

In The Matter Of:
*BEFORE THE ARKANSAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL*

November 19, 2015

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BEFORE THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL

#4 CAPITOL MALL
LITTLE ROCK, AR 72201

November 19, 2015

A P P E A R A N C E S

PANEL MEMBERS:

Ms. Deborah Coffman	Chairman/Chief of Staff
Dr. Debbie Jones	Vice Chair/Asst. Commissioner of Learning Services
Ms. Ivy Pfeffer	Asst. Commissioner - HR/Educator Effectiveness & Licensure
Dr. Eric Saunders	Asst. Commissioner - Fiscal & Administrative Services
Ms. Annette Barnes	Asst. Commission - Public School Accountability
Mr. Greg Rogers	Asst. Commissioner - Fiscal & Admin. Services
Dr. Mark Gotcher	Deputy Commissioner
Ms. Jennifer Liwo	PLSB Attorney
Mr. Bobby Lester	Director of Federal Programs

ALSO APPEARING:

Ms. Mary Perry	Coordinator - Learning Services
Ms. Alexandra Boyd	Public School Program Coordinator

ADE LEGAL COUNSEL:

Ms. Kendra Clay	ADE General Counsel
Ms. Jennifer Davis	ADE Deputy General Counsel
Mr. Cory Biggs	ADE Deputy General Counsel

I N D E X

	Page
Welcome and Preliminary Matters	3
Hearing Procedures	3
A-1: Gentry High School	5
A-2: Hot Springs World Class High School	55
Representative Eads	106
A-3: Springdale School of Innovation	107
A-4: Request to Postpone Open-Enrollment Priority School Hearings	190
Motion and Vote re: Adjournment	204
Court Reporter's Certificate	205

COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: PowerPoint presentations and videos shown during this meeting are available for viewing on the ADE website under the archived videos for Charter Authorizing Panel meetings.

P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen. The November 19, 2015 meeting of the Charter Authorizing Panel is now called to order. Welcome, everyone, to the Arkansas Department of Education. If you would, please silence all electronic devices. The Charter Authorizing Panel oversees the authorization, renewal, revision, and revocation of charters. The Arkansas Quality Charter Schools Act of 2013 requires the Commissioner to appoint ADE staff to the Panel. On July 1, 2015, Commissioner Key named nine members to the Charter Authorizing Panel and we sit before you today. As chair, my goal is to facilitate a fair and responsible hearing. I will request that each person speaking please state your name and title for the record. I will ask that you continue to speak clearly into the microphone for the benefit of the Panel, the audience and the viewing audience. This entire meeting is being live-streamed and recorded, and our court reporter will be providing a transcript of the meeting and it will be placed on the ADE website. So good morning to all. And, Ms. Clay, if you will go over the procedures for us today?

MS. CLAY: Good morning. Kendra Clay, General

1 Counsel for the Department of Education. The
2 procedures are the same that you have followed the
3 past two days, but I'll review them again for the
4 people that are new here today and the people that
5 are watching the live-stream. The district
6 conversion applicants will have 20 minutes to present
7 their case for approval of their application and then
8 any parties opposed will have 20 minutes to present
9 their opposition. After that the applicants will
10 have 5 minutes for closing statements and rebuttal
11 and then you will take questions and have discussion.
12 You can vote on the matter today or take it under
13 advisement and vote at a later meeting. If you do
14 that, you can allow the applicants to receive
15 technical assistance or provide additional
16 information to you. After you vote, you have access
17 to a Google doc. and you will go in and record how
18 you voted and the reason for your vote. This Google
19 doc. will then be shared with the State Board at
20 their December meeting to facilitate whether they
21 want to review your decision or not. As always, this
22 is basically a contract negotiation. A charter is
23 considered a contract. So anything that the
24 applicants say or agree to here today that is in
25 addition to or different than their application they

1 will be held to. Do you have any questions about the
2 procedures today? Okay.

3 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you. Do we have any
4 legislators in the room this morning? If not, then
5 Ms. Boyd, you are recognized to begin action item
6 one.

7 A-1: HEARING OF DISTRICT CONVERSION PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL
8 APPLICATION: GENTRY HIGH SCHOOL CONVERSION CHARTER

9 MS. BOYD: Thank you, Madam Chair. Item one,
10 Hearing of District Conversion Public Charter School
11 Application: Gentry High School Conversion Charter.
12 Gentry High School Conversion Charter is a proposed
13 district conversion public charter school. The
14 applicant is requesting to serve grades 9-12 with a
15 maximum enrollment of 500. ADE staff reviewed the
16 application, and concerns were shared with the
17 applicant for response. The application, the ADE
18 evaluation, and the applicant's response are included
19 for your review. From Gentry we have Dr. Barrett to
20 begin their presentation.

21 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: If all the representatives
22 from Gentry High School Conversion Charter and anyone
23 speaking in opposition will please stand to receive
24 the oath. Raise your right hand. Do you swear or
25 affirm that the testimony you're about to give shall

1 be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
2 truth?

3 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

4 SUPT. BARRETT: So help me God.

5 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Barrett, you're
6 recognized.

7 SUPT. BARRETT: Good morning, Madam Chair,
8 Members of the Panel. It's our pleasure and we thank
9 you for the opportunity to present to you today. Ms.
10 Winslett, Judy Winslett will be -- our assistant
11 superintendent at Gentry will be presenting the bulk
12 of our presentation; Mr. Brae Harper, high school
13 principal and I will be part of the group that will
14 respond to your questions; and I will be giving the
15 5-minute closing. So, Ms. Winslett.

16 MS. WINSLETT: Good morning. I'm Judy Winslett,
17 Gentry School assistant superintendent; very happy to
18 be with you today. Okay. I believe our PowerPoint
19 is up and visible now. I want to begin by giving you
20 just a little bit of an introduction about Gentry and
21 the community around the school system. We are
22 oftentimes thought of as a Mayberry. We're a small
23 town. You'll see there where we're located in the
24 top right. We're in the far northwest corner of
25 Arkansas, just nine miles north of Siloam Springs.

1 We're not too far from XNA Airport. And to the right
2 there you'll see three slides of communities that
3 also send children into our district. Highfill has
4 an approximate population of 353. We have Cherokee
5 City, which is on the Oklahoma border, and then
6 Springtown, which is also to the east of Gentry. No
7 matter where I go people will say, "Oh, Gentry,
8 that's where the Wilderness Safari is." So that is
9 our claim to fame in Gentry, and you'll see some
10 shots there of the safari.

11 This is a slide that will give you a little
12 picture of the industry in our area. As we are rural
13 and somewhat small, you'll see along the bottom we
14 have Tyson, Cobb, and Simmons. While none of those
15 particular industries are within our school district,
16 they do border our perimeters and we have families
17 that grow for these companies. Cargill is located
18 there to the bottom right. You'll see a picture of
19 SWEPCO. And then in the top left, a picture of
20 McKee, Little Debbie as we all refer to it. I met
21 her just recently for the first time and she does
22 very much look like her picture there on the side of
23 the truck. So a great partner for the Gentry
24 district.

25 I'm having just a little trouble with our

1 clicker. Next slide; thank you.

2 This is a picture, a quick picture of our
3 demographics there on the left. That was pulled the
4 first of November. And then the aerial shot of our
5 campus, which you will see our high school, our
6 middle school and our primary school back in the
7 distance there. We have another building which is on
8 the other side of town in our intermediate, which
9 houses grades 3-5.

10 I don't want to talk through these next two
11 slides. I inserted these so that you would see that
12 this process is not something we began in August. We
13 have been giving lots of thought and having multiple
14 meetings with business industry in our community.
15 And in my 17 years with Gentry I can't remember more
16 engagement and excitement about something that may
17 come to pass for us.

18 These are some events that began -- continued on
19 into this particular school year. And in the process
20 of this collaboration we began working with Decatur
21 and Gravette, which are to our north. We're all
22 relatively small in comparison to the big four on the
23 49 corridor. And we recognize that we can't do
24 everything for every child and so we have started
25 working together to try to provide opportunities for

1 them. For example, we have a student traveling to
2 Gravette now to be part of their HVAC program.

3 This is our mission statement that was drafted
4 for the charter and it simply says recognizing that
5 we do have a responsibility to students, parents and
6 stakeholders, business and industry, and our
7 community. And we have a need to provide safe and
8 productive school experiences for our students; that
9 we are going to purpose to deliver an education
10 that's designed to prepare our students for
11 successful transition to opportunities beyond us in
12 Gentry, whether that is college or career. We also
13 want to commit to being fiscally responsible with our
14 resources and provide the very best teachers,
15 technology and facilities that we have available.

16 So as we begin talking about our conversion
17 charter, these are the things that we saw great
18 opportunities for us to have: to build those
19 partnerships with business and industry, to provide
20 opportunities for our students to go out and work
21 with business and industry in an internship
22 environment; to expand our course offerings outside
23 what we traditionally offer as a high school; to
24 foster opportunities for our graduates to leave us
25 with an industry certificate; and to create these

1 following pathways in that process -- healthcare,
2 transportation, and IT.

3 In this process we have the innovations that we
4 looked closely at. Through the internship
5 opportunities, that provides our students with
6 training and it also gives them an opportunity to
7 build relationships with those potential employers.
8 The vocational programs that we hope to offer, once
9 approved by you guys, would be taught by industry
10 professionals and these professionals can bring up-
11 to-date training for our students and give them
12 authentic examples of what's happening in real world
13 situations. We would also strive to have
14 individualized instruction for our students by having
15 a customized education plan for them, offering self-
16 paced courses, college courses, and these specific
17 vocational and technical specialized courses.

18 So you would ask us why do we want to change and
19 we want to increase the options for our students. We
20 want to provide them with that value added diploma
21 that will help them in that next part of their
22 journey and to help them identify a pathway for their
23 future story.

24 Our friends at Northwest Arkansas Council
25 conducted personal interviews with business and

1 industry in our region and they -- this was a slide
2 that they allowed me to use. And questions that they
3 had with business and industry is, "Do you have
4 recruiting problems?" And you will see that over
5 half of the industries that were interviewed said
6 yes. "And of these problems, what are they related
7 to?" And you can see it's related to not only the
8 ability to get people to come to work but to also be
9 able to employ people that are trained and have the
10 skills and ability to work for their company.

11 Another slide that they provided for us. As a
12 result of that study were areas that they saw had
13 difficulties in filling. And so since we began
14 talking about this last fall we got excited about the
15 opportunities for our students. And because some of
16 the things we want to do needed your approval we
17 started looking at what can we do now, what can we do
18 to springboard us into our future plans. So there on
19 the right you will see the things that we were able
20 to plan and implement from last fall. And if you'll
21 look, they'll coordinate very closely with the
22 Northwest Arkansas Council's recommendations. We
23 began a new program of study in banking; we looked to
24 begin -- we did begin intro professional development
25 in medical terminology; we had discussed with

1 Gravette the opportunity to send our students to them
2 for a CNA program, as with their HVAC. And we had
3 enough students to hold our own class, so we
4 partnered with Northwest Arkansas Community College
5 and they provided us a teacher and we have a full
6 class of students from Gentry that will be graduating
7 with a CNA certificate. Personal care assistant will
8 be our second semester course in that area. We see
9 education as third on our list. Dr. Barrett did a
10 little data-gathering and for Gentry specifically
11 over half of our teaching staff is over 50 years old.
12 So we need to look to start growing some of our own
13 and so we've implemented an Orientation to Teaching
14 class. As I visited with business and industry, the
15 immediate response from everyone, when I said, "What
16 are we not doing in Gentry that you need us to do,"
17 and it all went back to soft skills; "We need folks
18 that know these things, know how to get to work, to
19 pass a drug test, to look you in the eye, shake your
20 hand," those things. So we implemented the college
21 and career readiness class.

22 This slide will show you in the northwest
23 Arkansas region where the percent of change is. and
24 you will see in those areas, those pathways the
25 growth in double-digits is signified for you and

1 those are the areas that we have sought and gone
2 after. We didn't select areas that we just thought
3 would be easy to provide things for or that we
4 thought kids would enjoy; we looked at things that
5 would help them to become employable and proceed
6 forward.

7 One of the things we talked about in our
8 planning is that for years now we have said, "Go to
9 college, go to college, go to college." And even as
10 a small district we've had great opportunities for
11 our students to leave our walls with 24 to 26 college
12 credits. We feel like we are doing a pretty good job
13 in that area. But students need other options.
14 We're not sending 100% of our students to college.
15 So we want to start looking at those industry
16 certificates, the workforce readiness certificate
17 that is coming out of Northwest Arkansas Community
18 College. And then there will be students that will
19 want to pursue a two-year program, whether it's an
20 associate's degree or something that would take place
21 at a vocational school.

22 You all heard repeatedly in the news about the
23 school that -- school loan crisis that our nation is
24 under, and so I thought it would be interesting for
25 our parents to see what they may be faced with. And

1 so there on the left is a list of the schools that
2 typically our students attend, and then I gathered
3 the most recent data I could find on those following
4 columns. And then look at the far right, at the
5 student. And I don't think it would be a situation
6 uncommon to find a student who would have difficulty
7 achieving chemistry or physics or that fourth math
8 beyond Algebra II that would keep them from having
9 the Academic Challenge Scholarship. And if they are
10 one of those students, and if they fall in a family
11 that would not qualify for a PEL grant, then they're
12 looking at student loans. And so you can see if they
13 go and if they finish in four years what they'll be
14 faced with with student debt over the long haul. It
15 ranges from \$522 a month for 15 years to \$1100 a
16 month.

17 So in this process we asked the question, "How
18 can we help parents, students and industry?" And so
19 we look at some of the ideas that we fleshed out in
20 this process. We can help our students clarify their
21 goals for the future. We can provide additional
22 college courses for them. We can deliver articulated
23 courses with our community college and the ones we
24 teach at Gentry. We can allow savings to our parents
25 for that post-secondary education. We can offer

1 opportunities for industry certifications. We can
2 arrange opportunities for our students to participate
3 in internships. We can create those value-added
4 diplomas and increase employability for our students.
5 And for our industry we can help them by providing
6 skilled and ready students to fill those openings as
7 we hear about the retiring workforce.

8 So just a little snapshot on Gentry, pulling
9 this data from the ADE college-going rate report.
10 You can see that the number of our graduates -- you
11 can see how many actually left us and enrolled in
12 college. So about 60% of our students are not going
13 to college in Arkansas. The next-to-the-last column
14 lets you get a snapshot of our students when they
15 graduated. That represents 20 of the 102 students
16 who took some college credit -- our college courses
17 at our high school. Of those 20 students, they
18 earned 230 college hours before they left us.
19 Because the community college offers us a discounted
20 rate, or those students a discounted rate on their
21 tuition those families for those 230 hours were able
22 to save over \$23,000 in tuition. So when you total
23 those columns our families have saved \$91,000 in
24 tuition costs.

25 So the three pathways that we look to implement

1 would be transportation as being one, and we would
2 offer a diesel mechanics or diesel technicians
3 program. And once fully implemented these would be
4 the courses that we would hope to have in place: the
5 preventative maintenance, electrical, tractor trailer
6 brakes, welding, heavy duty drivetrain, diesel
7 engines, hydraulics, suspension, you can see
8 electronic and climate control. We have had
9 conversations with NTI who also has a program, but
10 they are not accessible to us in the sense that
11 travel time is an hour one-way from our district to
12 get there. And when I consulted with our
13 transportation department last fall, \$55,000 a year
14 to take a bus over there, not to mention the fact
15 that our students are involved in a lot of activities
16 in our school and some would have to give up some of
17 those extracurricular activities if they were going
18 to participate and make that trek over.

19 Logistics is another program that we would find
20 underneath that transportation umbrella with multiple
21 pathways. Not all students, as we said, are going to
22 college and so we want opportunities for them to
23 begin preparation for that associate's degree, if
24 they want. We want them to have an opportunity to
25 have a certificate and be ready to work when they

1 leave, if that's what they choose. And the courses
2 that we would have available to them, as you see,
3 supply chain, transportation management, inventory
4 management, logistics, and an entrepreneurship. You
5 know, when you think about the transportation
6 industry it's more than just someone that's
7 dispatching a truck. It's more than someone working
8 on a truck. It's those small businesses that spring
9 out to the side of those, those folks that make the
10 trips out to repair trucks when they're down, tire
11 shops, so multiple things that go into the
12 transportation industry.

13 Healthcare pathways -- we are -- baby boomers
14 are going to need some healthcare in the future. And
15 you will see that healthcare pathways in our
16 offerings would be current courses that we're
17 teaching our medical professions, the CNA, followed
18 by the PCA, and medical terminology. Addition course
19 offerings, once we're up and running, are listed
20 there. Three of these four pictures are our students
21 in our first CNA class, which began in August. Their
22 instructor assures me that we are going to have all
23 of them pass the test; they're great students and
24 they're excited about this opportunity. Because of
25 the competitive market in entering into nursing

1 school, we believe that having that CNA is a little
2 bonus for them. Because not only do they get to get
3 a taste of is this what I really want to do, but it
4 also shows those schools on their applications that
5 they are committed and interested in pursuing that
6 career. I would say to you that starting up this
7 program was very minimal for us because our community
8 donated money, supplies, equipment for this. It was
9 amazing to see how they came to us without us really
10 even asking very much.

11 The IT program pathway that we would like to
12 pursue would involve opportunities for our students
13 to train for networking, programming, information
14 management. Those areas leading to just a few of the
15 high producing or high-in-demand jobs that you'll see
16 listed there. You'll notice in that listing that the
17 IT piece also bleeds over into healthcare very
18 easily.

19 Working with our partners at Northwest Arkansas
20 Community College, these are the workforce readiness
21 certificates of proficiency that are available to us
22 currently and technical certificates that follow
23 that. The parenthesis represents the college hours
24 required to achieve those. And then the online
25 courses that are made available to help in this

1 process too. We currently have three distance
2 learning labs within our facility that make this very
3 easy and very manageable for us.

4 And then we focus on our industry certificates.
5 These are the things that are relatively new to us --
6 or will be new to us in this charter process. We've
7 already talked about our CNA students. You'll see
8 the Comp TIA deals directly with the networking
9 piece. And then we would have the student
10 certifications that go with our diesel program, our
11 technician program.

12 So with that, I will conclude my part of the
13 presentation and I suppose ask Dr. Barrett --

14 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Let me ask if there is
15 anyone to speak in opposition.

16 (BRIEF MOMENT OF SILENCE)

17 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: All right. We'll turn it
18 over to you, Dr. Barrett.

19 DR. BARRETT: And, again, I thank you for this
20 opportunity to speak to you today. You have heard or
21 will hear many different ideas about how a conversion
22 charter would work. I listened on life-stream to
23 Cave City yesterday; I listened to the Virtual
24 Academy from Fayetteville. You've heard us today
25 with this approach. You're going to hear Hot

1 Springs; Dr. Hernandez is out there raring to go.
2 And our friends from Springdale. This truly is a
3 time where one size does not fit all anymore in
4 education. I have heard the Governor, I've heard the
5 State Board of Education, I've heard the people from
6 ForwARd Arkansas, and they're all saying the same
7 thing: there's going to need to be an education
8 today, a new approach, one that not only provides for
9 those students that are going to college, but also
10 for those students who are not. Ms. Wetsell I think
11 has made very clear that we feel like in years past
12 at Gentry we've worked very hard and have done things
13 that allows our students a good opportunity to go to
14 a four-year program. We also think we have not done
15 the same type job in preparing those students who do
16 not. I heard -- former Senator John Riggs spoke at
17 the AAEEA conference and he basically said to us --
18 and if you know Mr. Riggs and you know he's very
19 forward with what he thinks about things -- and he
20 said to us, "We are investing a lot of money in the
21 state in education and we don't feel like maybe we're
22 getting an equal return for business. We need
23 students that will come with those soft skills, ready
24 to go to work, maybe with some type of pre-
25 preparation for the jobs that industry and business

1 will need in the state." I heard Randy Zook echo
2 those same sentiments at that same meeting. And
3 while I have said to you that there are many
4 different approaches, different types of charter
5 schools that you're going to be approving or not,
6 there is a commonality there that I believe we all
7 agree on: we need to do a better job of understanding
8 that college is just one of the many options that
9 students have in this future that is really this
10 present that we're living in. More importantly, I
11 have heard from our local partners -- McKee, we have
12 had very close communications; we've been working
13 hand-in-hand. McKee needs diesel mechanics. Eric
14 Airola and I had, from J.B. Hunt, had that same
15 conversation. J.B. Hunt needs diesel mechanics.
16 Patrick Kerrwood, CEO at Siloam Springs Hospital,
17 they need nurses. Our community doesn't have
18 multiple businesses and industry for us to go to and
19 get involved. Our scope is somewhat bigger. Our
20 partners are more of a regional approach. And we do
21 have partners and I think that they are pretty
22 excited; I know that we are.

23 Finally, I want to say with all these important
24 people, important entities, there's another group of
25 people that I believe, my concern, may be the most

1 important, and that's our students and our parents.
2 And I can say I've worked in education now 40 years;
3 the last 24 has been as Superintendent at Gentry.
4 And of all the things that our school district has
5 done, good and some not so good, I believe this idea
6 of trying to address the needs of all of our students
7 is the most exciting thing and the most supportive
8 that our community has felt in a long time. And I
9 appreciate our community and I appreciate them
10 standing behind us when we do things. Since I've
11 been superintendent at Gentry they've raised the
12 millage three times; we've built buildings. They've
13 always supported us and when they see the need -- and
14 I believe they have clearly agreed that they see the
15 need -- they will support us in this.

16 I thank you for your consideration today. I
17 believe that we are in a point in time in Arkansas
18 education to where there is momentum building from
19 many sectors to balance out college and career
20 readiness, and we would like the opportunity to play
21 our small part in that venture. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you, Dr. Barrett.
23 Questions? Ms. Pfeffer, we'll start with you.

24 MS. PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Winslett, this may be
25 for you. Thank you for your presentation. I had a

1 general idea, but your walking us through that -- the
2 specifics of your presentation really helped me to
3 really visualize kind of the changes that you all
4 have made. So I'm going to ask a couple of questions
5 about the waivers. With the licensure waiver you're
6 asking to be able to employ instructors in those
7 career areas only. Is that correct?

8 MS. WINSLETT: That's correct. Yes, ma'am.

9 MS. PFEFFER: Okay. So -- and I'm just trying
10 to think, you would actually be employing people to
11 work at your school who have the career experience
12 and industry certification; they're not licensed
13 educators. Is that correct?

14 MS. WINSLETT: That is correct.

15 MS. PFEFFER: Okay. So they would be your
16 employees?

17 MS. WINSLETT: Well --

18 MS. PFEFFER: Or it could be concurrently -- or
19 they could be employees at like the college as well?

20 MS. WINSLETT: They could be college employees,
21 they could be our employees, or they could be
22 provided to us by one of our partners at no cost to
23 us.

24 MS. PFEFFER: Okay. So, and I'm just trying to
25 think through -- they would be teaching courses --

1 for example, some of the diesel mechanics, that would
2 be part of what students would be taking as their
3 required graduation credit within their career
4 pathway. Is that right?

5 MS. WINSLETT: They would count as elective
6 credits. Yes, ma'am.

7 MS. PFEFFER: Okay. Elective credits within
8 their required units or above the minimum graduation
9 requirements?

10 MS. WINSLETT: Depending on the course, it could
11 be both or either.

12 MS. PFEFFER: Okay. And I'm asking all that
13 because I want to make sure that Ms. Barnes and I are
14 both thinking about that from -- and Dr. Jones with
15 course codes and licensure codes and things like
16 that. Because in the past -- you know, normally, if
17 it's done as a concurrent class then that's a
18 different -- kind of a different thing. But if --
19 you know -- if they're an employee, as an employee
20 just without the certification, then that will have
21 an impact when those students are scheduled into some
22 of those courses. Questions are going to come up
23 about course codes and things like that.

24 MS. WINSLETT: Right.

25 MS. PFEFFER: So --

1 MS. WINSLETT: We're following very closely the
2 NTI model and they are operating through the career
3 and tech area.

4 MS. PFEFFER: Okay. Which model?

5 MS. WINSLETT: The Northwest Arkansas Technical
6 Institute.

7 MS. PFEFFER: Okay. We may have a few more
8 questions here in a second. Will all of the -- will
9 all the high school students be part of the charter?

10 MS. WINSLETT: All the high school students,
11 this will be a charter that encompasses the entire
12 school. And those students that are in 9th and 10th
13 grade will be doing prep work or prep courses that
14 would lead into whatever particular, you know,
15 pathway they choose, whether it is a college pathway
16 or whether it's one of the three that we're proposing
17 today.

18 MS. PFEFFER: Okay. I think that answers mine,
19 but just a minute; I want to see if they --

20 MS. WINSLETT: Okay.

21 MS. PFEFFER: -- have some thoughts on the other
22 areas that that touches.

23 MS. WINSLETT: Okay.

24 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Barnes, do you want to
25 follow-up with that?

1 MS. BARNES: Sure. Okay. So based on Ms.
2 Pfeffer's question, I was under the assumption, I
3 think, or at least I was thinking through it as these
4 students would be utilizing these courses as a part
5 of the requirements to graduate. But it would fall
6 within the elective portion since they would have six
7 elective courses that could be in the career and
8 technical path.

9 MS. WINSLETT: Right.

10 MS. BARNES: Okay. And that's why I didn't --

11 MS. WINSLETT: Yes, ma'am.

12 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Jones, do you want to
13 follow-up on the credits?

14 DR. JONES: I do know -- you had a list there of
15 all the courses that might've been offsite, and we
16 were in a meeting this week with ACE. Have you had
17 the opportunity to sit down and discuss the different
18 courses, certifications, and all that with them --
19 credits?

20 MS. WINSLETT: We have had a few emails back and
21 forth with them, but it seemed prudent to make sure
22 you were going to allow us to do this before we spent
23 hours --

24 DR. JONES: That makes sense.

25 MS. WINSLETT: -- in lining out all the course

1 codes and things.

2 DR. JONES: Well, we discussed some of the very
3 same things and they were very accommodating in
4 working with several schools doing the same sort of
5 thing. And so I just -- for clarity in my head, the
6 programs that y'all have on-site will be IT, medical,
7 diesel mechanics, and logistics. Correct?

8 MS. WINSLETT: Yes, ma'am.

9 DR. JONES: And then the other programs will be
10 off-site, you have that kids can pursue at NWACC. Is
11 that correct?

12 MS. WINSLETT: The courses that NWACC is
13 providing are all on our site at this time.

14 DR. JONES: Okay. And then, did you say you
15 share students with Gravette?

16 MS. WINSLETT: That's correct, yes, for those --

17 DR. JONES: Okay.

18 MS. WINSLETT: Because we can't house
19 everything.

20 DR. JONES: HVAC?

21 MS. WINSLETT: Yes, ma'am. HVAC.

22 DR. JONES: Okay. And I commend you for doing
23 that because certainly school districts can't afford
24 to run all these programs and I think that is a very
25 innovative way to look. I also commend you for

1 starting with your community data, looking where the
2 jobs are and spending your efforts there because
3 that's what we need to do. Can I help clarify -- or
4 can I ask you about some of the goals you have in
5 your application? When you talk about meeting the
6 ACT, the math and the English, clarify for me what
7 your benchmark is. Is it that when the state sets a
8 proficiency level that you will increase that 1%
9 annually? It's the proficiency level we set?

10 MS. WINSLETT: Yes, ma'am.

11 DR. JONES: Thank you.

12 MS. WINSLETT: In this time of transition for
13 us, it's become -- the water is a little muddy on
14 what our baseline would be. And so we always look to
15 the ADE to set their standards and then we hope to
16 rise above those.

17 DR. JONES: Okay. I'm clear on that now. And
18 then I think having the multiple measures is
19 certainly the industry certificates in those areas,
20 increasing concurrent credit -- those are all good
21 measures by which we can watch the progress of the
22 program. I'm finished for now.

23 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Saunders.

24 DR. SAUNDERS: Yes. Looking at the application
25 -- I'm in the unresolved issues, in particular, item

1 C6, where it says the students will receive a
2 reduction in tuition to approximately one-third of
3 the cost of other students attending NWACC. Would
4 that cost prohibit some students from participating?

5 MS. WINSLETT: It has not up to this point in
6 time because we have assured that anyone who wants to
7 take a class and doesn't get to that we will be
8 asking, once granted a charter, for support from some
9 of our partners to help with that cost.

10 DR. SAUNDERS: And I wanted to clarify also that
11 you mentioned would -- and I wasn't clear on this --
12 would all students in the high school be part of the
13 charter?

14 MS. WINSLETT: They'll all be attending this
15 school, which will be designated as a charter. It
16 will be their choice on whether they pursue one of
17 those pathways or whether they continue on a college-
18 bound route, taking Gen. Ed. classes with us.

19 DR. SAUNDERS: So every student would be
20 considered part of the charter school. So you would
21 have one LEA? Am I understanding that correctly?

22 MS. WINSLETT: Yes, sir. That's correct.

23 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay.

24 MS. WINSLETT: One LEA. Yes, sir.

25 DR. SAUNDERS: All right. And on the licensure,

1 it would be -- you asked for a waiver of licensure
2 and that would be limited to which courses?

3 MS. WINSLETT: The vocational courses
4 specifically.

5 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. One more follow-up, if I
6 may. I think this one might be for you, Dr. Barrett,
7 concerning the waiver on the teacher's salary fund
8 and the warrants void, 6-17-908 and 919. Could you
9 just explain the need for that?

10 DR. BARRETT: When you are beginning to deal, of
11 course, with people that don't normally fall on the
12 salary scale that we're required to have by the state
13 then there becomes some questions -- for example, on
14 an unlicensed teacher, where would they fall? Are
15 they a classified employee? Are they certified?
16 Obviously, you know, you can only pay out of the
17 teacher's salary fund, \$1,000, you know; you guys
18 know how that works. So what we tried to do was to
19 give ourselves as much flexibility as possible so
20 that we didn't inadvertently violate some of the
21 state standards in asking for that waiver.

22 DR. SAUNDERS: And just to clarify that, there
23 is not a limit on the funds that are available within
24 that -- those particular funds; so therefore, it
25 would not take away from the general teaching

1 salaries so-to-speak.

2 DR. BARRETT: No. No, not at all.

3 DR. SAUNDERS: That's all for now.

4 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Liwo.

5 MS. LIWO: This mic and I are not friends. But
6 I just needed a simple clarification. I want to make
7 sure that the non-licensed teachers that you have
8 will go through criminal background and child
9 maltreatment checks, because I didn't see that
10 anywhere.

11 DR. BARRETT: Yes, ma'am. And that's stated in
12 the application, I believe.

13 MS. LIWO: Okay. I'm sorry; I missed that.

14 DR. BARRETT: Well, it's 123 pages; it would be
15 pretty easy to miss. But, yes, ma'am, it is part of
16 our application.

17 MS. LIWO: Okay. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Barrett, I'd like to
19 recognize whoever submitted the Town Hall notes.
20 Who's the recordkeeper for the Town Hall notes?

21 MS. WINSLETT: Renee Bradshaw.

22 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: She does a fabulous job.

23 MS. WINSLETT: Yes, she does.

24 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: They were very helpful to
25 me as I was reading through this application, to help

1 me understand -- or put the application into context.
2 So kudos to her; she did an excellent job.

3 In looking through your notes I see that you
4 were really diligent in working with the community on
5 this project. But we did receive a letter from one
6 of your educators that did not feel that maybe the
7 communication had been as aggressive with the staff.
8 So could you kind of talk through the kind of
9 meetings you had with staff to keep them informed all
10 along the process?

11 MS. WINSLETT: Absolutely. Of course, they're
12 all invited to any of the outside meetings that we
13 host in the evening. I also went to the high school
14 in the spring and did a specific presentation to them
15 explaining the whole charter piece. And then I
16 believe again in the fall we had another
17 conversation.

18 DR. BARRETT: And let me follow-up on that, as
19 well, Ms. Winslett. They had an opportunity to
20 actually look at that email this morning. Ms. Clay
21 shared it with me. The teacher that sent that is one
22 of our very best teachers, a good guy, a long-time
23 employee of our district. And I read that -- and
24 this is the first thing I thought, "Thank God, we all
25 live in America." Okay? If we all thought the same

1 thing every time, it wouldn't be that great of a
2 place to live. But I am going to say this: in that
3 application somewhere -- I believe, Ms. Liwo, it's in
4 those 123 pages -- part of our documentation you'll
5 find a letter that I personally wrote to staff. And
6 at the end of it it says, "Please come to the
7 meeting." It also said in that last paragraph, "Hey,
8 if you're not comfortable about coming to meetings
9 and asking questions in public, if that makes you
10 nervous, come to my office. Come down and sit and
11 talk with me one-on-one and I'll answer any questions
12 you have about it." The person that sent you that
13 email did not avail himself of that opportunity.

14 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: And I certainly understand
15 that. I just want to continue to encourage you to
16 reach out to your educators. And I think you said it
17 very well earlier, "Times they are a-changing."

18 DR. BARRETT: Yes, they are.

19 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: And so sometimes it takes
20 people a while to process it, think about it, and --
21 we've been doing education the same way for a long
22 time; people are really comfortable in their
23 knowledge and expertise and making changes while it
24 is unknown what the education world is going to look
25 like is going to continue to require that constant

1 conversation with people. So I invite you to reach
2 out to your staff again and just keep supporting
3 them. It's big changes.

4 Ms. Barnes.

5 MS. BARNES: Well, you just hit on it. What I
6 was going to ask though is approximately what
7 percentage of your staff would you say is completely
8 comfortable with this move to a conversion charter
9 since it does encompass your whole high school?

10 MR. HARPER: I would answer that by -- there are
11 some that are uncomfortable.

12 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Your name, sir?

13 MR. HARPER: Brae Harper, high school principal.
14 There are some that are uncomfortable. I think it's
15 the unknown, like you said. But we've had a lot of
16 support, as well.

17 MS. BARNES: Well, let me ask it this way,
18 because, I mean, I'm a firm believer. I understand
19 change. And I say this often, it's usually only
20 difficult until you change. But when you have a lack
21 of buy-in sometimes then you struggle in areas where
22 you wouldn't have to. And so I'm simply -- you know
23 -- I asked approximately what percentage of your
24 staff and you said some. Majority, minority, about
25 half-and-half?

1 MR. HARPER: If I had to put a number to it, I
2 would say 70% are in support.

3 MS. BARNES: Okay. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Jones.

5 DR. JONES: Can you -- and this is Ms. Winslett
6 probably. Let's talk a little bit about core
7 classes. Do you intend to move to online instruction
8 for your core classes in the future?

9 MS. WINSLETT: We do have -- we utilize Virtual
10 Arkansas for some now, especially with scheduling
11 issues. You know, we have a requirement of a digital
12 course for every student before they graduate and so
13 we utilize it to meet that need. But as far as
14 moving out of our core classes and going completely
15 online, absolutely not.

16 DR. JONES: Okay. Thank you. And then the
17 second question; I think you've clarified this in
18 your application. You intend to go through the
19 regular process we have established to get blended
20 courses approved?

21 MS. WINSLETT: Yes, ma'am.

22 DR. JONES: Okay.

23 MS. WINSLETT: We see a very nice fit with oral
24 communication in the career ready class. And we have
25 a gentleman teaching that who is also certified for

1 oral comm.

2 DR. JONES: Okay.

3 MS. WINSLETT: And so he's already prepared a
4 crosswalk for me and we'll follow the process by the
5 State Department to ask for that.

6 DR. JONES: Okay. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Gotcher.

8 DR. GOTCHER: Good morning.

9 MS. WINSLETT: Good morning.

10 DR. GOTCHER: In your application you listed
11 three innovative pieces, part of the application, but
12 number one was apprenticeship opportunities. That's
13 not necessarily a new or innovative concept. So how
14 -- explain more of why or how the apprenticeship
15 opportunities would be something more innovative than
16 a traditional school that might have an opportunity
17 like that?

18 MS. WINSLETT: Well, it's new and innovative for
19 Gentry. We have not had an opportunity for our
20 students to go out and work as a partner with
21 business and industry, for them to have that
22 opportunity to maybe become an employee for that
23 company and employer. You know, I think it's so
24 great for our local business and for those that are
25 without, outside our local community, to get to try

1 someone out before they want to hire them. And at
2 the same time, that student gets to see the real-life
3 expectation in that business and industry.

4 DR. GOTCHER: And to your point earlier, that's
5 an excellent opportunity for a student to develop
6 those soft skills.

7 MS. WINSLETT: Yes, sir.

8 DR. GOTCHER: Because we all know that we want
9 to hire people in our world more than just the
10 cognitive knowledge, how they can get along with
11 others and show up to work on time and, to your
12 points earlier. Sp that's real intriguing; I think
13 that's awesome for Gentry kids should this work.

14 MS. WINSLETT: Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Saunders.

16 DR. SAUNDERS: Yes. On one of the waivers for
17 the required clock time for unit of credit, I'm just
18 having a tough time trying to bridge how that would
19 be required under your proposal.

20 MS. WINSLETT: To free up time for students to
21 be able to be outside of us and involved in that
22 internship opportunity we want to have the ability
23 that if a student can excel through self-paced
24 learning to be able to complete a course without
25 having to have 120 hours of seat time involved.

1 DR. SAUNDERS: What type of course would that
2 apply to, I think is what I'm asking?

3 MS. WINSLETT: Well, an assortment of courses,
4 not necessarily English 9 or 10 but when you start
5 looking at electives that you could work through
6 either in digital delivery or in blended learning
7 situations, and you meet the standards and you're
8 done.

9 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. That's all for now.

10 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Pfeffer.

11 MS. PFEFFER: So following up on your answer to
12 Dr. Saunders, with the -- because when I was reading
13 that I was thinking in terms of the internships, you
14 know, students needing that waiver there for them to
15 be able to complete those. And you say you're not
16 intending it for maybe that to be part of the core
17 classes. So are you pretty much tying this waiver to
18 the career opportunities to that part of it? Because
19 I guess in asking about that, if there are some
20 hesitations and reservations for your faculty, could
21 -- or potentially could their day look very different
22 with the way they're instructing students and the
23 students actually become more self-paced? Or is, you
24 know, pretty much this waiver going to apply to your
25 career courses?

1 MS. WINSLETT: We'd want to limit it solely to
2 our career courses. And when you think back years
3 ago we had opportunities for students and would've
4 utilized them for those in a crunch to do
5 correspondence courses or independent courses, and
6 those were not specifically tied to 120 hours of
7 that. And so we are living in a day where technology
8 is available and we could have some courses, as
9 needed, for students that were in the core area that
10 would free up their time.

11 MS. PFEFFER: Okay. So this very well could be
12 waiving that required time for any course offered at
13 the high school?

14 MS. WINSLETT: We would certainly like the
15 ability.

16 MS. PFEFFER: I'm asking because I know that's
17 probably going to lead to some other questions. And
18 as we're thinking through this, I just don't want six
19 months down the road for these questions to come up
20 and create issues, so --

21 MS. WINSLETT: Certainly.

22 MS. BARNES: Okay. So I think Ms. Pfeffer was
23 punting to me and I did take note of your response.

24 I wanted to give her time to finish doing what
25 she was doing; she might not hear me.

1 Okay. So I was listening to your response and I
2 believe you said not necessarily 9 or 10 English.

3 MS. WINSLETT: Uh-huh.

4 MS. BARNES: So I tried to put that into context
5 in my mind because we already talked about basically
6 this is a conversion charter request for the high
7 school and that the 9th and 10th graders primarily,
8 unless they are probably accelerated in their career
9 paths, may or may not be engaging into these
10 particular pathways.

11 MS. WINSLETT: That's correct.

12 MS. BARNES: So quite naturally, then, you know,
13 my ears did perk up a little bit more because we are
14 talking about consideration of a waiver that
15 ultimately, once granted, could give you the
16 authority to just -- any class. That makes me
17 uncomfortable. I'm just -- you know -- I have to go
18 ahead and state that. So maybe you could try to help
19 me with my comfort level with that and talk me
20 through how you would exercise cautions in insuring
21 that we are not opening a door to simply say, "Okay,
22 when you finish or meet all of the established
23 standards or skills you can move on." I mean, it's a
24 possibility that this could open the door, in my
25 mind, for any student who may come through, finish

1 up, and move on. I don't want to limit a student's
2 opportunities and I don't think you would necessarily
3 put the district in a situation where you would not
4 have students who would be able to mature in their
5 educational experience. But I need a little more
6 information now, since we're talking about core
7 courses or all courses. I was under the assumption
8 it was more in line with the career and technical
9 pathways.

10 MS. WINSLETT: Okay. Let me start by saying
11 while I'm very passionate about this opportunity for
12 our students and believe wholeheartedly in it, our
13 first responsibility is to keep our school out of any
14 kind of academic distress. And I will not be able to
15 do that if I just willy-nilly let children move
16 through courses when somebody says, okay, they've
17 ticked that box. So as we work through these courses
18 and they take these courses, there are interim
19 assessments given and we look to see how students are
20 progressing. And so if they've completed a self-
21 paced course, it would be once they had proven that
22 they were proficient in that area. Does that help
23 any? And I'm not looking to send masses of children
24 through those.

25 MS. BARNES: Thank you.

1 MS. PFEFFER: And I think what would help me
2 feel more comfortable with it is if you tied that to
3 the goals of your charter. So with what you were
4 describing there -- because there have been charters
5 where -- for example, that were focusing on
6 standards-based grading or -- I can't recall what I'm
7 trying to explain. But it almost sounds like this
8 could be almost a separate goal from the real intent
9 of your charter here to develop these career pathways
10 and provide these opportunities. So in order for a
11 student maybe to move through a self-paced and
12 accelerate their learning, how does that tie back to
13 the goals here for this charter for them to be able
14 to get into these career pathways? That would help
15 me, I think. And I think if it's done along those
16 lines we would feel better about knowing there's a
17 process in place where all of a sudden a certain
18 course won't be completed in three weeks. Does that
19 make sense, what I'm asking?

20 MS. WINSLETT: Maybe you could ask me -- what do
21 you need me to do to make this happen?

22 MS. PFEFFER: I think my thought is if a student
23 needed to complete -- in order for a student to be
24 able to do an internship where they were going to be
25 off-site for two hours a day, they needed to complete

1 a particular course in an accelerated manner; that
2 way, it's linked to the whole goal of getting them to
3 a career pathway. Otherwise, my question is would
4 there be a time that, you know, a science student
5 could just complete their science in three weeks?
6 Because this waiver would grant you that option.

7 MS. WINSLETT: Well, I can assure you there's
8 not -- I haven't come across a child who could finish
9 a requirement in three weeks for any course that's
10 offered at the state level. I would say to you that
11 we put this in place as an option to help students to
12 be able to do those internships once they are there.
13 We have 32 opportunities for credits and 24 is what
14 our school requires. Some of those credits though
15 are assigned to activities for those students to take
16 place in. So we just need to -- and, again, on a
17 limited basis -- and if we need to establish a
18 number, a child would not take more than X-number of
19 self-paced classes, I don't think that would be a
20 problem at all.

21 DR. JONES: I think the discomfort that you're
22 hearing is competency based instruction, which is --
23 and I know that you already know this; it's very
24 extensive work in developing competencies and
25 assessments. And it's a pretty comprehensive system

1 and we see it done and done well and it's part of
2 personalized learning. I guess that with the lack of
3 information within the application regarding that,
4 that's probably lending to some of the discomfort.
5 It's not that we don't support competency-based
6 instruction or promotion; it's just a very new
7 concept and it would take great trust and recognition
8 that you know -- that the whole system has developed
9 for that. Does that help or does it confuse?

10 MS. WINSLETT: Again, I would say that we're
11 going to do whatever we need to do to make this
12 happen.

13 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Let me see if I can fish
14 us out of this. So, Panel, are you asking them to
15 consider this waiver in light of core classes?

16 MS. BARNES: I think that's a lot of my
17 discomfort, because it covers grades 9-12. And in
18 its current state at some point or juncture along the
19 way it could easily apply to any core course or any
20 child. And that does give me some pause because, as
21 Ms. Pfeffer stated, and several others, we're looking
22 at the core foundations and preparatory work for
23 students to be successful. And I know that you will
24 take great care in that, but it also opens the door
25 because we set precedents when we make decisions.

1 And so that's what's, you know, concerning me.
2 Because, you know, in 9th grade we're looking at core
3 courses and I'm uncomfortable.

4 DR. JONES: Have y'all implemented standards-
5 based report cards at the lower levels? In what
6 grades?

7 MS. WINSLETT: No, ma'am.

8 DR. BARRETT: Let me talk to this issue just a
9 little bit, if you'll allow me. And what Ms. Barnes
10 said is very valid. You said earlier this morning
11 when we were talking about the teacher that sent the
12 email, there's a lot of us that are very traditional,
13 and I've already confessed 40 years in the business.
14 Okay? So I understand that concern. But, you know,
15 we all are breaking some new ground here. Okay? We
16 have said to our teachers for 40 years "let's don't
17 teach every one of those students the same way. If
18 you've got some that's already got through, let's
19 give them enrichment activities within the
20 classroom." So what we really did was we let them
21 move ahead while we dealt with the students that
22 hadn't reached proficiency. You know, if you to
23 approve our charter say limit it to those non-core
24 classes, we'll do that. But I don't want to give
25 that away too quickly because we are trying to change

1 the way we're doing things in education. So what if
2 you have a student that can master the science
3 standards and they can demonstrate proficiency?
4 We're going to leave them in that classroom the rest
5 of the year with that teacher till the rest of the
6 students are able to demonstrate that? That's all
7 I'm saying to you, and I may not be clear. We'll do
8 what you suggest because in all of our lists of
9 partners that we talked to you about being partners
10 with us, we consider the Arkansas Department of
11 Education a partner. And if you approve our charter,
12 we're going to consider you a partner in our charter
13 school. I'll just let -- instead of trying to read
14 pink notes, I'll let Ms. Winslett do her own pink
15 notes. Please, talk about it. No, seriously; talk
16 about what the means.

17 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: I think, Dr. Barrett, just
18 for a point of clarification, we are breaking new
19 ground; we just want to make sure you've assembled
20 all the right tools to do it successfully.

21 DR. BARRETT: I understand.

22 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: So we're a little
23 cautious, and it's not that we're not willing to go
24 out on the edge with a school district. We just want
25 to make sure that we've put in as many parachutes as

1 possible when we take that leap.

2 MS. PFEFFER: And can I just respond to Dr.
3 Barrett, because -- and I don't disagree with
4 anything that you said. But my question would be --
5 the situation you described, if a student has met all
6 of the competencies or requirements for instruction
7 in the science class, do we want to hold them there?
8 But, to me, that was not really clear in your charter
9 and I think that's where we're struggling; it's
10 because that's kind of emerged today. So I think
11 part of this negotiation is making sure that we all
12 really fully understand. And so my question would
13 be: is your faculty prepared to move to that kind of
14 a system? I mean, do you foresee that there are
15 going to be students in your math, English, science
16 classes this next school year who might complete the
17 course in advance of the school year? And if that is
18 part of this, you know, are your teachers prepared
19 for that? And, you know, I don't think that it's a
20 matter of anybody necessarily being against it; we
21 just want to make sure that when the standards report
22 comes out or, you know, there are questions that we
23 don't say, "Well, you know." And I was reading here,
24 it says, "If mastery is determined, students would
25 advance on to the next course in their individual

1 education plan." So maybe the question goes back to
2 what does that individual education plan look like,
3 how is that structured for each and every student and
4 does that begin with their 9th grade courses. So --

5 DR. BARRETT: Guys, you know, those of you
6 that's known me for any length of time, that
7 sometimes, you know, I can be the bull in the china
8 shop. But in listening to the conversation here and
9 in reading and understanding my pink Post-It note,
10 the prevailing opinion on our team seems to be, Ms.
11 Barnes, we should take your suggestion, and Ms.
12 Pfeffer, and limit this to the non-core classes.
13 Education hopefully is not going to end in this same
14 five-year period that our charter is going to exist
15 and we would have an opportunity to come back in five
16 years -- after demonstrating it working successfully
17 in the non-core classes perhaps to come back and ask
18 that that be extended to all classes. But for this
19 point in time please let the record show that we are
20 limiting this to those non-core classes.

21 DR. SAUNDERS: I want to jump in on that. And I
22 think that this type of system -- I commend you for
23 looking down this path. I think it's a good way to
24 look. I think there are -- as people have mentioned,
25 there's lots of structures that need to be in place

1 for that to take place. And also I think you would
2 have the opportunity possibly to employ some of that
3 in the non-core classes and perhaps get some of the
4 learning out of the way. And you wouldn't
5 necessarily have to wait the five years before coming
6 back for an adjustment. We just felt that that plan,
7 I think, would be in place where you could come
8 before us and ask for that at a later date.

9 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Barrett, you could
10 work with our Charter Office at a later time to
11 consider an amendment before your five years.

12 DR. BARRETT: Okay. Thank you.

13 MS. BARNES: Thank you. I appreciate you all
14 indulging our concerns.

15 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Any other questions or
16 comments?

17 MS. PFEFFER: The only thing I was going to say
18 to Mr. Harper is just to work closely with our office
19 and with Thomas Coy in Learning Services in terms of
20 course codes, if there's any questions between course
21 codes and licensure codes, just as you work on that
22 master schedule early on so that we can troubleshoot
23 any areas.

24 MR. HARPER: (Nodding head up and down.)

25 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Clay, are there any

1 issues remaining regarding this request?

2 MS. CLAY: A few issues with the waivers and I
3 think that I can go through them and then they can
4 just agree to them at the end. The first one is they
5 requested a waiver to imbed the oral communications
6 curriculum. I believe we heard from them today that
7 they were going to go through the course approval
8 process. So if that's the case, then they would just
9 need to confirm that they no longer need that waiver.

10 The second one is in school day and attendance
11 they also need a waiver of Section 10.01.4 of the
12 Standards for Accreditation. This is the companion
13 piece to 6-16-102 that deals with six hours of
14 instructional time.

15 And the last one is under the required clock
16 hours that you all discussed. This is really
17 unrelated, but 6-18-213 -- they only need a waiver of
18 (a)(2) of that section. That deals with the teacher
19 actually visually noting the students' attendance in
20 class. If they were to get a waiver of the entire
21 section of 6-18-213, it would look like they wouldn't
22 even have to take any attendance. So I think we need
23 to limit it just to that visual notation of the
24 student being in class. They would have other ways
25 to document the students' attendance. So if they

1 will agree to those, I have no remaining issues.

2 DR. BARRETT: We agree.

3 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Barrett, will you
4 speak into the microphone for the record?

5 DR. BARRETT: Oh, yes, ma'am; my apology. I
6 certainly have great respect for Ms. Clay and her
7 expertise and we certainly agree with the suggestions
8 that she made.

9 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Any other? All right.
10 Then I'll accept a motion regarding the request for
11 Gentry High School Conversion Charter.

12 DR. SAUNDERS: So moved.

13 MS. BARNES: Second.

14 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: To approve?

15 DR. SAUNDERS: Yes, ma'am. I thought that's
16 what you said.

17 MS. BARNES: She said she'd accept a motion.

18 DR. SAUNDERS: Oh.

19 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: I have a motion from Dr.
20 Saunders and a second from Ms. Barnes to approve the
21 request for Gentry High School Conversion Charter.
22 Any questions or comments? All those in favor of the
23 motion?

24 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

25 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Any opposed? The motion

1 has passed.

2 If you will wait patiently, our panel members
3 will type their responses and we'll go around and
4 read those to you aloud for the record.

5 DR. BARRETT: If I might have one quick word
6 before you do?

7 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Go ahead.

8 DR. BARRETT: Our vendor, one of our partners,
9 McKee Foods, Little Debbie, we're going to work on
10 that truck. They're up here on the table for you at
11 your next break.

12 MS. BARNES: I'm so thankful you waited.

13 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: In the future, we'd like
14 to meet Little Debbie.

15 MS. WINSLETT: Please know he refrained from
16 passing those out till you voted. Thank you very
17 much.

18 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: We'll open those up to the
19 audience, as well.

20 All right. If our board members will -- another
21 thing, Dr. Barrett, while they're typing in, the
22 camel at the Wilderness Safari is aggressive. And so
23 I hope that you will be as equally aggressive in
24 helping to grow your own on those educators. Because
25 I'm very excited that your application includes

1 educators as one of those groups of future employers
2 in your plan, that we are thinking about education,
3 not just welding and all those other great jobs. But
4 education is one of those great jobs also.

5 DR. BARRETT: Absolutely.

6 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Saunders.

7 DR. SAUNDERS: Yes. I voted for this as an
8 opportunity to provide the needed personalized
9 education for the students.

10 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you. Dr. Gotcher.

11 DR. GOTCHER: I voted for the motion to approve.
12 The applicant has presented a plan for a quality
13 conversion charter that serves the individual needs
14 of the students and the community. I am encouraged
15 by the plan.

16 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Mr. Lester.

17 MR. LESTER: This applicant has the resources
18 and the program and the partnerships currently in
19 place to meet the goals as outlined in their
20 application.

21 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Mr. Rogers.

22 MR. ROGERS: I voted for the motion because the
23 conversion charter allows the students more
24 educational and job opportunities in the local
25 community.

1 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Barnes.

2 MS. BARNES: I voted in support of the charter
3 because I believe that this is an excellent
4 opportunity to open doors for innovation to merge
5 with the current educational activities in this area.
6 And it allows students to have real world work
7 experiences contributing to community growth.

8 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Pfeffer.

9 MS. PFEFFER: I voted for the charter. This
10 charter will be good for kids and for the community.

11 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Jones.

12 DR. JONES: I voted for the charter. The
13 charter applicants are commended for their
14 collaboration with higher ed. and the business
15 community. They have developed career pathways that
16 are of high need and high pay and provide additional
17 options for students.

18 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Liwo.

19 MS. LIWO: I voted for the charter. I have the
20 same reasons as my other panel members have
21 mentioned.

22 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you.

23 Congratulations to the Gentry High School
24 Conversion Charter School. And congratulations to
25 the audience and you are welcome to Little Debbie

1 snacks.

2 DR. BARRETT: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: You're welcome. We'll
4 pause for a 10-minute break.

5 (BREAK: 9:50-10:05 A.M.)

6 A-2: HEARING OF DISTRICT CONVERSION PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL
7 APPLICATION: HOT SPRINGS WORLD CLASS HIGH SCHOOL

8 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Boyd, you are
9 recognized for action item two. We are having a
10 great day today.

11 MS. BOYD: Yes, we are. Thank you, Madam Chair.
12 I'm enjoying my cupcake from Little Debbie. Item A-
13 2, Hearing of District Conversion Public Charter
14 School Application: Hot Springs World Class High
15 School. Hot Springs World Class High School is a
16 proposed district conversion public charter school.
17 The applicant is requesting to serve students grades
18 9-12 with a maximum enrollment of 1200. ADE staff
19 reviewed the application; the concerns were shared
20 with the applicant for response. The application,
21 the ADE evaluation, and the applicant's response are
22 included for your review. And here from the Hot
23 Springs World Class High School we have Principal
24 Lloyd Jackson to begin their presentation.

25 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: If all the representatives

1 from Hot Springs World Class High School and anyone
2 speaking in opposition will please stand to receive
3 the oath; raise your right hand. Do you swear or
4 affirm that the testimony you're about to give shall
5 be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
6 truth?

7 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

8 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you. Mr. Jackson,
9 you are recognized.

10 MR. JACKSON: Good morning to the Chairman and
11 also to the Board -- the Panel. With us today we
12 have -- I am Lloyd Jackson, principal of Hot Springs
13 High School, and excited to be the principal possibly
14 after today's opportunity of the Hot Springs World
15 Class High School. We have presenting with us today
16 our superintendent Dr. Mike Hernandez, also our
17 Director of Secondary Education, Dr. Stephanie Nehus;
18 our district GT Coordinator is here as well, Becky
19 Rosburg; our IB Coordinator, Paula Redding; our
20 Career and College Counselor at Hot Springs High
21 School, Ms. Amy Schneider; and our Career and
22 Technical Coordinator, Mr. William Harris.

23 For the next few moments it is our goal to
24 describe an opportunity for our students that will
25 give them a choice in their future as they pursue

1 excellence in all they do. We hope to inspire young
2 minds and open them to the possibilities of a future
3 which is within reach for each of them along relevant
4 pathways toward and beyond graduation. The Hot
5 Springs World Class High School wants to do more than
6 provide a high school diploma. It is our desire to
7 provide our students with exposure to careers as well
8 as experience in their interested fields of study,
9 having our students leave with technical certificates
10 which gives them a leg-up amongst graduates in the
11 Hot Springs community. Hot Springs World Class High
12 School: a place where students are going to be
13 excited about their education, take ownership of
14 their education, and the community and students see
15 and understand the value in graduating from Hot
16 Springs World Class High School.

17 Let's take a journey to this place called Hot
18 Springs World Class High School, a school of choice,
19 excellence and opportunity.

20 DR. NEHUS: Good morning. My name is Stephanie
21 Nehus; I am the Director of Secondary Education for
22 Hot Springs School District, and I'm excited to be
23 here today to share with you our journey. As we
24 begin, of course, as you heard earlier this morning,
25 the focus has been so much on getting everyone ready

1 to go to college which is not reality for 100% of our
2 students, and we realized that, and so preparing
3 everyone for a career is a reality. So we want to
4 shift that focus to 100% career readiness, whether
5 that be through a path that takes a four-year college
6 route, a two-year college route, a technical school
7 route, or they leave us directly to the workforce.
8 We looked at our graduation rate and that was really
9 the data that we dug into, and we saw that 77% of Hot
10 Springs High School in the 13-14 school year
11 graduated in the four years on time. That is not
12 acceptable to us. And so what can we do to encourage
13 students, to inspire students and to help them to see
14 that graduation is important, and that numbers will
15 rise? You couple that with our college-going rate of
16 32.9%; so 77% of our students who graduated only
17 32.9% of them went directly to college. Again, that
18 is not acceptable for us. And we looked at the
19 unemployment rates by education level and it's clear
20 that those students who do not graduate, they have a
21 14% unemployment rate versus those students who do
22 graduate that comes to like 10%, and then those who
23 do go on to get some sort of college that then drops
24 amazingly as well. So that whole concept of the
25 value added diploma where they're leaving us with

1 college credit, concurrent credits, where they're
2 leaving us with industry certifications, and when
3 they're leaving us with workplace readiness skills we
4 know it's going to set them up for success in their
5 future. And so we looked at the research and we
6 tried to determine what direction do we want to take
7 our charter school that would make it different than
8 that traditional school. And the research is clearly
9 stating that the academy concept results in those
10 significant positive impacts on graduation rate, on
11 academic outcomes, on student behavior, and on post-
12 high school outcomes. In a recent northwest Arkansas
13 Tech Summit, they highlighted the need for those
14 skilled technical workers as they leave the high
15 school level. And so our timeline began and we did
16 begin this whole discussion back at the beginning of
17 the 2014-15 school year where we started just talking
18 to our staff and saying, "If there were no rules, if
19 we could do anything we wanted to do for our kids,
20 what could we do? What are some innovative ideas?"
21 And everything that came out of that was more
22 vocational offerings, workplace skills, internships,
23 the ability for our students to do more than they can
24 do in the traditional cookie cutter approach to
25 education, the 8-hour days, everyone is taking the

1 same thing. And so we began this process and we did
2 meet as a steering committee beginning this past
3 summer and we met every two weeks up until that
4 charter application deadline. And on that steering
5 committee we knew it was important to have our key
6 stakeholders, so we had district and building
7 administrators, of course, but we had school
8 personnel; we had teachers, we had students, we had
9 parents, and we had our community. We had the
10 Chamber of Commerce represented and we had higher ed.
11 with our partnership currently with National Park
12 College and National Park Technical Center.

13 In hopes that we will be approved, we are
14 already thinking of implementation. We knew that was
15 important. We've got the application submitted. We
16 knew the next step was to start deciding how are we
17 going to make this happen and how are we going to
18 make this happen by 2016-17. And so we've begun
19 implementation meetings as to what this will look
20 like; we've started our business partnership
21 conversations. We're very excited with the progress
22 we've made with those, and we'll share some of those
23 as we go through our presentation. We've got phases
24 for implementation because we realize we can't do
25 everything beginning 2016-17; we're going to have to

1 implement this in phases. And we know that
2 scheduling is going to be important because we're
3 going to start scheduling for next year end of
4 February, first of March, and so we've got to be
5 ready for that and what that will look like for our
6 school.

7 So here are our phases. In phase one we do want
8 to implement our innovations and some of those
9 innovations you may ask are they truly innovations.
10 And so first thing in phase one is the academies and
11 we do have a freshmen academy that we began last
12 year, so we're in the second year of that. However,
13 adding the career academies is going to be something
14 very new for us and we feel that that is an
15 innovation. We will be having pathways in these
16 academies, career pathways. And we are very proud to
17 be a K-12 IB, International Baccalaureate school
18 district and we are the only K-12 school district in
19 the state of Arkansas, and so we're really proud of
20 that. But what's new -- and we put that as an
21 innovation, being IB -- what's new is that we've
22 added the career related program. We are the first
23 school in the state of Arkansas to implement that and
24 there are only 50 schools in the nation. That is
25 brand-new with the International Baccalaureate

1 organization. And so that is very exciting to us
2 because it merges perfectly with this whole concept
3 of career academies. We're going to imbed courses
4 and we did ask for some waivers in that and we do
5 realize that we don't need waivers to imbed courses,
6 so we will be going through the ADE approval. And
7 we've actually decided that we're going to be asking
8 for course approval for a citizenship seminar which
9 would imbed civics and oral communications. And so
10 we're beginning that process of getting that course
11 approval ready to get that approved by the Department
12 of Ed. And then internships -- and that's that third
13 innovation and that will be new to us. And we
14 realize internships isn't really a new thing, but
15 it's going to be new to us. And those connections
16 with the business community, as well as not only
17 students going out and interning but actually
18 bringing business in and doing seminars, being
19 mentors in our school building. All of that fits
20 into that piece.

21 In phase two we're going to add additional
22 pathways as student interests change and as our
23 business community needs change, because we realize
24 that will take place. We're going to have advisory
25 committees established for each academy with the

1 business and industry, with our school stakeholders,
2 with our community and our parents involved. And
3 then we hope to establish the night school blended
4 learning opportunity possibility. Extending every
5 opportunity for our students to complete credits
6 outside of a traditional school day may require those
7 waivers of seat time and that full day attendance for
8 us. But, again, that whole concept of having
9 internships that might need to take place during the
10 school day and students might need to be doing their
11 schooling after regular school hours.

12 And phase three would be the possibility of
13 satellite programs, students actually going off our
14 site possibly for cosmetology, those types of areas.
15 Again, we want to focus on the needs of our community
16 and the businesses. Cosmetology is a huge interest
17 to our students, but it's not a huge need in the
18 business community at this stage. So that's, again,
19 a phase three possibility for us.

20 We shared our proposed bell schedule, again
21 going ahead and adding that zero hour, that extended
22 hour, so new opportunities for our students to get
23 what they need to be successful.

24 Here's what our academies are going to look
25 like. Grade 9 is our freshman academy. The life of

1 a 9th grader is going to be pretty typical. It's not
2 going to change a lot with this conversion charter.
3 They will be involved in the freshman academy;
4 they're going to be working on those core classes and
5 electives that they need to get taken care of in the
6 9th grade. They do have mentoring there and some
7 one-on-one individualized attention and they will
8 have a part of this four-year, six-year plan. So
9 that will be where they'll be established. In grades
10 10-12 we have determined we're going to begin with
11 these four academies: liberal studies, education and
12 healthcare, business and technology, and industrial
13 technology. And we chose these based on surveys of
14 our students and surveys from our community.

15 In the liberal studies, that's where we see our
16 current IB diploma program primarily fitting; not
17 that an IB diploma level student could not take
18 courses within any of the career academies, but we do
19 already have pathways established and those are
20 listed here up on the slide. And we are thinking
21 ahead to that phase two, food production. We know we
22 want to add that. We're already in conversation with
23 Chartwells, our food service management. Those
24 students will be able to do some internships right
25 there on our campus and get that -- those

1 certifications needed for food production and that
2 experience. Education and healthcare, we also see a
3 need to grow our own. We will be adding teaching and
4 training, we hope, in the 2016-17 school year. And
5 hopefully -- we already have partnerships with
6 National Park College. We are talking with Henderson
7 State University, since they now have a satellite
8 center in Hot Springs. And our own district, we're
9 looking to utilize our students to go down and intern
10 in our elementary schools, get their paraprofessional
11 certification, and be able to provide some
12 interventions for our students at that level.
13 Business and technology, phase two, I'd like to
14 highlight the mobile application development. We are
15 thrilled about the computer science initiative by our
16 Governor and we are having great success with our
17 Essentials of Computer Programming class this year
18 and our students are begging for "what can I do
19 next." And so we are adding a definite pathway for
20 them that they can continue to pursue their dreams in
21 that area. You'll also see on these slides the IB
22 career related programs. We see those fitting --
23 those classes, those requirements fitting very nicely
24 in all of these academies and these career pathways.
25 Industrial technology -- again, we have phase two

1 opportunities there, as well as other pathways that
2 we already have ready to go. Welding is one that
3 I'll highlight here. That could be available through
4 Job Corp, and Job Corp is located in our district
5 currently. It would possibly necessitate the
6 flexibility of full-day attendance and seat time
7 though for our students to be able to go out to Job
8 Corp, get into that program and then also handle
9 their credits at the high school.

10 And so I want to share with you one of these
11 pathway examples. We have them prepared for all of
12 our career pathways that we have established. And
13 this shows that we have a plan in place -- this is
14 the four-year and even beyond plan for each child.
15 We have it connected to career cluster, education and
16 training; we have the core curriculum credits there,
17 plus their additional credits, and we have what a
18 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade year will look like.
19 And I highlight this because you see -- in that 11th
20 grade year in our current eight period day you'll see
21 a line in that very last column because students will
22 have been able to receive their credits that they
23 need and that's where we see those internship
24 openings in their schedules already set to go. We
25 have the post-secondary piece so they see what

1 technical center programs, what community college
2 programs, what university programs would apply to
3 this career pathway. And even scrolling down just a
4 little bit you can also see what the careers -- we
5 may not be able to scroll down today -- there you go.
6 You can see the careers that would be possibilities
7 ranging from this pathway and the possible industry
8 certifications. We want our parents and our students
9 to know if this is the pathway you want to pursue
10 these are the opportunities that you're going to have
11 as you go on into your future. So a typical day for
12 a sophomore, junior or senior would be completing
13 those core credit requirements and then as they get
14 those items completed then going to internships in
15 the afternoon or even after school, before school,
16 those types of scenarios.

17 Talked a little bit about business partnerships
18 -- we are excited about the business partnerships and
19 progress, and the business partners are excited to be
20 having these conversations with us. We are
21 collaborating with Fountain Lake who is also a
22 conversion charter school in Garland County to meet
23 with business and industry partners to share our
24 needs, what we would need for our students in their
25 internships, and for them to share with us what they

1 need from us for a successful experience. If we
2 cannot for age restrictions -- for example, Oaklawn
3 -- concerned with age of our students, we've already
4 talked with them about them coming in and providing
5 seminars in our school building or being mentors to
6 our students that might be in that career pathway for
7 general management. So we're really excited and
8 we've got business partners already in communication
9 in every academy and we're trying to get one for each
10 pathway, as well.

11 And so we'd like to finish just sharing a video.
12 This video was created by our students from digital
13 communications and we're really excited about that.
14 And due to technology we're going to shift and go to
15 Plan B.

16 (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: A video was shown. It
17 is available for viewing on the ADE website, under
18 the archived videos the Charter Authorizing Panel
19 meetings.)

20 DR. NEHUS: That completes our presentation, and
21 Dr. Hernandez will follow-up in our 5-minute time.

22 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you. Anyone to
23 speak in opposition?

24 (BRIEF MOMENT OF SILENCE)

25 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Hernandez, you're

1 recognized.

2 SUPT. HERNANDEZ: I'm also doing lights back
3 here.

4 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Meeting the needs of the
5 people.

6 SUPT. HERNANDEZ: That's right. I'm folding
7 chairs out and doing lighting and all that. Good
8 morning. Mike Hernandez, superintendent of Hot
9 Springs School District. It's good to be here and be
10 able to follow that presentation. I think our staff
11 did well. You know, essentially what we're here
12 trying to do in Hot Springs School District is -- and
13 I feel like we've done that -- is we've got this
14 spark. You know, we've got people from the business
15 and industry community; we've got people from higher
16 ed., adult ed.; you know, we've got all these people
17 that are now taking a look at Hot Springs and being
18 interested and saying, "What are the possibilities
19 for our school district?" Now, you know, is
20 everything perfectly fleshed out? No. You know,
21 we've got a lot of conversations and a lot of long
22 roads to go to get things where they want to be. We
23 offer a lot. You know, we have the International
24 Baccalaureate program; we do have concurrent credit;
25 we do have AP courses; we have partnerships with Job

1 Corp. The biggest thing for us is we wanted to make
2 sure initially everything was aligned. And the
3 biggest thing that we had for kids is that they come
4 from -- we have a high poverty rate. These kids come
5 from places where they don't have those sometimes
6 role models that say, "Hey, here's the way that you
7 get from Point A to Point B." So a lot of this that
8 we've been doing now is structuring what we do offer,
9 and we offer quite a bit. And then as we roll-out,
10 you know, one thing that we're looking at within
11 these academies is that we're establishing these
12 advisory committees with each one of them and
13 bringing in business and industry and partnerships,
14 higher ed., and saying, "How can we make each one of
15 these better?" So what it starts out being in year-
16 one, it's going to look different. A perfect example
17 is the teacher academy. You know, we're having
18 conversations with ADE about how can we start to grow
19 our own teachers. You know, that data that's out
20 there that says there's, you know, 8,000 some-odd
21 people in educator prep programs in 2010, we're down
22 -- in 2015, it's down to 5,200. That's a problem.
23 You know, we've got to address that. And so, you
24 know, we're taking it incumbent upon ourselves, you
25 know, we're developing a unique high school. You

1 know, it's really almost a two-year, four-year
2 university career vo-tech center all meshed into one
3 place. And, you know, I look at it in these common
4 terms three buckets; you know, if you're really
5 wanting that super rigorous curriculum, you know, the
6 IB program is where you want to go. If you're not
7 sure you still want rigorous curriculum, but you also
8 want a career pathway, you know, the IBCP pathway is
9 where you get kind of a little bit of both. If you
10 know you want to go out into the workforce, you're
11 going to go in that direction and so there's yet
12 another pathway.

13 You know, I can't say enough about the folks
14 that have really stepped up for us in our community
15 and come to the table and say that "we want to help."
16 You know, we -- you know, even Ms. Hill, the
17 transcription lady, you know, approached us when we
18 got here about, you know, having a partnership --
19 they need welders, and so how can we help serve those
20 needs. And so that's, you know, what Representative
21 Mickey Gates said about being sought after. We want
22 our folks to be sought after and that's something
23 that we're working really hard to do for our kids.

24 So, you know, in closing, we'd appreciate the
25 opportunity to continue this journey for our kids and

1 then try to provide the best possible education. You
2 know, not very long ago I sat up there with you guys
3 and thought about -- you know -- this was my favorite
4 part about being on the Charter Authorizing Panel,
5 amongst many things working at the Department. But
6 you get to sit up there and you started dreaming
7 about, you know, hey, how can we do this better; so
8 many neat ideas came from this area. And so, you
9 know, my folks probably think I'm crazy, but I've
10 kind of came out there and charged after it. I said,
11 you know, "We're going to start doing the work and
12 we're going to work hard every day to try to improve
13 the lives for kids." So, thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you, Dr. Hernandez.
15 Dr. Gotcher, would you like to start --

16 DR. GOTCHER: I'd be honored.

17 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: -- with our questions?

18 DR. GOTCHER: Sure. Thank you, team. It's an
19 honor to have you folks here today and it's a
20 pleasure to see the goals and dreams that you have
21 for the Trojan students of Hot Springs. I think Dr.
22 Hernandez mentioned the citizenship seminar, the
23 blending of civics ad oral comm., so I don't need to
24 ask anything on that. But I was concerned just one
25 bit -- I think the plans were to already relocate the

1 ALE students prior to this proposal. So as you
2 consider relocation of your ALE students to the home
3 buildings, talk about some of the challenges that you
4 foresee and then how those students will be
5 integrated as well into the IBCP program and so-
6 forth.

7 MR. JACKSON: I don't necessarily see the
8 challenges; I see some opportunities for those
9 students --

10 DR. GOTCHER: I understand.

11 MR. JACKSON: -- who are coming into our campus
12 to get involved in this particular idea, this concept
13 even more fully. And so the challenges are simply
14 going to be how do we make this work for them not on
15 campus; it's easier to do that.

16 DR. GOTCHER: Good. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Saunders.

18 DR. SAUNDERS: I'd like to jump into some of the
19 waivers and ask some questions concerning those. If
20 I could look -- starting off on the oral
21 communications, you are asking for a waiver from that
22 requirement. Is that correct?

23 MR. JACKSON: That's going to be an actual --
24 we're looking at that as part of our imbedded blended
25 piece. And so that waiver --

1 DR. SAUNDERS: So you're pulling that?

2 MR. JACKSON: Yeah. That waiver is going to be
3 pulled.

4 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. As well as civics?

5 MR. JACKSON: Correct.

6 DR. SAUNDERS: Is that correct? Okay. I wanted
7 just to clarify that.

8 DR. NEHUS: Yeah. We will pull the civics and
9 the oral communications waivers because we do realize
10 that those will be imbedded --

11 MR. JACKSON: Yeah.

12 DR. NEHUS: -- and we will do the ADE course
13 approval process for start of that.

14 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. On the class size,
15 regarding class size there's two components to that
16 that I'd like to talk about, probably address each
17 one separately. The first one is to allow class size
18 not to exceed 40. So just talking about that one, it
19 says, "In the event of a specific career pathway" --
20 so this would not be, as we have looked at formerly
21 with online learning or those types of environments;
22 this would be a typical classroom setting, asking for
23 a class size of up to 40. Is that correct?

24 MR. JACKSON: We're looking at internships.
25 Those are for our internships for those individuals

1 who are involved in that, for those instructors that
2 have more than those 30 or 40 students that are
3 allowed there. So that's strictly for the internship
4 experience for the students. So it's not in any of
5 our core or any of the other courses outside the
6 internship experience.

7 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. When you're saying in the
8 internship --

9 MR. JACKSON: The supervisors -- the students
10 will be assigned to a supervisor.

11 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay.

12 MR. JACKSON: So if they're going into a
13 partnership that we have they'll have a supervisor
14 who was communicating with us, supervised by us, and
15 then they'll be supervising those students. And so
16 they may have more than just the 40 students per
17 class or per instructor there.

18 DR. SAUNDERS: So when you say -- I guess I just
19 want to try to understand that on an internship we're
20 not talking about a traditional classroom setting in
21 that sense?

22 MR. JACKSON: Correct.

23 DR. NEHUS: Correct.

24 MR. JACKSON: Correct.

25 DR. SAUNDERS: If I'm understanding you

1 correctly, you're talking about possibly the coding
2 within such a school, those things of assigning a
3 group of students --

4 MR. JACKSON: You are correct.

5 DR. SAUNDERS: -- to a supervisor?

6 MR. JACKSON: Correct.

7 DR. SAUNDERS: But they may be different
8 locations as far as --

9 MR. JACKSON: Where they're going.

10 DR. SAUNDERS: -- not all in one room?

11 DR. NEHUS: Correct.

12 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay.

13 DR. NEHUS: We requested that waiver for the
14 internship experience, specifically for those that
15 are supervising internships to make sure there would
16 be no problem if a specific pathway had 40 students
17 in it and one person needed to supervise more than
18 that 30 that would be allotted in their regular
19 teaching class size.

20 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. I understand that. The
21 one number for allowing teachers to go up to 180, is
22 that needed or are you trying to circumvent the --

23 DR. NEHUS: Same thing. It's for those that
24 would be supervising internships; they may be over
25 the 150 because they have students that are out in

1 the community working and they're just supervising
2 them. That's the only reason we ask for that waiver.

3 DR. SAUNDERS: And that waiver, that's currently
4 allowed for in law, my understanding; however, the
5 new law requires that -- Dr. Hernandez, could you --

6 SUPT. HERNANDEZ: Yeah. And I think the new law
7 does -- and any person that's in the traditional
8 classroom setting where they're, you know, developing
9 a curriculum, they're actually teaching, grading, all
10 those types of things that we would want to take
11 advantage of the law and make sure that if they're
12 doing that extra work we'd pay them. In the
13 internship setting where they're merely supervising
14 and most of their time is spent, you know, just kind
15 of an administrative role over the program we want
16 that flexibility to not have to pay additional monies
17 for that.

18 DR. SAUNDERS: So that would be limited just to
19 the internship?

20 SUPT. HERNANDEZ: Correct.

21 DR. SAUNDERS: And going down to the next item,
22 the seat time, would that be limited to just your
23 vocational courses on the waiver of the Carnegie
24 unit?

25 DR. NEHUS: That is -- we are requesting that

1 for our elective courses. That seat time for us
2 would be digitally earned utilizing Virtual Arkansas,
3 those types of settings. But that would be for the
4 electives and/or vocational pieces only.

5 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay.

6 DR. NEHUS: Not core classes.

7 DR. SAUNDERS: If somebody else needs to --

8 MS. BARNES: Okay. And I just wanted to make
9 sure I just heard you correctly. Because when I read
10 it, I read it as it would not impact any graduation
11 requirements. And since you do have some electives
12 in your graduation requirements, which I understand
13 the concept and I'm comfortable with it, but I did
14 want to make sure that what I'm hearing and what I'm
15 reading in your waiver is, you know, aligned. So
16 here it says, "High school -- Hot Springs High School
17 is only asking for a waiver of the 120 clock hour
18 requirement and not to waive any graduation
19 requirements."

20 DR. NEHUS: Correct.

21 MS. BARNES: Okay. So your seat time would not
22 be -- how many -- I'm sorry; how many credits do you
23 currently require, locally?

24 DR. NEHUS: Locally, we require 23 in
25 technology.

1 MS. BARNES: Okay. Okay. I'm okay; I just --
2 when I heard it I had to ask the question because I
3 wanted to be sure that we're in alignment with what
4 you are actually asking for. And so if Dr. Saunders
5 is okay with that, I am as well. I do have a
6 question --

7 SUPT. HERNANDEZ: I want to make sure -- I
8 apologize -- to clarify is that on that the seat time
9 waiver that we -- we aren't asking for it for -- we
10 are asking for it possibly for some of the core
11 classes if it's blended learning and digitally, as
12 well.

13 MS. BARNES: Okay.

14 SUPT. HERNANDEZ: In order to be able to -- and
15 make sure we're clear on that. And there's lots of
16 reasons for that, is that in our senior class what we
17 want our senior -- and I'll give you an example -- we
18 start out with about 400 kids in kindergarten.
19 Sometimes we end up with 180 to 200 kids in our
20 senior class. And so some of those we lose to
21 transfers, choice; some of them we lose to dropouts.
22 We're very -- we take everybody and so, you know, we
23 have strong partnerships with Job Corp. When people
24 come from all over the state of Arkansas and
25 sometimes other states we get those kids and they

1 become our students. When they go to JDC we take
2 those students. And so in that same vein, you know,
3 a 9th or 10th grader may get that spark and they may
4 decide, hey, you know, I want to get my act together.
5 But when they have that long list of things that they
6 have to accomplish we want to have that flexibility
7 and that seat time, if they're able to do some
8 blending learning, and opportunities to do that. You
9 know, we want our senior class to look like we want
10 the seniors that aren't there because they graduated
11 early; we want some that are going to do a little bit
12 of later on components and that kind of blends into
13 our third component of our concept of night school.
14 You know, we want to get to a point where we partner
15 with other school districts within our county. We
16 can't afford to do a night school by ourselves. But
17 as we roll this out a little bit further we want to
18 have that flexibility to be able to have kids come in
19 after hours from other school districts and things
20 like that and be able to have a little bit more
21 offerings where, you know, it's kind of a have-it-
22 your-way education plan.

23 MS. BARNES: Yes, sir. And thank you; thank you
24 for that additional information. You know, the
25 blending piece, that's understandable. And I'm fine

1 because I thought I read it correctly the first time,
2 but I wanted to be sure I was understanding it
3 completely. I do have a question in the midst of all
4 of this of buy-in from your faculty.

5 MR. JACKSON: That's a great question because we
6 started this conversation, as we mentioned in our
7 presentation, last school year, and it was a
8 conversation around if we could be our own bosses and
9 we had no rules to follow what would this look like.
10 And a lot of these concepts we have on the table come
11 from our faculty. The freshman academy, two years
12 ago, began because faculty said, "We ought to do
13 something different for our freshmen." And so we
14 created that concept with their buy-in and we move
15 forward with their buy-in. A large majority of our
16 faculty are on-board because they see the impact.
17 And if I were to share with you some of -- we tried
18 to make sure that -- at the table we have those who
19 may say no, so we can get that particular buy-in
20 along this journey.

21 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Saunders.

22 DR. SAUNDERS: Do you want to follow-up? Are
23 you still --

24 MS. BARNES: No.

25 DR. SAUNDERS: Then I'll switch subjects unless

1 you want to go. All right. I have questions on the
2 licensure waivers. I wasn't -- I wanted to be clear
3 on what's written. With the teacher licensure
4 waivers, would that only apply to non-core classes?

5 MR. JACKSON: That is correct. That is, again,
6 opportunities for partnerships, organizations to come
7 in and help and be involved in that process, or those
8 who are licensed in those particular areas --
9 plumbing, electrician, that kind of thing; not in
10 math, science, social studies, language arts.

11 DR. SAUNDERS: And why the request for the
12 waiver from principal licensure?

13 SUPT. HERNANDEZ: I don't like Mr. Jackson, so
14 -- no. I think that was probably an oversight on our
15 part. We don't intend to waive the principal
16 licensure.

17 DR. SAUNDERS: You want to withdraw that?

18 SUPT. HERNANDEZ: We'll withdraw that.

19 MR. JACKSON: I am fully licensed.

20 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Now he tells you.

21 DR. SAUNDERS: That's all I had right now.

22 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Pfeffer, do you have a
23 follow-up to the licensure question?

24 MS. PFEFFER: I did. I just -- can you give me
25 an example; you said a career professional coming in

1 and teaching a course. So can you give me an example
2 of what you think that might look like?

3 MR. JACKSON: Well, currently we partner with
4 National Park College and they own the bulk of that
5 licensure and making sure those two teachers are
6 certified to do the work that they do. There may be
7 opportunities for those teachers to come to our
8 campus and teach a welding class or to teach
9 automotives actually on our campus and not having our
10 students to go out to those areas. And so making
11 sure those individuals are still highly qualified but
12 going through the process of background checks and
13 malnutrition -- malnutrition? -- child maltreatment
14 -- we have plenty of cakes, so I'm good. And so
15 those kinds of opportunities we see down the road.

16 MS. PFEFFER: Okay. And this would also cover a
17 situation where in your -- I can't even -- your
18 technology, if you had someone from the business
19 sector --

20 MR. JACKSON: Correct.

21 MS. PFEFFER: -- come in, a non-educator who
22 came to teach on your campus they could potentially
23 be teaching students courses for which they would get
24 required graduation credit as an elective. Is that
25 correct?

1 SUPT. HERNANDEZ: Yeah. And, you know, we're
2 trying to be very entrepreneurial in our practices
3 and so some of the things -- you know -- by doing
4 things with technology, you know, we'll want -- we've
5 got tech guys that have their degrees and stuff like
6 that; we want to be very industrious with it. We
7 want to put our kids to work side-by-side with our
8 guys and allow them to teach in some of these
9 networking -- all these types of different things.
10 One, we get a staff that saves us costs, the kids get
11 certificates, and we have a lot more folks to fix our
12 computers so our teachers are happy. Same thing with
13 the Chartwells deal. You know, we want our kids to
14 understand food production; we want them to
15 understand how to do the things that people struggle
16 with, and at the same time, you know, they can get
17 that experience on what does it take to build a menu,
18 what does it take to make sure that your plate cost
19 is where it needs to be; what does it take to manage
20 a staff. You know, learning all of those components,
21 you know, through our partners I think would be very
22 valuable, especially for us being that hospitality
23 and tourism type of community. And so we think
24 that's a good thing for us.

25 MS. PFEFFER: And the reason for my asking is,

1 kind of like with the previous charters, just to be
2 sure that we're all clear that in terms of course
3 codes and graduation credits that we're going to have
4 to work as partners to make sure that there will not
5 be negative implications, you know, down the road for
6 students and that all of that has been thought
7 through in terms of --

8 DR. NEHUS: And in any of those situations I
9 will work directly with Mr. Coy to make sure that we
10 have that. We have a very good working relationship,
11 so any questions that we have on those course codes I
12 always try to make sure I run that by the Department
13 to make sure we are doing what's right for our kids.

14 MS. PFEFFER: And it has -- it is new for --
15 kind of a new experience for us because we have to be
16 very careful that the licensure office, his office,
17 plus the career education office -- that everyone is
18 working together to be sure that we're -- that we
19 don't have miscommunication.

20 DR. NEHUS: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Gotcher.

22 DR. GOTCHER: I noticed on the presentation -- I
23 think it was you, Dr. Hernandez, who referenced
24 advisory committees or advisory boards for each of
25 the different academies. I appreciate that and

1 recognize that that ongoing partnership and
2 conversation is important. What will that look like?
3 How often? How do you respond to your partnership or
4 to your advisory boards' requests or concerns and so-
5 forth? What would that look like, sir?

6 SUPT. HERNANDEZ: All right. I think what the
7 intention is, pending the approval of this charter,
8 we're going to form these advisories and probably
9 meet pretty frequently over this semester. And then
10 once we get into that mode, we're going to meet
11 probably quarterly. But the conversation is going to
12 be, you know, let's look at each pathway; let's see
13 -- if you remember that chart that was up there, it
14 talked about here are the different certifications
15 you can get. Well, how can we -- you know --
16 somebody in the aerospace manufacturing, advanced
17 manufacturing say, "Well, if you can add this
18 component or get this, this is what we're really
19 looking for." And having those ongoing conversations
20 gives us a lot of flexibility where we can modify
21 programs and really be responsive to what industry
22 needs at that time. You know, we're gearing up in
23 our community to have lots of conversations about how
24 we increase broadband; we're trying to attract more
25 tech companies. So, knowing that, we want to make

1 sure that, you know, we have all those things. You
2 know, we talk about Oaklawn, you know, and people
3 think about racing and horse races. Well, there is
4 -- they have one of the largest technology staffs
5 around. Because when you think about you can sit in
6 the comfort of your home and do -- you can place your
7 bets, if you will, and do all those kinds of things,
8 well, that's technology. They can't afford for Wi-Fi
9 systems to go down; they can't afford for service to
10 go down. And we know -- you guys know how much it
11 costs to get programming and things like that fixed,
12 and so we want to make sure that we're providing
13 those kinds of opportunities for our kids so, you
14 know, when they graduate they can see, you know, hey,
15 I may have to go to -- I may have the certification I
16 need to go right to work or I can go over to National
17 Park and pick up these few classes and go. But we
18 want to constantly be looking at that and not stay
19 stagnant in what we're doing and so that's why it's
20 important for us. You know, we can sit around as
21 teachers and talk about what we think, but we don't
22 know -- and that's why it's important for us to be
23 very symbiotic with our community and say, you know,
24 "When you're investing \$12,000 plus per kid each year
25 to educate them, we want to make sure you're getting

1 that return on investment upon graduation." And so
2 that's kind of the conversations that we're having
3 and that's why we're having so much buy-in. Because,
4 you know, when I put \$144,000 plus or \$150,000 into a
5 kid, hopefully I'm getting something out of it as a
6 community person. And so that's kind of the mindset
7 and the approach that we're taking with this.

8 DR. GOTCHER: And I think that's a powerful
9 piece. Recently, I had a chance to visit the
10 Springdale School District. I know they're guests in
11 our room today. But one of the things I asked Dr.
12 Rollins was how do you maintain those partnerships.
13 And he referenced something to the effect "if it's
14 intentional and it's proactive," and I think having
15 an advisory board is a very proactive piece. So I
16 commend you guys for that and I appreciate it. Thank
17 you, Dr. Hernandez.

18 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Jones.

19 DR. JONES: Dr. Hernandez, or I guess anyone, do
20 the students incur costs for National Park,
21 attendance there?

22 DR. HERNANDEZ: They do not. We pay \$50, their
23 registration fee, and then everything else is
24 covered. So it's a -- you know -- we're heavily
25 utilizing -- of course, with the new modification of

1 the state law allowing the ALE funds and NSLA funds
2 to be used in partnership with those, that's
3 something else that we're heavily exploring. And
4 we've actually upped quite a bit our concurrent
5 credit enrollment this year with National Park.

6 DR. JONES: Good. What about enrollment in IB?
7 I noticed you had AP and IB. Do students have to
8 meet certain criteria to go to either one of those
9 programs?

10 MR. JACKSON: If I may, I'd like to defer that
11 one to our IB Coordinator, Ms. Redding.

12 DR. JONES: All right.

13 MS. REDDING: My name is Paula Redding. I'm the
14 International Baccalaureate Coordinator at Hot
15 Springs High School; I'm also the Coordinator for the
16 IBCP. And as such I'm the academic advisor, mentor,
17 social, emotional guide; I'm kind of their go-to
18 person. We offer IB in grades 11-12. It's a program
19 that you can be fully invested in and take the seven
20 courses in 11th grade and the six or seven courses in
21 12th grade, but we also -- in some cases, we offer a
22 concurrent AP/IB. For example, I teach the 12th
23 grade IB English and AP Lit in the same class and the
24 students take both sets of tests. We do the same
25 thing with the IB and AP biology. The students take

1 the same curriculum; we imbed the two curriculum and
2 they take both tests. We also offer AP literature.
3 We have in the past offered some other AP courses;
4 for example, there's nothing in the IB program like
5 AP American Government. So when we have students
6 that want that we've offered that. We've offered AP
7 statistics; we've offered AP calculus. Those are
8 offered on an as-requested basis.

9 DR. JONES: Thank you. What kind of training
10 does an IB teacher have to have?

11 MS. REDDING: To teach the IB diploma programs
12 the first year they must, either before they start
13 teaching the class or during that year, go to the
14 International Baccalaureate official training. It's
15 three very -- three-and-a-half very intensive days of
16 training. If for some -- then every seven years, or
17 whenever the IB syllabus is adjusted, that teacher
18 must either go back to the face-to-face training or
19 if that is an experienced teacher they can do that
20 course online. But the -- for example, I have to --
21 as the coordinator, I had to be trained and then
22 every -- minimum of every seven years I have to go
23 back to the training, as well.

24 DR. JONES: Okay. And so offerings -- students
25 may go the AP/IB route --

1 MS. REDDING: They can go -- we have -- like Dr.
2 Hernandez said, we have lots of offerings. You can
3 be an IB diploma candidate --

4 DR. JONES: Right.

5 MS. REDDING: -- in which case you can pick up
6 some AP courses, as well. You can take IB isolated
7 courses; I only want to take IB English, that's the
8 only course I want to take. We do that. But the new
9 piece that we're offering, the IB career related, it
10 was kind of our precursor in a way along with the
11 freshman academy to what we're doing or hoping to do
12 with our pathways. The IBCP, the IB career-related
13 program, these students will be in the career
14 pathways; they will be completers, and it's a
15 requirement for them to receive the IBCP certificate.
16 They also must take two IB courses which adds the
17 rigor for them to go on to college. One of the
18 courses must be a two-year IB course, the other one
19 can be one or two years, and if they have room in
20 their schedule they can take additional courses. And
21 then there's also an extra IB course for those
22 students, called the IBCP Core.

23 DR. JONES: Okay. And so the students that
24 don't prefer to take AP or IB, they have regular --

25 MS. REDDING: They will be in -- all those

1 students will be in one of the career pathways under
2 this new -- and those -- some of our IB students will
3 also be in those career pathways.

4 DR. JONES: So what changes -- when you bring
5 ALE students back on campus, what's different? Can
6 they participate in any of those classes?

7 MS. REDDING: They can.

8 DR. JONES: Okay.

9 MS. REDDING: Okay. That's part of my job is to
10 advise. But they will be able to.

11 DR. NEHUS: Yeah. And bringing the ALE students
12 back on campus is going to provide them the
13 opportunity to be able to take these courses, which
14 they have not been able to do when they've been off-
15 site, whether it be that we actually bring the IB
16 teacher into that setting and teach them or whether
17 they actually leave and go out for a class period to
18 take that course. We're really excited about that
19 offer.

20 DR. JONES: And, Dr. Nehus, I want to compliment
21 you for the career pathways sheet. We have
22 encouraged that for about a year now because,
23 finally, it puts down a plan for the whole high
24 school career and we have found that it's very
25 difficult to counsel kids when we don't know what we

1 have available. And it gives them on paper a real
2 plan and what are the possibilities. Where did you
3 -- how did you start -- when did you start using
4 that?

5 DR. NEHUS: So we have not implemented it yet.
6 That will be with this charter. We're real excited
7 about that. But we found some examples -- and I have
8 to compliment our college and career counselor and
9 our career and technical ed. coordinator because they
10 have put in the legwork to make sure that all those
11 documents are complete for our current -- I think we
12 have 16 pathways we're ready to go with and those
13 documents are all ready. So we're real excited.

14 DR. JONES: That is a lot of work but it's so
15 incredibly important. Thank you for doing that work.
16 One more question and I will be finished. I'm
17 curious what you're doing -- what's your plan for the
18 extended hours, zero hour and after class?

19 MR. JACKSON: That's an opportunity again for
20 those students who are part of any of our academies,
21 but certainly those students in our IB program who --
22 you know -- we jam-pack a lot in for them during the
23 normal school day. So for them to get some more
24 elective opportunities, to have that zero hour
25 before, also some extended time after benefits them.

1 But also that student who -- you know -- I may be
2 behind and I have not gotten -- I didn't get on the
3 right track my freshman year, so I need to take some
4 things before school, a little after school in order
5 to get caught up so that I'm graduating in four years
6 and I can have the internship experience my
7 junior/senior year. Just trying to provide
8 opportunities for those students to get on-track,
9 stay on-track, and to move in the right direction.

10 DR. JONES: Thank you. And I want you to answer
11 this as a principal. On the PBIS, is that new for
12 y'all?

13 MR. JACKSON: This first year -- and you don't
14 see that a lot on a high school campus -- but I came
15 from the middle school world where we made it work
16 and we're looking forward to that being a huge impact
17 across our campus of rewarding -- we oftentimes get
18 so caught up in cracking the whip that we can get --

19 DR. JONES: That social/emotional component is
20 so important --

21 MR. JACKSON: It's critical.

22 DR. JONES: -- to blend with your program, so I
23 commend you for that.

24 MR. JACKSON: Thank you.

25 DR. JONES: Good luck.

1 MR. JACKSON: Thank you.

2 DR. NEHUS: Can I add one thing too, Dr. Jones,
3 to that last question? Our community, our board at
4 the public hearing, a lot of questions came up about
5 what if a child wants to switch pathways, will they
6 be able to do that. And that's another reason for
7 those zero and extended hour is because if they
8 choose to switch a pathway then they'll have the
9 capability to get all their graduation requirements,
10 but they might not be able to get that industry
11 certification because they might be a little behind.
12 But this would give them an opportunity, if they're
13 motivated, to put in extra time even to be able to
14 leave us with exactly what they want to be successful
15 in their future.

16 DR. JONES: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: I have some questions, and
18 you just answered one of them. But in keeping with
19 that idea of flexibility for the students, which I'm
20 really excited about, talk just a little bit about
21 your plans for being flexible with your teachers.

22 MR. JACKSON: It becomes natural. I mean, it's
23 the goal to be flexible for our students, but at the
24 same time this may provide opportunities with our
25 faculty schedule as well. Instead of coming in at

1 7:45 in the morning and going until 3:25, 3:24 in the
2 afternoon, we may have some of our faculty have a
3 shift in their schedule who are coming in at 9:00 and
4 going until that 4:45 time slot in order to
5 accommodate the needs of our students. So it's
6 certainly an option, an opportunity for us that we
7 look forward to as we move along this process.

8 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: I heard some -- overheard
9 someone in the bathroom say, "I'm not a morning
10 person." I thought, you know, and neither are many
11 of our --

12 MR. JACKSON: Our teachers.

13 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: -- adolescents.

14 MR. JACKSON: Yeah.

15 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: So that -- I mean, they
16 would be a perfect parent --

17 DR. NEHUS: We've actually had several who said,
18 "We love this idea of night school. Can I be the one
19 who comes in at 12:00 and I'll work until 6:00?" And
20 so we have a lot that are excited about that.

21 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: In keeping with the vein
22 of flexibility, in your video a student talked about,
23 you know, you might take a few classes, might go out
24 to local business or an internship and then might
25 even come back. Talk to us about transportation,

1 because I believe Dr. Hernandez talked about the free
2 and reduced rate. So how are those kids going to get
3 around?

4 DR. HERNANDEZ: Right now, you know, we do
5 provide a lot of early morning -- some early morning
6 tutoring opportunities and we have a lot of
7 afterschool, so we have transportation that's flowing
8 during those hours. Right now, we're in
9 conversations with our city in talking about -- we
10 have a transit, inner-city transit system, and so
11 between -- that goes out to the college and different
12 places. So we're trying to get some -- be able to
13 pay those costs or have some kind of free coupon, if
14 you will, type thing that if they're a, you know, Hot
15 Springs student that's involved in this program or
16 this internship, if they don't have transportation --
17 in 11th and 12th grades many of our kids don't -- can
18 we have that in place. So that's some of the
19 conversation in regards to transportation that we're
20 having. We want to make sure that we don't limit
21 kids that want these opportunities. You know, there
22 may be some businesses and industries, if we have
23 enough, that they may send folks to us. We'll come
24 pick them up and bring them out to our internship and
25 bring them back. And we also have various -- we have

1 a lot of different things at Hot Springs School
2 District. But we have some of these liaisons and
3 stuff that work with us that come in and, you know,
4 take our kids to various places throughout the day.
5 And so we have kind of a -- I won't say
6 transportation fleet; we have other additional
7 methods of transportation that we can kind of get
8 kids around, if we need to.

9 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you. I too want to
10 commend you on the preparation. One thing that I was
11 really excited about is you are already talking about
12 implementation and it wasn't couched in that "we're
13 waiting on you as a panel to approve before we
14 start." You're already starting, so we really
15 commend you for that.

16 SUPT. HERNANDEZ: You know, and it's because --
17 and I say that's a credit to our staff. I didn't do
18 anything but show up, but, you know, so far they
19 haven't done anything that I'm willing to not take
20 credit for. So, you know, it's because of our folks
21 all this work had begun. You know, I was concerned
22 about the timeline, you know, coming in and saying,
23 "Hey, let's have discussion about this charter." And
24 that was one of the first things I did when I got
25 hired is we went -- I took Mr. Jackson out here to

1 Outback Steakhouse and we had the conversation about
2 some of this stuff just to see where they were, and
3 so I figured if I fed him he'd be more amenable to
4 listen to what I was talking about. And so -- but I
5 was pleasantly surprised that the freshman academy
6 was put in place and there was already conversations
7 along these lines of thinking. And so, you know,
8 having the implementation working group, I said,
9 "Guys, we're going to do this whether they approve us
10 or not." There may be some other issues we have to
11 work through, but we just -- you know -- we have a
12 lot of great things. You know, we're real fortunate
13 in our district that we have Ouachita Job Corp. It's
14 currently a residential program for kids; you know,
15 they offer -- you can become union carpentry
16 certified, you can become union painting, union
17 masonry; there's urban forestry; there's welding,
18 same welding certificate you get from anywhere else;
19 and also office automation. You know, kids go out
20 there and they live there and it's a good advantage
21 for them. But we're having conversations that in the
22 spring we're going to start rolling out this day
23 program where we let kids go out and do that stuff
24 during the day and then they can come back. It's
25 beneficial to them because they get to grow their

1 program, paid for with federal dollars. And then,
2 you know, we have that service as kind of a -- we're
3 kind of taking this mentality of an alternative
4 learning environment in our complete district. It's
5 almost an alternative learning environment because
6 it's -- you know -- you may be really ambitious and
7 you really want to do lots of things, like be in the
8 orchestra and be in the band and be an IB student.
9 Well, in our cookie-cutter approach you can't do
10 that; there's all these barriers to that. So we want
11 to open those doors and say, "If you want to do it,
12 we'll figure out a way to get it done for you." If
13 you -- you know -- you're way behind, we're going to
14 figure out how to catch you up," because we can't
15 afford to put -- we cannot graduate kids or not
16 graduate kids anymore in our district that -- we have
17 to, you know, take it upon ourselves because it's our
18 responsibility to put quality kids out in the job
19 market.

20 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Amen.

21 SUPT. HERNANDEZ: Yes.

22 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Any other questions?

23 MS. PFEFFER: Can I make a comment?

24 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Yes, Ms. Pfeffer.

25 MS. PFEFFER: And kind of in response to what

1 you said there, I respect very much the commitment
2 that you all have that this is something you're going
3 to try to do regardless, because it's good for kids.
4 And that's why I also see that this is exactly what
5 this whole process is designed to do. And if we as a
6 state have barriers in place, preventing you, I'm
7 just very excited that we have an opportunity to work
8 with you and provide you with some of that
9 flexibility. And so I think this is a very good
10 example of what this whole process is supposed to be
11 and I just thank you for your hard work because it's
12 -- and something that was said while ago that
13 employers -- that the goal is for employers to be in
14 pursuit of your students, and I think that's an
15 awesome goal and I'm excited.

16 SUPT. HERNANDEZ: And, you know, we've tried to
17 be very thoughtful in our goals. You know, noticing
18 in those goals something that sometimes I know eluded
19 me when we were -- when I was on the panel was that
20 we gave you numbers. You know, we said, "We're doing
21 2%. We want to be held accountable." And, you know,
22 even though we don't have -- we're going to be back;
23 we're going to come back with waiver requests and
24 amendments because as we move through this we know
25 we're going to have issues. You know, we're really

1 encouraging folks in our county -- we meet pretty
2 regularly, the superintendents, and we're having
3 these conversations about how we can -- in Garland
4 County how can we make education the best thing
5 around. And that's something that this is just the
6 start of it, as Fountain Lake started it before us,
7 is that we're trying to work together. Because, you
8 know, we don't care who you are or where you come
9 from; we want to put you on the right path and
10 ultimately, you know, serve the society that we live
11 in. So we're really excited about it.

12 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Clay, are there any
13 remaining issues regarding this request?

14 MS. CLAY: One waiver that I would recommend
15 that they seek is the 6-18-213(a)(2). This is the
16 one we dealt with on the previous application that
17 deals with visually noting the physical presence of
18 students on digital courses. So if they would agree
19 to that, then I have no other issues.

20 SUPT. HERNANDEZ: Thank you for the "Clay-
21 ification." I wasn't going to get out of here
22 without being able to say that. We would much like
23 to seek that also.

24 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Any other questions or
25 comments? I'll accept a motion.

1 MS. PFEFFER: I move to approve the application
2 for Hot Springs World Class High School.

3 DR. GOTCHER: Second.

4 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: We have a motion by Ms.
5 Pfeffer and a second by Dr. Gotcher to approve the
6 application. Any comments, conversations? All those
7 in favor of the motion?

8 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

9 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Any opposed?
10 Congratulations, Dr. Hernandez. If you'll wait
11 patiently, we'll have detailed remarks.

12 Dr. Hernandez, as the Panel is completing their
13 document, and they'll read those to you, I would ask
14 you to consider ways that you will communicate your
15 progress along, not only for the benefit of the other
16 school districts in your county but for the benefit
17 of school districts across the state. And one note
18 that I wrote was as the only K-12 IB program in the
19 state it falls upon you to be the voice of that
20 opportunity for kids and to really share that. Other
21 schools may be interested but they don't know how to
22 get started or don't know enough about it. So it
23 really falls upon you to be the communicator of that
24 opportunity for children.

25 SUPT. HERNANDEZ: You won't have to worry about

1 us talking about all the things that we're doing in
2 Hot Springs. We're going to try to get out there
3 with the good and the bad, so -- and we're going to
4 be very open. And we'll think of ways that we can
5 maybe work on a quarterly report or something that we
6 can, you know, have out there for our public and
7 people to know, you know, what are our issues; you
8 know, what are we running up against that are
9 barriers; and then, what is it that we're doing well
10 and feel like we're having success with.

11 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: There are many people
12 pulling for you, so feel free to reach out. And, you
13 know, we love a good link to a video.

14 SUPT. HERNANDEZ: Yeah. If we can get the voice
15 to work; I think we're having issues with that, so --

16 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Jones.

17 DR. JONES: I support this motion because the
18 district has designed high level academic career
19 opportunities for students and have done the planning
20 necessary to expect this charter will be successful
21 for students.

22 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Mr. Lester.

23 MR. LESTER: I believe the applicant has an
24 excellent plan for career readiness and has the
25 resources, programs, partnerships currently in place

1 to meet the goals outlined in their application.

2 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Liwo.

3 MS. LIWO: I voted for. Simply put, this is a
4 very promising plan.

5 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Pfeffer.

6 MS. PFEFFER: This application clearly
7 demonstrates a vision for the future of education for
8 Arkansas students. The district is commended for its
9 strong partnerships with the community and also with
10 the other districts in Garland County. And I'm
11 optimistic that students, parents and the community
12 will be excited about taking ownership for student
13 success and articulating the value of being part of
14 the Hot Springs World Class High School.

15 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Mr. Rogers.

16 MR. ROGERS: I voted for the motion because the
17 career academy -- along the lines of everyone who
18 said the career academy will allow their students to
19 gain a high school diploma and obtain credit for
20 college or industry certification.

21 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Saunders.

22 DR. SAUNDERS: I thought this would provide an
23 opportunity for the students, reflecting the needs of
24 the community.

25 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Barnes.

1 MS. BARNES: I voted in favor of the motion. I
2 believe that this concept serves as an innovation
3 approach to student learning and college and career
4 proactive strategies. The phase-in is a very
5 responsible way to insure success.

6 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Gotcher.

7 DR. GOTCHER: I voted for the motion to approve.
8 I feel this applicant provides an innovative yet an
9 aggressive approach towards a school that creates its
10 own distinctive version of a flexible framework for
11 kids. I further encourage you to remain close to
12 your community partners in this process.

13 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Congratulations, Hot
14 Springs World Class High School.

15 SUPT. HERNANDEZ: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: We'll take a quick 7-
17 minute break and be ready for the next action item.

18 (BREAK: 11:11-11:23 A.M.)

19 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: I believe Representative
20 Eads came in. You're welcome to come to the podium.

21 REPRESENTATIVE EADS: I'm Representative Lance
22 Eads from Springdale, Arkansas, and I'm just here to
23 provide support for our school district and their
24 opportunity to get this charter. So any questions,
25 I'll be happy to answer. Thank you for allowing me

1 to join this morning.

2 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you for being here.

3 A-3: HEARING OF DISTRICT CONVERSION PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

4 APPLICATION: SPRINGDALE SCHOOL OF INNOVATION

5 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Boyd, you're
6 recognized for action item three.

7 MS. BOYD: Thank you, Madam Chair. Action item
8 three, Hearing of District Conversion Public Charter
9 School Application from the Springdale School of
10 Innovation. Springdale School of Innovation is a
11 proposed district conversion public charter school
12 with a full virtual component. The applicant is
13 requesting to serve students in grades K-12 with a
14 maximum enrollment of 2,000. ADE staff reviewed the
15 application, and concerns were shared with the
16 applicant for response. The application, the ADE
17 evaluation, and the applicant's response are included
18 for review by the Charter Authorizing Panel. And we
19 have Dr. Megan Witonski, the associate superintendent
20 here to begin the presentation for Springdale.

21 DR. WITONSKI: Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: If all the representatives
23 regarding Springdale School of Innovation and anyone
24 speaking in opposition would please stand to receive
25 the oath; raise your right hand. Do you swear or

1 affirm that the testimony you're about to give shall
2 be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
3 truth?

4 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

5 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you. Dr. Witonski,
6 you're recognized.

7 DR. WITONSKI: We are so thankful to be here.
8 So good morning; thank you for making sure that we
9 were able to join you before lunch because I know how
10 that works. So hopefully everyone had an opportunity
11 to meet Little Debbie in the front. My name is Megan
12 Witonski; I am associate superintendent with the
13 Springdale School District. And with me I have Mr.
14 Joe Rollins, who is principal at the School of
15 Innovation, and Dr. Mark Oesterle, who is assistant
16 principal at the School of Innovation. So we're
17 going to get started this morning and, Ms. Friedman,
18 I know you're helping us back there. This is a photo
19 -- and you can notice that it's a schematic, it's a
20 drawing, but this is our multimillion dollar
21 investment that is to open in August of 2016, which
22 is going to be the new School of Innovation, which is
23 where this charter will be living. And it is under
24 construction; it is going forward. And I know that
25 over the last three days we've talked a lot about

1 planning and implementation and development, and so
2 we come to you today with this application. We don't
3 take it lightly, we take it very seriously, and we
4 are investing not only money but time and effort to
5 make sure that we bring this model forward. There is
6 not a building that exists like this in the state of
7 Arkansas, and so we look forward to inviting you out
8 to visit the building once it is open but it is going
9 to be a beautiful facility.

10 We're going to go to a video and I know that Ms.
11 Friedman is working that for us through YouTube. And
12 this is a message from our superintendent, Dr. Jim
13 Rollins, like he said.

14 (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: A video was shown.
15 That video is available on the ADE website, in the
16 archived videos of Charter Authorizing Panel
17 meetings.)

18 DR. WITONSKI: So the School of Innovation is
19 about helping students to find their direction and
20 helping them find where do they need to go next.
21 Thanks, Ms. Friedman.

22 So justification -- look at that beautiful lady
23 -- all means all -- and when Dr. Rollins talked about
24 "all meaning all," it doesn't just mean a small
25 group; it doesn't just mean a small population. It

1 means every child. And when you look at our data as
2 a district and you look at our data at individual
3 schools across the 30 schools, until we reach 100%
4 proficiency we are not meeting the definition of "all
5 means all." We've learned a ton about
6 personalization of learning, personalization of
7 learning for students, personalization of learning
8 for teachers -- and those are two different things.
9 21st century college and career ready learners, we
10 have to have kids who are ready to lead; ready to
11 lead us in our region and ready to lead us in the
12 state, and we want them to be innovation ready.

13 So we have several waivers that are included in
14 our application and some of those waivers harness the
15 ability for us to go and access expertise,
16 professional expertise from industry leaders, which
17 we're going to talk about.

18 The digital access -- being able to insure that
19 students have access to any-time learning and through
20 that being able to show the mastery of that content
21 through the Arkansas State Learning Standards.

22 School-wise enrichment opportunities and, of
23 course, dual language instruction.

24 So regional awareness -- there's this misnomer
25 that northwest Arkansas is this golden egg; you know,

1 we serve -- 70% of our students are free and reduced.
2 We serve over 10,000 English Language Learners and we
3 have about 42 different languages that we provide
4 instruction and try to provide support and scaffold
5 for. But one of the huge components that we have in
6 our area is a strong local and business community and
7 we are fortunate that although it is local, it is a
8 national brand; it is a global competitor. And we
9 have learned a lot from those interactions that we've
10 had with those industry leaders, but we have also
11 learned that we are not maximizing that industry
12 knowledge. Our leaders are telling us in education
13 that they are not able to find the employees that
14 they need to be able to fill the jobs that they need
15 to fill and those are right there in Springdale. So
16 we want to harness the ability to bring in
17 instructors, to bring in the field knowledge, to have
18 students go out and experience what that field
19 knowledge looks like.

20 Competency-based learning -- this has not been
21 an easy road for us. This is a ton of work. It is
22 extremely expensive; it is extremely time-consuming,
23 and we have some of the best master teachers in
24 Springdale working to build this competency education
25 model for our students. But it is all based on the

1 idea of insuring mastery for our students -- and not
2 just some students, but for all students. And as you
3 heard one of our students say in the video, "I do it
4 again until I get it correct." And so the idea of
5 failure or the idea of not being able to succeed is
6 not an option. We have some unique needs that are
7 also unique to our geographic area. Some of those
8 are we have some -- we have recent immigrants. And
9 in some cases, parents or students might be concerned
10 about coming forward to work with the school as a
11 partner because of their United States legal status.
12 We also know that we have to maximize the ability for
13 students to be able to attend and so having the
14 ability to have a digital offering in situations that
15 we may not be able to connect with students
16 otherwise, who are not registered home-school
17 students and they are not enrolled in another
18 district, they are not enrolled anywhere. We need to
19 be able to bring that population into Springdale.

20 Enrichment opportunities -- this is not about
21 narrowing the focus; this is about broadening the
22 opportunities, insuring that students have access to
23 master teachers, industry experts, mentors, and, of
24 course, hands-on application.

25 And I'm going to tell you a quick story and this

1 is not the PowerPoint, but this is to me very telling
2 of kind of where we're heading. We've done a lot of
3 research. We've spent a lot of time -- we've worked
4 on this model and this idea for the last three years.
5 Now we were thrilled to be designated in 2014 under
6 Act 601 as one of the first Schools of Innovation and
7 we take that endorsement very seriously. But from
8 that and from those experiences it has taught us that
9 what we are doing is not enough. We have to be able
10 to lift those remaining barriers and that is why we
11 are before you today. One of those barriers is
12 through dual language instruction. There was a
13 researcher, her name is Dr. Patricia Kuhl, and she is
14 -- K-u-h-l, not cool, not like Clay-ification over
15 there -- but she has this ability to be able to show
16 what that looks like, and how she did it is she did
17 it with a clear box and a toy. So she took two
18 groups of babies and she put them in two separate
19 groups. One group of babies, 9-month old babies had
20 had exposure and had experience of multiple languages
21 in the home; any language, but they had had
22 experience with two languages. The other group of 9-
23 month old babies came from a single language home,
24 whatever the language but single language. She puts
25 them in two different groups and she puts a clear box

1 in front of them. And in the clear box she holds up
2 a toy; she shows the baby the toy; she puts the toy
3 in the box; the baby sees the toy in the box and the
4 baby wants to do what -- reach for the toy. The
5 babies -- none of the babies in either study group
6 were able to access the toy. And so she goes back
7 and she sits down and for each group and each
8 individual baby she models how you go through the
9 clear box to grab the toy and extrapolate it out.
10 And so what do the babies do? They go back and they
11 try it the same way they did it before -- but this
12 time, uh-huh, both groups used the model. And when
13 they used the model they were able to go in and
14 access the toy, which tells us teaching is important.
15 Right? You've got to have a way; you've got to have
16 a guide to show you initially. But the third time
17 she did it she alternated the box. She put the hole
18 in a different direction to alter the experience that
19 the child was having, and the babies put themselves
20 into two groups. And so what do you think happened?
21 The group who had been exposed to one language kept
22 trying the same way that had been modeled for them
23 over and over again. The group who had been exposed
24 to two or more languages, they figured out -- they
25 modified their effort and they were all successful in

1 pulling out the toy. Those are 9-month old babies.
2 And so if we can do the same thing to have our
3 students to be able to problem-solve and to apply
4 those skills and to think, teaching them how to think
5 is huge. So it helps to foster the brain
6 development, but it is also an obligation that we
7 have for all students. That enrichment model for all
8 students needs to be school-wise. We have to
9 increase the progress. And, of course, in
10 Springdale, it certainly helps us as we try to
11 continue to address our achievement gap. And, of
12 course, the last bullet that you see is the response
13 to this in industry. They need bilingual employees
14 who are ready to take over.

15 So I'm going to ask Mr. Joe Rollins to come up
16 and talk with you about our community partnerships.

17 MR. ROLLINS: Dr. Gotcher, you mentioned it
18 better than I ever could just a little while ago. We
19 have the unique opportunity to bring the facility
20 forward at the same time as our instructional
21 program, which they don't always line up. At that
22 same juncture we have the opportunity to involve our
23 business community and our partners from day-one. So
24 we had the chance to sit down and ask partners like
25 our Chamber of Commerce, our Northwest Council, our

1 post-secondary partners like Northwest Technical
2 Institute and Northwest Community College, and even
3 the University of Arkansas, "How can we work together
4 to move the needle for our kids?" Dr. Witonski
5 alluded to the types of students that we have in our
6 district and they're as diverse as I could ever
7 describe to you. Our business partners rallied
8 around the fact that they have two commonalities. No
9 matter where they came from, no matter what their
10 background is they have a future to prepare for and
11 they have us collectively to give them that. That's
12 kind of been our resounding focus within our
13 community. So we participate with our Chamber of
14 Commerce on a regular basis, even to the point of
15 this week. We visited with them in terms of
16 workforce development in our region. Those partners
17 give us incredible feedback in terms of what can we
18 offer to our students in terms of course offerings,
19 in terms of soft skill development, professional
20 skill development. The information that we got back
21 was very timely, very relevant to us, and they
22 indicated that we need the following fields in our
23 region: medical trades, skilled trades, HVAC,
24 mechanical systems, welding, plumbing, automation,
25 mechatronics, business and information technology,

1 entrepreneurship, transportation, logistics,
2 education, human resources, and then again those 21st
3 century skills that we work into our school day every
4 day in the terms of what we call habits of mind.
5 That might be the ability to collaborate or to manage
6 your time or to be self-directed or to work with a
7 group of your peers, or maybe just get as simple as
8 what does it truly mean to think instead of memorize
9 and repeat; what can you do to problem-solve -- all
10 skills that our students are bringing to the table
11 infused in what they do every day.

12 Then we were allowed to explore student choice
13 and voice in their education. We don't want our
14 students to be passive bystanders in their education;
15 we want them to be an active participant in the
16 process. You're going to hear some stories about
17 some of our students who are taking hold of some of
18 the opportunities that they're given in school and
19 really taking the next step in trying to prepare for
20 a career. We have a mantra at school that "it's not
21 enough to get to graduation day." If our students
22 aren't prepared to take that next step, there's still
23 more work to do. Those are the kinds of stories that
24 you're going to hear. I want to give a very sincere
25 congratulations to the efforts of our teachers in our

1 first year; they've really surpassed even my wildest
2 dreams about what they could accomplish for our
3 students. And our students are continuing to
4 accelerate and personalize and prepare for a future.

5 I'd like to invite Dr. Mark Oesterle to the
6 microphone to talk about how we personalize during
7 the school day.

8 DR. OESTERLE: Thank you. In 18 years, this is
9 the most exciting thing professionally I have ever
10 had an opportunity to be a part of because it is
11 what's right for kids. As we talk about
12 personalizing a course of student and we talk about
13 personalizing education for students, we follow some
14 of the guiding questions of what if and why not.
15 We've got to break down some of those walls that have
16 kept us from being able to provide opportunities for
17 our students over the years and really allow for that
18 student voice. I want to introduce you to Claire;
19 she's the girl that's in the photograph holding the
20 J.B. Hunt badge and she is an 8th grader at the
21 School of Innovation. She started with us in August
22 and she is a future computer systems analyst, IT
23 director. One of her goals was to be able to be
24 involved in that opportunity and she went out and
25 research her own internship as a 13-year old 8th

1 grader to go out and pursue those opportunities. But
2 it's not enough to just have this for her; we want
3 this for all of our students. Because we believe
4 that every student deserves a rigorous and
5 personalized education based on their needs, just
6 like Claire. It's not enough just to know the
7 standards, but we've got to teach our students how to
8 take those standards and apply those standards
9 through deeper thinking and problem-solving
10 activities. Part of that is developing a program of
11 study for each of our students, working with some
12 really outstanding counselors to really design over
13 that time what is their core. And then as we look at
14 our pathways for students, those explore
15 opportunities. When we look at the idea of mastery
16 learning it's research-based. Going back to one of
17 our earlier researchers, Benjamin Bloom, one of his
18 pieces that he says is, "Time can no longer be the
19 constant for our students. Students must be able and
20 allowed to advance when mastery is demonstrated."
21 And he believes, and we've seen, that given the right
22 conditions and opportunities every student can show
23 success and demonstrate mastery if we provide those
24 opportunities for them. How do we do that? We vary
25 the learning rate; we change the learning conditions;

1 we again make time the variable, not the box constant
2 of 180 days; and we allow for those students to
3 personalize and own that learning.

4 Some of the ways we support mastery learning at
5 the School of Innovation -- that idea between blended
6 and online learning, how do we effectively use
7 technology to support the programs that we're doing
8 in our building? How do we look at that dual
9 enrollment coursework so that we can get students
10 accelerated toward that college experience and our
11 partnerships through NWACC, NTI and those continue to
12 grow? How do we continue to look at those
13 internships, like Claire? I was sharing on the
14 break, I checked email because that's what we do and
15 there was a message waiting from J.B. Hunt offering
16 -- wanting to know how many of our girls were
17 interested in engineering. And they don't have an
18 idea yet, but they just wanted to come and talk about
19 how they could partner to help increase the amount of
20 women in engineering programs that they have. That's
21 the excitement in our community that this has
22 created. The other thing that we like to talk about
23 is our rich advisory program. This is the glue that
24 really holds us together. Every student on our
25 campus is well-known by an adult on campus. They

1 create their personalized learning plans; they look
2 at their own academic data; they set those goals;
3 they set those personal goals to where they want to
4 be career-wise; and they work with those advisors and
5 ultimately, as we pursue the charter application, the
6 opportunity to work with industry mentors to be able
7 to guide them toward that senior capstone project
8 that will allow them to put together basically a
9 senior thesis that will be a summary of all their
10 learning and their experiences and present that to
11 our community and their industry partners. As we
12 look at that competency-based system, those multiple
13 pathways to graduation, we know that one size does
14 not fit all. It works for a lot, but it doesn't work
15 for everyone. We want to be an efficient school; we
16 want to be good responsible stewards of our taxpayer
17 dollars; we want to provide the best opportunities
18 for all of our students.

19 As we take a look -- you've heard from a couple
20 of our students. There was Trevor and Savannah that
21 were a couple of the students that spoke in the
22 video. And they said school needs to be designed
23 around their needs and their dreams. Students
24 deserve a school that delivers more than a
25 traditional education; they deserve a school

1 experience that prepares them for college and career.
2 We do that through those multiple pathways and an
3 approved application will insure that all the
4 students in Springdale -- and as a dad with students
5 in Springdale, my own kids will have that opportunity
6 to lead to innovation and achieve at the highest
7 level. Dr. Witonski.

8 DR. WITONSKI: So you heard from Dr. Rollins and
9 hopefully I think from us that "all means all," which
10 means that we have a duty to access students and to
11 insure that they have access to learning. And as
12 we've talked with you about Claire and several of our
13 other students, it is about the student needs; it's
14 about making sure that we are meeting them, we are
15 meeting their dreams. It's about varying those
16 learning experiences, just like Dr. Kuhl has taught
17 us, with dual language and what that can look like in
18 the classroom. And, ultimately, it's about looking
19 at exploring career pathways and making sure that
20 students have access to those.

21 So that is the conclusion of our presentation to
22 kind of give you an overview. And so, Chairperson, I
23 will turn it back to you.

24 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you. Is there
25 anyone here to speak in opposition?

1 (BRIEF MOMENT OF SILENCE)

2 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Witonski, you have 5
3 additional minutes.

4 DR. WITONSKI: I will defer back to the Panel.
5 We hopefully can answer any questions that you have
6 and hopefully have provided you with enough
7 information to give you a clear overview, unless
8 anyone else would like to add anything on our team.
9 Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you, Dr. Witonski.
11 Dr. Jones would like for you to send that picture of
12 her to the newspaper so they have a good one.

13 DR. JONES: Is Cynthia out there?

14 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Yeah.

15 DR. JONES: Please tell them to stop printing
16 that picture.

17 DR. WITONSKI: And our students helped put this
18 together and did the video. And so when they figured
19 out and made the connection that you are who you are,
20 and that you are who you are and you were in the
21 building, and it was like, "Oh, we know her."

22 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: All right, Panel. Dr.
23 Saunders is eager to start.

24 DR. SAUNDERS: I have a lot of questions, but I
25 want to just start off with -- I'm trying to

1 understand as I'm looking at this -- if I'm --
2 correct me if I'm wrong. If I'm understanding this
3 correctly --

4 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

5 DR. SAUNDERS: -- the students that would be
6 enrolled 100% online, would they be students of your
7 School of Innovation?

8 DR. WITONSKI: Correct. Yes. This application
9 only applies to receiving designation to have an LEA
10 number assigned to School of Innovation and would
11 only apply to those students.

12 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. So there would be students
13 -- the online part, the students enrolled fulltime
14 online would be students of School of Innovation;
15 there would also be students that would be attending
16 on-site, as well. Correct?

17 DR. WITONSKI: Correct. So as we talk about
18 personalization, one of the things that we have
19 learned through the innovation process is students --
20 we really have to personalize that experience. And I
21 know we've referred to it several times over the last
22 few days, but we have students who do better and we
23 have certain cultures who are equipped to living life
24 or starting their day at a later time, so it truly is
25 about flexibility. That may be completely online for

1 some students; that might be a blended model, which
2 might be some face-to-face; it might be some online;
3 and in some cases that may be strictly face-to-face.
4 It truly will depend on the individual student.

5 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. Is it okay if I address
6 some of the unresolved, just -- I think we may all
7 have some questions there.

8 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Uh-huh.

9 DR. SAUNDERS: Looking at some of the unresolved
10 on the application, I'll just try to go through these
11 and I'll just read what it says concerning
12 educational need. It remains unclear that the
13 students with IEP's will receive the direct
14 instruction from instructors with special education
15 certification.

16 DR. WITONSKI: Absolutely. That's correct. We
17 will follow all guidelines required by IDEA and that
18 includes any screenings, any medical, or any guidance
19 that's required.

20 DR. SAUNDERS: The schedule of courses offered
21 -- in that particular section it referenced the
22 requirement, the federal requirements to have a
23 lottery if over-subscribed. Would that -- would you
24 have a lottery there?

25 DR. WITONSKI: Our process that we proposed was

1 to have students -- because we are free and open it's
2 to do it first-come first-serve if students want to
3 attend the school, and then to keep a waitlist that's
4 time-date stamped from those applications, and then
5 follow that protocol.

6 DR. SAUNDERS: I'm not -- is that allowable? I
7 guess I would defer. I don't know, since it's
8 federal law, if we would have any --

9 MS. PERRY: It's actually just in the federal
10 definition of a charter school that the lottery be
11 there, and then it's in state law for an open-
12 enrollment charter school to have the lottery piece.
13 The federal piece is significant if the applicant --
14 if the charter wanted to try to obtain grant money
15 from the feds for a charter school, either through
16 the state or directly when the state does not have an
17 active grant, as we won't for this group of charters
18 that you've approved this semester to open next year.
19 There is a process where they can apply directly to
20 the federal government for the charter start-up
21 money. However, if they don't meet the federal
22 definition they would not be eligible for that
23 federal money.

24 DR. SAUNDERS: Would it just be for that group
25 of funds or would it be for all federal funds?

1 MS. PERRY: It's just for that group of funds.

2 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay.

3 DR. WITONSKI: Dr. Saunders, to clarify, if it
4 is a type of process that's not permissible, our only
5 pushback is not how we do it; it's that it is open
6 and that it's accessible to all students. That is
7 our only concern. So, yes, we will comply with
8 whatever those demands would be.

9 DR. SAUNDERS: I just -- I don't know what -- I
10 just didn't know with it being federal law if we had
11 any ability or flexibility within that. That was
12 what my concern mainly was, but I think you've
13 addressed that.

14 MS. PERRY: They would not be in violation of
15 any federal law by not having a lottery. They would
16 simply not be eligible for federal charter money.

17 DR. SAUNDERS: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: And let me just interrupt
19 here. As long as Dr. Witonski is well aware of that,
20 for the record?

21 DR. WITONSKI: Yes. And we're fine to follow
22 whatever the protocol is as long as the protocol is
23 open and accessible to students. And I can work with
24 Ms. Perry to further define that.

25 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Okay. Go ahead, Dr.

1 Saunders.

2 DR. SAUNDERS: I'll defer to the committee.

3 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Barnes?

4 MS. BARNES: I don't have anything at this time.

5 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Jones?

6 DR. JONES: I do. Hello.

7 DR. WITONSKI: Hello.

8 DR. JONES: Okay. So there were two different
9 places in the application. I was especially
10 concerned -- you know from the CREDO report --

11 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

12 DR. JONES: -- online totally is a concern --

13 DR. WITONSKI: Okay.

14 DR. JONES: -- because of the lack of evidence
15 to show success. At one point I saw for the young
16 kids, the K-12 it said just online learning; in
17 another part it said blended or digital learning. Is
18 your plan to have both those that are at home
19 completely online?

20 DR. WITONSKI: Our plan is to -- we'd like to
21 propose to have three options.

22 DR. JONES: Okay.

23 DR. WITONSKI: Totally online, the blended
24 model, or face-to-face. And all of the instruction,
25 regardless of the mode of transportation the child

1 chooses or that the parent thinks is best for their
2 child, it would be that they would have interaction
3 with the competencies. So we have Arkansas learning
4 standards and then from those standards we have
5 developed curriculum to go along with those who have
6 a sequence and a guide and a process. And then from
7 those we've taken the big rocks, we've made smaller
8 rocks, and then we've tried to group them together
9 into these different competencies. So you still have
10 a mentor, you still have an advisor, you still have a
11 10-year plan. You have specific requirements that
12 are just components and requirements as part of being
13 part of Springdale School District. But it is that
14 you have access to a curriculum with a teacher who
15 can help you to navigate through whatever that looks
16 like for you.

17 DR. JONES: And I understand there will be those
18 at home that are not going to come to school and
19 you're trying to seek that population; I understand
20 that.

21 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

22 DR. JONES: What safeguards do you have in place
23 when they start to fail and they're at home?

24 DR. WITONSKI: So we spent two years trying to
25 find an appropriate learning management system, an

1 LMS that would speak to some of the problems that we
2 found, and even with students who are physically
3 attending, trying to make sure we have a connection
4 with parents. Parents work or they're busy or
5 whatever that looks like. And so the first go-round
6 we selected an LMS that was not the best for us; it
7 was not a good fit; it wasn't a good fit for our
8 parents; it wasn't a good fit for our kids. And it
9 has to be something that is very transparent and that
10 is very user-friendly; very simple not just for the
11 teacher to upload things and to download things but
12 for parents to do the same and for kids to do the
13 same. And so we have transitioned this year to a new
14 LMS and it is amazing. It is similar to how you
15 order something from eBay and you can click to have
16 updates and it will either bombard you with every
17 step that your package takes along the way -- and in
18 this case, the analogy would be to an assignment or
19 to a project -- and it also will text you; it will
20 tweet you; it will email you. You can have as much
21 on-demand information as a parent as you want. And
22 so what we found first is parents would sign up and
23 they clicked all the buttons because they want all of
24 the information, and then they kind of weaned
25 themselves off because, you know, I don't need to

1 know every time you walk or move through or click
2 through something. But if they want that high level
3 of information it's there and it's accessible. So we
4 have some parents who still have everything checked
5 and they want to know every time a child is in an
6 assignment, what is the duration of the time that
7 they're in the assignment, what did they do when they
8 were in the assignment, and if they wanted to watch
9 it they could go back and look at that. We also have
10 parents who have self-selected to receive less
11 information. So, it's customizable. And so how do
12 we keep up with students and how do we track and
13 insure that? It is by that personal relationship.
14 Because although it is an online virtual component it
15 still has to be about quality curriculum instruction;
16 it still has to be about insuring that they are
17 meeting the standards; and it still has to be about
18 insuring that they have access to that. And that all
19 goes back to -- whether you are using this mode of
20 transportation or not, it goes back to relationships.
21 And you can build those virtually but students have
22 to have the ability to have that relationship and to
23 have that trust. And sometimes with some of our
24 population that can be really difficult from the
25 onset for whatever reason. And so we are looking for

1 a way to try to bridge that gap so that if the fear
2 factor is us, so take us out of the equation and let
3 us partner you with someone that you are comfortable
4 with and then help you through that continuum.

5 DR. JONES: Okay. And my concern is as much for
6 the district as -- because you don't want to assign
7 all these kids that are at home and then you see a
8 huge failure rate.

9 DR. WITONSKI: Correct.

10 DR. JONES: Because they still have to
11 participate in testing. And so --

12 DR. WITONSKI: Absolutely.

13 DR. JONES: -- having those -- that built-in
14 safety net, when they fall below a certain amount
15 contact has to be made with them. And I know that
16 can be challenging, as well.

17 DR. WITONSKI: It is huge, especially when you
18 are changing your phone number or don't have one, or
19 you don't have an address or you're living out of a
20 hotel or whatever the situation is for your family.
21 And so that is the reason we truly fell hard -- hard
22 -- the first year when we realized that everything
23 that is out there -- you can have the best technology
24 and the fastest internet and put all of those things
25 in place that are great practice. But if you don't

1 have that connection and have the system to manage
2 that -- because it's a lot of information, it's a big
3 volume, it's a big dataset -- it's tough. It's
4 tough.

5 DR. JONES: I read that your courses were
6 approved by your school board. Did you have a
7 provider for those courses or did y'all build the
8 content?

9 DR. WITONSKI: We are building our own content.
10 We have courses that we engaged and we've worked with
11 Kathy Swann on with Virtual Arkansas to try to build
12 some additional partnerships. And we have taken the
13 stance -- you know, we were fortunate to receive a
14 grant and have invested a ton of money in curriculum
15 and instruction from those grant funds. And what
16 we've done is put everything out on the web;
17 everything is free; any school district can access
18 it; you can modify it, you can change it, whatever
19 you want to do to it. And that is the same thing
20 we're doing with the competencies. As we are
21 building and developing them -- they're not perfect;
22 you know, they go through a revision cycle, they have
23 to be vetted in a classroom. We've got to get
24 feedback from students to inform what does it need to
25 look like next; you know, we have to get feedback

1 from parents, how did this work at home; we have to
2 make tweaks. So it's this spiral that continues to
3 go. But even if it's not perfect -- one of the
4 things that we don't do well is we don't share our
5 own stories with each other very well across the
6 state. So putting it out on the web and saying,
7 like, "This isn't perfect and you might find a
8 misspelled word or whatever it is, but it's yours and
9 you can do anything you want to with it." So it is a
10 continual process, for sure.

11 DR. JONES: Have you gone through the process
12 for NCAA to make sure all of those are approved
13 courses? I'm sure you have.

14 DR. WITONSKI: Yes. And we've also worked with
15 EQUIP. We worked with LDC and MDC, and there is a
16 rubric that you can submit and vet each of your units
17 of study. And so they go through and they either
18 give you an exemplar rating or a not quite or "hey,
19 you may want to do this and then you could be
20 exemplar." And those levelized -- having a third-
21 party review your -- sometimes what you think is so
22 amazing, when a third-party reads it may not be as
23 amazing. And so we are taking time to go through and
24 vet those with someone else. It doesn't cost
25 anything; it's totally free. And so that was a great

1 resource from the Division of Learning Services that
2 said, "Hey, you know, if you need this, this is a
3 great resource for you." So we are all about the
4 partnerships and then how do we do that. And so that
5 doesn't mean that it's perfect yet; it just means
6 that this particular one that's been revised and is
7 at this point has had some type of other eyes on it
8 to tell us if we're heading the right direction or if
9 we're not.

10 DR. JONES: Okay. And my last question: you
11 know how uncomfortable we are with --

12 DR. WITONSKI: I know.

13 DR. JONES: -- waiving, you know --

14 DR. WITONSKI: I know what you're going to ask.
15 Yes, ma'am.

16 DR. JONES: Imbedded courses.

17 DR. WITONSKI: Yes, ma'am.

18 DR. JONES: And I'm not comfortable with waiving
19 that because when we do --

20 DR. WITONSKI: I understand.

21 DR. JONES: -- we waive that for all districts
22 that apply for that.

23 DR. WITONSKI: I understand.

24 DR. JONES: And that means that on any given day
25 they can say, "Hey, we're going to teach these three

1 math classes in this one class and give credit."

2 DR. WITONSKI: Right. Right.

3 DR. JONES: And while you think -- or many may
4 think they won't do that, there's always someone that
5 will.

6 DR. WITONSKI: Yes. Yes.

7 DR. JONES: And so there is -- and you know
8 this; you know that there is a reason we do that --

9 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

10 DR. JONES: -- and it's to protect the student's
11 transcript and it's to insure that they have --
12 they'll have an opportunity to take a math every
13 year. And that's just one example. And make sure
14 their course codes are correct.

15 DR. WITONSKI: Yes. Yes.

16 DR. JONES: And so would you be willing to pull
17 that?

18 DR. WITONSKI: So let me ask maybe a different
19 question. So in terms of the why do we do it and why
20 do we have it in place and what does the process look
21 like, I feel like I completely understand it. My
22 concern is -- or one thing that I feel like has been
23 a barrier to our progression is as we are able to put
24 things that just make good sense together, like oral
25 comm. and English 9, for example, and we're going to

1 blend those together, we regulate ourselves so much
2 more strictly than the Department of Ed. does. And
3 that's not just Dr. Rollins' expectation; that is our
4 own moral imperative. And so we don't take it
5 lightly what we're asking in terms of course code. I
6 also understand that setting precedents from your
7 point of view, as a former panel member, is very
8 scary. And so you have to have a huge amount of
9 trust to be able to do that. And I don't mean that I
10 don't think that you guys don't trust us; I totally
11 understand why the process is there. It serves as a
12 consistent barrier to us. We have a great
13 relationship with Mr. Coy; he is always so helpful
14 and extremely patient, which we certainly appreciate.
15 But we were just hopeful, like could this be an
16 option for us to maybe work with Mr. Coy in maybe a
17 different approval process way that we could show how
18 these integrate and are part of a cluster, a
19 humanities cluster or something that is richer or
20 bigger. And course code approval -- obviously, we
21 want our course codes to be correct so that
22 transcripts are recorded correctly -- but in terms of
23 the curriculum alignment, sometimes it is not so
24 clear-cut; sometimes it is not so innate. But if
25 students are out and are doing things through these

1 internship experiences, we want to insure that they
2 are receiving credit and they are really getting the
3 bang for their buck in terms of the time investment.
4 So it was an in effort to say could we have a
5 conversation, could it be a possibility -- and if
6 it's not, we do understand. But that's where the
7 initial onset of desire came from.

8 DR. JONES: Well, I think there are
9 possibilities without the waiver.

10 DR. WITONSKI: Right.

11 DR. JONES: We're having lots of conversations
12 with CTE.

13 DR. WITONSKI: Okay.

14 DR. JONES: If you're concerned about being out
15 in the market --

16 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

17 DR. JONES: -- or industry --

18 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

19 DR. JONES: -- and working with --

20 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

21 DR. JONES: -- imbedded credit --

22 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

23 DR. JONES: -- we're working on that.

24 DR. WITONSKI: Okay.

25 DR. JONES: And so we would be willing to work

1 with you on that.

2 DR. WITONSKI: Okay. Okay. That's what --

3 DR. JONES: I'm not comfortable waiving that --

4 DR. WITONSKI: I understand. I understand.

5 That's fair.

6 DR. JONES: Thank you.

7 DR. WITONSKI: That's fair.

8 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Gotcher.

9 DR. GOTCHER: Yes. Dr. Jones, you reminded me
10 of something that occurred yesterday.

11 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

12 DR. GOTCHER: And, Dr. Witonski, while I
13 completely trust -- to use that word earlier -- and
14 recognize your commitment on a personal level with
15 students, I have to bring up one thing that came up
16 yesterday regarding attendance.

17 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

18 DR. GOTCHER: In the event that a student
19 becomes inactive on their online learning, and you
20 make these attempts to re-engage them, with the
21 waiver that potentially, you know, could bypass the
22 compulsory attendance law, at what point do you feel
23 that you guys would need to drop a student? I know
24 you're going to hold that student accountable; but at
25 the same time, the Department wants to hold districts

1 accountable --

2 DR. WITONSKI: For sure.

3 DR. GOTCHER: -- not to abuse --

4 DR. WITONSKI: For sure.

5 DR. GOTCHER: -- the receiving of ADM funds --

6 DR. WITONSKI: For sure.

7 DR. GOTCHER: -- when a kid has been inactive
8 for three months, for example.

9 DR. WITONSKI: So I'm sure Clay-ification will
10 let us know. But we will need to add that waiver,
11 which isolates that attendance would be the visual
12 issue. If we have a student who is an online
13 student, we don't want to have to meet the
14 requirement of physically seeing them every day,
15 which is how it reads. The request is really in an
16 effort to bypass the physical attendance. Our rigor
17 and expectation of students being able to be engaged,
18 it will be no different for students who are
19 attending in any of the other modes. It will be a
20 requirement. But the physical checkpoint that they
21 have walked through the door, if they are a 100%
22 virtual student, would be extremely difficult for us
23 to meet.

24 DR. GOTCHER: So am I sort of hearing that your
25 practice would be 10 days of inactivity would be a

1 reason to drop a student as you would for a face-to-
2 face student?

3 DR. WITONSKI: Correct.

4 DR. GOTCHER: Right.

5 DR. WITONSKI: Correct.

6 DR. GOTCHER: And that would just be a trust --

7 DR. WITONSKI: It would be a trust part. The
8 other would be that if we have students who are in
9 unique situations typically they are accompanied with
10 a 504 or something else that tells us more about
11 their situation that could say why have you been
12 inactive for 10 days. And so we would also lean on
13 those measures --

14 DR. GOTCHER: Sure.

15 DR. WITONSKI: -- that we use as a good
16 reference point.

17 DR. GOTCHER: All right. Thank you.

18 DR. WITONSKI: Yes, sir.

19 DR. GOTCHER: Did Ms. Clay have something to add
20 or was it --

21 DR. WITONSKI: Sorry, Clay-ification.

22 MS. CLAY: A couple of things I just want to
23 make sure we're clear on. They have not asked for a
24 waiver of compulsory attendance.

25 DR. GOTCHER: The mandatory piece.

1 MS. CLAY: Yes. They asked for a waiver of
2 mandatory attendance for 9th through 12th graders.
3 Also, they have not asked for a waiver of the
4 requirement that the students not present for 10 days
5 that they be dropped from APSCN. So they would be
6 required to abide by both of those.

7 DR. GOTCHER: All right. So that's still in
8 place for this current request. All right. Thank
9 you. Sorry for the confusion.

10 DR. WITONSKI: No. It's perfect. We love it.

11 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Pfeffer.

12 MS. PFEFFER: Yes. Just a couple of questions.
13 I think that this was something that Dr. Rollins
14 mentioned in his video. He talked -- because we have
15 heard charter applications that talk about
16 personalized learning for students. But I think this
17 was the first time I heard someone say
18 personalization of teaching --

19 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

20 MS. PFEFFER: -- and learning.

21 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

22 MS. PFEFFER: And then there was another --
23 something else in there that struck me; you talked
24 about master teachers. So can you talk just a little
25 bit about what is the personalization of teaching and

1 then how do you plan to develop those master
2 teachers?

3 DR. WITONSKI: So I'm sure you noticed that we
4 asked for some leniency in professional development.
5 That is not in an effort to not provide professional
6 development. I know that you also received a letter
7 that stated some of those things in the letter, and I
8 want to clarify those also, if I can, with
9 permission. We will obviously offer professional
10 development. Our courses and how we interact with
11 our teachers through this innovation process, it has
12 been at some points grueling because it is -- you
13 have so many realizations that are happening at once.
14 It's like sitting on the Panel; sometimes it's a fire
15 hose moment where you're trying to get a drink, to
16 quote Dr. Cleveland. You have to have that time
17 though to be able to assess what do we need to do
18 differently. And so what we know is teachers need
19 specific professional development and sometimes it
20 has nothing to do with content; sometimes it's how do
21 you interact with this and still have a relationship
22 with the student. We want to bring in those industry
23 experts, and to be able to bring them in they're
24 going to need a different type of professional
25 development. They may have their content down cold

1 and they know it perfect, but they may need some
2 relationship building with how do I deal with this
3 student and what does that look like. And so we have
4 a professional development center in Springdale, in
5 our school district, to house and to insure that we
6 have consistent professional development. And so
7 that is not in an effort to walk away from the
8 importance of professional development. If anything,
9 it's to say let's crack the top of that off and then
10 how do we do this in a better way to really meet the
11 needs of -- what does the teacher need and that goes
12 and ties directly into what your work is with TESS
13 and with BloomBoard. As we are evaluating and as we
14 are in the classroom and as we are seeing these
15 different things, and then conversely with curriculum
16 development and instruction development as we are
17 looking at how was this implemented and how was this
18 taught in the classroom, it goes back to inform not
19 just our curriculum and instruction but it tells us,
20 oh, like we need professional development in this
21 area on this particular piece, and that might not be
22 prescribed by law. It might not be specifically
23 isolated, but it doesn't make it less important. So
24 I don't know if that helps.

25 MS. PFEFFER: I mean, no, it does, and I'm glad

1 you mentioned going back, because part of the
2 professional development then, yes, it's a natural
3 tie-in with what -- the educator's professional
4 growth plan.

5 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

6 MS. PFEFFER: So I appreciate you bringing that
7 back. And in -- I lost my question. I'm sorry.

8 DR. WITONSKI: That's okay. We can do it again.

9 MS. PFEFFER: Let me go ahead and --

10 DR. WITONSKI: Yeah.

11 MS. PFEFFER: I think Eric's got a question.

12 DR. WITONSKI: For sure.

13 DR. SAUNDERS: I wanted to follow-up on that
14 professional development. And I can understand --
15 looking at the waivers I can understand how that
16 would apply in requesting the waiver. And you may
17 need a law book for this question, but on the 6-17-
18 704 and 705. However, I'm having a tough time
19 understanding how 6-17-709 stands in the way as
20 you've described, and so --

21 DR. WITONSKI: Wow. Clay-ification's book is
22 really a lot.

23 MS. CLAY: They've seen it.

24 DR. SAUNDERS: She uses it.

25 DR. WITONSKI: Like a paperclip --

1 MS. CLAY: Yeah.

2 DR. WITONSKI: Okay. And you said 6-17-709?

3 DR. SAUNDERS: Yeah. I was trying to find out
4 what specific parts of that particular law stand in
5 the way of what you just described.

6 DR. WITONSKI: Okay. So in this particular one,
7 if you look, it talks about the rotation or the dial
8 that teachers access, suicide prevention awareness or
9 whatever it is. Right? And so the thought is if we
10 have -- a Tyson executive is not going to leave their
11 plus-hundred-and-fifty-thousand-dollar job to come
12 and teach for us. They might be willing to partner
13 with us on a course or on a class. And so the waiver
14 for professional development and the things that
15 encompass that are, one, to personalize whatever
16 their professional development needs are for them,
17 but also to say some of these may not be pertinent in
18 the particular role that you're serving for us as a
19 contracted employee. And by "contracted," that would
20 be a different type of contract.

21 DR. SAUNDERS: So that would be for -- so if I'm
22 understanding, this would be for classroom teachers
23 that you're speaking of. Correct?

24 DR. WITONSKI: It could be a classroom teacher.
25 Yes.

1 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay.

2 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Pfeffer.

3 MS. PFEFFER: Okay. I think I'm back to what my
4 question was. So you talk about kind of three
5 different ways students will participate in the
6 School of Innovation, either completely online,
7 blended, or all face-to-face.

8 DR. WITONSKI: Yes, ma'am.

9 MS. PFEFFER: So, but you don't yet know what
10 that breakdown is going to look like of your
11 students. Correct?

12 DR. WITONSKI: We don't. And when we started a
13 year-and-a-half ago and opened the school, we opened
14 it with a very -- we had an open mindset. I don't
15 mean that we were closed-minded, but we did the known
16 things that we know to do. We did a schedule and we
17 were like where are the -- you know, all of the
18 things that you're supposed to do in a school. And
19 those quickly unraveled and we had to re-assimilate.
20 And so on one hand I've told you we have done a ton
21 of planning; we have done a ton of research and we've
22 invested a ton of time and effort into this model.
23 We're building a building. At the same time, you
24 have to be -- in this world you have to have this
25 fixed-fluid, so you have to have the opportunities to

1 be there and you have to be prepared that if you have
2 600 students that all 600 might opt to do this and
3 then how do you staff that. And so that's had
4 implications for Dr. Cleveland in the world of
5 personnel; that's had implications for Mr. Rollins in
6 the world of who do I need to be here and how do I
7 access them. But we have learned not to completely
8 pin ourselves to specifics because we are trying to
9 make it personalized. So it could be all of them; it
10 could be some of them; it may be none of them. We
11 want to say, "Here are your options; this is what the
12 buffet looks like; these are the competencies you
13 have to meet; these are the Arkansas standards that
14 are absolutely required; and then, how would you like
15 to get there."

16 MS. PFEFFER: And I -- and that was, I guess,
17 where this is a --

18 DR. WITONSKI: Huge.

19 MS. PFEFFER: Wow.

20 DR. WITONSKI: I know.

21 MS. PFEFFER: You know, I'm just thinking
22 through -- and I was thinking through in my mind,
23 yes, you really don't know what this is going to look
24 like, so you're going to have to be positioned to be
25 able to adjust to those students.

1 DR. WITONSKI: Isn't that fun?

2 MS. PFEFFER: It is. I think the only thing
3 that's still in the back of my mind that's a little
4 concerning is, and Dr. Jones talked about, the
5 completely online, that if there is no face-to-face
6 support. I think my -- I guess the biggest concern,
7 if you did get the majority of them coming in online
8 and not only are they just online students but
9 they're speaking 10 different languages literally and
10 then you add the virtual component in, just thinking
11 through what is that going to look like. But I think
12 the other thing that I see is that -- and I guess the
13 one thing that really hit me was the talk about
14 creating a school of their dreams. I don't think
15 there's probably a lot of students today that would
16 say school is the school of their dreams.

17 DR. WITONSKI: Right.

18 MS. PFEFFER: So I think to approve this we're
19 all going to be taking kind of a big leap of faith
20 and it's going to -- you know -- and I think for
21 teachers that the fact that you are recognizing that
22 there is that need to personalize teaching and
23 support for them is maybe going to be as important --
24 not as important, but it's going to be very important
25 along with personalization for students. So --

1 DR. WITONSKI: It's critical. It's been one of
2 our biggest takeaways. And not that we didn't know
3 professional development wasn't important, but
4 learning how do we do it in a different way and then
5 how do we apply it, and then not being so regimented
6 in our routine. Because we've all been in education
7 in a traditional brick-and-mortar experience for so
8 long that you don't just make so many assumptions.
9 And so being -- having that fixed-fluid to know, yes,
10 we're prepared for it, you know, kind of like
11 disaster preparedness -- you know, we all know we
12 could have a tornado but we could not -- and then
13 being able to respond to whatever those things are.

14 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Witonski, I'd like to
15 take you back to the letter.

16 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: I always appreciate when
18 the patrons write in, and it's really great feedback,
19 and this person in particular was very articulate in
20 explaining the concerns that they had. So you've
21 laid out three pathways and one of those pathways is
22 really that more traditional come-to-school-every-
23 day, on time, and have that qualified teacher, that
24 licensed teacher in a normal class size limit, and
25 that teacher is going to be providing that quality

1 professional development that he or she needs to meet
2 the needs of those kids.

3 DR. WITONSKI: Right.

4 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: So I want to make sure
5 we've addressed every issue that was mentioned.

6 DR. WITONSKI: The only issue that I don't think
7 we've addressed, and that we will have to do this
8 locally, is you can never communicate enough; you can
9 never build enough relationships. I'm sure you saw
10 in the packet we had more than 30 letters of support
11 from local partners, from regional partners, and
12 national partners. You cannot communicate enough.
13 Our goal through this whole process is to try to
14 address all of our students and we see that our data
15 tells us we are not doing that, and this is in an
16 effort to meet whatever that need is.

17 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: But don't you appreciate
18 those people that will write in and tell you --

19 DR. WITONSKI: No, it's the only way you know.

20 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: It's the best.

21 DR. WITONSKI: It's the only way you know.
22 That's huge.

23 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: As opposed to the ones
24 that are just mad and tell everybody else.

25 DR. WITONSKI: And both are good. Right? So we

1 have social media, which helps to inform that, which
2 then we know what those knowns are. But then these
3 are also helpful.

4 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Yes, it is very -- talk to
5 me a little bit about the online courses. You said
6 you're creating your own courses. Am I to assume
7 then that Springdale teachers will be facilitating
8 those courses?

9 DR. WITONSKI: In some cases, yes. So we are
10 building courses. We are partners with Virtual
11 Arkansas, and we are looking for -- we have looked at
12 a ton of models. And so many that we have seen
13 always have the correct sticker on it and say the
14 right thing, but as you dig down deeper beneath the
15 surface it doesn't meet what our expectations are in
16 terms of high expectations. And so the reason we've
17 gone the route of trying to build our own is, one, to
18 provide that and spread it out among our state for
19 those who want to access it, because I have an
20 appreciation for understanding the lack of sharedness
21 from a state perspective. The other is that we have
22 the ability to truly change education and what that
23 experience is for kids. And so the online component,
24 we will have teachers who will be under a traditional
25 contract, who will be covered under Teacher Fair

1 Dismissal; we will have teachers who are not. Again,
2 it goes back to that conversation that we had earlier
3 about, you know, we started this process and we were
4 so fixed and we knew exactly what we were going to do
5 and this is going to be so great. And then it was
6 like -- it didn't go that way. And so when you have
7 that moment of unravel and you have that moment of
8 kind of rising back from that, it helps you to --
9 those lessons learned had to be learned that way.
10 And the only way you could've learned them is through
11 going through the process. So our job is to now
12 share what those lessons are so that other people who
13 might be considering that won't have to walk that
14 same path. And so that's through finding the right
15 LMS; it's through finding the right curriculum; it's
16 making sure that the standards are imbedded; it's all
17 of those things to ultimately provide us on the other
18 end someone who meets the needs, not only of our
19 local industry and our national industry but also
20 meets the needs of being a good citizen, having those
21 -- I believe that Dr. Gotcher said earlier "soft
22 skills." You know, it's "momma skills." It's things
23 your momma should've taught you. It's how do you
24 engage with somebody and what does that look like.
25 It's that personal relationship and whether that's

1 virtually or face-to-face how you interact with
2 people.

3 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Having had the experience
4 of writing lessons and units and then creating online
5 courses, it's certainly a daunting challenge but some
6 of the best professional development an educator will
7 ever have.

8 DR. WITONSKI: Amen. Yes, ma'am.

9 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Saunders, I see you
10 have a question.

11 DR. SAUNDERS: Yes. I want to go back to the
12 letter for just a second and I want to address
13 something within there. I think some things really
14 were powerful in the sense that I think there was an
15 idea that was communicated that, you know, the parent
16 sends the child to the school with the expectations
17 of a licensed teacher of this, of that, of other
18 certain criteria being available for that child. And
19 I do want to ask you, I guess, and clarify that in
20 your set-up, in your proposal any student that would
21 attend this is -- it's purely optional?

22 DR. WITONSKI: Yes. So student attendance is
23 optional. The other is our hiring practice due to
24 charter designation won't change. We have strict
25 standards. We have a really strong protocol. Dr.

1 Cleveland is very proficient in what he does in terms
2 of vetting potential applicants and who could be a
3 potential applicant, and that doesn't matter to us
4 whether they have licensure or they don't have
5 licensure. That won't change. What we have to be
6 able to access is when we have a university professor
7 who has maybe taught math and is an amazing teacher
8 and they've done it for 20 years, it's very hard to
9 have that face-to-face conversation to say, "We would
10 love to partner with you and, yes, you would be great
11 to teach a math course, but you can't." And so we
12 want to be able to remove those barriers and whatever
13 the situation is to be able to access that. That
14 doesn't mean though that you get to forego background
15 checks or an interview or go through and be vetted in
16 the process that any other person that would be
17 allowed to have contact with our kids would be --
18 it's not an option. You have to still go through the
19 process because at the end of the day our resources
20 that we have to protect are our students.

21 DR. SAUNDERS: Yes. Yeah. And that's a -- I
22 think you're exactly right and, you know, I know that
23 you do a thorough job on getting the best applicants
24 that you can get. And I just want to emphasize that
25 it would not be mandated upon these students; in

1 other words, it's not covering an entire grade range
2 district-wide that students are forced, if you would,
3 to participate in this environment.

4 DR. WITONSKI: Right.

5 DR. SAUNDERS: It is -- it's a different method,
6 thinking a different way, and students have the
7 option to take advantage of this if they so choose.

8 DR. WITONSKI: And it isn't for every student.
9 You know, it is a very different model; it is a very
10 different approach. But it is our effort to say if
11 we are achieving at this level and we are not yet at
12 100% there's still a portion that we're not meeting;
13 so how do we meet their needs, which could have other
14 implications later on. But for right now, from the
15 research we've done and the direction we think we
16 need to go, this is our next step.

17 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay.

18 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Pfeffer.

19 MS. PFEFFER: Can I follow-up? Because I think
20 -- from your comments I think that's what is -- one
21 of the benefits of a district conversion charter in a
22 sense like this where students can choose. So that's
23 part of the conversation with parents that you are
24 choosing a different environment where teachers'
25 qualifications and all that will look different and

1 -- but just that realization that that's not going to
2 be universally understood.

3 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

4 MS. PFEFFER: And that, you know, not all --
5 this is not going to be whatever the student wants.
6 So it's not going to be every student's dream.

7 DR. WITONSKI: That's right.

8 MS. PFEFFER: And so --

9 MS. LIWO: Ms. Coffman, may I --

10 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Yes, Ms. Liwo.

11 MS. LIWO: So every student can choose to
12 participate. What if they're interested in your
13 concept but don't like the idea of not having an
14 unlicensed teacher? Aren't you kind of limiting your
15 student pool that way?

16 DR. WITONSKI: We're limiting our student pool
17 if they don't have access to a licensed teacher? I
18 think our goal is to insure that students have access
19 to excellence, regardless of how that person achieved
20 those skills or that content knowledge, whatever
21 method they went about. We don't want to limit
22 students' ability to that access. And so having the
23 option for students to -- if they want a traditional
24 face-to-face, everyone has been through the
25 traditional teaching education coursework. We have

1 schools that offer that. This would be a school that
2 offered that and then some.

3 MS. LIWO: Okay. I'm also considering the
4 legislative intent, which is to create new
5 professional opportunities for teachers. With your
6 -- I mean, it's a pretty broad waiver for me, non-
7 licensed teachers in your core and non-core content
8 areas. How does that support even legislative
9 intent?

10 DR. WITONSKI: So I think the legislative intent
11 was to establish some type of process or procedure
12 for people to be vetted before they reach or have
13 access to children. And so how we would do that to
14 keep that legislative intent is to insure that we
15 apply the same hiring practices to this population,
16 as we would with any other population. If a
17 potential employee is going to have contact with a
18 student, we take that very seriously. And not only
19 from the stance of academically, but in terms of what
20 is their interaction like, how do they interact with
21 students, and making sure that we have appropriate
22 hiring practices in place to be able to insure that
23 that is not a problem for us.

24 MS. LIWO: And, I mean, I understand that the
25 safety of our students is paramount. I understand

1 that. But I also think about going through a process
2 to become licensed is not easy and I worry about
3 limiting job opportunities for people that have gone
4 through that process. And that's why I brought up
5 that specific portion of the legislative intent. I'm
6 a little uncomfortable. This is just a little too
7 broad for me.

8 DR. WITONSKI: In terms of how do we harness and
9 how do we insure that teachers are still there, we
10 have 29 schools who are still in practice that are
11 still moving forward, that are still happening. This
12 is a slight alternate to say if you are a university
13 professor and have some experience, if you work at
14 Tyson and you are an executive, if you work at J.B.
15 Hunt and you are an executive and you can't afford to
16 walk away from your job but you have the expertise,
17 you have the knowledge, you have the social skills,
18 you have appropriate interactions with students, and
19 you've gone through the application process to become
20 part of our team, if you're going to be part of
21 Springdale School District we take it very seriously.
22 We have a ton of applicants that come in and it is a
23 very rigorous process to be encompassed into that
24 world. And so hopefully to assure your fears are two
25 things: one is not to walk away from the process of

1 teacher licensure or how to become a teacher. What
2 we hope could be happening, that could be the fallout
3 from that is we initially bring you in and initially
4 you're interested in just teaching a course. But
5 over time you feel and determine that this might be a
6 passion for you and that might encourage you to go
7 back and seek additional licensure. We want people
8 that want to be part of the fabric of the school and
9 of this effort, and so how we hire and who we hire
10 would be treated whether the person has Arkansas
11 teacher licensure or does not have Arkansas teacher
12 licensure.

13 MS. LIWO: I guess -- how often -- the case
14 scenario that you brought up of this university
15 professor, how often do you envision a scenario like
16 that playing out?

17 DR. WITONSKI: I'll give you one example. We
18 are working with the engineering department at the
19 University of Arkansas, and one of the professors who
20 is involved with that particular department asked if
21 he could come and work with students and kind of
22 establish this robotics program for our students to
23 be able to have an interaction with. And that's kind
24 of grown and done some other components. His
25 interaction is great with kids; his content knowledge

1 is amazing. And so he has certification for ADHE; he
2 does not have the required components and pieces of
3 paper in place for ADE. He also is not eligible to
4 have that unless he opted to go back to school to
5 receive additional coursework. And so he has a Ph.D.
6 in engineering. It would be great to access his
7 skills and to do that on a daily basis, but we can't.
8 And so allowing that waiver to come forward allows us
9 to then go through the process to see would he be
10 interested in a bigger partnership beyond what we
11 have in place right now, which is a club that happens
12 after school or before school. How do we bring that
13 in? If we have kids who are interested in that,
14 would he be willing to do an hour five days a week?
15 Would he be willing -- you know -- I'm not sure what
16 that looks like, but it's building those partnerships
17 with these local experts that we have in our backyard
18 that have quality content and quality capability;
19 they just don't have that additional coursework. So
20 it's not that they're not educated, it's not that
21 they don't have an advanced degree, it's not that
22 they don't have content knowledge, and it's not that
23 they're not great with kids. They have all the
24 things that you would desire in an applicant, but if
25 they don't have that piece of paper then that's where

1 the difficulty comes.

2 MS. LIWO: Okay. Thank you.

3 DR. WITONSKI: Yes, ma'am.

4 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: So I think for point of
5 clarification, you're saying you're not displacing
6 teachers; you're trying to enhance your teaching
7 pool.

8 DR. WITONSKI: Yes, absolutely. Yes, we're
9 trying to build it. We're trying to build our
10 capacity and also build -- because of what Ms.
11 Pfeffer asked about how many kids do you think that
12 would want to access this or that, because we know
13 and have lived, you don't know. It might be that
14 they are all interested in this and you've got to
15 build that out to be able to harness that number or
16 there may be one that's interested in this. But if
17 one is interested and if we could build a course to
18 be able to access that one child and meet that one
19 child's interest and do that in a different way and
20 harness some of that expertise, that's what we feel
21 like we have a duty to do.

22 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Any other questions?

23 DR. SAUNDERS: If everyone is done, I would like
24 to go through each waiver just for my clarification
25 of where we're at on that. And I think there's some

1 we haven't hit on that we may have some --

2 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: You're between us and
3 lunch, Dr. Saunders.

4 DR. SAUNDERS: Well, I've been told that a lot.
5 All right. Waiver number one for the imbedding of
6 oral communications -- and you were asking to waive
7 that or pull that off. Correct?

8 DR. WITONSKI: We are asking for a different
9 partnership with Mr. Coy and the course code
10 department. Yes.

11 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Is that a yes or a no?

12 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

13 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Okay.

14 DR. SAUNDERS: Yes, you're withdrawing it?

15 DR. WITONSKI: We are withdrawing it --

16 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay.

17 DR. WITONSKI: -- with the opportunity to work a
18 different way.

19 DR. SAUNDERS: And the planned instructional day
20 requirements, trying to do a waiver from the planned
21 instructional day, the 360 minutes, because of the
22 virtual in particular. Correct?

23 DR. WITONSKI: Correct.

24 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. Class size and teaching
25 load --

1 DR. WITONSKI: Yes, sir.

2 DR. SAUNDERS: Can you talk just a minute about
3 that, please?

4 DR. WITONSKI: So, again, back to taking off
5 limitations, we all understand that the smaller the
6 class size, the better. In some cases, it might be
7 maybe three internships, it might be apprenticeships,
8 it might be that we have a particular interest in
9 this one particular area. It depends on what
10 students self-select in that learning continuum. So
11 we want to be able to have the ability or the
12 flexibility -- as kids self-select into whatever that
13 next course is or whatever that looks like and
14 they've outlined their 10-year learning plan and we
15 are following them through and then following them on
16 beyond high school that we have the capability to be
17 flexible in our scheduling and in the numbers. We
18 also, again, understand that low numbers are always
19 preferred and that would be our first effort. But we
20 also don't want to limit students to be able to
21 access courses.

22 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay.

23 DR. WITONSKI: So we would definitely have a
24 balance.

25 DR. SAUNDERS: So with the new law that allows

1 for this, you're asking for a waiver on the new law,
2 the requirements to fund the teachers beyond the 150?

3 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

4 DR. SAUNDERS: And so face-to-face looking at a
5 cap of 180, and for blended and online learning a cap
6 of 350?

7 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

8 DR. SAUNDERS: And the clock hours for credit,
9 the Carnegie unit, would that be for blended or would
10 that be for 100% online? Which environment would
11 that be for?

12 DR. WITONSKI: All three. And that is something
13 we participate in currently as a School of
14 Innovation, so that is something we would want to
15 sustain. Our model is built upon that flexibility.

16 DR. SAUNDERS: Core and non-core classes?

17 DR. WITONSKI: Correct.

18 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. And the waiver from
19 principal licensure?

20 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

21 DR. SAUNDERS: Why would that be needed?

22 DR. WITONSKI: It isn't needed now. Unlike Dr.
23 Hernandez, I do like Mr. Rollins. But the
24 flexibility -- it's flexibility in the future. I
25 don't know what this model is going to look like in

1 the next five years in terms of transition. I also
2 don't know that at some point we would not need
3 assistance virtually garnering students and I don't
4 want that to be a blockade for us later down the
5 road.

6 DR. SAUNDERS: Do you think if you needed that
7 waiver in the future you could come back and ask for
8 that as an amendment?

9 DR. WITONSKI: I could. Uh-huh.

10 DR. SAUNDERS: So would you be willing to
11 withdraw that at this time?

12 DR. WITONSKI: I would. Mr. Rollins said thank
13 you.

14 DR. SAUNDERS: Career and technical education --

15 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

16 DR. SAUNDERS: -- can you describe that just a
17 little bit?

18 DR. WITONSKI: For career and technical
19 education, we understand that it's a separate
20 division and we will have to work with them. It's
21 also just an awareness that we want you to know as a
22 department that we are working with their department
23 to try to find the best options for what that could
24 look like, and don't want to do that without one side
25 knowing what the other side is doing, trying to keep

1 us all on the same page.

2 DR. SAUNDERS: So you're asking to withdraw that
3 waiver. Is that correct?

4 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

5 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. Library media specialist.

6 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

7 DR. SAUNDERS: Can you just hit on that for a
8 second?

9 DR. WITONSKI: Yes. We want to transition that
10 class role into something else. This building
11 doesn't have a physical library and we have
12 instructional assistance and we have instructional
13 facilitators. We need a library everywhere kids are,
14 not in a sustained location.

15 DR. SAUNDERS: And gifted and talented waivers?

16 DR. WITONSKI: Yes. That's concerning the
17 enrichment access for all students and we want to
18 provide that for every child, not just a
19 subpopulation.

20 DR. SAUNDERS: Not just those that are
21 identified as GT?

22 DR. WITONSKI: Correct.

23 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. Basic language of
24 instruction?

25 DR. WITONSKI: Yes. That combines with our dual

1 language and our desire to move to providing our
2 region with bilingual students.

3 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. Beginning and end of
4 school year?

5 DR. WITONSKI: Yes. So that constant time is
6 not our constant; it's fluid. And so in some cases
7 students may need longer than is required; in some
8 cases students may need shorter than is required.
9 And we don't want the beginning and ending of the
10 school year to be the stop-gap for them.

11 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. Professional development
12 that we've discussed already.

13 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

14 DR. SAUNDERS: However, I would just still like
15 some clarification on the question earlier. I'm not
16 clear -- I guess when I'm looking at 6-17-709 that we
17 discussed earlier --

18 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

19 DR. SAUNDERS: -- looking at the categories, I
20 understood you to say that if I look at four main
21 categories -- mandated reporter, parent involvement,
22 teen suicide awareness, and Arkansas history -- I
23 guess I have a tough time with saying that anyone
24 serving as a classroom teacher does not at one point
25 need those trainings. So can you help me with that?

1 DR. WITONSKI: Yes, I can help you. So the
2 thought behind it is we want to personalize what that
3 teacher needs. And so obviously if it has something
4 to do with safety or it's something that is an
5 unknown quantity that is absolutely necessary for the
6 role that they're fulfilling we want to do that. On
7 the other hand, it might not be as pertinent for the
8 particular content area that they are helping us
9 with, whether that's online or whether that's face-
10 to-face.

11 DR. SAUNDERS: Can you give me a specific
12 example? Let me just put one out here. Where would
13 it not apply for a classroom teacher to have teen
14 suicide awareness training?

15 DR. WITONSKI: Okay. Let's talk about Arkansas
16 history.

17 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay.

18 DR. WITONSKI: So is it pertinent for you to
19 have the hours in Arkansas history for you to be able
20 to work with students in engineering or in a skilled
21 trade or to go through an internship?

22 DR. SAUNDERS: They're not required to have it
23 currently, I don't believe.

24 DR. WITONSKI: So my question is, in the -- and
25 you're concerned about the safety part?

1 DR. SAUNDERS: Yes. Basically, I'm concerned
2 about the first three, in particular -- the mandated
3 reporter, parent involvement, and teen suicide
4 awareness.

5 DR. WITONSKI: Okay. So, Ms. Clay, are there
6 any other components to that? Can I ask Ms. Clay a
7 question?

8 DR. SAUNDERS: That's up to her.

9 MS. CLAY: I'm trying to bring my falling-apart
10 book up here.

11 DR. WITONSKI: Yeah, I know; you have two. So
12 are there any other components besides those? I
13 think it's also the online component.

14 MS. CLAY: I'm not sure I'm following the
15 question. I understand --

16 MS. BARNES: Those are the only --

17 MS. CLAY: Right. I understand what -- I don't
18 --

19 DR. WITONSKI: I'm asking is there anything else
20 beyond those three?

21 MS. CLAY: That are required?

22 DR. WITONSKI: Uh-huh.

23 MS. CLAY: In this particular law, no.

24 DR. WITONSKI: Okay. We can withdraw that, Dr.
25 Saunders.

1 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay.

2 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: The additional requirement
3 of the professional development is that there is
4 professional development aligned with their
5 professional growth plan. And that would, I would
6 assume, be adjusted to whatever they're teaching,
7 whatever they're working on, and if they're a
8 fulltime licensed employee.

9 DR. WITONSKI: Right.

10 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Would it not, Ms. Pfeffer?

11 DR. WITONSKI: That's what I understand.

12 MS. PFEFFER: The professional development
13 requirements are for licensed personnel. Correct?

14 DR. JONES: Right.

15 MS. PFEFFER: Right. Now the professional
16 growth plan with TESS is not tied to -- TESS -- the
17 evaluation system is also for non-licensed employees;
18 the Teacher Excellence Support System is also for
19 non-licensed employees. But the requirement for
20 professional development would be for licensed, so
21 there would be some variation there. But I think for
22 what -- for that part of the statute that was dealing
23 with licensed employees. And the scenario you were
24 concerned about I think would be --

25 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

1 MS. PFEFFER: -- the non-licensed persons.

2 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

3 MS. PFEFFER: It's hard to untangle some of
4 these things.

5 DR. WITONSKI: I know. Isn't it fun?

6 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: That's why there's a team.

7 DR. WITONSKI: That's right.

8 DR. SAUNDERS: Now moving on to the next one,
9 non-instructional duties.

10 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

11 DR. SAUNDERS: Just hit on that for a second.
12 Is that dealing specifically with the online?

13 DR. WITONSKI: It could be online. It could be
14 that we have, again, an industry expert or a local
15 expert coming in to work with us in a different way
16 and we need the flexibility to be able to bring them
17 in.

18 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. And teacher contracts.

19 DR. WITONSKI: Yes. So contracts would look
20 different if you're not a licensed person. You would
21 not be covered by some of the components that are
22 included in the licensed contract.

23 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. Now maybe Dr. Cleveland
24 and Ms. Clay on this, but I want to combine the
25 teacher contracts with -- I know later on you get

1 down into -- let me skip down just a second here.
2 You get into the waiver from Teacher Fair Dismissal
3 and Public School Employee Fair Hearing Act. So am I
4 -- would it be required then for those employees to
5 essentially have like a separate policy book that
6 would apply to them? I'm trying to understand.

7 DR. CLEVELAND: Yeah. I'd like to speak to
8 that. Thanks for bringing that up. We had a lot of
9 conversation with the employees at the School of
10 Innovation even last week about the voice that
11 they'll have since they're there. They were hired as
12 a teacher at Springdale under Teacher Fair Dismissal,
13 the whole bit. They come to school, they're
14 physically there; they'll have a contract just like
15 every other Springdale employee. Assuming they go
16 through the following process and TESS and are
17 recommended for renewal, they'll have Teacher Fair
18 Dismissal. As far as policy development goes, we
19 have to have that -- if this is accepted today, the
20 work just begins, Dr. Saunders, for me -- okay? -- in
21 regard to working with PPC and those teachers at the
22 School of Innovation to make sure that processes are
23 in place for them to have some protection. We don't
24 want to lose that. Now, where I see the world, if we
25 have a teacher in China teaching Chinese to our

1 teachers it's more like a purchased service, much
2 like Scott said outside. So Teacher Fair Dismissal
3 wouldn't apply in that area, to me; that's my
4 interpretation. Okay.

5 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Cleveland, would you
6 give your full name and title for the record?

7 DR. CLEVELAND: Oh, I'm sorry. I'm Jared
8 Cleveland; I'm the deputy superintendent of
9 Springdale schools. I apologize.

10 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you.

11 DR. CLEVELAND: I should've known that after
12 being down at the podium.

13 DR. SAUNDERS: And I think that occurs many
14 times on online courses when the teacher of record
15 may not be an employee of the individual district.

16 DR. WITONSKI: Uh-huh.

17 DR. SAUNDERS: Mandatory attendance -- and I
18 think we've already discussed that one, along with
19 the attendance records and reports, as Dr. Jones here
20 pointed out earlier.

21 DR. WITONSKI: Uh-huh.

22 DR. SAUNDERS: And immunization requirements --
23 the immunization requirements would only apply to
24 those students that are online fulltime, I assume?

25 DR. WITONSKI: 100%. Yes. Because if they are

1 blended or they are going to interact with other
2 students then they would then be required.

3 DR. SAUNDERS: And on the eye and vision
4 screening, the question I had with that one: is it
5 possible for you to have some way for those students
6 that are online only to make sure they are notified
7 that eye and vision screening is occurring, like if
8 they wanted to attend one of those they could?

9 DR. WITONSKI: Yes. Yes. Our LMS would do
10 that. Uh-huh.

11 DR. SAUNDERS: And physical education --

12 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

13 DR. SAUNDERS: -- can you talk about that one
14 just for a moment, please?

15 DR. WITONSKI: We are wanting to transition what
16 physical education looks like. It's not that we
17 don't think that health and wellness is important,
18 but we need to do it in a different way, particularly
19 if a student is a virtual student. We have an online
20 health course that we did through Act 1280 and it has
21 physical and moving components; however, the student
22 does it and can do it in their home or they can do it
23 at school. So it will look very different.

24 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. And fine arts.

25 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

1 DR. SAUNDERS: Can you just talk about that
2 waiver?

3 DR. WITONSKI: So we will have -- our plan is to
4 offer fine arts for students. However, if they are
5 not physically able to come to school, if they are a
6 virtual student, we are seeking a waiver from that.

7 DR. SAUNDERS: Would there not be a -- I guess
8 I'm not understanding why it would not be possible to
9 provide a fine arts course for those online students.

10 DR. WITONSKI: They might have interaction with
11 fine arts through an online component, but they might
12 do -- obviously, they would do it in a different way
13 versus the face-to-face instruction.

14 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. But they would be
15 completing a fine arts course online?

16 DR. WITONSKI: They still have to complete the
17 courses that are required for graduation. We require
18 24 units for students to graduate, which is above the
19 state standard. If we have students who are in the
20 lower grades though, they may not have access to some
21 of those courses. So that's why it would be
22 particularly important for us to have it -- and,
23 again, in the online setting that could definitely be
24 the case. However, none of what we've discussed as
25 waivers changes the school board requirement of the

1 24 units to graduate.

2 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. I think just going through
3 all those I just want to come back to one that I just
4 have some concern about and it's concerning the
5 teaching load --

6 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

7 DR. SAUNDERS: -- of 350 students per teacher
8 for the online learning. And in trying to go with a
9 personalized approach I find it --

10 DR. WITONSKI: Counter-intuitive?

11 DR. SAUNDERS: Yeah.

12 DR. WITONSKI: So here is the thought behind it.
13 We obviously are going to use our best judgment. We
14 hire quality people, certified administrators, people
15 who are keeping a constant eye on that. However, if
16 there is an opportunity that we would be able to --
17 our students wanted to access a particular course, we
18 are looking for that flexibility. Again, going back
19 to class load and teaching methods and all of those
20 things, we will use our -- we will use the same level
21 of requirements that we would for any other school in
22 terms of being sure that we are being good stewards
23 for students, being sure that we're being good
24 stewards for parents, and then being sure that we're
25 good stewards for teachers, insuring that we are

1 approaching that in the right way.

2 DR. SAUNDERS: How did you get to the number
3 350?

4 DR. WITONSKI: Through discussion. Through
5 discussion. Yeah. We felt like we needed to isolate
6 a number and we felt like that we needed some type of
7 threshold. And through our digital experiences we
8 think that that number is higher; through the face-
9 to-face experience obviously the number is going to
10 be lower.

11 DR. SAUNDERS: That's all I have.

12 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Any additional questions
13 or comments?

14 Ms. Clay, do you have any remaining issues?

15 MS. CLAY: A couple of things with the waivers.
16 Dr. Saunders almost hit them all and I think we can
17 do this by -- I'll go over and if they just want to
18 confirm what I recommend. On the class size and
19 teaching load, I believe that they only need a waiver
20 of 10.02.5 of the Standards for Accreditation. The
21 entire 10.02 section deals with all grade levels and
22 that's not what it sounds like they're looking for.
23 So if they would confirm that.

24 Also, I believe they need to add a waiver of 6-
25 17-812. That has to do with teaching over the

1 required teaching load that came about as a result of
2 Act 993.

3 They have a lot of pages in their waiver sheets.

4 On attendance records and reports, we've
5 discussed that. But the way it was written in their
6 application it was written as 6-18-213(2); it should
7 actually be 6-18-213(a)(2). So if they'll just
8 confirm that.

9 And on the fine arts and the standards for
10 accreditation, the standard that they asked for a
11 waiver of was Section 9.03.3.6. That deals with
12 grades 5-8. If they intend on that waiver spanning
13 grades K-12, then they also need a waiver of 9.03.2.6
14 for K-4 and 9.03.4.6 for 9-12.

15 So if they will just confirm those or if they
16 have any additional discussion to add.

17 DR. WITONSKI: (Nodding head up and down.)

18 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Barnes.

19 MS. BARNES: No. Yeah. That was one of the
20 questions I had. And, you know, I heard Dr. Witonski
21 state that they are in conversation -- they would be
22 working in conversation, they just wanted everybody
23 on the same page. So I was under the impression that
24 you were pulling that piece so that you could do
25 that. But if you're not, you would need -- I didn't

1 know that we could waive career and technical. That
2 was my issue.

3 DR. WITONSKI: For career and tech?

4 MS. BARNES: Yeah.

5 DR. WITONSKI: We're working with career and
6 tech. Our effort was -- just from experience, I
7 understand that we have two different things
8 happening. It was just in an effort to say we know
9 that we need the partnership and we've got to work
10 through what that looks like.

11 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Witonski, are you --

12 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

13 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: -- agreeing to --

14 DR. WITONSKI: I agree to add and delete the
15 things that Ms. Clay has referenced.

16 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Does that answer all your
17 questions, everyone?

18 MS. BARNES: So I'm assuming that means you're
19 going to add the K-4 concept --

20 DR. WITONSKI: Yes, ma'am.

21 MS. BARNES: -- and the 9-12?

22 DR. WITONSKI: Yes, ma'am.

23 MS. BARNES: And, Ms. Clay, we have the
24 authority to address career and technical?

25 MS. CLAY: So, well, I'm -- you're not waiving

1 career and technical.

2 DR. WITONSKI: No.

3 MS. BARNES: Okay. That's -- I mean, that was
4 my -- we're waiving the requirement under the
5 standards for accreditation.

6 MS. CLAY: For fine arts.

7 MS. BARNES: Okay. I was discussing career and
8 technical and the 7-8 piece and all of that. I
9 thought they had pulled that, and that's what I
10 thought we said. I thought we were talking about
11 career and technical.

12 MS. CLAY: Okay. We're not talking about the
13 same thing. Let's make sure --

14 MS. BARNES: Okay.

15 MS. CLAY: -- we're all on the same page.

16 MS. BARNES: That just means that I am hungry
17 now.

18 MS. CLAY: I know. Me, too.

19 MS. BARNES: And since we're not talking about
20 career and technical, then I don't have a concern
21 about the K-4 and 9-12 fine arts.

22 MS. CLAY: Okay. We're on the same page. The
23 career and tech waiver was withdrawn --

24 MS. BARNES: That's what I thought.

25 MS. CLAY: -- and I was just suggesting adding

1 the fine arts portion for those other grade levels.

2 MS. BARNES: Not a problem.

3 MS. CLAY: Okay.

4 MS. PFEFFER: Can I ask a question? On the 9-12
5 fine arts, it's still a required graduation credit?

6 MS. CLAY: Yes.

7 MS. PFEFFER: So what are we waiving? Are we
8 waiving it to be taught but still requiring it for
9 graduation, or am I misunderstanding?

10 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Clay.

11 DR. WITONSKI: She's asked for just a moment.

12 MS. CLAY: Okay. On the 9-12, okay, the
13 9.03.4.6 is the part of the 38 units required to
14 offer. You can waive the 38 units; you cannot waive
15 graduation requirements. So how that would play out,
16 if it's still a part of the graduation requirement I
17 don't know. But technically you could waive a
18 requirement of the 38 being offered, but they would
19 still have to meet the graduation requirement.

20 DR. WITONSKI: Local.

21 MS. BARNES: And the way I saw that -- if I
22 might add, I saw that as the district is required to
23 teach the 38, grades 9-12. The district continues to
24 teach the required 38. The students are required to
25 have a minimum of 22 fine arts, having the fine arts

1 as part of that. So the opportunity then would have
2 to be present for students to meet the minimum
3 graduation requirements. But I saw that this school
4 --

5 MS. CLAY: This particular school.

6 MS. BARNES: -- is not being required to teach
7 it. That's what I was understanding that you were
8 asking for.

9 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

10 MS. BARNES: The district is still going to be
11 teaching it.

12 MS. CLAY: And that scenario --

13 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: So where are we at on that
14 one?

15 MS. CLAY: That scenario would work, yes, as Ms.
16 Barnes said.

17 MS. BARNES: I'm okay with what I was just
18 describing.

19 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: I want to be sure I'm
20 clear. Are we -- is the waiver being requested or
21 withdrawn for 9-12?

22 DR. WITONSKI: We'd like to leave the waiver in
23 as required, with the understanding that policy,
24 local school board policy is what would drive that
25 decision in terms of how many they would be required

1 to receive. And that was the difference I was
2 talking about between the 22 and the 24. They would
3 still be required -- to be a Springdale graduate,
4 they would still be required to have the 24.

5 MS. BARNES: And to be an Arkansas graduate they
6 would still be required to have the half-unit of fine
7 arts. It just would not be required to be taught at
8 this school.

9 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Okay. I'm with you now.

10 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

11 DR. SAUNDERS: Can I get back to that? So if
12 we're requiring it for graduation --

13 MS. BARNES: We can't waive it.

14 DR. SAUNDERS: -- don't we have to teach it?

15 MS. BARNES: The district is teaching it.

16 MS. CLAY: We do have to teach it but --

17 DR. SAUNDERS: In other words, how would those
18 kids attending this school get that graduation
19 credit?

20 DR. WITONSKI: So we will have -- for
21 traditional students who are face-to-face, we have --
22 we will offer opportunities for them to be able to
23 have that credit. If they're an online student, they
24 might access it in a different way. Or, they might
25 have a capstone project or be able to show

1 competency-based proficiency or mastery of that
2 particular content.

3 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: So it's more for the
4 blended or online?

5 DR. WITONSKI: Uh-huh.

6 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Okay. Not the
7 traditional?

8 DR. WITONSKI: Correct.

9 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Are we okay, Dr. Saunders?

10 DR. SAUNDERS: I'm okay.

11 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: All right.

12 DR. JONES: I'll make a motion that we approve
13 the Springdale School of Innovation Conversion Public
14 Charter School.

15 MS. BARNES: Second.

16 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Jones has made a
17 motion, second by Ms. Barnes to approve the
18 Springdale School of Innovation. Any discussion?
19 All in favor of the motion?

20 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

21 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Any opposed? Your motion
22 has passed.

23 DR. WITONSKI: Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: If you'll wait just a
25 moment, Dr. Witonski, for our detailed responses.

1 I'll take the liberty of giving you mine.
2 Yesterday, I think I used the word game-changer for a
3 local -- for one of your neighboring school
4 districts. I think this is also another game-changer
5 that's similar, but different. And some of the words
6 that came to my mind today is this is what real
7 school improvement looks like --

8 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

9 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: -- when you are already
10 really good but you know you're not 100%. And even
11 when you're 100% you're always working to continue to
12 meet the needs of kids. And I just really applaud
13 you for continuing to serve, to meet the needs of all
14 kids -- all really does mean all -- and your
15 willingness to share with the state. That just --
16 when one lifts up, you're lifting the others up when
17 you share. So we all appreciate that.

18 DR. WITONSKI: Absolutely.

19 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: All means all over here,
20 too.

21 DR. WITONSKI: Amen. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you.

23 Mr. Lester.

24 MR. LESTER: I voted for. The applicant has
25 designed a high level flexible plan to offer

1 alternative options for digital or blended learning
2 opportunities.

3 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Barnes.

4 MS. BARNES: I voted in favor of the motion
5 because I believe that this concept embodies
6 innovation in motion; it's responsive, exciting; and
7 it feels like this is a glimpse of education meeting
8 the needs of today's students.

9 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Jones.

10 DR. JONES: Springdale has proposed a strong
11 charter program that takes into consideration the
12 needs of that community. It truly offers options for
13 students to be successful.

14 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Liwo.

15 MS. LIWO: I saw a lot of good with this
16 application and, in general, I was -- by the way, I
17 voted for. Sorry. I am, as you know, a little
18 uncomfortable with the teacher licensure waiver but
19 what convinced me here is just that the students have
20 the choice. There is the possibility that they may
21 attract exceptional talent to the profession --

22 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

23 MS. LIWO: -- as licensed individuals. And
24 there was one more thing. You didn't say that you
25 would not be displacing our licensed teachers. So

1 for those reasons I voted for.

2 DR. WITONSKI: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Mr. Rogers.

4 MR. ROGERS: I voted for. The Springdale School
5 of Innovation will enable students to have a
6 personalized education experience and allow those
7 students to focus on college and career at their own
8 pace.

9 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Saunders.

10 DR. SAUNDERS: Yes. I voted for this. I
11 thought it was a well thought-out plan, designed to
12 meet the needs of the diverse community, and optional
13 pathways provided to meet the students' unique needs.

14 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Pfeffer.

15 MS. PFEFFER: I think that this is an
16 opportunity for the Springdale School District to
17 work with the students, parents, teachers, and
18 citizens of Springdale to -- and I'm quoting, I think
19 one of the students that said to create a school of
20 their dreams.

21 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Gotcher.

22 DR. GOTCHER: I voted for the motion to approve.
23 The applicant has demonstrated a quality concept for
24 students. We expect you to maintain this high
25 quality education for these kids and encourage you to

1 maintain the relationships with your community
2 partners, as I know you will.

3 DR. WITONSKI: Absolutely. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Congratulations, Dr.
5 Witonski.

6 DR. WITONSKI: Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: I would ask that you
8 remember that we love videos.

9 DR. WITONSKI: Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: We love to share your good
11 news.

12 DR. WITONSKI: Yes, we have a YouTube channel.

13 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: But -- yes, we appreciate
14 letting us know when a new one goes up. We also --
15 in addition to how we're educating the kids, we're
16 very interested in how we're communicating to parents
17 and to the general public. So we would appreciate
18 any ideas, anything you learn along the way. And we
19 certainly recognize this parent who took the time to
20 write in and how much we appreciate that kind of
21 feedback; it's really helpful in making decisions.
22 And so I know other school districts are always
23 challenged with how to keep that communication going
24 because you're busy educating kids all day.

25 DR. WITONSKI: Right.

1 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: So how do we do both of
2 those roles at the same time.

3 DR. WITONSKI: Absolutely.

4 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you so much.

5 DR. WITONSKI: Thank you. Thank you, Panel.

6 DR. GOTCHER: Congratulations.

7 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Congratulations.

8 DR. WITONSKI: Thank you.

9 A-4: REQUEST TO POSTPONE OPEN-ENROLLMENT PRIORITY SCHOOL
10 HEARINGS

11 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Boyd, you're
12 recognized for Action Item 4.

13 MS. BOYD: Thank you, Madam Chair. Action Item
14 4, Request to Postpone Open-Enrollment Priority
15 School Hearings. At its October 15, 2015 meeting,
16 the Charter Authorizing Panel directed staff to
17 arrange hearings in front of the Panel on December 17
18 through 18, 2015, for charters that received the
19 classification of priority in September 2015. On
20 October 16, 2015, Charter -- I notified charters of
21 hearing dates, materials requested by the Panel, and
22 authorizer actions allowed pursuant to Arkansas Code
23 Annotated 6-23-105. On November 6, 2015, I received
24 a letter from Executive Director Scott Smith of the
25 Arkansas Public School Resource Center, on behalf of

1 the four open-enrollment charters with scheduled
2 hearings, asking that the Panel postpone the December
3 hearings until February 2016. This item provides the
4 opportunity for the Panel to consider this request.

5 Also, I'd like to remind you that we recently
6 discussed called Quest-Pine Bluff before us and I
7 think it would be appropriate for us to discuss when
8 you would like to see them, as well.

9 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Panel?

10 DR. JONES: I can speak to this. If you recall
11 -- and I think it was last year our board members
12 mentioned -- I think it was in a meeting that they
13 wished we would move the process up so that where
14 there were concerns and should a charter need to be
15 closed they wanted to give parents the time to seek
16 options, which was the purpose in calling some of
17 those focus and priority, in addition to Quest-Pine
18 Bluff, back to the table, in order to evaluate that
19 and not wait until possibly their charter comes up
20 for renewal. So it was a time factor with a very
21 specific purpose.

22 DR. SAUNDERS: And I think the idea of having it
23 sooner is a good idea, where if there are
24 interventions that need to be done and resources, we
25 need to address those early so we can make any kind

1 of adjustments that need to be made.

2 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Barnes.

3 MS. BARNES: Okay. I understand and agree with
4 what both of my coworkers have stated. However, I
5 also am looking at some of the other parts with
6 respect to us being in the process of looking at data
7 and that data also determining various state
8 classifications. So I'm kind of in agreement that we
9 may be possibly looking at it in a timely manner, but
10 without all of the pieces, if you will. So I don't
11 know. I mean, I agree and understand that we do need
12 to address intensive issues in time to prepare
13 students and parents and schools, should there be a
14 reason to end a charter. But at the same time, I'm
15 also wondering if February is not also in time to do
16 that. I do know that that's possibly around the time
17 that we're going to be looking at any kind of public
18 information regarding accountability. That's just
19 one of my concerns.

20 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Mr. Smith, you have three
21 minutes.

22 MR. SMITH: Madam Chair, Members of the Panel,
23 thank you for your indulgence of this request. As
24 referenced, we made this request in response to the
25 Panel's action. I apologize for not being here that

1 day. I don't think this matter was on the agenda and
2 was picked up at the end of the meeting that day.

3 There are some pieces of information that I think the
4 Panel should take into consideration, some of which
5 have already been relayed to you with regards to the
6 logistics and timing issues, pointing out that two of
7 the charters have already been before the authorizer
8 and the Panel. The State Board requested that one of
9 the charters not be brought back until renewal time
10 so that they could focus on education. Also, I think
11 it's very relevant that this Panel consider Act 1272.
12 The State Board specifically deferred taking action
13 on ALE programs and SIA Tech in February of 2015,
14 until further action was taken on 1272. As you know,
15 that is the differentiated accountability law that
16 was passed. And we do not know how many of these
17 charters would be applicable with regards to what
18 comes out of that law, if any. We certainly think
19 SIA Tech and some of the others meet the
20 qualifications that were announced. I know that
21 because I helped Jeremy Lasiter draft that act and
22 put it in place during the legislative session. So
23 we certainly think this hearing in December may be
24 premature on that point.

25 Also, with regards to some of the information

1 that the schools have been asked to address, one
2 point was they've been asked to give an analysis of
3 the PARCC scores. As I understand it, they will --
4 we didn't have the PARCC scores when we submitted the
5 request for deferral. That is out there now -- or at
6 least I wasn't aware of it. But as I understand it,
7 the schools have until November 30th to submit an
8 appeal with regards to that information and then the
9 state will have to react to that. I don't think that
10 will be through that process if there is an appeal or
11 a challenge on any of those issues by the December
12 17th hearing dates. So I'm not even sure from a due
13 process perspective that they could address some of
14 the issues that they've been asked to address.

15 Also, I would point out that it is somewhat
16 unusual to have back-to-back accountability hearings
17 of the same typeset. These hearings are set pursuant
18 to 6-23-105. The state historically and by way of
19 the rules has the obligation of going first in
20 presenting their case as to what they want to do with
21 a proposed charter. It could be construed that this
22 is an attempt to reverse that order and have the
23 schools come in and have to answer a bunch of
24 questions and then the state respond to that. I
25 don't think that's the intent at all; I think the

1 intent is to be helpful here. But it was teed up, if
2 you will, as a legal action, not a review. And the
3 question was specifically asked of staff, of this
4 Panel, did they want a review hearing or did they
5 want an action hearing and the answer was an action
6 hearing.

7 So we just think that for those reasons that due
8 process and logistical issues that it makes sense
9 that this matter be dealt with at the same time the
10 other accountability matter is being heard. And
11 hopefully there will be action on Act 1272 by then,
12 as to its applicability. And certainly if there are
13 going to be any teasing out of the PARCC issues or
14 PARCC data that should be complete hopefully by the
15 February meeting as well.

16 I will just report, you know, historically and
17 institutionally the state does try to take a somewhat
18 systemic approach to these accountability hearings
19 because they are a major issue. These schools not
20 only have the lives of children and parents, as you
21 know as educators, certainly, but also they have a
22 property interest and a contract right with the
23 state. And so due process considerations from their
24 perspective and a fiduciary obligation on their part
25 to make sure that when these get teed up as a legal

1 hearing that they've addressed those issues as best
2 they can for their boards and their members out
3 there. So these are all considerations on why we
4 think it would be appropriate. And really, quite
5 honestly, February, given the holiday schedule that
6 we're in, is not that far and it's certainly a burden
7 to try and get all this done during the Thanksgiving
8 and Christmas breaks that are coming around the
9 corner, as well as have school during this same time.

10 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you, Mr. Smith.

11 Lanisha Broadway, do you have something to add
12 to that? If you will keep your comments in addition
13 to what Mr. Smith said, you have three minutes.

14 MS. BROADWAY: Good afternoon.

15 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you.

16 MS. BROADWAY: Thank you all for hearing us
17 today and even taking this into consideration. As
18 Mr. Smith stated -- and just on top of that -- we
19 just received our priority status recently, so we're
20 in the process of doing many turnaround items right
21 now, as well as being a charter and not having the
22 manpower. And we have to pull the leaders from the
23 school in order to compile all this information. We
24 really would appreciate more time to compile this
25 information and to make sure that we have a strong

1 presentation to present to the Charter Authorizing
2 Panel. Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you, Ms. Broadway.
4 Brent Mitchell.

5 (NO RESPONSE)

6 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Valerie Tatum.

7 MS. TATUM: Good afternoon, everyone. How are
8 you?

9 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Hungry.

10 MS. TATUM: I know. I know. I agree. I
11 certainly agree with Scott Smith in delaying the
12 meeting. We were one of the ones that, when we were
13 at the State Board hearing in June, they specifically
14 asked that we are the ones left alone to really go
15 back and do what we have to do before coming here for
16 renewal. So we would appreciate if you'd just take
17 that into consideration. Thank you. Happy lunch.

18 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Panel, what is your --
19 what's your will?

20 DR. JONES: Can I ask Alexandra to tell us the
21 timelines again, if it were moved to February -- or
22 Mary, either one.

23 MS. PERRY: Mary Perry, Coordinator of the
24 Division of Learning Services. If the timeline was
25 moved to February and you took any action on the

1 charter, significant action, then it would go to the
2 State Board in March as an item where they would
3 again determine whether or not they wanted to review
4 your decision. And should they decide to review your
5 decision, then another full hearing would occur at
6 the April meeting of the State Board of Education.
7 So should you determine that action were to be taken,
8 it could actually not be officially done until April.
9 That was the question, was it not, Dr. Jones?

10 DR. JONES: That was exactly the question.
11 Thank you.

12 DR. GOTCHER: And, Madam Chair, just to be clear
13 -- maybe, Mr. Smith, you could explain. I understood
14 December to be only a review. I don't -- maybe help
15 me understand what you meant by review and action.

16 MR. SMITH: Yeah. And I certainly appreciate
17 that and the Panel may wish to go back and clarify
18 that point. But the legal notice that was sent out
19 was for legal action, possible legal action on the
20 charter. And the question was specifically presented
21 to the Panel whether they wanted a review hearing or
22 legal action notice, and as I understand it staff was
23 informed of legal action notice.

24 With regards to the question about timing,
25 certainly timing is always a consideration. I would

1 just offer this: the state has been somewhat through
2 the history of closing a charter school down during
3 the school year. I would expect that hopefully if we
4 get to that point of action -- and hopefully we
5 certainly wouldn't -- that there's nothing egregious
6 -- so egregious that we would have to take action by
7 April. In other words, that we wouldn't be able to
8 finish out the school year, so as not to disrupt the
9 lives of the children or anything of that nature. So
10 I don't know that timing is that big of an issue from
11 that perspective.

12 I would also offer to the extent that it's
13 necessary, you know, maybe it's not always an issue
14 of closing a school. There may be other charter
15 schools that could work to work with that school or
16 something. So I think time -- my point is that I
17 don't know that timing is crucial at this point as
18 such.

19 DR. GOTCHER: And if moving to February gives
20 time for a district to receive technical assistance
21 and prepare, I personally don't have an issue with
22 December or February, February being -- so I'm not --
23 I guess I'm not clear on -- would it be advantageous
24 to wait till February from your folks' perspective?

25 MR. SMITH: Certainly. That's what they're

1 requesting.

2 DR. GOTCHER: That's where I was headed. Okay.
3 Thanks.

4 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Barnes, do you have a
5 question?

6 MS. BARNES: No, ma'am.

7 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Any other questions or
8 comments?

9 DR. SAUNDERS: Yeah, I do. I just want to
10 clarify. So basically any final action, pending
11 State Board, could not occur before April. Is that
12 correct?

13 MS. CLAY: If you meet in February, yes. In
14 December, then the timeline would be quicker; it
15 would be the State Board would vote whether to review
16 in January and then a potential second hearing would
17 happen in February.

18 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: What's the will of the
19 room?

20 DR. GOTCHER: Ladies first.

21 MS. BARNES: I would like to make a motion to
22 approve the request to move this review to February.

23 DR. GOTCHER: Second.

24 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Any discussion? A motion
25 has been made by Ms. Barnes and seconded by Dr.

1 Gotcher. Oh --

2 MS. CLAY: Can I ask for a point of
3 clarification? So we're using the term "review?"
4 The term "review" and the term "for potential action"
5 we need to be clear on. Do you want them in for
6 potential action or do you want them in for a review
7 report that would not lead to action?

8 MS. BARNES: Okay. I would like to delay the
9 current request that we had for the board -- for the
10 charters to come before this panel for review and
11 possible action to February.

12 DR. GOTCHER: Second.

13 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Does that include the
14 district conversion as well?

15 MS. BARNES: That's all charters that --
16 everyone that --

17 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: The request was only for
18 the four open-enrollment charters.

19 MS. BARNES: I think we do need to make that for
20 all charters that were coming for review because of
21 the timeline, because of accountability that I was
22 referring to earlier. Because even at that once we
23 make any criteria notifications they still would have
24 30 more days, so --

25 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Does that include Quest-

1 Pine Bluff?

2 DR. GOTCHER: You said all.

3 MS. BARNES: Yeah. I'm saying for everyone that
4 we were going to be looking at. I'm saying for all.
5 I just -- I don't know -- for me, I don't know that I
6 would be able to give it a full and diligent look
7 without all of my information.

8 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Clay.

9 MS. CLAY: Okay. I think that y'all probably
10 understand this, but just to clarify. Three of those
11 that would have been coming in December will already
12 be coming in February for renewals. So is it okay to
13 group those?

14 MS. BARNES: Yes.

15 MS. CLAY: We don't need two separate hearings
16 for those.

17 MS. BARNES: No, I do not want two separate
18 hearings. I simply want us to follow-up on --
19 correct. Well, let me see. Okay. So I'm asking to
20 approve the request that was brought before us today
21 --

22 MS. CLAY: Okay.

23 MS. BARNES: -- first of all. And with that,
24 I'm not asking to switch any other hearings that were
25 already outlined in February. I just want us to move

1 what we would have been reviewing in December, or
2 possibly acting on in December, to February. I
3 wanted to delay it.

4 MS. CLAY: And to add Quest of Pine Bluff --

5 MS. BARNES: And to add --

6 MS. CLAY: -- for possible action?

7 MS. BARNES: Yes.

8 MS. CLAY: Okay.

9 MS. BARNES: Because we are moving them from
10 December to February. Correct?

11 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: You're seconding that, Dr.
12 Gotcher?

13 MS. BARNES: He thinks so.

14 DR. GOTCHER: Yes. I'm still hungry.

15 MR. SMITH: Just to clarify, there were two
16 parts to the request: one was the deferral and the
17 second part was just the technical assistance. But
18 we want to make sure that we're being diligent during
19 this time period and we're not being light. So we
20 will continue that request from staff to assist on
21 these questions and things that you want addressed.

22 MS. BARNES: Always.

23 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you. All those in
24 favor of Ms. Barnes' motion and Dr. Gotcher's second?

25 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

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CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Any opposed?

Are there any items left before this panel
today? Speak now.

DR. JONES: I make a motion we adjourn.

DR. SAUNDERS: Second.

CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: All those in favor?

(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: This meeting is adjourned.

(The meeting was adjourned at 1:15 p.m.)

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 State Department of Education, Charter Authorizing Panel, in Little Rock, Arkansas, on November 18, 2015, 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: December 4, 2015.

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

	118:16,23;119:19; 121:6;136:23;137:9; 140:17;143:17,23; 148:25;150:13; 155:6,12,13;158:22; 160:23;162:15,18; 164:11,20;169:19; 172:16;176:5; 177:16;184:22,25; 199:7;202:6	accompanied (1) 141:9 accomplish (2) 80:6;118:2 accountability (6) 192:18;193:15; 194:16;195:10,18; 201:21 accountable (3) 101:21;139:24; 140:1	62:21;64:22;86:17; 95:2;123:8;140:10; 141:19;149:10; 178:24;179:16; 180:14,19;182:22; 196:11;203:4,5	advance (3) 47:17,25;119:20 advanced (2) 86:16;161:21 advantage (3) 77:11;99:20;156:7 advantageous (1) 199:23 advise (1) 92:10 advisement (1) 4:13 advisor (2) 89:16;129:10 advisories (1) 86:8 advisors (1) 121:4 advisory (7) 62:24;70:12;85:24, 24;86:4;88:15; 120:23 aerial (1) 8:4 aerospace (1) 86:16 affirm (3) 5:25;56:4;108:1 AFFIRMATIVELY (3) 6:3;56:7;108:4 afford (6) 27:23;80:16;87:8, 9;100:15;159:15 afternoon (4) 67:15;96:2;196:14; 197:7 afterschool (1) 97:7 again (27) 4:3;19:19;32:16; 34:2;43:16;44:10; 58:17;63:8,15,18,20; 65:25;82:5;93:19; 112:4;114:23;117:2; 120:1;145:8;153:1; 164:4,18;172:14; 176:23;177:18; 197:21;198:3 against (2) 47:20;104:8 age (2) 68:2,3 agenda (1) 193:1 aggressive (4) 32:7;52:22,23; 106:9 ago (6) 39:3;72:2;81:12; 101:12;115:18; 147:13 agree (12) 4:24;21:7;50:4;
\$				
\$1,000 (1) 30:17 \$1100 (1) 14:15 \$12,000 (1) 87:24 \$144,000 (1) 88:4 \$150,000 (1) 88:4 \$23,000 (1) 15:22 \$50 (1) 88:22 \$522 (1) 14:15 \$55,000 (1) 16:13 \$91,000 (1) 15:23	above (3) 24:8;28:16;176:18 Absolutely (11) 32:11;35:15;53:5; 125:16;132:12; 148:14;162:8;169:5; 186:18;189:3;190:3 abuse (1) 140:3 Academic (6) 14:9;41:14;59:11; 89:16;104:18;121:2 academically (1) 158:19 academies (11) 61:10,13,16;62:3; 63:24;64:11,18; 65:24;70:11;85:25; 93:20 Academy (13) 19:24;59:9;61:11; 62:25;63:25;64:3; 68:9;70:17;81:11; 91:11;99:5;105:17, 18 accelerate (2) 42:12;118:4 accelerated (3) 40:8;43:1;120:10 accept (3) 51:10,17;102:25 acceptable (2) 58:12,18 accepted (1) 173:19 access (30) 4:16;110:15,18,19; 112:22;114:6,14; 122:10,11,20;129:14; 131:18;133:17; 146:8;148:7;152:19; 155:6,13;157:17,18, 22;158:13;161:6; 162:12,18;164:21; 167:17;176:20; 177:17;184:24 accessible (4) 16:10;127:6,23; 131:3 accommodate (1) 96:5 accommodating (1) 27:3	Accreditation (4) 50:12;178:20; 179:10;181:5 ACE (1) 26:16 a-changing (1) 33:17 achieve (2) 18:24;122:6 achieved (1) 157:19 achievement (1) 115:11 achieving (2) 14:7;156:11 across (5) 43:8;94:17;103:17; 110:3;134:5 Act (10) 3:10;28:6;80:4; 113:6;173:3;175:20; 179:2;193:11,21; 195:11 acting (1) 203:2 action (30) 5:5;55:9;106:17; 107:6,7;190:12,13; 192:25;193:12,14; 195:2,5,5,11;197:25; 198:1,7,15,19,19,22, 23;199:4,6;200:10; 201:4,6,7,11;203:6 actions (1) 190:22 active (2) 117:15;126:17 activities (6) 16:15,17;43:15; 45:19;54:5;119:10 actual (1) 73:23 actually (18) 15:11;23:10;32:20; 38:23;50:19;62:7,17; 63:13;77:9;79:4; 83:9;89:4;92:15,17; 96:17;126:9;179:7; 198:8 ad (1) 72:23 add (16)	added (3) 10:20;58:25;61:22 adding (5) 61:13;63:21;65:3, 19;181:25 addition (5) 4:25;17:18;189:15; 191:17;196:12 additional (17) 4:15;14:21;54:16; 62:21;66:17;77:16; 80:24;91:20;98:6; 123:3;133:12;160:7; 161:5,19;171:2; 178:12;179:16 address (14) 22:6;70:23;74:16; 115:11;125:5; 132:19;151:14; 154:12;180:24; 191:25;192:12; 194:1,13,14 addressed (5) 127:13;151:5,7; 196:1;203:21 adds (1) 91:16 ADE (16) 3:11,22;5:15,17; 15:9;28:15;55:18,21; 62:6;68:17;70:18; 74:12;107:14,16; 109:15;161:3 ADHE (1) 161:1 adjourn (1) 204:4 adjourned (2) 204:8,10 adjust (1) 148:25 adjusted (2) 90:17;171:6 adjustment (1) 49:6 adjustments (1) 192:1 ADM (1) 140:5 administrative (1) 77:15 administrators (2) 60:7;177:14 adolescents (1) 96:13 adult (2) 69:16;120:25	
A				
A- (1) 55:12 A-1 (1) 5:7 a2 (1) 50:18 A-2 (1) 55:6 A-3 (1) 107:3 A-4 (1) 190:9 AAEA (1) 20:17 abide (1) 142:6 ability (16) 11:8,10;37:22; 39:15;59:23;110:15; 111:16;112:12,14; 113:15;117:5; 127:11;131:22; 152:22;157:22; 164:11 able (73) 11:9,19;15:21; 23:6;37:21,24;38:15; 41:4,14;42:13,24; 43:12;46:6;64:24; 65:11;66:7,22;67:5; 69:10;79:14;80:7,18, 20;92:10,13,14;95:6, 10,13;97:12;102:22; 108:9;110:18,20; 111:13,14;112:5,13, 15,19;113:9,15; 114:6,13;115:3;				

51:1,2,7;102:18; 180:14;192:3,11; 197:10,11 agreed (1) 22:14 agreeing (1) 180:13 agreement (1) 192:8 ahead (7) 40:18;45:21,52:7; 63:21;64:21;127:25; 145:9 Airola (1) 21:14 Airport (1) 7:1 ALE (6) 73:1,2;89:1;92:5, 11;193:13 Alexandra (1) 197:20 Algebra (1) 14:8 aligned (3) 70:2;78:15;171:4 alignment (2) 79:3;137:23 allotted (1) 76:18 allow (11) 4:14;14:24;26:22; 45:9;74:17;84:8; 105:18;118:17; 120:2;121:8;188:6 allowable (1) 126:6 allowed (7) 11:2;75:3;77:4; 117:12;119:20; 155:17;190:22 allowing (4) 76:21;89:1;106:25; 161:8 allows (5) 20:13;53:23;54:6; 161:8;164:25 alluded (1) 116:5 almost (5) 42:7,8;71:1;100:5; 178:16 alone (1) 197:14 along (17) 7:13;32:10;37:10; 42:15;44:18;57:3; 81:20;91:10;96:7; 99:7;103:15;105:17; 129:5;130:17; 149:25;174:18; 189:18 aloud (1)	52:4 alter (1) 114:18 alternate (1) 159:12 alternated (1) 114:17 alternative (3) 100:3,5;187:1 although (2) 111:7;131:14 always (15) 4:21;22:13;28:14; 85:12;115:21;136:4; 137:13;150:17; 152:13;164:18; 186:11;189:22; 198:25;199:13; 203:22 amazing (6) 18:9;130:14; 134:22,23;155:7; 161:1 amazingly (1) 58:24 ambitious (1) 100:6 Amen (3) 100:20;154:8; 186:21 amenable (1) 99:3 amendment (2) 49:11;166:8 amendments (1) 101:24 America (1) 32:25 American (1) 90:5 among (1) 152:18 amongst (2) 57:10;72:5 amount (3) 120:19;132:14; 137:8 Amy (1) 56:21 analogy (1) 130:18 analysis (1) 194:2 analyst (1) 118:22 and/or (1) 78:4 Annotated (1) 190:23 announced (1) 193:20 annually (1) 28:9	ANSWERED (4) 6:3;56:7;95:18; 108:4 anymore (2) 20:3;100:16 any-time (1) 110:19 AP (11) 69:25;89:7,23,25; 90:2,3,5,6,7;91:6,24 AP/IB (2) 89:22;90:25 apologize (3) 79:8;174:9;192:25 apology (1) 51:5 appeal (2) 194:8,10 applaud (1) 186:12 applicability (1) 195:12 applicable (1) 193:17 applicant (15) 5:14,17;53:12,17; 55:17,20;104:23; 106:8;107:12,16; 126:13;155:3; 161:24;186:24; 188:23 applicants (8) 4:6,9,14,24;54:13; 155:2,23;159:22 applicant's (3) 5:18;55:21;107:17 application (46) 4:7,25;5:8,11,16, 17;28:5,24;31:12,16, 25;32:1,33:3;35:18; 36:10,11;44:3;52:25; 53:20;55:7,14,19,20; 60:4,15;65:14; 102:16;103:1,6; 105:1,6;107:4,9,15, 16;109:2;110:14; 112:24;121:5;122:3; 124:8;125:10;128:9; 159:19;179:6;187:16 applications (3) 18:4;126:4;142:15 applies (1) 124:9 apply (17) 38:2,24;44:19; 67:2;82:4;115:3; 119:8;124:11; 126:19;135:22; 145:16;150:5; 158:15;169:13; 173:6;174:3,23 appoint (1) 3:11	appreciate (17) 22:9,9;49:13; 71:24;85:25;88:16; 137:14;145:6; 150:17;151:17; 186:17;189:13,17,20; 196:24;197:16; 198:16 appreciation (1) 152:20 apprenticeship (2) 36:12,14 apprenticeships (1) 164:7 approach (11) 19:25;20:8;21:20; 59:24;88:7;100:9; 106:3,9;156:10; 177:9;195:18 approached (1) 71:17 approaches (1) 21:4 approaching (1) 178:1 appropriate (5) 129:25;158:21; 159:18;191:7;196:4 approval (10) 4:7;11:16;50:7; 62:6,8,11;74:13; 86:7;137:17,20 approve (16) 45:23;46:11;51:14, 20;53:11;98:13;99:9; 103:1,5;106:7; 149:18;185:12,17; 188:22;200:22; 202:20 approved (8) 10:9;35:20;60:13; 62:11;122:3;126:18; 133:6;134:12 approving (1) 21:5 approximate (1) 7:4 approximately (3) 29:2;34:6,23 April (4) 198:6,8;199:7; 200:11 APSCN (1) 142:5 archived (2) 68:18;109:16 area (15) 7:12;12:8;13:13; 25:3;39:9;41:22; 54:5;65:21;72:8; 111:6;112:7;144:21; 164:9;169:8;174:3 areas (14)	11:12;12:24;13:1, 2;18:14;23:7;25:22; 28:19;34:21;49:23; 63:14;82:8;83:10; 158:8 Arkansas (39) 3:5,9;6:25;10:24; 11:22;12:4,23;13:17; 15:13;18:19;20:6; 22:17;25:5;35:10; 46:10;59:12;61:19, 23;78:2;79:24;105:8; 106:22;109:7; 110:21,25;116:3; 129:3;133:11; 148:13;152:11; 160:10,11,19;168:22; 169:15,19;184:5; 190:22,25 around (12) 6:21;52:3;81:8; 87:5,20;97:3;98:8; 102:5;116:8;121:23; 192:16;196:8 arrange (2) 15:2;190:17 articulate (1) 150:19 articulated (1) 14:22 articulating (1) 105:13 arts (14) 82:10;175:24; 176:4,9,11,15;179:9; 181:6,21;182:1,5,25, 25;184:7 as-requested (1) 90:8 assembled (1) 46:19 assess (1) 143:17 assessments (2) 41:19;43:25 assign (1) 132:6 assigned (3) 43:15;75:10; 124:10 assigning (1) 76:2 assignment (4) 130:18;131:6,7,8 assist (1) 203:20 assistance (5) 4:15;166:3;167:12; 199:20;203:17 assistant (4) 6:10,17;12:7; 108:15 associate (2)
--	--	--	--	---

107:19;108:12 associate's (2) 13:20;16:23 assortment (1) 38:3 assume (3) 152:6;171:6; 174:24 Assuming (2) 173:15;180:18 assumption (2) 26:2;41:7 assumptions (1) 150:8 assure (2) 43:7;159:24 assured (1) 29:6 assures (1) 17:22 attempt (1) 194:22 attempts (1) 139:20 attend (5) 14:2;112:13;126:3; 154:21;175:8 attendance (17) 50:10;19;22;25; 63:7;66:6;88:21; 139:16;22;140:11,16; 141:24;142:2; 154:22;174:17,19; 179:4 attending (6) 29:3,14;124:15; 130:3;140:19;184:18 attention (1) 64:7 attract (2) 86:24;187:21 audience (4) 3:19,19;52:19; 54:25 August (4) 8:12;17:21;108:21; 118:21 authentic (1) 10:12 authority (2) 40:16;180:24 authorization (1) 3:8 authorizer (2) 190:22;193:7 Authorizing (9) 3:4,7,13;68:18; 72:4;107:18;109:16; 190:16;197:1 automation (2) 99:19;116:24 automotives (1) 83:9	avail (1) 33:13 available (11) 9:15;17:2;18:21, 25;30:23;39:8;66:3; 68:17;93:1;109:15; 154:18 aware (2) 127:19;194:6 awareness (6) 110:24;146:8; 166:21;168:22; 169:14;170:4 away (5) 30:25;45:25;144:7; 159:16,25 awesome (2) 37:13;101:15 AYES (5) 51:24;103:8; 185:20;203:25;204:7 B babies (9) 113:18,19,19,23; 114:5,5,10,19;115:1 baby (5) 17:13;114:2,3,4,8 Baccalaureate (5) 61:17,25;69:24; 89:14;90:14 back (50) 8:6;12:17;26:20; 39:2;42:12;48:1,15, 17;49:6;59:16;69:2; 90:18,23;92:5,12; 96:25;97:25;99:24; 101:22,23;108:18; 114:6,10;116:20; 119:16;122:23; 123:4;131:9,19,20; 144:18;145:1,7; 147:3;149:3;150:15; 153:2,8;154:11; 160:7;161:4;164:4; 166:7;177:3,18; 184:11;191:18; 193:9;197:15;198:17 background (4) 31:8;83:12;116:10; 155:14 back-to-back (1) 194:16 backyard (1) 161:17 bad (1) 104:3 badge (1) 118:20 balance (2) 22:19;164:24 band (1)	100:8 bang (1) 138:3 banking (1) 11:23 Barnes (76) 24:13;25:24;26:1, 10;34:4,5,17;35:3; 39:22;40:4,12;41:25; 44:16;45:9;48:11; 49:13;51:13,17,20; 52:12;54:1,2;78:8; 21;79:1,13;80:23; 81:24;105:25;106:1; 128:3,4;170:16; 179:18,19;180:4,18, 21,23;181:3,7,14,16, 19,24;182:2,21; 183:6,10,16,17; 184:5,13,15;185:15, 17;187:3,4;192:2,3; 200:4,6,21,25;201:8, 15,19;202:3,14,17, 23;203:5,7,9,13,22 Barnes' (1) 203:24 Barrett (32) 5:19;6:4,5,7;12:9; 19:13,18,19;22:22; 30:6,10;31:2,11,14, 18;32:18;33:18;45:8; 46:17,21;47:3;48:5; 49:9,12;51:2,3,5; 52:5,8,21;53:5;55:2 barrier (2) 136:23;137:12 barriers (6) 100:10;101:6; 104:9;113:10,11; 155:12 based (6) 26:1;43:22;45:5; 64:13;111:25;119:5 baseline (1) 28:14 Basic (1) 167:23 basically (6) 4:22;20:17;40:5; 121:8;170:1;200:10 basis (4) 43:17;90:8;116:14; 161:7 bathroom (1) 96:9 beautiful (2) 109:9,22 Becky (1) 56:18 become (10) 13:5;28:13;36:22; 38:23;80:1;99:15,16; 159:2,19;160:1	becomes (3) 30:13;95:22; 139:19 began (10) 8:12,18,20;11:13, 23;17:21;59:15;60:1; 61:11;81:12 begging (1) 65:18 begin (13) 5:5,20;6:19;9:16; 11:24,24;16:23;48:4; 55:24;57:24;59:16; 64:10;107:20 beginning (7) 30:10;59:16;60:2, 25;62:10;168:3,9 begins (1) 173:20 begun (2) 60:18;98:21 behalf (1) 190:25 behavior (1) 59:11 behind (6) 22:10;94:2;95:11; 100:13;169:2;177:12 believer (1) 34:18 believes (1) 119:21 bell (1) 63:20 below (1) 132:14 benchmark (1) 28:7 beneath (1) 152:14 beneficial (1) 99:25 benefit (3) 3:18;103:15,16 benefits (2) 93:25;156:21 Benjamin (1) 119:17 besides (1) 170:12 best (15) 9:14;32:22;72:1; 102:4;111:23; 121:17;129:1;130:6; 132:23;151:20; 154:6;155:23; 166:23;177:13;196:1 bets (1) 87:7 better (8) 21:7;42:16;70:15; 72:7;115:18;124:22; 144:10;164:6	beyond (8) 9:11;14:8;57:4; 66:14;161:10; 164:16;165:2;170:20 big (7) 8:22;34:3;129:7; 133:2,3;149:19; 199:10 bigger (3) 21:19;137:20; 161:10 biggest (4) 70:1,3;149:6;150:2 bilingual (2) 115:13;168:2 biology (1) 89:25 bit (18) 6:20;35:6;40:13; 45:9;67:4,17;70:9; 71:9;72:25;80:11,17, 20;89:4;95:20; 142:25;152:5; 166:17;173:13 bleeds (1) 18:17 blend (2) 94:22;137:1 blended (15) 35:19;38:6;63:3; 73:24;79:11;120:5; 125:1;128:17,23; 147:7;165:5,9;175:1; 185:4;187:1 blending (3) 72:23;80:8,25 blends (1) 80:12 blockade (1) 166:4 Bloom (1) 119:17 BloomBoard (1) 144:13 Bluff (4) 191:6,18;202:1; 203:4 Board (18) 4:19;20:5;52:20; 56:11;88:15;95:3; 133:6;176:25; 183:24;191:11; 193:8,12;197:13; 198:2,6;200:11,15; 201:9 boards (2) 85:24;196:2 boards' (1) 86:4 bombard (1) 130:16 bonus (1) 18:2
---	--	--	--	---

book (4) 145:17,21;170:10; 173:5	117:10;145:6;173:8	97:22	120:9;122:17;123:5; 126:19;127:23; 129:15;130:15,20; 131:21,24;132:16,23; 133:17,18,18;134:9, 16;135:25;142:24; 143:8;145:8,14,15; 151:8,8;155:24; 156:19,22;157:11; 164:2;166:16;167:7; 168:25;169:1,11; 170:6,24;175:13,22, 22;176:1;178:16; 182:4,14;184:11; 191:10,25;196:2; 197:20;201:2	99:15
boomers (1) 17:13	broad (2) 158:6;159:7	busy (2) 130:4;189:24	candidate (1) 91:3	case (7) 4:7;50:8;91:5; 130:18;160:13; 176:24;194:20
border (2) 7:5,16	broadband (1) 86:24	buttons (1) 130:23	cap (2) 165:5,5	cases (7) 89:21;112:9;125:3; 152:9;164:6;168:6,8
bosses (1) 81:8	broadening (1) 112:21	buy-in (6) 34:21;81:4,14,15, 19;88:3	capability (3) 95:9;161:18; 164:16	catch (1) 100:14
both (11) 24:11,14;71:9; 89:24;90:2;114:12; 128:18;142:6; 151:25;190:1;192:4	Broadway (4) 196:11,14,16; 197:3	bypass (2) 139:21;140:16	capacity (1) 162:10	categories (2) 168:19,21
bottom (2) 7:13,18	brought (4) 159:4;160:14; 193:9;202:20	bystanders (1) 117:14	capstone (2) 121:7;184:25	caught (2) 94:5,18
bound (1) 29:18	buck (1) 138:3	C	cards (1) 45:5	cautions (1) 40:20
box (9) 41:17;113:17,25; 114:1,3,3,9,17;120:1	buckets (1) 71:4	C6 (1) 29:1	care (4) 12:7;44:24;64:5; 102:8	cautious (1) 46:23
Boyd (8) 5:5,9;55:8,11; 107:5,7;190:11,13	buffet (1) 148:12	cakes (1) 83:14	career (68) 9:12;12:21;18:6; 22:19;23:7,11;24:3; 25:2;26:7;35:24; 38:18,25;39:2;40:8; 41:8;42:9,14;43:3; 54:15;56:20,21;58:3, 4;61:13,16,22;62:3; 64:18;65:22,24; 66:12,15;67:3;68:6; 71:2,8;74:19;82:25; 85:17;91:9,13;92:1,3, 21,24;93:8,9;104:18, 24;105:17,18;106:3; 110:9;117:20;122:1, 19;166:14,18;180:1, 3,5,24;181:1,7,11,20, 23;188:7	Cave (1) 19:23
Bradshaw (1) 31:21	build (14) 9:18;10:7;84:17; 111:24;131:21; 133:7,11;151:9; 152:17;162:9,9,10, 15,17	calculus (1) 90:7	career-related (1) 91:12	Center (6) 60:12;65:8;67:1; 71:2;144:4;190:25
Brae (2) 6:12;34:13	building (17) 8:7;22:18;60:6; 62:19;68:5;109:6,8; 120:8;123:21;133:9, 21;144:2;147:23,23; 152:10;161:16; 167:10	call (1) 117:4	careers (3) 57:7;67:4,6	century (2) 110:9;117:3
brain (1) 115:5	buildings (2) 22:12;73:3	called (4) 3:4;57:17;91:22; 191:6	career-wise (1) 121:4	CEO (1) 21:16
brakes (1) 16:6	built (2) 22:12;165:15	calling (1) 191:16	careful (1) 85:16	certain (5) 42:17;89:8;124:23; 132:14;154:18
brand (1) 111:8	built-in (1) 132:13	came (14) 18:9;59:21;72:8, 10;83:22;94:14;95:4; 106:20;113:23; 116:9;138:7;139:15; 179:1;186:6	Cargill (1) 7:17	certainly (23) 27:23;28:19;33:14; 39:14,21;51:6,7; 93:21;96:6;115:10; 137:14;154:5; 189:19;193:18,23; 195:12,21;196:6; 197:11;198:16,25; 199:5,25
brand-new (1) 61:25	bulk (2) 6:11;83:4	camel (1) 52:22	Carnegie (2) 77:23;165:9	certificate (6) 9:25;12:7;13:16; 16:25;91:15;99:18
break (7) 52:11;55:4,5; 106:17,18;118:15; 120:14	bull (1) 48:7	campus (13) 8:5;64:25;73:11, 15;83:8,9,22;92:5,12; 94:14,17;120:25,25	carpentry (1)	certificates (7) 13:16;18:21,22; 19:4;28:19;57:9; 84:11
breakdown (1) 147:10	bullet (1) 115:12	can (143) 4:12,14;10:10; 11:7,17,17;14:12,18, 20,21,22,24,25;15:1, 3,5,10,11;16:7;22:2; 27:10;28:3,4,21; 30:16;35:5;37:10,23; 40:23;43:7;44:13; 46:2,3;47:2;48:7; 49:22;50:3,3;58:12; 59:23;65:18,20;67:4, 6;70:14,18;71:19; 72:7;81:19;82:24; 83:1;84:16;86:15,15, 17,20;87:5,6,14,16, 20;89:19;90:19;91:1, 2,5,6,19,20;92:5,7; 94:6,18;95:2;96:18; 97:17;98:7;99:15,16, 24;100:23;102:3,4; 104:4,6,14;108:19; 115:2;116:3,17; 117:9;119:18,22;		certification (8) 23:12;24:20;65:11; 87:15;95:11;105:20; 125:15;161:1
breaking (2) 45:15;46:18	bulldozing (1) 194:23			certifications (7) 15:1;19:10;26:18; 59:2;65:1;67:8;86:14
breaks (1) 196:8	burden (1) 196:6			certified (5) 30:15;35:25;83:6; 99:16;177:14
Brent (1) 197:4	bus (1) 16:14			chain (1) 17:3
brick-and-mortar (1) 150:7	business (35) 8:14;9:6,19,21; 10:25;11:3;12:14; 20:22,25;36:21,24; 37:3;45:13;54:14; 60:20;62:16,18,23; 63:1,18;64:12;65:13; 67:17,18,19,23;68:8; 69:14;70:13;83:18; 96:24;111:6;115:23; 116:7,25			chair (8) 3:14;5:9;6:7; 55:11;107:7;190:13; 192:22;198:12
bridge (2) 37:18;132:1	businesses (4) 17:8;21:18;63:16;			Chairman (1)
BRIEF (3) 19:16;68:24;123:1				
bring (17) 10:10;92:4,15; 97:24,25;109:5; 111:16,17;112:19; 115:19;139:15; 143:22,23;160:3; 161:12;170:9;172:16				
bringing (6) 62:18;70:13;92:11;				

56:10 CHAIRPERSON (179) 3:2;5:3,21;6:5; 19:14,17;22:22; 25:24;26:12;28:23; 31:4,18,22,24;33:14, 19;34:12;35:4;36:7; 37:15;38:10;44:13; 46:17,22;49:9,15,25; 51:3,9,14,19,25;52:7, 13,18;53:6,10,16,21; 54:1,8,11,18,22;55:3, 8,25;56:8;68:22,25; 69:4;72:14,17;73:17; 81:21;82:20,22; 85:21;88:18;95:17; 96:8,13,15,21;98:9; 100:20,22,24;102:12, 24;103:4,9;104:11, 16,22;105:2,5,15,21, 25;106:6,13,16,19; 107:2,5,22;108:5; 122:22,24;123:2,10, 14,22;125:8;127:18, 25;128:3,5;139:8; 142:11;147:2; 150:14,17;151:4,17, 20,23;152:4;154:3,9; 156:18;157:10; 162:4,22;163:2,11, 13;171:2,10;172:6; 174:5,10;178:12; 179:18;180:11,13,16; 182:10;183:13,19; 184:9;185:3,6,9,11, 16,21,24;186:9,19, 22;187:3,9,14;188:3, 9,14,21;189:4,7,10, 13;190:1,4,7,11; 191:9;192:2,20; 196:10,15;197:3,6,9, 18;200:4,7,18,24; 201:13,17,25;202:8; 203:11,23;204:1,6,8 chairs (1) 69:7 Challenge (3) 14:9;154:5;194:11 challenged (1) 189:23 challenges (3) 73:3,8,13 challenging (1) 132:16 Chamber (3) 60:10;115:25; 116:13 chance (2) 88:9;115:24 change (13) 10:18;12:23;34:19, 20;45:25;62:22,23; 64:2;119:25;133:18;	152:22;154:24;155:5 changes (5) 23:3;33:23;34:3; 92:4;176:25 changing (1) 132:18 channel (1) 189:12 charged (1) 72:10 chart (1) 86:13 Charter (90) 3:4,7,9,12;4:22; 5:7,8,10,11,12,13,22; 9:4,17;19:6,22;21:4; 25:9,11;29:8,13,15, 20;32:15;34:8;40:6; 42:3,9,13;45:23; 46:11,12;47:8;48:14; 49:10;51:11,21; 53:13,23;54:2,9,10, 12,13,19,24;55:6,13, 16;59:7;60:4;64:2; 67:22;68:18;72:4; 86:7;93:6;98:23; 104:20;106:24; 107:3,8,11,18; 108:23;109:16; 121:5;126:10,12,14, 15,20;127:16; 142:15;154:24; 156:21;185:14; 187:11;190:16,20; 191:14,19;192:14; 194:21;196:21; 197:1;198:1,20; 199:2,14 charters (14) 3:9;42:4;85:1; 126:17;190:18,20; 191:1;193:7,9,17; 201:10,15,18,20 Chartwells (2) 64:23;84:13 checked (2) 120:14;131:4 checkpoint (1) 140:20 checks (3) 31:9;83:12;155:15 chemistry (1) 14:7 Cherokee (1) 7:4 child (17) 8:24;31:8;43:8,18; 44:20;66:14;83:13; 95:5;110:1;114:19; 128:25;129:2;131:5; 154:16,18;162:18; 167:18 children (7)	7:3;41:15,23; 103:24;158:13; 195:20;199:9 child's (1) 162:19 china (2) 48:7;173:25 Chinese (1) 173:25 choice (6) 29:16;56:25;57:18; 79:21;117:12;187:20 choose (6) 17:1;25:15;95:8; 156:7,22;157:11 chooses (1) 129:1 choosing (1) 156:24 CHORUS (5) 51:24;103:8; 185:20;203:25;204:7 chose (1) 64:13 Christmas (1) 196:8 circumvent (1) 76:22 citizen (1) 153:20 citizens (1) 188:18 citizenship (2) 62:8;72:22 City (3) 7:5;19:23;97:9 civics (4) 62:9;72:23;74:4,8 claim (1) 7:9 Claire (4) 118:18;119:6; 120:13;122:12 clarification (6) 31:6;46:18;162:5, 24;168:15;201:3 clarified (1) 35:17 clarify (14) 14:20;28:3,6; 29:10;30:22;74:7; 79:8;127:3;143:8; 154:19;198:17; 200:10;202:10; 203:15 clarity (1) 27:5 class (48) 12:3,6,14,21; 17:21;24:17;29:7; 35:24;40:16;47:7; 50:20,24;55:7,14,15, 23;56:1,15;57:5,11,	16,18;65:17;74:14, 15,17,23;75:17; 76:19;79:16,20;80:9; 83:8;89:23;90:13; 92:17;93:18;103:2; 105:14;106:14; 136:1;146:13; 150:24;163:24; 164:6;167:10; 177:19;178:18 classes (24) 29:18;35:7,8,14; 38:17;43:19;44:15; 45:24;47:16;48:12, 17,18,20;49:3;64:4; 65:23;78:6;79:11; 82:4;87:17;92:6; 96:23;136:1;165:16 classification (1) 190:19 classifications (1) 192:8 classified (1) 30:15 classroom (13) 45:20;46:4;74:22; 75:20;77:8;122:18; 133:23;144:14,18; 146:22,24;168:24; 169:13 Clay (50) 3:23,25,25;32:20; 49:25;50:2;51:6; 102:12,14;141:19,22; 142:1;145:23;146:1; 170:5,6,9,14,17,21, 23;172:24;178:14, 15;180:15,23,25; 181:6,12,15,18,22, 25;182:3,6,10,12; 183:5,12,15;184:16; 200:13;201:2;202:8, 9,15,22;203:4,6,8 Clay- (1) 102:20 Clay-ification (3) 113:14;140:9; 141:21 Clay-ification's (1) 145:21 clear (20) 20:11;28:17;29:11; 46:7;47:8;58:19; 79:15;82:2;85:2; 113:17,25;114:1,9; 123:7;141:23; 168:16;183:20; 198:12;199:23;201:5 clear-cut (1) 137:24 clearly (4) 3:18;22:14;59:8; 105:6	Cleveland (9) 143:16;148:4; 155:1;172:23;173:7; 174:5,7,8,11 click (2) 130:15;131:1 clicked (1) 130:23 clicker (1) 8:1 climate (1) 16:8 clock (4) 37:17;50:15;78:17; 165:8 close (2) 21:12;106:11 closed (1) 191:15 closed-minded (1) 147:15 closely (4) 10:4;11:21;25:1; 49:18 closing (5) 4:10;6:15;71:24; 199:2,14 club (1) 161:11 cluster (3) 66:15;137:18,19 CNA (6) 12:2,7;17:17,21; 18:1;19:7 Cobb (1) 7:14 code (4) 137:5,20;163:9; 190:22 codes (11) 24:15,15,23;27:1; 49:20,21,21;85:3,11; 136:14;137:21 coding (1) 76:1 COFFMAN (179) 3:2;5:3,21;6:5; 19:14,17;22:22; 25:24;26:12;28:23; 31:4,18,22,24;33:14, 19;34:12;35:4;36:7; 37:15;38:10;44:13; 46:17,22;49:9,15,25; 51:3,9,14,19,25;52:7, 13,18;53:6,10,16,21, 54:1,8,11,18,22;55:3, 8,25;56:8;68:22,25; 69:4;72:14,17;73:17; 81:21;82:20,22; 85:21;88:18;95:17; 96:8,13,15,21;98:9; 100:20,22,24;102:12, 24;103:4,9;104:11,
---	---	--	---	--

16,22;105:2,5,15,21, 25;106:6,13,16,19; 107:2,5,22;108:5; 122:24;123:2,10,14, 22;125:8;127:18,25; 128:3,5;139:8; 142:11;147:2; 150:14,17;151:4,17, 20,23;152:4;154:3,9; 156:18;157:9,10; 162:4,22;163:2,11, 13;171:2,10;172:6; 174:5,10;178:12; 179:18;180:11,13,16; 182:10;183:13,19; 184:9;185:3,6,9,11, 16,21,24;186:9,19, 22;187:3,9,14;188:3, 9,14,21;189:4,7,10, 13;190:1,4,7,11; 191:9;192:2,20; 196:10,15;197:3,6,9, 18;200:4,7,18,24; 201:13,17,25;202:8; 203:11,23;204:1,6,8	come-to-school-every- (1) 150:22 comfort (2) 40:19;87:6 comfortable (8) 33:8,22;34:8;42:2; 78:13;132:3;135:18; 139:3 coming (17) 13:17;33:8;49:5; 68:4;73:11;82:25; 95:25;96:3;98:22; 112:10;149:7; 172:15;196:8; 197:15;201:20; 202:11,12 comm (3) 36:1;72:23;136:25 commend (7) 27:22,25;48:22; 88:16;94:23;98:10, 15 commended (2) 54:13;105:8 comment (1) 100:23 comments (8) 49:16;51:22; 102:25;103:6; 156:20;178:13; 196:12;200:8 Commerce (3) 60:10;115:25; 116:14 Commissioner (2) 3:10,12 commit (1) 9:13 commitment (2) 101:1;139:14 committed (1) 18:5 committee (3) 60:2,5;128:2 committees (3) 62:25;70:12;85:24 common (1) 71:3 commonalities (1) 116:8 commonality (1) 21:6 communicate (3) 103:14;151:8,12 communicated (1) 154:15 communicating (2) 75:14;189:16 communication (4) 32:7;35:24;68:8; 189:23 communications (7) 21:12;50:5;62:9;	68:13;73:21;74:9; 163:6 communicator (1) 103:23 communities (1) 7:2 community (52) 6:21;8:14;9:7; 12:4;13:17;14:23; 15:19;18:7,20;21:17; 22:8,9;28:1;32:4; 36:25;53:14,25;54:7, 10,15;57:11,14;60:9; 62:16,23;63:2,15,18; 64:14;67:1;69:15; 71:14;77:1;84:23; 86:23;87:23;88:6; 95:3;105:9,11,24; 106:12;111:6; 115:16,23;116:2,13; 120:21;121:11; 187:12;188:12;189:1 Comp (1) 19:8 companies (2) 7:17;86:25 companion (1) 50:12 company (2) 11:10;36:23 comparison (1) 8:22 competencies (6) 43:24;47:6;129:3, 9;133:20;148:12 competency (2) 43:22;111:24 competency-based (4) 44:5;111:20; 121:12;185:1 competitive (1) 17:25 competitor (1) 111:8 compile (2) 196:23,24 complete (11) 37:24;38:15;42:23, 25;43:5;47:16;63:5; 93:11;100:4;176:16; 195:14 completed (3) 41:20;42:18;67:14 completely (10) 34:7;35:14;81:3; 124:25;128:19; 136:21;139:13; 147:6;148:7;149:5 completers (1) 91:14 completes (1) 68:20 completing (3)	67:12;103:12; 176:15 compliment (2) 92:20;93:8 comply (1) 127:7 component (9) 80:13;86:18;94:19; 107:12;131:14; 149:10;152:23; 170:13;176:11 components (11) 74:15;80:12;84:20; 111:5;129:12; 160:24;161:2;170:6, 12;172:21;175:21 comprehensive (1) 43:25 compulsory (2) 139:22;141:24 computer (3) 65:15,17;118:22 computers (1) 84:12 concept (15) 36:13;44:7;58:24; 59:9;62:2;63:8; 73:12;78:13;80:13; 81:14;106:2;157:13; 180:19;187:5;188:23 concepts (1) 81:10 concern (10) 21:25;45:14;127:7, 12;128:12;132:5; 136:22;149:6;177:4; 181:20 concerned (9) 68:3;72:24;98:21; 112:9;128:10; 138:14;169:25; 170:1;171:24 concerning (7) 30:7;45:1;73:19; 125:11;149:4; 167:16;177:4 concerns (8) 5:16;49:14;55:19; 86:4;107:15;150:20; 191:14;192:19 conclude (1) 19:12 conclusion (1) 122:21 concurrent (6) 24:17;28:20;59:1; 69:24;89:4,22 concurrently (1) 23:18 conditions (2) 119:22,25 conducted (1) 10:25	conference (1) 20:17 confessed (1) 45:13 confirm (5) 50:9;178:18,23; 179:8,15 confuse (1) 44:9 confusion (1) 142:9 Congratulations (8) 54:23,24;103:10; 106:13;117:25; 189:4;190:6,7 connect (1) 112:15 connected (1) 66:15 connection (3) 123:19;130:3; 133:1 connections (1) 62:15 consider (8) 44:15;46:10,12; 49:11;73:2;103:14; 191:4;193:11 consideration (7) 22:16;40:14; 187:11;193:4; 196:17;197:17; 198:25 considerations (2) 195:23;196:3 considered (2) 4:23;29:20 considering (2) 153:13;158:3 consistent (2) 137:12;144:6 constant (6) 33:25;119:19; 120:1;168:5,6; 177:15 constantly (1) 87:18 construction (1) 108:24 construed (1) 194:21 consulted (1) 16:12 contact (3) 132:15;155:17; 158:17 content (12) 110:20;133:8,9; 143:20,25;157:20; 158:7;160:25; 161:18,22;169:8; 185:2 context (2)
--	--	---	---	--

32:1;40:4 continual (1) 134:10 continue (11) 3:17;29:17;33:15, 25;65:20;71:25; 115:11;120:11,12; 186:11;203:20 continued (1) 8:18 continues (2) 134:2;182:23 continuing (2) 118:3;186:13 continuum (2) 132:4;164:10 contract (7) 4:22,23;146:20; 152:25;172:22; 173:14;195:22 contracted (2) 146:19,19 contracts (3) 172:18,19,25 contributing (1) 54:7 control (1) 16:8 conversation (18) 21:15;32:17;34:1; 48:8;64:22;81:6,8; 86:2,11;97:19;99:1; 138:5;153:2;155:9; 156:23;173:9; 179:21,22 conversations (14) 16:9;60:21;67:20; 69:21;70:18;86:19, 23;88:2;97:9;99:6, 21;102:3;103:6; 138:11 conversely (1) 144:15 conversion (28) 4:6;5:7,8,10,11,12, 13,22;9:16;19:21; 34:8;40:6;51:11,21; 53:13,23;54:24;55:6, 13,16;64:2;67:22; 107:3,8,11;156:21; 185:13;201:14 convinced (1) 187:19 cookie (1) 59:24 cookie-cutter (1) 100:9 cool (1) 113:14 coordinate (1) 11:21 Coordinator (9) 56:18,19,22;89:11,	14,15;90:21;93:9; 197:23 core (20) 35:6,8,14;38:16; 39:9;41:6;44:15,19, 22;45:2;64:4;66:16; 67:13;75:5;78:6; 79:10;91:22;119:13; 158:7;165:16 corner (2) 6:24;196:9 Corp (6) 66:4,4,8;70:1; 79:23;99:13 correctly (6) 29:21;76:1;78:9; 81:1;124:3;137:22 correspondence (1) 39:5 corridor (1) 8:23 cosmetology (2) 63:14,16 cost (6) 23:22;29:3,4,9; 84:18;134:24 costs (5) 15:24;84:10;87:11; 88:20;97:13 couched (1) 98:12 Council (2) 10:24;115:25 Council's (1) 11:22 Counsel (2) 4:1;92:25 Counselor (2) 56:20;93:8 counselors (1) 119:12 count (1) 24:5 Counter-intuitive (1) 177:10 County (6) 67:22;80:15;102:1, 4;103:16;105:10 couple (7) 23:4;58:15;121:19, 21;141:22;142:12; 178:15 coupon (1) 97:13 course (57) 9:22;12:8;17:18; 24:10,15,23;26:25; 30:11;32:11;35:12; 37:24;38:1;39:12; 41:21;42:18;43:1,9; 44:19;47:17,25; 49:20,20;50:7;57:24; 60:7;62:8,10;74:12;	83:1;85:2,11;88:25; 90:20;91:8,18,21; 92:18;110:23; 112:24;115:9,12; 116:18;118:12; 136:14;137:5,20,21; 146:13;155:11; 160:4;162:17;163:9; 164:13;175:20; 176:9,15;177:17 courses (68) 10:16,16,17;14:22, 23;15:16;16:4;17:1, 16;18:25;23:25; 24:22;25:13;26:4,7, 15,18;27:12;30:2,3; 35:20;38:3,25;39:2,5, 5,8;41:7,7,16,17,18; 45:3;48:4;62:3,5; 64:18;69:25;75:5; 77:23;78:1;83:23; 89:20,20;90:3;91:6,7, 16,18,20;92:13; 102:18;125:20; 133:5,7,10;134:13; 135:16;143:10; 152:5,6,8,10;154:5; 164:21;174:14; 176:17,21 coursework (4) 120:9;157:25; 161:5,19 court (3) 3:21;68:16;109:14 cover (1) 83:16 covered (3) 88:24;152:25; 172:21 covering (1) 156:1 covers (1) 44:17 coworkers (1) 192:4 Coy (5) 49:19;85:9;137:13, 16;163:9 crack (1) 144:9 cracking (1) 94:18 crazy (1) 72:9 create (6) 9:25;15:3;39:20; 121:1;158:4;188:19 created (3) 68:12;81:14; 120:22 creates (1) 106:9 creating (3)	149:14;152:6; 154:4 credit (19) 15:16;24:3;28:20; 37:17;59:1;67:13; 69:24;83:24;89:5; 98:17,20;105:19; 136:1;138:2,21; 165:8;182:5;184:19, 23 credits (15) 13:12;24:6,7; 26:13,19;43:13,14; 59:1;63:5;66:9,16,17, 22;78:22;85:3 CREDO (1) 128:10 criminal (1) 31:8 crisis (1) 13:23 criteria (3) 89:8;154:18; 201:23 critical (2) 94:21;150:1 crosswalk (1) 36:4 crucial (1) 199:17 crunch (1) 39:4 CTE (1) 138:12 cultures (1) 124:23 cupcake (1) 55:12 curious (1) 93:17 current (8) 17:16;44:18;54:5; 64:16;66:20;93:11; 142:8;201:9 currently (12) 18:22;19:1;53:18; 60:11;66:5;77:3; 78:23;83:3;99:14; 104:25;165:13; 169:23 curriculum (15) 50:6;66:16;71:5,7; 77:9;90:1,1;129:5, 14;131:15;133:14; 137:23;144:15,19; 153:15 customizable (1) 131:11 customized (1) 10:15 cutter (1) 59:24 cycle (1)	133:22 Cynthia (1) 123:13 <hr/> D <hr/> dad (1) 122:4 daily (1) 161:7 data (12) 14:3;15:9;28:1; 58:9;70:19;110:1,2; 121:2;151:14;192:6, 7;195:14 data-gathering (1) 12:10 dataset (1) 133:3 date (1) 49:8 dates (2) 190:21;194:12 daunting (1) 154:5 day (30) 38:21;39:7;42:25; 50:10;55:10;63:6,7, 10;66:20;67:11; 72:12;93:23;98:4; 99:22,24;117:3,4,11, 21;118:7;124:24; 135:24;140:14; 150:23;155:19; 163:19,21;189:24; 193:1,2 day-one (1) 115:23 days (11) 4:3;59:25;90:15; 108:25;120:2; 124:22;140:25; 141:12;142:4; 161:14;201:24 deadline (1) 60:4 deal (3) 30:10;84:13;144:2 dealing (2) 171:22;172:12 deals (6) 19:8;50:13,18; 102:17;178:21; 179:11 dealt (3) 45:21;102:16; 195:9 Debbie (6) 7:20;52:9,14; 54:25;55:12;108:11 debt (1) 14:14 Decatur (1)
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8:20 December (12) 4:20;190:17;191:2; 193:23;194:11; 198:14;199:22; 200:14;202:11; 203:1,2,10 decide (2) 80:4;198:4 decided (1) 62:7 deciding (1) 60:16 decision (4) 4:21;183:25;198:4, 5 decisions (2) 44:25;189:21 deeper (2) 119:9;152:14 defer (4) 89:10;123:4;126:7; 128:2 deferral (2) 194:5;203:16 deferred (1) 193:12 define (1) 127:24 definite (1) 65:19 definitely (2) 164:23;176:23 definition (3) 110:4;126:10,22 degree (3) 13:20;16:23; 161:21 degrees (1) 84:5 delay (2) 201:8;203:3 delaying (1) 197:11 delete (1) 180:14 deliver (2) 9:9;14:22 delivers (1) 121:24 delivery (1) 38:6 demands (1) 127:8 demographics (1) 8:3 demonstrate (3) 46:3,6;119:23 demonstrated (2) 119:20;188:23 demonstrates (1) 105:7 demonstrating (1)	48:16 Department (15) 3:5;4:1;16:13; 36:5;46:10;62:11; 72:5;85:12;137:2; 139:25;160:18,20; 163:10;166:22,22 depend (1) 125:4 Depending (1) 24:10 depends (1) 164:9 deputy (1) 174:8 describe (3) 56:24;116:7; 166:16 described (3) 47:5;145:20;146:5 describing (2) 42:4;183:18 deserve (2) 121:24,25 deserves (1) 119:4 design (1) 119:12 designated (2) 29:15;113:5 designation (2) 124:9;154:24 designed (6) 9:10;101:5;104:18; 121:22;186:25; 188:11 desire (4) 57:6;138:7;161:24; 168:1 detailed (2) 103:11;185:25 determine (4) 59:6;160:5;198:3,7 determined (2) 47:24;64:10 determining (1) 192:7 develop (3) 37:5;42:9;143:1 developed (3) 44:8;54:15;129:5 developing (5) 43:24;70:25;77:8; 119:10;133:21 development (31) 11:24;65:14;109:1; 115:6;116:16,19,20; 143:4,6,10,19,25; 144:4,6,8,16,16,20; 145:2,14;146:14,16; 150:3;151:1;154:6; 168:11;171:3,4,12, 20;173:18	devices (1) 3:7 dial (1) 146:7 diesel (8) 16:2,2,6;19:10; 21:13,15;24:1;27:7 difference (1) 184:1 different (50) 4:25;19:21;21:4,4; 24:18,18;26:17; 38:21;59:7;70:16; 76:7;81:13;84:9; 85:25;86:14;92:5; 97:11;98:1;110:8; 111:3;113:25; 114:18;128:8;129:9; 136:18;137:17; 140:18;143:24; 144:15;146:20; 147:5;149:9;150:4; 156:5,6,9,10,24,25; 162:19;163:8,18; 172:15,20;175:18,23; 176:12;180:7; 184:24;186:5 differentiated (1) 193:15 differently (1) 143:18 difficult (4) 34:20;92:25; 131:24;140:22 difficulties (1) 11:13 difficulty (2) 14:6;162:1 dig (1) 152:14 digital (9) 35:11;38:6;68:12; 102:18;110:18; 112:14;128:17; 178:7;187:1 digitally (2) 78:2;79:11 diligent (3) 32:4;202:6;203:18 diploma (8) 10:20;57:6;58:25; 64:16,17;90:11;91:3; 105:19 diplomas (1) 15:4 direct (1) 125:13 directed (1) 190:16 direction (7) 59:6;71:11;94:9; 109:19;114:18; 135:8;156:15	directly (7) 19:8;58:7,17;85:9; 126:16,19;144:12 Director (4) 56:17;57:21; 118:23;190:24 disagree (1) 47:3 disaster (1) 150:11 discomfort (3) 43:21;44:4,17 discounted (2) 15:19,20 discuss (2) 26:17;191:7 discussed (9) 11:25;27:2;50:16; 168:12,17;174:18; 176:24;179:5;191:6 discussing (1) 181:7 discussion (8) 4:11;59:16;98:23; 178:4,5;179:16; 185:18;200:24 Dismissal (5) 153:1;173:2,12,18; 174:2 dispatching (1) 17:7 displacing (2) 162:5;187:25 disrupt (1) 199:8 distance (2) 8:7;19:1 distinctive (1) 106:10 distress (1) 41:14 district (55) 4:5;5:7,10,13;7:3, 15,24;13:10;16:11; 22:4;32:23;41:3; 46:24;55:6,13,16; 56:18;57:22;60:6; 61:18,18;65:8;66:4; 69:9,12,19;88:10; 98:2;99:13;100:4,16; 104:18;105:8; 106:23;107:3,8,11; 108:13;110:2; 112:18;116:6; 129:13;132:6; 133:17;144:5; 156:21;159:21; 174:15;182:22,23; 183:10;184:15; 188:16;199:20; 201:14 districts (10) 27:23;80:15,19;	103:16,17;105:10; 135:21;139:25; 186:4;189:22 district-wide (1) 156:2 diverse (2) 116:6;188:12 Division (3) 135:1;166:20; 197:24 doc (2) 4:17,19 document (2) 50:25;103:13 documentation (1) 33:4 documents (2) 93:11,13 dollar (1) 108:20 dollars (2) 100:1;121:17 donated (1) 18:8 done (23) 20:12,14;22:5; 24:17;38:8;42:15; 44:1,1;69:13;98:19; 100:12;104:19; 113:2;133:16; 147:20,21;155:8; 156:15;160:24; 162:23;191:24; 196:7;198:8 door (4) 40:21,24;44:24; 140:21 doors (2) 54:4;100:11 double-digits (1) 12:25 down (28) 17:10;26:17;33:10; 39:19;48:23;49:24; 65:9;67:3,5;70:21, 22;77:21;83:15;85:5; 87:9,10;92:23;114:7; 115:24;118:15; 143:25;152:14; 166:4;173:1,1; 174:12;179:17;199:2 download (1) 130:11 Dr (567) 5:19;6:5;12:9; 19:13,18,19;20:1; 22:22;24:14;26:12, 14,24;27:2,9,14,17, 20,22;28:11,17,23, 24;29:10,19,23,25; 30:5,6,10,22;31:2,3, 11,14,18;32:18; 33:18;35:4,5,16,22;
---	--	---	---	--

36:2,6,7,8,10;37:4,8, 15,16;38:1,9,12; 43:21;45:4,8;46:17, 21;47:2;48:5,21; 49:9,12;51:2,3,5,12, 15,18,19;52:5,8,21; 53:5,6,7,10,11;54:11, 12;55:2;56:16,17; 57:20;68:20,21,25; 72:14,15,16,18,21; 73:10,16,17,18;74:1, 4,6,8,12,14;75:7,11, 18,23,25;76:5,7,10, 11,12,13,20,23;77:3, 5,18,21,25;78:5,6,7, 20,24;79:4;81:21,22, 25;82:11,17,21;85:8, 20,21,22,23;88:8,11, 17,18,19,19,22;89:6, 12;90:9,24;91:1,4,23; 92:4,8,11,20,20;93:5, 14;94:10,19,22,25; 95:2,2,16;96:17;97:1, 4;103:3,5,10,12; 104:16,17;105:21,22; 106:6,7;107:19,21; 108:5,7,15;109:12, 18,23;113:13; 115:17;116:4;118:5, 8;122:7,8,8,16;123:2, 4,10,11,13,15,17,22, 24;124:4,5,8,12,17; 125:5,9,16,20,25; 126:6,24;127:2,3,3,9, 17,19,21,25;128:2,5, 6,7,8,11,12,13,14,20, 22,23;129:17,21,22, 24;132:5,9,10,12,13, 17;133:5,9;134:11, 14;135:10,12,13,14, 16,17,18,20,21,23,24; 136:2,3,6,7,9,10,15, 16,18;137:3;138:8, 10,11,13,14,16,17,18, 19,20,21,22,23,24,25; 139:2,3,4,6,7,8,9,9, 11,12,12,17,18; 140:2,3,4,5,6,7,9,24; 141:3,4,5,6,7,14,15, 17,18,19,21,25; 142:7,10,13,19,21; 143:3,16;145:5,8,10, 12,13,21,24,25; 146:2,3,6,21,24; 147:1,8,12;148:4,18, 20;149:1,4,17;150:1, 14,16;151:3,6,19,21, 25;152:9;153:21; 154:8,9,11,22,25; 155:21;156:4,5,8,17; 157:3,7,16;158:10; 159:8;160:17;162:3, 8,23;163:3,4,8,12,14,	15,16,17,19,23,24; 164:1,2,4,22,23,25; 165:3,4,7,8,12,16,17, 18,20,21,22,22; 166:6,9,10,12,14,15, 16,18;167:2,4,5,6,7,9, 15,16,20,22,23,25; 168:3,5,11,13,14,18, 19;169:1,11,15,17, 18,22,24;170:1,5,8, 11,19,22,24,24; 171:1,9,11,14,25; 172:2,5,7,8,10,11,13, 18,19,23,23;173:7, 20;174:5,7,11,13,16, 17,19,21,22,25; 175:3,9,11,12,13,15, 24,25;176:1,3,7,10, 14,16;177:2,6,7,10, 11,12;178:2,4,11,16; 179:17,20;180:3,5, 11,12,14,20,22; 181:2;182:11,20; 183:9,22;184:10,11, 14,17,20;185:5,8,9, 10,12,16,23,25; 186:8,18,21;187:9, 10,22;188:2,9,10,21, 22;189:3,4,6,9,12,25; 190:3,5,6,8;191:10, 22;197:20;198:9,10, 12;199:19;200:2,9, 20,23,25;201:12; 202:2;203:11,14,24; 204:4,5 draft (1) 193:21 drafted (1) 9:3 drawing (1) 108:20 dream (1) 157:6 dreaming (1) 72:6 dreams (8) 65:20;72:20;118:2; 121:23;122:15; 149:14,16;188:20 drink (1) 143:15 drive (1) 183:24 drivetrain (1) 16:6 drop (2) 139:23;141:1 dropouts (1) 79:21 dropped (1) 142:5 drops (1) 58:23	drug (1) 12:19 dual (5) 110:23;113:12; 120:8;122:17;167:25 due (5) 68:14;154:23; 194:12;195:7,23 dug (1) 58:9 duration (1) 131:6 during (11) 63:9;90:13;93:22; 97:8;99:24;118:6; 193:22;196:7,9; 199:2;203:18 duties (1) 172:9 duty (3) 16:6;122:10; 162:21 E Eads (3) 106:20,21,22 eager (1) 123:23 earlier (13) 33:17;37:4,12; 45:10;57:24;119:17; 139:13;153:2,21; 168:15,17;174:20; 201:22 early (5) 49:22;80:11;97:5, 5;191:25 earned (2) 15:18;78:2 ears (1) 40:13 easier (1) 73:15 easily (2) 18:18;44:19 east (1) 7:6 easy (5) 13:3;19:3;31:15; 111:21;159:2 eBay (1) 130:15 echo (1) 21:1 Ed (9) 29:18;54:14;60:10; 62:12;69:16,16; 70:14;93:9;137:2 edge (1) 46:24 educate (1) 87:25	educated (1) 161:20 educating (2) 189:15,24 Education (57) 3:6;4:1;9:9;10:15; 12:9;14:25;20:4,5,7, 21;22:2,18;33:21,24; 46:1,11;48:1,2,13; 53:2,4,9;56:17;57:13, 14,21;58:19;59:25; 64:11;65:2;66:15; 72:1;80:22;85:17; 102:4;105:7;111:12, 24;117:2,13,14; 118:13;119:5; 121:25;125:14; 150:6;152:22; 157:25;166:14,19; 175:11,16;187:7; 188:6,25;193:10; 198:6 educational (4) 41:5;53:24;54:5; 125:12 educator (2) 70:21;154:6 educators (6) 23:13;32:6;33:16; 52:24;53:1;195:21 educator's (1) 145:3 effect (1) 88:13 effectively (1) 120:6 efficient (1) 121:15 effort (13) 109:4;114:25; 138:4;140:16;143:5; 144:7;147:22; 151:16;156:10; 160:9;164:19;180:6, 8 efforts (2) 28:2;117:25 egg (1) 110:25 egregious (2) 199:5,6 eight (1) 66:20 either (11) 24:11;38:6;89:8; 90:12,18;114:5; 126:15;130:16; 134:17;147:6;197:22 elective (7) 24:5,7;26:6,7;78:1; 83:24;93:24 electives (4) 38:5;64:5;78:4,11	electrical (1) 16:5 electrician (1) 82:9 electronic (2) 3:7;16:8 elementary (1) 65:10 eligible (3) 126:22;127:16; 161:3 else (11) 78:7;88:23;89:3; 99:18;123:8;134:24; 141:10;142:23; 151:24;167:10; 170:19 eluded (1) 101:18 email (5) 32:20;33:13;45:12; 120:14;130:20 emails (1) 26:20 embodies (1) 187:5 emerged (1) 47:10 emotional (1) 89:17 emphasize (1) 155:24 employ (3) 11:9;23:6;49:2 employability (1) 15:4 employable (1) 13:5 employee (11) 24:19,19;30:15; 32:23;36:22;146:19; 158:17;171:8;173:3, 15;174:15 employees (11) 23:16,19,20,21; 111:13;115:13; 171:17,19,23;173:4,9 employer (1) 36:23 employers (4) 10:7;53:1;101:13, 13 employing (1) 23:10 enable (1) 188:5 encompass (2) 34:9;146:15 encompassed (1) 159:23 encompasses (1) 25:11 encourage (5)
--	---	--	---	---

33:15;58:12; 106:11;160:6;188:25 encouraged (2) 53:14;92:22 encouraging (1) 102:1 end (10) 33:6;48:13;50:4; 61:3;79:19;153:18; 155:19;168:3; 192:14;193:2 ending (1) 168:9 endorsement (1) 113:7 engage (1) 153:24 engaged (2) 133:10;140:17 engagement (1) 8:16 engaging (1) 40:9 engineering (5) 120:17;20;160:18; 161:6;169:20 engines (1) 16:7 English (8) 28:6;38:4;40:2; 47:15;89:23;91:7; 111:2;136:25 enhance (1) 162:6 enjoy (1) 13:4 enjoying (1) 55:12 enough (12) 12:3;71:13;97:23; 103:22;113:9; 117:21;119:2,6; 123:6;151:8,9,12 enrichment (5) 45:19;110:22; 112:20;115:7;167:17 enrolled (5) 15:11;112:17,18; 124:6,13 enrollment (7) 5:15;55:18;89:5,6; 107:14;120:9;126:12 entering (1) 17:25 entire (5) 3:20;25:11;50:20; 156:1;178:21 entities (1) 21:24 entrepreneurial (1) 84:2 entrepreneurship (2) 17:4;117:1	environment (6) 9:22;100:4,5; 156:3,24;165:10 environments (1) 74:21 envision (1) 160:15 equal (1) 20:22 equally (1) 52:23 equation (1) 132:2 EQUIP (1) 134:15 equipment (1) 18:8 equipped (1) 124:23 Eric (1) 21:13 Eric's (1) 145:11 especially (4) 35:10;84:22;128:9; 132:17 essentially (2) 69:11;173:5 Essentials (1) 65:17 establish (4) 43:17;63:3;158:11; 160:22 established (6) 35:19;40:22;62:25; 64:9,19;66:12 establishing (1) 70:11 evaluate (1) 191:18 evaluating (1) 144:13 evaluation (4) 5:18;55:21;107:17; 171:17 even (23) 13:9;18:10;50:22; 66:14;67:3,15;71:16; 73:13;83:17;95:13; 96:25;101:22;116:2, 14;118:1;130:2; 134:3;158:8;173:10; 186:10;194:12; 196:17;201:22 evening (1) 32:13 event (2) 74:19;139:18 events (1) 8:18 everybody (3) 79:22;151:24; 179:22	everyone (15) 3:5;12:15;57:25; 58:3;59:25;85:17; 105:17;108:10; 121:15;157:24; 162:23;180:17; 197:7;201:16;202:3 everywhere (1) 167:13 evidence (1) 128:14 exactly (5) 95:14;101:4;153:4; 155:22;198:10 example (18) 9:1;24:1;30:13; 42:5;68:2;70:16; 79:17;82:25;83:1; 89:22;90:4,20; 101:10;136:13,25; 140:8;160:17;169:12 examples (3) 10:12;66:11;93:7 exceed (1) 74:18 excel (1) 37:23 excellence (4) 57:1,19;157:19; 171:18 excellent (4) 32:2;37:5;54:3; 104:24 exceptional (1) 187:21 excited (22) 11:14;17:24;21:22; 52:25;56:13;57:13, 22;60:21;67:18,19; 68:7,13;92:18;93:6, 13;95:20;96:20; 98:11;101:7,15; 102:11;105:12 excitement (2) 8:16;120:21 exciting (4) 22:7;62:1;118:9; 187:6 executive (4) 146:10;159:14,15; 190:24 exemplar (2) 134:18,20 exercise (1) 40:20 exist (1) 48:14 exists (1) 109:6 expand (1) 9:22 expect (3) 104:20;188:24;	199:3 expectation (3) 37:3;137:3;140:17 expectations (3) 152:15,16;154:16 expensive (1) 111:22 experience (25) 23:11;41:5;57:8; 65:2;68:1;75:4,6; 76:14;84:17;85:15; 94:6;111:18;113:20, 22;114:18;120:10; 122:1;124:20;150:7; 152:23;154:3; 159:13;178:9;180:6; 188:6 experienced (1) 90:19 experiences (7) 9:8;54:7;113:8; 121:10;122:16; 138:1;178:7 expert (2) 172:14,15 expertise (6) 33:23;51:7;110:15, 16;159:16;162:20 experts (3) 112:23;143:23; 161:17 explain (4) 30:9;36:14;42:7; 198:13 explaining (2) 32:15;150:20 explore (2) 117:12;119:14 exploring (2) 89:3;122:19 exposed (2) 114:21,23 exposure (2) 57:7;113:20 extended (5) 48:18;63:21;93:18, 25;95:7 Extending (1) 63:4 extensive (1) 43:24 extent (1) 199:12 extra (3) 77:12;91:21;95:13 extracurricular (1) 16:17 extrapolate (1) 114:9 extremely (4) 111:22,22;137:14; 140:22 eye (4)	12:19;175:3,7; 177:15 eyes (1) 135:7 <hr/> F <hr/> fabric (1) 160:8 fabulous (1) 31:22 face (1) 141:2 face- (2) 169:9;178:8 faced (2) 13:25;14:14 face-to- (1) 141:1 face-to-face (12) 90:18;125:2,3; 128:24;147:7;149:5; 154:1;155:9;157:24; 165:4;176:13;184:21 facilitate (2) 3:14;4:20 facilitating (1) 152:7 facilitators (1) 167:13 facilities (1) 9:15 facility (3) 19:2;109:9;115:19 fact (3) 16:14;116:8; 149:21 factor (2) 132:2;191:20 faculty (8) 38:20;47:13;81:4, 11,12,16;95:25;96:2 fail (1) 129:23 failure (2) 112:5;132:8 fair (9) 3:14;139:5,7; 152:25;173:2,3,12, 17;174:2 faith (1) 149:19 fall (9) 11:14,20;14:10; 16:13;26:5;30:11,14; 32:16;132:14 falling-apart (1) 170:9 fallout (1) 160:2 falls (2) 103:19,23 fame (1)
---	---	---	---	--

(11) families - Gentlemen

GENTRY (27) 5:8,11,12,19,22; 6:11,17,20;7:6,7,9, 23;8:15;9:12;12:6, 10,16;14:24;15:8; 20:12;22:3,11;36:19; 37:13;51:11,21; 54:23 geographic (1) 112:7 gets (1) 37:2 gifted (1) 167:15 girl (1) 118:19 girls (1) 120:16 given (5) 41:19;117:18; 119:21;135:24;196:5 gives (5) 10:6;57:10;86:20; 93:1;199:19 giving (4) 6:14,19;8:13;186:1 glad (1) 144:25 glimpse (1) 187:7 global (1) 111:8 glue (1) 120:23 goal (9) 3:14;42:8;43:2; 56:23;95:23;101:13, 15;151:13;157:18 goals (12) 14:21;28:4;42:3, 13;53:19;72:20; 101:17,18;105:1; 118:23;121:2,3 God (2) 6:4;32:24 goes (10) 48:1;97:11;114:6; 131:19,20;144:11,18; 153:2;173:18;189:14 golden (1) 110:25 Good (49) 3:2,23,25;6:7,16; 13:12;20:13;22:5,5; 28:20;32:22;36:8,9; 48:23;54:10;56:10; 57:20;69:7,9;73:16; 83:14;84:24;85:10; 89:6;94:25;99:20; 101:3,9;104:3,13; 108:8;121:16; 123:12;130:7,7,8; 136:24;141:15;	151:25;153:20; 177:22,23,25;186:10; 187:15;189:10; 191:23;196:14;197:7 Google (2) 4:17,18 go-round (1) 130:5 Gotcher (49) 36:7,8,10;37:4,8; 53:10,11;72:15,16, 18;73:10,16;85:21, 22;88:8;103:3,5; 106:6,7;115:17; 139:8,9,12,18;140:3, 5,7,24;141:4,6,14,17, 19,25;142:7;153:21; 188:21,22;190:6; 198:12;199:19; 200:2,20,23;201:1, 12;202:2;203:12,14 Gotcher's (1) 203:24 go-to (1) 89:17 Government (2) 90:5;126:20 Governor (2) 20:4;65:16 grab (1) 114:9 grade (13) 25:13;45:2;48:4; 63:25;64:6;66:18,20; 89:20,21,23;156:1; 178:21;182:1 grader (4) 64:1;80:3;118:20; 119:1 graders (2) 40:7;142:2 grades (13) 5:14;8:9;44:17; 45:6;55:17;64:9; 89:18;97:17;107:13; 176:20;179:12,13; 182:23 grading (2) 42:6;77:9 graduate (11) 26:5;35:12;58:20, 22;87:14;100:15,16; 176:18;177:1;184:3, 5 graduated (4) 15:15;58:11,16; 80:10 graduates (3) 9:24;15:10;57:10 graduating (3) 12:6;57:15;94:5 graduation (24) 24:3,8;57:4;58:8,	14;59:10;78:10,12, 18;83:24;85:3;88:1; 95:9;117:21;121:13; 176:17;182:5,9,15, 16,19;183:3;184:12, 18 grant (6) 14:11;43:6;126:14, 17;133:14,15 granted (2) 29:8;40:15 Gravette (4) 8:21;9:2;12:1; 27:15 great (25) 7:23;9:17;13:10; 17:23;33:1;36:24; 44:7,24;51:6;53:3,4; 55:10;65:16;81:5; 99:12;132:25; 134:25;135:3; 137:12;150:18; 153:5;155:10; 160:25;161:6,23 ground (2) 45:15;46:19 group (17) 6:13;21:24;76:3; 99:8;109:25;113:19, 22;114:5,7,21,23; 117:7;126:17,24; 127:1;129:8;202:13 groups (6) 53:1;113:18,19,25; 114:12,20 grow (6) 7:17;52:24;65:3; 70:18;99:25;120:12 growing (1) 12:12 grown (1) 160:24 growth (5) 12:25;54:7;145:4; 171:5,16 grueling (1) 143:12 GT (2) 56:18;167:21 guess (14) 38:19;44:2;75:18; 88:19;126:7;148:16; 149:6,12;154:19; 160:13;168:16,23; 176:7;199:23 guests (1) 88:10 guidance (1) 125:18 guide (4) 89:17;114:16; 121:7;129:6 guidelines (1)	125:17 guiding (1) 118:14 guy (1) 32:22 guys (11) 10:9;30:17;48:5; 72:2;84:5,8;87:10; 88:16;99:9;137:10; 139:23 H habits (1) 117:4 half (2) 11:5;12:11 half-and-half (1) 34:25 half-unit (1) 184:6 Hall (2) 31:19,20 hand (6) 5:24;12:20;56:3; 107:25;147:20;169:7 hand-in-hand (1) 21:13 handle (1) 66:8 hands-on (1) 112:24 happen (5) 42:21;44:12;60:17, 18;200:17 happened (1) 114:20 happening (5) 10:12;143:13; 159:11;160:2;180:8 happens (1) 161:11 happy (4) 6:17;84:12;106:25; 197:17 hard (8) 20:12;71:23;72:12; 101:11;132:21,21; 155:8;172:3 harness (5) 110:14;111:16; 159:8;162:15,20 Harper (7) 6:12;34:10,13,13; 35:1;49:18,24 Harris (1) 56:22 haul (1) 14:14 have-it- (1) 80:21 head (3) 27:5;49:24;179:17	headed (1) 200:2 heading (2) 113:2;135:8 health (2) 175:17,20 healthcare (7) 10:1;17:13,14,15; 18:17;64:12;65:2 hear (6) 15:7;19:21,25; 39:25;117:16,24 heard (21) 13:22;19:20,24; 20:4,4,5,16;21:1,11; 50:6;57:24;78:9; 79:2;96:8;112:3; 121:19;122:8; 142:15,17;179:20; 195:10 hearing (24) 3:15;5:7,10;43:22; 55:6,13;78:14;95:4; 107:3,8;140:24; 173:3;190:21; 193:23;194:12; 195:4,5,6;196:1,16; 197:13;198:5,21; 200:16 HEARINGS (11) 190:10,15,17; 191:2,3;194:16,17; 195:18;202:15,18,24 heavily (2) 88:24;89:3 heavy (1) 16:6 held (2) 5:1;101:21 Hello (2) 128:6,7 help (27) 6:4;10:21,22;13:5; 14:18,20;15:5;18:25; 28:3;29:9;31:25; 40:18;41:22;42:1,14; 43:11;44:9;58:13; 71:15,19;82:7; 120:19;129:15; 132:4;168:25;169:1; 198:14 helped (3) 23:2;123:17; 193:21 helpful (5) 31:24;137:13; 152:3;189:21;195:1 helping (5) 52:24;108:18; 109:19,20;169:8 helps (5) 115:5,10;144:24; 152:1;153:8
--	---	---	--	---

Henderson (1) 65:6	historically (2) 194:18;195:16	89:14;97:14;98:1; 103:2;104:2;105:14; 106:13	identified (1) 167:21	inactivity (1) 140:25
Here's (2) 63:24;70:6	history (4) 168:22;169:16,19; 199:2	hotel (1) 132:20	identify (1) 10:22	inadvertently (1) 30:20
Hernandez (35) 20:1;56:16;68:21; 25;69:2,6,8;72:14,22; 77:5,6,20;79:7,14; 82:13,18;84:1;85:23; 86:6;88:17,19,22; 91:2;97:1,4;98:16; 100:21;101:16; 102:20;103:10,12,25; 104:14;106:15; 165:23	hit (6) 34:5;149:13;163:1; 167:7;172:11;178:16	hour (8) 16:11;63:21,22; 78:17;93:18,24;95:7; 161:14	IEP's (1) 125:13	include (2) 201:13,25
hesitations (1) 38:20	hold (5) 12:3;47:7;117:17; 139:24,25	hours (15) 15:18,21;18:23; 26:23;37:25;39:6; 42:25;50:13,16; 63:11;80:19;93:18; 97:8;165:8;169:19	ification (1) 102:21	included (5) 5:18;55:22;107:17; 110:13;172:22
Hey (9) 33:7;70:6;72:7; 80:4;87:14;98:23; 134:18;135:2,25	holding (1) 118:19	house (2) 27:18;144:5	II (1) 14:8	includes (2) 52:25;125:18
HIGH (56) 5:8,11,12,22;6:12; 8:5;9:23;15:17; 18:15;25:9,10;29:12; 32:13;34:9,13;39:13; 40:6;51:11,21;54:16; 16,23;55:7,14,15,23; 56:1,13,15,20;57:5,6, 11,16,18;58:10; 59:12,14;66:9;70:4; 25;78:16,16;89:15; 92:23;94:14;103:2; 104:18;105:14,19; 106:14;131:2; 152:16;164:16; 186:25;188:24	holds (2) 114:1;120:24	houses (1) 8:9	imbed (5) 50:5;62:3,5,9;90:1	increase (6) 10:19;15:4;28:8; 86:24;115:9;120:19
higher (5) 54:14;60:10;69:15; 70:14;178:8	hole (1) 114:17	huge (10) 63:16,17;94:16; 111:5;115:5;132:8, 17;137:8;148:18; 151:22	imbedded (5) 73:24;74:10; 135:16;138:21; 153:16	increasing (1) 28:20
highest (1) 122:6	holiday (1) 196:5	human (1) 117:2	imbedding (1) 163:5	incredible (1) 116:17
Highfill (1) 7:3	home (10) 73:2;87:6;113:21, 23;128:18;129:18, 23;132:7;134:1; 175:22	humanities (1) 137:19	immediate (1) 12:15	incredibly (1) 93:15
high-in-demand (1) 18:15	home-school (1) 112:16	hungry (3) 181:16;197:9; 203:14	immigrants (1) 112:8	incumbent (1) 70:24
highlight (3) 65:14;66:3,19	honestly (1) 196:5	Hunt (5) 21:14,15;118:20; 120:15;159:15	immunization (2) 174:22,23	incur (1) 88:20
highlighted (1) 59:13	honor (1) 72:19	human (1) 117:2	impact (4) 24:21;78:10;81:16; 94:16	independent (1) 39:5
highly (1) 83:11	honored (1) 72:16	hydraulics (1) 16:7	impacts (1) 59:10	indicated (1) 116:22
Hill (1) 71:16	hope (8) 10:8;16:4;28:15; 52:23;57:1;63:3; 65:4;160:2	I	imperative (1) 137:4	individual (7) 47:25;48:2;53:13; 110:2;114:8;125:4; 174:15
himself (1) 33:13	hopeful (1) 137:15	IB (31) 56:19;61:17,21; 64:16,17;65:21;71:6; 89:6,7,11,18,23,25; 90:4,10,11,17;91:3,6, 7,9,12,16,18,21,24; 92:2,15;93:21;100:8; 103:18	implement (5) 11:20;15:25;61:1, 8,23	individualized (2) 10:14;64:7
hire (5) 37:1,9;160:9,9; 177:14	hopefully (12) 48:13;65:5;88:5; 108:10;122:9;123:5, 6;159:24;195:11,14; 199:3,4	IBCP (6) 71:8;73:5;89:16; 91:12,15,22	implementation (6) 60:14,19,24;98:12; 99:8;109:1	individuals (3) 74:25;83:11; 187:23
hired (2) 98:25;173:11	hopes (1) 60:13	idea (17) 22:5;23:1;73:12; 95:19;96:18;112:1,4, 5;113:4;119:15; 120:5,18;125:17; 154:15;157:13; 191:22,23	implemented (6) 12:13,20;16:3; 45:4;93:5;144:17	indulgence (1) 192:23
hiring (3) 154:23;158:15,22	host (1) 32:13	ideas (5) 14:19;19:21;59:20; 72:8;189:18	implications (4) 85:5;148:4,5; 156:14	indulging (1) 49:14
	Hot (29) 19:25;55:7,14,15, 22;56:1,12,14,20; 57:4,11,11,15,17,22; 58:9;65:8;69:8,12, 17;72:21;78:16;		importance (1) 144:8	industrial (2) 64:12;65:25
			important (20) 21:23,24;22:1; 58:14;60:5,15;61:2; 86:2;87:20,22;93:15; 94:20;114:14; 144:23;149:23,24,24; 150:3;175:17;176:22	industries (3) 7:15;11:5;97:22
			importantly (1) 21:10	industrious (1) 84:6
			impression (1) 179:23	industry (44) 7:12;8:14;9:6,19, 21,25;10:9;11:1,3; 12:14;13:15;14:18; 15:1,5;17:6,12;19:4; 20:25;21:18;23:12; 28:19;36:21;37:3; 59:2;63:1;67:7,23; 69:15;70:13;86:21; 95:10;105:20; 110:16;111:10,11; 112:23;115:13; 121:6,11;138:17; 143:22;153:19,19; 172:14
			improve (1) 72:12	inform (3)
			improvement (1) 186:7	
			inactive (3) 139:19;140:7; 141:12	

133:24;144:18; 152:1 information (20) 4:16;18:13;41:6; 44:3;80:24;116:20, 25;123:7;130:21,24; 131:3,11;133:2; 192:18;193:3,25; 194:8;196:23,25; 202:7 informed (2) 32:9;198:23 infused (1) 117:11 initial (1) 138:7 initially (4) 70:2;114:16;160:3, 3 initiative (1) 65:15 innate (1) 137:24 inner-city (1) 97:10 innovation (31) 54:4;61:15,21; 62:13;106:2;107:4, 10,10,23;108:15,16, 22;109:18;110:12; 113:6;118:21;120:5; 122:6;124:7,10,14, 19;143:11;147:6; 165:14;173:10,22; 185:13,18;187:6; 188:5 innovations (4) 10:3;61:8,9,9 innovative (7) 27:25;36:11,13,15, 18;59:20;106:8 inserted (1) 8:11 inspire (2) 57:1;58:13 instead (3) 46:13;95:25;117:8 Institute (2) 25:6;116:2 institutionally (1) 195:17 instructing (1) 38:22 instruction (16) 10:14;35:7;43:22; 44:6;47:6;110:23; 111:4;113:12; 125:14;128:24; 131:15;133:15; 144:16,19;167:24; 176:13 instructional (6) 50:14;115:20;	163:19,21;167:12,12 instructor (2) 17:22;75:17 instructors (4) 23:6;75:1;111:17; 125:14 insure (12) 106:5;110:18; 122:3,11;131:13; 136:11;138:1;144:5; 157:18;158:14,22; 159:9 insuring (6) 40:20;112:1,22; 131:16,18;177:25 integrate (1) 137:18 integrated (1) 73:5 intend (4) 35:7,18;82:15; 179:12 intending (1) 38:16 intensive (2) 90:15;192:12 intent (8) 42:8;158:4,9,10, 14;159:5;194:25; 195:1 intention (1) 86:7 intentional (1) 88:14 interact (5) 143:10,21;154:1; 158:20;175:1 interaction (5) 129:2;158:20; 160:23,25;176:10 interactions (2) 111:9;159:18 interest (4) 63:16;162:19; 164:8;195:22 interested (13) 18:5;57:8;69:18; 103:21;120:17; 157:12;160:4; 161:10,13;162:14,16, 17;189:16 interesting (1) 13:24 interests (1) 62:22 interim (1) 41:18 intermediate (1) 8:8 intern (1) 65:9 International (5) 61:17,25;69:23;	89:14;90:14 internet (1) 132:24 interning (1) 62:17 internship (19) 9:21;10:4;37:22; 42:24;66:23;75:3,6,8, 19;76:14;77:13,19; 94:6;96:24;97:16,24; 118:25;138:1;169:21 internships (16) 15:3;38:13;43:12; 59:22;62:12,14;63:9; 64:24;67:14,25; 74:24,25;76:15,24; 120:13;164:7 interpretation (1) 174:4 interrupt (1) 127:18 interventions (2) 65:12;191:24 interview (1) 155:15 interviewed (1) 11:5 interviews (1) 10:25 into (43) 3:18;7:3;8:19; 11:18;17:11,25; 18:17;24:21;25:14; 32:1;40:4,9;42:14; 51:4;58:9;62:20; 66:8;67:11;71:2,10; 73:5,11,18;75:12; 80:12;86:10;88:4; 92:16;112:19; 114:20;117:3;129:9; 144:12;147:22; 159:23;164:12; 167:10;173:1,2; 187:11;193:4; 196:17;197:17 intriguing (1) 37:12 intro (1) 11:24 introduce (1) 118:18 introduction (1) 6:20 inventory (1) 17:3 invested (3) 89:19;133:14; 147:22 investing (3) 20:20;87:24;109:4 investment (3) 88:1;108:21;138:3 invite (2)	34:1;118:5 invited (1) 32:12 inviting (1) 109:7 involve (2) 18:12;115:22 involved (12) 16:15;21:19;37:21, 25;63:2;64:3;73:12; 75:1;82:7;97:15; 118:24;160:20 involvement (2) 168:21;170:3 isolate (1) 178:5 isolated (2) 91:6;144:23 isolates (1) 140:11 issue (9) 45:8;140:12;151:5, 6;180:2;195:19; 199:10,13,21 issues (20) 28:25;35:11;39:20; 50:1,2;51:1;99:10; 101:25;102:13,19; 104:7,15;178:14; 192:12;193:6; 194:11,14;195:8,13; 196:1 item (13) 5:5,9;28:25;55:9, 12;77:21;106:17; 107:6,7;190:12,13; 191:3;198:2 items (3) 67:14;196:20; 204:2	Jeremy (1) 193:21 Jim (1) 109:12 job (19) 13:12;20:15;21:7; 31:22;32:2;53:24; 66:4,4,7;69:25; 79:23;92:9;99:13; 100:18;146:11; 153:11;155:23; 159:3,16 jobs (6) 18:15;20:25;28:2; 53:3,4;111:14 Joe (2) 108:14;115:15 John (1) 20:16 join (2) 107:1;108:9 Jones (91) 24:14;26:12,14,24; 27:2,9,14,17,20,22; 28:11,17;35:4,5,16, 22;36:2,6;43:21; 45:4;54:11,12;88:18, 19;89:6,12;90:9,24; 91:4,23;92:4,8,20; 93:14;94:10,19,22, 25;95:2,16;104:16, 17;123:11,13,15; 128:5,6,8,12,14,22; 129:17,22;132:5,10, 13;133:5;134:11; 135:10,13,16,18,21, 24;136:3,7,10,16; 138:8,11,14,17,19,21, 23,25;139:3,6,9; 149:4;171:14; 174:19;185:12,16; 187:9,10;191:10; 197:20;198:9,10; 204:4 journey (5) 10:22;57:17,23; 71:25;81:20 judgment (1) 177:13 Judy (2) 6:10,16 July (1) 3:11 jump (2) 48:21;73:18 juncture (2) 44:18;115:22 June (1) 197:13 junior (1) 67:12 junior/senior (1) 94:7
J				
Jackson (34) 55:24;56:8,10,12; 73:7,11,23;74:2,5,11, 24;75:9,12,22,24; 76:4,6,9;81:5;82:5, 13,19;83:3,20;89:10; 93:19;94:13,21,24; 95:1,22;96:12,14; 98:25 jam-pack (1) 93:22 January (1) 200:16 Jared (1) 174:7 JB (5) 21:14,15;118:20; 120:15;159:14 JDC (1) 80:1				

justification (1) 109:22	160:21,23;189:20; 191:25;192:8,17	11:14,20;16:13; 22:3;33:7;50:15; 61:11;66:21;81:7; 95:3;108:25;113:4; 115:12;124:21; 135:10;173:10; 191:11	146:10;183:22 leaving (3) 58:25;59:2,3 left (7) 7:19;8:3;14:1; 15:11,18;197:14; 204:2 legal (8) 112:11;195:2,25; 198:18,19,19,22,23 legislative (6) 158:4,8,10,14; 159:5;193:22 legislators (1) 5:4 leg-up (1) 57:10 legwork (1) 93:10 lending (1) 44:4 length (1) 48:6 leniency (1) 143:4 less (2) 131:10;144:23 lessons (3) 153:9,12;154:4 Lester (6) 53:16,17;104:22, 23;186:23,24 lets (1) 15:14 letter (7) 32:5;33:5;143:6,7; 150:15;154:12; 190:24 letters (1) 151:10 letting (1) 189:14 level (15) 28:8,9;40:19; 43:10;58:19;59:15; 64:17;65:12;104:18; 122:7;131:2;139:14; 156:11;177:20; 186:25 levelized (1) 134:20 levels (3) 45:5;178:21;182:1 liaisons (1) 98:2 liberal (2) 64:11,15 liberty (1) 186:1 Library (3) 167:5,11,13 licensed (16) 23:12;82:8,19;	150:24;154:17; 157:17;158:7;159:2; 171:8,13,20,23; 172:20,22;187:23,25 licensure (20) 23:5;24:15;29:25; 30:1;49:21;82:2,3,12, 16,23;83:5;85:16; 155:4,5;160:1,7,11, 12;165:19;187:18 life (2) 63:25;124:23 life-stream (1) 19:22 lift (1) 113:10 lifting (1) 186:16 lifts (1) 186:16 light (2) 44:15;203:19 lighting (1) 69:7 lightly (2) 109:3;137:5 lights (1) 69:2 limit (10) 30:23;39:1;41:1; 45:23;48:12;50:23; 97:20;150:24; 157:21;164:20 limitations (1) 164:5 limited (4) 30:2;43:17;77:18, 22 limiting (4) 48:20;157:14,16; 159:3 line (3) 41:8;66:21;115:21 lines (3) 42:16;99:7;105:17 lining (1) 26:25 link (1) 104:13 linked (1) 43:2 list (4) 12:9;14:1;26:14; 80:5 listed (4) 17:19;18:16;36:10; 64:20 listen (1) 99:4 listened (2) 19:22,23 listening (2) 40:1;48:8
K	kindergarten (1) 79:18 kinds (4) 83:15;87:7,13; 117:23 knew (4) 60:5,14,16;153:4 knowing (3) 42:16;86:25; 166:25 knowledge (9) 33:23;37:10; 111:12,17,19;157:20; 159:17;160:25; 161:22 known (3) 48:6;147:15; 174:11 knowns (1) 152:2 kudos (1) 32:2 Kuhl (2) 113:13;122:16 K-u-h-l (1) 113:14	later (8) 4:13;49:8,10; 80:12;124:24; 156:14;166:4;172:25 law (18) 77:4,5,6,11;89:1; 126:8,11;127:10,15; 139:22;144:22; 145:17;146:4; 164:25;165:1; 170:23;193:15,18 LDC (1) 134:15 LEA (3) 29:21,24;124:9 lead (7) 25:14;39:17; 110:10,11,11;122:6; 201:7 leaders (4) 110:16;111:10,12; 196:22 leading (1) 18:14 lean (1) 141:12 leap (2) 47:1;149:19 learn (1) 189:18 learned (8) 110:5;111:9,11; 124:19;148:7;153:9, 9,10 learners (2) 110:9;111:2 learning (46) 19:2;37:24;38:6; 42:12;44:2;49:4,19; 63:4;74:21;79:11; 80:8;84:20;100:4,5; 106:3;110:6,7,7,19, 21;111:20;119:16,25, 25;120:3,4,6;121:1, 10;122:11,16;128:16, 17;129:3,25;135:1; 139:19;142:16,20; 150:4;164:10,14; 165:5;177:8;187:1; 197:24 least (2) 26:3;194:6 leave (11) 9:24;13:11;17:1; 46:4;57:9;58:7; 59:14;92:17;95:14;	leaving (3) 58:25;59:2,3 left (7) 7:19;8:3;14:1; 15:11,18;197:14; 204:2 legal (8) 112:11;195:2,25; 198:18,19,19,22,23 legislative (6) 158:4,8,10,14; 159:5;193:22 legislators (1) 5:4 leg-up (1) 57:10 legwork (1) 93:10 lending (1) 44:4 length (1) 48:6 leniency (1) 143:4 less (2) 131:10;144:23 lessons (3) 153:9,12;154:4 Lester (6) 53:16,17;104:22, 23;186:23,24 lets (1) 15:14 letter (7) 32:5;33:5;143:6,7; 150:15;154:12; 190:24 letters (1) 151:10 letting (1) 189:14 level (15) 28:8,9;40:19; 43:10;58:19;59:15; 64:17;65:12;104:18; 122:7;131:2;139:14; 156:11;177:20; 186:25 levelized (1) 134:20 levels (3) 45:5;178:21;182:1 liaisons (1) 98:2 liberal (2) 64:11,15 liberty (1) 186:1 Library (3) 167:5,11,13 licensed (16) 23:12;82:8,19;	licensure (20) 23:5;24:15;29:25; 30:1;49:21;82:2,3,12, 16,23;83:5;85:16; 155:4,5;160:1,7,11, 12;165:19;187:18 life (2) 63:25;124:23 life-stream (1) 19:22 lift (1) 113:10 lifting (1) 186:16 lifts (1) 186:16 light (2) 44:15;203:19 lighting (1) 69:7 lightly (2) 109:3;137:5 lights (1) 69:2 limit (10) 30:23;39:1;41:1; 45:23;48:12;50:23; 97:20;150:24; 157:21;164:20 limitations (1) 164:5 limited (4) 30:2;43:17;77:18, 22 limiting (4) 48:20;157:14,16; 159:3 line (3) 41:8;66:21;115:21 lines (3) 42:16;99:7;105:17 lining (1) 26:25 link (1) 104:13 linked (1) 43:2 list (4) 12:9;14:1;26:14; 80:5 listed (4) 17:19;18:16;36:10; 64:20 listen (1) 99:4 listened (2) 19:22,23 listening (2) 40:1;48:8
K-12 (6) 61:17,18;103:18; 107:13;128:16; 179:13 K-4 (3) 179:14;180:19; 181:21 Kathy (1) 133:11 keep (10) 14:8;32:9;34:2; 41:13;126:3;131:12; 158:14;166:25; 189:23;196:12 keeping (3) 95:18;96:21; 177:15 Kendra (1) 3:25 kept (2) 114:21;118:16 Kerrwood (1) 21:16 Key (2) 3:12;60:5 kid (3) 87:24;88:5;140:7 kids (57) 13:4;27:10;37:13; 54:10;59:19;70:3,4; 71:23,25;72:13; 79:18,19,25;80:18; 84:7,10,13;85:13; 87:13;92:25;97:2,17, 21;98:4,8;99:14,19, 23;100:15,16,18; 101:3;103:20; 106:11;110:10; 116:4;118:11;122:5; 128:16;130:8,12; 132:7;151:2;152:23; 155:17;160:25; 161:13,23;162:11; 164:12;167:13; 184:18;186:12,14; 188:25;189:15,24 kind (41) 23:3;24:18;32:8,8; 41:14;47:10,13;71:9; 72:10;77:14;80:12, 21;82:9;85:1,15; 88:2,6;89:17;90:9; 91:10;97:13;98:5,7; 100:2,3,25;113:2; 116:12;122:22; 130:24;147:4; 149:19;150:10; 153:8;157:14;	L			
	labs (1) 19:2 lack (4) 34:20;44:2;128:14; 152:20 Ladies (2) 3:2;200:20 lady (2) 71:17;109:22 laid (1) 150:21 Lake (2) 67:21;102:6 Lance (1) 106:21 language (12) 82:10;110:23; 111:2;113:12,21,23, 24,24;114:21; 122:17;167:23;168:1 languages (5) 111:3;113:20,22; 114:24;149:9 Lanisha (1) 196:11 large (1) 81:15 largest (1) 87:4 Lasiter (1) 193:21 last (17)			

listing (1) 18:16	located (3) 6:23;7:17;66:4	79:20;21;173:24	195:19	47:24;110:20;
lists (1) 46:8	location (1) 167:14	lost (1) 145:7	Majority (3) 34:24;81:15;149:7	112:1;119:15;20,23;
Lit (1) 89:23	locations (1) 76:8	lot (35) 16:15;20:20;34:15;	makes (4) 26:24;33:9;40:16;	120:4;185:1
literally (1) 149:9	logistical (1) 195:8	44:16;45:12;64:2;	195:8	materials (1) 190:21
literature (1) 90:2	Logistics (5) 16:19;17:4;27:7;	69:21,21,23;70:7;	making (10) 33:23;47:11;83:5;	math (8) 14:7;28:6;47:15;
little (35) 6:20;7:11,20,25;	117:1;193:6	81:10;84:11;86:20;	10;108:8;122:14,19;	82:10;136:1,12;
12:10;15:8;18:1;	long (9) 14:14;22:8;33:21;	93:14,22;94:14;95:4;	153:16;158:21;	155:7,11
28:13;35:6;40:13;	69:21;72:2;80:5;	99:12;108:25;111:9;	189:21	matter (9) 4:12;7:7;47:20;
41:5;45:9;46:22;	127:19,22;150:8	113:2,3;121:14;	malnutrition (2) 83:13,13	116:9,9;155:3;193:1;
52:9,14;54:25;55:12;	longer (3) 50:9;119:18;168:7	123:24;133:2;	maltreatment (2) 31:9;83:13	195:9,10
67:4,17;71:9;80:11,	long-time (1) 32:22	145:22;149:15;	manage (3) 84:19;117:5;133:1	mature (1) 41:4
17,20;94:4;95:11,20;	look (59) 7:22;11:21;12:12,	163:4;173:8;179:3;	manageable (1) 19:3	maximize (1) 112:12
108:11;115:18;	19:14;4,19;15:25;	187:15	management (6) 17:3,4;18:14;	maximizing (1) 111:11
142:24;149:3;152:5;	27:25;28:14;32:20;	lots (7) 8:13;48:25;79:15;	64:23;68:7;129:25	maximum (3) 5:15;55:18;107:14
159:6,6;166:17;	33:24;38:21;41:19;	86:23;91:2;100:7;	mandated (3) 155:25;168:21;	may (56) 8:16;13:25;21:25;
187:17	48:2,24;50:21;60:19;	138:11	170:2	22:24;25:7;30:6;
live (4) 32:25;33:2;99:20;	61:5;63:24;66:18;	lottery (5) 125:23,24;126:10,	mandatory (3) 141:25;142:2;	40:9,9,25;46:7;61:9;
102:10	69:17;70:16;71:3;	12;127:15	174:17	63:6;67:5;75:16;
lived (1) 162:13	73:20;80:9;81:9;	love (6) 96:18;104:13;	manner (2) 43:1;192:9	76:7,24;80:3,3;
lives (3) 72:13;195:20;	83:2;86:2,5,12;96:7;	142:10;155:10;	manpower (1) 196:22	81:19;83:6;87:15,15;
199:9	109:7,22;110:1,2;	189:8,10	mantra (1) 117:20	89:10;90:25;94:1;
live-stream (1) 4:5	119:13,15;120:8,12;	low (1) 164:18	manufacturing (2) 86:16,17	95:24;96:2;97:22,23;
live-streamed (1) 3:20	121:1,12,19;122:17;	lower (3) 45:5;176:20;	many (23) 15:11;19:21;21:3,	99:10;100:6;103:21;
living (5) 21:10;39:7;108:23;	131:9;133:25;	178:10	8;22:19;46:25;72:5,	112:15;124:25;
124:23;132:19	136:20;144:3;146:7;	luck (1) 94:25	8;78:22,22;96:10;	125:3,6;134:19,22;
Liwo (19) 31:4,5,13,17;33:3;	147:10;148:23;	lunch (3) 108:9;163:3;	97:17;104:11;	136:3;143:25;144:1;
54:18,19;105:2,3;	149:11;153:24;	197:17	120:16;136:3;	145:16;146:17;
157:9,10,11;158:3,	156:25;165:25;		143:13;150:8;	148:10;157:9;
24;160:13;162:2;	166:24;168:20;		152:12;162:11;	162:16;163:1;168:7,
187:14,15,23	172:19;175:23;202:6		174:13;183:25;	8;174:15;176:20;
Lloyd (2) 55:24;56:12	looked (8) 10:4;11:23;13:4;	M	193:16;196:20	187:20;192:9;
LMS (5) 130:1,6,14;153:15;	58:8,18;59:5;74:20;	ma'am (20) 23:8;24:6;26:11;	97:17;104:11;	193:23;198:17;
175:9	152:11	27:8,21;28:10;31:11,	120:16;136:3;	199:14
load (5) 163:25;177:5,19;	looking (35) 11:17;13:15;14:12;	15;35:21;45:7;51:5,	143:13;150:8;	maybe (21) 20:21,24;32:6;
178:19;179:1	28:1,24;32:3;38:5;	15;135:15,17;147:8;	152:12;162:11;	36:22;38:16;40:18;
loan (1) 13:23	41:23;44:21;45:2;	154:8;162:3;180:20,	174:13;183:25;	42:11,20;48:1;104:5;
loans (1) 14:12	48:23;65:9;70:10;	22;200:6	193:16;196:20	117:7;136:18;
local (14) 21:11;36:24,25;	73:24;74:24;86:19;	mad (1) 151:24	March (2) 61:4;198:2	137:16,16;149:23;
53:24;96:24;111:6,7;	87:18;94:16;122:18;	Madam (7) 5:9;6:7;55:11;	Mark (2) 108:15;118:5	155:7;164:7;172:23;
151:11;153:19;	124:1;125:9;131:25;	107:7;190:13;	market (3) 17:25;100:19;	198:13,14;199:13
161:17;172:14;	152:11;165:4;	192:22;198:12	138:15	Mayberry (1) 6:22
182:20;183:24;186:3	168:16,19;177:18;	main (1) 168:20	Mary (2) 197:22,23	McKee (4) 7:20;21:11,13;52:9
locally (3) 78:23,24;151:8	178:22;192:5,6,9,17;	mainly (1) 127:12	masonry (1) 99:17	MDC (1) 134:15
	202:4	maintain (3) 88:12;188:24;	masses (1) 41:23	mean (18) 34:18;40:23;47:14;
	looks (10) 111:19;113:16;	189:1	master (6) 46:2;49:22;111:23;	95:22;96:15;109:24,
	129:15;130:5;	maintenance (1) 16:5	112:23;142:24;143:1	25;117:8;135:5;
	148:12;161:16;	major (1)	mastery (8)	137:9;144:25;
	164:13;175:16;			147:15;155:14;
	180:10;186:7			158:6,24;181:3;
	lose (3)			186:14;192:11

meaning (1) 109:24	16:14	148:22;149:3;186:6	143:15;153:7,7; 175:14;182:11; 185:25	202:25
means (11) 46:16;109:23; 110:1,5;122:9,10; 135:5,24;180:18; 181:16;186:19	mentioned (10) 29:11;48:24;54:21; 72:22;81:6;115:17; 142:14;145:1;151:5; 191:12	minds (1) 57:2	moments (1) 56:23	moved (3) 51:12;197:21,25
meant (1) 198:15	mentor (2) 89:16;129:10	mindset (2) 88:6;147:14	momentum (1) 22:18	moving (6) 35:14;159:11; 172:8;175:21; 199:19;203:9
measures (3) 28:18,21;141:13	mentoring (1) 64:6	mine (2) 25:18;186:1	momma (2) 153:22,23	much (17) 7:22;18:10;30:19; 38:17,24;52:17; 57:25;87:10;88:3; 101:1;102:22; 130:20;132:5;137:1; 174:1;189:20;190:4
mechanical (1) 116:24	mentors (4) 62:19;68:5;112:23; 121:6	minimal (1) 18:7	money (8) 18:8;20:20;109:4; 126:14,21,23;127:16; 133:14	muddy (1) 28:13
mechanics (5) 16:2;21:13,15; 24:1;27:7	menu (1) 84:17	minority (1) 34:24	monies (1) 77:16	multimillion (1) 108:20
mechatronics (1) 116:25	merely (1) 77:13	minute (3) 25:19;106:17; 164:2	month (3) 14:15,16;113:23	multiple (8) 8:13;16:20;17:11; 21:18;28:18;113:20; 121:12;122:2
media (2) 152:1;167:5	merge (1) 54:4	minutes (7) 4:6,8,10;123:3; 163:21;192:21; 196:13	months (2) 39:19;140:8	must (5) 90:12,18;91:16,18; 119:19
medical (6) 11:25;17:17,18; 27:6;116:23;125:18	merges (1) 62:2	miscommunication (1) 85:19	moral (1) 137:4	N
meet (31) 35:13;38:7;40:22; 52:14;53:19;60:2; 67:22;86:9,10;89:8; 102:1;105:1;108:11; 126:21;140:13,23; 144:10;148:13; 151:1,16;152:15; 156:13;162:18; 182:19;183:2; 186:12,13;188:12,13; 193:19;200:13	meshed (1) 71:2	misnomer (1) 110:24	more (42) 8:15;17:6,7;21:10, 20;25:7;30:5;36:14, 15;37:9;38:23;40:13; 41:5,8;42:2;43:18; 53:23;57:5;59:21,23; 73:13;75:2,16;76:17; 80:20;84:11;86:24; 93:16,23;99:3; 114:24;117:23; 121:24;137:2; 141:10;150:22; 151:10;174:1;185:3; 187:24;196:24; 201:24	
meeting (24) 3:3,20,22;4:13,20; 21:2;26:16;28:5; 33:7;69:4;110:4; 122:14,15;131:17; 156:12;187:7; 190:15;191:12; 193:2;195:15; 197:12;198:6;204:8, 10	message (2) 109:12;120:15	miss (1) 31:15	morning (21) 3:2,23,25;5:4;6:7, 16;32:20;36:8,9; 45:10;56:10;57:20, 24;69:8;96:1,9;97:5, 5;107:1;108:8,17	name (7) 3:16;34:12;57:20; 89:13;108:11; 113:13;174:6
meetings (7) 8:14;32:9,12;33:8; 60:19;68:19;109:17	method (2) 156:5;157:21	missed (1) 31:13	most (6) 14:3;21:25;22:7,7; 77:14;118:9	named (1) 3:12
meets (2) 153:18,20	methods (2) 98:7;177:19	mission (1) 9:3	motion (25) 51:10,17,19,23,25; 53:11,22;102:25; 103:4,7;104:17; 105:16;106:1,7; 185:12,17,19,21; 187:4,6;188:22; 200:21,24;203:24; 204:4	narrowing (1) 112:21
Megan (2) 107:19;108:11	mic (1) 31:5	misspelled (1) 134:8	motivated (1) 95:13	nation (2) 13:23;61:24
member (1) 137:7	Mickey (1) 71:21	misunderstanding (1) 182:9	move (19) 34:8;35:7;40:23; 41:1,15;42:11;45:21; 47:13;81:14;94:9; 96:7;101:24;103:1; 116:4;131:1;168:1; 191:13;200:22;	National (10) 60:11,12;65:6; 83:4;87:16;88:20; 89:5;111:8;151:12; 153:19
members (8) 3:12;6:8;52:2,20; 54:20;191:11; 192:22;196:2	microphone (3) 3:18;51:4;118:6	Mitchell (1) 197:4		natural (2) 95:22;145:2
memorize (1) 117:8	middle (2) 8:6;94:15	mobile (1) 65:14		naturally (1) 40:12
mentality (1) 100:3	midst (1) 81:3	mode (3) 86:10;128:25; 131:19		nature (1) 199:9
mention (1)	might (37) 30:6;36:16;39:25; 47:16;52:5;63:9,10; 68:6;83:2;95:10,11; 96:23,23,24;112:9; 117:5;125:1,2,2; 134:7;144:21,22; 146:12;148:2; 153:13;160:5,6; 162:13;164:6,7,8; 169:7;176:10,11; 182:22;184:24,24	model (14) 25:2,4;109:5; 111:25;113:4; 114:12,13;115:7; 125:1;128:24; 147:22;156:9; 165:15,25		navigate (1) 129:15
	might've (1) 26:15	modeled (1) 114:22		NCAA (1) 134:12
	Mike (2) 56:16;69:8	models (3) 70:6;114:8;152:12		neat (1) 72:8
	miles (1) 6:25	modes (1) 140:19		necessarily (7) 36:13;38:4;40:2; 41:2;47:20;49:5;73:7
	millage (1) 22:12	modification (1) 88:25		necessary (3) 104:20;169:5; 199:13
	mind (6) 40:5,25;117:4;	modified (1) 114:25		necessitate (1) 66:5
		modify (2) 86:20;133:18		
		MOMENT (9) 19:16;68:24;123:1;		

need (87) 9:7;12:12,16,17; 13:13;17:14;20:7,22; 21:1,7,17;22:13,15; 28:3;30:9;35:13; 41:5;42:21;43:16,17; 44:11;48:25;50:9,9, 11,17,22;54:16; 59:13;62:5;63:9,10, 17,23;64:5;65:3; 66:23;67:24;68:1; 71:19;72:23;87:16; 94:3;98:8;109:20; 111:14,14;112:18; 115:13;116:22; 125:12;130:25; 133:24;135:2; 139:23;140:10; 143:17,18,24;144:1, 11,20;145:17;148:6; 149:22;151:16; 156:16;166:2; 167:13;168:7,8,25; 172:16;175:18; 178:19,24;179:13,25; 180:9;191:14,24,25; 192:1,11;201:5,19; 202:15	96:10 nervous (1) 33:10 net (1) 132:14 networking (3) 18:13;19:8;84:9 new (31) 4:4;11:23;19:5,6; 20:8;36:13,18;44:6; 45:15;46:18;61:14; 20,21;62:13,14,15; 63:22;77:5,6;85:14, 15;88:25;91:8;92:2; 94:11;108:22; 130:13;158:4; 164:25;165:1;189:14 news (2) 13:22;189:11 newspaper (1) 123:12 Next (21) 8:1,10;10:21; 47:16,25;52:11; 56:23;60:16;61:3; 65:19;77:21;106:17; 109:20;117:19,22; 126:18;133:25; 156:16;164:13; 166:1;172:8 next-to-the-last (1) 15:13 nice (1) 35:23 nicely (1) 65:23 night (4) 63:3;80:13,16; 96:18 nine (2) 3:12;6:25 Nodding (2) 49:24;179:17 non- (1) 158:6 non-core (8) 45:23;48:12,17,20; 49:3;82:4;158:7; 165:16 none (4) 7:14;114:5;148:10; 176:24 non-educator (1) 83:21 non-instructional (1) 172:9 non-licensed (4) 31:7;171:17,19; 172:1 normal (2) 93:23;150:24 normally (2) 24:16;30:11	north (2) 6:25;8:21 northwest (13) 6:24;10:24;11:22; 12:4,22;13:17;18:19; 25:5;59:12;110:25; 115:25;116:1,2 notation (1) 50:23 note (5) 39:23;48:9;68:16; 103:17;109:14 notes (5) 31:19,20;32:3; 46:14,15 notice (5) 18:16;108:19; 198:18,22,23 noticed (3) 85:22;89:7;143:3 noticing (1) 101:17 notifications (1) 201:23 notified (2) 175:6;190:20 noting (2) 50:19;102:17 November (4) 3:3;8:4;190:23; 194:7 NSLA (1) 89:1 NTI (3) 16:9;25:2;120:11 number (13) 15:10;35:1;36:12; 43:18;76:21;124:10; 132:18;162:15; 163:5;178:2,6,8,9 numbers (4) 58:14;101:20; 164:17,18 nurses (1) 21:17 nursing (1) 17:25 NWACC (4) 27:10,12;29:3; 120:11	30:16;137:20; 143:9;169:3;176:12; 177:13;178:9 occur (2) 198:5;200:11 occurred (1) 139:10 occurring (1) 175:7 occurs (1) 174:13 October (2) 190:15,20 Oesterle (3) 108:15;118:5,8 off (7) 63:13;73:20; 123:25;130:25; 144:9;163:7;164:4 off- (1) 92:14 offer (21) 9:23;10:8;14:25; 16:2;69:23;70:8,9; 89:18,21;90:2;92:19; 99:15;116:18;143:9; 158:1;176:4;182:14; 184:22;186:25; 199:1,12 offered (10) 39:12;43:10;90:3, 6,6,7,8;125:20;158:2; 182:18 offering (4) 10:15;91:9;112:14; 120:15 offerings (8) 9:22;17:16,19; 59:22;80:21;90:24; 91:2;116:18 offers (2) 15:19;187:12 office (7) 33:10;49:10,18; 85:16,16,17;99:19 official (1) 90:14 officially (1) 198:8 offsite (1) 26:15 off-site (2) 27:10;42:25 often (4) 34:19;86:3;160:13, 15 oftentimes (2) 6:22;94:17 Oklahoma (1) 7:5 old (5) 12:11;113:19,23; 115:1;118:25	on-board (1) 81:16 once (11) 10:8;16:3;17:19; 29:8;40:15;41:21; 43:12;86:10;109:8; 143:13;201:22 on-demand (1) 130:21 one (121) 5:6,9;13:7;14:10; 16:1;20:3,8;21:8; 23:22;25:16;29:16, 21,24;30:5,6;32:5,21; 36:12;37:16;45:17; 50:4,10,15;52:5,8; 53:1,4;61:7,10;66:2, 10;68:9;70:10,12,14, 16;71:2;72:24;74:17, 17,18;76:10,17,21; 84:10;87:4;88:11; 89:8,11;91:17,18,19; 92:1;93:16;95:2,18; 96:18;98:10,24; 102:14,16;103:17; 111:5;112:3;113:6, 11,19;114:21; 118:23;119:16,17; 121:13;123:12; 124:18;128:15; 132:18;134:3;135:6; 136:1,13,22;139:15; 146:6,15;147:20; 149:13;150:1,21; 152:17;156:20; 159:25;160:17,19; 162:16,17,18,18; 163:5;164:9;166:24; 168:24;169:12; 172:8;174:18;175:4, 8,13;177:3;179:19; 183:14;186:3,16; 187:24;188:19; 189:14;192:19; 193:8;194:1;197:12, 22;203:16 one-on-one (2) 33:11;64:7 ones (4) 14:23;151:23; 197:12,14 one-third (1) 29:2 one-way (1) 16:11 ongoing (2) 86:1,19 online (42) 18:24;35:7,15; 74:21;90:20;120:6; 124:6,13,14,25; 125:2;128:12,16,19, 23;131:14;139:19;
needed (14) 11:16;31:6;39:9; 42:23,25;53:8;65:1; 76:17,22;165:21,22; 166:6;178:5,6 needing (1) 38:14 needle (1) 116:4 needs (34) 21:13,15;22:6; 53:13;62:23;63:15; 67:24;69:4;71:20; 78:7;84:19;86:22; 96:5;105:23;112:6; 115:8;119:5;121:22, 23;122:13;144:11; 146:16;151:1,2; 153:18,20;156:13; 169:3;186:12,13; 187:8,12;188:12,13 negative (1) 85:5 negotiation (2) 4:22;47:11 Nehus (21) 56:17;57:20,21; 68:20;74:8,12;75:23; 76:11,13,23;77:25; 78:6,20,24;85:8,20; 92:11,20;93:5;95:2; 96:17 neighboring (1) 186:3 neither (1)		O Oaklawn (2) 68:2;87:2 oath (3) 5:24;56:3;107:25 obligation (3) 115:6;194:19; 195:24 obtain (2) 105:19;126:14 Obviously (7)		

140:12;147:6;149:5; 7,8;152:5,23;154:4; 165:5,10;169:9; 170:13;172:12,13; 174:14,24;175:6,19; 176:9,11,15,23; 177:8;184:23;185:4 only (40) 11:7;18:2;20:8; 23:7;30:16;34:19; 49:17;50:17;58:16; 61:18,24;62:16;77:2; 78:4,17;82:4;91:7,8; 103:15,18;109:4; 124:9,11;127:4,7; 149:2,8;151:6,19,21; 153:10,18;158:18; 170:16;174:23; 175:6;178:19; 195:20;198:14; 201:17 onset (2) 131:25;138:7 on-site (2) 27:6;124:16 on-track (2) 94:8,9 open (13) 40:24;52:18;54:4; 57:2;100:11;104:4; 108:21;109:8;126:1, 18;127:5,23;147:14 open- (1) 126:11 opened (2) 147:13,13 OPEN-ENROLLMENT (4) 190:9,14;191:1; 201:18 opening (1) 40:21 openings (2) 15:6;66:24 opens (1) 44:24 operating (1) 25:2 opinion (1) 48:10 opportunities (50) 8:25;9:11,18,20, 24;10:5;11:15;13:10; 15:1,2;16:22;18:12; 36:12,15;38:18;39:3; 41:2;42:10;43:13; 53:24;63:22;66:1; 67:10;73:8;80:8; 82:6;83:7,15;87:13; 93:24;94:8;95:24; 97:6,21;104:19; 110:22;112:20,22; 117:18;118:16; 119:1,15,22,24;	121:17;147:25; 158:5;159:3;184:22; 187:2 opportunity (49) 6:9;10:6;12:1; 16:24;17:24;19:20; 20:13;22:20;26:17; 32:19;33:13;36:16, 19,22;37:5,22;41:11; 48:15;49:2;53:8; 54:4;56:14,24;57:19; 63:4,5;71:25;92:13; 93:19;95:12;96:6; 101:7;103:20,24; 105:23;106:24; 108:10;115:19,22; 118:10,24;121:6; 122:5;136:12; 163:17;177:16; 183:1;188:16;191:4 opposed (6) 4:8;51:25;103:9; 151:23;185:21;204:1 opposition (7) 4:9;5:23;19:15; 56:2;68:23;107:24; 122:25 opt (1) 148:2 opted (1) 161:4 optimistic (1) 105:11 option (8) 43:6,11;96:6; 112:6;137:16; 155:18;156:7;157:23 optional (3) 154:21,23;188:12 options (10) 10:19;13:13;21:8; 54:17;128:21; 148:11;166:23; 187:1,12;191:16 oral (9) 35:23;36:1;50:5; 62:9;72:23;73:20; 74:9;136:24;163:6 orchestra (1) 100:8 order (11) 3:4;42:10,23; 79:14;94:4;96:4; 130:15;191:18; 194:22;196:23;199:7 organization (1) 62:1 organizations (1) 82:6 Orientation (1) 12:13 others (4) 37:11;44:21;	186:16;193:19 Otherwise (2) 43:3;112:16 Ouachita (1) 99:13 ought (1) 81:12 ourselves (6) 30:19;70:24;80:16; 100:17;137:1;148:8 out (81) 9:20;13:17;14:19; 17:9,10;20:1;22:19; 26:25;30:16;33:16; 34:2;35:14;36:20; 37:1;41:13;44:14; 46:24;47:22;49:4; 52:16;59:21;62:17; 66:7;69:7,20;70:15, 19;71:10;72:10; 76:25;79:18;80:17; 83:10;88:5;92:17; 96:23;97:11,24; 98:25;99:19,22,23; 100:12,14,18;102:21; 104:2,6,12;109:7; 111:18;114:9,24; 115:1;118:24;119:1; 123:13,19;132:2,19, 23;133:16;134:6; 137:25;138:14; 146:3;150:21; 152:18;160:16; 162:15;169:12; 174:20;182:15; 193:6,18;194:5,15; 195:13;196:2; 198:18;199:8 Outback (1) 99:1 outcomes (2) 59:11,12 outlined (4) 53:19;105:1; 164:14;202:25 outside (7) 9:22;32:12;36:25; 37:21;63:6;75:5; 174:2 outstanding (1) 119:12 over (28) 3:24;11:4;12:11, 11;14:14;15:22; 16:14,18;18:17; 19:18;76:24;77:15; 79:24;86:9;87:16; 108:25;111:2; 113:14;114:23,23; 115:14;118:17; 119:12;124:21; 160:5;178:17,25; 186:19	overheard (1) 96:8 oversees (1) 3:8 oversight (1) 82:14 over-subscribed (1) 125:23 overview (2) 122:22;123:7 own (20) 12:3,12;46:14; 52:24;65:3,8;70:19; 81:8;83:4;106:10; 118:25;120:3;121:2; 122:5;133:9;134:5; 137:4;152:6,17; 188:7 ownership (2) 57:13;105:12 P pace (1) 188:8 paced (2) 10:16;41:21 package (1) 130:17 packet (1) 151:10 page (4) 167:1;179:23; 181:15,22 pages (3) 31:14;33:4;179:3 paid (1) 100:1 painting (1) 99:16 Panel (39) 3:4,7,11,13,19;6:8; 44:14;52:2;54:20; 56:11;68:18;72:4; 98:13;101:19; 103:12;107:18; 109:16;123:4,22; 137:7;143:14;190:5, 16,17,21;191:2,4,9; 192:22;193:4,8,11; 195:4;197:2,18; 198:17,21;201:10; 204:2 Panel's (1) 192:25 paper (3) 93:1;161:3,25 paperclip (1) 145:25 parachutes (1) 46:25 paragraph (1) 33:7	paramount (1) 158:25 paraprofessional (1) 65:10 PARCC (4) 194:3,4;195:13,14 parent (7) 96:16;129:1; 130:21;154:15; 168:21;170:3;189:19 parenthesis (1) 18:23 parents (25) 9:5;13:25;14:18, 24;22:1;60:9;63:2; 67:8;105:11;112:9; 130:4,4,8,12,22; 131:4,10;134:1; 156:23;177:24; 188:17;189:16; 191:15;192:13; 195:20 Park (7) 60:11,12;65:6; 83:4;87:17;88:20; 89:5 part (45) 6:13;9:2;10:21; 19:12;22:21;24:2; 25:9;26:4;29:12,20; 31:15;33:4;36:11; 38:16,18;44:1;47:11, 18;64:8;72:4;73:24; 82:15;92:9;93:20; 105:13;118:10; 119:10;124:13; 128:17;129:12,13; 137:18;141:7;145:1; 156:23;159:20,20; 160:8;169:25; 171:22;182:13,16; 183:1;195:24;203:17 participant (1) 117:15 participate (9) 15:2;16:18;92:6; 116:13;132:11; 147:5;156:3;157:12; 165:13 participating (1) 29:4 particular (27) 7:15;8:19;25:14; 28:25;30:24;40:10; 43:1;73:12;81:19; 82:8;125:21;135:6; 144:21;146:4,6,18; 150:19;160:20; 163:22;164:8,9; 169:8;170:2,23; 177:17;183:5;185:2 particularly (2) 175:18;176:22
---	--	--	--	--

parties (1) 4:8	29:17;40:10;41:9; 42:9,14;54:15;57:4; 61:15,16;62:22; 64:19;65:24;66:1,12; 91:12,14;92:1,3,21; 93:12;95:5;119:14; 121:13;122:2,19; 150:21,21;188:13	48:14;66:20;92:17; 203:19	26:2	places (4) 70:5;97:12;98:4; 128:9
partner (11) 7:23;36:20;46:11, 12;80:14;83:3; 112:11;120:19; 132:3;146:12;155:10	patient (1) 137:14	perk (1) 40:13	phase (8) 61:7,10;62:21; 63:12,19;64:21; 65:13,25	plan (29) 10:15;11:20;48:1, 2;49:6;53:2,12,15; 64:8;66:13,14;68:15; 80:22;92:23;93:2,17; 104:24;105:4; 128:18,20;129:11; 143:1;145:4;164:14; 171:5,16;176:3; 186:25;188:11
partnered (1) 12:4	patiently (2) 52:2;103:11	permissible (1) 127:4	phase-in (1) 106:4	planned (2) 163:19,20
partners (26) 18:19;21:11,20,21; 23:22;29:9;46:9,9; 52:8;67:19,23;68:8; 84:21;85:4;106:12; 115:23,24;116:1,7, 16;121:11;151:11,11, 12;152:10;189:2	Patricia (1) 113:13	permission (1) 143:9	phases (3) 60:23;61:1,7	planning (4) 13:8;104:19;109:1; 147:21
partnership (10) 60:11,20;71:18; 75:13;86:1,3;89:2; 161:10;163:9;180:9	Patrick (1) 21:16	PERRY (6) 126:9;127:1,14,24; 197:23,23	PhD (1) 161:5	plans (4) 11:18;72:25;95:21; 121:1
partnerships (17) 9:19;53:18;65:5; 67:17,18;69:25; 70:13;79:23;82:6; 88:12;104:25;105:9; 115:16;120:11; 133:12;135:4;161:16	patrons (1) 150:18	person (12) 3:15;33:12;76:17; 77:7;88:6;89:18; 96:10;150:19; 155:16;157:19; 160:10;172:20	phone (1) 132:18	plate (1) 84:18
parts (3) 146:4;192:5; 203:16	Paula (2) 56:19;89:13	personal (6) 10:25;12:7;121:3; 131:13;139:14; 153:25	photo (1) 108:18	play (2) 22:20;182:15
party (1) 134:21	pause (2) 44:20;55:4	personalization (7) 110:6,6,7;124:18; 142:18,25;149:25	photograph (1) 118:19	playing (1) 160:16
pass (3) 8:17;12:19;17:23	pay (6) 30:16;54:16;77:12, 16;88:22;97:13	personalize (7) 118:4,6;120:3; 124:20;146:15; 149:22;169:2	physical (7) 102:17;140:16,20; 167:11;175:11,16,21	pleasantly (1) 99:5
passed (3) 52:1;185:22; 193:16	PBIS (1) 94:11	personalized (8) 44:2;53:8;119:5; 121:1;142:16;148:9; 177:9;188:6	physically (4) 130:2;140:14; 173:14;176:5	please (12) 3:6,16;5:23;33:6; 46:15;48:19;52:15; 56:2;107:24;123:15; 164:3;175:14
passing (1) 52:16	PCA (1) 17:18	personalizing (2) 118:12,13	physics (1) 14:7	pleasure (2) 6:8;72:20
passion (1) 160:6	peers (1) 117:7	personally (2) 33:5;199:21	pick (3) 87:17;91:5;97:24	plenty (1) 83:14
passionate (1) 41:11	PEL (1) 14:11	persons (1) 172:1	picked (1) 193:2	plumbing (2) 82:9;116:24
passive (1) 117:14	pending (2) 86:7;200:10	perspective (5) 152:21;194:13; 195:24;199:11,24	picture (8) 7:12,18,19,22;8:2, 2;123:11,16	plus (4) 66:17;85:17;87:24; 88:4
past (5) 4:3;20:11;24:16; 60:2;90:3	people (33) 4:4,4,7;7:11,8,9; 20:5;21:24,25;23:10; 30:11;33:20,22;34:1; 37:9;48:24;69:5,14, 15,16;70:21;79:23; 84:15;87:2;104:7,11; 151:18;153:12; 154:2;158:12;159:3; 160:7;177:14,14	pertinent (3) 146:17;169:7,18	pieces (6) 36:11;78:4;119:18; 161:2;192:10;193:3	plus-hundred-and-fifty-thousand-dollar (1) 146:11
path (5) 26:8;48:23;58:5; 102:9;153:14	per (4) 75:16,17;87:24; 177:7	Pfeffer (69) 22:23,24;23:9,15, 18,24;24:7,12,25; 25:4,7,18,21;38:10, 11;39:11,16,22;42:1, 22;44:21;47:2;48:12; 49:17;54:8,9;82:22; 24:83:16,21;84:25; 85:14;100:23,24,25; 103:1,5;105:5,6; 142:11,12,20,22; 144:25;145:6,9,11; 147:2,3,9;148:16,19, 21;149:2,18;156:18, 19;157:4,8;162:11; 171:10,12,15;172:1, 3;182:4,7;188:14,15	pin (1) 148:8	pm (1) 204:10
paths (1) 40:9	percent (1) 12:23	personnel (3) 60:8;148:5;171:13	Pine (2) 202:1;203:4	podium (2) 106:20;174:12
pathway (20) 10:22;18:11;24:4; 25:15,15;43:3;65:19; 66:11;67:3,7,9;68:6, 10;71:8,8,12;74:19; 76:16;86:12;95:8	percentage (2) 34:7,23	persons (1) 172:1	pink (3) 46:14,14;48:9	point (26) 22:17;29:5;37:4; 44:18;46:18;48:19; 70:7;80:14;116:14; 128:15;135:7;137:7; 139:22;141:16; 162:4;166:2;168:24; 193:24;194:2,15; 198:18;199:4,16,17; 201:2
pathways (34) 10:1;12:24;15:25; 16:21;17:13,15;	perfect (8) 70:16;96:16; 133:21;134:3,7; 135:5;142:10;144:1	perspective (5) 152:21;194:13; 195:24;199:11,24	place (30) 13:20;16:4;33:2; 42:17;43:11,16; 48:25;49:1,7;53:19; 57:12,17;62:24;63:9; 66:13;71:3;87:6; 97:18;99:6;101:6; 104:25;129:22; 132:25;136:20; 142:8;158:22;161:3, 11;173:23;193:22	pointed (1) 174:20
	perfectly (2) 62:2;69:20	perspective (5) 152:21;194:13; 195:24;199:11,24	placed (1) 3:22	pointing (1) 193:6
	perhaps (2) 48:17;49:3	pertinent (3) 146:17;169:7,18		
	perimeters (1) 7:16	Pfeffer's (1)		
	period (4)			

points (2) 37:12;143:12	precedents (2) 44:25;137:6	40:7;64:16	9:8	105:4
policy (4) 173:5,18;183:23, 24	precursor (1) 91:10	primary (1) 8:6	profession (1) 187:21	promotion (1) 44:6
pool (3) 157:15,16;162:7	prefer (1) 91:24	principal (11) 6:13;34:13;55:23; 56:12,13;82:12,15; 94:11;108:14,16; 165:19	professional (29) 11:24;82:25; 110:16;116:19; 143:4,5,9,19,24; 144:4,6,8,20;145:2,3, 14;146:14,16;150:3; 151:1;154:6;158:5; 168:11;171:3,4,5,12, 15,20	property (1) 195:22
population (7) 7:4;109:25;112:19; 129:19;131:24; 158:15,16	preferred (1) 164:19	printing (1) 123:15		proposal (3) 37:19;73:1;154:20
portion (4) 26:6;156:12;159:5; 182:1	premature (1) 193:24	prior (1) 73:1	professionally (1) 118:9	propose (1) 128:21
positioned (1) 148:24	prep (3) 25:13,13;70:21	PRIORITY (5) 190:9,14,19; 191:17;196:19	professionals (2) 10:10,10	proposed (7) 5:12;55:16;63:20; 107:11;125:25; 187:10;194:21
positive (1) 59:10	preparation (3) 16:23;20:25;98:10	proactive (3) 88:14,15;106:4	professions (1) 17:17	proposing (1) 25:16
possibilities (5) 57:2;67:6;69:18; 93:2;138:9	preparatory (1) 44:22	probably (11) 35:6;39:17;40:8; 44:4;72:9;74:16; 82:14;86:8,11; 149:15;202:9	professors (1) 160:15	protect (2) 136:10;155:20
possibility (6) 40:24;63:4,12,19; 138:5;187:20	prepared (7) 36:3;47:13,18; 66:11;117:22;148:1; 150:10	problem (5) 43:20;70:22;76:16; 158:23;182:2	proficiency (7) 18:21;28:8,9; 45:22;46:3;110:4; 185:1	protection (1) 173:23
possible (9) 30:19;47:1;67:7; 72:1;175:5;176:8; 198:19;201:11;203:6	preparedness (1) 150:11	problems (3) 11:4,6;130:1	proficient (2) 41:22;155:1	protocol (4) 126:5;127:22,22; 154:25
possibly (10) 49:2;56:13;63:14; 66:5;76:1;79:10; 191:19;192:9,16; 203:2	prepares (1) 122:1	problem-solve (2) 115:3;117:9	program (36) 9:2;11:23;12:2; 13:19;16:3,9,19;18:7, 11;19:10,11;20:14; 28:22;53:18;61:22; 64:16;66:8;69:24; 71:6;73:5;77:15; 89:18;90:4;91:13; 93:21;94:22;97:15; 99:14,23;100:1; 103:18;115:21; 119:10;120:23; 160:22;187:11	proud (2) 61:16,19
post- (1) 59:11	preparing (2) 20:15;58:2	problem-solving (1) 119:9	programming (3) 18:13;65:17;87:11	proven (1) 41:21
Post-It (1) 48:9	prescribed (1) 144:22	procedure (1) 158:11	programs (17) 10:8;27:6,9,24; 63:13;65:22;67:1,2, 2;70:21;86:21;89:9; 90:11;104:25;120:7, 20;193:13	provide (32) 4:15;8:25;9:7,14, 19;10:20;13:3;14:21; 42:10;53:8;54:16; 57:6,7;65:11;72:1; 92:12;94:7;95:24; 97:5;101:8;105:22; 106:23;111:3,4; 118:16;119:23; 121:17;143:5; 152:18;153:17; 167:18;176:9
POSTPONE (3) 190:9,14;191:2	presence (1) 102:17	proceed (1) 13:5	progress (5) 28:21;60:21;67:19; 103:15;115:9	provided (5) 11:11;12:5;23:22; 123:6;188:13
post-secondary (3) 14:25;66:25;116:1	present (8) 4:6,8;6:9;21:10; 121:10;142:4;183:2; 197:1	process (55) 8:12,19;10:1,3; 14:17,20;19:1,6; 32:10;33:20;35:19; 36:4;42:17;50:8; 60:1;62:10;74:13; 82:7;83:12;96:7; 101:5,10;106:12; 117:16;124:19; 125:25;126:19; 127:4;129:6;134:10, 11;136:20;137:11, 17;143:11;151:13; 153:3,11;155:16,19; 158:11;159:1,4,19, 23,25;161:9;173:16; 191:13;192:6; 194:10,13;195:8,23; 196:20	progressing (1) 41:20	provider (1) 133:7
potential (7) 10:7;155:2,3; 158:17;200:16; 201:4,6	presentation (15) 5:20;6:12;19:13; 22:25;23:2;32:14; 55:24;60:23;68:20; 69:10;81:7;85:22; 107:20;122:21;197:1	proceed (1) 13:5	prohibiting (1) 41:20	provides (4) 10:5;20:8;106:8; 191:3
potentially (3) 38:21;83:22; 139:21	presented (2) 53:12;198:20	processes (1) 173:22	prohibition (1) 29:4	providing (7) 3:21;15:5;27:13; 68:4;87:12;150:25; 168:1
poverty (1) 70:4	presenting (3) 6:11;56:15;194:20	producing (1) 18:15	project (4) 32:5;121:7;130:19; 184:25	prudent (1) 26:21
powerful (2) 88:8;154:14	pretty (10) 13:12;21:21;31:15; 38:17,24;43:25;64:1; 86:9;102:1;158:6	production (3) 64:21;65:1;84:14	promising (1)	PUBLIC (17) 5:7,10,13;33:9; 55:6,13,16;95:4; 104:6;107:3,8,11; 173:3;185:13; 189:17;190:25; 192:17
PowerPoint (2) 6:18;113:1	prevailing (1) 48:10	productive (1)		pull (4) 74:8;136:16;163:7; 196:22
PPC (1) 173:21	preventative (1) 16:5			pulled (3)
practice (4) 132:25;140:25; 154:23;159:10	preventing (1) 101:6			
practices (3) 84:2;158:15,22	prevention (1) 146:8			
pre- (1) 20:24	previous (2) 85:1;102:16			
	primarily (2)			

8:3;74:3;181:9 pulling (5) 15:8;74:1;104:12; 115:1;179:24 punting (1) 39:23 purchased (1) 174:1 purely (1) 154:21 purpose (3) 9:9;191:16,21 pursuant (2) 190:22;194:17 pursue (9) 13:19;18:12;27:10; 29:16;56:25;65:20; 67:9;119:1;121:5 pursuing (1) 18:5 pursuit (1) 101:14 pushback (1) 127:5 put (26) 32:1;35:1;40:4; 41:3;43:11;46:25; 61:20;84:7;88:4; 93:10;95:13;99:6; 100:15;18;102:9; 105:3;113:18; 114:17;19;121:8; 123:17;132:24; 133:16;136:23; 169:12;193:22 puts (4) 92:23;113:24,25; 114:2 putting (1) 134:6	191:6,17 quick (4) 8:2;52:5;106:16; 112:25 quicker (1) 200:14 quickly (2) 45:25;147:19 quite (5) 40:12;70:9;89:4; 134:18;196:4 quote (1) 143:16 quoting (1) 188:18	31:25;38:12;47:23; 48:9;78:15 reads (2) 134:22;140:15 ready (17) 15:6;16:25;20:23; 35:24;57:25;61:5; 62:11;66:2;93:12,13; 106:17;110:9,10,10, 11,12;115:14 real (9) 10:12;37:12;42:8; 54:6;93:1,6,13; 99:12;186:6 reality (2) 58:1,3 realization (1) 157:1 realizations (1) 143:13 realize (5) 60:24;62:5,14,23; 74:9 realized (2) 58:2;132:22 real-life (1) 37:2 really (57) 18:3,9;21:9;23:2,3; 32:4;33:22;45:20; 47:8,12;50:16;58:8; 61:19;62:14;68:7,13; 71:1,4,14,23;86:18, 21;92:18;95:20; 98:11,14;100:6,7; 101:25;102:11; 103:20,23;117:19; 118:1,17;119:12,12; 120:24;124:20; 131:24;138:2; 140:15;144:10; 145:22;148:23; 149:13;150:18,22; 154:13,25;186:10,12, 14;189:21;196:4,24; 197:14 reason (10) 4:18;77:2;84:25; 95:6;131:25;132:21; 136:8;141:1;152:16; 192:14 reasons (4) 54:20;79:16;188:1; 195:7 re-assimilate (1) 147:19 rebuttal (1) 4:10 recall (2) 42:6;191:10 receive (14) 4:14;5:23;29:1; 32:5;56:2;66:22;	91:15;107:24; 125:13;131:10; 133:13;161:5;184:1; 199:20 received (4) 143:6;190:18,23; 196:19 receiving (3) 124:9;138:2;140:5 recent (3) 14:3;59:12;112:8 recently (4) 7:21;88:9;191:5; 196:19 recognition (1) 44:7 recognize (5) 8:23;31:19;86:1; 139:14;189:19 recognized (8) 5:5;6:6;55:9;56:9; 69:1;107:6;108:6; 190:12 recognizing (2) 9:4;149:21 recommend (2) 102:14;178:18 recommendations (1) 11:22 recommended (1) 173:17 record (8) 3:17;4:17;48:19; 51:4;52:4;127:20; 174:6,14 recorded (2) 3:20;137:22 recordkeeper (1) 31:20 records (2) 174:19;179:4 recruiting (1) 11:4 Redding (10) 56:19;89:11,13,13; 90:11;91:1,5,25;92:7, 9 reduced (2) 97:2;111:1 reduction (1) 29:2 re-engage (1) 139:20 refer (1) 7:20 reference (1) 141:16 referenced (5) 85:23;88:13; 125:21;180:15; 192:24 referred (1) 124:21	referring (1) 201:22 reflecting (1) 105:23 refrained (1) 52:15 regard (1) 173:21 regarding (8) 44:3;50:1;51:10; 74:15;102:13; 107:23;139:16; 192:18 regardless (3) 101:3;128:25; 157:19 regards (6) 97:19;193:5,17,25; 194:8;198:24 regimented (1) 150:5 region (6) 11:1;12:23;110:11; 116:16,23;168:2 regional (3) 21:20;110:24; 151:11 registered (1) 112:16 registration (1) 88:23 regular (5) 35:19;63:11;76:18; 91:24;116:14 regularly (1) 102:2 regulate (1) 137:1 related (5) 11:6,7;61:22; 65:22;91:9 relationship (7) 85:10;131:13,22; 137:13;143:21; 144:2;153:25 relationships (4) 10:7;131:20;151:9; 189:1 relatively (2) 8:22;19:5 relayed (1) 193:5 relevant (3) 57:3;116:21; 193:11 relocate (1) 72:25 relocation (1) 73:2 remain (1) 106:11 remaining (5) 50:1;51:1;102:13;
Q	R			
qualifications (2) 156:25;193:20 qualified (2) 83:11;150:23 qualify (1) 14:11 Quality (10) 3:9;53:12;100:18; 131:15;150:25; 161:18,18;177:14; 188:23,25 quantity (1) 169:5 quarterly (2) 86:11;104:5 Quest (1) 203:4 Quest- (1) 201:25 Quest-Pine (2)	races (1) 87:3 racing (1) 87:3 Raise (3) 5:24;56:3;107:25 raised (1) 22:11 rallied (1) 116:7 Randy (1) 21:1 range (1) 156:1 ranges (1) 14:15 ranging (1) 67:7 raring (1) 20:1 rate (11) 15:9,20,20;58:8,15, 21;59:10;70:4;97:2; 119:25;132:8 rates (1) 58:19 rating (1) 134:18 reach (7) 33:16;34:1;57:3; 104:12;110:3;114:4; 158:12 reached (1) 45:22 react (1) 194:9 read (9) 32:23;46:13;52:4; 78:9,10;81:1;103:13; 125:11;133:5 readiness (7) 12:21;13:16;18:20; 22:20;58:4;59:3; 104:24 reading (5)			

113:10;178:14 remains (1) 125:12 remarks (1) 103:11 remember (3) 8:15;86:13;189:8 remind (1) 191:5 reminded (1) 139:9 remove (1) 155:12 Renee (1) 31:21 renewal (5) 3:8;173:17;191:20; 193:9;197:16 renewals (1) 202:12 repair (1) 17:10 repeat (1) 117:9 repeatedly (1) 13:22 report (7) 15:9;45:5;47:21; 104:5;128:10; 195:16;201:7 reporter (3) 3:21;168:21;170:3 REPORTER'S (2) 68:16;109:14 reports (2) 174:19;179:4 Representative (4) 71:20;106:19,21, 21 representatives (3) 5:21;55:25;107:22 represented (1) 60:10 represents (2) 15:15;18:23 request (21) 3:15;40:6;50:1; 51:10,21;82:11; 102:13;140:15; 142:8;190:9,14; 191:4;192:23,24; 194:5;200:22;201:9, 17;202:20;203:16,20 requested (5) 50:5;76:13;183:20; 190:21;193:8 requesting (6) 5:14;55:17;77:25; 107:13;145:16;200:1 requests (2) 86:4;101:23 require (5) 33:25;63:6;78:23,	24;176:17 required (34) 18:24;24:3,8; 30:12;37:17,19; 39:12;50:15;83:24; 125:17,19;142:6; 148:14;161:2;168:7, 8;169:22;170:21; 173:4;175:2;176:17; 179:1;182:5,13,22, 24,24;183:6,23,25; 184:3,4,6,7 requirement (16) 35:11;43:9;73:22; 78:18;91:15;125:22; 140:14,20;142:4; 171:2,19;176:25; 181:4;182:16,18,19 requirements (20) 24:9;26:5;47:6; 65:23;67:13;78:11, 12,19;95:9;125:22; 129:11,12;163:20; 165:2;171:13; 174:22,23;177:21; 182:15;183:3 requires (3) 3:10;43:14;77:5 requiring (2) 182:8;184:12 research (6) 59:5,8;113:3; 118:25;147:21; 156:15 research-based (1) 119:16 researcher (1) 113:13 researchers (1) 119:17 reservations (1) 38:20 residential (1) 99:14 resounding (1) 116:12 resource (3) 135:1,3;190:25 resources (6) 9:14;53:17;104:25; 117:2;155:19;191:24 respect (3) 51:6;101:1;192:6 respond (5) 6:14;47:2;86:3; 150:13;194:24 response (13) 5:17,18;12:15; 39:23;40:1;55:20,21; 100:25;107:16,17; 115:12;192:24;197:5 responses (2) 52:3;185:25	responsibility (3) 9:5;41:13;100:18 responsible (4) 3:15;9:13;106:5; 121:16 responsive (2) 86:21;187:6 rest (2) 46:4,5 restrictions (1) 68:2 result (2) 11:12;179:1 results (1) 59:9 retiring (1) 15:7 return (2) 20:22;88:1 reverse (1) 194:22 review (20) 4:3,21;5:19;55:22; 107:18;134:21; 195:2,4;198:3,4,14, 15,21;200:15,22; 201:3,4,6,10,20 reviewed (3) 5:15;55:19;107:14 reviewing (1) 203:1 revised (1) 135:6 revision (2) 3:8;133:22 revocation (1) 3:9 rewarding (1) 94:17 rich (1) 120:23 richer (1) 137:19 Riggs (2) 20:16,18 right (66) 5:24;6:24;7:1,18; 11:19;14:4;19:17; 24:4,24;26:9;29:25; 46:20;51:9;52:20; 56:3;64:24;69:6; 82:1,21;85:13;86:6; 87:16;89:12;91:4; 94:3,9;97:4,8;102:9; 107:25;111:15; 114:15;118:11; 119:21;123:22; 135:8;136:2,2; 138:10;141:4,17; 142:7,8;146:9; 149:17;151:3,25; 152:14;153:14,15; 155:22;156:4,14;	157:7;161:11;163:5; 170:17;171:9,14,15; 172:7;178:1;185:11; 189:25;195:22; 196:20 rigor (2) 91:17;140:16 rigorous (4) 71:5,7;119:4; 159:23 rise (2) 28:16;58:15 rising (1) 153:8 road (5) 39:19;83:15;85:5; 111:21;166:5 roads (1) 69:22 robotics (1) 160:22 rocks (2) 129:7,8 Rogers (6) 53:21,22;105:15, 16;188:3,4 role (5) 70:6;77:15;146:18; 167:10;169:6 roles (1) 190:2 roll (1) 80:17 rolling (1) 99:22 Rollins (11) 88:12;108:14; 109:13,23;115:15,17; 122:8;142:13;148:5; 165:23;166:12 Rollins' (1) 137:3 roll-out (1) 70:9 room (5) 5:4;76:10;88:11; 91:19;200:19 Rosburg (1) 56:19 rotation (1) 146:7 route (6) 29:18;58:6,6,7; 90:25;152:17 routine (1) 150:6 rubric (1) 134:16 rules (3) 59:18;81:9;194:19 run (2) 27:24;85:12 running (2)	17:19;104:8 rural (1) 7:12 <hr/> S <hr/> Safari (3) 7:8,10;52:22 safe (1) 9:7 safeguards (1) 129:22 safety (4) 132:14;158:25; 169:4,25 salaries (1) 31:1 salary (3) 30:7,12,17 same (47) 4:2;20:6,15;21:2,2, 14;27:3,4;32:25; 33:21;37:2,45;17; 48:13;54:20;60:1; 76:23;80:2;84:12,16; 89:23,24;90:1;95:24; 99:18;114:11,22; 115:2,20,22;130:12, 13;133:19;139:25; 147:23;153:14; 158:15;167:1; 177:20;179:23; 181:13,15,22;190:2; 192:14;194:17; 195:9;196:9 sat (1) 72:2 satellite (2) 63:13;65:7 Saunders (142) 28:23,24;29:10,19, 23,25;30:5,22;31:3; 37:15,16;38:1,9,12; 48:21;51:12,15,18, 20;53:6,7;73:17,18; 74:1,4,6,14;75:7,11, 18,25;76:5,7,10,12, 20;77:3,18,21;78:5,7; 79:4;81:21,22,25; 82:11,17,21;105:21, 22;123:23,24;124:5, 12;125:5,9,20;126:6, 24;127:2,3,9,17; 128:1,2;145:13,24; 146:3,21;147:1; 154:9,11;155:21; 156:5,17;162:23; 163:3,4,14,16,19,24; 164:2,22,25;165:4,8, 16,18,21;166:6,10, 14,16;167:2,5,7,15, 20,23;168:3,11,14, 19;169:11,17,22;
---	--	---	--	--

170:1,8,25;171:1; 172:8,11,18,23; 173:20;174:13,17,22; 175:3,11,13,24; 176:1,7,14;177:2,7, 11;178:2,11,16; 184:11,14,17;185:9, 10;188:9,10;191:22; 200:9;204:5 Savannah (1) 121:20 save (1) 15:22 saved (1) 15:23 saves (1) 84:10 savings (1) 14:24 saw (9) 9:17;11:12;58:9; 128:15;151:9; 182:21,22;183:3; 187:15 saying (13) 20:6;41:10;46:7; 59:18;69:18;70:14; 75:7;98:22;134:6; 162:5;168:23;202:3, 4 scaffold (1) 111:4 scale (1) 30:12 scary (1) 137:8 scenario (5) 160:14,15;171:23; 183:12,15 scenarios (1) 67:16 schedule (8) 49:22;63:20;91:20; 95:25;96:3;125:20; 147:16;196:5 scheduled (2) 24:21;191:1 schedules (1) 66:24 scheduling (4) 35:10;61:2,3; 164:17 schematic (1) 108:19 Schneider (1) 56:21 Scholarship (1) 14:9 SCHOOL (206) 5:7,8,10,11,12,13, 22;6:12,17,21;7:15; 8:5,6,6,19;9:8,23; 13:21,23,23;15:17; 16:16;18:1;22:4; 23:11;25:9,10,12; 27:23;29:12,15,20; 32:13;34:9,13;36:16; 39:13;40:7,41:13; 43:14;46:13,24; 47:16,17;50:10; 51:11,21;54:23,24; 55:6,7,14,15,15,16, 23;56:1,13,15,21; 57:5,6,12,16,18,18, 22;58:6,10,10;59:7,8, 12,15,17;60:7;61:6; 17,18,23;62:19;63:1, 3,6,10,11;65:4;66:9; 67:15,15,22;68:5; 69:9,12,19;70:25; 76:2;78:16,16;80:13, 15,16,19;81:7;88:10; 89:15;92:24;93:23; 94:4,4,14,15;96:18; 98:1;103:2,16,17; 105:14,19;106:9,14, 23;107:3,4,9,9,10,11, 23;108:13,14,16,22; 109:18;112:10; 117:3,18,20;118:7, 21;120:5;121:15,22, 24,25;124:7,10,14; 126:3,10,12,15; 129:13,18;133:6,17; 144:5;147:6,13,18; 149:14,16,16;154:16; 158:1;159:21;160:8; 161:4,12,12;164:16; 165:13;168:4,10; 173:3,9,13,22; 175:23;176:5,25; 177:21;183:3,5,24; 184:8,18;185:13,14, 18;186:3,7;188:4,16, 19;189:22;190:9,15, 25;196:9,23;199:2,3, 8,14,15 schooling (1) 63:11 Schools (20) 3:10;14:1;18:4; 21:5;27:4;61:24; 65:10;103:21;110:3, 3;113:6;158:1; 159:10;174:9; 192:13;194:1,7,23; 195:19;199:15 School-wise (2) 110:22;115:8 science (7) 43:4,5;46:2;47:7, 15;65:15;82:10 scope (1) 21:19 scores (2) 194:3,4 Scott (3) 174:2;190:24; 197:11 screening (2) 175:4,7 screenings (1) 125:18 scroll (1) 67:5 scrolling (1) 67:3 seat (8) 37:25;63:7;66:6; 77:22;78:1,21;79:8; 80:7 second (21) 12:8;25:8;35:17; 50:10;51:13,20; 61:12;103:3,5; 154:12;167:8; 172:11;173:1; 185:15,17;200:16,23; 201:12;203:17,24; 204:5 Secondary (2) 56:17;57:21 seconded (1) 200:25 seconding (1) 203:11 Section (6) 50:11,18,21; 125:21;178:21; 179:11 sector (1) 83:19 sectors (1) 22:19 seeing (2) 140:14;144:14 seek (5) 102:15,23;129:19; 160:7;191:15 seeking (1) 176:6 seemed (1) 26:21 seems (1) 48:10 sees (1) 114:3 select (1) 13:2 selected (1) 130:6 self- (2) 10:15;41:20 self-directed (1) 117:6 self-paced (4) 37:23;38:23;42:11; 43:19 self-select (2) 164:10,12 self-selected (1) 131:10 semester (3) 12:8;86:9;126:18 seminar (2) 62:8;72:22 seminars (2) 62:18;68:5 Senator (1) 20:16 send (5) 7:3;12:1;41:23; 97:23;123:11 sending (1) 13:14 sends (1) 154:16 senior (7) 67:12;79:16,17,20; 80:9;121:7,9 seniors (1) 80:10 sense (8) 16:10;26:24;42:19; 75:21;136:24; 154:14;156:22;195:8 sent (4) 32:21;33:12;45:11; 198:18 sentiments (1) 21:2 separate (6) 42:8;113:18; 166:19;173:5; 202:15,17 separately (1) 74:17 September (1) 190:19 sequence (1) 129:6 seriously (5) 46:15;109:3;113:7; 158:18;159:21 serve (8) 5:14;55:17;71:19; 102:10;107:13; 111:1,2;186:13 serves (3) 53:13;106:2; 137:11 service (4) 64:23;87:9;100:2; 174:1 Services (3) 49:19;135:1; 197:24 serving (2) 146:18;168:24 session (1) 193:22 set (8) 28:9,15;44:25; 59:4;66:24;121:2,3; 194:17 sets (2) 28:7;89:24 setting (7) 74:22;75:20;77:8, 13;92:16;137:6; 176:23 settings (1) 78:3 set-up (1) 154:20 seven (4) 89:19,20;90:16,22 several (6) 27:4;44:21;96:17; 110:13;122:12; 124:21 shake (1) 12:19 shall (3) 5:25;56:4;108:1 share (13) 27:15;57:23;60:22; 66:10;67:23,25; 81:17;103:20;134:4; 153:12;186:15,17; 189:10 shared (6) 4:19;5:16;32:21; 55:19;63:20;107:15 sharedness (1) 152:20 sharing (2) 68:11;120:13 sheet (1) 92:21 sheets (1) 179:3 shift (3) 58:4;68:14;96:3 shop (1) 48:8 shops (1) 17:11 shorter (1) 168:8 shot (1) 8:4 shots (1) 7:10 show (11) 12:22;37:11;48:19; 98:18;110:20; 113:15;114:16; 119:22;128:15; 137:17;184:25 shown (2) 68:16;109:14 shows (3) 18:4;66:13;114:2 SIA (2)

193:13,19 side (5) 7:22;8:8;17:9; 166:24,25 side-by-side (1) 84:7 sign (1) 130:22 significant (3) 59:10;126:13; 198:1 signified (1) 12:25 silence (4) 3:6;19:16;68:24; 123:1 Siloam (2) 6:25;21:16 similar (2) 130:14;186:5 Simmons (1) 7:14 simple (3) 31:6;117:7;130:10 simply (7) 9:4;34:22;40:21; 73:13;105:3;127:16; 202:18 sincere (1) 117:24 single (2) 113:23,24 sit (7) 3:13;26:17;33:10; 72:6;87:5,20;115:24 site (3) 27:13;63:14;92:15 sits (1) 114:7 sitting (1) 143:14 situation (7) 14:5;41:3;47:5; 83:17;132:20; 141:11;155:13 situations (5) 10:13;38:7;85:8; 112:14;141:9 six (4) 26:6;39:18;50:13; 89:20 six-year (1) 64:8 size (11) 20:3;74:14,15,17, 23;76:19;121:13; 150:24;163:24; 164:6;178:18 skill (2) 116:19,20 skilled (4) 15:6;59:14;116:23; 169:20	skills (15) 11:10;12:17;20:23; 37:6;40:23;59:3,22; 115:4;117:3,10; 153:22,22;157:20; 159:17;161:7 skip (1) 173:1 slide (6) 7:11;8:1;11:1,11; 12:22;64:20 slides (3) 7:2;8:11;65:21 slight (1) 159:12 slot (1) 96:4 small (8) 6:22;7:13;8:22; 13:10;17:8;22:21; 109:24,25 smaller (2) 129:7;164:5 Smith (11) 190:24;192:20,22; 196:10,13,18;197:11; 198:13,16;199:25; 203:15 snacks (1) 55:1 snapshot (2) 15:8,14 so- (2) 73:5;86:4 social (4) 82:10;89:17;152:1; 159:17 social/emotional (1) 94:19 society (1) 102:10 soft (5) 12:17;20:23;37:6; 116:19;153:21 solely (1) 39:1 somebody (4) 41:16;78:7;86:16; 153:24 some-odd (1) 70:20 someone (10) 17:6,7;37:1;83:18; 96:9;132:3;134:24; 136:4;142:17;153:18 sometimes (14) 33:19;34:21;48:7; 70:5;79:19,25; 101:18;131:23; 134:21;137:23,24; 143:14,19,20 somewhat (5) 7:13;21:19;194:15;	195:17;199:1 somewhere (1) 33:3 sooner (1) 191:23 sophomore (1) 67:12 sorry (7) 31:13;78:22; 141:21;142:9;145:7; 174:7;187:17 sort (3) 27:4;58:23;140:24 so-to-speak (1) 31:1 sought (3) 13:1;71:21,22 sounds (2) 42:7;178:22 Sp (1) 37:12 spanning (1) 179:12 spark (2) 69:14;80:3 speak (10) 3:17;19:15,20; 51:4;68:23;122:25; 130:1;173:7;191:10; 204:3 SPEAKERS (3) 6:3;56:7;108:4 speaking (6) 3:16;5:23;56:2; 107:24;146:23;149:9 special (1) 125:14 specialist (1) 167:5 specialized (1) 10:17 specific (10) 10:16;32:14;74:19; 76:16;129:11; 143:19;146:4;159:5; 169:11;191:21 specifically (10) 12:10;30:4;39:6; 76:14;144:22; 172:12;193:12; 195:3;197:13;198:20 specifics (2) 23:2;148:8 spending (1) 28:2 spent (4) 26:22;77:14;113:3; 129:24 spiral (1) 134:2 spoke (2) 20:16;121:21 spread (1)	152:18 spring (3) 17:8;32:14;99:22 springboard (1) 11:18 Springdale (29) 20:2;88:10;106:22; 107:4,9,10,20,23; 108:13;111:15,24; 112:19;115:10; 122:4,5;129:13; 144:4;152:7;159:21; 173:12,15;174:9; 184:3;185:13,18; 187:10;188:4,16,18 Springs (31) 6:25;20:1;21:16; 55:7,14,15,23;56:1, 12,14,20;57:5,11,11, 16,18,22;58:10;65:8; 69:9,12,17;72:21; 78:16;89:15;97:15; 98:1;103:2;104:2; 105:14;106:14 Springtown (1) 7:6 staff (21) 3:11;5:15;12:11; 32:7,9;33:5;34:2,7, 24;55:18;59:18; 69:10;84:10,20; 98:17;107:14;148:3; 190:16;195:3; 198:22;203:20 staffs (1) 87:4 stage (1) 63:18 stagnant (1) 87:19 stakeholders (3) 9:6;60:6;63:1 stamped (1) 126:4 stance (2) 133:13;158:19 stand (4) 5:23;56:2;107:24; 146:4 standard (2) 176:19;179:10 standards (20) 28:15;30:21;38:7; 40:23;46:3;47:21; 50:12;110:21;119:7, 8,8;129:4,4;131:17; 148:13;153:16; 154:25;178:20; 179:9;181:5 standards- (1) 45:4 standards-based (1) 42:6	standing (1) 22:10 stands (1) 145:19 start (21) 12:12;13:15;22:23; 38:4;41:10;60:16; 61:3;70:18;72:11,15; 74:13;79:18;90:12; 93:3,3;98:14;99:22; 102:6;123:23,25; 129:23 started (12) 8:24;11:17;59:17; 60:20;72:6;81:6; 102:6;103:22; 108:17;118:21; 147:12;153:3 starting (5) 18:6;28:1;73:20; 98:14;124:24 starts (1) 70:15 start-up (1) 126:20 state (46) 3:16;4:19;20:5,21; 21:1;28:7;30:12,21; 36:5;40:18;43:10; 44:18;61:19,23;65:7; 79:24;89:1;101:6; 103:17,19;109:6; 110:12,21;126:11,16, 16;134:6;152:18,21; 176:19;179:21; 186:15;192:7;193:8, 12;194:9,18,24; 195:17,23;197:13; 198:2,6;199:1; 200:11,15 stated (5) 31:11;44:21;143:7; 192:4;196:18 statement (1) 9:3 statements (1) 4:10 states (2) 79:25;112:11 stating (1) 59:9 statistics (1) 90:7 status (2) 112:11;196:19 statute (1) 171:22 stay (2) 87:18;94:9 Steakhouse (1) 99:1 steering (2) 60:2,4
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step (5) 60:16;117:19,22; 130:17;156:16 Stephanie (2) 56:17;57:20 stepped (1) 71:14 stewards (4) 121:16;177:22,24, 25 sticker (1) 152:13 still (33) 71:7;81:23;83:11; 117:22;129:9,10,10; 131:4,15,16,17; 132:10;142:7; 143:21;149:3; 155:18;156:12; 159:9,10,11,11; 168:14;176:16; 182:5,8,16,19; 183:10;184:3,4,6; 201:23;203:14 stop (1) 123:15 stop-gap (1) 168:10 stories (3) 117:16,23;134:5 story (2) 10:23;112:25 strategies (1) 106:4 strict (1) 154:24 strictly (3) 75:3;125:3;137:2 strive (1) 10:13 strong (6) 79:23;105:9;111:6; 154:25;187:10; 196:25 struck (1) 142:23 structured (1) 48:3 structures (1) 48:25 structuring (1) 70:8 struggle (2) 34:21;84:15 struggling (1) 47:9 student (60) 9:1;14:5,6,12,14; 19:9;29:19;35:12; 37:2,5,23;40:25; 42:11,22,23;43:4; 46:2;47:5;48:3; 50:24;59:11;62:22;	64:17;94:1;96:22; 97:15;100:8;105:12; 106:3;117:12; 118:12,18;119:4,22; 120:24;122:13; 125:4;139:18,23,24; 140:12,13,22;141:1, 2;143:22;144:3; 154:20,22;156:8; 157:5,11,15,16; 158:18;175:19,19,21; 176:6;184:23 students (276) 9:5,8,10,20;10:5, 11,14,19;11:15;12:1, 3,6;13:11,13,14,18; 14:2,10,18,20;15:2,4, 6,12,14,15,17,20; 16:15,21;17:20,23; 18:12;19:7;20:9,10, 13,15,23;21:9;22:1,6; 24:2,21;25:9,10,12; 26:4;27:15;29:1,3,4, 12;36:20;37:20; 38:14,22,23;39:3,9; 41:4,12,19;43:11,15; 44:23;45:17,21;46:6; 47:15,24;53:9,14,23; 54:6,17;55:17;56:24; 57:7,9,12,14;58:2,13, 13,16,20,21;59:23; 60:8;62:17;63:5,10, 13,17,22;64:14,24; 65:9,12,18;66:7,21; 67:8,24;68:3,6,12; 72:21;73:1,2,4,9; 75:2,4,9,15,16;76:3, 16,25;80:1,2;83:10, 23;85:6;88:20;89:7, 24,25;90:5,24;91:13, 22,23;92:1,2,5,11; 93:20,21;94:8;95:19, 23;96:5;101:14; 102:18;104:19,21; 105:8,11,18,23; 107:13;109:19; 110:7,19;111:1,18, 25;112:1,2,2,3,9,13, 15,17,22;115:3,7,8; 116:5,18;117:10,14, 17,21;118:3,3,13,17; 119:3,7,11,14,19,19; 120:2,9;121:18,20, 21,23;122:4,4,10,13, 20;123:17;124:5,6, 11,12,13,14,15,19,22; 125:1,13;126:1,2; 127:6,23;130:2; 131:12,21;133:24; 137:25;139:15; 140:17,18;141:8; 142:4,16;147:5,11; 148:2,25;149:8,15,	25;151:14;155:20, 25;156:2,6,22; 157:18,23;158:21,25; 159:18;160:21,22; 164:10,20;166:3; 167:17;168:2,7,8; 169:20;174:24; 175:2,5;176:4,9,18, 19;177:7,17,23; 182:24;183:2; 184:21;187:8,13,19; 188:5,7,17,19,24; 192:13 students' (4) 50:19,25;157:22; 188:13 student's (3) 41:1;136:10;157:6 studies (3) 64:11,15;82:10 study (6) 11:12,23;57:8; 114:5;119:11;134:17 stuff (4) 84:5;98:3;99:2,23 subjects (1) 81:25 submit (2) 134:16;194:7 submitted (3) 31:19;60:15;194:4 subpopulation (1) 167:19 succeed (1) 112:5 success (7) 59:4;65:16;104:10; 105:13;106:5; 119:23;128:15 successful (8) 9:11;44:23;63:23; 68:1;95:14;104:20; 114:25;187:13 successfully (2) 46:20;48:16 sudden (1) 42:17 suggest (1) 46:8 suggesting (1) 181:25 suggestion (1) 48:11 suggestions (1) 51:7 suicide (4) 146:8;168:22; 169:14;170:3 summary (1) 121:9 summer (1) 60:3 Summit (1)	59:13 super (1) 71:5 superintendent (10) 6:11,17;22:3,11; 56:16;69:8;107:19; 108:12;109:12;174:8 superintendents (1) 102:2 supervise (1) 76:17 supervised (1) 75:14 supervising (5) 75:15;76:15,24; 77:1,13 supervisor (3) 75:10,13;76:5 supervisors (1) 75:9 supplies (1) 18:8 supply (1) 17:3 support (16) 22:15;29:8;34:16; 35:2;44:5,54:2; 104:17;106:23; 111:4;120:4,7;149:6, 23;151:10;158:8; 171:18 supported (1) 22:13 supporting (1) 34:2 supportive (1) 22:7 suppose (1) 19:13 supposed (2) 101:10;147:18 SUPT (19) 6:4,7;69:2,6;77:6, 20;79:7,14;82:13,18; 84:1;86:6;98:16; 100:21;101:16; 102:20;103:25; 104:14;106:15 sure (68) 24:13;26:1,21; 31:7;46:19,25;47:11, 21;70:2;71:7;72:18; 76:15;77:11;78:9,14; 79:3,7,15;81:2,18; 83:5,11;84:18;85:2,4, 9,12,13,18;87:1,12, 25;93:10;97:20; 108:8;109:5;122:14, 19;130:3;134:10,12, 13;136:13;140:2,4,6, 9;141:14,23;143:3; 145:12;151:4,9; 153:16;158:21;	161:15;170:14; 173:22;175:6; 177:22,23,24;181:13; 183:19;194:12; 195:25;196:25; 203:18 surface (1) 152:15 surpassed (1) 118:1 surprised (1) 99:5 surveys (2) 64:13,14 suspension (1) 16:7 sustain (1) 165:15 sustained (1) 167:14 Swann (1) 133:11 swear (3) 5:24;56:3;107:25 SWEPCO (1) 7:19 switch (4) 81:25;95:5,8; 202:24 syllabus (1) 90:17 sympiotic (1) 87:23 system (11) 6:21;43:25;44:8; 47:14;48:22;97:10; 121:12;129:25; 133:1;171:17,18 systemic (1) 195:18 systems (3) 87:9;116:24; 118:22
T				
table (6) 52:10;71:15;81:10, 18;117:10;191:18 takeaways (1) 150:2 talent (1) 187:21 talented (1) 167:15 talk (32) 8:10;28:5;32:8; 33:11;35:6;40:19; 45:8;46:15,15;73:3; 74:16;87:2,21;95:20; 96:25;110:17; 115:16;118:6,11,12; 120:18,22;124:17;				

142:15;24;147:4; 149:13;152:4;164:2; 169:15;175:13;176:1 talked (15) 13:7;19:7;40:5; 46:9;67:17;68:4; 86:14;96:22;97:1; 108:25;109:23; 122:12;142:14,23; 149:4 talking (18) 9:16;11:14;40:14; 41:6;45:11;59:17; 65:6;74:18;75:20; 76:1;97:9;98:11; 99:4;104:1;181:10, 12,19;184:2 talks (1) 146:7 taste (1) 18:3 Tatum (3) 197:6,7,10 taught (8) 10:9;113:8;122:16; 144:18;153:23; 155:7;182:8;184:7 taxpayer (1) 121:16 teach (18) 14:24;45:17;83:8, 8,22;84:8;89:22; 90:11;92:16;119:7; 135:25;146:12; 155:11;182:23,24; 183:6;184:14,16 teacher (43) 12:5;30:14;32:21; 45:11;46:5;50:18; 70:17;82:3;90:10,17, 19;92:16;129:14; 130:11;144:11; 146:24;150:23,24,25; 152:25;154:17; 155:7;157:14,17; 160:1,1,11,11; 168:24;169:3,13; 171:18;172:18,25; 173:2,12,12,17,25; 174:2,14;177:7; 187:18 teachers (38) 9:14;31:7;32:22; 45:16;47:18;60:8; 70:19;76:21;83:5,7; 84:12;87:21;95:21; 96:12;110:8;111:23; 112:23;117:25; 142:24;143:2,11,18; 146:8,22;149:21; 152:7,24;153:1; 158:5,7;159:9;162:6; 165:2;173:21;174:1; 177:25;187:25; 188:17 teachers' (1) 156:24 teacher's (2) 30:7,17 teaching (30) 12:11,13;17:17; 23:25;30:25;35:25; 65:3;76:19;77:9; 83:1,23;90:13; 114:14;115:4; 142:18,25;149:22; 157:25;160:4;162:6; 163:24;171:6; 173:25;177:5,19; 178:19,25;179:1; 183:11;184:15 team (5) 48:10;72:18;123:8; 159:20;172:6 teasing (1) 195:13 tech (9) 25:3;59:13;84:5; 86:25;180:3,6; 181:23;193:13,19 technical (24) 4:15;10:17;18:22; 25:5;26:8;41:8; 56:22;57:9;58:6; 59:14;60:12;67:1; 93:9;116:1;166:14, 18;180:1,24;181:1,8, 11,20;199:20;203:17 technically (1) 182:17 technician (1) 19:11 technicians (1) 16:2 technology (15) 9:15;39:7;64:12, 13;65:13,25;68:14; 78:25;83:18;84:4; 87:4,8;116:25;120:7; 132:23 teed (2) 195:1,25 teen (3) 168:22;169:13; 170:3 telling (2) 111:12;113:1 tells (5) 82:20;114:14; 141:10;144:19; 151:15 term (3) 201:3,4,4 terminology (2) 11:25;17:18 terms (21)	38:13;49:19;71:4; 85:2,7;116:15,17,18, 19;117:4;136:19; 137:5,22;138:3; 152:16;155:1; 158:19;159:8;166:1; 177:22;183:25 TESS (4) 144:12;171:16,16; 173:16 test (2) 12:19;17:23 testimony (3) 5:25;56:4;108:1 testing (1) 132:11 tests (2) 89:24;90:2 thankful (2) 52:12;108:7 Thanks (3) 109:21;173:8; 200:3 Thanksgiving (1) 196:7 therefore (1) 30:24 thesis (1) 121:9 thinking (13) 24:14;26:3;38:13; 39:18;53:2;60:14; 64:20;99:7;119:9; 148:21,22;149:10; 156:6 third (4) 12:9;62:12;80:13; 114:16 third- (1) 134:20 third-party (1) 134:22 Thomas (1) 49:19 thorough (1) 155:23 though (7) 34:6;43:14;66:7; 101:22;143:17; 155:14;176:20 thought (22) 6:22;8:13;13:2,4, 24;32:24,25;42:22; 51:15;72:3;81:1; 85:6;96:10;105:22; 146:9;169:2;177:12; 181:9,10,10,24; 188:11 thoughtful (1) 101:17 thought-out (1) 188:11 thoughts (1)	25:21 three (30) 7:2;15:25;17:20; 19:1;22:12;25:16; 36:11;42:18;43:5,9; 63:12,19;71:4;90:15; 107:6,8;108:25; 113:4;128:21; 135:25;140:8;147:4; 150:21;164:7; 165:12;170:2,20; 192:20;196:13; 202:10 three-and-a-half (1) 90:15 threshold (1) 178:7 thrilled (2) 65:15;113:5 throughout (1) 98:4 TIA (1) 19:8 ticked (1) 41:17 tie (1) 42:12 tied (3) 39:6;42:2;171:16 tie-in (1) 145:3 ties (1) 144:12 till (3) 46:5;52:16;199:24 time-consuming (1) 111:22 time-date (1) 126:4 timeline (5) 59:15;98:22; 197:24;200:14; 201:21 timelines (1) 197:21 timely (2) 116:21;192:9 times (4) 22:12;33:17; 124:21;174:14 timing (5) 193:6;198:24,25; 199:10,17 tire (1) 17:10 title (2) 3:16;174:6 to-date (1) 10:11 today (30) 3:13,24;4:4,12,24; 5:2;6:9,18;19:20,24; 20:8;22:16;25:17; 47:10;50:6;55:10; 56:11,15;57:23;67:5; 72:19;88:11;109:2; 113:11;149:15; 173:19;186:6; 196:17;202:20;204:3 today's (2) 56:14;187:8 to-face (2) 169:10;178:9 together (11) 8:25;80:4;85:18; 102:7;116:3;120:24; 121:8;123:18;129:8; 136:24;137:1 told (2) 147:20;163:4 ton (8) 110:5;111:21; 133:14;147:20,21,22; 152:12;159:22 took (5) 15:16;98:25; 113:17;189:19; 197:25 tools (1) 46:20 top (4) 6:24;7:19;144:9; 196:18 tornado (1) 150:12 total (1) 15:22 totally (4) 128:12,23;134:25; 137:10 touches (1) 25:22 tough (5) 37:18;133:3,4; 145:18;168:23 tourism (1) 84:23 toward (3) 57:4;120:10;121:7 towards (1) 106:9 town (4) 6:23;8:8;31:19,20 toy (10) 113:17;114:2,2,2,3, 4,6,9,14;115:1 track (2) 94:3;131:12 tractor (1) 16:5 trade (1) 169:21 trades (2) 116:23,23 traditional (15) 36:16;45:12;59:8,
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24;63:6;75:20;77:7; 121:25;150:7,22; 152:24;157:23,25; 184:21;185:7 traditionally (1) 9:23 trailer (1) 16:5 train (1) 18:13 trained (2) 11:9;90:21 training (10) 10:6,11;65:4; 66:16;90:9,14,16,18, 23;169:14 trainings (1) 168:25 transcript (2) 3:21;136:11 transcription (1) 71:17 transcripts (1) 137:22 transfers (1) 79:21 transit (2) 97:10,10 transition (5) 9:11;28:12;166:1; 167:9;175:15 transitioned (1) 130:13 transparent (1) 130:9 transportation (16) 10:2;16:1,13,20; 17:3,5,12;96:25;97:7, 16,19;98:6,7;117:1; 128:25;131:20 travel (1) 16:11 traveling (1) 9:1 treated (1) 160:10 trek (1) 16:18 Trevor (1) 121:20 tried (6) 30:18;40:4;59:6; 81:17;101:16;129:8 trips (1) 17:10 Trojan (1) 72:21 trouble (1) 7:25 troubleshoot (1) 49:22 truck (4) 7:23;17:7,8;52:10	trucks (1) 17:10 truly (8) 20:2;61:9;117:8; 124:24;125:4; 132:21;152:22; 187:12 trust (7) 44:7;131:23;137:9, 10;139:13;141:6,7 truth (9) 6:1,1,2;56:5,5,6; 108:2,2,3 try (20) 8:25;36:25;40:18; 72:1,12;75:19;85:12; 101:3;104:2;111:4; 114:11;115:10; 125:10;126:14; 132:1;133:11; 151:13;166:23; 195:17;196:7 trying (33) 22:6;23:9,24; 37:18;42:7;45:25; 46:13;68:9;69:12; 76:22;84:2;86:24; 94:7;97:12;102:7; 114:22;117:19; 123:25;129:19,24; 130:3;143:15;146:3; 148:8;152:17;162:6, 9,9;163:20;166:25; 170:9;173:6;177:8 tuition (4) 15:21,22,24;29:2 turn (2) 19:17;122:23 turnaround (1) 196:20 tutoring (1) 97:6 tweaks (1) 134:2 tweet (1) 130:20 two (32) 4:3;8:10;42:25; 55:9;60:3;62:21; 64:21;65:13,25; 74:15;81:11;83:5; 90:1;91:16,19;110:8; 113:17,18,22,25; 114:20,24;116:8; 128:8;129:24; 159:24;170:11; 180:7;193:6;202:15, 17;203:15 two-year (4) 13:19;58:6;71:1; 91:18 tying (1) 38:17	type (13) 20:15,24;38:1; 48:22;52:3;84:23; 97:14;127:4;135:7; 143:24;146:20; 158:11;178:6 types (8) 21:4;63:14;67:16; 74:21;77:10;78:3; 84:9;116:5 typeset (1) 194:17 typical (3) 64:1;67:11;74:22 typically (2) 14:2;141:9 typing (1) 52:21 Tyson (3) 7:14;146:10; 159:14 U ultimately (5) 40:15;102:10; 121:5;122:18;153:17 umbrella (1) 16:20 UNANIMOUS (5) 51:24;103:8; 185:20;203:25;204:7 unclear (1) 125:12 uncomfortable (7) 34:11,14;40:17; 45:3;135:11;159:6; 187:18 uncommon (1) 14:6 under (15) 4:12;13:24;26:2; 37:19;41:7;50:15; 68:17;92:1;108:23; 113:5;152:24,25; 173:12;179:23;181:4 underneath (1) 16:20 understandable (1) 80:25 understood (3) 157:2;168:20; 198:13 unemployment (2) 58:19,21 union (3) 99:15,16,16 unique (6) 70:25;112:6,7; 115:19;141:9;188:13 unit (3) 37:17;77:24;165:9 United (1)	112:11 units (7) 24:8;134:16;154:4; 176:18;177:1; 182:13,14 universally (1) 157:2 University (8) 65:7;67:2;71:2; 116:3;155:6;159:12; 160:14,19 unknown (3) 33:24;34:15;169:5 unless (4) 40:8;81:25;123:7; 161:4 unlicensed (2) 30:14;157:14 Unlike (1) 165:22 unravel (1) 153:7 unraveled (1) 147:19 unrelated (1) 50:17 unresolved (3) 28:25;125:6,9 untangle (1) 172:3 unusual (1) 194:16 up (57) 6:19;16:16;17:19; 18:6;24:22;29:5; 37:11,20;38:11; 39:10,19;40:13;41:1; 49:24;52:10,18;59:4; 60:3;64:20;71:14; 72:2,6;74:23;76:21; 79:19;86:13,22; 87:17;91:5;94:5,18; 95:4;97:24;98:18; 100:14;104:8;114:1; 115:15,21;130:22; 131:12;139:15,15; 159:4;160:14;170:8, 10;173:8;179:17; 186:16,16;189:14; 191:13,19;193:2; 195:1,25 up- (1) 10:10 updates (1) 130:16 upload (1) 130:11 upon (7) 70:24;88:1;100:17; 103:19,23;155:25; 165:15 upped (1) 89:4	urban (1) 99:17 use (7) 11:2;120:6;139:13; 141:15;177:13,20,20 used (4) 89:2;114:12,13; 186:2 user-friendly (1) 130:10 uses (1) 145:24 using (3) 93:3;131:19;201:3 usually (1) 34:19 utilize (3) 35:9,13;65:9 utilized (1) 39:4 utilizing (3) 26:4;78:2;88:25 V Valerie (1) 197:6 valid (1) 45:10 valuable (1) 84:22 value (4) 10:20;57:15;58:25; 105:13 value-added (1) 15:3 variable (1) 120:1 variation (1) 171:21 various (3) 97:25;98:4;192:7 vary (1) 119:24 varying (1) 122:15 vein (2) 80:2;96:21 vendor (1) 52:8 venture (1) 22:21 version (1) 106:10 versus (2) 58:21;176:13 veter (2) 134:16,24 vett (3) 133:23;155:15; 158:12 vetting (1) 155:2
--	---	---	---	--

video (12) 68:11,12,16;96:22; 104:13;109:10,14,15; 112:3;121:22; 123:18;142:14	W	water (1) 28:13	wholeheartedly (1) 41:12	21;128:7,11,13,20; 23;129:21,24;132:9; 12,17;133:9;134:14; 135:12,14,17,20,23; 136:2,6,9,15,18; 138:10,13,16,18,20; 22,24;139:2,4,7,11, 12,17;140:2,4,6,9; 141:3,5,7,15,18,21; 142:10,19,21;143:3; 145:5,8,10,12,21,25; 146:2,6,24;147:8,12; 148:18,20;149:1,17; 150:1,14,16;151:3,6, 19,21,25;152:9; 154:8,22;156:4,8; 157:3,7,16;158:10; 159:8;160:17;162:3, 8;163:8,12,15,17,23; 164:1,4,23;165:3,7, 12,17,20,22;166:9, 12,15,18;167:4,6,9, 16,22,25;168:5,13, 18;169:1,15,18,24; 170:5,11,19,22,24; 171:9,11,25;172:2,5, 7,10,13,19;174:16, 21,25;175:9,12,15, 25;176:3,10,16; 177:6,10,12;178:4; 179:17,20;180:3,5, 11,12,14,20,22; 181:2;182:11,20; 183:9,22;184:10,20; 185:5,8,23,25;186:8, 18,21;187:22;188:2; 189:3,5,6,9,12,25; 190:3,5,8
videos (3) 68:18;109:16; 189:8	wait (6) 49:5;52:2;103:10; 185:24;191:19; 199:24	way (45) 27:25;33:21;34:17; 38:22;43:2;44:19; 45:17;46:1;48:23; 49:4;70:6;91:10; 100:12,13;106:5; 114:11,15,22;130:17; 132:1;137:17; 144:10;145:19; 146:5;150:4;151:19, 21;153:6,9,10;156:6; 157:15;162:19; 163:18;172:15; 175:5,18;176:12; 178:1;179:5;182:21; 184:24;187:16; 189:18;194:18	Who's (1) 31:20	21;128:7,11,13,20; 23;129:21,24;132:9; 12,17;133:9;134:14; 135:12,14,17,20,23; 136:2,6,9,15,18; 138:10,13,16,18,20; 22,24;139:2,4,7,11, 12,17;140:2,4,6,9; 141:3,5,7,15,18,21; 142:10,19,21;143:3; 145:5,8,10,12,21,25; 146:2,6,24;147:8,12; 148:18,20;149:1,17; 150:1,14,16;151:3,6, 19,21,25;152:9; 154:8,22;156:4,8; 157:3,7,16;158:10; 159:8;160:17;162:3, 8;163:8,12,15,17,23; 164:1,4,23;165:3,7, 12,17,20,22;166:9, 12,15,18;167:4,6,9, 16,22,25;168:5,13, 18;169:1,15,18,24; 170:5,11,19,22,24; 171:9,11,25;172:2,5, 7,10,13,19;174:16, 21,25;175:9,12,15, 25;176:3,10,16; 177:6,10,12;178:4; 179:17,20;180:3,5, 11,12,14,20,22; 181:2;182:11,20; 183:9,22;184:10,20; 185:5,8,23,25;186:8, 18,21;187:22;188:2; 189:3,5,6,9,12,25; 190:3,5,8
view (1) 137:7	waited (1) 52:12	ways (5) 50:24;103:14; 104:4;120:4;147:5	Wi-Fi (1) 87:8	
viewing (2) 3:19;68:17	waiting (2) 98:13;120:15	weaned (1) 130:24	Wilderness (2) 7:8;52:22	21;128:7,11,13,20; 23;129:21,24;132:9; 12,17;133:9;134:14; 135:12,14,17,20,23; 136:2,6,9,15,18; 138:10,13,16,18,20; 22,24;139:2,4,7,11, 12,17;140:2,4,6,9; 141:3,5,7,15,18,21; 142:10,19,21;143:3; 145:5,8,10,12,21,25; 146:2,6,24;147:8,12; 148:18,20;149:1,17; 150:1,14,16;151:3,6, 19,21,25;152:9; 154:8,22;156:4,8; 157:3,7,16;158:10; 159:8;160:17;162:3, 8;163:8,12,15,17,23; 164:1,4,23;165:3,7, 12,17,20,22;166:9, 12,15,18;167:4,6,9, 16,22,25;168:5,13, 18;169:1,15,18,24; 170:5,11,19,22,24; 171:9,11,25;172:2,5, 7,10,13,19;174:16, 21,25;175:9,12,15, 25;176:3,10,16; 177:6,10,12;178:4; 179:17,20;180:3,5, 11,12,14,20,22; 181:2;182:11,20; 183:9,22;184:10,20; 185:5,8,23,25;186:8, 18,21;187:22;188:2; 189:3,5,6,9,12,25; 190:3,5,8
violeat (1) 30:20	waitlist (1) 126:3	web (2) 133:16;134:6	wildest (1) 118:1	
violation (1) 127:14	waive (9) 78:18;82:15; 135:21;163:6;180:1; 182:14,14,17;184:13	website (3) 3:23;68:17;109:15	William (1) 56:22	21;128:7,11,13,20; 23;129:21,24;132:9; 12,17;133:9;134:14; 135:12,14,17,20,23; 136:2,6,9,15,18; 138:10,13,16,18,20; 22,24;139:2,4,7,11, 12,17;140:2,4,6,9; 141:3,5,7,15,18,21; 142:10,19,21;143:3; 145:5,8,10,12,21,25; 146:2,6,24;147:8,12; 148:18,20;149:1,17; 150:1,14,16;151:3,6, 19,21,25;152:9; 154:8,22;156:4,8; 157:3,7,16;158:10; 159:8;160:17;162:3, 8;163:8,12,15,17,23; 164:1,4,23;165:3,7, 12,17,20,22;166:9, 12,15,18;167:4,6,9, 16,22,25;168:5,13, 18;169:1,15,18,24; 170:5,11,19,22,24; 171:9,11,25;172:2,5, 7,10,13,19;174:16, 21,25;175:9,12,15, 25;176:3,10,16; 177:6,10,12;178:4; 179:17,20;180:3,5, 11,12,14,20,22; 181:2;182:11,20; 183:9,22;184:10,20; 185:5,8,23,25;186:8, 18,21;187:22;188:2; 189:3,5,6,9,12,25; 190:3,5,8
Virtual (12) 19:23;35:9;78:2; 107:12;131:14; 133:11;140:22; 149:10;152:10; 163:22;175:19;176:6	waiver (58) 23:5;30:1,7,21; 38:14,17,24;40:14; 43:6;44:15;50:5,9,11, 17,20;73:21,25;74:2; 76:13;77:2,3,23; 78:15,17;79:9;82:12; 101:23;102:14; 138:9;139:21; 140:10;141:24; 142:1,3;145:16; 146:13;158:6;161:8; 162:24;163:5,20; 165:1,18;166:7; 167:3;173:2;176:2,6; 178:19,24;179:3,11, 12,13;181:23;183:20, 22;187:18	weeks (4) 42:18;43:5,9;60:3	willing (8) 46:23;98:19; 136:16;138:25; 146:12;161:14,15; 166:10	
virtually (3) 131:21;154:1; 166:3	waivers (16) 23:5;37:16;50:2; 62:4,5;63:7;73:19; 74:9;82:2,4;110:13, 14;145:15;167:15; 176:25;178:15	Welcome (4) 3:5;54:25;55:3; 106:20	willingness (1) 186:15	21;128:7,11,13,20; 23;129:21,24;132:9; 12,17;133:9;134:14; 135:12,14,17,20,23; 136:2,6,9,15,18; 138:10,13,16,18,20; 22,24;139:2,4,7,11, 12,17;140:2,4,6,9; 141:3,5,7,15,18,21; 142:10,19,21;143:3; 145:5,8,10,12,21,25; 146:2,6,24;147:8,12; 148:18,20;149:1,17; 150:1,14,16;151:3,6, 19,21,25;152:9; 154:8,22;156:4,8; 157:3,7,16;158:10; 159:8;160:17;162:3, 8;163:8,12,15,17,23; 164:1,4,23;165:3,7, 12,17,20,22;166:9, 12,15,18;167:4,6,9, 16,22,25;168:5,13, 18;169:1,15,18,24; 170:5,11,19,22,24; 171:9,11,25;172:2,5, 7,10,13,19;174:16, 21,25;175:9,12,15, 25;176:3,10,16; 177:6,10,12;178:4; 179:17,20;180:3,5, 11,12,14,20,22; 181:2;182:11,20; 183:9,22;184:10,20; 185:5,8,23,25;186:8, 18,21;187:22;188:2; 189:3,5,6,9,12,25; 190:3,5,8
visible (1) 6:19	waiving (8) 39:12;135:13,18; 139:3;180:25;181:4; 182:7,8	welders (1) 71:19	willy-nilly (1) 41:15	
vision (3) 105:7;175:3,7	walk (5) 131:1;144:7; 153:13;159:16,25	welding (7) 16:6;53:3;66:2; 83:8;99:17,18; 116:24	Winslett (61) 6:10,10,15,16,16; 22:24;23:8,14,17,20; 24:5,10,24;25:1,5,10, 20,23;26:9,11,20,25; 27:8,12,16,18,21; 28:10,12;29:5,14,22, 24;30:3;31:21,23; 32:11,19;35:5,9,21, 23;36:3,9,18;37:7,14, 20;38:3;39:1,14,21; 40:3,11;41:10;42:20; 43:7;44:10;45:7; 46:14;52:15	21;128:7,11,13,20; 23;129:21,24;132:9; 12,17;133:9;134:14; 135:12,14,17,20,23; 136:2,6,9,15,18; 138:10,13,16,18,20; 22,24;139:2,4,7,11, 12,17;140:2,4,6,9; 141:3,5,7,15,18,21; 142:10,19,21;143:3; 145:5,8,10,12,21,25; 146:2,6,24;147:8,12; 148:18,20;149:1,17; 150:1,14,16;151:3,6, 19,21,25;152:9; 154:8,22;156:4,8; 157:3,7,16;158:10; 159:8;160:17;162:3, 8;163:8,12,15,17,23; 164:1,4,23;165:3,7, 12,17,20,22;166:9, 12,15,18;167:4,6,9, 16,22,25;168:5,13, 18;169:1,15,18,24; 170:5,11,19,22,24; 171:9,11,25;172:2,5, 7,10,13,19;174:16, 21,25;175:9,12,15, 25;176:3,10,16; 177:6,10,12;178:4; 179:17,20;180:3,5, 11,12,14,20,22; 181:2;182:11,20; 183:9,22;184:10,20; 185:5,8,23,25;186:8, 18,21;187:22;188:2; 189:3,5,6,9,12,25; 190:3,5,8
visit (2) 88:9;109:8	walked (1) 140:21	well-known (1) 120:25	wish (1) 198:17	
visited (2) 12:14;116:15	walking (1) 23:1	wellness (1) 175:17	wished (1) 191:13	21;128:7,11,13,20; 23;129:21,24;132:9; 12,17;133:9;134:14; 135:12,14,17,20,23; 136:2,6,9,15,18; 138:10,13,16,18,20; 22,24;139:2,4,7,11, 12,17;140:2,4,6,9; 141:3,5,7,15,18,21; 142:10,19,21;143:3; 145:5,8,10,12,21,25; 146:2,6,24;147:8,12; 148:18,20;149:1,17; 150:1,14,16;151:3,6, 19,21,25;152:9; 154:8,22;156:4,8; 157:3,7,16;158:10; 159:8;160:17;162:3, 8;163:8,12,15,17,23; 164:1,4,23;165:3,7, 12,17,20,22;166:9, 12,15,18;167:4,6,9, 16,22,25;168:5,13, 18;169:1,15,18,24; 170:5,11,19,22,24; 171:9,11,25;172:2,5, 7,10,13,19;174:16, 21,25;175:9,12,15, 25;176:3,10,16; 177:6,10,12;178:4; 179:17,20;180:3,5, 11,12,14,20,22; 181:2;182:11,20; 183:9,22;184:10,20; 185:5,8,23,25;186:8, 18,21;187:22;188:2; 189:3,5,6,9,12,25; 190:3,5,8
visual (2) 50:23;140:11	walls (2) 13:11;118:15	Wetsell (1) 20:10	withdraw (5) 82:17,18;166:11; 167:2;170:24	
visualize (1) 23:3	wants (6) 29:6;57:5;95:5; 114:4;139:25;157:5	what's (11) 10:12;45:1;61:20, 21;82:3;85:13;92:5; 93:17;118:11; 197:19;200:18	withdrawing (2) 163:14,15	21;128:7,11,13,20; 23;129:21,24;132:9; 12,17;133:9;134:14; 135:12,14,17,20,23; 136:2,6,9,15,18; 138:10,13,16,18,20; 22,24;139:2,4,7,11, 12,17;140:2,4,6,9; 141:3,5,7,15,18,21; 142:10,19,21;143:3; 145:5,8,10,12,21,25; 146:2,6,24;147:8,12; 148:18,20;149:1,17; 150:1,14,16;151:3,6, 19,21,25;152:9; 154:8,22;156:4,8; 157:3,7,16;158:10; 159:8;160:17;162:3, 8;163:8,12,15,17,23; 164:1,4,23;165:3,7, 12,17,20,22;166:9, 12,15,18;167:4,6,9, 16,22,25;168:5,13, 18;169:1,15,18,24; 170:5,11,19,22,24; 171:9,11,25;172:2,5, 7,10,13,19;174:16, 21,25;175:9,12,15, 25;176:3,10,16; 177:6,10,12;178:4; 179:17,20;180:3,5, 11,12,14,20,22; 181:2;182:11,20; 183:9,22;184:10,20; 185:5,8,23,25;186:8, 18,21;187:22;188:2; 189:3,5,6,9,12,25; 190:3,5,8
visually (2) 50:19;102:17	warrants (1) 30:8	whenever (1) 90:17	withdrawn (2) 181:23;183:21	
vocational (7) 10:8,17;13:21; 30:3;59:22;77:23; 78:4	watch (2) 28:21;131:8	whip (1) 94:18	within (16) 7:15;19:2;24:3,7; 26:6;30:23;44:3; 45:19;57:3;64:18; 70:10;76:2;80:15; 116:12;127:11; 154:13	21;128:7,11,13,20; 23;129:21,24;132:9; 12,17;133:9;134:14; 135:12,14,17,20,23; 136:2,6,9,15,18; 138:10,13,16,18,20; 22,24;139:2,4,7,11, 12,17;140:2,4,6,9; 141:3,5,7,15,18,21; 142:10,19,21;143:3; 145:5,8,10,12,21,25; 146:2,6,24;147:8,12; 148:18,20;149:1,17; 150:1,14,16;151:3,6, 19,21,25;152:9; 154:8,22;156:4,8; 157:3,7,16;158:10; 159:8;160:17;162:3, 8;163:8,12,15,17,23; 164:1,4,23;165:3,7, 12,17,20,22;166:9, 12,15,18;167:4,6,9, 16,22,25;168:5,13, 18;169:1,15,18,24; 170:5,11,19,22,24; 171:9,11,25;172:2,5, 7,10,13,19;174:16, 21,25;175:9,12,15, 25;176:3,10,16; 177:6,10,12;178:4; 179:17,20;180:3,5, 11,12,14,20,22; 181:2;182:11,20; 183:9,22;184:10,20; 185:5,8,23,25;186:8, 18,21;187:22;188:2; 189:3,5,6,9,12,25; 190:3,5,8
voice (5) 103:19;104:14; 117:13;118:18; 173:10	watching (1) 4:5	whole (16) 6:1;32:15;34:9; 43:2;44:8;56:5; 58:24;59:16;62:2; 63:8;92:23;101:5,10; 108:2;151:13;173:13	without (9) 18:9;24:20;36:25; 37:24;102:22;138:9; 166:24;192:10;202:7	
void (1) 30:8			Witonski (199) 107:19,21;108:5,7, 12;109:18;116:4; 122:7,8;123:2,4,10, 17;124:4,8,17; 125:16,25;127:3,19,	21;128:7,11,13,20; 23;129:21,24;132:9; 12,17;133:9;134:14; 135:12,14,17,20,23; 136:2,6,9,15,18; 138:10,13,16,18,20; 22,24;139:2,4,7,11, 12,17;140:2,4,6,9; 141:3,5,7,15,18,21; 142:10,19,21;143:3; 145:5,8,10,12,21,25; 146:2,6,24;147:8,12; 148:18,20;149:1,17; 150:1,14,16;151:3,6, 19,21,25;152:9; 154:8,22;156:4,8; 157:3,7,16;158:10; 159:8;160:17;162:3, 8;163:8,12,15,17,23; 164:1,4,23;165:3,7, 12,17,20,22;166:9, 12,15,18;167:4,6,9, 16,22,25;168:5,13, 18;169:1,15,18,24; 170:5,11,19,22,24; 171:9,11,25;172:2,5, 7,10,13,19;174:16, 21,25;175:9,12,15, 25;176:3,10,16; 177:6,10,12;178:4; 179:17,20;180:3,5, 11,12,14,20,22; 181:2;182:11,20; 183:9,22;184:10,20; 185:5,8,23,25;186:8, 18,21;187:22;188:2; 189:3,5,6,9,12,25; 190:3,5,8
volume (1) 133:3				
vote (5) 4:12,13,16,18; 200:15				21;128:7,11,13,20; 23;129:21,24;132:9; 12,17;133:9;134:14; 135:12,14,17,20,23; 136:2,6,9,15,18; 138:10,13,16,18,20; 22,24;139:2,4,7,11, 12,17;140:2,4,6,9; 141:3,5,7,15,18,21; 142:10,19,21;143:3; 145:5,8,10,12,21,25; 146:2,6,24;147:8,12; 148:18,20;149:1,17; 150:1,14,16;151:3,6, 19,21,25;152:9; 154:8,22;156:4,8; 157:3,7,16;158:10; 159:8;160:17;162:3, 8;163:8,12,15,17,23; 164:1,4,23;165:3,7, 12,17,20,22;166:9, 12,15,18;167:4,6,9, 16,22,25;168:5,13, 18;169:1,15,18,24; 170:5,11,19,22,24; 171:9,11,25;172:2,5, 7,10,13,19;174:16, 21,25;175:9,12,15, 25;176:3,10,16; 177:6,10,12;178:4; 179:17,20;180:3,5, 11,12,14,20,22; 181:2;182:11,20; 183:9,22;184:10,20; 185:5,8,23,25;186:8, 18,21;187:22;188:2; 189:3,5,6,9,12,25; 190:3,5,8
vo-tech (1) 71:2				
voted (20) 4:1				

**BEFORE THE ARKANSAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL**

November 19, 2015

121:4,6,14;127:23; 130:4;134:1;137:16; 138:25;144:12; 159:13,14;160:21; 163:17;166:20; 169:20;172:15; 173:20;180:9; 183:15;188:17; 199:15,15 worked (6) 20:12;22:2;113:3; 133:10;134:14,15 workers (1) 59:14 workforce (6) 13:16;15:7;18:20; 58:7;71:10;116:16 working (27) 8:20,25;17:7; 18:19;21:12;27:4; 32:4;48:16;64:4; 71:23;72:5;77:1; 85:10,18;99:8; 109:11;111:24; 119:11;138:19,23; 160:18;166:22; 171:7;173:21; 179:22;180:5;186:11 workplace (2) 59:3,22 works (3) 30:18;108:10; 121:14 world (23) 10:12;33:24;37:9; 54:6;55:7,14,15,23; 56:1,14;57:5,11,16, 18;94:15;103:2; 105:14;106:14; 147:24;148:4,6; 159:24;173:24 worry (2) 103:25;159:2 Wow (2) 145:21;148:19 write (3) 150:18;151:18; 189:20 writing (1) 154:4 written (3) 82:3;179:5,6 wrong (1) 124:2 wrote (2) 33:5;103:18	Y y'all (5) 27:6;45:4;94:12; 133:7;202:9 year (33) 8:19;16:13;46:5; 47:16,17;58:10; 59:17;61:3,12,12; 65:4,17;66:18,20; 81:7;87:24;89:5; 90:12,13;92:22;94:3, 7,13;118:1;126:18; 130:13;132:22; 136:13;168:4,10; 191:11;199:3,8 year- (1) 70:15 year-and-a-half (1) 147:13 years (25) 8:15;12:11;13:8; 14:13,15;20:11;22:2; 39:2;45:13,16;48:16; 49:5,11;58:11;81:11; 90:16,22;91:19;94:5; 113:4;118:8,17; 129:24;155:8;166:1 yesterday (4) 19:23;139:10,16; 186:2 young (2) 57:1;128:15 your-way (1) 80:22 YouTube (2) 109:11;189:12	50:11 10.02 (1) 178:21 10.02.5 (1) 178:20 100% (11) 13:14;58:1,4; 110:3;124:6;140:21; 156:12;165:10; 174:25;186:10,11 10-12 (1) 64:10 102 (1) 15:15 10-minute (1) 55:4 10th (4) 25:12;40:7;66:18; 80:3 10-year (2) 129:11;164:14 11-11-11:23 (1) 106:18 11-12 (1) 89:18 11th (4) 66:18,19;89:20; 97:17 12:00 (1) 96:19 120 (3) 37:25;39:6;78:17 1200 (1) 55:18 123 (2) 31:14;33:4 1272 (3) 193:11,14;195:11 1280 (1) 175:20 12th (5) 66:18;89:21,22; 97:17;142:2 13-14 (1) 58:10 13-year (1) 118:25 14% (1) 58:21 15 (2) 14:15;190:15 150 (2) 76:25;165:2 16 (2) 93:12;190:20 17 (2) 8:15;190:17 17-812 (1) 178:25 17th (1) 194:12 18 (2) 118:8;190:18	180 (4) 76:21;79:19;120:2; 165:5 19 (1) 3:3 2 2 (1) 55:13 2% (1) 101:21 2,000 (1) 107:14 20 (5) 4:6,8;15:15,17; 155:8 200 (1) 79:19 2010 (1) 70:21 2013 (1) 3:10 2014 (1) 113:5 2014-15 (1) 59:17 2015 (9) 3:3,11;70:22; 190:15,18,19,20,23; 193:13 2016 (2) 108:21;191:3 2016-17 (3) 60:18,25;65:4 21st (2) 110:9;117:2 22 (2) 182:25;184:2 23 (1) 78:24 230 (2) 15:18,21 24 (7) 13:11;22:3;43:13; 176:18;177:1;184:2, 4 26 (1) 13:11 29 (1) 159:10 3 3:24 (1) 96:1 3:25 (1) 96:1 30 (5) 75:2;76:18;110:3; 151:10;201:24 30th (1) 194:7	32 (1) 43:13 32.9% (2) 58:16,17 3-5 (1) 8:9 350 (3) 165:6;177:7;178:3 353 (1) 7:4 360 (1) 163:21 38 (5) 182:13,14,18,23,24 4 4 (2) 190:12,14 4:45 (1) 96:4 40 (8) 22:2;45:13,16; 74:18,23;75:2,16; 76:16 400 (1) 79:18 42 (1) 111:3 49 (1) 8:23 5 5 (2) 4:10;123:2 5,200 (1) 70:22 50 (2) 12:11;61:24 500 (1) 5:15 504 (1) 141:10 5-8 (1) 179:12 5-minute (2) 6:15;68:21 6 6 (1) 190:23 6- (1) 178:24 6:00 (1) 96:19 60% (1) 15:12 600 (2) 148:2,2 601 (1) 113:6
X XNA (1) 7:1 X-number (1) 43:18	Z zero (4) 63:21;93:18,24; 95:7 Zook (1) 21:1 1 1 (1) 3:11 1% (1) 28:8 1:15 (1) 204:10 10 (6) 38:4;40:2;140:25; 141:12;142:4;149:9 10% (1) 58:22 10,000 (1) 111:2 10.01.4 (1)			

6-16-102 (1) 50:13 6-17- (1) 145:17 6-17-709 (3) 145:19;146:2; 168:16 6-17-908 (1) 30:8 6-18-213 (2) 50:17,21 6-18-2132 (1) 179:6 6-18-213a2 (2) 102:15;179:7 6-23-105 (2) 190:23;194:18	179:14;180:21; 181:21;182:4,12,23; 183:21 919 (1) 30:8 993 (1) 179:2 9-month (2) 113:19;115:1 9th (9) 25:12;40:7;45:2; 48:4;64:1,6;66:18; 80:3;142:2			
7				
7- (1) 106:16 7:45 (1) 96:1 70% (2) 35:2;111:1 704 (1) 145:18 705 (1) 145:18 77% (2) 58:9,16 7-8 (1) 181:8				
8				
8,000 (1) 70:20 8-hour (1) 59:25 8th (2) 118:20,25				
9				
9 (4) 38:4;40:2;63:25; 136:25 9- (1) 113:22 9.03.2.6 (1) 179:13 9.03.3.6 (1) 179:11 9.03.4.6 (2) 179:14;182:13 9:00 (1) 96:3 9:50-10:05 (1) 55:5 9-12 (10) 5:14;44:17;55:18;				