2,17;4:17,20,22, 24;5:7;19:12,16,19, 21;20:3,11,16;21:5; 23:16,24;24:2,28;18; 31:7,11;34:13;36:11; 37:14,16;39:2;44:8; 47:13;52:2,7,20; 53:15,21;54:5;55:5, 19;57:4,13,18;58:1,9; 59:2,5,21,25;60:23; 61:1,11,15,19;62:4, 21,24;63:4,8,11,14, 19,24;64:5,10,14,16, 21;65:2,8,22,25;66:5, 13,19;81:3,16;82:16, 21,25;83:10,15,18; 85:21,25;86:4;89:14, 19;95:16,23;96:6; 97:21;102:5,15,21; 103:9,15,17;104:25; 105:4,6,14,16,18,22; 106:5,7;109:7,21,25; 110:2,10,16,18; 111:10,15,19,24; 112:1,5;113:1,16,21; 114:6,14,17,21; 115:20,24;117:11,19; 118:24;130:13,16,19, 25;132:21,23;133:1; 134:12,15,24;135:10, 12,14,16,24;138:7, 10,15;139:11,18; 141:9;142:8;145:9; 148:23;149:11,20; 150:15;151:24; 152:1,16,21,25; 153:17;154:1,4; 155:13,18,24;157:5, 9,12,20,25;158:6,21; 159:17,25;160:21; 161:2,7,11,14,19; 162:3,8,14,16;163:2, 5,8,10,16,19,22; 164:3;168:13,19; 169:21;170:12,16; 171:1;172:18; 174:17,21;178:5; 179:22;180:8;181:8, 13;183:24;184:1; 185:18,22;186:1,13; 187:20;189:6,10,13, 17,22;190:14,23; 191:2,5,13,16;192:3; 193:10,18,21;208:9, 15,19;209:5;210:11,</p>	<p>15;213:2;214:12; 215:20;216:3,10,17, 25;217:11,13,20,22; 218:14;219:7,10,12, 16;220:4;221:3; 222:25;223:19,23; 224:10,12,16,20,23; 225:2,6,20;226:2,5,7 <b>phase- (1)</b> 181:15 <b>phase-down (1)</b> 171:25 <b>phases (1)</b> 124:5 <b>phenomenal (1)</b> 214:7 <b>phone (5)</b> 40:19;129:22; 133:10,12,21 <b>phonemic (1)</b> 202:23 <b>Phonics (2)</b> 54:3;203:8 <b>photo (1)</b> 18:14 <b>physical (3)</b> 33:6;49:22;149:4 <b>pick (1)</b> 78:22 <b>picture (1)</b> 102:9 <b>piece (22)</b> 7:3;8:15;9:23; 25:6;32:23,25;33:23; 35:16;36:22,22; 39:10,15;40:15,17; 61:23;90:1;95:11; 97:7;131:17,17; 201:16;220:16 <b>pieces (12)</b> 7:10;10:1,9;28:10; 36:3;37:10;42:5; 92:14;93:4;99:22; 173:21;221:23 <b>piggyback (1)</b> 93:14 <b>Pine (84)</b> 104:21;118:5,10; 119:3,15,21;120:25; 121:1,3,25,25;122:3, 13;123:10,16,17; 126:4;131:7;133:5; 139:5;140:3,6,8; 144:19,19;147:23; 149:6,17;151:1,5,6,9; 153:23;156:17,23; 157:14,21;159:16; 170:2,23;176:7,8; 186:25;189:2;192:2, 4,9,20,24;193:2,5,8; 194:2,11,19,22,23; 195:14,18,24;196:11, 13;197:2,9;198:5;</p>
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<p>199:14,21;201:4,11, 15;203:16,22;204:1; 205:5,18;207:10; 211:10,23;212:15; 214:5,14,21;215:4,9</p> <p><b>pioneer (1)</b> 31:20</p> <p><b>Pizza (1)</b> 87:11</p> <p><b>place (31)</b> 25:18;35:3;37:25; 69:5;80:5;91:4; 94:15;101:5;103:23; 107:2;110:21;123:2; 127:9;128:23; 132:11,20;151:20,20; 164:21;168:15,17; 170:5;174:24; 198:15,21;199:6; 205:20;206:1,12; 214:9;225:11</p> <p><b>placed (2)</b> 70:7;116:3;190:4</p> <p><b>placement (2)</b> 23:8;176:3</p> <p><b>places (3)</b> 69:4;157:18;173:6</p> <p><b>plain (1)</b> 212:9</p> <p><b>plan (39)</b> 7:5;8:1,6;39:12; 47:5;64:12;78:13; 92:7,12;93:15;95:11, 13;113:23;116:19; 117:1;125:22;127:9; 129:21;130:1; 148:20;160:17,19,20; 164:19;166:4; 167:17,19;168:17; 188:4,5;198:11; 202:7;205:15,23; 206:3;207:2,3; 210:24;211:17</p> <p><b>planned (4)</b> 130:2;131:23,24; 200:6</p> <p><b>planning (21)</b> 6:6;15:7,15,16; 73:17,25;91:22;92:1, 2,8,19,22;93:15,25; 94:9,10;115:8; 167:23,24;203:14; 215:12</p> <p><b>plans (9)</b> 22:2;60:4;77:1; 121:17;122:8; 168:15;198:14; 207:20,20</p> <p><b>platform (7)</b> 8:14;69:3;74:10, 14;198:2,4;202:4</p> <p><b>play (3)</b> 51:21;86:13;</p>	<p>131:17</p> <p><b>PLC (1)</b> 93:19</p> <p><b>PLCs (1)</b> 9:8</p> <p><b>please (7)</b> 5:2;66:8,16; 115:25;117:13; 160:1;179:12</p> <p><b>pleased (1)</b> 83:22</p> <p><b>plenty (3)</b> 57:15,21;179:1</p> <p><b>PM (3)</b> 114:20;192:1; 226:13</p> <p><b>pockets (1)</b> 187:17</p> <p><b>point (22)</b> 11:1;22:9;28:16; 53:2;94:4;102:15; 103:19;115:17; 119:12;123:10; 136:3,22;138:2; 142:10;143:19,20; 157:15;166:19; 178:8;183:13;185:2; 197:8</p> <p><b>points (8)</b> 5:21;79:8;196:1; 197:4,6,10;215:23,23</p> <p><b>policies (11)</b> 20:24;21:11;22:25; 23:19,20;26:3,12,14; 27:8;91:4;160:9</p> <p><b>policy (14)</b> 21:21;23:12,14,22; 26:4;27:5;28:11,13; 76:13;90:19;132:11; 155:5;165:14;197:14</p> <p><b>poll (1)</b> 15:3</p> <p><b>pool (1)</b> 188:18</p> <p><b>Poore (1)</b> 17:14</p> <p><b>populated (1)</b> 38:14</p> <p><b>population (20)</b> 23:15;38:13;64:20; 67:16,22;68:3;76:18; 100:2,19,24;123:13; 124:12,14,18;166:3; 194:8,14,22;197:18; 216:25</p> <p><b>populations (2)</b> 46:12;124:16</p> <p><b>portion (2)</b> 34:23;79:21</p> <p><b>position (5)</b> 5:18;107:9;117:22; 126:10;131:6</p> <p><b>positions (2)</b></p>	<p>13:16;90:12</p> <p><b>positive (9)</b> 60:10;108:14; 118:9;141:3;143:25; 144:12;147:6; 218:20;225:14</p> <p><b>positively (1)</b> 7:25</p> <p><b>possibilities (1)</b> 49:10</p> <p><b>possible (6)</b> 23:10;36:10;49:24; 129:8;172:7;186:20</p> <p><b>post- (1)</b> 8:5</p> <p><b>posted (4)</b> 3:14;167:4,6; 210:23</p> <p><b>post-sessions (1)</b> 73:24</p> <p><b>potential (2)</b> 179:5;208:3</p> <p><b>potentially (5)</b> 121:11;159:8; 168:25;173:6;178:14</p> <p><b>poured (1)</b> 82:6</p> <p><b>pouring (1)</b> 48:13</p> <p><b>Poverty (1)</b> 71:14</p> <p><b>power (1)</b> 202:5</p> <p><b>practice (9)</b> 29:17,19,23;30:19; 107:1,14;111:9; 126:14;129:5</p> <p><b>practices (3)</b> 69:12;107:11; 203:5</p> <p><b>prayer (2)</b> 116:24;165:16</p> <p><b>pre-assess (1)</b> 201:16</p> <p><b>preclude (1)</b> 186:25</p> <p><b>predictability (1)</b> 8:9</p> <p><b>predictions (1)</b> 15:6</p> <p><b>predictive (1)</b> 207:14</p> <p><b>predicts (1)</b> 9:17</p> <p><b>preference (2)</b> 135:7;177:20</p> <p><b>Preferred (1)</b> 157:17</p> <p><b>pregnant (1)</b> 13:7</p> <p><b>preliminary (1)</b> 202:19</p> <p><b>Prep (14)</b></p>	<p>116:2,11;117:6; 133:3,16,20;134:11; 143:17;165:19; 168:24;170:18; 176:13;187:2;194:5</p> <p><b>preparation (1)</b> 127:1</p> <p><b>Preparatory (5)</b> 114:24;115:22; 118:5;119:2;161:21</p> <p><b>prepare (2)</b> 15:8;92:9</p> <p><b>prepared (1)</b> 200:20</p> <p><b>present (3)</b> 46:20;56:15;118:8</p> <p><b>presentation (12)</b> 5:11;60:2;61:21; 66:14,15;106:19; 115:10;117:20; 118:22;166:13; 193:9;205:22</p> <p><b>presentations (1)</b> 42:5</p> <p><b>presented (9)</b> 58:7;62:15;63:2; 127:2;187:7;191:1; 198:11;224:14,17</p> <p><b>presenters (1)</b> 18:10</p> <p><b>presenting (1)</b> 100:14</p> <p><b>presents (2)</b> 88:4,9</p> <p><b>pre-sessions (1)</b> 73:24</p> <p><b>president (2)</b> 117:8;175:12</p> <p><b>pretty (15)</b> 8:20;22:7;36:6,8; 38:23;49:1;52:7; 53:8;57:2;132:13; 150:23;174:23; 175:4;182:16;210:21</p> <p><b>prevented (1)</b> 121:11</p> <p><b>prevents (1)</b> 165:14</p> <p><b>previous (8)</b> 56:13;84:9;120:3; 128:2;133:11; 174:10;183:16; 225:10</p> <p><b>previously (4)</b> 31:12;64:7;67:1; 71:25</p> <p><b>price (1)</b> 153:24</p> <p><b>primarily (1)</b> 18:24</p> <p><b>primary (3)</b> 28:23;39:5;173:14</p> <p><b>principal (9)</b></p>	<p>4:11,12,13,14;8:4; 53:20;66:21;73:3; 118:4</p> <p><b>principals (1)</b> 40:6</p> <p><b>print/non-print (1)</b> 25:4</p> <p><b>Prior (5)</b> 11:4;40:8;161:23; 217:20;219:3</p> <p><b>priority (3)</b> 42:25;76:23; 171:22</p> <p><b>privilege (1)</b> 118:3</p> <p><b>proactive (2)</b> 69:16;78:3</p> <p><b>proactively (1)</b> 7:9</p> <p><b>probably (18)</b> 29:13;39:25;92:23; 93:18;101:20;110:8; 133:13;142:14; 153:11,12;154:5; 159:4;162:18; 163:24;179:8; 181:12;191:11; 220:25</p> <p><b>probation (1)</b> 174:24</p> <p><b>problem (5)</b> 130:4;142:17,18, 24;150:2</p> <p><b>problems (2)</b> 128:15,22</p> <p><b>problem-solving (1)</b> 88:24</p> <p><b>procedure (1)</b> 90:22</p> <p><b>procedures (7)</b> 21:1;91:13;115:1; 160:9;169:20; 181:20;182:16</p> <p><b>proceed (1)</b> 223:3</p> <p><b>process (20)</b> 26:18;31:9;35:1,2, 15;36:6,9;46:24; 50:17,18;54:2;64:1; 91:2,5;130:8;152:22; 155:5;178:2;185:21; 204:23</p> <p><b>proceeded (1)</b> 153:8</p> <p><b>processes (6)</b> 18:21;31:17;35:23; 53:10;166:25;170:5</p> <p><b>product (1)</b> 36:9</p> <p><b>Professional (18)</b> 41:14,14,21,22; 42:2,6;44:5;71:19, 21;75:7;76:10;98:24;</p>
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99:5;126:2,12;130:1; 200:22;204:11 <b>professionalism (2)</b> 40:17,20 <b>professionals (1)</b> 15:20 <b>program (40)</b> 4:16;10:2;12:19; 13:8;15:22;16:21; 19:4;22:20;38:3; 49:24;52:23;53:19; 68:11,18;74:18; 104:24;120:5; 128:12;131:8; 148:20;154:6,7; 160:3;166:16; 168:24;199:21,23; 201:5,6,11,12,14,24, 25;202:1,3,12; 203:17;212:1;215:10 <b>Programs (9)</b> 4:10;16:14;37:8; 72:25;103:25,25,25; 104:3;154:8 <b>progress (6)</b> 54:3;129:6;193:24; 202:8;208:2;222:4 <b>projected (2)</b> 136:19;198:14 <b>projecting (1)</b> 146:2 <b>projection (7)</b> 138:3,11;146:16; 147:1,2;159:19; 179:17 <b>projections (7)</b> 128:2;136:2; 137:17;142:6; 159:24;180:5,6 <b>promised (1)</b> 201:3 <b>promote (2)</b> 23:20;29:3 <b>promotes (1)</b> 70:22 <b>promoting (3)</b> 21:14,24;23:1 <b>proof (1)</b> 124:18 <b>proper (1)</b> 91:5 <b>properly (1)</b> 182:1 <b>property (1)</b> 182:15 <b>prosper (1)</b> 210:3 <b>prospering (2)</b> 210:4,9 <b>protected (2)</b> 116:24;165:15 <b>proud (8)</b> 88:19;119:17,19;	121:22;122:1,21; 124:21;200:25 <b>proved (1)</b> 113:6 <b>provide (44)</b> 10:16;16:20;26:6, 11;27:15,22;29:3; 35:9,21,24;38:4,19; 39:3;40:5;41:5;64:4; 75:23;78:10;80:6; 86:23;120:11; 126:18,20;127:4,6, 10;132:1,6;139:6; 149:17;150:11; 157:6;159:10; 160:15,17;163:13; 164:9;165:22;166:3; 168:7,23;183:5; 193:24;200:1 <b>provided (22)</b> 21:17;34:18;35:17; 78:6;95:4,14;116:11; 136:4;140:11; 147:24;150:7; 153:25;160:9,10; 164:18;165:25; 166:10;167:17,19; 168:5;172:10;206:25 <b>provider (1)</b> 27:1 <b>providers (3)</b> 35:1,4;157:17 <b>provides (6)</b> 17:21;75:6;176:1, 24;199:1;204:11 <b>providing (16)</b> 3:13;9:18;25:16; 35:7,18;40:2;68:21; 80:23;108:10;115:8; 128:14;139:8; 144:20;156:19; 161:25;167:24 <b>provision (4)</b> 24:5;104:4;158:12; 159:14 <b>provisions (10)</b> 21:3;25:15,24; 26:19;36:1;37:6; 62:7;94:25;95:7; 159:2 <b>psychological (1)</b> 219:25 <b>PT (1)</b> 171:4 <b>public (20)</b> 3:20;21:7;29:14; 81:13;82:18,19;83:2, 6,11;91:8;109:11; 139:5;142:22; 143:11;176:4; 187:21;208:13,16,21, 25 <b>Pulaski (1)</b>	17:17 <b>pull (4)</b> 14:1;53:13;157:9; 213:3 <b>pulled (2)</b> 103:21;153:9 <b>pulling (2)</b> 43:17;48:1 <b>purchasing (1)</b> 127:3 <b>purposes (2)</b> 8:11;10:5 <b>pursuing (2)</b> 11:21;14:19 <b>push (2)</b> 125:15;178:16 <b>pushback (1)</b> 179:13 <b>pushing (2)</b> 80:25;125:17 <b>put (20)</b> 13:7;30:19;49:23; 50:25;51:4;57:5; 116:5;128:21; 140:22;146:25; 147:5;148:16; 149:25;155:6; 198:15;206:1;212:9; 221:17;222:5;225:11 <b>puts (2)</b> 165:5,10 <b>putting (2)</b> 123:2;151:18	<b>quietly (1)</b> 32:20 <b>quit (1)</b> 13:10 <b>quite (11)</b> 28:13;43:16;58:4; 137:10;151:3; 153:18;154:10; 155:1,4;210:25; 225:7	<b>R</b>	123:1,12;126:17; 196:21,23 <b>reading (71)</b> 6:24;7:2,9;24;10:5, 7;36:18,20;41:23,23; 43:6;51:12;56:2; 62:3;68:22;72:2,5, 19;76:23;77:7,19; 78:7;79:7,10,19; 88:18,22;98:5,10,14; 99:3,16;116:7; 120:15;122:21,24; 123:1,5,6;124:16; 126:5,9,17;127:3,10; 194:1;195:22;196:2, 9,20;197:7,12,22; 198:1;199:20,25; 200:23;201:17; 202:13,20,24;203:4, 6,7,18;204:2,5,6,13; 211:7;213:4,6 <b>reading/math (1)</b> 79:12 <b>Reads (1)</b> 10:2 <b>ready (13)</b> 13:21;20:4;38:2; 104:19;114:22; 121:24;122:2;123:6; 189:6;196:12; 219:17;224:11,12 <b>real (4)</b> 16:10;96:13; 151:21;182:15 <b>reality (4)</b> 51:9;89:12;128:3; 222:21 <b>realize (4)</b> 28:9;32:1;126:16; 225:9 <b>realized (1)</b> 143:15 <b>really (92)</b> 5:19;7:4,20;8:15; 9:19;10:3,12;12:9, 25;13:17;15:1;16:9; 17:2,20;19:4,7; 22:19;27:21;30:20; 37:10;38:7,17,20; 40:11,25,25;42:2,6,7; 43:22;44:2,3,4; 45:21;46:5;47:3,3; 48:10;50:12;53:11; 54:13;55:5,16;60:8, 13;62:5;89:8;90:3; 92:5;95:4,4,25;97:8, 14,16;99:16,23; 100:6,11;102:2,14; 103:5;104:23;108:1; 112:21;139:15; 142:1,2,25;149:25; 156:10;159:3;167:1, 8;171:2,6,14;172:7;
				<b>Q</b>	
		<b>Q-and-A (1)</b> 115:21 <b>qualification (1)</b> 129:13 <b>qualified (7)</b> 93:22;119:5,7,9, 11;129:10;200:14 <b>qualified/certified (2)</b> 129:9;130:9 <b>qualify (1)</b> 158:4 <b>quality (2)</b> 41:1;93:23 <b>quantify (1)</b> 50:20 <b>quarter (6)</b> 8:6;40:6,8,9; 147:13;148:7 <b>quarterly (2)</b> 8:5;17:17 <b>quick (2)</b> 95:25;143:17 <b>quickly (3)</b> 47:12;142:19; 202:8 <b>quiet (1)</b> 84:21	<b>rates (3)</b> 109:10,13;158:7 <b>rather (3)</b> 134:25;135:1; 166:24 <b>ratio (2)</b> 25:25;95:3 <b>rationale (9)</b> 21:17,25;24:7; 27:20,21;34:18,22; 91:1,18 <b>reach (6)</b> 27:9;38:17;120:19, 19,20;133:15 <b>reached (8)</b> 17:7;54:7;126:3; 143:15;165:18; 166:7,8;173:9 <b>reaching (5)</b> 50:3;55:6;130:4; 173:11,20 <b>react (3)</b> 27:5,10;37:2 <b>reacting (1)</b> 36:5 <b>read (4)</b> 10:4;45:20;98:2; 136:16 <b>readers (1)</b> 127:14 <b>readiness (16)</b> 9:14;17:21;55:2; 77:7,8,10;121:5; 122:6,12,18,23;		

178:8;181:20;182:2, 18,19,20;183:13; 184:6;187:13; 209:12,15;218:21; 220:6;221:1 <b>re-alouds (1)</b> 99:11 <b>reason (3)</b> 34:17;91:12; 107:21 <b>reasons (6)</b> 31:4;35:12;45:25; 49:14;51:25;190:15 <b>reassess (1)</b> 9:11 <b>rebuttal (1)</b> 30:3 <b>recall (1)</b> 152:19 <b>receivable (2)</b> 177:6;182:9 <b>receive (30)</b> 5:3;39:22,24;66:8; 67:25;68:22;69:20; 76:20;88:10;92:2; 93:5;117:13;126:25; 127:16;128:7,9,13; 133:10,18;141:13; 144:7;156:8;159:3; 165:19,21;168:11; 190:7;193:12;202:1; 207:7 <b>received (15)</b> 7:23;26:13;32:13; 36:18;74:21;101:2; 123:17;124:8; 131:20;136:3; 153:13;160:20; 166:20;202:21; 211:24 <b>receives (3)</b> 67:20;194:12; 202:15 <b>receiving (21)</b> 6:23;80:12;93:23; 124:22;127:18; 153:19;155:20; 156:3;160:13;161:4; 162:8;164:22;165:2, 12;168:2,3,17,22; 169:17;199:19; 203:23 <b>recent (1)</b> 12:4 <b>recently (4)</b> 17:13;18:11; 191:19;207:11 <b>receptive (1)</b> 154:14 <b>Recess (1)</b> 19:11 <b>recognize (6)</b> 6:18;7:13;49:9;	54:24;78:25;108:22 <b>recognized (11)</b> 5:12;17:23;66:17; 76:17;83:19;117:23; 124:7;131:2;135:21; 197:12,16 <b>recommend (1)</b> 155:8 <b>recommendation (1)</b> 171:15 <b>recommendations (2)</b> 32:22;167:10 <b>recommended (1)</b> 181:15 <b>reconciliation (1)</b> 141:23 <b>record (16)</b> 3:10;5:12;20:23; 61:7;63:15;66:17; 83:19;94:20;95:8; 112:7;117:23;131:1; 135:20;152:2;160:2; 214:7 <b>records (1)</b> 120:2 <b>recruit (1)</b> 129:9 <b>recruiting (1)</b> 130:8 <b>recruitment (3)</b> 117:1;166:3; 200:15 <b>redesigned (1)</b> 199:20 <b>reduce (3)</b> 107:3,3;151:10 <b>reduced (8)</b> 76:19;80:13,15; 106:1;109:1;119:6,9; 158:4 <b>reduction (1)</b> 141:16 <b>refer (1)</b> 74:22 <b>reference (2)</b> 211:14;212:22 <b>referrals (1)</b> 132:8 <b>referring (1)</b> 147:9 <b>reflections (1)</b> 215:12 <b>reflective (2)</b> 96:1;219:22 <b>Reform (1)</b> 169:2 <b>regard (1)</b> 154:2 <b>regarding (2)</b> 23:17;163:23 <b>regardless (1)</b> 91:10 <b>regards (2)</b>	152:17;190:20 <b>Region (1)</b> 76:16 <b>regional (1)</b> 195:6 <b>registration (1)</b> 120:1 <b>regular (9)</b> 12:17;22:16,16; 40:4;51:21;73:16; 164:10,21,24 <b>regularly (1)</b> 125:20 <b>regulated (1)</b> 154:8 <b>regulation (1)</b> 154:9 <b>regulations (1)</b> 22:21 <b>reimbursement (13)</b> 127:3;128:10; 153:14;154:7;156:1, 2,9,15,20,25;157:3; 158:8;162:24 <b>reimbursements (2)</b> 128:13;158:14 <b>reiterate (1)</b> 191:18 <b>reiterating (1)</b> 88:20 <b>related (2)</b> 79:12;135:22 <b>relates (3)</b> 69:15;97:3;198:25 <b>relationship (1)</b> 80:22 <b>relationships (4)</b> 69:6,18;70:8;97:17 <b>relatively (1)</b> 29:10 <b>released (2)</b> 6:8;141:4 <b>relevant (2)</b> 15:12;190:9 <b>religious (1)</b> 37:8 <b>rely (1)</b> 222:20 <b>relying (2)</b> 43:4;146:4 <b>remain (2)</b> 75:24;176:13 <b>remainder (1)</b> 208:6 <b>remained (1)</b> 67:10 <b>remaining (11)</b> 28:25;32:6;61:12; 89:22;91:16;109:22; 111:16;116:13; 132:24;208:4;224:7 <b>remarks (1)</b> 132:24	<b>remediate (1)</b> 53:1 <b>remember (3)</b> 51:13;158:3; 214:18 <b>Remind (1)</b> 199:12 <b>remiss (1)</b> 6:24 <b>removal (3)</b> 26:3,15;90:8 <b>removals (1)</b> 22:22 <b>remove (3)</b> 24:11;25:19;38:5 <b>removed (2)</b> 22:19;90:6 <b>Renee (1)</b> 128:12 <b>renegotiate (1)</b> 140:3 <b>renew (1)</b> 113:23 <b>RENEWAL (24)</b> 3:15,21;4:4,18; 5:16;11:1,4,7;18:20; 60:3;62:18;64:18; 65:6,10,16;86:10; 109:23;112:2;115:2; 198:10;201:3;205:6; 208:1;223:15 <b>rent (1)</b> 137:11 <b>repair (1)</b> 107:6 <b>repay (1)</b> 148:14 <b>repayment (1)</b> 148:14 <b>repeat (1)</b> 136:11 <b>report (16)</b> 77:13;165:17; 166:1,9;172:5;173:2, 4;180:23;195:10; 221:23;223:7,9,18, 21;224:13,17 <b>reported (2)</b> 160:12;164:1 <b>reporter (1)</b> 3:12 <b>REPORTER'S (1)</b> 32:19 <b>reporting (2)</b> 128:15;174:25 <b>Reports (13)</b> 128:19,20;129:1; 166:20,23;169:7; 173:3;181:11,13,14; 184:16,18;224:5 <b>represent (3)</b> 68:3;121:3;194:17 <b>representation (2)</b>	31:4;204:16 <b>representative (2)</b> 90:24;217:18 <b>representatives (7)</b> 4:6;5:1;66:1,7; 117:4,12;193:11 <b>represented (1)</b> 77:21 <b>request (18)</b> 15:3;21:3;23:5; 24:13;25:7,23;28:3; 30:10,14;32:23;33:2; 35:13;44:10;61:18, 20;62:8;63:2,21 <b>requested (7)</b> 19:9;24:10;25:1; 32:8;33:7;57:24; 90:20 <b>requesting (5)</b> 4:4;65:16;91:20; 92:20;95:8 <b>requests (2)</b> 21:9;91:1 <b>require (9)</b> 21:20;90:9;129:11; 155:2,4,9;160:7; 175:2;223:8 <b>required (8)</b> 36:16;73:16; 131:11;132:19; 154:18;160:22; 221:4,11 <b>requirement (4)</b> 37:24;92:22; 165:16;167:5 <b>requirements (15)</b> 19:11;23:25;26:11; 33:6,9;34:5,8,8; 36:19,24;37:13; 174:24,25;190:22; 221:12 <b>requires (5)</b> 21:21;25:2;154:8; 165:11;166:2 <b>rescind (8)</b> 21:2,8;24:13,17, 19;25:6;30:9;33:13 <b>rescission (1)</b> 33:17 <b>rescission (1)</b> 33:19 <b>research (1)</b> 118:13 <b>research-based (2)</b> 80:17,18 <b>resigned (1)</b> 48:23 <b>resolution (1)</b> 190:6 <b>resolved (2)</b> 24:25;32:17 <b>resolving (1)</b> 70:23
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<b>Resource (7)</b> 21:7;27:3;76:3; 132:18,20;143:11; 198:21	48:20;176:9,11	172:20;177:9; 184:13,22;186:4,15; 188:22;189:21; 193:13;210:11,15; 212:19;217:5;219:7, 12,16;223:1;224:21; 226:2,5	151:15;164:6,13,23; 165:8;172:21;174:1; 175:5;184:10,12,14, 22;185:3,14;188:12, 16,19,22;189:2; 191:5,6;213:2,3; 214:11,13;215:18; 224:4;225:19;226:4	69:23
<b>resources (21)</b> 15:18;16:5;17:11; 25:3;26:6,21,22; 27:11,14,16,22; 30:16;38:11,19; 43:25;54:22;75:23; 78:6;108:11;198:25; 206:12	<b>returning (3)</b> 48:21;107:12; 200:13	<b>right-hand (2)</b> 18:11;49:19	<b>role (2)</b> 74:2;145:5	<b>safe (3)</b> 70:15,21;134:1
<b>respond (2)</b> 69:22;97:15	<b>revealing (1)</b> 80:10	<b>right-of- (1)</b> 178:15	<b>rolled (1)</b> 99:7	<b>sake (1)</b> 125:16
<b>response (10)</b> 26:13;32:12;34:15; 35:2,10;61:5;74:6; 78:11;90:16;180:1	<b>revenue (2)</b> 141:13;153:21	<b>rights (3)</b> 27:2;91:6;169:14	<b>room (5)</b> 8:13;13:24;57:16, 21;208:23	<b>salaries (1)</b> 200:14
<b>responses (1)</b> 190:16	<b>review (36)</b> 20:6,19;61:5; 89:15;94:21;95:5,17; 110:21;111:3; 114:11,23;115:1,22; 116:1,4,9;142:23; 154:19,22,23;155:1; 166:12;178:11,16; 186:7,8,8,10,13,20; 192:2,4,9;221:11; 223:15,15	<b>rigorous (1)</b> 73:10	<b>root (2)</b> 97:6;126:23	<b>salary (2)</b> 141:16;172:12
<b>responsibilities (1)</b> 104:11	<b>reviewing (1)</b> 207:5	<b>RINGS] (3)</b> 85:7;88:23;134:4	<b>Rosanna (3)</b> 66:20;80:8;98:21	<b>same (20)</b> 42:14;45:7;47:4; 48:10;58:14,24;59:8; 62:1;90:9;96:18; 98:13;105:25; 112:13;175:16; 185:7;187:12;193:2; 196:16;215:25;220:2
<b>responsibility (4)</b> 129:3;181:25; 182:3;191:21	<b>reviews (1)</b> 155:9	<b>RISE (15)</b> 9:20;10:1;72:14; 75:4,5;80:17;104:18; 124:19;126:7;203:8; 204:7;206:22,23; 207:21;213:4	<b>rotate (1)</b> 93:24	<b>Santa (1)</b> 88:3
<b>responsible (3)</b> 3:7;154:12;176:20	<b>revocation (7)</b> 181:19;183:21; 189:8,11,19;190:25; 223:6	<b>RISE-based (1)</b> 68:18	<b>rough (1)</b> 142:4	<b>SAPHS (12)</b> 119:17;120:25; 121:8,22;122:11,17, 21;123:9;124:4; 125:8,9;129:12
<b>rest (1)</b> 103:14	<b>revoke (9)</b> 175:1,1;176:1; 177:15;178:9;186:5, 24;187:4;190:18	<b>risk (6)</b> 46:11,12;153:3; 165:5,10;220:11	<b>round (1)</b> 207:12	<b>Sarah (1)</b> 205:2
<b>restorative (10)</b> 69:11;70:3,10,12, 22;107:1,5,5,11; 168:24	<b>rich (14)</b> 11:19;14:17;19:3; 143:10,22;145:16; 146:10,14,17,23,25; 147:11,16;148:18	<b>River (1)</b> 87:14	<b>round-about (1)</b> 209:15	<b>satisfaction (1)</b> 76:5
<b>restructuring (1)</b> 215:1	<b>richness (1)</b> 47:1	<b>RNKV (1)</b> 38:2	<b>route (3)</b> 78:21;108:11; 179:3	<b>satisfied (4)</b> 48:25;64:12;76:8; 123:2
<b>result (4)</b> 70:25;71:22;155:9; 201:11	<b>revoke (3)</b> 175:24;177:3; 181:24	<b>Roberts (47)</b> 81:19,19;92:15; 93:10,12,12;95:22; 96:21,21;104:8,8; 105:2,5,12,15,17,20; 106:3,6;193:9,18,20, 22,22;198:7,7; 204:14,14;208:18,24; 209:2,6,7;210:14; 213:11,11;214:16; 216:16,24;217:1,12, 19,21,24;222:12; 224:22;225:18	<b>routes (1)</b> 105:3	<b>save (1)</b> 135:15
<b>resulted (1)</b> 154:11	<b>right (84)</b> 5:13;6:3;13:6;14:2, 7;19:1;20:15;24:3; 29:9;31:4;33:16; 37:14;50:10,19;55:1, 12;56:6;57:4,23; 58:21;59:25;62:23; 63:15,17,19;64:9,21, 24;65:8,25;66:13,18; 80:25;82:14;83:15; 95:18;96:6,8;101:16; 104:16;110:3,8; 111:19;112:14; 114:6,9;117:14; 132:21;136:3,25; 139:17;140:5,10; 143:1,2;145:18; 149:20;158:7; 160:24;163:25; 164:15,23;171:6,9;	<b>robust (1)</b> 104:23	<b>routine (1)</b> 206:19	<b>saved (2)</b> 170:19;219:14
<b>results (12)</b> 6:17,18;7:23;76:6; 121:9;207:15,22; 216:18,19;218:21; 224:2;225:14	<b>Ridge (1)</b> 143:10	<b>Rock (5)</b> 17:14;41:19;54:7; 83:22;198:3	<b>row (3)</b> 5:10;108:24;113:2	<b>savior (1)</b> 186:25
<b>retained (2)</b> 200:9;214:2	<b>richness (1)</b> 47:1	<b>Rockbridge (3)</b> 177:7;183:8,18	<b>RTI (12)</b> 4:16;52:22,25; 53:10;54:2;68:19,22; 79:12;80:5,18;99:14, 15	<b>saw (12)</b> 14:7;20:17;50:9,9; 81:24;82:2;98:6; 102:9;104:17,18; 115:6;151:7
<b>retaining (2)</b> 130:9;200:19	<b>right (84)</b> 5:13;6:3;13:6;14:2, 7;19:1;20:15;24:3; 29:9;31:4;33:16; 37:14;50:10,19;55:1, 12;56:6;57:4,23; 58:21;59:25;62:23; 63:15,17,19;64:9,21, 24;65:8,25;66:13,18; 80:25;82:14;83:15; 95:18;96:6,8;101:16; 104:16;110:3,8; 111:19;112:14; 114:6,9;117:14; 132:21;136:3,25; 139:17;140:5,10; 143:1,2;145:18; 149:20;158:7; 160:24;163:25; 164:15,23;171:6,9;	<b>Roger (1)</b> 84:20	<b>row (3)</b> 5:10;108:24;113:2	<b>saying (10)</b> 58:15;112:22; 143:1;151:16;161:2; 162:3;165:20;173:8; 174:3;180:3
<b>re-teach (1)</b> 9:11	<b>richness (1)</b> 47:1	<b>ROGERS (59)</b> 58:14;59:5,7;64:5, 6;82:24;106:7,8,16; 107:21;108:3;109:6, 23;110:1;113:8; 116:6;139:20,25; 140:3,5,11,14;142:8, 11;143:14;147:20; 149:16;150:5,13,25;	<b>rules (9)</b> 32:24;33:24;34:21; 35:6;37:7;169:10; 177:20;181:24;183:4	<b>scale (9)</b> 79:6,8;197:4,5,6,8, 10;212:8,8
<b>retention (9)</b> 26:3,14;106:15; 114:4;166:4;200:8, 12,12,16	<b>richness (1)</b> 47:1	<b>ROGERS (59)</b> 58:14;59:5,7;64:5, 6;82:24;106:7,8,16; 107:21;108:3;109:6, 23;110:1;113:8; 116:6;139:20,25; 140:3,5,11,14;142:8, 11;143:14;147:20; 149:16;150:5,13,25;	<b>run (10)</b> 52:22;78:21; 108:25;138:22; 141:2;142:15; 146:19;151:11; 171:11;176:18	<b>schedule (8)</b> 72:1;81:22;128:16; 186:16;197:22; 199:15;201:1;204:4
<b>Retired (1)</b> 127:12	<b>richness (1)</b> 47:1	<b>ROGERS (59)</b> 58:14;59:5,7;64:5, 6;82:24;106:7,8,16; 107:21;108:3;109:6, 23;110:1;113:8; 116:6;139:20,25; 140:3,5,11,14;142:8, 11;143:14;147:20; 149:16;150:5,13,25;	<b>rural (3)</b> 17:10;38:7,10	<b>scheduled (1)</b> 126:2
<b>Retirement (3)</b> 137:8;138:13; 139:12	<b>richness (1)</b> 47:1	<b>ROGERS (59)</b> 58:14;59:5,7;64:5, 6;82:24;106:7,8,16; 107:21;108:3;109:6, 23;110:1;113:8; 116:6;139:20,25; 140:3,5,11,14;142:8, 11;143:14;147:20; 149:16;150:5,13,25;	<b>S</b>	<b>schizophrenic (1)</b> 85:3
<b>retreat (1)</b> 102:11	<b>richness (1)</b> 47:1	<b>ROGERS (59)</b> 58:14;59:5,7;64:5, 6;82:24;106:7,8,16; 107:21;108:3;109:6, 23;110:1;113:8; 116:6;139:20,25; 140:3,5,11,14;142:8, 11;143:14;147:20; 149:16;150:5,13,25;	<b>sad (1)</b>	<b>scholar (8)</b> 12:25;67:19;72:8; 78:18;194:11; 198:18;202:7;217:16
<b>return (3)</b>	<b>richness (1)</b> 47:1	<b>ROGERS (59)</b> 58:14;59:5,7;64:5, 6;82:24;106:7,8,16; 107:21;108:3;109:6, 23;110:1;113:8; 116:6;139:20,25; 140:3,5,11,14;142:8, 11;143:14;147:20; 149:16;150:5,13,25;		<b>scholars (107)</b>

<p>66:25;67:4,7,9,11, 15,24;68:15,20,22, 24;69:7,19,20,22; 70:2,5,13,14,17;71:3, 12;72:9,10,11,18,21, 24;73:11;74:7,9,11, 14;75:22;76:1,4,25; 77:16,21,22;78:13, 16,22,24;79:1,23; 80:5,11,12,14,20; 82:2;83:21,24;84:15; 96:13;97:8,15,19; 99:10,15;108:8,14, 19;194:3,4,5,7,15; 195:15;196:4;197:1, 3,6,8;198:5;199:2,3, 6;201:8,15,25;202:1, 3,8,9,18,22,25; 203:10,13,20,22; 205:8,11,15,16,18; 206:2,9,10;207:4,5, 10,16;218:3,6</p> <p><b>scholars' (5)</b> 69:4;75:15;196:2; 201:17;207:20</p> <p><b>scholar's (1)</b> 196:7</p> <p><b>scholarship (3)</b> 13:5,14,15</p> <p><b>SCHOOL (336)</b> 3:15,21;4:8,10,11, 13;5:14,17,20;6:6,14, 15,15,16,17,21;7:21, 22;10:22;11:20;12:2, 5;13:10,10;14:18; 16:2;17:14,24;21:7, 13,17,18;22:25;23:4, 7,9,19;26:2;28:1; 29:14,19;30:14;31:3; 32:9,10;41:24,25; 42:15,23,23;43:1,6; 48:12;49:16,16;51:6, 7,8,21;52:16;54:8,10; 56:18,23;57:25; 58:15;64:7;65:6,7, 10;66:22;67:6,12; 68:12;70:6;75:2,8; 76:15,15,16,21,24; 77:6,12,14;78:4; 79:2;80:21;81:12,16; 82:5,6,11,14;84:1,10, 11,17;85:4,5,17; 86:10,14,17,21;87:8, 18;89:4;90:21;96:23; 100:10;102:23,24; 103:1,5,22,24,24; 104:11,21,24;105:1, 9,23;106:9,18,22,23, 24;107:19;108:1,9, 21;109:16;110:4; 113:6,9,10,14,17; 114:2,24;115:23; 116:23;117:7,8;</p>	<p>118:5,13;119:2,18, 22;120:7,8,11;121:1, 1,2,9,16;123:18; 126:6,8;127:19; 128:18;130:10,21; 131:10,14;132:8,12, 16;133:6,9,12,15,25; 137:5;139:5;140:7; 142:9,21;143:11,23, 25;144:1,2,19,19; 145:1,25;146:5; 147:6;148:14,16,21; 149:24;150:22,25; 151:2,6;153:2; 157:14;158:13; 161:1,21,23;162:2,4; 164:24;165:2,12,21; 166:2,7,17,22,23,24; 167:2,11,16;168:10, 12;169:7,8,12,16,19, 19,23;170:2,13; 171:12;173:1; 174:13;175:1,2; 176:4,5,7,8,12,14,15, 16,16,25;177:9,12, 18;178:13,14; 179:11;180:13,17,18; 181:4,18,21;182:4,6, 7,13,19;183:1,4,19; 184:2,6;187:1,21,25; 188:5;190:6,7,10,19; 192:15,17;193:1; 194:2,23;195:4,10, 12,12;196:15,20,21, 25;197:9,12,19; 198:5,17,20;199:5, 13,14,22;200:10,13, 18;201:5,12,24; 202:2;203:8,16,22; 204:1;205:5,7,9,13, 19,25;206:10;207:11, 16;209:13,21,23; 211:11,12;214:6,22; 215:6;217:17; 219:23;220:6; 221:10,11,14;222:5, 10</p> <p><b>school- (1)</b> 78:25</p> <p><b>schooled (1)</b> 51:19</p> <p><b>schools (57)</b> 6:20,22;10:19,20, 23;29:20,22,24; 31:19;33:8,13;38:10; 42:22;60:19;76:19; 84:11;86:9,16;88:8; 100:8,24;102:17; 103:2;109:11,15; 119:14,21;120:3; 121:2,3;123:16; 133:4,11;142:22; 145:12;149:6;</p>	<p>169:14;170:4,6; 177:3,5;182:12; 183:16;189:4; 192:14,19;193:4,5,7; 196:15;205:10; 210:3;211:15,19; 217:4;224:5,6</p> <p><b>school's (3)</b> 13:7;93:8;193:25</p> <p><b>school-to-home (1)</b> 199:9</p> <p><b>school-wide (3)</b> 10:2;69:8;78:13</p> <p><b>science (35)</b> 10:10;41:22;56:2; 72:2,4;77:18;78:1,2, 4,5,7,8,11;88:18; 99:16;113:20; 120:16;121:5;123:9, 12,14;124:14;126:4; 195:19,20;197:12,22; 198:1;199:20; 200:23;204:2,5,6,12; 207:1</p> <p><b>scope (1)</b> 111:12</p> <p><b>score (14)</b> 7:24;59:8;77:20; 79:6;123:19,24; 195:14,25;196:1; 197:5;212:8,8; 221:14,19</p> <p><b>scored (2)</b> 121:24;123:5</p> <p><b>scores (19)</b> 51:11;53:2;74:19; 79:22,22;98:3; 100:14;113:20; 120:18,20,23;122:5; 123:4;125:2;195:10; 201:10;212:3;213:6; 221:13</p> <p><b>scoring (4)</b> 40:14;52:12; 121:11;196:12</p> <p><b>screen (2)</b> 18:14;101:11</p> <p><b>screener (2)</b> 54:1,2</p> <p><b>screeners (1)</b> 53:10</p> <p><b>screening (2)</b> 52:9;53:15</p> <p><b>seams (1)</b> 18:25</p> <p><b>SEARK (1)</b> 127:8</p> <p><b>seats (2)</b> 57:10;67:11</p> <p><b>second (28)</b> 8:15;17:25;21:10; 25:22;54:5;62:1; 63:9,10,11;82:24;</p>	<p>83:1,11;92:23; 111:25;112:2; 116:10;121:6;134:6; 139:1;154:21; 175:14;189:12,13; 206:15;224:15,17; 226:6,7</p> <p><b>Secondary (1)</b> 150:21</p> <p><b>second-party (2)</b> 26:21;27:2</p> <p><b>Section (19)</b> 33:3,9,9,10,11,12; 34:24;35:5;37:6,11; 90:4,7,16;121:20; 122:10,21;123:9; 165:11;167:13</p> <p><b>Sections (4)</b> 33:7,8;90:19; 122:14</p> <p><b>secure (1)</b> 195:2</p> <p><b>seeing (9)</b> 22:19;40:15;64:22; 82:17;148:5,6;158:7; 172:5;215:22</p> <p><b>seek (2)</b> 15:24;17:10</p> <p><b>seeking (8)</b> 13:13;15:1;16:9; 17:5;33:24;36:20; 57:11;95:12</p> <p><b>seem (6)</b> 6:10;16:11;53:8, 12;154:13,14</p> <p><b>seemed (3)</b> 49:18;110:13; 185:10</p> <p><b>seems (4)</b> 20:7;26:10;60:12; 167:12</p> <p><b>sees (1)</b> 133:5</p> <p><b>SEGERS (1)</b> 117:25</p> <p><b>segmentation (1)</b> 202:23</p> <p><b>seldom (1)</b> 94:13</p> <p><b>select (1)</b> 26:5</p> <p><b>selection (3)</b> 26:3,15,18</p> <p><b>selections (1)</b> 27:18</p> <p><b>self-care (1)</b> 86:13</p> <p><b>semester (2)</b> 154:22;180:15</p> <p><b>send (3)</b> 101:21;111:12; 151:7</p> <p><b>sending (2)</b></p>	<p>85:8,11</p> <p><b>sends (1)</b> 219:24</p> <p><b>seniors (1)</b> 127:6</p> <p><b>sense (8)</b> 6:8;25:24;28:10, 22;30:3;47:9;61:21; 70:20</p> <p><b>sent (4)</b> 85:13;140:23; 144:23;152:11</p> <p><b>sentences (2)</b> 84:23,23</p> <p><b>separate (2)</b> 62:7,12</p> <p><b>separately (1)</b> 61:25</p> <p><b>September (2)</b> 165:17;206:7</p> <p><b>seq (1)</b> 25:23</p> <p><b>Sergeant (1)</b> 145:4</p> <p><b>serious (2)</b> 28:17;191:1</p> <p><b>seriously (1)</b> 182:20</p> <p><b>serve (21)</b> 4:2;11:15;37:20; 45:9;64:19;65:14; 67:15;68:5;73:3; 76:18;86:8;87:2; 105:8;112:14;118:3; 125:3;149:22;194:7; 196:15;197:18;205:8</p> <p><b>served (5)</b> 67:1;119:4;120:8, 21;161:23</p> <p><b>serves (6)</b> 66:25;67:19;119:3; 124:18;194:20; 201:25</p> <p><b>service (13)</b> 10:13,17;37:22,23; 39:4;132:7;137:3,12; 139:21;144:17; 149:17;164:9;174:5</p> <p><b>services (47)</b> 15:2;35:8;67:23; 69:21,25;84:25;85:2; 95:3;117:3;128:5,14; 132:10;135:25; 136:20,23,23;137:6, 15;138:19;143:11; 153:25;159:18; 160:13;161:4;162:1, 9,13,24;163:1; 164:10,18;165:3; 167:17,18,20,25; 168:9,11,17;169:1,6; 172:10;174:9;185:1; 191:4;194:15;203:24</p>
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<p><b>serving (6)</b> 52:5;112:15; 149:21;156:18; 158:25;186:2</p> <p><b>session (2)</b> 9:3;18:16</p> <p><b>sessions (7)</b> 44:24;45:13;52:25; 69:13;70:4;73:25; 99:1</p> <p><b>set (14)</b> 11:4;22:14;91:19; 92:14;94:1;128:7,9; 132:16;173:13; 177:20;181:20; 196:5;204:4;214:18</p> <p><b>sets (2)</b> 61:7;212:22</p> <p><b>setting (4)</b> 23:10;25:21;40:9; 45:5</p> <p><b>settled (1)</b> 188:8</p> <p><b>several (16)</b> 4:6;12:24;16:1; 38:21;43:11;81:5; 82:17;84:10;117:2; 118:12;121:10; 130:6;149:3;171:8; 192:5;196:24</p> <p><b>Shaking (4)</b> 24:1;61:14;130:18; 163:4</p> <p><b>shall (5)</b> 5:4;22:25;66:10; 117:15;193:14</p> <p><b>Shanna (4)</b> 117:9;130:23; 131:3;134:20</p> <p><b>shape (1)</b> 222:21</p> <p><b>share (9)</b> 6:25;50:12;86:25; 95:6;112:7;164:4; 219:18;224:25; 225:13</p> <p><b>shared (3)</b> 161:16;205:12,14</p> <p><b>sharing (1)</b> 134:13</p> <p><b>Sharon (1)</b> 3:12</p> <p><b>sheets (2)</b> 134:18;189:25</p> <p><b>Sheila (1)</b> 150:18</p> <p><b>shell (1)</b> 87:5</p> <p><b>shifted (3)</b> 11:3;69:16;80:24</p> <p><b>Shock (3)</b> 206:20;214:20; 215:4</p>	<p><b>shoot (1)</b> 51:8</p> <p><b>shored (1)</b> 55:24</p> <p><b>Short (8)</b> 4:12;14:5,9;51:15; 83:24;139:25; 207:15;208:1</p> <p><b>show (9)</b> 13:19;60:7;79:9; 88:19;112:16; 125:15;142:17; 150:1;179:18</p> <p><b>showed (3)</b> 49:17;58:16; 133:12</p> <p><b>showing (22)</b> 76:7;77:11,15,17; 78:18;96:1,3;98:4; 102:22;104:1,2; 109:3;142:14,25; 143:3;148:4;181:4; 195:20;196:24; 197:7;211:13;222:22</p> <p><b>shown (6)</b> 14:5;67:13;73:5; 79:18,25;208:2</p> <p><b>shows (9)</b> 47:22;74:23;77:3; 123:15;124:5,23; 141:3;145:24;196:17</p> <p><b>siblings (1)</b> 188:25</p> <p><b>side (12)</b> 24:1,1;39:6;47:12; 49:19;61:14,14; 130:18,18;148:19; 163:4,4</p> <p><b>side-by-side (2)</b> 99:4;108:24</p> <p><b>sign (2)</b> 139:5;173:23</p> <p><b>signed (22)</b> 19:23;61:12;65:20; 81:5,10,15;82:18; 83:5;115:12;130:17; 134:16;137:4,4,6; 139:21;144:18; 156:4,13;157:4; 158:9;159:13;208:12</p> <p><b>significant (6)</b> 80:12;197:7;201:9; 202:25;207:9;210:21</p> <p><b>significantly (1)</b> 57:2</p> <p><b>sign-in (1)</b> 134:18</p> <p><b>signing (1)</b> 173:22</p> <p><b>SILENCE (5)</b> 63:18;81:9;112:25; 190:13;225:1</p> <p><b>similar (6)</b> 6:17;20;62:16; 115:6;157:13;205:10</p>	<p><b>Similarly (1)</b> 207:22</p> <p><b>simply (5)</b> 27:22;29:10; 121:13;128:21;177:8</p> <p><b>sing (1)</b> 108:21</p> <p><b>single (8)</b> 8:4;11:8;22:9; 79:6;103:1;108:17; 109:4;111:1</p> <p><b>sister (2)</b> 67:12;198:3</p> <p><b>sit (2)</b> 5:9;8:13</p> <p><b>site (2)</b> 131:25;198:3</p> <p><b>situation (8)</b> 50:8;94:16;155:22; 172:23;178:24; 187:14;191:15,20</p> <p><b>situations (6)</b> 22:18;23:6;25:12; 48:22;50:5;97:11</p> <p><b>six (7)</b> 56:21;72:15;79:8; 146:22;152:12; 203:22;215:23</p> <p><b>six-month (2)</b> 146:16;179:17</p> <p><b>size (4)</b> 44:18,19,20;46:1</p> <p><b>sizes (2)</b> 9:2;45:7</p> <p><b>skill (2)</b> 9:13;207:8</p> <p><b>skills (15)</b> 9:12,14;14:25; 15:10;17:22;19:8; 52:25;53:13;80:7; 88:25;201:7,17; 202:20;203:7;212:2</p> <p><b>SkillsUSA (1)</b> 18:3</p> <p><b>slack (1)</b> 110:7</p> <p><b>slide (4)</b> 102:18;124:23; 204:15;217:14</p> <p><b>slight (2)</b> 6:16;195:25</p> <p><b>slightly (2)</b> 51:7;53:3</p> <p><b>small (23)</b> 8:21;13:21;44:12; 52:7;68:16;69:12; 70:3;72:7,10,23; 73:15;74:17;76:9; 94:24;126:22;144:1, 2;157:18;202:15,21; 203:19;214:24,25</p>	<p><b>smaller (4)</b> 17:10;38:10,16,21</p> <p><b>Smart (2)</b> 13:14;201:14</p> <p><b>Smith (11)</b> 138:19,19;139:14, 24;140:2,4,10,13; 152:11;159:18,18</p> <p><b>snack (2)</b> 67:22;194:13</p> <p><b>snapshot (2)</b> 120:24,25</p> <p><b>snowball (1)</b> 142:19</p> <p><b>social (7)</b> 68:11;69:5,8;71:4; 82:9;86:14;99:21</p> <p><b>socially (1)</b> 133:17</p> <p><b>so-forth (2)</b> 100:9;179:2</p> <p><b>solar (1)</b> 43:15</p> <p><b>solely (1)</b> 27:1</p> <p><b>solid (1)</b> 47:5</p> <p><b>Solution (1)</b> 71:19</p> <p><b>Solutions (1)</b> 127:22</p> <p><b>solved (2)</b> 7:1;47:25</p> <p><b>solvent (1)</b> 143:6</p> <p><b>Somebody (3)</b> 86:2;110:17; 118:25</p> <p><b>somehow (1)</b> 101:14</p> <p><b>someone (16)</b> 25:7;62:22;83:9; 88:3;90:5;143:7; 145:3,3;155:10; 168:6,21;169:2; 176:23;181:16; 187:7;208:12</p> <p><b>sometime (2)</b> 28:14;186:21</p> <p><b>sometimes (9)</b> 27:12,13;28:9; 41:18;51:24;86:22; 88:11;94:9;104:11</p> <p><b>somewhere (3)</b> 156:20;180:18; 186:19</p> <p><b>son (16)</b> 13:13;51:18;84:20, 22,24;85:2,5,8,10,12, 14;133:3,8;134:6; 209:13,21</p> <p><b>soon (2)</b> 113:15;140:16</p>	<p><b>sooner (3)</b> 141:25;186:21; 187:15</p> <p><b>sorry (14)</b> 66:2;98:21;116:14; 118:24;136:11,13,18; 157:11;169:5; 170:17;177:16; 183:12;187:4;192:22</p> <p><b>sort (15)</b> 5:23;8:22;14:14, 17;18:25;22:11;27:9; 35:15;36:8;38:15; 43:1;46:6;53:5; 54:19;169:13</p> <p><b>sorts (1)</b> 43:7</p> <p><b>sound (1)</b> 195:2</p> <p><b>sounds (4)</b> 109:17;170:18,20; 185:23</p> <p><b>Southeast (18)</b> 114:23;115:22; 116:2,11;117:6; 118:4;119:2;133:3, 16,20;134:11; 143:17;161:21; 165:18;168:23; 170:18;176:13;187:1</p> <p><b>southern (1)</b> 38:22</p> <p><b>space (2)</b> 70:19;99:7</p> <p><b>span (1)</b> 196:16</p> <p><b>speak (31)</b> 3:9;19:22;61:13; 65:20;81:4,6,7,11,11; 98:20,22;104:7; 129:22;130:12,14,22; 145:17;151:18,23; 161:7,14,15;167:22; 187:23;208:7,21; 209:4,9;212:11; 217:1;220:5</p> <p><b>SPEAKERS (5)</b> 5:6;66:12;117:18; 134:22;193:17</p> <p><b>speaking (14)</b> 3:8;5:2,8,9;17:1; 66:1,8;117:12; 167:13;168:14; 193:11;209:13,14,23</p> <p><b>speaks (3)</b> 31:8;120:6;210:22</p> <p><b>Special (37)</b> 4:10;11:18;13:22, 23;49:24;67:23;68:7; 80:16;117:3;128:13; 135:2;158:12,23; 159:2;160:1,4,5,14, 16;161:4,16,25;</p>
--	---	--	--	--

<p>162:6,9,24;163:1,11, 23;167:13,21,25; 171:2;179:24; 186:16;187:15; 194:14;204:21 <b>specialist (3)</b> 74:3;132:4;200:16 <b>specialists (2)</b> 74:1;200:1 <b>specific (15)</b> 13:15,15;38:20; 51:15;57:10;76:11; 79:11;80:6;92:16; 93:10;99:13,17; 142:3;218:20;224:24 <b>specifically (3)</b> 36:21;114:2; 202:13 <b>specified (1)</b> 68:23 <b>SPED (5)</b> 164:6;174:6; 184:19,24;191:9 <b>speech (3)</b> 88:16;168:7;171:3 <b>spell (1)</b> 86:5 <b>Spelling (1)</b> 203:18 <b>spending (3)</b> 146:1;155:7; 225:16 <b>spent (3)</b> 53:20;79:5;197:2 <b>spite (1)</b> 129:14 <b>split (1)</b> 215:5 <b>spoke (4)</b> 32:19;87:3;149:3; 170:10 <b>spoken (3)</b> 130:6;134:17; 158:19 <b>spots (2)</b> 43:13;187:16 <b>spring (15)</b> 6:16;18:8;87:21; 104:14;121:21; 154:22;155:8; 180:16;181:1,5; 184:5;187:18;188:1; 201:13;207:18 <b>SQSS (5)</b> 6:23;77:20;78:2; 103:6;195:14 <b>stability (1)</b> 216:23 <b>Stack (1)</b> 4:13 <b>staff (54)</b> 9:21;11:22,22,22; 12:3,6;15:16;21:6;</p>	<p>25:20;47:11;67:4; 70:8,13,14;71:3,11, 13;72:17;73:20;74:9; 82:6,11;91:10;93:19; 97:9;115:15;123:22; 125:8,10,12;126:5; 128:24;129:9,10,13; 130:9;155:3;170:13; 171:9,14;181:17; 182:7,23;190:3; 200:9,15,17,19,22; 203:10,12;213:18; 214:2,8 <b>staffed (1)</b> 195:4 <b>staffing (5)</b> 93:8;94:3;118:17; 128:1;200:12 <b>staff's (1)</b> 91:5 <b>stages (1)</b> 120:5 <b>stagnated (1)</b> 43:1 <b>stakeholders (1)</b> 82:12 <b>stand (4)</b> 5:2;66:8;117:13; 193:12 <b>standard (6)</b> 72:9,12,13;150:23; 221:18;222:8 <b>Standards (20)</b> 7:7;9:13,14;25:1; 33:11;34:7;35:9,25; 59:22;65:19;73:13; 78:10;116:16; 124:11;126:14; 128:19;167:5; 192:10;194:1;204:16 <b>stand-out (1)</b> 103:5 <b>standpoint (2)</b> 176:17,22 <b>start (29)</b> 6:11;10:24;20:6; 37:18;96:8;102:16; 105:3;113:1;135:18, 19;139:8;144:3,7; 173:20;175:9;179:7; 181:15;190:16; 195:8;201:5,14; 210:17;211:20; 212:1;214:6,24; 215:3,12;218:24 <b>started (16)</b> 3:19;31:13;43:9, 10;44:3;54:19;83:25; 111:11;114:25; 185:8;210:25;211:7; 215:9,10;218:10; 224:1 <b>starting (6)</b></p>	<p>42:18;117:20; 173:9;177:21; 218:10,25 <b>starts (2)</b> 46:4;177:17 <b>state (78)</b> 3:9;5:11;6:22; 9:13;10:15;11:11,13, 19;14:12,13;15:5,22; 16:21,23;30:10; 35:25;36:16;37:1,20; 38:14,22;41:17,19; 43:13;49:3;53:3,5,7; 55:3;66:16;73:13; 83:18;117:22; 122:22;125:8,10,12; 128:21;129:2,15,19; 130:4,6,25;135:20; 152:1;160:1;177:1,1, 15,22;178:2,3,6,10, 15;179:6;182:1,17; 184:23;185:17; 186:6,7,12,15,16; 187:4,8;190:11; 196:6;197:20;205:4; 207:14,17,17,22,24; 221:11 <b>stated (9)</b> 64:7,18;94:2,13; 132:13;160:16; 190:15;191:6;200:4 <b>statement (3)</b> 101:21;116:23; 137:20 <b>statements (1)</b> 140:20 <b>states (1)</b> 21:13 <b>State's (1)</b> 28:23 <b>Statewide (4)</b> 76:14;150:23; 197:14,15 <b>status (2)</b> 195:2;196:7 <b>statuses (1)</b> 68:7 <b>statute (5)</b> 22:25;29:2;92:24; 166:1;172:22 <b>statutes (1)</b> 33:23 <b>statutory (1)</b> 32:23 <b>stay (10)</b> 15:13;25:18;45:7, 16;51:14;79:9;144:9; 147:16;171:9;217:7 <b>stayed (1)</b> 67:13 <b>staying (2)</b> 102:24;197:6 <b>stays (1)</b></p>	<p>36:25 <b>steered (1)</b> 46:13 <b>STEM (1)</b> 131:8 <b>step (1)</b> 163:8 <b>stepped (2)</b> 106:19;189:20 <b>steps (3)</b> 60:6;98:16;177:16 <b>stewardship (1)</b> 36:2 <b>sticks (1)</b> 15:12 <b>still (48)</b> 15:10;19:12;23:19, 19;26:1;27:20;37:12; 46:21;48:12,12,13; 51:8;57:15,20;93:23; 96:17;98:4;101:20; 103:17;107:1; 113:13;116:25; 117:2;122:4,14; 123:1;124:24; 130:19;132:23; 135:3;136:25;137:2; 143:18;145:19; 159:23;173:4;177:4, 10;178:10;183:8,9; 184:20;195:1;208:9; 210:13;212:18; 215:6;224:7 <b>stone (2)</b> 56:13;126:3 <b>stop (1)</b> 186:2 <b>stories (1)</b> 20:14 <b>story (4)</b> 12:10,11;83:24; 219:2 <b>strategic (1)</b> 102:11 <b>strategies (12)</b> 21:13;41:23;64:2, 3;68:21;75:8;76:11; 77:5;99:8;126:15; 127:5;196:19 <b>strategy (1)</b> 99:22 <b>streamed (1)</b> 3:11 <b>strength (1)</b> 7:4 <b>strengths (1)</b> 68:25 <b>stressing (1)</b> 10:3 <b>stretch (2)</b> 16:18;43:8 <b>striving (1)</b> 124:4</p>	<p><b>strong (13)</b> 18:4;68:9,11,17; 72:7;73:10;75:24; 82:9;179:5;201:22; 205:12,13;217:9 <b>stronger (1)</b> 75:11 <b>strongly (1)</b> 109:19 <b>structure (1)</b> 180:9 <b>struggle (5)</b> 41:16;46:18;78:15; 104:12;179:13 <b>struggling (1)</b> 127:14 <b>stuck (2)</b> 59:12;184:25 <b>student (52)</b> 11:6,8;12:15;15:3, 18,21;17:19;21:14, 25;22:3,5,8,9;23:1, 15,20;26:22;40:16; 44:1;46:17;47:2; 49:20;50:1,9,11; 52:18;62:10;67:16; 82:2;93:7;95:2; 113:18;114:4; 118:16;123:25; 127:4;148:6,13,15; 154:24;159:20; 167:3,16;168:16; 169:11,14;170:8,9; 194:8;199:3;212:15; 216:25 <b>student-focused (1)</b> 64:2 <b>students (241)</b> 4:2;6:3;7:1,6,14; 8:12,18,25;9:3,6,10; 10:4,15;11:6,16,20; 13:20;14:12,18,25; 15:3,8,12,13,20,25; 16:8,12,14,20,21,25; 17:3,8,12,18,20;18:6, 15,22;19:4,5;22:8,11, 14,17;23:21,25; 24:11;25:20;27:16; 29:7,13;30:7;36:10, 23;38:2,16;39:4; 40:16;43:12,24,24; 44:6,10,15,17;45:2,4, 22;48:14;49:18;50:1, 5;51:14;52:1,5,12,13, 24;53:9,12;54:17; 55:2,3,8,22,25;56:6, 14,19;57:11,14,22; 60:11,20;64:4,20,23; 65:14;67:23,25;70:8; 73:20;79:4,9,14,15, 20;86:19;88:1;89:3, 9;92:10;93:23;96:16, 22,25;98:7;99:8,12;</p>
--	---	--	--	---

<p>100:19,22,22,23; 101:23;102:23; 105:8,13,14;108:25; 112:19,20;119:5,5,6, 7,8,9,10,11,13,16,21, 24,25;121:5,6,10,18, 23;122:2,6,12,23; 123:9,13;124:10,19, 25;125:6,17;126:6,8, 16,18,21;127:10,17, 18,20;131:10,14; 147:17,25;148:9; 149:4,7,8,23;150:7, 10;151:8;152:13; 155:19;156:7; 157:18;158:2,4,15, 25;160:12,25;161:3; 162:1,4,14;164:8; 167:25;168:7,10,14, 25;169:3,8,15;176:7, 7;180:14,21;182:21; 183:2,15;187:18,24; 191:4,23;192:15,24; 193:4;194:14;195:4, 17;196:12;201:12; 202:21;209:19; 210:1;211:23,24; 212:1,3,18;215:22, 24,25;216:21; 218:24;220:11,13; 225:12</p> <p><b>students' (3)</b> 9:13;73:19;123:4</p> <p><b>study (3)</b> 9:4;72:4;197:25</p> <p><b>stuff (4)</b> 138:18;152:7; 182:13;183:6</p> <p><b>subject (5)</b> 7:15;25:12;77:6, 12;196:25</p> <p><b>subjects (1)</b> 68:10</p> <p><b>submission (1)</b> 160:8</p> <p><b>submissions (1)</b> 129:15</p> <p><b>submit (3)</b> 20:18;153:5; 165:20</p> <p><b>submitted (8)</b> 10:21;116:20,23; 119:25;153:6;173:3, 4;204:18</p> <p><b>subs (3)</b> 93:21,21,22</p> <p><b>substantial (1)</b> 156:7</p> <p><b>substantially (1)</b> 139:10</p> <p><b>substantive (1)</b> 207:6</p> <p><b>succeed (1)</b></p>	<p>9:7</p> <p><b>success (11)</b> 10:24;60:4,7; 74:17;80:9;125:6; 198:1,19;201:20; 206:15;208:6</p> <p><b>successes (2)</b> 31:18;82:7</p> <p><b>successful (6)</b> 35:6;74:19;87:2; 89:5;134:10;215:11</p> <p><b>successfully (2)</b> 71:11;198:15</p> <p><b>sudden (1)</b> 183:1</p> <p><b>suffers (1)</b> 133:7</p> <p><b>sufficient (3)</b> 25:3;64:13,15</p> <p><b>suggest (1)</b> 184:16</p> <p><b>suggested (2)</b> 15:23;27:7</p> <p><b>Sullivan (1)</b> 4:10</p> <p><b>sum (1)</b> 100:16</p> <p><b>summarize (1)</b> 225:3</p> <p><b>summarized (1)</b> 110:14</p> <p><b>summative (5)</b> 8:10;9:17;39:22; 211:4;221:10</p> <p><b>summatives (1)</b> 6:7</p> <p><b>summer (8)</b> 73:21;103:25; 108:23;125:11; 155:11;201:5,6; 211:20</p> <p><b>Summit (8)</b> 69:3;72:5;74:9,21; 80:18;198:4;200:4, 24</p> <p><b>Sunday (1)</b> 199:10</p> <p><b>super (1)</b> 88:7</p> <p><b>Superintendent (8)</b> 17:14;116:18; 117:7;118:4;166:13, 16;174:10;175:15</p> <p><b>superintendents (1)</b> 17:16</p> <p><b>supervisor (3)</b> 117:9;161:9,20</p> <p><b>support (55)</b> 4:15;6:23;12:3; 39:23;40:2,11;41:6; 60:14,17;64:17; 65:21;67:13;72:4,18; 73:14;74:1;75:10,22;</p>	<p>80:23;81:12;82:11; 86:10;97:8;100:2,22; 113:17;116:7,17,19; 125:24;127:11,14; 136:1;174:9;177:22; 191:3;197:25; 198:22;199:3,25; 200:1,11;203:4,7,12, 12;204:22;206:19, 21;207:1,4,6,7,20; 218:7</p> <p><b>supported (3)</b> 12:7;133:15,17</p> <p><b>supporting (1)</b> 112:20</p> <p><b>supportive (1)</b> 67:10</p> <p><b>supports (3)</b> 22:7;75:11;203:10</p> <p><b>supposed (3)</b> 139:14,16,23</p> <p><b>SUPT (23)</b> 117:25;119:1; 130:15,23;132:25; 149:2,13,19,24; 150:17;157:7,11,13, 24;158:5,16;161:8, 12;162:22;168:20; 170:7;172:17,20</p> <p><b>surcharge (3)</b> 137:9;139:12; 140:18</p> <p><b>surcharges (1)</b> 138:15</p> <p><b>sure (58)</b> 4:25;11:18;14:24; 15:7;19:25;20:8,23; 23:18,20;29:23,25; 34:17;41:11;45:20; 50:15;52:19;55:25; 58:7;89:1;90:11; 93:23;94:21;95:5,7; 102:19;104:15,22; 105:4,6,23;115:2; 128:22;129:4;138:9; 143:24;148:9;150:6; 155:3;159:9;162:16; 167:14,15;172:8,13; 175:6,16,18;177:2, 19;180:3;181:18; 182:21;183:3,18; 186:18;200:19; 208:20;214:16</p> <p><b>surprise (1)</b> 146:19</p> <p><b>surprised (1)</b> 46:20</p> <p><b>surrounding (4)</b> 50:5;100:21; 192:14;205:10</p> <p><b>surveys (3)</b> 44:16;76:6;131:20</p> <p><b>suspending (1)</b></p>	<p>169:9</p> <p><b>suspension (6)</b> 21:16;23:3,9;24:6; 71:1;166:25</p> <p><b>suspensions (3)</b> 21:16;23:3;107:3</p> <p><b>sustained (1)</b> 170:22</p> <p><b>swear (5)</b> 5:3;66:9;115:7; 117:14;193:13</p> <p><b>switch (3)</b> 8:20;94:6;180:15</p> <p><b>switched (1)</b> 128:4</p> <p><b>system (9)</b> 22:4;39:17;40:11; 43:15;73:1;91:14; 93:2;127:3;128:25</p> <p><b>systemic (1)</b> 180:9</p> <p><b>Systems (2)</b> 203:18,18</p>	<p>17:22;19:8</p> <p><b>tangibly (1)</b> 43:16</p> <p><b>target (3)</b> 56:16;201:8; 202:22</p> <p><b>targeted (6)</b> 8:21;44:24;104:14; 202:17,24;207:4</p> <p><b>task (1)</b> 72:12</p> <p><b>taskforce (3)</b> 198:16,16;206:2</p> <p><b>tasks (2)</b> 74:6;78:11</p> <p><b>tat (1)</b> 211:19</p> <p><b>taught (2)</b> 44:11;75:17</p> <p><b>tax (4)</b> 155:7;177:7,8,11</p> <p><b>taxes (3)</b> 138:25;140:17; 177:22</p> <p><b>teach (6)</b> 9:5,11;16:17; 69:22;78:7;89:8</p> <p><b>teacher (34)</b> 8:2,4;16:22;24:10; 27:7;39:11;41:25; 47:17;48:7;50:8; 59:14;74:16;91:5,8; 92:17;100:9;101:25; 106:11,14;113:12; 114:3;116:25; 138:13;139:11; 160:14,16;162:7; 199:10;200:8,11; 206:16;207:19; 210:22;214:5</p> <p><b>teachers (91)</b> 8:3,16;9:1,5,21; 11:23;15:10;16:4; 36:2;39:17,21,24; 40:2,7,12;41:1,16,19, 24;42:3,8;47:18; 48:7,11,17,21,24; 49:6,7;51:1,4;53:11; 59:17;67:9;68:24; 69:6;70:9;71:23; 72:8,14,15;73:17,23, 25;75:3,7,20;76:25; 78:19;88:15;90:22, 23;91:2;92:7;93:5, 24;99:5,6,11;100:20; 101:13;107:12,13; 112:19;127:13; 133:14;137:8;166:4; 168:4;177:21; 199:19;200:2,20; 203:12;204:6,9; 206:18,22,22;209:12, 14,16,25;210:5;</p>
---	--	--	---	---

**T**

**tables (1)**

78:8

**tacit (1)**

41:9

**tackle (2)**

7:20;49:25

**tailor (3)**

23:5;24:4;25:19

**talented (2)**

68:3;194:18

**talk (18)**

17:15;18:16;47:10,

17;52:20;86:11;

87:15;89:11;107:23;

134:1;135:4;176:23;

195:8;198:9;202:13;

212:6;213:9;214:15

**talked (18)**

24:5;39:8;41:6;

51:16;54:8;96:19;

106:17,18;107:25;

108:4;134:19,21;

138:16;141:18;

147:21;175:15;

196:22;215:15

**talking (7)**

40:7;102:25;139:9,

22;142:12,12;211:7

**talks (2)**

127:12;213:24

**Tallo (1)**

15:21

**Tammy (1)**

127:8

**tamper (1)**

45:11

**tangible (2)**

<p>211:18,19;213:16,21, 25;215:5,9 <b>teachers' (1)</b> 213:20 <b>teaching (22)</b> 8:19;12:16;15:10; 41:5;47:23;48:5,6; 64:2;71:7,24;74:16; 76:10,11;101:5,13; 102:13;125:8,10,12; 200:21;203:13; 220:23 <b>team (22)</b> 5:20;12:7;18:3; 22:7;36:25;39:25; 40:4;60:16;78:19; 84:8;108:12;116:17; 131:22;145:16; 160:11;193:9;199:3; 207:5;211:16; 214:19,21;215:5 <b>team-build (1)</b> 70:18 <b>teams (2)</b> 9:9;36:2 <b>Tech (3)</b> 14:22;18:14,18 <b>technical (2)</b> 155:2;159:11 <b>technology (3)</b> 72:11;198:23; 202:4 <b>teenager (1)</b> 133:23 <b>telling (2)</b> 88:16;208:22 <b>tells (2)</b> 220:15;222:15 <b>tem (1)</b> 130:5 <b>temporary (1)</b> 141:16 <b>Ten (2)</b> 205:4,11 <b>tend (1)</b> 131:15 <b>term (10)</b> 119:19,22;120:8, 11;121:9;123:18; 128:18;130:10; 207:25;208:6 <b>termination (1)</b> 91:14 <b>terms (11)</b> 52:18;55:22;115:3; 119:13;120:9; 121:14;123:14; 124:22;129:24; 130:3;180:3 <b>TESS (2)</b> 40:13;125:25 <b>test (11)</b> 8:12,17;100:14;</p>	<p>121:20;122:9; 125:20;201:10; 207:22;212:3,22; 216:2 <b>testimony (5)</b> 5:4;66:10;115:8; 117:15;193:14 <b>Testing (8)</b> 188:7,9;207:13; 212:18;213:13,17,22, 23 <b>tests (1)</b> 207:14 <b>textbook (1)</b> 74:12 <b>thank- (1)</b> 112:21 <b>thankful (1)</b> 118:7 <b>Thanks (2)</b> 32:21;204:21 <b>that'll (1)</b> 144:24 <b>theirs (1)</b> 24:24 <b>therapist (4)</b> 68:14;86:8,12; 133:5 <b>therefore (2)</b> 32:14;85:13 <b>thinkers (1)</b> 74:7 <b>thinking (14)</b> 48:8;52:14;54:9, 10;178:19;179:15; 180:12;184:10,12,22; 185:14;188:2; 216:12,17 <b>third (6)</b> 17:23;95:10; 114:22;122:11; 220:11,12 <b>thorough (1)</b> 181:20 <b>though (10)</b> 19:1;30:18;34:5; 58:5;76:17;104:1; 131:13;152:17; 169:4;197:17 <b>thought (6)</b> 24:6;47:4;55:5; 61:6;63:21;155:5 <b>thoughtful (1)</b> 64:1 <b>thoughts (5)</b> 57:19;58:10;59:12; 112:8;224:25 <b>thousand (1)</b> 146:12 <b>three (39)</b> 6:15,20,22;12:10, 12;22:17;42:10,21; 47:16;59:10;65:16;</p>	<p>79:5;80:4;83:5,12, 21;84:5,14;86:10; 91:20;100:15; 109:25;110:1,2,7; 111:23;112:2; 113:23;118:15; 119:20,24;129:12; 135:2;199:4;201:6; 205:21;209:10; 223:25;230:25 <b>three-quarter (5)</b> 127:17,19,20; 147:13;148:11 <b>three-tier (1)</b> 39:17 <b>three-tiered (1)</b> 22:12 <b>three-year (7)</b> 62:18;102:22; 198:11;205:6,23; 207:2;208:1 <b>threshold (1)</b> 196:5 <b>thriving (1)</b> 133:19 <b>throughout (4)</b> 39:21;43:11;70:20; 147:18 <b>throw (1)</b> 175:6 <b>Thursday (2)</b> 153:12;199:5 <b>thus (1)</b> 77:15 <b>tier (11)</b> 22:17,17;40:11; 125:17,24;126:14,20, 21;202:18,20;203:23 <b>ties (2)</b> 114:3;165:3 <b>tighter (2)</b> 9:12;10:9 <b>till (2)</b> 162:5;185:4 <b>timeframe (1)</b> 179:8 <b>timeline (8)</b> 20:4;172:2;174:19; 183:7;184:7;187:25; 190:9;223:9 <b>timelines (3)</b> 180:14;183:4; 190:12 <b>timely (3)</b> 76:24;128:25; 129:4 <b>times (9)</b> 20:7;105:7;149:4; 151:11,20;156:9; 159:6;166:8;167:20 <b>timing (2)</b> 177:25;178:19 <b>tips (1)</b></p>	<p>127:5 <b>tired (1)</b> 192:7 <b>tirelessly (1)</b> 125:5 <b>title (9)</b> 3:10;5:12;66:17; 131:1,11,12;132:18; 135:20;160:2 <b>today (41)</b> 3:5,18;4:6;5:16; 28:24;29:11;60:2; 64:22;86:9;90:19; 94:7;95:20;109:13; 111:13;112:23; 114:23;116:22; 117:4;118:2,7,22; 125:9;128:15,16; 129:16;155:13; 184:5;185:5;187:4; 190:8;191:17; 193:24;195:8; 204:17,20;206:6; 208:8;209:17;223:8, 10;225:17 <b>together (5)</b> 10:15;17:15;86:15; 146:25;147:5 <b>toiletries (1)</b> 198:24 <b>told (5)</b> 12:10,12;84:13; 85:11;109:13 <b>tomorrow (2)</b> 87:25;185:20 <b>took (6)</b> 79:21;98:1;131:5; 211:9;213:24;215:4 <b>tool (1)</b> 9:15 <b>tools (1)</b> 42:8 <b>top (3)</b> 156:12;164:24; 171:9 <b>total (5)</b> 11:21;45:8;119:24; 123:20;137:25 <b>totally (2)</b> 101:11;222:20 <b>touch (3)</b> 14:10;106:20; 108:5 <b>touched (2)</b> 175:6;202:12 <b>tough (1)</b> 213:18 <b>toward (3)</b> 38:25;76:10;109:2 <b>towards (1)</b> 46:13 <b>town (1)</b> 69:9</p>	<p><b>track (11)</b> 13:12;39:21,22,23; 40:13,13;197:19; 205:23;207:17,23; 214:1 <b>tracking (4)</b> 9:12;199:16;200:6; 201:1 <b>tracks (1)</b> 40:10 <b>Tracy (2)</b> 3:23;223:11 <b>traditional (8)</b> 29:14;32:10;33:14; 105:9;109:11; 142:22;176:3;189:4 <b>train (1)</b> 48:11 <b>trained (3)</b> 75:4;107:10; 203:24 <b>trainer (2)</b> 9:22;206:20 <b>trainers (1)</b> 97:13 <b>training (33)</b> 9:20,22;41:5;43:9, 18;51:10;71:10,14; 72:14,15,16;73:21; 75:5;78:6;93:19; 97:9;107:14;126:5,7, 10,11;129:11;155:3, 11;160:7;167:11; 199:20;200:24; 204:7;206:22,23,24; 207:1 <b>trainings (7)</b> 70:10,12;71:11,15; 97:13;131:24;132:1 <b>trajectory (1)</b> 208:5 <b>transcript (1)</b> 3:13 <b>Transition (9)</b> 68:13;97:1,2; 165:6;216:21;217:3, 6;218:2,13 <b>transitioned (1)</b> 129:19 <b>transparency (3)</b> 173:1,5,7 <b>transportation (3)</b> 68:5;120:4;194:19 <b>transported (1)</b> 67:7 <b>trauma (7)</b> 70:11;71:10,13; 76:1;96:19;97:3,4 <b>trauma-informed (2)</b> 97:13,17 <b>travel (2)</b> 8:12;13:2 <b>traveled (1)</b></p>
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<p>18:12 <b>Traveling (1)</b> 79:3 <b>travels (1)</b> 16:23 <b>tray (1)</b> 150:4 <b>Tree (2)</b> 71:19;87:10 <b>tremendous (3)</b> 87:5;124:24;208:3 <b>tremendously (1)</b> 69:1 <b>trend (2)</b> 59:10;145:24 <b>trending (1)</b> 109:2 <b>triangulate (1)</b> 100:10 <b>trickier (2)</b> 16:17;44:10 <b>tried (4)</b> 23:5;102:16;142:3; 157:16 <b>tries (1)</b> 167:1 <b>triggers (1)</b> 154:21 <b>trip (2)</b> 43:24;87:12 <b>Tripp (8)</b> 21:6;22:23;24:3; 18;25:9;32:21;90:13; 93:14 <b>trophy (1)</b> 108:18 <b>truancy (1)</b> 22:21 <b>true (2)</b> 147:20;150:13 <b>truly (6)</b> 70:18,20;73:18; 80:9,19,24 <b>trust (1)</b> 69:19 <b>truth (12)</b> 5:5,5,5;66:10,11, 11;117:16,16,17; 193:15,15,16 <b>try (15)</b> 15:6;16:15;30:16; 36:8;38:1,19;45:22; 93:22;100:9;134:10; 148:17;154:14; 170:4;174:8;213:19 <b>trying (24)</b> 11:10;31:24;33:22; 46:21;50:4;59:13; 84:1,11;107:15; 131:9;136:16;141:1; 150:2;156:6;158:8; 171:17;172:12; 178:20;179:13;</p>	<p>181:16;183:13; 213:3;214:9;218:11 <b>turn (1)</b> 209:15 <b>turned (2)</b> 84:12;174:8 <b>turning (1)</b> 50:10 <b>turnover (10)</b> 47:17;48:5,18; 59:15;106:11,14; 113:12;129:15; 154:10;210:22 <b>twice (4)</b> 8:7;165:19;173:23; 215:3 <b>two (48)</b> 8:11;11:5;15:5; 19:23;21:3,8;23:7; 26:11;55:9;65:20; 67:17;79:16;80:2; 83:5;92:14;94:24; 95:7;97:13;101:7; 114:11,11;117:4; 133:4;134:16; 144:23,25;145:6; 147:17;155:9; 158:13;165:1,23; 166:20;177:3; 180:24;183:9,16; 192:21;194:10; 199:25;204:9; 206:22;208:4;219:4; 221:18;223:24,25; 229:25 <b>two-line (1)</b> 29:2 <b>two-plus (1)</b> 165:2 <b>two-thirds (1)</b> 220:13 <b>type (8)</b> 60:17,19;85:2; 146:16;152:14; 158:12;187:14;220:3 <b>types (2)</b> 87:16;177:23 <b>typically (4)</b> 53:4;89:15;177:14; 182:3 <b>typing (1)</b> 112:9</p>	<p><b>unaware (1)</b> 168:21 <b>uncertainty (1)</b> 213:14 <b>unclear (1)</b> 26:9 <b>under (10)</b> 19:1;28:13;125:25, 25;128:20;131:11; 132:18;134:6;175:7; 221:11 <b>under-enrolled (1)</b> 57:2 <b>underserved (3)</b> 37:21,22;38:8 <b>understood (2)</b> 45:20;50:13 <b>unfortunate (1)</b> 214:1 <b>unique (6)</b> 23:6,15;25:12; 67:15;91:6;194:8 <b>Unit (8)</b> 3:24;150:19;160:4; 166:8;181:20; 182:20;224:5,7 <b>units (2)</b> 117:4;192:12 <b>universities (3)</b> 75:13,14;200:17 <b>University (5)</b> 101:3;131:7;132:6; 197:13;204:8 <b>unknown (1)</b> 31:14 <b>unless (5)</b> 28:17;29:18;32:18; 34:10;186:13 <b>unpaid (3)</b> 177:6,8,12 <b>up (81)</b> 19:23;20:7;22:17; 23:23;28:5;29:21; 30:11;37:17;40:10, 10;43:23,24;51:9; 53:18;55:24;56:22; 57:20;61:12;63:6; 65:20;66:16;78:19, 22;81:6,10,15;82:18; 83:5;88:3;89:10,11; 95:10;100:16; 101:11;103:22; 109:9;115:12,21; 128:16,24;130:17; 132:16,17;133:12; 134:16;135:6;136:6; 137:25;139:9;150:1; 152:21;153:7; 155:12;157:10; 159:14;160:6; 161:18;163:14; 165:8;170:7;171:21; 173:15;181:4;184:6;</p>	<p>185:4;187:9;208:13, 14;210:16;213:3,7, 15,20;214:12,18; 215:11;216:8,9; 218:11;219:4;220:5 <b>upcoming (1)</b> 36:17 <b>update (3)</b> 116:10;193:24; 198:12 <b>updated (1)</b> 160:8 <b>updates (1)</b> 116:12 <b>uploaded (1)</b> 20:21 <b>upon (7)</b> 68:25;80:10; 118:11;125:7;142:6; 147:3;206:13 <b>upper (6)</b> 52:10;55:14;67:4; 96:2;195:11,18 <b>upset (1)</b> 69:23 <b>urgency (4)</b> 6:9,12;7:19;47:9 <b>USDA (2)</b> 154:6,21 <b>use (25)</b> 21:15;23:2;27:12; 52:9;54:1;72:24; 73:13;74:17;75:8; 81:17;93:16,17;94:3, 12,14;107:1;120:12; 121:16;126:22; 129:23;199:12; 203:8,17;222:3,19 <b>used (14)</b> 8:13,14,22;68:19; 69:7;74:21;85:4; 98:2;101:19;102:10; 111:8;147:1;173:14; 182:1 <b>uses (2)</b> 72:5;79:10 <b>using (8)</b> 27:12,13;52:10; 54:3;127:20;151:8; 173:18;202:19 <b>usually (2)</b> 145:10,11 <b>utilize (11)</b> 20:9;53:11;68:4; 72:2,11;74:5;162:25; 176:14;194:18; 197:23;202:3 <b>utilizes (1)</b> 199:22 <b>utilizing (5)</b> 8:7,10,21;41:23; 166:18</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>V</b></p> <p><b>vacancies (2)</b> 90:10;200:18 <b>vacancy (2)</b> 90:8,11 <b>valedictorian (2)</b> 12:13,20 <b>valedictorians (1)</b> 12:12 <b>Valentine's (1)</b> 214:17 <b>valid (1)</b> 156:5 <b>validated (1)</b> 156:13 <b>value (1)</b> 46:6 <b>value-added (4)</b> 6:21;8:1;77:15; 195:13 <b>values (1)</b> 69:10 <b>variety (9)</b> 29:4,12;38:9,11; 50:1;115:18;126:8; 157:16,18 <b>various (4)</b> 16:22;125:20; 127:5;155:4 <b>varying (1)</b> 68:7 <b>vast (1)</b> 197:21 <b>vastly (1)</b> 80:16 <b>vending (3)</b> 33:8,15,15 <b>vendors (5)</b> 146:4;177:11,19, 20,23 <b>verification (1)</b> 120:3 <b>verified (2)</b> 34:3;95:12 <b>verify (1)</b> 21:4 <b>version (1)</b> 81:25 <b>versus (6)</b> 94:6;95:3;143:20; 153:19;156:11; 216:22 <b>vertical (1)</b> 76:9 <b>vetted (1)</b> 35:22 <b>via (3)</b> 8:23;18:17;215:16 <b>viable (3)</b> 172:1,14;195:3 <b>vice-versa (1)</b></p>
	<b>U</b>			
	<p><b>ultimately (3)</b> 70:24;114:4; 123:24 <b>unable (1)</b> 190:20 <b>UNANIMOUS (6)</b> 63:13;83:14;112:4; 189:16,18;224:19</p>			

8:1 <b>victim (1)</b> 133:9 <b>video (5)</b> 9:1;14:5;45:25; 46:2;49:17 <b>vie (1)</b> 12:20 <b>viewed (1)</b> 14:6 <b>viewing (1)</b> 3:11 <b>village (1)</b> 75:9 <b>violation (1)</b> 190:21 <b>violent (1)</b> 168:25 <b>VIRTUAL (31)</b> 3:16,21,25;4:7; 5:14;14:4;17:24; 18:1;21:18;23:6,10; 24:23;25:12,20; 26:10,21,24;27:3,14; 29:15;32:9;40:18; 41:20;43:16;46:19; 47:20;48:6;49:2; 60:19;61:6;227:24 <b>virtually (3)</b> 16:17,18;18:18 <b>visit (8)</b> 81:23;100:8,8; 102:7;133:13; 148:21;190:1,4 <b>visited (2)</b> 81:24;141:18 <b>visiting (1)</b> 10:19 <b>visits (3)</b> 10:25;78:20; 108:12 <b>vital (2)</b> 131:17;201:16 <b>vocabulary (1)</b> 203:5 <b>voice (1)</b> 8:23 <b>volcano (1)</b> 43:15 <b>volumes (1)</b> 120:6 <b>voluntarily (1)</b> 181:19 <b>volunteer (2)</b> 10:17;18:7 <b>vote (10)</b> 81:14;185:16,20; 186:4,8,10;189:18; 190:18;208:15;209:3 <b>voted (14)</b> 63:20;64:6,11; 113:4,8,13,22;114:1; 186:20;187:5,5;	190:24;191:6,14 <b>votes (4)</b> 63:15;177:15; 186:7;187:3 <b>voting (1)</b> 189:24  <b>W</b>  <b>wading (1)</b> 220:22 <b>wait (3)</b> 179:23;188:17; 224:24 <b>waited (1)</b> 176:12 <b>waiting (4)</b> 116:14;144:6; 188:14;215:16 <b>waive (1)</b> 33:24 <b>waiver (46)</b> 11:24,25;19:9; 21:3,8,11,12;22:1; 23:5;24:13,16;25:1,5, 17;26:18;27:11;28:3, 16,20;30:4,5,9,13; 32:15,16;33:4,13; 34:2,6,21,23,24; 35:13;36:7;61:22; 64:18;90:2,6,10,15; 91:1;92:20;94:23; 95:12;111:1;166:15 <b>waivers (29)</b> 20:25;24:23;26:9; 28:9;29:1,18,20,23; 31:11,15,23;89:24; 90:2,20;91:8,19,20; 94:22;110:13,14,18, 20,22;111:2,5,7,10; 125:14;166:12 <b>walk (2)</b> 86:17;114:25 <b>wall (1)</b> 102:10 <b>Waller (1)</b> 127:1 <b>WALTER (22)</b> 21:5,6;22:23,23; 24:18,18;25:9,9; 28:7;30:8,23;31:1,6; 32:5,19;33:1,18; 90:13,13;91:3;92:13; 95:9 <b>wants (1)</b> 176:23 <b>war (1)</b> 49:4 <b>washer (1)</b> 198:23 <b>waste (1)</b> 137:13 <b>watch (1)</b>	222:18 <b>water (1)</b> 137:12 <b>Watson (4)</b> 121:2;176:10; 209:21,21 <b>way (24)</b> 9:5;15:12;28:11; 30:17;32:3;40:18; 49:21;56:4;58:6; 85:16;90:9,12; 106:23;171:11,18; 178:25;179:7;181:3; 185:12;206:24; 217:8;220:19; 221:22;225:21 <b>ways (7)</b> 29:12;44:4,11; 50:1;54:8;55:7; 225:12 <b>Webb (16)</b> 3:23,23;4:19,21, 23;59:21,24;65:12, 24;66:3;115:24; 116:1;192:8,9; 204:22;223:13 <b>website (4)</b> 3:14;14:6;167:4,6 <b>weeds (1)</b> 39:12 <b>week (14)</b> 9:9;79:20;92:22; 93:4;98:11;99:6; 116:18;120:1;147:4; 148:22;153:10,11; 158:17;168:9 <b>weekend (1)</b> 103:25 <b>weekends (1)</b> 168:10 <b>weekly (6)</b> 126:12;129:20; 199:9;200:1;203:11; 206:19 <b>weeks (7)</b> 143:16;145:6,19; 173:9;178:13; 179:11;201:7 <b>weighted (5)</b> 6:19;7:25;77:14; 195:13;196:6 <b>welcome (2)</b> 3:4;57:1 <b>Welding (1)</b> 16:17 <b>well-done (1)</b> 102:14 <b>wellness (1)</b> 198:22 <b>well-versed (1)</b> 53:22 <b>weren't (12)</b> 92:5;149:10;151:8;	156:4,4;158:9;165:2; 167:17,18;179:24; 184:25;185:6 <b>whatnot (1)</b> 210:23 <b>what's (16)</b> 31:15,16;42:15; 43:23;50:6;88:21; 131:11;132:11; 139:12;163:8;171:1; 181:2;182:22; 192:13;212:7;219:22 <b>whenever (2)</b> 134:2;187:18 <b>WHEREUPON (1)</b> 14:5 <b>wherever (2)</b> 101:22;188:8 <b>White (1)</b> 176:11 <b>whole (16)</b> 5:5;11:9;19:2; 28:11;36:14;66:11; 84:22,23;107:15,19; 108:21;113:24; 117:16;140:6; 193:15;214:8 <b>wholeheartedly (1)</b> 47:12 <b>who's (3)</b> 4:7;5:8;78:18 <b>who've (3)</b> 79:4;82:17;197:8 <b>wide (1)</b> 79:1 <b>wider (1)</b> 68:5 <b>Williams (112)</b> 20:20;28:19,20; 29:9;30:2,9,22,25; 31:3,10;39:2,3,8; 41:4,9,12;42:9,13,18; 44:7;46:9;58:24; 59:3;61:4,17,20; 62:13,23;63:1,7; 64:16,17;65:1;82:20, 23;89:18;100:5; 102:20;103:8,13,16; 105:25;106:4;110:3; 112:9;113:17; 114:13,16;123:21; 125:22;129:25; 135:13,15;136:11,15, 21;143:4,21;145:10, 23;147:8,15,19; 170:15;171:13; 174:20;175:20,22; 176:17;177:25; 178:19;179:16; 180:7,22;181:10,14, 22;182:24;183:12, 22;184:9,11,13,21; 185:2,13;186:2;	191:2,3;212:6,19,24; 213:1;219:9,11,14, 20;220:1,17;221:8, 16,21,25;222:9,23; 223:20;224:9,11,13; 225:5;226:1,6 <b>Williams' (1)</b> 102:6 <b>willing (5)</b> 6:4;17:10;84:17; 154:14;189:5 <b>Wilson (25)</b> 37:18,19;39:1; 63:10;64:10,11,15; 109:8,20;111:22; 113:2,4;127:3;135:8, 11;170:17;171:20; 186:22;187:11; 189:8;191:13,14; 215:19;219:25; 224:15 <b>wind- (1)</b> 182:18 <b>wind-down (6)</b> 177:17;182:8,24; 183:14;185:21;186:3 <b>winding (1)</b> 181:21 <b>Windle (1)</b> 190:1 <b>window (1)</b> 188:7 <b>winning (2)</b> 48:14;49:4 <b>winter (2)</b> 79:21;212:16 <b>wise (1)</b> 45:13 <b>wisely (1)</b> 15:15 <b>wish (8)</b> 21:8;25:10;81:17; 111:1;112:11; 219:21;221:22; 225:15 <b>wishes (2)</b> 21:2;93:2 <b>wishing (1)</b> 208:25 <b>withdraw (2)</b> 169:8;170:9 <b>within (19)</b> 27:6;36:16;45:4; 57:16;58:12,23;59:4; 62:10;63:5;68:11; 72:10;96:24;103:6; 120:1;153:11; 154:20;183:5,6; 202:17 <b>without (6)</b> 23:12;91:25;120:4; 159:1,7;162:6 <b>witness (1)</b>
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90:23 <b>witnessed (1)</b> 82:1 <b>wonderful (3)</b> 84:3,4;169:18 <b>wondering (2)</b> 52:9;54:23 <b>Word (2)</b> 72:4;197:25 <b>wording (1)</b> 29:5 <b>words (5)</b> 14:9;151:18; 187:11;202:23,24 <b>work (60)</b> 8:16;16:21;17:15; 31:20;36:23;38:1; 46:15;52:25;53:13; 54:2;59:19;64:23; 68:21;70:2;71:11,21; 72:8,10,11,12;73:23, 25;80:19;81:23;82:5, 7;88:9;99:4,8; 103:12;113:19; 118:19;122:14; 123:22;124:24; 131:25;132:12; 133:7;144:11;145:1, 2,7,14,17;169:23; 170:25;172:12; 173:2,8;183:8,10; 184:8;204:23; 205:13;206:2; 207:23;214:4,9,23; 215:14 <b>worked (12)</b> 7:9;14:21,23; 28:13,14;42:3;87:4; 88:15;131:8;170:3; 206:17;211:18 <b>workers (1)</b> 137:7 <b>working (37)</b> 16:10,14,22;17:3; 30:6;46:11;47:11; 49:2;58:20;88:7; 100:1,20;114:8; 116:20;121:8;122:8; 125:1,4;128:23; 129:5;131:5,12,13; 132:15,19;133:8; 141:22;143:23; 145:6,11;152:7; 184:17;190:10; 199:15;206:3; 211:21;212:20 <b>workplace (2)</b> 16:24;48:25 <b>works (9)</b> 23:14;68:15;72:21, 23;92:16;164:11; 175:11;198:17; 203:11	<b>world (1)</b> 16:10 <b>worried (1)</b> 185:11 <b>worth (2)</b> 159:4;179:12 <b>worthwhile (1)</b> 87:18 <b>wound-down (1)</b> 183:7 <b>wrap (1)</b> 95:10 <b>wrapping (1)</b> 88:9 <b>write (1)</b> 84:22 <b>writing (4)</b> 72:12;88:24;196:9; 201:18 <b>written (5)</b> 26:2;29:5;56:13; 58:25;132:8 <b>wrong (3)</b> 145:13;212:14; 223:12 <b>wrote (1)</b> 152:10	25;144:4,5,6;145:4, 15;147:6,13,14,18, 24;148:10;151:3; 153:2;158:13,20; 159:5;161:4,23; 162:2;163:1;166:15; 168:12;170:22; 175:2,13,14;176:13, 14,16;178:25;180:14, 17;183:9,11,20; 184:6;195:12,12; 196:18,20,21;198:5; 200:10;203:22; 206:4,10,11,11; 207:16,18,22;213:5, 13,13,15,19;214:2,5; 215:1;218:5;220:11, 14;224:2;225:10,17 <b>yearly (1)</b> 212:7 <b>year-one (1)</b> 201:1 <b>years (49)</b> 4:4,23;6:15;12:24; 30:15;42:10;47:23; 48:2,15;50:23;51:9; 58:19;59:10,15; 65:17;73:6;79:5,16, 16,17,18,18;80:1,2,4; 87:22;101:8;107:8; 109:25;110:1,2,7; 111:23;112:2; 113:23;158:13; 177:4;183:9;194:24; 197:2,10;205:21; 208:4;209:11; 217:17;219:5; 223:24,25;225:13 <b>year's (3)</b> 212:11,11,23 <b>year-to-year (1)</b> 51:24 <b>year-two (1)</b> 201:2 <b>yesterday (7)</b> 20:17;62:17;137:5; 139:6;144:19,21; 215:16 <b>yielding (1)</b> 71:23 <b>young (1)</b> 49:19 <b>younger (2)</b> 44:13;216:22 <b>youngest (1)</b> 84:20 <b>youngsters (1)</b> 113:6	204:17 <b>zoned (2)</b> 176:4,16 <b>Zoom (4)</b> 8:21,24;18:17; 44:15 <b>zoomed (1)</b> 18:15	53:6;121:7,21; 122:5,6,15,17;123:4, 5,13;222:7 <b>11 (6)</b> 33:9,12;160:24; 161:3;162:14;185:6 <b>11% (4)</b> 67:22;69:19;77:9; 79:24 <b>11:34 (1)</b> 114:20 <b>111 (2)</b> 11:22,23 <b>115 (2)</b> 151:1,7 <b>116 (2)</b> 119:12,24 <b>117 (4)</b> 127:20;139:23; 147:16;149:22 <b>11th (2)</b> 53:2;137:14 <b>12 (7)</b> 11:20;18:25;34:9; 44:14;56:12;57:8; 195:15 <b>12% (1)</b> 77:11 <b>12:00 (3)</b> 114:18,18,19 <b>12:06 (1)</b> 114:20 <b>12:45 (1)</b> 94:7 <b>1240 (1)</b> 29:21 <b>12th (1)</b> 119:3 <b>13 (2)</b> 204:5;206:23 <b>13% (3)</b> 79:23;98:6;194:15 <b>13th (3)</b> 137:20;160:6; 161:17 <b>1400 (1)</b> 58:19 <b>14th (1)</b> 225:24 <b>15 (4)</b> 13:7;65:14;163:14; 183:5 <b>15% (2)</b> 76:6;196:20 <b>150 (1)</b> 11:21 <b>153 (1)</b> 194:20 <b>159 (1)</b> 193:4 <b>15th (6)</b> 117:2;163:21; 164:14;165:17;
	<b>X</b>			
	<b>Xello (1)</b> 15:22 <b>X-number (1)</b> 56:14			
	<b>Y</b>			
	<b>y'all (1)</b> 106:22 <b>year (159)</b> 4:18;5:17,25;6:6; 7:21,22;8:7,20,24; 9:8,19;10:13;11:5, 12;12:21;13:11;15:3; 16:3;17:23,25;18:3; 39:21,23;42:14; 43:10,12,22;47:25; 48:19;51:5,19;53:3; 58:16;59:16,16; 64:18;67:8;74:2,3,20, 24,25;75:2;77:4,7,14; 78:4;79:16,19,23,25; 80:3,4;94:14;96:24, 25;97:6,24;98:4,7,9, 12,13;104:13,21; 105:10,17,19;106:13, 21,21;109:4;120:9, 12,18,20,22;121:14, 16;124:8;125:4; 127:15,25;128:17; 131:6;132:16;133:3; 134:7;136:9,19; 137:5;142:7;143:6,	<b>zero (3)</b> 122:5;123:5;		
		<b>Z</b>		
			<b>1</b>	
			<b>1 (16)</b> 39:18,18,24; 118:11;119:8,23; 125:7,17,24;126:14; 129:8,11;202:18,20; 227:25;228:25 <b>1% (6)</b> 68:3;71:1;98:5; 194:9,9,10 <b>1,096 (1)</b> 58:2 <b>1.1 (1)</b> 80:1 <b>1.2 (1)</b> 79:18 <b>1.25 (3)</b> 79:16,17;80:3 <b>1.5 (1)</b> 195:25 <b>1.6 (1)</b> 47:24 <b>1:46 (1)</b> 192:1 <b>10 (10)</b> 22:21;33:11;34:24; 35:5;37:11;57:8; 76:19;156:9;208:1; 209:9 <b>10% (6)</b> 77:23;78:2;125:7; 195:16,19;206:10 <b>10:20 (1)</b> 65:5 <b>10:30 (1)</b> 65:5 <b>10:45 (1)</b> 94:6 <b>100 (2)</b> 75:3;176:8 <b>100% (2)</b> 80:14;126:18 <b>100-percent (1)</b> 8:24 <b>10-122 (2)</b> 32:23;33:4 <b>105 (1)</b> 26:2 <b>107 (2)</b> 119:8,22 <b>10-percent (1)</b> 95:2 <b>10th (11)</b>	

166:6;168:3 <b>16.68% (1)</b> 11:17 <b>167 (1)</b> 66:25 <b>16th (1)</b> 164:2 <b>17 (1)</b> 101:2 <b>17- (1)</b> 133:2 <b>17-18 (4)</b> 74:24;75:1;77:6,14 <b>18 (2)</b> 3:3;213:7 <b>18-19 (5)</b> 74:25;75:2;77:6, 14;210:23 <b>19 (3)</b> 77:21,22;213:7 <b>190 (2)</b> 105:12,14 <b>19-20 (3)</b> 48:2;97:23;200:14 <b>1991 (1)</b> 166:5 <b>1st (3)</b> 145:5;160:25; 188:5	65:14 <b>2015 (2)</b> 66:24;80:11 <b>2016 (1)</b> 194:25 <b>2017-18 (1)</b> 196:20 <b>2017-2018 (1)</b> 195:11 <b>2018 (3)</b> 119:4;120:17; 196:13 <b>2018-19 (1)</b> 196:21 <b>2018-2019 (20)</b> 67:1;119:18,22; 120:8,10,21,24; 121:9,19,23;122:7,9, 18,20;123:7,12,18; 125:1,3;195:12 <b>2019 (15)</b> 3:3;67:2;118:11; 119:4,8,23;120:17; 121:21;125:7;129:8, 12;196:13;201:13, 14;221:14 <b>2019-20 (1)</b> 203:21 <b>2019-2019 (1)</b> 121:15 <b>2019-2020 (2)</b> 121:16;199:13 <b>2020 (3)</b> 125:11;146:22; 163:15 <b>2020-2021 (1)</b> 130:10 <b>2021 (2)</b> 223:12,14 <b>2023 (1)</b> 65:17 <b>2025 (3)</b> 4:5,19,23 <b>203 (1)</b> 194:4 <b>20th (2)</b> 218:8,9 <b>210 (1)</b> 21:1 <b>21st (3)</b> 104:20;161:23; 201:24 <b>22 (2)</b> 17:1;102:18 <b>22nd (1)</b> 181:7 <b>23% (1)</b> 218:6 <b>2361 (1)</b> 58:16 <b>24.66% (1)</b> 77:25 <b>2474 (1)</b>	57:14 <b>25 (1)</b> 44:22 <b>25% (1)</b> 125:9 <b>256 (1)</b> 194:3 <b>25th (2)</b> 141:17;165:23 <b>26% (1)</b> 194:25 <b>27th (1)</b> 181:7 <b>28.6% (1)</b> 67:23 <b>29% (1)</b> 98:10 <b>29th (1)</b> 137:16 <b>2d1 (1)</b> 25:1 <b>2nd (2)</b> 218:2,9	7:1 <b>38 (2)</b> 16:21;77:22 <b>3-8 (4)</b> 67:5;199:23; 202:25;203:7 <b>39 (1)</b> 127:17 <b>3rd (12)</b> 196:3;216:3,6,9, 20;217:7;218:3,3,5, 10,23;219:5	215:24;216:4 <b>5-minute (1)</b> 65:2 <b>5th (13)</b> 72:5,17;74:22,24; 102:12;196:23; 201:8,10;211:12; 215:7,8;217:17; 221:15
<b>2</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2 (7)</b> 6:23;43:22;54:2; 65:9;126:20;203:23; 229:25 <b>2% (3)</b> 67:18;120:20; 139:17 <b>2,547 (1)</b> 11:16 <b>2.5% (1)</b> 68:2 <b>2:00 (4)</b> 152:6;191:24,25; 192:1 <b>2:42 (1)</b> 226:13 <b>20 (12)</b> 5:10;9:3;45:14; 46:4;66:14;92:21; 115:9,11;117:23; 192:23;202:17; 208:10 <b>200 (2)</b> 92:24;93:3 <b>2001 (2)</b> 4:2;31:12 <b>2003 (1)</b> 165:16 <b>200-minute (1)</b> 92:21 <b>2014 (1)</b>		<b>3 (6)</b> 39:18;40:1;72:4; 114:19;126:21; 230:25 <b>3% (3)</b> 11:18;78:1;194:16 <b>3,000 (2)</b> 4:3;62:10 <b>3:45 (1)</b> 105:2 <b>30 (10)</b> 44:10,14,16,22; 45:2;156:24;179:19, 19,19;183:6 <b>30% (1)</b> 194:25 <b>3000 (1)</b> 57:15 <b>30-minute (1)</b> 114:10 <b>30-something (2)</b> 52:11;98:9 <b>30th (1)</b> 167:3 <b>31 (2)</b> 156:10;206:11 <b>31st (2)</b> 141:18;156:13 <b>32.43% (1)</b> 195:17 <b>3-4 (1)</b> 216:8 <b>35% (1)</b> 98:9 <b>3-6 (2)</b> 197:25;203:8 <b>36% (1)</b>	<b>4 (4)</b> 72:4;73:12;101:8; 197:10 <b>4% (2)</b> 67:17;195:19 <b>40 (5)</b> 92:2,25;148:2; 156:24;202:16 <b>40-minute (1)</b> 93:4 <b>40-something (2)</b> 146:11,11 <b>42% (1)</b> 98:11 <b>45 (1)</b> 67:19 <b>45-minute (1)</b> 126:20 <b>4-point (1)</b> 219:5 <b>4th (8)</b> 162:1,5;196:20,23; 216:4,5,20;219:5	<b>6 (2)</b> 18:3;216:14 <b>6- (1)</b> 32:22 <b>6.25 (1)</b> 197:4 <b>6.5% (1)</b> 196:11 <b>60 (3)</b> 170:20;202:15; 206:10 <b>60% (1)</b> 98:12 <b>61 (1)</b> 7:13 <b>6-1 (1)</b> 33:3 <b>6-13-612 (1)</b> 90:4 <b>6-13-612c (2)</b> 90:10,16 <b>6-16-102a5 (1)</b> 19:10 <b>6-17-111 (1)</b> 91:21 <b>6-17-114 (1)</b> 91:21 <b>6-17-117 (1)</b> 91:21 <b>6-17-1901 (1)</b> 166:1 <b>6-17-208 (3)</b> 20:25;90:20,21 <b>6-17-210 (2)</b> 90:20,22 <b>6-18-2003a2a (1)</b> 94:25 <b>6-18-209b (1)</b> 21:12 <b>6-18-3004 (1)</b> 95:1 <b>6-18-511 (1)</b> 24:10 <b>62 (1)</b> 147:22 <b>6-25- (1)</b> 26:1 <b>6-25-101 (1)</b> 25:23 <b>6-25-105 (1)</b> 27:20

<p><b>6-25-106 (3)</b> 26:5;27:21;29:1 <b>639 (1)</b> 58:17 <b>64 (1)</b> 7:14 <b>65 (1)</b> 52:5 <b>65.91% (1)</b> 126:16 <b>66% (1)</b> 194:18 <b>67% (1)</b> 11:16 <b>6-8 (2)</b> 67:11;222:11 <b>6th (11)</b> 16:3;55:16;74:19, 23,25;75:1,1;126:9; 196:23;197:5;204:3</p>	<p>207:16 <b>8.6 (1)</b> 48:3 <b>8.9 (1)</b> 48:3 <b>80 (2)</b> 48:25;148:1 <b>80% (1)</b> 106:15 <b>80.99 (1)</b> 222:13 <b>83 (2)</b> 119:4,21 <b>84% (3)</b> 11:20;16:8,12 <b>85 (6)</b> 139:7,21;147:24; 149:18,21,22 <b>86% (1)</b> 76:5 <b>87% (2)</b> 67:16;158:3 <b>89% (2)</b> 120:19,19 <b>8th (3)</b> 79:7;198:5;200:5</p>			
<b>7</b>				
<p><b>7 (3)</b> 33:8,9;194:6 <b>7% (3)</b> 67:17;194:17; 196:22 <b>7:45 (1)</b> 105:2 <b>70 (1)</b> 148:1 <b>70% (2)</b> 119:5;214:2 <b>71% (1)</b> 98:14 <b>72% (1)</b> 68:4 <b>75 (2)</b> 14:13;48:25 <b>750 (2)</b> 58:18;65:15 <b>76.69 (1)</b> 222:6 <b>77% (1)</b> 80:13 <b>7-8 (4)</b> 216:14;222:11,12, 13 <b>79 (1)</b> 127:21 <b>7th (6)</b> 16:3;55:16;126:10; 196:23;198:5;200:5</p>				
<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>			
<p><b>8 (12)</b> 11:20,25;16:25; 18:24;33:10;44:14; 56:12;57:8,8;194:6; 197:5;201:13 <b>8% (1)</b></p>	<p><b>9 (2)</b> 33:10;34:9 <b>9% (1)</b> 77:8 <b>90 (4)</b> 163:13,14;170:20; 206:5 <b>90% (1)</b> 206:5 <b>90-percent (1)</b> 95:2 <b>91 (1)</b> 206:5 <b>93% (2)</b> 119:6,9 <b>95% (4)</b> 119:7;120:20; 206:6,7 <b>9-5-2-4 (1)</b> 165:11 <b>96% (2)</b> 48:20;194:8 <b>960 (1)</b> 57:24 <b>98 (1)</b> 201:25 <b>99% (2)</b> 119:10,10 <b>9th (12)</b> 53:6;119:3;121:4, 21,23,23;122:11,22, 25;123:9,11;124:10</p>			