

**In The Matter Of:**  
*ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION*

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*August 11, 2022*

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*Sharon K. Hill, CCR*  
*(501) 680-0888*

## ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

AUGUST 11, 2022  
10:00 a.m.

## A P P E A R A N C E S

## BOARD MEMBERS:

MS. OUIDA NEWTON, Chairman  
DR. SARAH MOORE, Vice Chairman  
DR. FITZGERALD HILL  
MS. KATHY McFETRIDGE  
MS. ADRIENNE WOODS  
MR. STEVE SUTTON  
MR. RANDY HENDERSON

## NON-VOTING PARTICIPANTS:

MR. JOHNNY KEY, Secretary of Education  
MS. JESSICA SAUM, Arkansas Teacher of the Year

## DESE LEGAL COUNSEL:

MS. LORI FRENO, General Counsel  
MS. SHASTADY WAGNER, Attorney

## LOCATION:

ARKANSAS DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION  
- Auditorium  
#4 Capitol Mall  
Little Rock, AR 72201

I N D E X

	Page
Changes to Agenda . . . . .	4
1. School Choice Appeals - Procedures . . . . .	4
a) Hicks . . . . .	6
b) Galeazzi . . . . .	19
2. Act 1240 Waiver Requests	
a) Springdale School District . . . . .	25
b) Blytheville School District . . . . .	54
c) Magnolia School District . . . . .	74
d) El Dorado School District . . . . .	80
e) Hope School District . . . . .	83
3. Amendment Request - Cross County High . . . . .	88
4. Act 1240 Digital Learning Waivers	
a) Mountain View . . . . .	93
b) Concord . . . . .	93
c) Highland . . . . .	93
d) Blytheville . . . . .	93
e) Melbourne . . . . .	93
f) Alpena . . . . .	95
g) Ozark Mountain . . . . .	95
h) Lamar . . . . .	98
i) Prairie Grove . . . . .	95

(cont.)

j) Southside Batesville Charter . . . . . 92

k) Rector . . . . . 98

5. Rules Governing Educator Licensure and  
Licensure Assessment Updates/Recommendations . . . 100

6. Helena-West Helena System Analysis . . . . . 147

Court Reporter's Certificate . . . . . 174

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

P R O C E E D I N G S

CHANGES TO AGENDA

CHAIRMAN NEWTON: We do, Board, have a change to the agenda that we would like to make. We have a school choice appeal, the Galeazzi family, that we would like to add after -- it's after the first item on the agenda, after the Hicks family appeal, if that would be okay with the Board. And we would need a motion to that effect.

MS. WOODS: I'll move to add.

CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. We have a motion to add by Ms. Woods.

DR. MOORE: I'll second that.

CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Seconded by Dr. Moore.

All in favor?

(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any opposed?

Thank you for doing that, Board.

1) SCHOOL CHOICE APPEAL UNDER THE SCHOOL CHOICE ACT OF 2015

CHAIRMAN NEWTON: We are moving on to our Action Agenda. The first item on our action agenda is School Choice Appeals. Ms. Wagner.

While you're coming, Ms. Wagner, I just want to thank you for all of your hard work on all of these school choice appeals. Because in the past, during

1 school choice appeal time, it's always been a very,  
2 very difficult time for the Board, and you have just  
3 made it go smoothly. It has been the -- I think the  
4 smoothest I can remember, and this will be my eighth  
5 time going through it. So it's -- you've done a  
6 great job --

7 MS. WAGNER: Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: -- and we are very  
9 appreciative of it.

10 MS. WAGNER: Well, thank you. I appreciate  
11 that. And I appreciate you guys all being willing to  
12 sit down with me, as I worked through the training,  
13 since this is my first time doing school choice. So  
14 I really appreciate it.

15 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Thank you.

16 MS. WAGNER: Okay. Well, this morning we've got  
17 our -- we've got two last school choice appeals to  
18 handle; so we'll start with our State Board  
19 procedures.

20 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

21 MS. WAGNER: So all persons that are wishing to  
22 testify in front of the State Board of Education  
23 shall first be placed under oath by the chairperson  
24 -- Ms. Newton. Each party that wishes to participate  
25 in the hearing may take up to 20 minutes to present

1 their case, beginning with the non-resident district,  
2 and then followed by the resident district, and then,  
3 finally, the appealing party or the parent.

4 The chairperson of the State Board may for good  
5 cause shown, upon request by any of the parties,  
6 allow additional time to present their cases. The  
7 State Board of Education at its discretion shall have  
8 the authority to require any person associated with  
9 the application to appear in person, or on Zoom, as  
10 many of them are. The State Board of Education may  
11 accept testimony by affidavit, declaration, or  
12 deposition. The State Board of Education will grant  
13 or deny the appeal based on the totality of the  
14 evidence presented. The State Board of Education may  
15 announce its decision immediately upon hearing all  
16 arguments and evidence or may take the matter under  
17 advisement. All discussions shall take place in open  
18 meeting. The State Board shall provide a written  
19 decision to DESE, the appealing party, the non-  
20 resident district, and the resident district within  
21 14 days.

22 a) HICKS

23 MS. WAGNER: Okay. The first appeal we have up  
24 is the Hicks family. This appeal was denied based on  
25 that 3% cap. The resident district is Augusta; the

1 non-resident district is McCrory. And there is one  
2 student at issue here.

3 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

4 MS. WAGNER: And I believe everyone is present  
5 on Zoom.

6 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right. It's in  
7 here somewhere. Here it is.

8 All right. Anyone that is planning on giving  
9 testimony on the Hicks family appeal, would you raise  
10 your right hand? Do you swear or affirm that you --  
11 the testimony you're about to give shall be the  
12 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

13 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

14 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Ms. Freno, is that sufficient?  
15 Because I really didn't hear anything.

16 MS. FRENO: Yes, ma'am.

17 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right.

18 Okay. The first one would be the non-resident  
19 district, McCrory. Who is on with us from McCrory?

20 SUPT. WAYMIRE: That'll be me, Ma'am.

21 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Mr. Waymire.

22 SUPT. WAYMIRE: Yes, ma'am.

23 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Do you have anything you would  
24 like to share this morning?

25 SUPT. WAYMIRE: Well, I was -- I'm new to the

1 district, came aboard July 1. And I was made aware  
2 of it about a week-and-a-half ago, so I don't know a  
3 whole lot prior to this.

4 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. I guess the question  
5 from the Board would be would you be willing to  
6 accept the child if the appeal was granted?

7 SUPT. WAYMIRE: Yes, we would.

8 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right. Anything  
9 else you would like to add?

10 SUPT. WAYMIRE: No, ma'am. That's it.

11 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. The resident district  
12 is Augusta.

13 SUPT. TANNER: Yes, ma'am. I'm Cathy Tanner;  
14 I'm the superintendent at Augusta Schools. This  
15 process started back in the summer, when the mother,  
16 Ms. Hicks, applied to come to school at Augusta. And  
17 the form was filled out incorrectly, and we accepted  
18 the child; we also sent a letter saying how excited  
19 we were that he would be coming to Augusta. We had  
20 no prior knowledge -- you know, we knew that -- only  
21 thing we knew was that he was moving into our  
22 district. Previously, he lived in McCrory district.  
23 And about a week later we got a letter from McCrory  
24 saying that he wanted to school-choice -- and we had  
25 already reached our 3% max, so we sent a letter

1 saying it was denied, per state law. We had a notice  
2 from the parent wanting to be -- have a hearing at  
3 the school board in June. The parent did not show.  
4 We were going to grant -- you know, we were going to  
5 have the hearing then to discuss this.

6 And soon after that I received a letter, like  
7 Mr. Waymire did, about the reasons for coming, and  
8 the letter doesn't give a true picture of Augusta, by  
9 no means. Everything that is listed in this letter,  
10 Augusta has. We have state championships; we're  
11 competitive in all sports. We have honor students;  
12 we have a GT class; we have advanced classes. So  
13 making it to the point that Augusta does not offer a  
14 quality education, that is not the purpose -- that is  
15 not true at all. Matter of fact, during the Covid,  
16 Augusta was one of the 21 school districts that  
17 showed growth during the Covid district [sic].

18 And so we -- the other problem I see from this  
19 is that if you're granting someone the availability  
20 to go to a school district for sports, then that also  
21 interferes with the Triple-A rules. Because -- I may  
22 be mistaken on this, because I have been doing some  
23 checking -- is that if a non-resident student goes to  
24 a different district, then they're not eligible to  
25 play. So I wanted to make sure -- that's how I read

1 the letter, that it was based on sports. Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Thank you, Ms. Tanner.

3 Who do we have representing the parents?

4 MS. HICKS: Savannah Hicks. Can you hear me?

5 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yes. Welcome, Ms. Hicks.

6 MS. HICKS: Hi. So I did not not show for the  
7 meeting; it got rescheduled because our -- the  
8 Augusta School District didn't respond back. So I  
9 was told that the meeting was rescheduled. I did not  
10 not show.

11 My son has gone to McCrory school since  
12 kindergarten; he is in 8th grade. We moved two miles  
13 away, and I just don't think that for him  
14 academically, socially, just at all, there's any  
15 reason for him to change schools. He has already  
16 started at McCrory school. McCrory started August  
17 1st, so he's already in the school year.

18 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Do you have anything  
19 else that you would like to add?

20 MS. HICKS: I mean I know she's saying that it  
21 has nothing to do with sports. But I would like to  
22 add that my son was at practice for basketball and  
23 football at 8:00 a.m., Monday through Thursday, all  
24 summer long. So he's already put in that work and I  
25 don't think that it is fair that he spent his summer

1 going for practices and committing to their school  
2 for this to be denied.

3 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right. We'll see  
4 if we have any questions from the Board.

5 Anyone over here on my left have a question for  
6 either of the districts or Ms. Hicks?

7 MS. McFETRIDGE: I'm confused about is the child  
8 going to be able to play sports if he stays in  
9 McCrory? Did I hear that right?

10 SECRETARY KEY: That would be up to Triple-A  
11 rules and that's not something that we would -- the  
12 Department would be --

13 MS. McFETRIDGE: Okay.

14 SECRETARY KEY: -- digging into.

15 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: And that -- I don't think that  
16 would be a determining factor for our decision.

17 SECRETARY KEY: No, it's not.

18 MS. McFETRIDGE: Okay.

19 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Any other questions on  
20 this side?

21 Okay. Any questions over here?

22 Ms. Woods.

23 MS. WOODS: Ms. Hicks, when you moved, did you  
24 know that you were moving into a new district?

25 MS. HICKS: No. Actually, across the street

1 from me is McCrory School District. The McCrory bus  
2 drives down my street in the morning. So I'm right  
3 on the line. So I purchased this house and I didn't  
4 know that it was going to cause all this.

5 MS. WOODS: Okay. And back to the -- I think it  
6 was the June Augusta meeting, so was there a meeting?

7 SUPT. TANNER: Yes, there was.

8 MS. HICKS: There was one scheduled. I was told  
9 that -- the Augusta School District had not  
10 responded, and the meeting was on a Thursday and they  
11 still hadn't filled out that following Friday, the  
12 next day, to respond. So we had to reschedule.

13 MS. WOODS: Yeah, I guess I'm confused. Can  
14 somebody from -- Ms. Tanner, from Augusta, was there  
15 -- were they on the agenda for --

16 SUPT. TANNER: Yes, they were. And they were  
17 notified of the meeting, the change in the meeting,  
18 and they were notified by my secretary. Now as far  
19 as no one not responding, I don't understand the part  
20 about who -- because we called the person that turned  
21 in the request.

22 MS. WOODS: Which would have been Ms. Hicks?

23 SUPT. TANNER: (Nodding head up and down.)

24 MS. WOODS: Yes, okay. All right. I don't have  
25 any more questions.

1 MS. HICKS: I never talked to anybody at the  
2 Augusta School District. I'd only dealt with  
3 Shastady; she's the one who called me and told me  
4 that they hadn't responded, and she's the one who  
5 told me that it would be rescheduled.

6 SUPT. TANNER: I'm not aware of that.

7 MS. WOODS: Shastady, could you come tell us the  
8 timeline for dates, since I know it was last-minute?

9 MS. WAGNER: So I believe what Ms. Hicks is  
10 talking about is I originally received her appeal.  
11 And when I originally received it I had believed that  
12 it was untimely, because the letter from Augusta came  
13 out in April, and I did not receive her appeal until  
14 the end of May. And so that would've not been within  
15 the 10-day timeline in our code, so that would've  
16 been untimely. However, the non-resident district  
17 was McCrory, and McCrory did not send out their  
18 letters until the end of June. So the timeline did  
19 not actually start running until the end of June,  
20 which is why I sent her, Ms. Hicks, an email back and  
21 let her know, "Hey, actually this appeal is timely,  
22 and so we can put it in July." But when I reached  
23 out to Ms. Tanner, she was out of the office and was  
24 not able to waive that 10 days -- and the school  
25 district gets to respond, so we couldn't put it on

1 the July meeting because I couldn't get a waiver of  
2 the 10 days. So we had to allow them a full 10 days,  
3 so it ended up coming here in August. So that's the  
4 only timeline issue I know of.

5 MS. WOODS: Right. So this whole Friday issue  
6 has nothing to do with the Augusta school board  
7 meeting --

8 MS. WAGNER: No.

9 MS. WOODS: -- as far as -- okay.

10 MS. WAGNER: No. As far as this -- when it came  
11 here -- no, ma'am.

12 MS. WOODS: Okay.

13 DR. MOORE: Can I ask a question too, Ms.  
14 Wagner?

15 MS. WAGNER: Yes, of course.

16 DR. MOORE: So why were they even -- is it  
17 typical that an applicant like this goes to their  
18 local board first?

19 MS. WAGNER: So I've seen where sometimes they  
20 will do that; they will attempt a board-to-board  
21 transfer.

22 DR. MOORE: Okay. That's what --

23 MS. WAGNER: Yes.

24 DR. MOORE: Okay.

25 MS. WAGNER: I believe that's maybe what was

1 going on there. I don't know that for sure. Ms.  
2 Tanner can probably allude to that better than I can.  
3 But sometimes we do see where they will attempt a  
4 board-to-board transfer before coming to us.

5 DR. MOORE: Okay. And how does that board-to-  
6 board transfer work? Both boards have to approve --

7 MS. WAGNER: Yes.

8 DR. MOORE: -- when you're transferring?

9 MS. WAGNER: And it's completely discretionary,  
10 up to the board. Some boards accept board-to-board  
11 transfers, some do not.

12 DR. MOORE: Do parents typically have to present  
13 --

14 MS. WAGNER: Yes. We have a form on our website  
15 that the parents have to fill out and they have to  
16 submit it to those boards.

17 DR. MOORE: Okay. Okay. Thank you.

18 MS. WOODS: And just from a process, is it the  
19 school district that they would -- that they are  
20 zoned for has to approve first, before it goes to the  
21 non-resident district?

22 MS. WAGNER: It's not in the code as to which  
23 one has to approve first; just that both boards have  
24 to agree.

25 MS. WOODS: Okay.

1 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Ms. Saum.

2 MS. SAUM: I just wanted to clarify. Ms. Hicks,  
3 did you say that your child has already begun the  
4 school year at the McCrory School District?

5 MS. HICKS: Yes.

6 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: And has previously attended  
7 all years at McCrory?

8 MS. HICKS: Yes, ma'am. He's gone there from  
9 kindergarten to 8th grade.

10 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right. All right.  
11 Any other questions from the Board?

12 MS. McFETRIDGE: So is the parent required then  
13 to be at the school board meeting to ask for this  
14 transfer?

15 MS. WAGNER: That would depend on school board  
16 policy. I don't know exactly what their policies  
17 are; they set that. So if she was required to be  
18 there, that would be something to ask Ms. Tanner.  
19 The code does not require that. That's not written  
20 into the code.

21 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Ms. Tanner.

22 SUPT. TANNER: Yes, ma'am.

23 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Did you hear Ms. McFetridge's  
24 question?

25 SUPT. TANNER: Yes, ma'am. What happens is that

1 when they -- whenever they want to talk to my board  
2 -- and the board makes the decision, not the  
3 superintendent -- about the board-to-board transfers,  
4 they come in and they present their case, in the  
5 event that another board wants to grant it. This is  
6 the first time ever that I've been for a school  
7 choice on the State Board level. Our board does not  
8 grant transfers unless it's -- it hasn't -- this is  
9 my sixth year at Augusta, and we have not because,  
10 you know, of the state law and what it says where  
11 residency is.

12 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

13 MS. McFETRIDGE: What does your policy say about  
14 a parent attending the meeting then? Is it in  
15 policy?

16 SUPT. TANNER: It is not. It is not required,  
17 but the board cannot act upon something without  
18 knowledge of the reason why.

19 MS. McFETRIDGE: Okay.

20 SUPT. TANNER: And I will say, if I may, Augusta  
21 has students down that same road that we have a bus  
22 that goes there as well.

23 MS. WOODS: So at your board meeting, just to  
24 follow-up on that, did -- basically, was the issue  
25 just rendered moot or did you actually deny the

1 transfer that night?

2 SUPT. TANNER: We did not act.

3 MS. WOODS: You just didn't act.

4 SUPT. TANNER: We did not act because she wasn't  
5 there to present her case. So, in other words, it  
6 wasn't given; approval was not given.

7 MS. WOODS: Okay.

8 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any other questions from the  
9 Board? Any discussion?

10 Okay. Does someone have a motion?

11 MS. McFETRIDGE: I'd like to make the motion  
12 that we accept the appeal, because I feel like the  
13 student has been there since kindergarten, has  
14 already started school this year. In all fairness, I  
15 think it would be best for the child.

16 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. We have a motion from  
17 Ms. McFetridge to grant the appeal.

18 Do we have a second?

19 MR. SUTTON: I'll second that.

20 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Have a -- seconded by Mr.  
21 Sutton.

22 All in favor?

23 (MAJORITY CHORUS OF AYES)

24 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any opposed?

25 MS. WOODS: Aye.

1 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. Congratulations,  
2 Ms. Hicks. We wish your child the very best.

3 MS. HICKS: Thank you.

4 b) GALEAZZI

5 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. The one that we --  
6 we have one that we've added. Ms. Wagner.

7 MS. WAGNER: Yes, ma'am. This is the Galeazzi  
8 family appeal. I see that Josie Galeazzi is on; this  
9 is the parent. So the resident district was Shirley;  
10 the non-resident district was Westside, which I saw  
11 Dr. Wallace is on for Westside. And then I don't  
12 know if Mr. Wiggins is on; Mr. Wiggins is the  
13 superintendent though of Shirley. This one was also  
14 denied --

15 SUPT. WIGGINS: Yes, I'm here.

16 MS. WAGNER: Okay, perfect. This one was also  
17 denied for that 3% cap. The reason why this one is  
18 coming to us late is because the Westside did not  
19 send a notice of denial to the parent until July  
20 28th; so they sent a provisional acceptance. Shirley  
21 sent a notice of denial, but Shirley is the resident  
22 district; so therefore, that timeline didn't start  
23 running until I got an official notice from Westside  
24 that the student had been rejected. So we received  
25 that on July 28th, so this appeal is timely under our

1 rules.

2 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right. Thank you.

3 MS. WAGNER: And I will tell you as well, Ms.  
4 Newton and the Board, that this -- these parents did  
5 attempt to do a board-to-board transfer, so that was  
6 part of this. They attempted that first and then  
7 didn't work, so that's why this appeal is here.

8 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right. Thank you.

9 All right. I guess all of these were sworn in.  
10 Do I -- okay, we're not sure if we -- you were sworn  
11 in or not, so we're going to take the time and do  
12 that again. If you're planning on giving testimony  
13 on this appeal, would you raise your right hand  
14 please? Do you swear or affirm that the testimony  
15 you're about to give shall be the truth, the whole  
16 truth, and nothing but the truth?

17 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

18 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Thank you.

19 All right. We will hear from the non-resident  
20 district first, Westside. Mr. Wallace?

21 MS. WALLACE: Ms. Wallace.

22 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Ms. Wallace. There you are.  
23 I see you now. Thank you. I'm sorry.

24 MS. WALLACE: Yes, so Tucker has been one of our  
25 students before; he attended our preschool. And his

1 mother is also one of our substitutes. And as far as  
2 us not sending the denial, we were not aware that the  
3 non-resident district had sent a denial.

4 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Would you accept the  
5 student if the appeal was granted?

6 MS. WALLACE: Yes. He's already been one of our  
7 students.

8 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right. Thank you.  
9 Anything else you want to add?

10 MS. WALLACE: No.

11 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Resident district,  
12 Shirley, Mr. Wiggins.

13 SUPT. WIGGINS: Yes, ma'am.

14 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: There you are. Okay.

15 SUPT. WIGGINS: Yes, ma'am. Good morning.

16 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Good morning.

17 SUPT. WIGGINS: First of all, we -- kind of like  
18 Mr. Waymire, I'm also new as of July 1st. And so in  
19 the transition of superintendents, the Galeazzi  
20 family was notified on June 6th about the denial due  
21 to the 3% cap. They did appeal to a board-to-board  
22 transfer, which we had the board meeting on July  
23 25th, which is our last July meeting there. And our  
24 board decided, after having the information that MS.  
25 Galeazzi provided to us as far as the reasons why

1 that was given to the board, they read through that  
2 and decided to not approve that due to the 3%. And  
3 so that's kind of where we're at today.

4 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right. Thank you,  
5 Mr. Wiggins.

6 SUPT. WIGGINS: Yes, ma'am.

7 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: From the parent, Ms. Galeazzi?

8 MS. GALEAZZI: Yes, ma'am.

9 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. Do you have  
10 anything you would like to present to the Board?

11 MS. GALEAZZI: Yes. Just, again, that I'm a  
12 substitute teacher at Westside. I substitute for  
13 kindergarten through 12th grade. They usually need  
14 me about four days a week. I stay pretty busy there.  
15 It would be impossible for me to be -- continue to be  
16 a substitute teacher if Tucker was to have to go to  
17 Shirley. My daughter is also in preschool at  
18 Westside; again, that would be nearly impossible for  
19 me to get her to preschool and also him to  
20 kindergarten at Shirley. And also our entire family  
21 lives in Westside School District; we have plenty of  
22 help if ever we need it.

23 Anything else you want to add?

24 MR. GALEAZZI: We both graduated from Westside.  
25 I went there kindergarten through 12th grade. It's

1 just we all grew up in that community and all of our  
2 family lives in that community. It's just more  
3 convenient for us for our kids to go there.

4 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right. First, I  
5 want to thank you for being a substitute teacher.  
6 That shows dedication and a love for kids; and so  
7 thank you for doing that. It's something that's --  
8 that we need more people like you. So, thank you for  
9 that.

10 We'll see if we have any comments or questions  
11 from the Board.

12 All right. Anyone on my right have a comment or  
13 a question?

14 On my left?

15 Dr. Moore.

16 DR. MOORE: Just clarifying -- your student is  
17 entering kindergarten. Is that correct?

18 MS. GALEAZZI: He will be starting kindergarten  
19 this year. Yes.

20 DR. MOORE: Okay. And preschool was at  
21 Westside?

22 MS. GALEAZZI: Yes, that's correct.

23 DR. MOORE: Okay. Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any other questions?

25 Ms. Woods.

1 MS. WOODS: I just want to make sure I'm reading  
2 this handout that was sent. Is he -- was he number  
3 six on the list to transfer? There was like 10, it  
4 looks like, the 3% cap. I just want to make sure I'm  
5 not -- am I supposed to be reading from the bottom up  
6 or from the top down?

7 SUPT. WIGGINS: Yes, it goes from the bottom up.

8 MS. WOODS: Bottom up. Okay.

9 SUPT. WIGGINS: Yes.

10 MS. WOODS: Thank you.

11 SUPT. WIGGINS: And the dates I believe are  
12 listed there as well, as far as when they turned in  
13 the paperwork for the school choice.

14 MS. WOODS: Okay.

15 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Anything else from the Board?  
16 Okay. We're ready for a motion.

17 DR. MOORE: My rationale is because the student  
18 has never attended the resident school district they  
19 are not included in the calculation at any point. So  
20 I will move to accept the transfer of the  
21 kindergarten student into the non-resident district.

22 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. We have a motion by Dr.  
23 Moore to grant the appeal.

24 Do we have a second?

25 MR. HENDERSON: Second.

1 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Seconded by Mr. Henderson.

2 All in favor?

3 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

4 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any opposed?

5 All right. Congratulations to the Galeazzi  
6 family. We wish your child a long and successful  
7 school year.

8 MS. GALEAZZI: Thank you so much.

9 MR. GALEAZZI: Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right.

11 SUPT. WIGGINS: Thank you, guys. Have a great  
12 day.

13 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: You too.

14 2) CONSIDERATION OF REQUESTS FOR ACT 1240 WAIVERS

15 a) SPRINGDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT

16 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. We are going to  
17 move on now to our 1240 waivers. Ms. Freno.

18 MS. FRENO: Thank you, Ms. Newton. Lori Freno,  
19 Arkansas Department of Education.

20 We have five Act 1240 waivers -- five school  
21 districts here today. The first is Springdale.  
22 They're here either -- Springdale is here in person;  
23 some are here by Zoom. But Springdale, we have here  
24 with us in the auditorium Associate Superintendent  
25 Marcia Smith; Assistant Superintendent Shannon

1 Tisher; and General Counsel Kendra Clay.

2 The Springdale School District has requested  
3 waivers of Teacher Licensure, district-wide for its  
4 grades 8 through 12, and Class Size and Teaching Load  
5 waivers, district-wide for all grades K through 12.  
6 Both of these waivers are requested for five years.  
7 And the district does have a very short presentation  
8 they would like to present to the Board. And any  
9 non-lawyers and witnesses in this matter, as well as  
10 the other Act 1240 waiver matters, should be sworn  
11 in.

12 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right.

13 Welcome, ladies. We're glad that you're here.

14 Anyone that is not a lawyer, would you stand and  
15 raise your right hand please? Do you swear or affirm  
16 that the testimony you're about to give shall be the  
17 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

18 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

19 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

20 MS. FRENO: And, Ms. Newton, one other thing,  
21 immediately after the school district presents,  
22 Deputy Commissioner Stacy Smith would also like to  
23 make some comments about the waivers.

24 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right. Thank you.

25 All right. Welcome, Ms. Clay.

1 MS. CLAY: Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: We are glad to see you this  
3 morning.

4 MS. CLAY: Yes. It's good to be here and good  
5 to see some familiar faces, and some new faces, as  
6 well.

7 Dr. Cleveland regrets that he couldn't be here  
8 today. Our Chamber of Commerce hosts a back-to-  
9 school event for our teachers where they give away  
10 about \$100,000 in prizes. It's a really big deal.  
11 And so he felt like he needed to be there today. But  
12 myself and Dr. Smith and Ms. Tisher are glad to be  
13 here to answer questions.

14 I have a short presentation just to give some  
15 background to our waiver request. It might help if I  
16 turn the clicker on first.

17 So we're here today asking for two waivers. One  
18 is Class Size and Teaching Load -- we're asking for  
19 up to two students over, with limited but flexible  
20 use. I'll talk about that in just a minute; and also  
21 asking for Licensure. We're coming at it from a much  
22 different perspective than some of the districts that  
23 you see, in that Springdale does not have a teacher  
24 shortage. But we're asking for some flexibility in  
25 how we use and staff some of our classes.

1           The Class Size and Teaching Load waiver, we're  
2           requesting K-12; and the Licensure would be 8-12,  
3           which is how we're configured at junior high and high  
4           school.

5           Many of you know Springdale is located in the  
6           northwest corner of the state. There it is.  
7           Geographically -- and this is important in the  
8           context of the Class Size waiver -- geographically,  
9           we are very long east to west, about 25 miles. And  
10          within that -- the boundaries, we have 18 elementary  
11          schools. So I'm going to talk about the Class Size  
12          waiver and our need in the elementary level first,  
13          and then we'll talk about secondary.

14          So I do want to show you what we're working with  
15          here in our elementary schools. Like I said, we have  
16          18. The first one is Bayyari Elementary, Knapp  
17          Elementary, Elmdale Elementary, George Elementary,  
18          Hart Elementary, Hunt Elementary, Jones Elementary,  
19          Monitor Elementary, Parsons Hills, Rollins, Shaw,  
20          Smith, Sonoro, Turnbow, Tyson, Walker, Westwood, and  
21          Young.

22          So in these elementary schools we have  
23          approximately 300 classroom teachers -- so that's  
24          just K-5 -- assigned to a classroom. That's not any  
25          additional special ed. classes, speech classes,

1 music, specials, anything along those lines. We  
2 would love to be able to have space at each student's  
3 zoned elementary school, but that's not the case when  
4 we have this large number of students. Sometimes  
5 people move in and there's not a space at their zoned  
6 elementary school. We handle it, I think like most  
7 large school districts, in that we look at the  
8 numbers of students at each school and, if necessary,  
9 reassign them to a nearby school where there's space  
10 available. It's certainly not feasible for us when  
11 one student moves in a particular grade to hire a  
12 teacher at that particular grade at that particular  
13 school. When we're looking at transferring students,  
14 we use 71(b) as kind of the guidepost and transfer  
15 based on east schools and west schools. The reason  
16 we do this is, this is largely how our secondary  
17 feeder patterns run in that the west side feeds to  
18 Har-Ber High School and its feeder patterns, and the  
19 east side feeds Springdale High School and its feeder  
20 junior highs and middle schools. So we already have  
21 established bus routes here, so it's not -- we're not  
22 reinventing the wheel when we're trying to figure out  
23 how to get a student from an east side school to an  
24 east side school, or west side to west side, because  
25 routes are already running to get those same

1           siblings, for example, to middle school or a junior  
2           high.

3           I've been kind of overseeing this process for  
4           six years now, and last year was the first year we  
5           got to a point where we absolutely did not have a  
6           space available for this process to work. Towards  
7           the middle of the second semester we were completely  
8           over in 3rd grade on the west side of town. We -- it  
9           was right around spring break, and so, if anybody has  
10          been in a school or knows much about school, trying  
11          to hire a teacher at spring break is a big challenge.  
12          So we continued to work through that. We talked  
13          about what different solutions we can have. And  
14          really, if we could have just a little bit of  
15          flexibility to manage some of that transferring, we  
16          think it would work out really well for students.

17          I'm going to give some really specific examples,  
18          and these are not just hypotheticals; these are real  
19          examples. Last year, like I said, we had 3rd grade  
20          on the west side that became completely full. And  
21          then I know when you see this you think, we'll just  
22          hire a teacher on the west side. Well, at spring  
23          break, when we've got one student who's over, that  
24          would be a little odd for one student and the  
25          teacher. Great instruction, I'm sure, but it's not

1 feasible to hire one teacher at that point for one  
2 student. So that's one issue that we had. Also,  
3 right after spring break this past year some twins  
4 enrolled and the zoned school had one open seat; so  
5 we're faced with a situation of do we send one twin  
6 away, do we enroll one. So if we had some  
7 flexibility there to make the call that, hey, we can  
8 hold one of the twins over so that there's -- the  
9 students aren't being split up.

10 This one actually is pretty sad, but it did  
11 happen. A student moved to a different zone due to a  
12 parent death, moved in with an aunt and uncle, and  
13 the classroom that he was leaving had students  
14 waiting for those seats. So when one transfers out,  
15 a lot of times there's already a student waiting to  
16 come in. So following our process, his seat was no  
17 longer available. His teacher begged to keep him;  
18 "I'll keep him, I don't mind, please, this is what's  
19 best for him." So another really specific instance  
20 where if we had the flexibility to hold a couple of  
21 students over.

22 As we presented this to our personnel policy  
23 committee, our school board, our joint council which  
24 is a teacher group that works on curriculum issues,  
25 I've said over and over, and I will still say it

1           today, if we are granted this waiver, I hope three  
2           years, five years down the road somebody asks, "Hey,  
3           did they ever get that waiver?" That's how  
4           infrequently we want to use it. We're continuing to  
5           staff today. We're doing this process today based on  
6           the class size that is in the Standards for  
7           Accreditation. We're not looking to put two extra  
8           students in every classroom. If we get to the point  
9           where a particular school has many students that they  
10          need a new class, we open a new class. We're opening  
11          kindergarten classes this week; probably today we've  
12          opened another one because students are coming in.  
13          So it's not really an effort to get around the Class  
14          Size rules, as it is an effort to try to do what's  
15          right for kids in those specific instances where some  
16          flexibility is needed. We're going to continue to do  
17          what we call our balanced transfer process, which is  
18          where we move students around based on where there is  
19          space available. We do that at the beginning of the  
20          school year, and then we recalibrate and do it again  
21          at semester. And then as students move in,  
22          individual schools find space for them. So that  
23          process will still happen; we just would like some  
24          flexibility for the really specific instances at the  
25          elementary level.

1           We did explore asking for the one-year waiver of  
2           the Standards for Accreditation, which would  
3           accomplish the same goal. Our issue is that we'd  
4           come every year. This isn't a one-time issue; this  
5           would be an every year issue most likely. So going  
6           the route of the 1240 waiver makes a lot of sense for  
7           us.

8           So very different scenario once we shift to  
9           secondary. With the secondary class size limit of  
10          30, there are instances where we have students that  
11          move in. We have a very mobile student population.  
12          The principal at Lakeside Junior High uses these  
13          statistics; I haven't verified it, but I'm going to  
14          repeat it because he said it. He says that even  
15          though they have the same number of students at the  
16          beginning of the year and the end of the year that  
17          70% of those students are different; so students are  
18          constantly moving in and out. And when that happens  
19          at the credit-bearing level -- if a student comes in  
20          mid-semester with a grade for a really particular  
21          class, and there's not a seat in that really  
22          particular class due to either -- maybe it's only  
23          offered certain periods, maybe that student is in so  
24          many different activities that he can only take it a  
25          particular period, then we're faced with either

1 putting the student in a course that he may not get  
2 credit in or going over the class size. And so some  
3 flexibility on those specific class size instances  
4 would be very helpful for secondary.

5 In the waiver request I included Teaching Load  
6 that we wouldn't go over 162. I included that  
7 because I knew somebody would ask what would the  
8 Teaching Load be. So I just said two kids times six  
9 periods a day and got to 162. But I think it's  
10 important for you to know that the 162 on the  
11 Teaching Load is really more of a hypothetical. So  
12 we pulled out numbers from last year -- and we used  
13 last year because right now the numbers -- we don't  
14 know where we are; we're still working on that,  
15 trying to get everybody scheduled. But last year no  
16 one was over 140 students and that's in our whole  
17 district. So, it's not -- we don't schedule that  
18 way, but we do have classes that have 30 students in  
19 them; so it's really more of a class size issue than  
20 a teaching load. And also, important too, there were  
21 only three teachers that -- or, I'm sorry -- nobody  
22 was over 150 students. There were three teachers  
23 that had between 140 and 143. So we typically  
24 schedule a teaching load much lower, but do need some  
25 flexibility on the class size.

1           Okay. Moving on to the Licensure, like I said,  
2 I think we're probably approaching this from a lot  
3 different perspective than some people that come and  
4 ask for a Licensure waiver. Springdale has a long  
5 history of recruiting the best teachers, being able  
6 to recruit the best teachers, and having hundreds of  
7 applicants for jobs. We continue to have a large  
8 applicant pool, although we're seeing it diminish  
9 just a little bit. But the Licensure waiver is not  
10 an effort to get around hiring the best teachers, and  
11 it's not due to a licensure shortage -- or a teacher  
12 shortage, like we've seen in some areas. It's really  
13 due to Dr. Cleveland's vision of expanding the career  
14 and technical education program. I know many of you  
15 have visited the Don Tyson School of Innovation. It  
16 has many facets to it, but one of the central facets  
17 is a robust CTE program. Students are doing diesel  
18 mechanics, refrigeration, construction, all sorts of  
19 programs, where when they leave or even while they're  
20 still in high school they're credentialed to go work  
21 that day in industries that are in Springdale. So,  
22 Tyson, George's are great partners and equip our  
23 students. Dr. Cleveland is looking to expand that  
24 sort of program across what we call our comprehensive  
25 high schools; some call them traditional high

1 schools, which would be Har-Ber High School,  
2 Springdale High School, and their feeder patterns,  
3 with the idea that he wants career and technical  
4 education work experience to be the norm for a high  
5 school student even during school hours. So maybe  
6 similar to what the JAG program looks like but on a  
7 much broader scale, where you go to school for a few  
8 hours a day and then go to work, make money, get  
9 ready for a career, and even make the determination  
10 that maybe a career is not the best thing for you.

11 So the vision of expanding that goal of DTSOI  
12 does require a Licensure waiver. I will tell you  
13 that I feel like that we've been really good stewards  
14 of the Licensure waiver that DTSOI has. They have  
15 approximately 150 teachers and four of them are  
16 teaching without a teaching -- without a license in  
17 the area that they're teaching. So, again, it's not  
18 -- we don't intend to use it as a broad brushstroke  
19 to hire and license teachers, but there are specific  
20 instances in the context of CTE where a Licensure  
21 waiver would be helpful and having that flexibility  
22 to move and bring in subject matter experts as needed  
23 would be beneficial.

24 Also, one of the things that we've seen, and  
25 especially as we move to trying to gear our education

1 programs more towards career pathways for everybody,  
2 is having the flexibility that even if a teacher is  
3 licensed, if they taught out of area -- technical  
4 math is a good one that we've used -- that maybe an  
5 industry specialist doesn't have a teaching license  
6 but uses -- you know, when you're in math class and  
7 you think when are we ever going to use this; they're  
8 actually using it in their job -- being able to help  
9 teach that course or other courses, with support. I  
10 think that's important too. Whether you're teaching  
11 in our district with a teaching license or not,  
12 you're getting a lot of support. We get a lot of  
13 support from our co-op and we are making a very  
14 intentional move this year to implement collaborative  
15 team meetings. We're releasing early on Wednesday so  
16 that every single teacher in our district has that  
17 time to collaborate with their like partners in  
18 teaching. And so, even someone teaching without a  
19 license in a particular area is going to be  
20 supported.

21 So, again, a limited need but some flexibility  
22 there for us to adapt to what our kids are needing,  
23 rather than what our teachers are licensed for.

24 What questions do you have?

25 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. Ms. Smith, did you

1 want to speak?

2 MS. CLAY: Oh, I'm sorry. I forgot.

3 MS. SMITH: No, you're good. You're good.

4 Listen, they didn't say this about this one, but she  
5 used to be one of ours.

6 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yeah. Pretty good, isn't she?

7 MS. CLAY: I know about -- know about this half.

8 MS. SMITH: Yeah. Yeah.

9 MS. CLAY: This half is new.

10 MS. SMITH: Stacy Smith, Deputy Commissioner.

11 This board charged us with, a couple of months  
12 ago, to really start digging into 1240s and being  
13 able to say are we comfortable, are we not  
14 comfortable. And I will say that we asked Springdale  
15 to come in and meet with us in person about a month  
16 ago, and they did; they brought their whole team. We  
17 really talked through what this looked like, what it  
18 meant. They are the largest school district in the  
19 state, especially the one on the class size and the  
20 moving of students and trying to get a better  
21 understanding of what that looks like for a very  
22 large district. We were confident after we met with  
23 them that they had some protocols in place to make  
24 decisions best on students about a transfer and not  
25 just trying to push everybody to a bus. It is one of

1 those things that we will work with them this year,  
2 look at it, watch the numbers, see where we are. But  
3 we were confident that the intent of what they were  
4 asking for really was about thinking about individual  
5 students and what it means to split up a family when  
6 you have a full school and you're putting one on a  
7 bus to go across town. So we felt confident with  
8 that.

9 The CTE waiver for teachers, School of  
10 Innovation, Don Tyson, has been one of our leading  
11 School of Innovation schools. And for us, where we  
12 really had to shift to say, okay, we have a school  
13 within a district that has kind of set the standard  
14 and being successful, and they're now trying to  
15 expand the innovation they had for CTE to their other  
16 high schools. But you just can't turn the other  
17 schools into a Don Tyson overnight; it's steps. And  
18 so we have seen what they've done with those waivers  
19 at Don Tyson and felt comfortable with that as well.

20 And so we were comfortable with them on the  
21 Class Size one. That is something we want to look at  
22 and watch. We do think that it might even, as we  
23 watch it throughout the year, play into how we maybe  
24 need to make revisions to our own standards  
25 pertaining to Class Size and maybe look at, you know,

1 the whole teaching load of the district so it could  
2 actually influence some of those pieces.

3 So, thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. We'll see what  
5 questions the Board has.

6 Anyone on my right have a comment or a question?

7 Okay. Over here, on my left?

8 Dr. Moore.

9 DR. MOORE: I appreciate you all presenting  
10 today and bringing this in. I actually think it  
11 might be for the Department. I don't know if it's  
12 for Lori, but actually you could probably answer it  
13 too, Kendra. But I have a question on the rules and  
14 what the Class Size rules state, if that's okay. But  
15 thank y'all again for the very thorough presentation;  
16 it's very helpful today.

17 MS. FRENO: Dr. Moore, you're talking about the  
18 rules with regard to Class Size?

19 DR. MOORE: Class Size and Teaching Load. So  
20 when we look at them -- for instance, when we're  
21 looking at grades 1-3, it says the school district  
22 should have an average of 23 students, but no class  
23 should have more than 25.

24 MS. FRENO: I would --

25 DR. MOORE: Are we talking about raising the 23

1 or the 25? What does that look like?

2 MS. FRENO: What I would love to do is ask my  
3 friends from Public School Accountability --

4 DR. MOORE: Okay.

5 MS. FRENO: -- who are the experts in this --

6 DR. MOORE: Okay. I noticed that --

7 MS. FRENO: -- to come up and discuss that with  
8 you.

9 DR. MOORE: Okay. Thank you.

10 MS. FRENO: And I'll hang close just in case,  
11 but --

12 DR. MOORE: Okay.

13 MS. FRENO: -- I'm sure they can answer.

14 DR. MOORE: And I know we talked a lot about  
15 this two years ago, but I forget.

16 DR. SUTHERLIN: Yeah. So the basic premise is  
17 that it's 23, but then you can have a class size  
18 that's a maximum of 25 -- but you have to have that  
19 average of 23.

20 DR. MOORE: Okay. So if you have -- and that --  
21 is that an average in the school or across the whole  
22 district?

23 DR. SUTHERLIN: That would be within the school.  
24 Yeah.

25 DR. MOORE: The school would have to have that

1 average of 23. And so this waiver, are they  
2 requesting to bump up that 23 number or the 25  
3 number? How does that work?

4 MS. CLAY: Yes. So the request would be to bump  
5 up the 25, the maximum --

6 DR. MOORE: Okay.

7 MS. CLAY: -- number in the class. That average  
8 term I know has given some fits over the years.

9 DR. MOORE: Right.

10 MS. CLAY: I think it's tied to Lake View in  
11 some way.

12 DR. MOORE: Okay.

13 MS. CLAY: And so actually determining the  
14 average is a little bit difficult. So the -- our  
15 request is to increase the maximum class size in each  
16 grade; so the 22 --

17 DR. MOORE: Okay.

18 MS. CLAY: -- 25, 28, 30.

19 DR. MOORE: Okay. So those might have some  
20 flexibility there.

21 MS. CLAY: Yes.

22 DR. MOORE: And then for high school, the 7-12,  
23 individual classes not exceeding 30 students, that's  
24 what you've bumped up to 32?

25 MS. CLAY: Correct.

1 DR. MOORE: Okay. Okay. Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any other questions over here?

3 I just have a couple of comments, and the  
4 Department, Ms. Smith, you may want to come and pull  
5 me down, I guess, a little bit here. But the Teacher  
6 Licensure, it feels innovative. And that's what I've  
7 always expected from Springdale is innovation, and  
8 that feels innovative. The Teacher Licensure doesn't  
9 feel that way. The comments that I read from  
10 teachers, teachers were very concerned about it. And  
11 I don't know how y'all talked -- thought about that.  
12 So you have said, MS. Smith, that y'all were going to  
13 keep an eye on it. You know, if we -- you know, I  
14 would be fine with the five years on the Teacher  
15 Licensure, but I don't know about five years for the  
16 Class Size. You know, I -- and I'm even maybe  
17 hesitant about it at all, but then for sure for five  
18 years. And so I don't know what your thoughts are,  
19 Ms. Smith, about that, because you said that was  
20 something you were going to look at and work with the  
21 district on?

22 MS. SMITH: Yeah. I mean if you guys would want  
23 to maybe consider it more of like a pilot and look at  
24 two years and us be able to watch the numbers like to  
25 see who moved, let them come back and explain what

1 they did, how they -- I mean what it looked like.

2 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yeah.

3 MS. SMITH: I do think when you're dealing with  
4 a district that large, who has very efficient numbers  
5 and -- I mean, we have been talking teacher salaries  
6 and efficiencies, and the number of students in a  
7 classroom is how you push your teacher salary up.

8 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yeah.

9 MS. SMITH: Okay. When we look at the  
10 efficiency numbers for the Springdale School  
11 District, they maintain their class sizes at that  
12 larger size. And because they do that, they have one  
13 of the largest salaries in the state. So when you  
14 get to the model of efficiency with student ratios,  
15 you're doing it on that -- your teetering with that.  
16 And that's where they find themselves right now. And  
17 so I came from a smaller district, like Benton, that  
18 had four elementary schools and it was still an issue  
19 when we had to put siblings one on this bus to this  
20 school and one staying here, and a mother saying for  
21 elementary kids, like, "I've got -- I'm putting my  
22 kindergartner on a bus." And that's really what's  
23 happening here. And so I agree with you; we want to  
24 take care of teachers, we want our class sizes to be  
25 right. And me pleading that their heart is in the

1 right place, I don't know that that's my  
2 responsibility to do. I will say when we met with  
3 them we did feel like that their intent was not to  
4 fill up their classes at the maximum on the waiver  
5 side, but for special circumstances.

6 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

7 MS. SMITH: So, no. If they hold to those  
8 special circumstances, that's on them. We have seen  
9 them hold true to what they said they were going to  
10 do with CTE waivers in the past in School of  
11 Innovation, and so that's why we feel comfortable.

12 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Ms. Clay, maybe you  
13 could speak a little bit to teacher reaction in your  
14 district?

15 MS. CLAY: Yes. So it was as we expected it to  
16 be. We know that especially after the last few years  
17 our teachers are tired.

18 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yeah.

19 MS. CLAY: They're overloaded. And so the  
20 initial response -- I'll kind of -- I should've gone  
21 through how we solicited feedback. We have a robust  
22 personnel policy committee, even though not required.  
23 We have a representative from each school building.  
24 And before each one of our meetings -- we meet  
25 monthly -- we ask that representative to solicit

1           questions, feedback, and not just about policies,  
2           about whatever is happening. And so they funnel  
3           through all teachers, through their PPC rep, into a  
4           meeting where our administrative team participates  
5           and creates a dialogue about this is why this is  
6           happening, this is why that's happened. And it's  
7           really a great relationship.

8           So we solicited feedback through the PPC, and  
9           the way we did that is we just sent out the waiver  
10          and said, "Hey, this is what we're thinking about.  
11          We'd like your feedback. We'd like to talk to you  
12          about it." The feedback you got was initial, so  
13          that's really before we had much context, much  
14          conversation. We talked about it extensively at the  
15          PPC meeting. I think there's still some  
16          reservations, because until you're actually living  
17          something you don't know if when I say "we are not  
18          going to overload you" -- you don't know if what I'm  
19          saying is true, and I understand that. And I told  
20          them, like I told you, I hope that a few years from  
21          now they don't even know if it passed -- or if they  
22          do, they can say, "They were right, they didn't  
23          overload us; they needed it for really specific  
24          instances." We also -- our Springdale Education  
25          Association, which is our local body of AEA, had some

1 concerns. They brought some concerns to our school  
2 board. And Dr. Smith actually sat down with their  
3 leadership team of the SEA and had an extensive  
4 meeting with them. I don't want to speak for them  
5 and say that they're supporting it, but they came to  
6 a place where they understood where we were coming  
7 from and they could see that we have really specific  
8 needs where we need to accommodate kids, even if that  
9 means one or two over for them, in particular.

10 Something else I'll say too is I know that when  
11 you think one or two over in every class that starts  
12 to seem really big. But if we start going one or two  
13 over in more than one class in a particular school,  
14 we'd be looking at hiring a teacher. I mean, each  
15 grade level at our elementaries has between three and  
16 five teachers. And so if you start getting five,  
17 six, seven kids, we're looking at, okay, where's our  
18 tipping point, who else has kids, and we're hiring  
19 teachers. So, again, it wouldn't -- you know, I  
20 would be shocked if we even had, you know, multiple  
21 teachers in a building who had more than one student  
22 over because we would start to see -- it wouldn't  
23 just be that building; it would be multiple  
24 buildings, and we'd hire a teacher.

25 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: What about K-12, if you had a

1 teacher that you wanted to put an extra child in  
2 would they have a choice?

3 MS. CLAY: We would ask them. I don't -- I was  
4 thinking just as I was sitting here whether I needed  
5 to say this or not -- but I'm just going to say it.  
6 So before the Standards for Accreditation system was  
7 the way it was -- way it is now where every day the  
8 Department is able to tell if we're in or out of  
9 compliance, and there was an October 1 count, you had  
10 to be in on October 1 and then after that, unless  
11 somebody was in there, they really didn't know.  
12 Sometimes we went over on Class Size, and the way  
13 that we handled it is we would just ask the teacher,  
14 "Are you willing to take this student?" So I don't  
15 -- we would ask the teacher. We know for teachers to  
16 do their best they've got to be happy, appreciated,  
17 and have some input. So, you know, if a teacher  
18 says, "Hey, I've got a really tough class this year,  
19 I can't take one more," well, certainly, we're going  
20 to take that into consideration. And there's going  
21 to be other grade level teachers at that same  
22 building that we could have a conversation with and  
23 likely find a spot.

24 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Is there going to be  
25 any extra compensation or is that just going to be

1 part of their duty?

2 MS. CLAY: There is not going to be extra  
3 compensation. That would just be something that we  
4 ask them to do, with the expectation that it's not  
5 permanent, and we could move as kids move as well.

6 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Any other questions or  
7 comments from the Board?

8 Ms. Saum.

9 MS. SAUM: Have you considered the use of -- if  
10 a -- in the elementary grades, if there was numbers  
11 getting -- they were getting higher, putting a  
12 paraprofessional in there to support the teachers to  
13 alleviate some of that?

14 MS. CLAY: Yes. We do use paraprofessionals,  
15 especially at kindergarten level, because you can  
16 already do that in the Class Size rules. The issue  
17 that we have is some of our schools that do not get  
18 as much Title 1 funding as others don't have as many  
19 paraprofessionals. And so we have -- well, I don't  
20 know, because it does vary by every school. We use  
21 paraprofessionals and we have support staff and we  
22 continue to do that, and have done that even when  
23 they weren't at the maximum class size.

24 MS. SAUM: And have you considered that number,  
25 what would be the number -- okay, we have six

1 students in this same grade or each teacher is at  
2 least one student over. Have you considered what  
3 that number would be that you would choose, okay,  
4 this is the point where we have to hire another  
5 teacher?

6 MS. CLAY: Yeah, there's not -- I won't say that  
7 there's a set number. But I'll tell you when we're  
8 looking -- like right now, when kids are enrolling  
9 left and right -- we're starting school Monday -- we  
10 typically look when we have a double-digit overage on  
11 one side of town that we're saying, okay, we're going  
12 to need a new kindergarten teacher. So it is a  
13 little bit fluid because we know that some schools  
14 are more -- have more mobile students than others.  
15 But typically once it hits double-digits overage --  
16 and that wouldn't be at a particular school; it would  
17 be on our feeders, east, west, we would start having  
18 the conversation about do we need to hire a teacher.

19 MS. SAUM: Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any others?

21 Mr. Henderson.

22 MR. HENDERSON: Thank you for your presentation.  
23 One thing that I guess really hasn't been discussed,  
24 what percentage of I guess the classes and 300  
25 teachers is done virtually?

1 MS. CLAY: Oh, we did not even include our  
2 virtual -- we have a separate virtual program through  
3 Don Tyson School of Innovation. It's called VIA  
4 Virtual Innovation Academy. Those teachers are not  
5 included in those numbers. We don't look at them the  
6 same way when we're balancing. And even though DTSOI  
7 does have a Class Size waiver, we have held true to  
8 the traditional elementary class sizes throughout  
9 Covid just because of a management and good  
10 instruction standpoint. Now I won't say that they  
11 didn't go one or two over here and there, but we  
12 honor those class sizes, even with our virtual  
13 students. But they weren't included here because  
14 that's a little bit different conversation for us.

15 MR. HENDERSON: Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any other questions from the  
17 Board?

18 MS. McFETRIDGE: I just have to say being  
19 involved in this district for as long as I have, the  
20 heart of this district is with the students and the  
21 teachers. And I think one thing that maybe wasn't  
22 discussed, when you have to transport a student  
23 they're losing educational time, and that is such a  
24 huge concern. Yes, you don't want to overload the  
25 teacher, but these are rare instances. And I know

1           you're going to take care of the whole situation. So  
2           I appreciate you being here today and being so  
3           thorough with your presentation and helping us  
4           understand. You know, some of us are with smaller  
5           districts and maybe not quite understand the volume  
6           and the intensity that Springdale has. But your  
7           heart is in the right place; it certainly is. Thank  
8           you.

9                   CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any other questions or  
10           comments?

11                   I think let's take these separate and see how we  
12           want to go with those.

13                   The first one was -- I'm looking for my sheet  
14           here. The first one was the Class Size and Teaching  
15           -- there it is -- Class Size and Teaching Load. Do  
16           we have a motion on that?

17                   MS. WOODS: Just to clarify -- they're both for  
18           five years?

19                   CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yes, they asked for five years  
20           on both. Yes.

21                   (FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

22                   CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Do we have more to --

23                   MR. HENDERSON: I'd like to make a motion --

24                   CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

25                   MR. HENDERSON: -- to approve the waiver request

1 for the Class Size and also the License --

2 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Let's keep those separate --

3 MR. HENDERSON: Separate?

4 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: -- if you don't mind. So  
5 you're making a motion to approve the Class Size and  
6 Teaching Load?

7 MR. HENDERSON: Yes.

8 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: For how long?

9 MR. HENDERSON: I know it was mentioned that we  
10 possibly have a two-year pilot possibility.

11 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

12 MR. HENDERSON: I'd say three years.

13 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. Motion to approve  
14 Class Size and Teaching Load for three years by Mr.  
15 Henderson.

16 MS. McFETRIDGE: I'll second that.

17 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Seconded by Ms. McFetridge.  
18 All in favor -- or do we want to do a roll-call?  
19 Would you rather do discussion?

20 Okay. All right. All in favor?

21 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

22 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any opposed?

23 Okay. Motion passes.

24 Okay. The next one was Teacher Licensure.

25 And this was for grades 8 through 12. Correct?

1 MS. CLAY: Yes, ma'am.

2 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

3 MS. McFETRIDGE: I'll make the motion that we  
4 approve the Teacher Licensure request.

5 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. For -- length of time?

6 MS. McFETRIDGE: For five years.

7 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. We have a motion by Ms.  
8 McFetridge to approve Teacher Licensure for grades 8  
9 through 12 for five years.

10 Do we have a second?

11 DR. MOORE: I'll second that.

12 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Seconded by Dr. Moore.

13 All in favor?

14 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

15 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any opposed?

16 Okay. Congratulations.

17 MS. CLAY: Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Thank you for being here this  
19 morning.

20 b) BLYTHEVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT

21 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. Ms. Freno, our  
22 next one -- are you doing the next one or are you  
23 doing all of these or --

24 MS. FRENO: The next four will be by Karli  
25 Saracini.

1 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Ms. Saracini. The  
2 first one, I think, is Blytheville. Okay.

3 MS. SARACINI: Good morning. Karli Saracini --

4 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Good morning.

5 MS. SARACINI: -- Assistant Commissioner,  
6 Educator Effectiveness and Licensure.

7 And I have with me that will be speaking as well  
8 is Melissa Jacks.

9 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

10 MS. SARACINI: And I have done some reorgani-  
11 zation and we have Derrick Williams back as our  
12 Director of Licensure. So it's made -- it's given me  
13 the opportunity to free Melissa Jacks up to really  
14 work with our districts on our Act 1240 waivers and  
15 exceptions, and I hope you've seen that as you were  
16 looking at them today. So she'll be with me up here  
17 so that we can answer any questions.

18 Blytheville is asking for the waivers -- and I  
19 know Dr. Perkins is on.

20 SUPT. PERKINS: I am.

21 MS. SARACINI: They are on. I just want to kind  
22 of give you a little update, and then I will let them  
23 present. I know that they're asking for the Teacher  
24 Licensure waiver. And they have also asked us for  
25 that Level 4 support, to receive that human capital

1 and literacy in that Level 4 support. And that would  
2 be levels of support not only from my division, but  
3 also Ms. Coffman's division. So as they talk about  
4 their waivers know that we are going to support them,  
5 and I think their application speaks for itself.

6 So if you have any questions -- and I'll let Dr.  
7 Perkins take over.

8 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. Anyone that's  
9 going to testify on behalf of Blytheville, would you  
10 raise your right hand? Do you swear or affirm that  
11 the testimony you're about to give shall be the  
12 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

13 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

14 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Thank you.  
15 Go ahead, Dr. Perkins.

16 SUPT. PERKINS: I thank the Board for having the  
17 opportunity to meet with my team. I also thank our  
18 DESE teams who have supported us as we have worked  
19 through the application of these waivers.

20 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Dr. Perkins, we're having  
21 trouble understanding you. Is there any way you  
22 could get closer to your microphone?

23 SUPT. PERKINS: Yes, ma'am, I can get closer.  
24 Can you hear me better now?

25 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: That's much better. Thank

1           you.

2                   SUPT. PERKINS: I wanted to say again I thank  
3           you for the opportunity to request these waivers. As  
4           Ms. Saracini has shared with you, we are asking for  
5           two waivers.

6                   We've asked for waiver number one which is  
7           Teacher Licensure. I wanted to provide just a little  
8           bit of context. If you know where Blytheville is, we  
9           are in that extreme northern section of the state  
10          right near the Missouri line. And the district for  
11          the last five years has had quite a bit of turnover  
12          and teacher shortages. We've averaged about 25 or so  
13          openings, and we just haven't had the candidates to  
14          respond to our need. So I want to say a little bit  
15          about how many we have on Licensure at present time.  
16          There are about 41 teachers who are on Licensure  
17          waivers at this time, and I'll give you a breakdown  
18          of those. For 2022-23, at our primary school there  
19          are 12 waivers; at the elementary there are 7; at  
20          middle school there's 6; and at the high school there  
21          are 12 -- I'm sorry -- 16. And even though we were  
22          able to hire 12 teachers who are certified, our need  
23          is still great and at present we even have five  
24          vacancies that are not covered.

25                   So a little bit about our teacher turnover -- in

1 many instances teachers will come to Blytheville to  
2 teach, and then when there is a vacancy or an  
3 opportunity closer to their home they will leave the  
4 district, leaving us with those vacancies. This past  
5 year the district lost 33 certified teachers, and we  
6 lost 8 from the primary, 12 from the elementary, 7  
7 from the middle, and 6 from the high school.

8 So we know that the waiver allows us to have  
9 teachers who have a bachelor's degree, who are AQT  
10 certified, they have their 18 hours in a concentrated  
11 area -- it allows us to bring those individuals in.  
12 So part of our responsibility to those teachers that  
13 we bring in is to insure that our teachers seek a  
14 pathway. And so at present we have three teachers  
15 who are in the ArPEP program; we have 15 teachers who  
16 are in the Master's of Art teaching program; we have  
17 four teachers in Arkansas Teacher Corps; and we have  
18 2 who are in our PPTL. And we do have 17 teachers  
19 who have not engaged a pathway, but 8 of those just  
20 finished their first year of teaching. We have 5 who  
21 are starting, they have no experience. And then the  
22 other four teachers have two or more years of not  
23 engaging a pathway. But my team is working  
24 aggressively to make sure that our teachers know the  
25 expectation that they engage a pathway and that we

1 meet the expectation that our teachers are certified  
2 at the end of the three-year cycle. And to that end,  
3 we've met -- we have 35 of the teachers who are in  
4 that pool that's identified, one, that they're going  
5 to take a Praxis exam, and, two, if they've not  
6 identified a pathway that they identify a pathway.

7 So the second waiver request that I'm asking for  
8 is around Class Size and Teaching Load. We know that  
9 part of the issue is that even though teachers who  
10 are coming in are waiver, they do not have the  
11 content knowledge. So we had to think about how is  
12 it that we could get more certified teachers to our  
13 student population. So, waiver two, which would give  
14 us Class Size and Teaching Load reprieve, would give  
15 us the opportunity to engage Opportunity Culture.  
16 I've already been working with the Department of Ed.  
17 around what the model could look like in the  
18 Blytheville School District; how we might go about  
19 identifying what the model called MCL, which is a  
20 multi-classroom leader -- that teacher not only  
21 teaches the content but they also teach other  
22 teachers, building capacity and content knowledge to  
23 other teachers who are on their team. So we have  
24 expedited the process. We've already started working  
25 with the Opportunity Culture model, and Public Impact

1 is an organization that is assisting us. We are  
2 going to begin with the model at the high school  
3 level. We've identified two MCLs which will work in  
4 the area of math. Those MCLs will engage all of the  
5 core instruction for all Algebra I classes -- our  
6 Algebra I students all prefer the MCL. The MCL model  
7 allows us to give a stipend of sorts to those  
8 teachers who take on additional roles and  
9 responsibilities, and also it allows for us to hire  
10 REACH associates who will give teachers the  
11 opportunity to do more small group instruction, do  
12 more intervention, and to give that teacher relief  
13 time if they need to go and coach with another  
14 teacher on the team. So that will mean if I'm going  
15 to reach all of my students in the 9th grade level  
16 with those two teachers I would have to go over the  
17 allowable number of students who are acceptable in  
18 those classrooms -- and I believe that's 28 or 30.  
19 In some instances, I might have to go up to 34 or 35,  
20 but the REACH associate is there. There are some  
21 responsibilities for the REACH associate training  
22 that is going to happen for all of the parties who  
23 are involved. And so we have been polling in the  
24 district -- you know, how individuals are responding  
25 to us wanting to engage this model. There is some

1           apprehension. I understand that change is often  
2           difficult, but I think it's necessary for us to  
3           engage actively and aggressively to be able to meet  
4           the needs of my -- our student population. I've been  
5           very pleased that the principal at the high school  
6           has been very engaged and supportive of the process,  
7           along with the two teachers who are the MCLs which  
8           are -- they were formerly instructional facilitators.  
9           They are very willing to engage the process with us,  
10          because we know we have to improve the REACH  
11          certified instruction to our students.

12                 So we are seeking these two waivers. Without  
13          them, we can't really engage the way we need to  
14          engage in order to move the needle to impact change  
15          that needs to happen in the district. And as Ms.  
16          Saracini alluded to, we have been open to the support  
17          of Level 4 in terms of human capital. They've been  
18          working with us to make sure that we identify the  
19          pathways for our teachers who are not certified. So  
20          we appreciate that help and support; they've been a  
21          real co-teaching and partner with us, along with Ms.  
22          Tally Harp who was giving us support in the area of  
23          literacy, that support. And we welcome both of those  
24          arms of support, because the district is really  
25          trying to diligently impact what is happening in our

1 district.

2 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Thank you, Dr. Perkins.  
3 We appreciate that information.

4 Ms. Saracini.

5 MS. SARACINI: I'd like to just kind of  
6 piggyback on some of the things she said. We have  
7 met with them, our team, and their team in person  
8 back in Hot Springs at the Summit; we have had  
9 several Zooms, and almost weekly conference calls.  
10 And already there is a team going on their campus  
11 September 1st. Tally Harp and Melissa Jacks are  
12 leading that team. So I want you to know that we are  
13 providing the support and that it's just not up here  
14 today, but our goal is to really support them and get  
15 -- what our students need is teachers in front of  
16 them that have that instruction.

17 And also on that Class Size and Teaching Load,  
18 that's a little bit different --

19 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yeah.

20 MS. SARACINI: -- because of what Springdale was  
21 asking for. This is to make -- insure that we have  
22 that master lead teacher, and in their case a multi-  
23 classroom leader, that they're leading; that it's not  
24 that they're going to be a class, especially at the  
25 elementary, over without another body being in there

1 -- and as well, at the high school. And that's what  
2 -- that REACH associate is that paraprofessional.

3 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Are you --

4 MS. SARACINI: I just want to make sure --

5 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Are you giving them the  
6 specific support as far as Opportunity Culture? Are  
7 y'all giving them -- it sounds like it's an  
8 implementation year. So you are going to give them  
9 specific support for that implementation?

10 MS. SARACINI: Yes. We are working with the  
11 vendor, Public Impact, and, yes, that's already  
12 started. And also not just that, but we're going to  
13 go and meet and look at that human capital need so  
14 that if we need to meet with each individual teacher  
15 when Melissa Jacks takes the team on the 1st, we will  
16 go in and do that as well.

17 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yeah.

18 MS. SARACINI: So it's really -- we talk about  
19 wraparound services for students; this is the  
20 wraparound service for districts.

21 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yes. The Class Size/Teaching  
22 Load, will it only apply to those Opportunity Culture  
23 classrooms?

24 SUPT. PERKINS: No, it will not. At the  
25 elementary level as well there are several vacancies

1 that we were not able to fill. There will be times  
2 when we need to engage there as well, but we did  
3 specifically go around which classroom we were going  
4 to engage, not running the risk of putting more  
5 uncertified people in the classrooms. We thought if  
6 we engage the waiver, put the paraprofessional in,  
7 that we'd be able to meet our needs without leaving  
8 our uncertified people in classrooms.

9 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: So you're not going to do  
10 Opportunity Culture at elementary? Is that what I'm  
11 understanding?

12 SUPT. PERKINS: Well, they will come in next  
13 year. We're going to do middle school and high  
14 school this year. It is an implementation year, and  
15 I do believe that we could engage the school  
16 district. I wanted to get two schools up and  
17 running, for us to learn the model. There are some  
18 pieces that really need planning. Now the  
19 accelerated piece we are doing this year; we've  
20 already started. We went with Public Impact. We've  
21 done the plan for the high school, but it takes time  
22 to plan with Public Impact to get your people with  
23 the necessary skills that they need. The MCLs at the  
24 high school will start training next week. And so we  
25 wanted to start middle and high this year, and then

1 bring the other two campuses on next year.

2 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: So, and I'm sorry, let me see  
3 if the Board has questions and I'll come back.

4 Anyone over here on my left have questions?

5 Yeah. Okay, Dr. Moore.

6 DR. MOORE: Yes. So just to help me understand  
7 a little bit more on that Class Size -- there are no  
8 numbers in here. So what will that look like in the  
9 elementary level?

10 SUPT. PERKINS: So we have looked at the state  
11 standards for kindergarten, K through 5, and there  
12 will be no more than two to three overages in those  
13 classrooms. In those kindergarten through 2nd grade  
14 classrooms, no more than three students over.

15 DR. MOORE: Okay.

16 MR. SUTTON: Will that be stipulated in the  
17 waiver?

18 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: You can. I mean, that would  
19 be up to the Board. You could make that stipulation,  
20 if we want to, in the waiver.

21 MR. SUTTON: It's seems like it can't be -- as  
22 Dr. Moore is saying, it can't be just open-ended.

23 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Right.

24 DR. MOORE: Well, is this something that, as  
25 y'all have worked through the process, y'all have

1 worked with your staff? And I know it's hard with a  
2 changing staff and y'all have a lot on your plate.  
3 But you've worked with them, the elementary  
4 particularly, for them to understand what might be  
5 coming?

6 SUPT. PERKINS: Yes, especially with the  
7 principal. I do have a new principal in that  
8 building. The 3-5 building is a little better; the  
9 principal has been there -- this is her second year.  
10 We've been working with staff and with principals to  
11 help them understand what our reality is and where  
12 we're trying to move. We've been very careful around  
13 our language, but not wanting to overload teachers as  
14 well -- but to see if we can -- to make these  
15 adjustments just so that we can really try to meet  
16 the needs of the students. But we've been careful in  
17 our language, trying to build awareness and  
18 understanding of where we are.

19 DR. MOORE: Okay. And then, on Teacher  
20 Licensure, I don't -- it might've been written down,  
21 but did y'all hold that waiver for the five previous  
22 years or was it a three-year waiver?

23 SUPT. PERKINS: It was a five-year waiver.

24 DR. MOORE: Okay. So this is your -- the second  
25 time to receive that. And I know y'all have laid out

1 some of your challenges with that and some of the  
2 things you're going to be taking to move forward.

3 SUPT. PERKINS: Well, we're asking for this  
4 waiver for three years.

5 DR. MOORE: Okay, three years.

6 SUPT. PERKINS: [Zoom audio distortion]. Yes.

7 DR. MOORE: Okay. Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Ms. Freno or Ms. Saracini --  
9 I'm not sure which one would need to answer this  
10 question -- because we're almost looking at two  
11 different teacher licensure -- not teacher licensure  
12 -- Class Size and Teaching Load waivers. Because  
13 Opportunity Culture, we wouldn't be able to limit  
14 that at three; am I right?

15 MS. SARACINI: (Nodding head up and down.)

16 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: They would -- because they --  
17 don't they almost have to be two classrooms? But  
18 then if we're -- if they're going to use this for  
19 elementary also and we wanted to limit it, then how  
20 -- do you understand my -- if we grant it for the  
21 Opportunity Culture, that -- and we don't -- how --  
22 do you understand my question is how are we going to  
23 make that where it's not unlimited also at  
24 elementary?

25 MS. SARACINI: Because they're eventually going

1 to have the elementary come on, not this year, but  
2 next year.

3 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

4 MS. SARACINI: Right?

5 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

6 MS. SARACINI: So I don't know how that would  
7 have to be --

8 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: I don't know what -- I don't  
9 know if we need to stipulate or if we just need to --

10 DR. PFEFFER: One point that might help is that  
11 the district has asked us to provide Level 4 support  
12 for their human capital; so that's directed support.  
13 So we will be taking -- we will have a team that  
14 specifically --

15 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yeah.

16 DR. PFEFFER: -- works with them alongside the  
17 support team that's already working with them around  
18 their literacy. So I think putting all of that  
19 together will provide the oversight needed, and  
20 regular updates and reporting.

21 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

22 MS. SARACINI: Because it's just not my  
23 division, but Tally Harp out of Ms. Coffman's. And  
24 we talked about they're going to have their first  
25 visit on September 1st. So it will be truly

1 oversight.

2 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right. Because we  
3 can't put a limit on it because of the Opportunity  
4 Culture. Am I -- because they almost need two  
5 classrooms; right?

6 MS. SARACINI: (Nodding head up and down.)

7 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right.

8 All right. Any other questions from the Board  
9 here?

10 Over here?

11 All right, Mr. Henderson.

12 MR. HENDERSON: Dr. Perkins, thank you for your  
13 presentation and your comments. Can you share once  
14 more the number of staff members or teachers that you  
15 lost?

16 SUPT. PERKINS: Yes, sir. So I lost this past  
17 year 33 teachers.

18 MR. HENDERSON: Okay. How many were elementary?

19 SUPT. PERKINS: There were eight at the primary  
20 building, and our primary building is K-2, pre-K-2.  
21 At the elementary building, which is 3-5, we lost 12.

22 MR. HENDERSON: Okay.

23 SUPT. PERKINS: At the middle school we lost  
24 seven, and at the high school we lost six.

25 MR. HENDERSON: Okay. Thank you.

1 SUPT. PERKINS: Yes, sir.

2 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any other questions or  
3 comments for the Board -- or from the Board?

4 I think they've asked for these for three years,  
5 if I'm not mistaken, so --

6 Do we want to take these separately again, I  
7 think?

8 DR. MOORE: May I ask a question? With the  
9 Opportunity Culture, is there a timeline for how long  
10 that -- do you know if they're signing on to a  
11 contract for a certain number of years with that or  
12 is that an annual process?

13 MS. SARACINI: It is currently -- this is the  
14 design year, but we kind of fast-tracked them. And  
15 we've really worked with Public Impact so they can  
16 get that in at the high school and the middle school  
17 ASAP --

18 DR. MOORE: Okay.

19 MS. SARACINI: -- to kind of get that relief on  
20 the loss of teachers, and then looking at  
21 establishing it in elementary next year. Yes, it is  
22 an ongoing process yearly and we support that as an  
23 initiative out of my office.

24 DR. MOORE: Okay.

25 MS. SARACINI: So we will be here to support

1 that.

2 DR. MOORE: Okay. So if for some reason it were  
3 to change, these waivers would not continue without  
4 that program there?

5 MS. SARACINI: Yes. But they have made a  
6 commitment to us of three years.

7 DR. MOORE: Okay.

8 MS. SARACINI: And that's why they're  
9 specifically asking three years.

10 DR. MOORE: Okay. Thank you.

11 MS. SARACINI: Does that help?

12 DR. MOORE: That does. I want to check with the  
13 district just quickly -- I was double-checking with  
14 your virtual plans. Do any of your teachers do  
15 virtual instruction or -- I think it was Virtual  
16 Arkansas that's doing that. Is that correct?

17 SUPT. PERKINS: That's correct.

18 DR. MOORE: Okay. So teachers won't be doubling  
19 doing in virtual?

20 SUPT. PERKINS: They will not.

21 DR. MOORE: Okay.

22 SUPT. PERKINS: They will not.

23 DR. MOORE: Thank you.

24 MS. McFETRIDGE: So, Ms. Saracini, so I  
25 understand, your level of support, Level 4 support

1 will be for the full three years?

2 MS. SARACINI: They have asked for it  
3 specifically. Yes.

4 MS. McFETRIDGE: Okay.

5 MS. SARACINI: It may go beyond three years.  
6 They're -- I mean, we don't have to cap it at three  
7 years, but we're hoping for -- yes -- specifically,  
8 yes.

9 MS. McFETRIDGE: Okay.

10 MS. SARACINI: Yes.

11 MS. McFETRIDGE: While their 1240 waiver is in  
12 place?

13 MS. SARACINI: Yes.

14 MS. McFETRIDGE: Okay.

15 MS. SARACINI: Uh-huh. And it's not just human  
16 capital, but it's also literacy, because we know  
17 that's important too.

18 MS. McFETRIDGE: Okay. Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any other questions or  
20 comments from the Board?

21 Okay. The first waiver that Blytheville has  
22 asked for was Teacher Licensure for three years. Do  
23 I have a motion from the Board?

24 MS. McFETRIDGE: I'll make that motion to  
25 approve.

1 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. We have a motion from  
2 Ms. McFetridge to approve the waiver for Teacher  
3 Licensure for three years.

4 Do we have a second?

5 MR. SUTTON: I'll second that.

6 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Seconded by Mr. Sutton.

7 All in favor?

8 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

9 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any opposed?

10 Okay. They have asked for Class Size and  
11 Teaching Load in order to implement Opportunity  
12 Culture for three years. Do we have a motion from  
13 the Board?

14 MR. HENDERSON: I'd like to make that motion.

15 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. A motion from Mr.  
16 Henderson to --

17 MR. HENDERSON: Three years.

18 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: -- approve -- okay, to approve  
19 it for three years. Okay.

20 And do we have a second?

21 DR. HILL: Second.

22 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Seconded by Dr. Hill.

23 All in favor?

24 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

25 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any opposed?

1                   Okay. Congratulations, Dr. Perkins. We're  
2 looking forward to hearing great things of how -- the  
3 success of Opportunity Culture in your district.

4                   SUPT. PERKINS: Thank you so much.

5           c)   MAGNOLIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

6                   CHAIRMAN NEWTON: These next three 1240s are  
7 very similar and very exciting. So we will first see  
8 Magnolia. Ms. Saracini.

9                   MS. SARACINI: We have -- Magnolia is here, so  
10 I'm going to just let him take over.

11                  CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. And welcome.

12                  MS. SARACINI: Because I think it's pretty much  
13 a collaborative effort with these three particular  
14 districts with SAU.

15                  CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yes. Welcome, Mr. Ward.

16                  SUPT. WARD: Thank you. Skipper Ward,  
17 Superintendent of Magnolia Schools.

18                  So we are asking for a waiver for Class Size and  
19 -- in the elementary grades, and Teaching Load in the  
20 middle school grades, specifically math and science.

21                  This affects four teachers, student teachers  
22 actually, who are graduates of Magnolia. They are  
23 also enrolled in SAU in the teacher prep program.

24                  They only lack their student teaching semester, so  
25 that is the length of this waiver, is for the fall

1 semester. They will all have a mentor; they will all  
2 continue to go through the requirements of Southern  
3 Arkansas University teacher prep program; they will  
4 all have mentors on campus; they will all have access  
5 to an instructional facilitator as well.

6 The Teaching Load -- the mentor teacher will  
7 also -- will actually be the teacher of record for  
8 each one of these subject areas. The student  
9 teacher, the intern, will be the actual teacher  
10 that's in that class -- classroom.

11 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. Exciting to hear  
12 about this teacher efficacy. I'm looking forward to  
13 seeing some great results.

14 Do we have questions or comments over here on my  
15 right?

16 Ms. Saum.

17 MS. SAUM: What grade -- what classes will they  
18 be teaching?

19 SUPT. WARD: So 1st grade and then 6th grade  
20 science and 6th grade math.

21 MS. SAUM: Okay. Exciting. Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any other questions over here?

23 Secretary Key.

24 SECRETARY KEY: I just want -- Skipper, I just  
25 want to give you a chance to brag on what you and

1 your board recently did.

2 SUPT. WARD: Yes, so thank you for that. So,  
3 you know, with all of the talk of bonuses and  
4 recruitment and retention and our obvious need to  
5 recruit teachers to Magnolia, I think we had 48 new  
6 staff members in our district. It's very hard for us  
7 to recruit teachers. So we -- our board approved,  
8 Monday night, to use our APR ESSER funds to give our  
9 teachers a \$10,000 bonus, and our certified staff --  
10 non-certified -- our classified staff a \$6,000 bonus.  
11 It will be paid in two equal payments, one in the  
12 fall, one in the spring. We had, I think, three  
13 classroom jobs open, and once that news broke we  
14 suddenly had teachers who were interested in  
15 teaching. So kind of gives you an idea of the  
16 importance of teacher pay and being able to recruit  
17 teachers. The \$10,000 put our -- our beginning pay  
18 is \$39,200, so our first-year teachers will actually  
19 make, you know, \$49,000 -- pretty equal to any of the  
20 other highest paid districts in the state. So they  
21 were very appreciative. We were very excited to be  
22 able to use those funds for that.

23 So, thank you. I appreciate that opportunity.

24 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: We heard cheers coming from  
25 Magnolia --

1 SUPT. WARD: That's right.

2 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: -- all the way here.

3 SUPT. WARD: That's right.

4 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: So congratulations --

5 SUPT. WARD: Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: -- for thinking of teachers.

7 Any questions or comments over here?

8 Dr. Moore.

9 DR. MOORE: Yes. Thank you. That's great news  
10 for you and your staff.

11 As far as these intern teachers go, this would  
12 be for this fall semester?

13 SUPT. WARD: Fall semester.

14 DR. MOORE: And then, what happens in the spring  
15 semester?

16 SUPT. WARD: So they'll graduate and then  
17 they'll be in that classroom as the teacher of record  
18 in the spring semester --

19 DR. MOORE: Okay.

20 SUPT. WARD: -- moving forward.

21 DR. MOORE: And so looking at it now, as y'all  
22 are working with them -- I know this kind of -- they  
23 understand that this is a full year commitment --

24 SUPT. WARD: Yes.

25 DR. MOORE: -- and they're not going to --

1 SUPT. WARD: So the way we do our long-term subs  
2 in a similar situation, they would make the state  
3 minimum on their teacher salary.

4 DR. MOORE: Okay.

5 SUPT. WARD: Our state -- our base is -- what  
6 did I say -- \$39,200.

7 DR. MOORE: Uh-huh.

8 SUPT. WARD: So at the spring -- starting in the  
9 spring semester they'll actually move up to that  
10 higher salary scale.

11 DR. MOORE: Okay. That makes sense.

12 As far as support, would you say that these  
13 interns are going to receive more support than a  
14 regular first-year teacher?

15 SUPT. WARD: I would --

16 DR. MOORE: What will that --

17 SUPT. WARD: I would say the only additional  
18 support they would be receiving was -- is from SAU.

19 DR. MOORE: Okay.

20 SUPT. WARD: Because they'll still have their  
21 mentor --

22 DR. MOORE: Sure.

23 SUPT. WARD: -- you know, person from the  
24 university level. We provide the same mentorship and  
25 instructional facilitator support for, you know, all

1 of our teachers, specifically the first-year  
2 teachers; they get an additional mentor.

3 DR. MOORE: That's great. For the -- you said  
4 1st grade and 6th grade -- the 1st grade teacher,  
5 will they be receiving RISE training or additional  
6 support --

7 SUPT. WARD: Yes, ma'am.

8 DR. MOORE: -- in reading?

9 SUPT. WARD: Uh-huh. I think they received that  
10 this past week, I believe.

11 DR. MOORE: Okay. Awesome. Thank you.

12 SUPT. WARD: They've all -- they've also all  
13 passed their Praxis portion of --

14 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: That's wonderful.

15 SUPT. WARD: -- their test, so --

16 DR. MOORE: That's great.

17 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Congratulations.

18 SUPT. WARD: Thank you.

19 DR. MOORE: So thank you for coming today.

20 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. So I think we're  
21 ready for a motion to approve this waiver for the  
22 fall semester.

23 MR. SUTTON: I'll make the motion to approve.

24 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. Motion by Mr.  
25 Sutton.

1 MS. WOODS: Second.

2 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Seconded by Ms. Woods.

3 All in favor?

4 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

5 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any opposed?

6 SUPT. WARD: Thank y'all so much.

7 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Thank you for coming.

8 SUPT. WARD: We appreciate it. Thank you.

9 d) EL DORADO SCHOOL DISTRICT

10 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. Same sort of  
11 thing, I think, for El Dorado. Ms. Saracini.

12 MS. SARACINI: Yes. And El Dorado is on. I see

13 --

14 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Mr. Tucker.

15 MS. SARACINI: Uh-huh.

16 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: There he is.

17 MS. SARACINI: And Ms. Powell. And they are  
18 asking for specific waivers, very similar, to  
19 increase that equitable access to effective teachers

20 --

21 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

22 MS. SARACINI: -- for the fall semester.

23 And I just want to say SAU has a very intense  
24 rubric, and if they did not feel these interns could  
25 do a good job in the classroom they wouldn't be put

1 -- letting this happen.

2 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yes.

3 MS. SARACINI: So I just want you to know it's  
4 very -- a collaborative effort.

5 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yes. Mr. Tucker, welcome. Do  
6 you have anything you would like to share?

7 SUPT. TUCKER: Jim Tucker, Superintendent, El  
8 Dorado School District. On the screen also is  
9 Melissa Powell, Assistant Superintendent, El Dorado  
10 School District. And she's going to do the  
11 presentation.

12 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

13 MS. POWELL: Good morning.

14 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Good morning.

15 MS. POWELL: That's really almost exactly like  
16 Magnolia. We have an opportunity to have these three  
17 interns in these classrooms. All three of these  
18 interns have previously volunteered in our district;  
19 they have worked at STEAM days. And we have known  
20 that they were coming to student-teach with us and  
21 we're hoping to find a place for them in our district  
22 in January. They are all invested in our schools.  
23 So we're really -- I feel like we know these people.  
24 I guess we're always taking a chance on a teacher,  
25 but we know that they're all strong. Obviously, just

1 like Karli said, SAU does a great job of vetting  
2 them. We had a rubric. And they will receive that  
3 additional support from SAU. We do plan, just like  
4 Magnolia, to hire them in January to be the teacher  
5 of record. For us, they will be 5th grade literacy,  
6 and then 7th and 8th grade science, middle school.  
7 So, and they have all passed their licensure exams as  
8 well. And we're really excited about it. We've had  
9 them in training, but they're operating as teachers,  
10 as if this were not going to happen. And so they've  
11 received all of the training in the summer that our  
12 teachers have received as well and have been involved  
13 in that PD. We feel very confident about these three  
14 ladies.

15 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Thank you. We'll see  
16 if we have any questions from the Board.

17 Anyone over here on my left?

18 On my right?

19 I think we're ready for a motion then.

20 MS. WOODS: I'll move to approve.

21 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. We have a motion from  
22 Ms. Woods to approve the waiver for the El Dorado  
23 School District.

24 Do I have a second?

25 MS. McFETRIDGE: Second.

1 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Seconded by Ms. McFetridge.

2 All in favor?

3 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

4 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any opposed?

5 All right.

6 MS. POWELL: Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Thank you, and good luck.

8 MS. POWELL: Thank you.

9 SUPT. TUCKER: Thank you.

10 e) HOPE SCHOOL DISTRICT

11 MS. SARACINI: We have Hope next, and I see  
12 Jonathan Crossley is on. And this is very similar;  
13 it's that collaborative effort with SAU. And so I  
14 will let him go forth.

15 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Welcome, Mr. Crossley.

16 SUPT. CROSSLEY: Thank you. Jonathan Crossley,  
17 Superintendent of Schools, Hope School District.

18 So, really excited about this partnership with  
19 SAU; can't wait to get this going this year. This is  
20 a part of a comprehensive HR strategy. We are  
21 leaning into incentive pay and trying to raise  
22 teacher salaries and we're increasing teacher support  
23 through teacher coaching; we've received federal  
24 funds to do so, in addition to local resources. We  
25 have an Aspiring Leaders program for teachers to be a

1 part of a leadership cohort for promotion within the  
2 district. And then this is a pipeline with our --  
3 with SAU, a local institution that just does a  
4 phenomenal job.

5 Ashley Stewart is online. She is the elementary  
6 school principal.

7 We see this as being appropriate for her campus.  
8 She has 900 students, and she will be fully staffed  
9 after -- if and when this goes through. We have an  
10 instructional facilitator who will serve as the  
11 teacher of record in there, also receiving a \$2,000  
12 stipend to provide additional support. There's a  
13 paraprofessional who will assist in the classroom  
14 with this teacher. And we'd like to make this a  
15 multi-year process so that we can get ahead of the  
16 game and recruit high-quality candidates from SAU.  
17 We know on average we have somewhere between five and  
18 nine openings at the elementary school. We'd like to  
19 start hiring earlier in the year, somewhere around  
20 March, April. That's the guidance that came down  
21 from multiple institutions, HR institutions. And we  
22 want to lean into best practice.

23 Thank you all for allowing me to be here today.  
24 And I'll turn it over to Ashley Stewart with any  
25 information she wants to share.

1 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

2 MS. STEWART: We feel fortunate to have found  
3 this candidate. She is not your typical teacher ed.  
4 person; she actually has 15 years as a certified  
5 teacher with an Arkansas license in the vo-tech realm  
6 of education; so she is ahead of the game. And we  
7 look forward to the approval and her working with our  
8 students in a 3rd grade literacy classroom.

9 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. So this is just for one  
10 teacher then?

11 MS. STEWART: For one person, yes, ma'am.

12 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right.

13 SUPT. CROSSLEY: And if I would, I'd like to  
14 commend Ms. Freno and Ms. Saracini, Ms. Jacks with  
15 the Department who did a fantastic job collaborating  
16 with us; Ms. Boyd and Ms. Dobbins at SAU for their  
17 intent work with us. And we stand before you  
18 virtually for your decision.

19 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. Thank you.  
20 Any questions or comments from the Board?  
21 Okay. We're ready for a motion then.

22 MR. SUTTON: Motion to approve.

23 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. We have a motion by Mr.  
24 Sutton to approve the waiver for the Hope School  
25 District.

1 MS. McFETRIDGE: I'll second that.

2 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Seconded by Ms. McFetridge.

3 All in favor?

4 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

5 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any opposed?

6 Congratulations. Looking forward to hearing  
7 great things. Good to see you, Jonathan.

8 SECRETARY KEY: Yeah.

9 SUPT. CROSSLEY: Good to see you as well.

10 SECRETARY KEY: While we're on this topic, I was  
11 going to save this for my report but time -- the  
12 timeliness of it, I think, is appropriate now. Dr.  
13 Pfeffer and I went to SAU last week and visited with  
14 their leadership, College of Education team. And I  
15 just want to say they are doing a tremendous job down  
16 there. We got to tour their new education building  
17 for their College of Ed. And they are actively  
18 seeking partnerships with the local school districts.  
19 They are -- you know, Dr. Berry -- he told us several  
20 times if he can be the first to do anything, they  
21 want to be the first -- so any new ideas, new  
22 partnerships. And they really are working hard to --  
23 you know, to strengthen that educator pipeline for  
24 south Arkansas. And I think these three districts  
25 coming before us today, those are evidence of what

1 they're trying to do. And I just want to say how  
2 much I appreciate Dr. Berry and that team down there  
3 for, you know, trying to find out what more they can  
4 do. They're always looking for ways that they can  
5 partner with the Department.

6 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: And as a grandmother I  
7 appreciate it too. I have a grandson that's moving  
8 in Sunday, so I'm excited to become part of the  
9 family, I guess. So, congratulations to SAU and the  
10 districts that are working with them. So looking  
11 forward to great things.

12 MS. McFETRIDGE: Secretary Key, I wanted to ask  
13 as well --

14 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Use your microphone.

15 MS. McFETRIDGE: Are they involved with the PLC  
16 process, and are the interns working in that as well?

17 SECRETARY KEY: Yes. Dr. Guevara, who is the  
18 head of the Education Renewal Zone there at SAU,  
19 along with all the other ERZs, they are very much  
20 involved in that and in introducing those concepts,  
21 bringing those concepts to the candidates through  
22 their processes. So, yeah, when I say they are a  
23 full partner, I mean they're partnering with us  
24 across the board.

25 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. I think this will

1 be a good spot for us to stop and break for lunch.  
2 So, Board, would you like 45 minutes or an hour?  
3 Which one do you prefer? Is 45 plenty? Okay. Good.  
4 So we'll be back at 12:45. And I got my time right  
5 this time. All right.

6 (LUNCH BREAK: 11:58 a.m. - 12:52 p.m.)

7 3) CONSIDERATION FOR CROSS COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL A NEW TECH  
8 SCHOOL AMENDMENT REQUEST

9 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. I think we're  
10 ready to begin our afternoon session. We're going to  
11 begin with Cross County High School amendment  
12 request. Ms. Summons. No, not Ms. Summons.

13 DR. SUTHERLIN: So Matthew Sutherlin, Standards  
14 and Systems Support, Charter.

15 So we have here -- Cross County High School A  
16 New Tech High School is requesting a waiver for Class  
17 Size and Teaching Load. Now they already had Class  
18 Size and Teaching Load when the standard was actually  
19 Class Size and Teaching Load. Those standards have  
20 been split apart, so now they're 1-A.5 and 1-A.6; so  
21 they're really just adding 1-A.6 to incorporate the  
22 Teaching Load.

23 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

24 DR. SUTHERLIN: And then I believe somebody was  
25 going to be on here from Cross County, but I don't

1 see them right now. Guess not. They were here  
2 before lunch, but --

3 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. That's okay. We broke  
4 right in the middle. So they are -- it's a  
5 continuation of one and then -- almost really a  
6 continuation of both, I guess?

7 DR. SUTHERLIN: Yeah. It's really almost like  
8 they're cleaning up their waivers.

9 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Right. Yeah, that's a better  
10 way of saying it. Okay. All right. And so this  
11 would be to review or not review also?

12 DR. SUTHERLIN: Yes, it would be review or not  
13 review.

14 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. So, any comments or  
15 questions from the Board?

16 DR. MOORE: I did. I did watch this Charter  
17 Authorizing Panel meeting. Did they have any --

18 MR. PRINCE: We are here.

19 DR. MOORE: Did the Panel have any concerns?

20 DR. SUTHERLIN: Not that I'm aware of.

21 DR. MOORE: Okay.

22 DR. SUTHERLIN: And then I believe Mr. Prince --

23 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yes, I see Mr. Prince now.

24 DR. MOORE: Okay. Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Mr. Prince, did you have

1 anything you would like to say?

2 MR. PRINCE: No, ma'am, I don't. Just that this  
3 waiver has really helped us start the school year  
4 off. And some of the things that we've put in place  
5 to kind of help offset some of the larger class sizes  
6 has really helped with that 9th grade group. For  
7 instance, we did -- we have -- we had three co-  
8 teaching situations that we've created for that 9th  
9 grade class, and it's been -- or two for that 9th  
10 grade class, and it's been very beneficial to help  
11 with that class size as well.

12 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Any other questions  
13 from the Board?

14 MS. McFETRIDGE: So you're going to continue the  
15 co-teaching then with this 9th grade class?

16 MR. PRINCE: So we are currently piloting for  
17 our first year Boundless Learning, and so we have our  
18 9th grade English class and our Algebra I classes set  
19 up with co-teaching. And so that co-teaching model  
20 is set up to be more inclusive and provide more  
21 inclusive practices for all of our student  
22 population. And so that has -- so far, has been very  
23 beneficial, but, you know, we're just one week in.  
24 But for those students to experience that traditional  
25 classroom is going to be very helpful for them in

1 terms of their academic achievement.

2 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any others, Ms. McFetridge?

3 Do you have another question?

4 MS. McFETRIDGE: No.

5 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Anyone else?

6 Okay. This one would be review or not review.

7 DR. MOORE: I'll move to not review.

8 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. We have a motion by Dr.

9 Moore not to review.

10 MR. SUTTON: I'll second.

11 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Seconded by Mr. Sutton.

12 All in favor?

13 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

14 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any opposed?

15 All right. Thank you, Mr. Prince.

16 MR. PRINCE: Thank you all.

17 4) CONSIDERATION OF ACT 1240 DIGITAL LEARNING WAIVERS

18 a) MOUNTAIN VIEW SCHOOL DISTRICT

19 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. Now we're to the  
20 1240 waivers. And, Ms. Harp, are we going to batch  
21 some of these together or are we taking --

22 MS. HARP: Yes, ma'am, we are.

23 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. You read my mind.

24 MS. HARP: Yeah.

25 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right.

1 MS. HARP: Good afternoon. Tally Harp, District  
2 Support.

3 We have -- let's see -- three, six -- 11 digital  
4 learning applications to present today. I want to do  
5 Southside Charter first since it's -- well, I don't  
6 remember the terminology for a charter. Review or  
7 not review; is that right?

8 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Uh-huh. Yes.

9 MS. HARP: So if we want to do that one first?

10 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

11 j) SOUTHSIDE BATESVILLE CHARTER

12 MS. HARP: Southside Batesville Charter, the  
13 only change they made to their application was with  
14 the change to the Tri-Region Consortium, adding 7th  
15 and 8th grade. And so they revised theirs to have  
16 their 7th and 8th graders stay with the consortium  
17 instead of doing Virtual Arkansas.

18 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

19 MS. HARP: They did request three years;  
20 however, we have in past meetings said only up to  
21 two. So they would be to review or not review.

22 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. So Southside on your --  
23 is 4.j. Okay. It's 4.j if you're looking at it on  
24 your agenda. And this would be review or not review.

25 And any comments or questions from the Board on

1 this digital learning plan?

2 Okay. Are we ready for a motion now?

3 MS. McFETRIDGE: I'll make a motion that we not  
4 review.

5 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. A motion by Ms.  
6 McFetridge not to review.

7 Do we have a second?

8 MS. WOODS: Second.

9 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Seconded by Ms. Woods.  
10 All in favor?

11 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

12 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any opposed?

13 All right.

- 14 a) MOUNTAIN VIEW SCHOOL DISTRICT  
15 b) CONCORD SCHOOL DISTRICT  
16 c) HIGHLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT  
17 d) BLYTHEVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
18 e) MELBOURNE SCHOOL DISTRICT

19 MS. HARP: Okay. The next five or the other  
20 first ones, if you just take Southside out of that --  
21 Mountain View, Concord, Highland, Blytheville, and  
22 Melbourne -- they all are part of the Tri-Region  
23 Consortium and their changes were only to add to that  
24 consortium. So Concord added K-2; they did not have  
25 K-2 in the past, so they put K-2 with the Tri-Region.

1 And then the rest of the districts went ahead and  
2 added up to 7th and 8th, except Blytheville only had  
3 K-5 with the consortium and they added 6th grade.

4 Concord requested one year; the rest of the  
5 districts requested three. So, again, we would -- we  
6 may need to do two for those.

7 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Is Melbourne going to  
8 stick with one year?

9 MS. HARP: Melbourne -- no, Concord said one and  
10 that was --

11 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Oh, Concord.

12 MS. HARP: Yes, ma'am.

13 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: I thought it was Melbourne.  
14 I'm sorry.

15 MS. HARP: Yes, ma'am.

16 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Is Concord going to stick with  
17 one year?

18 MS. HARP: They did not indicate any changes to  
19 that. We had some come -- there's only two on that  
20 whole set that did it for one year this time.

21 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right. Any  
22 questions or comments?

23 Okay. This would be for Mountain View,  
24 Highland, Blytheville, and Melbourne for two years,  
25 and Concord for one year, if that's the motion that

1 the Board would like to make.

2 Mr. Sutton, do you have something? I'm going to  
3 pick on you because of what you said.

4 MR. SUTTON: Well, that's fine. I'll make the  
5 motion; I'm not sure I can repeat it.

6 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. That's okay. We have a  
7 motion for Mountain View, Highland, Blytheville, and  
8 Melbourne for two years; Concord for one year.

9 Do we have a second?

10 MR. HENDERSON: Second.

11 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Seconded by Mr. Henderson.

12 All in favor?

13 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

14 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any opposed?

15 Okay.

16 f) ALPENA SCHOOL DISTRICT

17 g) OZARK MOUNTAIN SCHOOL DISTRICT

18 i) PRAIRIE GROVE SCHOOL DISTRICT

19 MS. HARP: Okay. The next three -- Alpena,  
20 Ozark Mountain, and Prairie Grove -- they changed  
21 their CMS/LMS. So Alpena added 7-12 to Virtual  
22 Arkansas; Ozark Mountain, 7-12 went to Virtual  
23 Arkansas; and Prairie Grove, they changed their K-8  
24 to Lincoln Learning from Florida Virtual. So the  
25 other schools were providing their own digital

1 program for their secondary; they have since changed  
2 to Virtual Arkansas. And then Prairie Grove was the  
3 opposite; they were doing it on their own K-8 and --  
4 or, no, were doing -- yeah, sorry -- Florida Virtual  
5 and moved to Lincoln Learning.

6 And Ozark Mountain and Prairie Grove have  
7 requested -- Ozark Mountain requested two; Prairie  
8 Grove requested three; and Alpena requested one.

9 MS. WOODS: Did Lamar get taken off, or they're  
10 just in a different one?

11 MS. HARP: Lamar is in the next section.

12 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. So it's just different.  
13 I got confused too. Okay.

14 MS. HARP: I did them out of order. I  
15 apologize.

16 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: That's okay. All right. So  
17 Alpena is one year?

18 MS. HARP: Yes, ma'am.

19 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: And then Ozark Mountain is  
20 two?

21 MS. HARP: Yes, ma'am.

22 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: And Prairie Grove is two?

23 MS. HARP: Yes, ma'am.

24 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Did the Board catch  
25 that? And we'll pull Lamar in for just -- in just a

1 minute.

2 DR. MOORE: I do have a question for Prairie  
3 Grove --

4 MS. HARP: Okay.

5 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right.

6 DR. MOORE: -- if they're on.

7 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Is someone from Prairie Grove  
8 on?

9 MS. HARP: I don't know that I see them on.

10 DR. MOORE: Okay. Well, this is one of these  
11 programs -- Lincoln Learning is still using in-house  
12 teachers. Is that correct?

13 MS. HARP: Are you talking about their --

14 DR. MOORE: Their plan for K-6.

15 MS. HARP: Oh, their plan.

16 DR. MOORE: They're moving from Florida Virtual?

17 MS. HARP: So for their elementary, the  
18 elementary teachers are totally virtual. So they --  
19 those teachers are dedicated to --

20 DR. MOORE: Okay.

21 MS. HARP: -- that only.

22 DR. MOORE: Using Lincoln Learning.

23 MS. HARP: Uh-huh. Now the 7th and 8th grader  
24 -- 8th grade, then they have a dual role --

25 DR. MOORE: Okay.

1 MS. HARP: -- depending on if the district  
2 offers something that's not available through Lincoln  
3 Learning.

4 DR. MOORE: Okay.

5 MS. HARP: But the elementary, the K-6 are  
6 completely virtual teachers.

7 DR. MOORE: Okay. Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Do we have a motion for these  
9 three districts?

10 MS. McFETRIDGE: I'll make the motion for these  
11 three districts.

12 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. We have a motion to  
13 approve Alpena for one, Ozark Mountain for two, and  
14 Prairie Grove for two by Ms. McFetridge.

15 MR. SUTTON: I'll second.

16 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Seconded by Mr. Sutton.

17 All in favor?

18 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

19 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any opposed?

20 h) LAMAR SCHOOL DISTRICT

21 k) RECTOR SCHOOL DISTRICT

22 MS. HARP: Okay. Then the last two are Rector  
23 -- excuse me -- Rector and Lamar. They had a  
24 previously one year approved plan. They resubmitted  
25 this year for an additional two years and made no

1 revisions to either plan.

2 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: So both of these are for two  
3 years?

4 MS. HARP: Yes, ma'am.

5 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. Any questions on  
6 Lamar or Rector?

7 Okay. We're ready for a motion.

8 MR. HENDERSON: I make a motion to approve.

9 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Motion by Mr. Henderson to  
10 approve Lamar and Rector for two years.

11 Do we have a second?

12 MS. WOODS: I'll second.

13 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Seconded by Ms. Woods.

14 All in favor?

15 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

16 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any opposed?

17 Okay.

18 MS. HARP: Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Thank you. We've come a long  
20 way from spending hours on these, haven't we?

21 MS. HARP: Yes, ma'am, we have.

22 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: But that was because of all of  
23 the guidance that y'all have given and the hard work  
24 that y'all have put in, and we as a board appreciate  
25 it very much. So thank you.

1 MS. HARP: We have a great team.

2 5) CONSIDERATION FOR EMERGENCY PROMULGATION AND PUBLIC  
3 COMMENT RELEASE: DESE RULES GOVERNING EDUCATOR LICENSURE,  
4 SECTIONS 1-2.0, 4-5.0, 6-4.0, AND 4-8.0 ONLY)

5 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. We are looking at  
6 the emergency rules governing Educator Licensure.  
7 Ms. Freno.

8 MS. FRENO: Thank you, Ms. Newton. We have for  
9 the Board for consideration today certain sections of  
10 the Educator Licensure rules. But before -- and this  
11 is for emergency promulgation and for permanent  
12 promulgation. Emergency rules only stay in effect  
13 for 120 days, if approved. So, consequently, we  
14 promulgate them both ways.

15 But before we get started and ask for your  
16 approval, we ask that -- we have a guest here, Dr.  
17 Josh McGee, and we ask that you allow him to come up  
18 and give a presentation that will provide context for  
19 what the requested amendments are for.

20 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right. Welcome,  
21 Mr. McGee.

22 DR. MCGEE: Thank you. I appreciate it. My  
23 presentation is part of your packet, I believe. Are  
24 we pulling that up on the screen? If not, I've got  
25 it printed out and I can grab my copy.

1 DR. PFEFFER: Board Members, while he's pulling  
2 that up, if you remember a couple of months ago you  
3 all requested that we do some research on licensure  
4 assessments, how they were affecting the teacher  
5 pipeline in Arkansas, and also what's going on in  
6 other states. Well, Dr. McGee and his team have been  
7 doing that research for us, so they have some  
8 preliminary findings. And then we're going to infuse  
9 the request for the rule change as part of a policy  
10 recommendation. And then they'll continue on with  
11 the partnership and work over the next few months.  
12 So --

13 DR. MCGEE: I'll go ahead and get started while  
14 he's pulling that up. The slides are available on  
15 the web and should be part of your packet.

16 So we're going to talk today about our  
17 investigation of the impact of teacher licensure  
18 policies on teacher recruitment, retention, and  
19 diversity. I'm with Office of Education Policy at  
20 the University of Arkansas; that's inside the  
21 Department of Education Reform. I'm also the Chief  
22 Data Officer for the State of Arkansas, so I've been  
23 working with the state to help us bring our data  
24 together and deliver actionable insights that can  
25 inform policy.

1           So our discussion today is part of a larger  
2 project that is looking at the entire teacher  
3 pipeline. It's a collaboration between the  
4 University of Arkansas, the Department of Education,  
5 the ARData team, which is the state's data and  
6 analytics team, and TNTP.

7           We've got a bunch of goals that really boils  
8 down to we want to provide actionable data and  
9 evidence around the teacher pipeline, along with  
10 informed policy recommendations that will help move  
11 the state forward on teacher recruitment, retention,  
12 and training. We also want to work with the state to  
13 help the Department set goals and monitor progress  
14 against those goals.

15           Go up one slide to four, please.

16           This work is made possible by new state linked  
17 data. We brought data together from across state  
18 departments, including DESE, the Division of Higher  
19 Education, and the Division of Workforce Services.  
20 We've got one of the most comprehensive datasets now  
21 that allows us to dig into teacher education and  
22 training.

23           Next slide, please.

24           At the outset, I want to make sure that we all  
25 understand that the teacher pipeline is a very

1 complex system. You can't concentrate on one piece  
2 of it; it's a system that has multiple on- and off-  
3 ramps. And we're going to hone in on teacher  
4 licensure exams today, but it's a complex system and  
5 we're going to be looking at the entire pipeline.

6 Next slide, please.

7 Now Arkansas faces several challenges around  
8 this teacher pipeline.

9 Next slide. There we go. We're going full-  
10 screen.

11 Interest in teaching has been declining. So our  
12 enrollment in EPP programs has been declining over  
13 time. This is the national trend; we've seen  
14 enrollment in teaching preparation programs decline  
15 nationally.

16 At the same time many districts have a large  
17 percentage of waiver teachers. You'll notice the  
18 lighter colors here are districts with a high  
19 proportion of waiver teachers. This aligns with  
20 districts with a high proportion of minority  
21 students, as well as students living in poverty.

22 Waivers are disproportionately used by Black  
23 teachers. So the bottom bar there are waiver  
24 teachers, and you'll see that a larger percentage of  
25 those teachers are Black.

1           At the same time, Arkansas' teachers are less  
2           diverse than their students. The student bar is the  
3           top one. You'll see relatively large percentages of  
4           Black and Hispanic students, and lower percentages of  
5           teachers with those ethnicities. And we know that  
6           having a diverse teacher workforce will help students  
7           reach their full potential.

8           So, the question of the hour: How do licensure  
9           policies influence teacher supply, quality, and  
10          diversity?

11          Evidence suggests that licensure requirements  
12          are not always well aligned with classroom  
13          effectiveness. They're only partially predictive of  
14          classroom effectiveness, and exams can be a barrier  
15          to entry into the teaching workforce, especially for  
16          underrepresented communities. We're working to  
17          investigate for Arkansas the relationship between  
18          licensure scores and classroom effectiveness. We'll  
19          have that data a little later on in the fall. We  
20          know a little bit more about diversity now.

21          So this looks at the various stages of the  
22          teacher pipeline. The first bar there is the entire  
23          undergraduate population in Arkansas' universities.  
24          It matches the student population pretty closely, the  
25          K-12 student population for the state. If you move

1 left to right from undergraduates through graduates  
2 -- so those people who completed -- to education  
3 graduates to EPP graduates, you'll see that we lose  
4 diversity at every step along the way. The middle  
5 two bars represent test-takers; so this is licensure  
6 test-takers and test-passers. Again, we get some  
7 diversity on test-takers, but that bar drops by half  
8 for Black -- aspiring Black teachers on test-passers.  
9 It appears that the test, the licensure test is a  
10 significant barrier for those teachers. Again, the  
11 last three bars represent the demographics of the  
12 current teaching population.

13 I'll highlight the end bar there. So while we  
14 have diversity challenges, it looks like things are  
15 getting better. And we'll talk about some things  
16 that the State is doing to improve teacher diversity,  
17 and it appears to be working.

18 So we're going to look at pass rates. We're  
19 going to dig into the licensure exam a little bit  
20 more. What I want you to take away from these slides  
21 -- so I've got three slides; the first one is  
22 elementary, second one is middle, third one is  
23 secondary. What I want you to take away from these  
24 slides, one, the pass rates are pretty low, so it  
25 does look like the test is a barrier; and, two,

1           there's a significant gap between White teachers,  
2           Black teachers, and Hispanic teachers. And that's  
3           causing a problem with the diversity of licensed  
4           teachers in the state.

5           Pass rates are lower for middle school; so while  
6           pass rates seem low for elementary school, they're  
7           even lower for middle school and the gaps increase in  
8           some subjects.

9           Secondary, you've got kind of a dual threat  
10          here. We've got pass rates that are somewhat low  
11          with large gaps. But then we've also got several  
12          subjects -- well, we simply don't have many Black and  
13          Hispanic teachers taking the test at all. We have a  
14          real challenge getting Black and Hispanic teachers  
15          into the teacher pipeline for secondary. But  
16          Arkansas is working to address this challenge.

17          So there are lots of different programs that are  
18          put in place. I'm going to highlight a few here.  
19          There's the Alternative Assessment Plan that allows  
20          aspiring teachers to work toward a standard license  
21          if they score within minus two (-2) standard error of  
22          measurement on the licensure exam. To be granted a  
23          standard license, they have to complete an approved  
24          micro-credential or performance-based content  
25          assessment, and have three years of successful

1 teaching experience. There are lots of teachers that  
2 have been using this pathway. We see 271 over the  
3 last three years, and 32 of those provisional  
4 licenses have been converted to standard licenses.  
5 So that's a viable pathway to get teachers a license  
6 and teaching in the classroom.

7 The Department is also providing support  
8 tutoring through the Licensure Assessment Ready  
9 program. So for those teachers who need some help to  
10 get over that passing score, the Department is  
11 providing tutoring. You can see that a significant  
12 amount of support has been provided and hundreds of  
13 teachers have already gone to those tutoring  
14 sessions.

15 That brings us to the proposed rule change. So  
16 aspiring teachers can receive a one-year provisional  
17 license that can be renewed for up to three years.  
18 To receive the provisional license, an aspiring  
19 teacher must, first, hold a Bachelor's degree; and  
20 provide official -- an official score, passing score  
21 on the licensure exam score -- on the licensure exam  
22 test; or -- and this is where the change comes in --  
23 if the applicant did not pass the licensure exam,  
24 they can show evidence of a degree in the content  
25 area, 18 credit hours -- college credit hours in the

1 content area, or document successful, relevant work  
2 experience. Applicants may also be eligible for the  
3 Alternative Assessment Plan. The above  
4 qualifications satisfy the Arkansas Qualified Teacher  
5 requirements but provide flexibility around when they  
6 must pass the Praxis exam. This year, 113 applicants  
7 who did not pass the Praxis would have been eligible  
8 for this option.

9 DR. PFEFFER: Can we pause for just a second?

10 DR. MCGEE: Yeah.

11 DR. PFEFFER: Is that okay?

12 Okay. So I think you've had some really, really  
13 compelling data shared so far. So we're going to  
14 pause a little bit to see if you have questions  
15 around data, and then I want to talk a little bit  
16 more about the proposed rule change. So do you have  
17 any questions for Dr. McGee about the data that he  
18 has shared?

19 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Anyone over here have a  
20 question?

21 MS. WOODS: I'm good. I don't have any  
22 questions.

23 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

24 MR. SUTTON: I'd like to ask just probably a  
25 silly question. But we've been talking for years --

1 the last couple of years, since I've been on the  
2 Board, about the low pass rate on the Praxis. At  
3 what point do we look and say there's something wrong  
4 with the Praxis exam?

5 DR. PFEFFER: So, well, and I'll -- what we're  
6 trying to do is really understand all of the issues  
7 around that; so is it an issue with the exam, is it  
8 -- are there better ways to determine whether or not  
9 a teacher has the content knowledge and the peda-  
10 gogical skills to enter the classroom. So that's  
11 part -- I think to answer your question about at what  
12 point, I think we want to do more research around  
13 what other states are doing, what does it look like  
14 if we could expand our performance-based assessment,  
15 which is what the AAP really is. We don't have the  
16 capacity at this point to switch over to a complete  
17 portfolio system or, you know, an alternate system  
18 yet. But I think as we gather more data, and working  
19 with Josh and his team, I think we're going to come  
20 to that conclusion over the next few months.

21 MR. SUTTON: Okay. Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any other questions over here?

23 DR. HILL: I have a comment.

24 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

25 DR. HILL: What about -- I know that the

1 Commissioner had mentioned SAU. And we looked at,  
2 say, nursing school and these type of exams that have  
3 to be taken after you complete your degree. Is there  
4 any thoughts of integrating this into the colleges so  
5 they have multiple times to be prepping to taking it,  
6 a content analysis while they're doing that. It just  
7 seems to me like, you know, everybody gets tested,  
8 particularly when you're coming from a different  
9 culture of understanding of the way the test is  
10 written. So I think there's something -- when you  
11 talk about being the first, that if we start  
12 integrating that into the process and you -- there's  
13 a lot -- I've talked to several individuals who have  
14 worked real hard; they said, "I got my whole check  
15 riding on me passing this test." So, a lot of  
16 anxiety going into that situation. And the ones that  
17 you -- five years you've been there and you've got to  
18 walk into that situation, knowing that you're not a  
19 good test-taker anyway, and then now you've got  
20 everything based on that. I think we need to look at  
21 possibly integrating this into the educational  
22 process and start working through that, each way you  
23 go through, and don't wait till one last -- say,  
24 "Okay, we're going to do this in the junior year;  
25 we'll do this semester and we'll start integrating

1           that," so you're not waiting until that last time.  
2           You've got all eggs in one basket; if you crack it,  
3           if the yolk is out, then you can't do it again. So I  
4           think there's a process that we need to look at. I  
5           know some nursing schools are doing that, because I  
6           know some schools that would have nursing degrees and  
7           they were not passing the nursing tests. So they  
8           want to go back and look at the process. So I think  
9           we may need to evaluate it, that whole process, to  
10          matriculate through that over a period of junior,  
11          senior year, into a professional development plan.

12                 DR. PFEFFER: I agree. And I think -- and I  
13                 know y'all probably get tired every time I get up  
14                 here I talk about the teacher residency model. But  
15                 that is exactly the design of the residency model,  
16                 because you're having students that they're getting  
17                 -- first of all, it's integrating not just within  
18                 their prep program but it's integrating in their  
19                 everyday work experience. So you're blending that  
20                 experience their having with that work-based  
21                 opportunity while they're studying the content,  
22                 learning the content; they're part of the ed-prep  
23                 pathway, and that's part of the design that they'll  
24                 be -- exposed to the information, exposed to the  
25                 experience, taking those assessments, and they're

1 going to be completely ready when they walk out that  
2 door. I think for some of those who really do  
3 struggle with that paper/pencil or on-screen exam, I  
4 think the addition of either a portfolio or  
5 performance-based test, where they're showing that  
6 they can teach by teaching, I think that is exactly  
7 the direction that we'll be heading. And that will  
8 require the ed-prep program -- and the hard part  
9 right now is our alternative programs, like MATs, the  
10 RPEP program, the licensure programs, they are  
11 designed more around pedagogy. Because in the past  
12 all of the candidates would come with the content  
13 background; you would have the science majors who  
14 want to be science teachers. That's a completely  
15 different -- we have a completely different aspiring  
16 teacher now. So if we're going to have kindergarten  
17 teachers, special ed. teachers, middle school  
18 teachers going through an alternative route, we're  
19 going to have to recognize that they're going to need  
20 the content support while they're learning the art  
21 and -- the art of teaching at the same time. So that  
22 is definitely what we've got to consider and move  
23 toward, and this recommendation is going to be a step  
24 toward that.

25 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any other --

1 Dr. Moore.

2 DR. MOORE: Yeah. It was great to see this data  
3 and I know a lot of work went into it. I would be  
4 curious to know were y'all able to drill down to the  
5 university level and see what universities are doing  
6 a better job of, you know, having higher passing  
7 rates, especially with students of color?

8 DR. McGEE: Yes. We didn't do that for this  
9 presentation, but we have the capability to do that.  
10 So part of me coming here today was to get feedback  
11 from you all about the questions that you really need  
12 answered to inform policy. So we'll add that to the  
13 list and make sure that we have that information for  
14 you next time you see us.

15 DR. MOORE: I think I've heard some university  
16 say that they required Praxis passing to graduate.  
17 Is that very common?

18 MS. SARACINI: Karli Saracini.

19 Yes, it's all over the place. Some have to have  
20 it before they even do their internship.

21 DR. MOORE: Okay.

22 MS. SARACINI: Some have to just have it before  
23 they can get their diploma. Some do not. So it's  
24 kind of all over the place. I can't say, you know,  
25 this one does this, this one does that. But in the

1 traditional program, which Dr. Hill is talking about,  
2 they are really trying to integrate -- you know, when  
3 you're taking your lower course math -- to take the  
4 Praxis during that. But when we look at our  
5 alternate routes, they don't have that traditional  
6 program. So this is kind of meeting that need.  
7 Because, you know, if everybody could go through the  
8 residency model I don't think we would have -- we  
9 would be up here today. But we have teachers coming  
10 in, all different levels, areas, and so how can we  
11 meet everyone's needs, is what Dr. Pfeffer and Dr.  
12 McGee -- I mean, we're really wanting to look and  
13 deep-dive into it, and this is just his first time.  
14 I mean, we are really looking to see what we can do.  
15 So I think this is just step one or stage one of what  
16 we're trying to do.

17 DR. MOORE: That's great. And I look forward to  
18 more research to come.

19 One follow-up question -- when I'm looking at  
20 this graph again, 12% of test-takers are Black and  
21 then 6% are passers. Do we have information about  
22 what happens to those that aren't passing and where  
23 they're going?

24 DR. MCGEE: That's a great question and, again,  
25 anticipates where we're going with our look at the

1 data.

2 DR. MOORE: Okay.

3 DR. MCGEE: So we're very interested to see both  
4 trajectories from high school into postsecondary, but  
5 also what happens in postsecondary, what does the  
6 enrollment and financial aid look like for people who  
7 want to become teachers, when do they pass the  
8 Praxis, what happens to those who don't pass the  
9 Praxis. So we can follow folks using our linked data  
10 from high school into postsecondary into teaching, if  
11 they go into teaching -- but we can also follow them  
12 into the workforce in Arkansas. So we're going to be  
13 able to see if they go into some other job, either  
14 before or after they teach, what industry they're  
15 employed in, what their wages were.

16 DR. MOORE: Okay. That's great. Thank you.

17 MR. SUTTON: I think this is very encouraging to  
18 see that we're focusing this hard on this pipeline  
19 and all the causes and effects and how we correct.  
20 I'm very encouraged by this.

21 DR. PFEFFER: And every time I hear him talk  
22 about and we can find out this and we can know this,  
23 I just get excited because I'm thinking, wow, once we  
24 have this information we're going to be able to make  
25 some really good decisions and it's going to benefit

1 a wide array of areas in the workforce. So --

2 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any other questions or  
3 comments?

4 DR. PFEFFER: So I'm pausing here for just a  
5 minute on the recommendation on the rules. So to  
6 just kind of give you a little more background with  
7 that, I want to make sure that everyone is really  
8 clear and comfortable with what the change will do.

9 So, the change is to the sections of the rules  
10 that deal with provisional licensing -- so our  
11 alternate programs -- and the change is only for  
12 those who are going into a prep program. Okay. So  
13 it's not just someone who says, "Oh, I want to be a  
14 teacher, hire me to be a teacher." So you have to be  
15 enrolling in an approved Arkansas prep program, first  
16 of all. Then --

17 Dan, can we have this slide back up too? I'm  
18 sorry. Yes, I'm still -- we're just pausing right  
19 now.

20 And then it won't be for everyone who's  
21 enrolling in an alternate program; it will be for a  
22 candidate who does have some type of background --  
23 either background knowledge or experience in the  
24 content area where they want to teach. So, right  
25 now, these are the requirements that meet our AQT,

1           Arkansas Qualified Teacher requirements. But what it  
2           will allow is this person, even if they don't pass  
3           the Praxis, they would go ahead and get a provisional  
4           license, and that license could be renewed for up to  
5           three years. Because right now I could have a  
6           background in math, I could have been a math major,  
7           but if I don't pass that Praxis -- and some people  
8           may say, "Why wouldn't you pass the math Praxis?"  
9           Well, you know, that test is measuring what a first-  
10          year teacher should know and be able to do. But if  
11          you've been in a different field, a different area  
12          and you haven't, you know, necessarily used some of  
13          those skills, the test just may not align at that  
14          moment. And so right now that teacher would be  
15          either stuck in a program, and they might just be  
16          going through a program but they can't have a  
17          license; so then districts can't hire that person.  
18          They may even complete the program and never wind up  
19          getting their degree or their license, which is a  
20          horrible outcome. But this would allow them to have  
21          that provisional license to be able to teach in a  
22          classroom; so we're not forcing districts to feel  
23          like they have to have waivers just to hire people,  
24          but they can hire someone with that provisional  
25          license and that person could be practicing growing

1 in that content, getting that experience so it is  
2 embedded. And we're going to be working also with  
3 those nontraditional programs to really think about  
4 how to support that content along with that pedagogy.  
5 So this is really what the rule would do. But we  
6 know of at least 113 applicants that could be  
7 eligible right now, but that are most likely working  
8 under a waiver or maybe some type of an emergency  
9 teaching permit or long-term sub. This would elevate  
10 them to that next level. So that's the proposed rule  
11 change.

12 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Dr. Pfeffer, does this mean  
13 that if they've graduated and they're taking a  
14 position, and they've got this provisional license,  
15 the only difference is that instead of having to pass  
16 that Praxis now we're saying we're going to give you  
17 three years to pass it. So they're still going to  
18 have to pay --

19 DR. PFEFFER: Yes.

20 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: -- multiple times, every time  
21 they take that Praxis?

22 DR. PFEFFER: They would -- they're still going  
23 to have to pass the content Praxis in order to  
24 convert to a standard license. Or, if they are  
25 eligible for the AAP then they could utilize that

1 route there through the performance-based assessment

2 --

3 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Is there still a cost?  
4 There's still a cost involved in it also, isn't  
5 there?

6 DR. PFEFFER: Karli would have to describe that.

7 MS. SARACINI: Yes, we do have a cost. But I  
8 set aside some funding this year, so the first 150  
9 were -- we have money set aside to pay for that.

10 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

11 MS. SARACINI: We are trying to, you know, break  
12 down those barriers, whether it's costs -- and that's  
13 why we're doing the tutoring and we have lots of  
14 things available. And you see my team going out and,  
15 you know, really having those conversations at the  
16 co-op level, even with Higher Ed. Because, you know,  
17 those MATs, those Masters of Arts in Teaching, you  
18 know, sometimes it's just test anxiety or not -- you  
19 know, maybe they haven't taken a test in a long time;  
20 maybe they've never taken one online -- that's a  
21 different experience. So we have to just look at all  
22 those factors and make sure we have supports in  
23 place.

24 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yeah. I just have heard from  
25 teachers sometimes, you know, when you're thinking --

1 I'm still going to have to put out this money, I'm  
2 not going to just keep throwing money down a hole,  
3 I'm going to go find something else -- and so, you  
4 know, even though we're doing this now, you know, we  
5 need to think about that even having to take a test  
6 multiple times over three years can still be a  
7 barrier through cost for some.

8 SECRETARY KEY: Dr. Pfeffer, with the  
9 provisional license they could then be teaching on a  
10 certified salary --

11 DR. PFEFFER: They can, and --

12 SECRETARY KEY: -- rather than long-term sub pay  
13 or some of the other alternatives --

14 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Right.

15 SECRETARY KEY: -- that districts do --

16 DR. PFEFFER: And it is --

17 SECRETARY KEY: -- for student candidates.

18 DR. PFEFFER: Yes. And I would also say that in  
19 those situations there, and the conversations we're  
20 having with superintendents, is when you hire someone  
21 you're -- you should be making an investment in them.  
22 They're investing in your school by choosing to be  
23 there, becoming part of your team; you need to be  
24 investing in them. And so for those teachers who  
25 have a provisional license, whether they have the

1 provisional because they're lacking Science of  
2 Reading or Arkansas History or awaiting some other  
3 piece -- whatever it should be, those teachers should  
4 be getting the support from the school district to  
5 meet their needs. And, therefore, the school  
6 district should take initiative to think about. hey,  
7 let's make sure you have access to this assessment  
8 ready study guide; let's make sure you've got a  
9 mentor teacher to help work with you. And the  
10 district could cover the cost of that assessment, if  
11 needed. And that would be a perfect use of their  
12 Title 2-A funds, ESA funds, have a plan as part of  
13 their teacher recruitment and retention plan. So  
14 there are a lot of different ways that teachers could  
15 get support, financial support to help them then  
16 convert to their standard.

17 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Right. I think that a place  
18 that we might look at is -- you know, collecting data  
19 is if we lose any teachers during that three-year  
20 period, why do we lose them --

21 DR. PFEFFER: Yeah.

22 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: -- and think about that too,  
23 is there some reason that they're not going on and  
24 getting a standard license.

25 DR. MCGEE: That's a great point. We have been

1 working with Karli's team on teacher surveys and  
2 we've been thinking about ways that we can survey  
3 different categories of teachers, and even those who  
4 leave the profession, to try to get that kind of  
5 information. So we'll definitely work on that.

6 MR. SUTTON: I was glad -- also glad to read  
7 where you reached out to the other 49 states, you  
8 know, in this country --

9 DR. PFEFFER: Yeah.

10 MR. SUTTON: -- and we all share the same  
11 problems.

12 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yeah.

13 MR. SUTTON: You know, to pick up ideas that  
14 they have.

15 DR. MCGEE: Again, a fantastic point. Arkansas  
16 is not unique in its struggle around the teacher  
17 pipeline. It's not unique in its struggles to find  
18 teachers in rural areas or in areas that have a high  
19 proportion of minority students or have high poverty.  
20 Those are common challenges that a lot of states  
21 face. So we're reaching out -- TNTP is really  
22 helping with this. We're reaching out to a lot of  
23 other states to learn from their approaches, to try  
24 to incorporate some of those approaches here in  
25 Arkansas.

1 MR. SUTTON: Right.

2 DR. McGEE: And we're going to come back with  
3 some recommendations, not just based on the data from  
4 Arkansas --

5 MR. SUTTON: Right.

6 DR. McGEE: -- but based on what we're seeing  
7 from other states.

8 MR. SUTTON: Right.

9 SECRETARY KEY: And other states are looking at  
10 us. And I'll give you an example: Alabama has  
11 recently reached out and they're very interested in  
12 what we're doing with the AAP using the Minus Two  
13 Standard Error of Measure. So I've talked to their  
14 Commissioner last month and they're very excited  
15 about that. So there's a lot of exchange of ideas  
16 within the states to come up with the solutions to  
17 these mutual problems.

18 DR. McGEE: I've got a few more slides here that  
19 I was just going to run through pretty quickly, kind  
20 of getting to some of these points.

21 So we talked about what we can learn from other  
22 states. We've got some information here that I  
23 talked about some other states that are digging into  
24 these issues -- Colorado, New Mexico, Massachusetts,  
25 Mississippi, our neighbor, Wisconsin. We're

1 communicating with those states; we're trying to cast  
2 a wide net to try to figure out what other states are  
3 doing here.

4 Evidence suggests that performance-based  
5 assessments are effective tools. So we're going to  
6 dig into that evidence more. We're going to present  
7 some of that evidence to you and some recommendations  
8 based on that evidence.

9 We've also got a learning agenda, so -- and we  
10 would love your guidance on this learning agenda.  
11 We've got questions we want to ask of the data and  
12 bring those answers back to you.

13 So we're going to dig into the data for  
14 Arkansas, we're going to look more deeply into what  
15 other states have done, and we're going to develop a  
16 set of data-driven recommendations.

17 Specifically, we're going to look at what impact  
18 current licensure exams and cut scores have on  
19 teacher recruitment and diversity. We're going to  
20 try to investigate whether exam scores, particularly  
21 around that pass/fail cutoff, are related to  
22 classroom effectiveness. We're also going to look at  
23 the benefits and drawbacks of using performance-based  
24 assessments as an alternative to traditional content  
25 exams. We can look at the alternative assessment

1 plan as one implementation of that here in Arkansas,  
2 but we're going to also look at other states there.  
3 And then, we're going to try to capture some  
4 alternatives to licensure exams that Arkansas should  
5 consider, because that ongoing problem seems to be a  
6 barrier and we're going to try to come up with some  
7 solutions for you.

8 And with that, I'll leave it to questions. I  
9 would just echo something that Secretary Key said.  
10 Arkansas is a leader on data right now. We have a  
11 rich dataset, privacy protected, that allows us to  
12 answer a lot of questions, present information back  
13 to policy leaders, like you. We're also a leader in  
14 being innovative with policy. So it's a great time  
15 to be an Arkansan. I think there's a lot of benefit  
16 that could be delivered to our students to help them  
17 reach their full potential by marrying the policy  
18 side and the data and analytic side. Thank you.

19 MR. SUTTON: Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Thank you. Great work. Great  
21 work. And we're very appreciative of the work that  
22 you and Dr. Pfeffer and Ms. Saracini are doing. So,  
23 thank you for that. And we look forward to hearing  
24 some great results.

25 Anything else from the Board?

1 DR. MOORE: I do. I have some questions.

2 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. Dr. Moore. I'm sorry.

3 DR. MOORE: I think it might be for Ivy. But as  
4 I look at this and think about the proposed change,  
5 is there any minimum? You know, I know the  
6 alternative assessment plan is Minus 2 Standard Error  
7 of Measurement. But is there for this proposed  
8 change, failing the Praxis, is there a minimum that  
9 score or has nothing to do with the score?

10 DR. PFEFFER: It doesn't.

11 DR. MOORE: Okay.

12 DR. PFEFFER: Legislation requires the  
13 assessment.

14 DR. MOORE: Okay.

15 DR. PFEFFER: And that's why -- so it -- the  
16 person would have had to at least taken the  
17 assessment. But I think the benefit for that is  
18 that, first of all, you know, if you pass the  
19 assessment, it's irrelevant and you get your  
20 provisional license and you move on. However, if  
21 you're not successful on the assessment, then you  
22 know, okay, am I close; because if I'm close, then I  
23 might want to go ahead and do the AAP route, because  
24 that way I'm getting to practice and -- my craft with  
25 my content over time and move forward that way. But

1 if you're not close, then I think it also helps the  
2 candidate to know and understand, you know, if I'm  
3 scoring pretty low, but I'm still wanting to move  
4 forward and I'm eligible to go ahead and get the  
5 provisional license and teach, it's going to help  
6 them to know and understand what is it that I need to  
7 really hone in and work on. Because those score  
8 reports are like our state assessments for students;  
9 there are specific criteria and area -- the areas for  
10 focus. And so you can almost create a learning plan.  
11 And so that really is going to be the benefit of them  
12 going ahead and taking the exam to begin with.

13 DR. MOORE: Okay. When a district would hire  
14 someone under this license, would they be aware of  
15 what type of provisional license they have?

16 DR. PFEFFER: This wouldn't -- no. I mean, they  
17 would know that the person has a provisional license  
18 and they would know by -- when a person has a  
19 provisional license, then the district, I would hope,  
20 would always be determining reason why they have the  
21 provisional and is it that you're enrolled in a  
22 program or is it a provisional license because you're  
23 maybe moving in-state through reciprocity and maybe  
24 you're missing a professional development component.  
25 So they would just know they have the provisional and

1 they would need to be working with that candidate.

2 DR. MOORE: Can you --

3 DR. PFEFFER: Am I correct on that, Karli?

4 MS. SARACINI: Yes.

5 DR. PFEFFER: Am I leaving anything out?

6 MS. SARACINI: Most districts also ask for  
7 Praxis scores --

8 DR. MOORE: Okay.

9 MS. SARACINI: -- and things like that. So just  
10 that HO -- HR person -- those are just things that  
11 districts do when you're hired. So, more than  
12 likely, they're going to know when all that  
13 information --

14 DR. MOORE: You know, to provide supports --

15 MS. SARACINI: Yes.

16 DR. MOORE: In my perspective, it would be --  
17 curriculum becomes even more important when you might  
18 be lower. Which I know that Praxis passage does not  
19 necessarily indicate content knowledge, but I know  
20 curriculum becomes more important if you are less  
21 familiar with that subject area. And so I think a  
22 district needs to be aware of that in that sense.

23 MS. SARACINI: As we have gone out and spoken to  
24 superintendents, just to make sure -- how can I help  
25 this candidate, because they're so good and I want

1           them teaching. And I think a lot of times we don't  
2           think about maybe it is that math and they can't just  
3           get over -- maybe it's the calculus part, because  
4           it's been so long since you had calculus. So our  
5           suggestions are there is Khan Academy, which is free;  
6           go in -- and once you have that learning plan, go in  
7           and take that. Or, we want them to partner with SAU,  
8           our different universities; let them go and just  
9           monitor a class or even take a class. And so it's  
10          been interesting, as we've gone out and had these  
11          conversations with superintendents over the summer,  
12          they were like, "Well, I hadn't thought of that."

13                 And that's another thing: even if they just --  
14                 even if they need to take a class again, those  
15                 districts can invest and use that Title 2-A Teacher  
16                 Quality funding to do that and then it's a win-win.  
17                 They're going to learn the curriculum.

18                 And then also I want to say that Dr. Pride's  
19                 group in Learning Services has helped us develop all  
20                 of those tutoring sessions, and so we're utilizing  
21                 our state specialists in these content areas. So I  
22                 just feel like -- I know y'all think it's just us,  
23                 but we are really getting out of our silos and really  
24                 working across the agency.

25                 DR. MOORE: That's great. I have one more

1 question written down. Sorry. Thank you. That's  
2 very helpful, and I'll stop asking after this.

3 MS. SARACINI: We're just really always  
4 together.

5 DR. MOORE: That's great.

6 MS. SARACINI: I can tell you that.

7 DR. MOORE: That's great.

8 When a teacher is on a provisional, it seems,  
9 are they under Teacher Fair Dismissal?

10 MS. SARACINI: Yes.

11 DR. MOORE: Okay.

12 DR. PFEFFER: They would be. And also will  
13 receive mentoring.

14 DR. MOORE: Okay.

15 DR. PFEFFER: And so, yes, I mean they're an  
16 employee of the district. You know, the difference  
17 between that provisional license and the standard  
18 license is once you've achieved the standard license  
19 then, you know, you're just renewing every five  
20 years. The provisional, it's a one-year provisional  
21 that can be renewed each of those years, up to three  
22 years.

23 DR. MOORE: Renewed by the district or by the  
24 state?

25 DR. PFEFFER: By the -- the candidate would be

1 renewing --

2 DR. MOORE: Okay.

3 DR. PFEFFER: -- with us. So in this case here,  
4 if they no longer in a -- are in a preparation  
5 program, then we would not renew their license for  
6 the next year. If they were to drop out of the  
7 preparation program, then they would not have the  
8 provisional license for a second year.

9 DR. MOORE: Okay. But if they receive this  
10 waiver, they don't have to be in a preparation  
11 program; right -- or do they? I thought they just  
12 have to have a content area degree. Does this waiver  
13 require them to be in a prep program?

14 DR. PFEFFER: It is not a waiver. It's not a  
15 waiver. This is just a change to --

16 DR. MOORE: How to receive --

17 DR. PFEFFER: -- for how they would get a  
18 provisional license.

19 DR. MOORE: Okay. But they -- is it requiring  
20 you to be in a prep program?

21 DR. PFEFFER: Yes. It's only for someone who is  
22 enrolling in a prep program, because that's a section  
23 of the rules that are being amended.

24 DR. MOORE: Oh, okay. I missed that.

25 MS. SARACINI: And to really speak to her point,

1 if you're in an alternate route currently --

2 DR. MOORE: Yes.

3 MS. SARACINI: -- I mean on a provisional  
4 license and you drop out, we rescind your license.

5 DR. MOORE: Okay. That makes sense. Because I  
6 mean I -- thinking of that issue, if we're lowering  
7 the bar as to entry, then the bar to exit I think  
8 should mirror that, so that, you know --

9 DR. PFEFFER: Yeah. So this does not --

10 DR. MOORE: -- if things don't work out --

11 DR. PFEFFER: This does not impact the licensure  
12 program. The licensure programs are -- have criteria  
13 for enrolling candidates; so, you know, different  
14 programs --

15 DR. MOORE: Okay.

16 DR. PFEFFER: -- may have different criteria.  
17 If you're in an MAT program at one university versus  
18 an MAT program --

19 DR. MOORE: Okay.

20 DR. PFEFFER: -- at a different university, they  
21 may have their own criteria. This is about the  
22 license though.

23 DR. MOORE: Okay.

24 DR. PFEFFER: Because right now we have people  
25 who enroll in an MAT program --

1 DR. MOORE: That don't pass the Praxis?

2 DR. PFEFFER: Don't pass the Praxis. They do  
3 not get a provisional license. The only thing they  
4 can do, if they continue on in their program, is go  
5 to a district that has a waiver from licensure and  
6 that's the only way --

7 DR. MOORE: Yeah.

8 DR. PFEFFER: -- they can work. And so, then  
9 we're just perpetuating the cycle --

10 DR. MOORE: Right.

11 DR. PFEFFER: -- and they may or may not ever  
12 successfully complete requirements --

13 DR. MOORE: Okay.

14 DR. PFEFFER: -- to earn their standard license.

15 DR. MOORE: I don't know how I'm going to sound  
16 in leading up to this. That makes sense. So if you  
17 are an Act 1240 waiver teacher, you have a  
18 provisional license; is that correct?

19 DR. PFEFFER: No.

20 DR. MOORE: Or you don't have a license at all?

21 DR. PFEFFER: You --

22 DR. MOORE: Right.

23 DR. PFEFFER: You don't have --

24 DR. MOORE: You're just hired --

25 DR. PFEFFER: Yeah.

1 DR. MOORE: -- by that district?

2 DR. PFEFFER: You -- yeah. I think -- I'm not  
3 saying that if you're -- in a district that has an  
4 Act 1240 waiver -- we don't have an Act 1240 waiver  
5 teacher really. You have a district that has an Act  
6 1240 waiver from licensure --

7 DR. MOORE: Yeah, and they have had hired --

8 DR. PFEFFER: -- and they can hire people.

9 DR. MOORE: Yeah.

10 DR. PFEFFER: Now those people are supposed to  
11 meet AQT --

12 DR. MOORE: Right.

13 DR. PFEFFER: -- if they're in core content  
14 areas. I don't know that we've been able to monitor  
15 that to the degree we would like, and so we very  
16 likely have people that don't meet those  
17 qualifications. So --

18 DR. MOORE: So hopefully with this we would --  
19 you know, this is that opening where applicants on  
20 this pathway are more people eligible to lessen  
21 people who are on that pathway.

22 DR. PFEFFER: And we're hoping it will encourage  
23 more people to enter those programs. Whether it's  
24 through a traditional route or through an alt route,  
25 we hope that we will have people in our preparation

1 programs and be able to come through with a  
2 provisional license that will convert to a standard.

3 DR. MOORE: Okay. Thank you.

4 DR. PFEFFER: Yes.

5 DR. MOORE: Thank you for talking me through it.

6 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: I thought I understood it, but  
7 then I got lost in your conversation that you just  
8 had with Dr. Moore. So I don't have it up anymore,  
9 so I'm going to borrow one; mine died over here. But  
10 if I am in a ed-prep program somewhere in a four-year  
11 college and I go through internship and I do all  
12 those things, and my school didn't have anything as  
13 far as I had to pass the Praxis, and I got my degree  
14 but I didn't pass the Praxis, I'm not really enrolled  
15 in a prep program anywhere. Would I be -- because it  
16 doesn't say that in here, that you have to be -- on  
17 this screen, so it may be --

18 SECRETARY KEY: Yeah.

19 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: -- in the rules.

20 SECRETARY KEY: It's in the rules under 4 --

21 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

22 SECRETARY NEWTON: 4-5.0. And that first  
23 sentence there, Division shall issue a provisional  
24 license for up to three years to an applicant who is  
25 enrolled in an alternative educator preparation

1 program --

2 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

3 SECRETARY KEY: -- that is approved.

4 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yeah.

5 SECRETARY KEY: And then the following sections  
6 have the various options that they could be involved  
7 in.

8 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: So they would have to enroll  
9 in like an MAT or something like that in order to  
10 qualify for that?

11 SECRETARY KEY: ArPEP or --

12 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

13 SECRETARY KEY: -- PPTLs, yes.

14 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right. I got it  
15 now. All right.

16 DR. PFEFFER: Yes. And I think over -- I think  
17 as we continue to study and learn more about the  
18 traditional program completers who don't pass their  
19 test and can't get a license, then I think what we  
20 want to do is look at, okay, what happens then.

21 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right.

22 DR. PFEFFER: Are they coming back, are they  
23 able to work on some type of a permit. Because in  
24 some cases those candidates could qualify for an  
25 emergency teaching permit, I would think.

1 MS. SARACINI: Yes.

2 DR. PFEFFER: And so --

3 MS. SARACINI: And we've had that.

4 DR. PFEFFER: -- what are the pathways for that.

5 Yeah.

6 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

7 MS. SARACINI: We have the exceptions in place  
8 with the emergency teaching permit for our  
9 traditional. Because it's, again, that AQT, a degree  
10 in the area, work experience; and we consider if  
11 you've done your internship, your work experience.  
12 And so, yes.

13 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right.

14 MS. SARACINI: We have a pathway.

15 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. That clears it up.  
16 Because it was -- I think there was a difference  
17 between the PowerPoint and then --

18 DR. PFEFFER: Yes. And the presentation was  
19 just kind of summarizing bullet points. But, yes,  
20 the rules that are being amended apply to when the  
21 Division can grant a provisional license.

22 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right. Any other  
23 questions?

24 DR. HILL: Yeah, I just had one, so -- and I  
25 just -- you just triggered Dumas when they came here

1 and after the three years, and then we had to -- he  
2 had to let them -- they had to terminate them after  
3 investing time and resources, you know. And then had  
4 to, you know, bring somebody in who was not someone  
5 from the community, who didn't understand the culture  
6 of the Delta, those type of things. So I'm just --  
7 and maybe you've said this, but I'm certain that  
8 we're working -- after you invest in a teacher for  
9 three years to continue to invest in them for however  
10 long you need to invest in them, if they still want  
11 to try to teach. Because that's a lot to invest in  
12 someone and then after three years they're -- they  
13 probably have, you know, extreme test anxiety after  
14 three years and -- but still want to do the  
15 profession. I just hope that we're looking at that.  
16 Because, you know, I'm -- when I look today -- and  
17 I've said this many times, you know -- you know,  
18 teaching is a standard -- that we're trying to uphold  
19 the education and definitely the leaders of tomorrow  
20 for -- that's the human capital in our classrooms and  
21 the standard we have.

22 But the relationship with the teacher cannot be  
23 mis- -- cannot be understated as how we are --  
24 because research indicates that that's usually the  
25 number one predictor of academic success is

1 relationship with the teacher. And I don't want us  
2 to ever forget the importance of that when we're  
3 looking at a standardized deviation or all, you know,  
4 these high-tech, you know, evaluations that are  
5 important -- because numbers don't lie but, yeah,  
6 they tell a story. I got that, one-hundred percent  
7 behind that. But I know a relationship with the  
8 teacher who -- Ms. Duke Wells was my 1st grade  
9 teacher. Her dad Calvin -- had such a relationship  
10 with Ms. Duke Wells, white female teacher that put  
11 her arm around me. Ms. Miranda Terry, my 7th grade  
12 teacher; Ms. Jones, my 3rd. I remember all their  
13 names because of the relationship with my teacher.  
14 Ms. Jackson was my 4th grade teacher. Ms. Duke, my  
15 5th. All of those women put their arms around Fitz  
16 Hill and made me feel important. I probably couldn't  
17 read real well, all that, but they loved me. So  
18 that's the most important thing I want as a board  
19 member to make sure that we never forget the main  
20 thing that's the main thing.

21 DR. PFEFFER: Absolutely. And I think the fact  
22 that you remember their names and you remember those  
23 experiences speak to the reason why this is so  
24 important.

25 DR. HILL: Absolutely.

1 DR. PFEFFER: So important. So, and I know Dr.  
2 McGee would love to have your continued feedback as  
3 we really do look at what do we want to be our  
4 criteria for the future. And our criteria for the  
5 future doesn't have to be the criteria that we have  
6 today; so this is a first step in a policy  
7 recommendation that we can change right now and make  
8 a difference. And it -- you know, like we said, 113  
9 people could be working if the rule -- if the  
10 emergency rule is approved by you all and then  
11 approved by the ALC. We can have, we know, 113  
12 people right now in our schools with a license.  
13 That's much different than being on a waiver and  
14 scared to death you're going to lose your job if you  
15 don't pass that test. You've got these people that  
16 can be there with a license, putting their arms  
17 around another child who's going to remember their  
18 name 12 years, 15, 20 years later. I think that is  
19 exactly what matters.

20 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yes.

21 MR. SUTTON: Can I make one more comment? All  
22 of this is wonderful, and it truly is, in making sure  
23 we don't lose those that want to be a teacher. What  
24 does the -- this probably isn't a Department  
25 question, as much as it may be Congress or, you know,

1 state legislature. What we're doing is for those  
2 who've already made a decision they want to be a  
3 teacher. How do we get people that haven't thought  
4 about being a teacher to be a teacher? And that --  
5 that's what I think has to be also focused on. And  
6 is that -- is that credit against state income tax,  
7 is it pay their health insurance, or something? And  
8 I think we've really got to give some thought on this  
9 -- the State does, maybe Arkansas legislature has to,  
10 or the Department can make suggestions maybe. But  
11 we've got to have people that want to be. This all  
12 helps them get there after they've made that  
13 decision. So anyway, that's just coming to my mind.

14 MS. WOODS: Follow-up to that, because I had a  
15 friend just this year -- she's starting her first  
16 year of teaching next week. She left her corporate  
17 job, making six figures, and she's going to be a  
18 teacher; she's a 6th grade teacher, English teacher,  
19 this year. And then she took the Praxis and she  
20 nailed it, and it was really just because she  
21 developed a relationship with her principal that  
22 said, "Have you ever thought about teaching?" And  
23 she's been in retail for the last I guess 18 years,  
24 and she's going to be a teacher, 6th grade English  
25 this year. We went shopping for her room the other

1 day, so --

2 MR. SUTTON: Well, and I have my own experience.  
3 I have two daughter-in-laws, both that graduated with  
4 non-education degrees. And they -- after working in  
5 the private sector for probably five years each, or  
6 so, they both have now been teaching for about 10  
7 years and with nontraditional --

8 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yeah.

9 MR. SUTTON: -- methods to get their license.  
10 But, again, I'm more concerned about those that  
11 haven't thought about teaching because teaching is  
12 hard and it just -- the demands on them and what the  
13 public expects, you know -- somehow I think there's  
14 going to have to be some incentives given to keep  
15 them in that pipeline.

16 SECRETARY KEY: Karli's team has done an  
17 excellent job over the last several years of  
18 increasing the number of chapters of Educators Rising  
19 and the number of students in those chapters. I  
20 think we've got -- I mean, we've got some really good  
21 numbers there, I mean, and that's -- there is a  
22 student organization, like those that we celebrated  
23 earlier. So it's --

24 Karli, could you talk about that a little bit?

25 MS. SARACINI: We currently have 802 in Educator

1 Rising across the state, which is huge.

2 SECRETARY KEY: And that compares to how many  
3 five years ago?

4 MS. SARACINI: Maybe a handful, two hand -- I  
5 mean, not as many, no. We have really increased it.

6 SECRETARY KEY: And the number of chapters in  
7 the districts has grown as well. So we're --

8 MS. SARACINI: And as we go forth with this  
9 teacher residency, those -- and what's wonderful  
10 about this organization is it's not only at the high  
11 school level, but you can follow it up to the  
12 collegiate level and so we're getting a lot of  
13 chapters at the collegiate level. So it's not just  
14 can we hook you and get you in that, but it's that  
15 continued -- because you get to college, things  
16 change. How many of us changed our majors? You  
17 know, so it's these rich organizations that can kind  
18 of, "Okay, we can kind of cultivate you at the high  
19 school level and then also see you through at  
20 college." And so I think that's what's so exciting.  
21 We've really -- just really been about Educator  
22 Rising for the past few years and we've seen it grow  
23 tremendously. I can remember when it was less than  
24 100, and now it's 802. And so we have some national  
25 winners; I mean, we're really getting on the scene

1 with this.

2 And so, as our residency program goes forth I  
3 just can see it very -- growing a lot. And this week  
4 I know I've taken some calls, and I know Ms. Stewart  
5 back here has taken phone calls, because  
6 superintendents are calling us to make sure that they  
7 have those partnerships with these two- and four-year  
8 universities. Because we're getting it out there  
9 that you can go and get the AR Futures, go two years  
10 free, and so that's really resonating with people.  
11 So -- but it's us having to get out there and do the  
12 PR. And when you talk about how are we going to do  
13 that, that's us changing that -- and we have started  
14 changing that, and I know our Teacher of the Year,  
15 Jessica, has seen that. And it's just like us doing  
16 the campaign. Sometimes my division gets worried  
17 when I -- isn't that right, Ms. Jessica? And Kim  
18 Mundell will say that too. But we wanted to do --  
19 what's going on that's positive right now in  
20 education. So what you're seeing a lot right now --  
21 and I know you just went and did two of the four  
22 finalists of ATOY -- of getting the room ready and  
23 getting that out on social media -- because that,  
24 again, is one of those platforms that I am not as  
25 comfortable with because I'm old-school and I've been

1 in education a long time. But it's -- we have to  
2 change that narrative, and I think we're changing it.  
3 And I think with the Educator Rising, I think with  
4 the pre-educator pathway that we're working with Ross  
5 White's group in CTE -- I mean, it's all of these  
6 factors, and it's not just one. But I think it's how  
7 we package it and how we make education look cool  
8 again, for a better word.

9 MR. SUTTON: So we have our own incubators?

10 MS. SARACINI: We do.

11 MR. SUTTON: Yeah.

12 MS. SARACINI: We do. But -- and it's exciting  
13 because I think it's just going to grow.

14 MR. SUTTON: Yeah.

15 MS. SARACINI: But again it's we have to --  
16 that's got to be at the forefront and we have to be  
17 thinking about it all the time. And again our  
18 campaign with Teach Arkansas-dot-org has been  
19 fabulous, what FORWARD Arkansas has done with us. I  
20 mean there's just a lot of different things, and so  
21 -- and it's just keeping it going as we go forth.

22 MR. SUTTON: Okay. Thank you, Karli.

23 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Thank you, Dr. McGee, Dr.  
24 Pfeiffer, Ms. Saracini, for the hard work on this, and  
25 I think we're going in the right direction. And I

1 know there's several steps involved in it, but I  
2 think we're being smart looking at it now. So, thank  
3 you for the work that you're doing. We appreciate  
4 it.

5 And, Ms. Freno, I think we're going to need some  
6 guidance on a motion because this has provisional and  
7 permanent. So would you guide us through an  
8 appropriate motion for this?

9 MS. FRENO: The appropriate motion in this case  
10 -- it could -- you could split it up and do emergency  
11 rules and permanent promulgation, but if everyone --  
12 if it would be good with everyone, I would just  
13 recommend that you make a motion to approve the rules  
14 for emergency and permanent promulgation. Because  
15 the Governor's office already has approved these  
16 rules, conditioned upon, of course, you-all's  
17 approving them, we do not need to make this pending  
18 upon Governor's office approval.

19 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay.

20 MS. FRENO: So it would be approval to release  
21 the rules -- to release rules for both emergency  
22 promulgation and permanent promulgation.

23 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. All right. So you  
24 heard that, very well explained. So, do we have a  
25 motion?

1 MR. SUTTON: I'll make the motion to approve the  
2 release of DESE rules governing educator licensure  
3 emergency promulgation and -- something else.

4 MS. FRENO: Permanent promulgation.

5 MR. SUTTON: And permanent promulgation, of  
6 course.

7 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right.

8 DR. HILL: Second.

9 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Thank you, Mr. Sutton.  
10 Seconded by --

11 DR. HILL: Second.

12 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: -- Dr. Hill. All right.  
13 All in favor?

14 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

15 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any opposed?

16 MS. FRENO: Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Thank you, Ms. Freno.

18 6) HELENA-WEST HELENA SYSTEM ANALYSIS

19 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: All right. So now, MS. Smith,  
20 you're going to give us some information on Helena-  
21 West Helena System Analysis.

22 MS. SMITH: So while he's pulling up their  
23 presentation, Coach Hill -- and, Ivy, I don't  
24 normally like to correct you in public.

25 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Uh-oh.

1 MS. SMITH: But Coach Hill was referencing his  
2 1st and 2nd grade, and Ivy said "this work is so  
3 important that people can remember their teachers 15,  
4 20, 25 years later." And because you're famous, we  
5 looked up your age and it was really 52 years later.

6 [LAUGHTER]

7 MS. SMITH: I know it's important -- I know it's  
8 important to give accurate information and keep us in  
9 check.

10 DR. HILL: Don't lie.

11 MS. SMITH: Hey, hey. Hey, hey, hey, hey.

12 Good afternoon. All right. Stacy Smith.

13 And I've got some rock stars in the room today  
14 and I'm excited about that, and I'm going to save to  
15 introducing you in just a second. You're just going  
16 to sit there for a minute. But when I get to you,  
17 you pop up like the rock star you are. Okay? Don't  
18 disappoint.

19 All right. So last month, Helena-West Helena,  
20 we classified them in Level 5 support and you  
21 directed the Department to begin an analysis of their  
22 systems. And so this is a preliminary report. I'll  
23 have you a written report on your agenda for next  
24 month, okay, the details. I was really hoping to get  
25 you one this month; it's just so -- it's been so fast

1 and keeping it accurate and making sure that what we  
2 put in writing is going to be the final report; we  
3 need to make sure it's correct. Okay?

4 So one of the first things, when we went into  
5 the district on the analysis part, we had already  
6 been there -- but went in, did some interviews, did  
7 some observations, and it was under administrative.  
8 So what I'm going to go through today are immediate  
9 needs and action that has been required in the 15  
10 days that we've been in there working. Okay?

11 So one of the findings was there was  
12 insufficient organizational leadership in place.  
13 Clear job descriptions and responsibilities,  
14 essential office were not there. And so an action  
15 that we have taken in these past 15 days is we have  
16 appointed Dr. Keith McGee --

17 [APPLAUSE]

18 MS. SMITH: -- the superintendent of Helena-West  
19 Helena. Ms. Anderson, our interim superintendent,  
20 who did what she had to do and worked hard during  
21 that time period, she returned back to her previous  
22 school, and we did compensate her for her time spent  
23 as interim. The last time we were here talking about  
24 that she had not been compensated at a pay for the  
25 responsibility that she had, so we have taken care of

1 that. So we're in the process of clarifying some job  
2 roles.

3 And Keith doesn't know I have a picture of him  
4 and all that good stuff.

5 I'm just going to pause for a second and I'm  
6 going to let him come up -- he didn't know I was  
7 going to do this -- and just let him give you a  
8 little bit of passion about who he is, what he's  
9 about, and just a little bit of his experience.  
10 Keith.

11 SUPT. DR. MCGEE: Thank you, Ms. Smith. And  
12 good afternoon, Board Members. Let me pause and say  
13 thank you for allowing me to go down and serve in the  
14 Delta. I want to thank Secretary Key and, again,  
15 thank the Department who has been very supportive,  
16 especially, to my left, Ms. Whitlow. The last 15  
17 days have been very busy, but it was worth it.

18 When this first -- this opportunity was first  
19 presented to myself, and me and my wife, we were  
20 actually on our way out of town to a quick getaway  
21 and just enjoy our time. And when I got that phone  
22 call that Friday morning, my wife asked me a  
23 question; she said, "How do you feel?" And I said,  
24 "I feel fine. And I think this where I'm supposed to  
25 be." And with that, I went back, because I am a

1 product of the Delta. I'm a product of the Delta and  
2 I remember my educational experience; Ms.  
3 Weatherford, who was my 3rd grade teacher, who still  
4 goes by my mom's house to this day to check on Keith.  
5 So I knew the impact that that would -- was made.  
6 But when I went to Fayetteville my first year of  
7 college I realized I had gaps in my education. After  
8 graduating from Brinkley High School at the top of my  
9 -- one of the tops in my class, I realized I had  
10 gaps. And it was there that I decided I was going to  
11 be an architect and I wanted to go to law school to  
12 be an architect -- a lawyer for an architectural  
13 firm. It was after I graduated and transferred to  
14 UAPB that I decided that that was not my calling;  
15 education was my calling. And I set aside a goal  
16 personally to become that leader and influence that  
17 Ms. Weatherford had on Keith. That's why I took this  
18 job and that's why I enjoy this job thus far. It's a  
19 lot of work. It's a lot of work, but it has been  
20 very, very beneficial. And you see two quotes that's  
21 here, and when Ms. Whitlow and Ms. Smith asked me  
22 about it I said, "It's doable." "It's doable." It  
23 is doable. But I also said this, when we were  
24 starting something -- this Monday we started our --  
25 kicked off our convocation, and we're calling it

1 "Restoring the Cougar Pride." Restore. Because once  
2 upon a time, that community had pride, and it's up to  
3 us to come together as a school community and for the  
4 state to get behind us to help us restore that same  
5 pride and keeping the main thing, which is educating  
6 our children -- that's the primary focus.

7 So that's where we're going and that's where  
8 we're headed. And I believe and I know that we're  
9 going to make some changes this year with the  
10 continued support.

11 MS. SMITH: Good job. Thank you.

12 So I may have either one of you up at different  
13 times as we get into it and if they have questions.  
14 Okay?

15 So, again, Dr. Keith McGee, new superintendent  
16 at Helena-West Helena. And 15 days -- and I told  
17 Johnny Key this morning -- he was bragging about  
18 something, I said, "Hey, you ain't seen nothing yet.  
19 You wait and see what Keith McGee has done in 15  
20 days."

21 So immediate things that needed done -- the  
22 governance, we -- so we have appointed a new  
23 superintendent.

24 Second thing that was an immediate need and  
25 action required was governance. It is clear that

1           there is a divided board. There is evidence of a  
2           lack of trust. But I think it's still something  
3           that's very workable; it's doable. It's doable. And  
4           we're in the process of establishing that trust. Dr.  
5           McGee has already met with every board member; he's  
6           had personal meetings; he's already led and  
7           facilitated a board meeting. Up until this point,  
8           the school -- the board has been setting the agendas.  
9           They've been very lengthy. There have been items on  
10          the board agenda that didn't need board action.  
11          Keith has taken over that role; he's now setting the  
12          agenda. We definitely had a lack of understanding of  
13          roles and responsibilities between the superintendent  
14          and the board, so we're in the process of clearly  
15          establishing that. Keeping them informed is  
16          important. But that lack of trust has come over the  
17          years because of people not doing what they're  
18          supposed to be doing. So I understand when they're  
19          getting into the details of the check register and  
20          they're asking -- and that's daily operations. I get  
21          why that may be happening, is because there was a  
22          lack of trust and transparency or misuse in the past.  
23          So this is an opportunity for us to rebuild that.  
24          Okay? But we have to get back to the structural  
25          piece of it.

1           Lack of board protocols, adherence to Roberts  
2 Rules of Order -- they would -- without it being on  
3 the agenda, an action item, they would just make a  
4 motion and go to a vote, not even trying to get it on  
5 the agenda. And so Dr. McGee, during the last board  
6 meeting, had to advise and lead them to make sure  
7 that they're following those -- and did a good job  
8 for the first board meeting.

9           So, thank you for doing that.

10          He is in the process of planning board member  
11 training, very specific to what their needs are, and  
12 bringing in who can help us like patch that up and  
13 move forward.

14          I think individually -- you felt like you had  
15 really good meetings individually, didn't you?

16          SUPT. MCGEE: The meetings were very productive,  
17 as Ms. Smith stated, that trust is there. But we're  
18 in the process of getting that training, the  
19 governance, financial training on that, as well as  
20 the parliamentary procedures. Tentatively, we've  
21 scheduled that meeting for September 10th, on a  
22 Saturday morning, from 8:00 to 12:00. So we have it  
23 tentatively set and I'm going to continue to poll  
24 each board member to make sure that they can commit  
25 to that date so that we can finalize that.

1 MS. SMITH: The next thing that needed --  
2 immediate needs and action required was the high  
3 school master schedule. Now I will say that this is  
4 one that we've been working on all along and  
5 providing support. But there is a big difference  
6 between providing support and getting to the point  
7 where you're directing it and you're in there making  
8 sure you're getting the accurate information. It was  
9 a mess. It was a mess, not because anybody wasn't  
10 trying, not because people weren't working; it was  
11 because I think that just over the years they've lost  
12 the skill of how to build a schedule. I do think  
13 some of that is in direct result of having an open  
14 1240 waiver that allowed you just to plug people in  
15 wherever and the lack of consideration of what that  
16 looks like. So the schedule in itself -- lot of  
17 classes; a lot of like ACT prep classes scheduled all  
18 throughout the day and our licensed teachers teaching  
19 those courses. That's not a required course for a  
20 licensed teacher. And what are we short on?

21 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Licensed teachers.

22 MS. SMITH: Licensed teachers. Right?

23 Credit recovery scheduled throughout the day.

24 A-L -- I mean just -- just, you know, the  
25 understanding of what does it take to make a class.

1 We would see Algebra 3 on the schedule four times and  
2 you would realize there's only four kids in a class,  
3 three kids in a class; so, how do you collapse that.  
4 Now it is not -- I'm not going to stand here and say  
5 it's the most efficient schedule, because it's not.  
6 We still are looking at it and it's myriads of  
7 repeated classes. But in the matter of days that we  
8 had and the puzzle we were fitting together I think  
9 we did a pretty good job. Students' schedules --  
10 now, remember, this is a school that didn't have  
11 schedules with kids three or four weeks into school  
12 last year. As of today, schedules have been printed  
13 and they're being handed out tonight.

14 [APPLAUSE]

15 SUPT. DR. MCGEE: May I add one -- only four  
16 students at the high school didn't -- had holes in  
17 their schedules. That is a major plus on the  
18 schedules. So the high school worked pretty good to  
19 get that -- very hard with this for everybody.

20 MS. SMITH: Yeah. And I'm letting Ivy talk,  
21 because she went.

22 DR. PFEFFER: So I'll be very brief. But when  
23 we first started looking, it was evident that a lot  
24 of their talent was being used to provide  
25 intervention to students. And Dr. McGee quickly saw,

1           hey, we've got to pull those people in to provide the  
2           core instruction; we're going to be intervening all  
3           day long and we're never going to have enough  
4           interventions if we don't get our core instruction  
5           where it needs to be. And so he has embraced that  
6           and he's moving things around to make it happen. And  
7           I'm just going to tell you, I think when he first got  
8           there and he --

9                     Did you tell the story about the start-date?

10           When he got there he realized they were starting  
11           school in two weeks, and he was like, "Whoa, whoa,  
12           what are we going to do?" When he -- when we saw  
13           that master schedule, I'm telling you, for them to  
14           have those schedules ready to go and it to look as  
15           good as what y'all are going to hear, that is -- it's  
16           phenomenal and he deserves that credit for making it  
17           happen. Because the leader is going to make the  
18           difference, so --

19                     MS. SMITH: It only takes us 15 days and we can  
20           change everything.

21                             [LAUGHTER]

22                     MS. SMITH: I wish that was true. No. So as  
23           far as the schedule goes, lots of work is being done  
24           on that. There's still a lot of work to do. And  
25           next year it'll be cleaner, it'll be leaner, it'll be

1 making sure we've got all those pieces. But a lot of  
2 work has been done on that.

3 This has required multiple people from the  
4 Department going there and working with folks. Okay.  
5 Multiple people, teams of folks. It's been a  
6 tremendous amount of work.

7 High school staffing -- going in in this last 15  
8 days it was -- they have a large number of  
9 international teachers that they thought were coming  
10 or weren't coming or weren't sure; so it was very  
11 unclear on what we actually had coming in. It was  
12 discovered that we needed an additional half  
13 counselor to meet standards for the high school; so  
14 we didn't have enough. We needed a foreign language  
15 teacher to meet standards. We had several vacant  
16 classroom positions that were being requested. So it  
17 was like over-staffed and under-staffed in areas. We  
18 had licensed staff assigned to multiple courses again  
19 that were not required. So things that we did -- and  
20 this was hard, y'all. This was hard on their staff  
21 too; I don't want to take that away from teachers who  
22 were assigned a class, two weeks beforehand that we  
23 have said, "You're not teaching that; you're teaching  
24 this." So this hasn't been easy.

25 We created a more efficient schedule considering

1 requirements and current licensed staff. We  
2 reassigned licensed staff to core classes. We hired  
3 and we clarified the role of international teachers.  
4 And we have in that time put in a lead teacher role  
5 so that licensed staff can be assigned to non-  
6 licensed staff for mentoring. The way our schedule  
7 is built, we had some licensed staff who have extra  
8 prep periods during the day where they didn't have  
9 kids because of the way the schedule is done. We're  
10 taking those folks and pushing them into a classroom  
11 with a licensed teacher to provide co-teaching and  
12 mentoring.

13 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yay.

14 MS. SMITH: So getting creative, looking at  
15 where we have -- and where we can do support.

16 Elementary staffing -- when we -- 15 days ago,  
17 all unlicensed staff in 1st grade, all unlicensed  
18 staff in 4th grade. We had three vacant positions  
19 for classroom teachers and -- but we realized we had  
20 three licensed staff assigned to non-classroom  
21 positions. So what we did is we reassigned licensed  
22 staff that was in non-classroom positions back to the  
23 classroom. So, again, let's talk about that  
24 intervention piece. Where do we need you the most?  
25 We need you back in the classroom. This has been

1 hard on their staff.

2 So we're celebrating and patting ourselves on  
3 the back; do not want to take away the fact that this  
4 has been very hard on folks. But we feel like it's a  
5 better plan. And good work in -- again, leadership  
6 to stand by what's important.

7 So just the staffing piece -- right now, we do  
8 have 11 in that international teachers. Of those 11,  
9 four are returning; we have seven new. Three are  
10 currently here, two will be here by August 12th, and  
11 two more will arrive by August 29th. Okay. So they  
12 will be in the school and play an integral role in  
13 teaching in Helena-West Helena.

14 We had recommended, and you approved, a  
15 volleyball girls' track coach. That fell through.  
16 It was from another school and it moved back and  
17 forth. But when you're listening to some of the  
18 stories in the Delta and the loss of teachers,  
19 they're jumping from district to district, okay; and  
20 so being mindful of not putting another district in  
21 crisis while you're trying to fulfill it. We do have  
22 some ideas on this. It's very important -- this is a  
23 Title 9 issue in getting our sports balanced, and you  
24 know how much sports play in getting kids involved  
25 and keeping them there. So we've got some ideas on

1 that that they're working on, and we're hoping that  
2 we're going to bring something to Commissioner Key  
3 soon and that will get resolved.

4 Again, we shifted those non-licensed -- or, no,  
5 licensed staff back to the classroom and we did a lot  
6 of collapsing in that schedule. I do want to read  
7 you some numbers because I'm proud of them, and I've  
8 got the microphone. Right now, in the elementary we  
9 now have 16 licensed staff in classrooms of teachers  
10 and only 8 non-licensed. We're going to also create  
11 that lead teacher role there. So in grade levels  
12 where there's several unlicensed teachers you're  
13 going to have a lead teacher taking the lead and  
14 she'll be compensated for that. That's a big deal.  
15 In the high school, I want to share this -- because,  
16 again, it was a really expansive schedule and we had  
17 to do lots of maneuvering around. For English, of  
18 the four English teachers three of them are now  
19 certified teachers, licensed teachers; in the math  
20 department, four of the five are licensed teachers;  
21 Science department, five out of five; Social studies,  
22 three of the five. So in our core subjects we have  
23 done a good job covering and moving and shifting  
24 people. And, again, we talked about where we have  
25 someone who's unlicensed, they're on a waiver. If

1 somebody has an open prep, they're going to be  
2 pushing in. Okay.

3 SECRETARY KEY: Stacy, how many -- do we know if  
4 there are any of these unlicensed teachers that might  
5 qualify for the provisional license under the rules  
6 change we just approved?

7 MS. SMITH: I do not know.  
8 Do you know?

9 SUPT. DR. MCGEE: One. We have one English  
10 position, we just found out today. He will qualify  
11 and will probably get a license.

12 SECRETARY KEY: Good. Thank you.

13 MS. SMITH: Is that the one we're going to  
14 recommend?

15 SUPT. DR. MCGEE: That's the one we're going to  
16 recommend.

17 MS. SMITH: Yeah. We'll be bringing that to you  
18 for approval.

19 Okay. So I'm going to pause so y'all can  
20 applaud to that, because that's some good stuff.

21 [APPLAUSE]

22 MS. SMITH: All right. Let's see. Special  
23 education findings -- there is a sufficient number of  
24 licensed special educators in Helena-West Helena.  
25 And I think this goes back to, again, you can never

1 waive special education, so they have sufficient  
2 staff in that area. So when you think about when  
3 everything is completely waived and they've just not  
4 had an -- you can plug people in, that's what  
5 happened, and that oversight and working with and  
6 being intentional matters. However, we do need  
7 intensive instructional support needed for our  
8 special education teachers there. The district has  
9 been issued a compliance action plan for not  
10 correcting their findings within 90 days from their  
11 monitoring visit; so we were aware that was going to  
12 happen. We already have them bringing in some  
13 support for them and some professional development  
14 and training, but there is -- they're in need of  
15 intensive support in this area. Special education  
16 students at the high school specifically basically  
17 were all pushed into resource classes for the full  
18 day or self-contained. No consideration given to  
19 really limited -- you know, your least restrictive  
20 environment. It was pretty much if you're  
21 identified, you've got resource all day long. So,  
22 again, we've got some things there we need to get in  
23 and work with them on.

24 Schedule for special education students were not  
25 set as of yesterday. Do we know if those are done

1 yet? Still working on those maybe?

2 MS. WHITLOW: Not sure.

3 MS. SMITH: Not sure about that. Okay. So  
4 those are pieces we're trying to resolve.

5 We did hire a new LEA supervisor. We've been  
6 doing our training and we've been reviewing timelines  
7 and identifying needs for evaluations. We are off on  
8 our timelines, and we're aware of that, and we've got  
9 Julie from my team in there working very closely with  
10 them and folks from the Department.

11 Transportation findings -- there was no evidence  
12 that drivers for the Helena-West Helena School  
13 District met the Arkansas School Bus qualifications,  
14 and that is a huge safety issue and concern. The  
15 district had no established bus routes. They had two  
16 drivers basically that would go out each day and  
17 drive through the neighborhoods picking up kids. You  
18 would have kids delivered as late as two hours to  
19 school. We brought in our Transportation Department,  
20 so huge, huge support from our folks here. They came  
21 in and determined there were six to eight bus routes  
22 needed to sufficiently transport students. So since  
23 then we have, in 15 days, established bus routes,  
24 hired eight -- six to eight bus drivers?

25 SUPT. DR. MCGEE: Eight bus drivers.

1 MS. SMITH: Eight bus drivers. Inspecting the  
2 buses, getting the buses road ready, and we're going  
3 to have routes and we're going to pick up kids in an  
4 orderly, safe manner, on time.

5 Findings for additional programs -- the district  
6 -- I told you, remember, they did a RIF at the end.  
7 When they RIF'd folks, some of those folks held  
8 multiple positions and responsibilities. So at the  
9 Central Office they had never went back and decided  
10 who was taking on those responsibilities from  
11 positions they RIF'd. So there was no one over ESOL,  
12 there was no district testing coordinator, K-12  
13 literacy specialist, dyslexia, or any type of novice  
14 teacher mentoring. And you've got to remember, we  
15 have all these teachers -- international teachers  
16 coming in. CTE JAG program had not maintained proper  
17 records for the last two years. Their Comprehensive  
18 School Counseling plan has scored the lowest possible  
19 score you can have, and that's about all those  
20 additional supports and wraparound services that your  
21 school provides. High school counselor is out of  
22 compliance due to too many clerical duties. So  
23 actions right now, Dr. McGee and Sheila have worked  
24 on shifting a position over into a new role and  
25 assigning some extra duties. We're excited about

1 that. I think it will be a big help to Dr. McGee at  
2 the Central Office. We've got -- we had an existing  
3 staff member at the high school who was interested in  
4 becoming a counselor, and so we've got her on an ALP;  
5 she's teaching math half the day, and the other half  
6 the day she'll do counseling roles as she's going  
7 back and getting her certification. Okay.

8 So this is -- this list right here is a little  
9 bit different. This list is other findings that we  
10 have, but they're not on the immediate thing, like  
11 we've got to get it done before the kids come back,  
12 although they're all very important. Dyslexia  
13 interventionist, we need to identify our folks, get  
14 folks re-trained; Science of Reading proficiency and  
15 awareness training for the staff. At the elementary  
16 we have 16 licensed teachers and 8 non-licensed at  
17 the elementary.

18 And how many had completed -- what was the --  
19 how many -- the RISE training was pretty -- we had a  
20 large number that had completed RISE.

21 MS. WHITLOW: It was like 16, I believe.

22 MS. SMITH: 16. We've had a large number finish  
23 it, but we still have a lot to do. Maybe not have  
24 proficiency yet, but finished their awareness  
25 training. But we've got a lot of work to do on that.

1 Human capital for special education, improving  
2 our instructional pieces there and the use of our  
3 paraprofessionals; it's like we have a  
4 paraprofessional for every special education teacher,  
5 and how that is used -- we've got to go through and  
6 balance that piece out. They are identified as a  
7 comprehensive supports goal. And there is a lack of  
8 internal controls in the business office. So, you  
9 know, as far as their ending, their fund balances,  
10 that type of thing, we don't have big concerns about  
11 that. But how funding contracts -- have a lot of  
12 questions around contracts right now, and not only --  
13 I'm talking about teacher contracts and pay-outs,  
14 like there's questions around that. And also just  
15 contracts that need to go to the board and, you know,  
16 what the purpose and outcomes of those are. Lots of  
17 questions around those, but we need to get in and do  
18 some investigating and ask some questions. And, of  
19 course, Dr. McGee will take kind of the lead on those  
20 pieces.

21 So that's just kind of a snapshot of what we've  
22 done in a very short amount of time. If you have any  
23 questions for me or for my team, we'll be happy to  
24 answer them.

25 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: I just want to know when y'all

1           slept the last two weeks.

2           MS. SMITH: I slept fine, but I don't know about  
3           Dr. McGee.

4           CHAIRMAN NEWTON: There had to have been none.  
5           I am amazed at what y'all have gotten done in just a  
6           short period of time. And I just say congratulations  
7           -- and not just to y'all, but to the Helena-West  
8           Helena District for y'all coming in and doing such  
9           amazing work. That's fantastic.

10          MS. SMITH: They -- it's been extremely  
11          difficult. I know I'm up here joking and trying to  
12          keep you guys awake after lunch. It's been a  
13          tremendous amount of work.

14          CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Oh, yeah.

15          MS. SMITH: And it really is --  
16          Sheila, stand up. Stand up.

17          You've heard me say her name. This woman is  
18          amazing. Amazing. Lives on the road.

19                           [APPLAUSE]

20          MS. SMITH: She lives on the road. Several days  
21          a week she works directly in Helena-West Helena and  
22          Lee County.

23          You just thought she was going to be in Lee  
24          County, but we're sharing her.

25          You're going to get to hear from Michael Stone

1 in a little bit. But she's done amazing work. She's  
2 a great mentor facilitator, has a gift of being able  
3 to identify what we've got to get done now, and get  
4 in there and push and get things done. So,  
5 appreciate you guys.

6 MR. SUTTON: This is -- sorry. Stacy, they're  
7 in Level 5; right?

8 MS. SMITH: (Nodding head up and down.)

9 MR. SUTTON: Does the board have any power  
10 anymore?

11 MS. SMITH: Yes. You guys only limited their  
12 authority to -- for personnel.

13 MR. SUTTON: Okay.

14 MS. SMITH: So all personnel decisions have been  
15 -- in the last -- since the last board meeting have  
16 all been funneled to Commissioner Key.

17 MR. SUTTON: Okay.

18 MS. SMITH: So all the hiring, all the staffing,  
19 shifting of -- all that has to come through us.

20 MR. SUTTON: Okay.

21 MS. SMITH: And we reappointed a new  
22 superintendent.

23 MR. SUTTON: Right.

24 SECRETARY KEY: Dr. McGee, tell me your  
25 assessment -- because I know in seeing the personnel

1 recommendations, I know at least -- you know,  
2 obviously that increase in the number of bus drivers.  
3 One, I remember that she was going to resign and then  
4 she decided to come back. And your sense of the  
5 stability that's being created and how that has  
6 changed the outlook for hiring and getting qualified  
7 people in the district.

8 SUPT. DR. MCGEE: I tell you, 15 days, I think  
9 the fairest way to say this is staff hasn't felt  
10 valued. So, you know, we all know the minds, a lot  
11 say people will never forget how you make them feel.  
12 So the biggest piece for me was to make them feel  
13 valued. And as a result of that, we were able to  
14 retrieve bus drivers. The pay in the Delta, that is  
15 a huge challenge with the salary schedules. We just  
16 have to be honest. So a lot of the staff down in  
17 Helena-West Helena are not there because of the pay;  
18 they're there because they love it, that community.  
19 So it takes somebody that -- to let them know -- just  
20 say thank you. And so to Secretary Key's question,  
21 we were able to make them feel valued, but also  
22 assure them that we're going to work with them to do  
23 our best, once we can get things under control to  
24 address the salary schedule to see how we can pour  
25 back money to making that more competitive. And not

1 just bus drivers, but we were able to retain  
2 teachers. You heard in the report that where we  
3 started was in reassigning teachers -- licensed  
4 teachers that was in non-licensed positions. We  
5 assigned them back. We had multiple -- a lot of  
6 teachers getting ready to resign and retire. But  
7 after speaking with me, they agreed to stay on. And  
8 so we just want to make them feel valued. The  
9 culture -- as I stated earlier, the morale was very  
10 low. And I think there's a little buzz, a new vibe  
11 as we kind of, sort of say in the Delta, that's  
12 picking them up, that they feel -- they're feeling  
13 rejuvenated, restored. I'm feeling tired.

14 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: I'm sure.

15 SUPT. DR. MCGEE: But I think that it's going to  
16 be good. We're going to have a great year.

17 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Thank you. Any questions or  
18 comments from the Board?

19 MS. SMITH: He's also done a great job setting  
20 the expectation.

21 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yeah.

22 MS. SMITH: I mean, he's talking about being  
23 valued, but he's also saying this is who we are and  
24 this is what we're about and this is what we're going  
25 to do.

1 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yeah.

2 MS. SMITH: So he's done a good job of that.

3 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yeah. Thank you, Dr. McGee.  
4 Go ahead.

5 MR. HENDERSON: I'd just like to congratulate  
6 you guys and tell you that it's a well-done job and  
7 really appreciate that effort.

8 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Yes. Yes. Thank you to you  
9 and your -- I know you had a team there working, Ms.  
10 Whitlow and Ms. Smith, and you had -- probably had a  
11 lot of others that you are working with at the  
12 district. And so we want to say thank you, and I  
13 know your kids will go into a new school when they  
14 come in. So we appreciate it very much. Good luck.

15 SUPT. DR. MCGEE: Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Try to get some rest every  
17 once in awhile.

18 Okay. We need a motion to accept the report.

19 DR. HILL: So moved.

20 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Okay. We have a motion by Dr.  
21 Hill.

22 Do I have a second?

23 MR. SUTTON: Second.

24 CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Seconded by Mr. Sutton.

25 All in favor?

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(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

CHAIRMAN NEWTON: Any opposed?

[NO OPPOSITION STATED]

(The Action Agenda was concluded at 2:30 p.m.)



	<b>64:19</b>	<b>10:19,22;21:9;22:23; 93:23;113:12;156:15</b>	<b>129:24</b>	<b>69:4;81:15;89:5,7; 127:10</b>
<b>\$</b>	<b>accept (7)</b> 6:11;8:6;15:10; 18:12;21:4;24:20; 172:18	<b>added (5)</b> 19:6;93:24;94:2,3; 95:21	<b>AGENDA (15)</b> 4:2,4,7,21,21; 12:15;92:24;124:9; 10;148:23;153:10, 12;154:3,5;173:6	<b>along (8)</b> 29:1;61:7,21; 87:19;102:9;105:4; 118:4;155:4
<b>\$10,000 (2)</b> 76:9,17	<b>acceptable (1)</b> 60:17	<b>adding (2)</b> 88:21;92:14	<b>agendas (1)</b> 153:8	<b>alongside (1)</b> 68:16
<b>\$100,000 (1)</b> 27:10	<b>acceptance (1)</b> 19:20	<b>addition (2)</b> 83:24;112:4	<b>aggressively (2)</b> 58:24;61:3	<b>ALP (1)</b> 166:4
<b>\$2,000 (1)</b> 84:11	<b>accepted (1)</b> 8:17	<b>additional (12)</b> 6:6;28:25;60:8; 78:17;79:2,5;82:3; 84:12;98:25;158:12; 165:5,20	<b>ago (7)</b> 8:2;38:12,16; 41:15;101:2;143:3; 159:16	<b>ALPENA (6)</b> 95:16,19,21;96:8, 17;98:13
<b>\$39,200 (2)</b> 76:18;78:6	<b>access (3)</b> 75:4;80:19;121:7	<b>address (2)</b> 106:16;170:24	<b>agree (3)</b> 15:24;44:23; 111:12	<b>alt (1)</b> 134:24
<b>\$49,000 (1)</b> 76:19	<b>accommodate (1)</b> 47:8	<b>adherence (1)</b> 154:1	<b>agreed (1)</b> 171:7	<b>alternate (5)</b> 109:17;114:5; 116:11,21;132:1
<b>\$6,000 (1)</b> 76:10	<b>accomplish (1)</b> 33:3	<b>adjustments (1)</b> 66:15	<b>ahead (10)</b> 56:15;84:15;85:6; 94:1;101:13;117:3; 126:23;127:4,12; 172:4	<b>Alternative (8)</b> 106:19;108:3; 112:9,18;124:24,25; 126:6;135:25
<b>[</b>	<b>Accountability (1)</b> 41:3	<b>administrative (2)</b> 46:4;149:7	<b>aid (1)</b> 115:6	<b>alternatives (2)</b> 120:13;125:4
<b>[APPLAUSE] (4)</b> 149:17;156:14; 162:21;168:19	<b>Accreditation (3)</b> 32:7;33:2;48:6	<b>advanced (1)</b> 9:12	<b>ain't (1)</b> 152:18	<b>although (2)</b> 35:8;166:12
<b>[LAUGHTER] (2)</b> 148:6;157:21	<b>accurate (3)</b> 148:8;149:1;155:8	<b>advise (1)</b> 154:6	<b>A-L (1)</b> 155:24	<b>always (7)</b> 5:1;43:7;81:24; 87:4;104:12;127:20; 130:3
<b>[NO (1)</b> 173:3	<b>achieved (1)</b> 130:18	<b>advisement (1)</b> 6:17	<b>Alabama (1)</b> 123:10	<b>amazed (1)</b> 168:5
<b>[sic] (1)</b> 9:17	<b>achievement (1)</b> 91:1	<b>AEA (1)</b> 46:25	<b>ALC (1)</b> 140:11	<b>amazing (4)</b> 168:9,18,18;169:1
<b>[Zoom (1)</b> 67:6	<b>across (8)</b> 11:25;35:24;39:7; 41:21;87:24;102:17; 129:24;143:1	<b>affecting (1)</b> 101:4	<b>Algebra (4)</b> 60:5,6;90:18;156:1	<b>amended (2)</b> 131:23;137:20
<b>-</b>	<b>ACT (15)</b> 4:19;17:17;18:2,3, 4;25:14,20;26:10; 55:14;91:17;133:17; 134:4,4,5;155:17	<b>affects (1)</b> 74:21	<b>align (1)</b> 117:13	<b>AMENDMENT (2)</b> 88:8,11
<b>-2 (1)</b> 106:21	<b>Action (10)</b> 4:20,21;149:9,14; 152:25;153:10; 154:3;155:2;163:9; 173:6	<b>affidavit (1)</b> 6:11	<b>aligned (1)</b> 104:12	<b>amendments (1)</b> 100:19
<b>A</b>	<b>actionable (2)</b> 101:24;102:8	<b>affirm (4)</b> 7:10;20:14;26:15; 56:10	<b>aligns (1)</b> 103:19	<b>amount (4)</b> 107:12;158:6; 167:22;168:13
<b>AAP (4)</b> 109:15;118:25; 123:12;126:23	<b>actions (1)</b> 165:23	<b>AFFIRMATIVELY (4)</b> 7:13;20:17;26:18; 56:13	<b>alleviate (1)</b> 49:13	<b>analysis (5)</b> 110:6;147:18,21; 148:21;149:5
<b>able (27)</b> 11:8;13:24;29:2; 35:5;37:8;38:13; 43:24;48:8;57:22; 61:3;64:1,7;67:13; 76:16,22;113:4; 115:13,24;117:10,21; 134:14;135:1; 136:23;169:2; 170:13,21;171:1	<b>actively (2)</b> 61:3;86:17	<b>again (34)</b> 20:12;22:11,18; 32:20;36:17;37:21; 40:15;47:19;57:2; 70:6;94:5;105:6,10; 111:3;114:20,24; 122:15;129:14; 137:9;142:10; 144:24;145:8,15,17; 150:14;152:15; 158:18;159:23; 160:5;161:4,16,24; 162:25;163:22	<b>allow (5)</b> 6:6;14:2;100:17; 117:2,20	<b>analytic (1)</b> 125:18
<b>aboard (1)</b> 8:1	<b>activities (1)</b> 33:24	<b>against (2)</b> 102:14;141:6	<b>allowable (1)</b> 60:17	<b>analytics (1)</b> 102:6
<b>above (1)</b> 108:3	<b>actual (1)</b> 75:9	<b>age (1)</b> 148:5	<b>allowed (1)</b> 155:14	<b>Anderson (1)</b> 149:19
<b>absolutely (3)</b> 30:5;139:21,25	<b>Actually (20)</b> 11:25;13:19,21; 17:25;31:10;37:8; 40:2,10,12;42:13; 46:16;47:2;74:22; 75:7;76:18;78:9; 85:4;88:18;150:20; 158:11	<b>agency (1)</b>	<b>allowing (2)</b> 84:23;150:13	<b>announce (1)</b> 6:15
<b>academic (2)</b> 91:1;138:25	<b>adapt (1)</b> 37:22		<b>allows (7)</b> 58:8,11;60:7,9; 102:21;106:19; 125:11	<b>annual (1)</b> 70:12
<b>academically (1)</b> 10:14	<b>add (11)</b> 4:6,10,11;8:9;		<b>allude (1)</b> 15:2	<b>ANSWERED (5)</b> 7:13;20:17;26:18; 56:13;113:12
<b>Academy (2)</b> 51:4;129:5			<b>alluded (1)</b> 61:16	<b>anticipates (1)</b> 114:25
<b>accelerated (1)</b>			<b>almost (8)</b> 62:9;67:10,17;	<b>anxiety (3)</b> 110:16;119:18;

<p>138:13  <b>anymore (2)</b>                  135:8;169:10  <b>apart (1)</b>                  88:20  <b>apologize (1)</b>                  96:15  <b>appeal (21)</b>                  4:5,7,19;5:1,6:13,                  23,24;7:9;8:6;13:10,                  13,21;18:12,17;19:8,                  25;20:7,13;21:5,21;                  24:23  <b>appealing (2)</b>                  6:3,19  <b>Appeals (3)</b>                  4:22,25,5:17  <b>appear (1)</b>                  6:9  <b>appears (2)</b>                  105:9,17  <b>applaud (1)</b>                  162:20  <b>applicant (4)</b>                  14:17;35:8;107:23;                  135:24  <b>applicants (5)</b>                  35:7;108:2,6;                  118:6;134:19  <b>application (4)</b>                  6:9;56:5,19;92:13  <b>applications (1)</b>                  92:4  <b>applied (1)</b>                  8:16  <b>apply (2)</b>                  63:22;137:20  <b>appointed (2)</b>                  149:16;152:22  <b>appreciate (17)</b>                  5:10,11,14;40:9;                  52:2;61:20;62:3;                  76:23;80:8;87:2,7;                  99:24;100:22;146:3;                  169:5;172:7,14  <b>appreciated (1)</b>                  48:16  <b>appreciative (3)</b>                  5:9;76:21;125:21  <b>apprehension (1)</b>                  61:1  <b>approaches (2)</b>                  122:23,24  <b>approaching (1)</b>                  35:2  <b>appropriate (4)</b>                  84:7;86:12;146:8,9  <b>approval (6)</b>                  18:6;85:7;100:16;                  146:18,20;162:18  <b>approve (24)</b>                  15:6,20,23;22:2;                  52:25;53:5,13;54:4,</p>	<p>8;72:25;73:2,18,18;                  79:21,23;82:20,22;                  85:22,24;98:13;99:8,                  10;146:13;147:1  <b>approved (11)</b>                  76:7;98:24;100:13;                  106:23;116:15;                  136:3;140:10,11;                  146:15;160:14;162:6  <b>approving (1)</b>                  146:17  <b>approximately (2)</b>                  28:23;36:15  <b>APR (1)</b>                  76:8  <b>April (2)</b>                  13:13;84:20  <b>AQT (4)</b>                  58:9;116:25;                  134:11;137:9  <b>AR (1)</b>                  144:9  <b>architect (2)</b>                  151:11,12  <b>architectural (1)</b>                  151:12  <b>ARData (1)</b>                  102:5  <b>area (16)</b>                  36:17;37:3,19;                  58:11;60:4;61:22;                  116:24;117:11;                  127:9;128:21;                  131:12;137:10;                  163:2,15  <b>areas (10)</b>                  35:12;75:8;114:10;                  116:1;122:18,18;                  127:9;129:21;                  134:14;158:17  <b>arguments (1)</b>                  6:16  <b>Arkansan (1)</b>                  125:15  <b>Arkansas (32)</b>                  25:19;58:17;71:16;                  75:3;85:5;86:24;                  92:17;95:22,23;96:2;                  101:5,20,22;102:4;                  103:7;104:17;                  106:16;108:4;                  115:12;116:15;                  117:1;121:2;122:15,                  25;123:4;124:14;                  125:1,4,10;141:9;                  145:19;164:13  <b>Arkansas' (2)</b>                  104:1,23  <b>Arkansas-dot-org (1)</b>                  145:18  <b>arm (1)</b>                  139:11</p>	<p><b>arms (3)</b>                  61:24;139:15;                  140:16  <b>around (27)</b>                  30:9;32:13,18;                  35:10;59:8,17;64:3;                  66:12;68:17;84:19;                  102:9;103:7;108:5,                  15;109:7,12;112:11;                  122:16;124:21;                  139:11,15;140:17;                  157:6;161:17;                  167:12,14,17  <b>ArPEP (2)</b>                  58:15;136:11  <b>array (1)</b>                  116:1  <b>arrive (1)</b>                  160:11  <b>Art (3)</b>                  58:16;112:20,21  <b>Arts (1)</b>                  119:17  <b>ASAP (1)</b>                  70:17  <b>Ashley (2)</b>                  84:5,24  <b>aside (3)</b>                  119:8,9;151:15  <b>Aspiring (6)</b>                  83:25;105:8;                  106:20;107:16,18;                  112:15  <b>Assessment (15)</b>                  106:19,25;107:8;                  108:3;109:14;119:1;                  121:7,10;124:25;                  126:6,13,17,19,21;                  169:25  <b>assessments (5)</b>                  101:4;111:25;                  124:5,24;127:8  <b>assigned (6)</b>                  28:24;158:18,22;                  159:5,20;171:5  <b>assigning (1)</b>                  165:25  <b>assist (1)</b>                  84:13  <b>Assistant (3)</b>                  25:25;55:5;81:9  <b>assisting (1)</b>                  60:1  <b>Associate (4)</b>                  25:24;60:20,21;                  63:2  <b>associated (1)</b>                  6:8  <b>associates (1)</b>                  60:10  <b>Association (1)</b>                  46:25  <b>assure (1)</b></p>	<p>170:22  <b>ATOY (1)</b>                  144:22  <b>attempt (3)</b>                  14:20;15:3;20:5  <b>attempted (1)</b>                  20:6  <b>attended (3)</b>                  16:6;20:25;24:18  <b>attending (1)</b>                  17:14  <b>audio (1)</b>                  67:6  <b>auditorium (1)</b>                  25:24  <b>August (4)</b>                  10:16;14:3;160:10,                  11  <b>Augusta (18)</b>                  6:25;8:12,14,16,                  19;9:8,10,13,16;10:8;                  12:6,9,14;13:2,12;                  14:6;17:9,20  <b>aunt (1)</b>                  31:12  <b>authority (2)</b>                  6:8;169:12  <b>Authorizing (1)</b>                  89:17  <b>availability (1)</b>                  9:19  <b>available (7)</b>                  29:10;30:6;31:17;                  32:19;98:2;101:14;                  119:14  <b>average (7)</b>                  40:22;41:19,21;                  42:1,7,14;84:17  <b>averaged (1)</b>                  57:12  <b>awaiting (1)</b>                  121:2  <b>awake (1)</b>                  168:12  <b>aware (8)</b>                  8:1;13:6;21:2;                  89:20;127:14;                  128:22;163:11;164:8  <b>awareness (3)</b>                  66:17;166:15,24  <b>away (7)</b>                  10:13;27:9;31:6;                  105:20,23;158:21;                  160:3  <b>Awesome (1)</b>                  79:11  <b>awhile (1)</b>                  172:17  <b>Aye (1)</b>                  18:25  <b>AYES (17)</b>                  4:16;18:23;25:3;                  53:21;54:14;73:8,24;</p>	<p>80:4;83:3;86:4;                  91:13;93:11;95:13;                  98:18;99:15;147:14;                  173:1</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>B</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>bachelor's (2)</b>                  58:9;107:19  <b>back (31)</b>                  8:15;10:8;12:5;                  13:20;43:25;55:11;                  62:8;65:3;88:4;                  111:8;116:17;123:2;                  124:12;125:12;                  136:22;144:5;                  149:21;150:25;                  153:24;159:22,25;                  160:3,16;161:5;                  162:25;165:9;166:7,                  11;170:4,25;171:5  <b>background (6)</b>                  27:15;112:13;                  116:6,22,23;117:6  <b>back-to- (1)</b>                  27:8  <b>balance (1)</b>                  167:6  <b>balanced (2)</b>                  32:17;160:23  <b>balances (1)</b>                  167:9  <b>balancing (1)</b>                  51:6  <b>bar (7)</b>                  103:23;104:2,22;                  105:7,13;132:7,7  <b>barrier (5)</b>                  104:14;105:10,25;                  120:7;125:6  <b>barriers (1)</b>                  119:12  <b>bars (2)</b>                  105:5,11  <b>base (1)</b>                  78:5  <b>based (10)</b>                  6:13,24;10:1;                  29:15;32:5,18;                  110:20;123:3,6;                  124:8  <b>basic (1)</b>                  41:16  <b>basically (3)</b>                  17:24;163:16;                  164:16  <b>basket (1)</b>                  111:2  <b>basketball (1)</b>                  10:22  <b>batch (1)</b>                  91:20  <b>BATESVILLE (2)</b></p>
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<p>92:11,12  <b>Bayyari (1)</b>                  28:16  <b>became (1)</b>                  30:20  <b>become (3)</b>                  87:8;115:7;151:16  <b>becomes (2)</b>                  128:17,20  <b>becoming (2)</b>                  120:23;166:4  <b>beforehand (1)</b>                  158:22  <b>begged (1)</b>                  31:17  <b>begin (5)</b>                  60:2;88:10,11;                  127:12;148:21  <b>beginning (4)</b>                  6:1;32:19;33:16;                  76:17  <b>begun (1)</b>                  16:3  <b>behalf (1)</b>                  56:9  <b>behind (2)</b>                  139:7;152:4  <b>beneficial (4)</b>                  36:23;90:10,23;                  151:20  <b>benefit (4)</b>                  115:25;125:15;                  126:17;127:11  <b>benefits (1)</b>                  124:23  <b>Benton (1)</b>                  44:17  <b>Berry (2)</b>                  86:19;87:2  <b>best (11)</b>                  18:15;19:2;31:19;                  35:5,6,10;36:10;                  38:24;48:16;84:22;                  170:23  <b>better (11)</b>                  15:2;38:20;56:24,                  25;66:8;89:9;105:15;                  109:8;113:6;145:8;                  160:5  <b>beyond (1)</b>                  72:5  <b>big (7)</b>                  27:10;30:11;47:12;                  155:5;161:14;166:1;                  167:10  <b>biggest (1)</b>                  170:12  <b>bit (22)</b>                  30:14;35:9;42:14;                  43:5;45:13;50:13;                  51:14;57:8,11,14,25;                  62:18;65:7;104:20;                  105:19;108:14,15;</p>	<p>142:24;150:8,9;                  166:9;169:1  <b>Black (9)</b>                  103:22,25;104:4;                  105:8,8;106:2,12,14;                  114:20  <b>blending (1)</b>                  111:19  <b>BLYTHEVILLE (13)</b>                  54:20;55:2,18;                  56:9;57:8;58:1;                  59:18;72:21;93:17,                  21;94:2,24;95:7  <b>Board (87)</b>                  4:3,8,18;5:2,18,22;                  6:4,7,10,12,14,18;                  8:5;9:3;11:4;14:6,18;                  15:6,10;16:11,13,15;                  17:1,2,5,7,7,17,23;                  18:9;20:4;21:22,24;                  22:1,10;23:11;24:15;                  26:8;31:23;38:11;                  40:5;47:2;49:7;                  51:17;56:16;65:3,19;                  69:8;70:3,3;72:20,                  23;73:13;76:1,7;                  82:16;85:20;87:24;                  88:2;89:15;90:13;                  92:25;95:1;96:24;                  99:24;100:9;101:1;                  109:2;125:25;                  139:18;150:12;                  153:1,5,7,8,10,10,14;                  154:1,5,8,10,24;                  167:15;169:9,15;                  171:18  <b>boards (4)</b>                  15:6,10,16,23  <b>board-to- (1)</b>                  15:5  <b>board-to-board (6)</b>                  14:20;15:4,10;                  17:3;20:5;21:21  <b>body (2)</b>                  46:25;62:25  <b>boils (1)</b>                  102:7  <b>bonus (2)</b>                  76:9,10  <b>bonuses (1)</b>                  76:3  <b>borrow (1)</b>                  135:9  <b>Both (14)</b>                  15:6,23;22:24;                  26:6;52:17,20;61:23;                  89:6;99:2;100:14;                  115:3;142:3,6;                  146:21  <b>bottom (4)</b>                  24:5,7,8;103:23  <b>boundaries (1)</b>                  28:10</p>	<p><b>Boundless (1)</b>                  90:17  <b>Boyd (1)</b>                  85:16  <b>brag (1)</b>                  75:25  <b>bragging (1)</b>                  152:17  <b>break (7)</b>                  30:9,11,23;31:3;                  88:1,6;119:11  <b>breakdown (1)</b>                  57:17  <b>brief (1)</b>                  156:22  <b>bring (8)</b>                  36:22;58:11,13;                  65:1;101:23;124:12;                  138:4;161:2  <b>bringing (5)</b>                  40:10;87:21;                  154:12;162:17;                  163:12  <b>brings (1)</b>                  107:15  <b>Brinkley (1)</b>                  151:8  <b>broad (1)</b>                  36:18  <b>broader (1)</b>                  36:7  <b>broke (2)</b>                  76:13;89:3  <b>brought (4)</b>                  38:16;47:1;102:17;                  164:19  <b>brushstroke (1)</b>                  36:18  <b>build (2)</b>                  66:17;155:12  <b>building (11)</b>                  45:23;47:21,23;                  48:22;59:22;66:8,8;                  69:20,20,21;86:16  <b>buildings (1)</b>                  47:24  <b>built (1)</b>                  159:7  <b>bullet (1)</b>                  137:19  <b>bump (2)</b>                  42:2,4  <b>bumped (1)</b>                  42:24  <b>bunch (1)</b>                  102:7  <b>bus (17)</b>                  12:1;17:21;29:21;                  38:25;39:7;44:19,22;                  164:13,15,21,23,24,                  25;165:1;170:2,14;                  171:1  <b>buses (2)</b></p>	<p>165:2,2  <b>business (1)</b>                  167:8  <b>busy (2)</b>                  22:14;150:17  <b>buzz (1)</b>                  171:10</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>C</b></p> <p><b>calculation (1)</b>                  24:19  <b>calculus (2)</b>                  129:3,4  <b>call (5)</b>                  31:7;32:17;35:24,                  25;150:22  <b>called (4)</b>                  12:20;13:3;51:3;                  59:19  <b>calling (4)</b>                  144:6;151:14,15,                  25  <b>calls (3)</b>                  62:9;144:4,5  <b>Calvin (1)</b>                  139:9  <b>came (8)</b>                  8:1;13:12;14:10;                  44:17;47:5;84:20;                  137:25;164:20  <b>campaign (2)</b>                  144:16;145:18  <b>campus (3)</b>                  62:10;75:4;84:7  <b>campuses (1)</b>                  65:1  <b>can (85)</b>                  5:4;10:4;12:13;                  13:22;14:13;15:2,2;                  30:13;31:7;33:24;                  41:13,17;46:22;                  49:15;55:17;56:23,                  24;65:18;66:14,15;                  69:13;70:15;84:15;                  86:20;87:3,4;95:5;                  100:25;101:24;                  104:14;107:11,16,17,                  24;108:9;112:6;                  113:23;114:10,14;                  115:9,11,22,22;                  116:17;117:24;                  120:6,11;122:2;                  123:21;124:25;                  127:10;128:2,24;                  129:15;130:6,21;                  133:4,8;134:8;                  137:21;140:7,11,16,                  21;141:10;143:11,14,                  17,18,23;144:3,9;                  148:3;154:12,24,25;                  157:19;159:5,15;                  162:19,25;163:4;</p>	<p>165:19;170:23,24  <b>candidate (6)</b>                  85:3;116:22;127:2;                  128:1,25;130:25  <b>candidates (7)</b>                  57:13;84:16;87:21;                  112:12;120:17;                  132:13;136:24  <b>cap (5)</b>                  6:25;19:17;21:21;                  24:4;72:6  <b>capability (1)</b>                  113:9  <b>capacity (2)</b>                  59:22;109:16  <b>capital (7)</b>                  55:25;61:17;63:13;                  68:12;72:16;138:20;                  167:1  <b>capture (1)</b>                  125:3  <b>care (3)</b>                  44:24;52:1;149:25  <b>career (5)</b>                  35:13;36:3,9,10;                  37:1  <b>careful (2)</b>                  66:12,16  <b>case (8)</b>                  6:1;17:4;18:5;                  29:3;41:10;62:22;                  131:3;146:9  <b>cases (2)</b>                  6:6;136:24  <b>cast (1)</b>                  124:1  <b>catch (1)</b>                  96:24  <b>categories (1)</b>                  122:3  <b>Cathy (1)</b>                  8:13  <b>cause (2)</b>                  6:5;12:4  <b>causes (1)</b>                  115:19  <b>causing (1)</b>                  106:3  <b>celebrated (1)</b>                  142:22  <b>celebrating (1)</b>                  160:2  <b>central (3)</b>                  35:16;165:9;166:2  <b>certain (4)</b>                  33:23;70:11;100:9;                  138:7  <b>certainly (3)</b>                  29:10;48:19;52:7  <b>certification (1)</b>                  166:7  <b>certified (11)</b>                  57:22;58:5,10;</p>
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<p>59:1,12;61:11,19; 76:9;85:4;120:10; 161:19 <b>CHAIRMAN (275)</b> 4:3,11,14,17,20; 5:8,15,20;7:3,6,14, 17,21,23;8:4,8,11; 10:2,5,18;11:3,15,19; 16:1,6,10,21,23; 17:12;18:8,16,20,24; 19:1,5;20:2,8,18,22; 21:4,8,11,14,16,22,4, 7,9;23:4,24;24:15,22; 25:1,4,10,13,16; 26:12,19,24;27:2; 37:25;38:6,40,4; 43:2;44:2,8;45:6,12, 18;47:25;48:24;49:6; 50:20;51:16;52:9,19, 22,24;53:2,4,8,11,13, 17,22;54:2,5,7,12,15, 18,21;55:1,4,9;56:8, 14,20,25;62:2,19; 63:3,5,17,21;64:9; 65:2,18,23;67:8,16; 68:3,5,8,15,21;69:2, 7;70:2;72:19;73:1,6, 9,15,18,22,25;74:6, 11,15;75:11,22; 76:24;77:2,4,6;79:14, 17,20,24;80:2,5,7,10, 14,16,21;81:2,5,12, 14;82:15,21;83:1,4,7, 15;85:1,9,12,19,23; 86:2,5;87:6,14,25; 88:9,23;89:3,9,14,23, 25;90:12;91:2,5,8,11, 14,19,23,25;92:8,10, 18,22;93:5,9,12;94:7, 11,13,16,21;95:6,11, 14;96:12,16,19,22, 24;97:5,7;98:8,12,16, 19;99:2,5,9,13,16,19, 22;100:5,20;108:19, 23;109:22,24; 112:25;116:2; 118:12,20;119:3,10, 24;120:14;121:17, 22;122:12;125:20; 126:2;135:6,19,21; 136:2,4,8,12,14,21; 137:6,13,15,22; 140:20;142:8; 145:23;146:19,23; 147:7,9,12,15,17,19, 25;155:21;159:13; 167:25;168:4,14; 171:14,17,21;172:1, 3,8,16,20,24;173:2 <b>chairperson (2)</b> 5:23;6:4 <b>challenge (4)</b> 30:11;106:14,16;</p>	<p>170:15 <b>challenges (4)</b> 67:1;103:7;105:14; 122:20 <b>Chamber (1)</b> 27:8 <b>championships (1)</b> 9:10 <b>chance (2)</b> 75:25;81:24 <b>change (24)</b> 4:3;10:15;12:17; 61:1,14;71:3;92:13, 14;101:9;107:15,22; 108:16;116:8,9,11; 118:11;126:4,8; 131:15;140:7; 143:16;145:2; 157:20;162:6 <b>changed (5)</b> 95:20,23;96:1; 143:16;170:6 <b>CHANGES (4)</b> 4:2;93:23;94:18; 152:9 <b>changing (4)</b> 66:2;144:13,14; 145:2 <b>chapters (4)</b> 142:18,19;143:6, 13 <b>charged (1)</b> 38:11 <b>Charter (6)</b> 88:14;89:16;92:5, 6,11,12 <b>check (5)</b> 71:12;110:14; 148:9;151:4;153:19 <b>checking (1)</b> 9:23 <b>cheers (1)</b> 76:24 <b>Chief (1)</b> 101:21 <b>child (9)</b> 8:6,18;11:7;16:3; 18:15;19:2;25:6; 48:1;140:17 <b>children (1)</b> 152:6 <b>choice (11)</b> 4:5,19,19,22,25; 5:1,13,17;17:7; 24:13;48:2 <b>choose (1)</b> 50:3 <b>choosing (1)</b> 120:22 <b>CHORUS (17)</b> 4:16;18:23;25:3; 53:21;54:14;73:8,24; 80:4;83:3;86:4;</p>	<p>91:13;93:11;95:13; 98:18;99:15;147:14; 173:1 <b>circumstances (2)</b> 45:5,8 <b>clarified (1)</b> 159:3 <b>clarify (2)</b> 16:2;52:17 <b>clarifying (2)</b> 23:16;150:1 <b>class (72)</b> 9:12;26:4;27:18; 28:1,8,11;32:6,10,10, 13;33:9,21,22;34:2,3, 19,25;37:6;38:19; 39:21,25;40:14,18, 19,22;41:17;42:7,15; 43:16;44:11,24; 47:11,13;48:12,18; 49:16,23;51:7,8,12; 52:14,15;53:1,5,14; 59:8,14;62:17,24; 63:21;65:7;67:12; 73:10;74:18;75:10; 88:16,17,19;90:5,9, 10,11,15,18;129:9,9, 14;151:9;155:25; 156:2,3;158:22 <b>classes (17)</b> 9:12;27:25;28:25, 25;32:11;34:18; 42:23;45:4;50:24; 60:5;75:17;90:18; 155:17,17;156:7; 159:2;163:17 <b>classified (2)</b> 76:10;148:20 <b>classroom (27)</b> 28:23,24;31:13; 32:8;44:7;62:23; 64:3;75:10;76:13; 77:17;80:25;84:13; 85:8;90:25;104:12, 14,18;107:6;109:10; 117:22;124:22; 158:16;159:10,19,23, 25;161:5 <b>classrooms (11)</b> 60:18;63:23;64:5, 8;65:13,14;67:17; 69:5;81:17;138:20; 161:9 <b>Clay (24)</b> 26:1,25;27:1,4; 38:2,7,9;42:4,7,10, 13,18,21,25;45:12, 15,19;48:3;49:2,14; 50:6;51:1;54:1,17 <b>cleaner (1)</b> 157:25 <b>cleaning (1)</b> 89:8</p>	<p><b>clear (3)</b> 116:8;149:13; 152:25 <b>clearly (1)</b> 153:14 <b>clears (1)</b> 137:15 <b>clerical (1)</b> 165:22 <b>Cleveland (2)</b> 27:7;35:23 <b>Cleveland's (1)</b> 35:13 <b>clicker (1)</b> 27:16 <b>close (4)</b> 41:10;126:22,22; 127:1 <b>closely (2)</b> 104:24;164:9 <b>closer (3)</b> 56:22,23;58:3 <b>CMS/LMS (1)</b> 95:21 <b>co- (1)</b> 90:7 <b>coach (4)</b> 60:13;147:23; 148:1;160:15 <b>coaching (1)</b> 83:23 <b>code (4)</b> 13:15;15:22;16:19, 20 <b>Coffman's (2)</b> 56:3;68:23 <b>cohort (1)</b> 84:1 <b>collaborate (1)</b> 37:17 <b>collaborating (1)</b> 85:15 <b>collaboration (1)</b> 102:3 <b>collaborative (4)</b> 37:14;74:13;81:4; 83:13 <b>collapse (1)</b> 156:3 <b>collapsing (1)</b> 161:6 <b>collecting (1)</b> 121:18 <b>College (7)</b> 86:14,17;107:25; 135:11;143:15,20; 151:7 <b>colleges (1)</b> 110:4 <b>collegiate (2)</b> 143:12,13 <b>color (1)</b> 113:7</p>	<p><b>Colorado (1)</b> 123:24 <b>colors (1)</b> 103:18 <b>comfortable (7)</b> 38:13,14;39:19,20; 45:11;116:8;144:25 <b>coming (26)</b> 4:23;8:19;9:7; 14:3;15:4;19:18; 27:21;32:12;47:6; 59:10;66:5;76:24; 79:19;80:7;81:20; 86:25;110:8;113:10; 114:9;136:22; 141:13;158:9,10,11; 165:16;168:8 <b>commend (1)</b> 85:14 <b>comment (5)</b> 23:12;40:6;100:3; 109:23;140:21 <b>comments (17)</b> 23:10;26:23;43:3, 9;49:7;52:10;69:13; 70:3;72:20;75:14; 77:7;85:20;89:14; 92:25;94:22;116:3; 171:18 <b>Commerce (1)</b> 27:8 <b>Commissioner (7)</b> 26:22;38:10;55:5; 110:1;123:14;161:2; 169:16 <b>commit (1)</b> 154:24 <b>commitment (2)</b> 71:6;77:23 <b>committee (2)</b> 31:23;45:22 <b>committing (1)</b> 11:1 <b>common (2)</b> 113:17;122:20 <b>communicating (1)</b> 124:1 <b>communities (1)</b> 104:16 <b>community (6)</b> 23:1,2;138:5; 152:2,3;170:18 <b>compares (1)</b> 143:2 <b>compelling (1)</b> 108:13 <b>compensate (1)</b> 149:22 <b>compensated (2)</b> 149:24;161:14 <b>compensation (2)</b> 48:25;49:3 <b>competitive (2)</b></p>
---	---	--	--	--

<p>9:11;170:25  <b>complete (5)</b>                  106:23;109:16;                  110:3;117:18;133:12  <b>completed (3)</b>                  105:2;166:18,20  <b>completely (8)</b>                  15:9;30:7,20;98:6;                  112:1,14,15;163:3  <b>completers (1)</b>                  136:18  <b>complex (2)</b>                  103:1,4  <b>compliance (3)</b>                  48:9;163:9;165:22  <b>component (1)</b>                  127:24  <b>comprehensive (5)</b>                  35:24;83:20;                  102:20;165:17;167:7  <b>concentrate (1)</b>                  103:1  <b>concentrated (1)</b>                  58:10  <b>concepts (2)</b>                  87:20,21  <b>concern (2)</b>                  51:24;164:14  <b>concerned (2)</b>                  43:10;142:10  <b>concerns (4)</b>                  47:1,1;89:19;                  167:10  <b>concluded (1)</b>                  173:6  <b>conclusion (1)</b>                  109:20  <b>CONCORD (9)</b>                  93:15,21,24;94:4,9,                  11,16,25;95:8  <b>conditioned (1)</b>                  146:16  <b>conference (1)</b>                  62:9  <b>confident (4)</b>                  38:22;39:3,7;82:13  <b>configured (1)</b>                  28:3  <b>confused (3)</b>                  11:7;12:13;96:13  <b>congratulate (1)</b>                  172:5  <b>Congratulations (9)</b>                  19:1;25:5;54:16;                  74:1;77:4;79:17;                  86:6;87:9;168:6  <b>Congress (1)</b>                  140:25  <b>consequently (1)</b>                  100:13  <b>consider (4)</b>                  43:23;112:22;                  125:5;137:10</p>	<p><b>CONSIDERATION (8)</b>                  25:14;48:20;88:7;                  91:17;100:2,9;                  155:15;163:18  <b>considered (3)</b>                  49:9,24;50:2  <b>considering (1)</b>                  158:25  <b>Consortium (5)</b>                  92:14,16;93:23,24;                  94:3  <b>constantly (1)</b>                  33:18  <b>construction (1)</b>                  35:18  <b>content (22)</b>                  59:11,21,22;                  106:24;107:24;                  108:1;109:9;110:6;                  111:21,22;112:12,20;                  116:24;118:1,4,23;                  124:24;126:25;                  128:19;129:21;                  131:12;134:13  <b>context (5)</b>                  28:8;36:20;46:13;                  57:8;100:18  <b>continuation (2)</b>                  89:5,6  <b>continue (12)</b>                  22:15;32:16;35:7;                  49:22;71:3;75:2;                  90:14;101:10;133:4;                  136:17;138:9;154:23  <b>continued (4)</b>                  30:12;140:2;                  143:15;152:10  <b>continuing (1)</b>                  32:4  <b>contract (1)</b>                  70:11  <b>contracts (4)</b>                  167:11,12,13,15  <b>control (1)</b>                  170:23  <b>controls (1)</b>                  167:8  <b>convenient (1)</b>                  23:3  <b>conversation (5)</b>                  46:14;48:22;50:18;                  51:14;135:7  <b>conversations (3)</b>                  119:15;120:19;                  129:11  <b>convert (3)</b>                  118:24;121:16;                  135:2  <b>converted (1)</b>                  107:4  <b>convocation (1)</b>                  151:25  <b>cool (1)</b></p>	<p>145:7  <b>co-op (2)</b>                  37:13;119:16  <b>coordinator (1)</b>                  165:12  <b>copy (1)</b>                  100:25  <b>core (6)</b>                  60:5;134:13;157:2,                  4;159:2;161:22  <b>corner (1)</b>                  28:6  <b>corporate (1)</b>                  141:16  <b>Corps (1)</b>                  58:17  <b>correcting (1)</b>                  163:10  <b>cost (5)</b>                  119:3,4,7;120:7;                  121:10  <b>costs (1)</b>                  119:12  <b>co-teaching (5)</b>                  61:21;90:15,19,19;                  159:11  <b>Cougar (1)</b>                  152:1  <b>council (1)</b>                  31:23  <b>Counsel (1)</b>                  26:1  <b>Counseling (2)</b>                  165:18;166:6  <b>counselor (3)</b>                  158:13;165:21;                  166:4  <b>count (1)</b>                  48:9  <b>country (1)</b>                  122:8  <b>COUNTY (6)</b>                  88:7,11,15,25;                  168:22,24  <b>couple (5)</b>                  31:20;38:11;43:3;                  101:2;109:1  <b>course (8)</b>                  14:15;34:1;37:9;                  114:3;146:16;147:6;                  155:19;167:19  <b>courses (3)</b>                  37:9;155:19;                  158:18  <b>cover (1)</b>                  121:10  <b>covered (1)</b>                  57:24  <b>covering (1)</b>                  161:23  <b>Covid (3)</b>                  9:15,17;51:9  <b>crack (1)</b></p>	<p>111:2  <b>craft (1)</b>                  126:24  <b>create (2)</b>                  127:10;161:10  <b>created (3)</b>                  90:8;158:25;170:5  <b>creates (1)</b>                  46:5  <b>creative (1)</b>                  159:14  <b>credentialed (1)</b>                  35:20  <b>credit (6)</b>                  34:2;107:25,25;                  141:6;155:23;157:16  <b>credit-bearing (1)</b>                  33:19  <b>crisis (1)</b>                  160:21  <b>criteria (7)</b>                  127:9;132:12,16,                  21;140:4,4,5  <b>CROSS (4)</b>                  88:7,11,15,25  <b>Crossley (6)</b>                  83:12,15,16,16;                  85:13;86:9  <b>CTE (7)</b>                  35:17;36:20;39:9,                  15;45:10;145:5;                  165:16  <b>cultivate (1)</b>                  143:18  <b>Culture (14)</b>                  59:15,25;63:6,22;                  64:10;67:13,21;69:4;                  70:9;73:12;74:3;                  110:9;138:5;171:9  <b>curious (1)</b>                  113:4  <b>current (3)</b>                  105:12;124:18;                  159:1  <b>currently (5)</b>                  70:13;90:16;132:1;                  142:25;160:10  <b>curriculum (4)</b>                  31:24;128:17,20;                  129:17  <b>cut (1)</b>                  124:18  <b>cutoff (1)</b>                  124:21  <b>cycle (2)</b>                  59:2;133:9</p>	<p><b>Dan (1)</b>                  116:17  <b>Data (20)</b>                  101:22,23;102:5,8,                  17,17;104:19;108:13,                  15,17;109:18;113:2;                  115:1,9;121:18;                  123:3;124:11,13;                  125:10,18  <b>data-driven (1)</b>                  124:16  <b>dataset (1)</b>                  125:11  <b>datasets (1)</b>                  102:20  <b>date (1)</b>                  154:25  <b>dates (2)</b>                  13:8;24:11  <b>daughter (1)</b>                  22:17  <b>daughter-in-laws (1)</b>                  142:3  <b>day (17)</b>                  12:12;25:12;34:9;                  35:21;36:8;48:7;                  142:1;151:4;155:18,                  23;157:3;159:8;                  163:18,21;164:16;                  166:5,6  <b>days (20)</b>                  6:21;13:24;14:2,2;                  22:14;81:19;100:13;                  149:10,15;150:17;                  152:16,20;156:7;                  157:19;158:8;                  159:16;163:10;                  164:23;168:20;170:8  <b>deal (3)</b>                  27:10;116:10;                  161:14  <b>dealing (1)</b>                  44:3  <b>dealt (1)</b>                  13:2  <b>death (2)</b>                  31:12;140:14  <b>decided (6)</b>                  21:24;22:2;151:10,                  14;165:9;170:4  <b>decision (7)</b>                  6:15,19;11:16;                  17:2;85:18;141:2,13  <b>decisions (3)</b>                  38:24;115:25;                  169:14  <b>declaration (1)</b>                  6:11  <b>decline (1)</b>                  103:14  <b>declining (2)</b>                  103:11,12  <b>dedicated (1)</b></p>
<b>D</b>				
			<p><b>dad (1)</b>                  139:9  <b>daily (1)</b>                  153:20</p>	

<p>97:19  <b>dedication (1)</b>                  23:6  <b>deep-dive (1)</b>                  114:13  <b>deeply (1)</b>                  124:14  <b>definitely (4)</b>                  112:22;122:5;                  138:19;153:12  <b>degree (9)</b>                  58:9;107:19,24;                  110:3;117:19;                  131:12;134:15;                  135:13;137:9  <b>degrees (2)</b>                  111:6;142:4  <b>deliver (1)</b>                  101:24  <b>delivered (2)</b>                  125:16;164:18  <b>Delta (7)</b>                  138:6;150:14;                  151:1,1;160:18;                  170:14;171:11  <b>demands (1)</b>                  142:12  <b>demographics (1)</b>                  105:11  <b>denial (5)</b>                  19:19,21;21:2,3,20  <b>denied (5)</b>                  6:24;9:1;11:2;                  19:14,17  <b>deny (2)</b>                  6:13;17:25  <b>Department (22)</b>                  11:12;25:19;40:11;                  43:4;48:8;59:16;                  85:15;87:5;101:21;                  102:4,13;107:7,10;                  140:24;141:10;                  148:21;150:15;                  158:4;161:20,21;                  164:10,19  <b>departments (1)</b>                  102:18  <b>depend (1)</b>                  16:15  <b>depending (1)</b>                  98:1  <b>deposition (1)</b>                  6:12  <b>Deputy (2)</b>                  26:22;38:10  <b>Derrick (1)</b>                  55:11  <b>describe (1)</b>                  119:6  <b>descriptions (1)</b>                  149:13  <b>DESE (5)</b>                  6:19;56:18;100:3;</p>	<p>102:18;147:2  <b>deserves (1)</b>                  157:16  <b>design (3)</b>                  70:14;111:15,23  <b>designed (1)</b>                  112:11  <b>details (2)</b>                  148:24;153:19  <b>determination (1)</b>                  36:9  <b>determine (1)</b>                  109:8  <b>determined (1)</b>                  164:21  <b>determining (3)</b>                  11:16;42:13;                  127:20  <b>develop (2)</b>                  124:15;129:19  <b>developed (1)</b>                  141:21  <b>development (3)</b>                  111:11;127:24;                  163:13  <b>deviation (1)</b>                  139:3  <b>dialogue (1)</b>                  46:5  <b>died (1)</b>                  135:9  <b>diesel (1)</b>                  35:17  <b>difference (6)</b>                  118:15;130:16;                  137:16;140:8;155:5;                  157:18  <b>different (31)</b>                  9:24;27:22;30:13;                  31:11;33:8,17,24;                  35:3;51:14;62:18;                  67:11;96:10,12;                  106:17;110:8;                  112:15,15;114:10;                  117:11,11;119:21;                  121:14;122:3;129:8;                  132:13,16,20;140:13;                  145:20;152:12;166:9  <b>difficult (4)</b>                  5:2;42:14;61:2;                  168:11  <b>dig (4)</b>                  102:21;105:19;                  124:6,13  <b>digging (3)</b>                  11:14;38:12;                  123:23  <b>DIGITAL (4)</b>                  91:17;92:3;93:1;                  95:25  <b>diligently (1)</b>                  61:25  <b>diminish (1)</b></p>	<p>35:8  <b>diploma (1)</b>                  113:23  <b>direct (1)</b>                  155:13  <b>directed (2)</b>                  68:12;148:21  <b>directing (1)</b>                  155:7  <b>direction (2)</b>                  112:7;145:25  <b>directly (1)</b>                  168:21  <b>Director (1)</b>                  55:12  <b>disappoint (1)</b>                  148:18  <b>discovered (1)</b>                  158:12  <b>discretion (1)</b>                  6:7  <b>discretionary (1)</b>                  15:9  <b>discuss (2)</b>                  9:5;41:7  <b>discussed (2)</b>                  50:23;51:22  <b>discussion (3)</b>                  18:9;53:19;102:1  <b>discussions (1)</b>                  6:17  <b>Dismissal (1)</b>                  130:9  <b>disproportionately (1)</b>                  103:22  <b>distortion] (1)</b>                  67:6  <b>district (115)</b>                  6:1,2,20,20,25;7:1,                  19;8:1,11,22,22;9:17,                  20,24;10:8;11:24;                  12:1,9;13:2,16,25;                  15:19,21;16:4;19:9,                  10,22;20:20;21:3,11;                  22:21;24:18,21;                  25:15;26:2,7,21;                  34:17;37:11,16;                  38:18,22;39:13;40:1,                  21;41:22;43:21;44:4,                  11,17;45:14;51:19,                  20;54:20;57:10;58:4,                  5;59:18;60:24;61:15,                  24;62:1;64:16;68:11;                  71:13;74:3,5;76:6;                  80:9;81:8,10,18,21;                  82:23;83:10,17;84:2;                  85:25;91:18;92:1;                  93:14,15,16,17,18;                  95:16,17,18;98:1,20,                  21;121:4,6,10;                  127:13,19;128:22;                  130:16,23;133:5;                  134:1,3,5;149:5;</p>	<p>160:19,19,20;163:8;                  164:13,15;165:5,12;                  168:8;170:7;172:12  <b>districts (27)</b>                  9:16;11:6;25:21;                  27:22;29:7;52:5;                  55:14;63:20;74:14;                  76:20;86:18,24;                  87:10;94:1,5;98:9,                  11;103:16,18,20;                  117:17,22;120:15;                  128:6,11;129:15;                  143:7  <b>district-wide (2)</b>                  26:3,5  <b>diverse (2)</b>                  104:2,6  <b>diversity (9)</b>                  101:19;104:10,20;                  105:4,7,14,16;106:3;                  124:19  <b>divided (1)</b>                  153:1  <b>division (8)</b>                  56:2,3;68:23;                  102:18,19;135:23;                  137:21;144:16  <b>doable (5)</b>                  151:22,22,23;                  153:3,3  <b>Dobbins (1)</b>                  85:16  <b>document (1)</b>                  108:1  <b>Don (5)</b>                  35:15;39:10,17,19;                  51:3  <b>done (25)</b>                  5:5;39:18;49:22;                  50:25;55:10;64:21;                  124:15;137:11;                  142:16;145:19;                  152:19,21;157:23;                  158:2;159:9;161:23;                  163:25;166:11;                  167:22;168:5;169:1,                  3,4;171:19;172:2  <b>door (1)</b>                  112:2  <b>DORADO (6)</b>                  80:9,11,12;81:8,9;                  82:22  <b>double-checking (1)</b>                  71:13  <b>double-digit (1)</b>                  50:10  <b>double-digits (1)</b>                  50:15  <b>doubling (1)</b>                  71:18  <b>down (22)</b>                  5:12;12:2,23;                  17:21;24:6;32:2;</p>	<p>43:5;47:2;66:20;                  67:15;69:6;84:20;                  86:15;87:2;102:8;                  113:4;119:12;120:2;                  130:1;150:13;169:8;                  170:16  <b>DR (276)</b>                  4:13,14;14:13,16,                  22,24;15:5,8,12,17;                  19:11;23:15,16,20,                  23;24:17,22;27:7,12;                  35:13,23;40:8,9,17,                  19,25;41:4,6,9,12,14,                  16,20,23,25;42:6,9,                  12,17,19,22;43:1;                  47:2;54:11,12;55:19;                  56:6,15,20;62:2;65:5,                  6,15,22,24;66:19,24;                  67:5,7;68:10,16;                  69:12;70:8,18,24;                  71:2,7,10,12,18,21,                  23;73:21,22;74:1;                  77:8,9,14,19,21,25;                  78:4,7,11,16,19,22;                  79:3,8,11,16,19;                  86:12,19;87:2,17;                  88:13,24;89:7,12,16,                  19,20,21,22,24;91:7,                  8;97:2,6,10,14,16,20,                  22,25;98:4,7;100:16,                  22;101:1,6,13;108:9,                  10,11,17;109:5,23,                  25;111:12;113:1,2,8,                  15,21;114:1,11,11,                  17,24;115:2,3,16,21;                  116:4;118:12,19,22;                  119:6;120:8,11,16,                  18;121:21,25;122:9,                  15;123:2,6,18;                  125:22;126:1,2,3,10,                  11,12,14,15;127:13,                  16;128:2,3,5,8,14,16;                  129:18,25;130:5,7,                  11,12,14,15,23,25;                  131:2,3,9,14,16,17,                  19,21,24;132:2,5,9,                  10,11,15,16,19,20,23,                  24;133:1,2,7,8,10,11,                  13,14,15,19,20,21,22,                  23,24,25;134:1,2,7,8,                  9,10,12,13,18,22;                  135:3,4,5,8;136:16,                  22;137:2,4,18,24;                  139:21,25;140:1,1,                  145:23,23;147:8,11,                  12;148:10;149:16;                  150:11;152:15;                  153:4;154:5;156:15,                  22,25;162:9,15;                  164:25;165:23;                  166:1;167:19;168:3;                  169:24;170:8;                  171:15;172:3,15,19,</p>
---	--	---	--	--

<p>20  <b>drawbacks (1)</b>                  124:23  <b>drill (1)</b>                  113:4  <b>drive (1)</b>                  164:17  <b>drivers (8)</b>                  164:12,16,24,25;                  165:1;170:2,14;                  171:1  <b>drives (1)</b>                  12:2  <b>drop (2)</b>                  131:6;132:4  <b>drops (1)</b>                  105:7  <b>DTSOI (3)</b>                  36:11,14;51:6  <b>dual (2)</b>                  97:24;106:9  <b>due (7)</b>                  21:20;22:2;31:11;                  33:22;35:11,13;                  165:22  <b>Duke (3)</b>                  139:8,10,14  <b>Dumas (1)</b>                  137:25  <b>during (9)</b>                  4:25;9:15,17;36:5;                  114:4;121:19;                  149:20;154:5;159:8  <b>duties (2)</b>                  165:22,25  <b>duty (1)</b>                  49:1  <b>dyslexia (2)</b>                  165:13;166:12</p>	<p>152:5  <b>Education (34)</b>                  5:22;6:7,10,12,14;                  9:14;25:19;35:14;                  36:4,25;46:24;85:6;                  86:14,16;87:18;                  101:19,21;102:4,19,                  21;105:2;138:19;                  144:20;145:1,7;                  151:7,15;162:23;                  163:1,8,15,24;167:1,                  4  <b>educational (3)</b>                  51:23;110:21;                  151:2  <b>Educator (10)</b>                  55:6;86:23;100:3,                  6,10;135:25;142:25;                  143:21;145:3;147:2  <b>Educators (2)</b>                  142:18;162:24  <b>effect (2)</b>                  4:9;100:12  <b>effective (2)</b>                  80:19;124:5  <b>Effectiveness (5)</b>                  55:6;104:13,14,18;                  124:22  <b>effects (1)</b>                  115:19  <b>efficacy (1)</b>                  75:12  <b>efficiencies (1)</b>                  44:6  <b>efficiency (2)</b>                  44:10,14  <b>efficient (3)</b>                  44:4;156:5;158:25  <b>effort (7)</b>                  32:13,14;35:10;                  74:13;81:4;83:13;                  172:7  <b>eggs (1)</b>                  111:2  <b>eight (6)</b>                  69:19;164:21,24,                  24,25;165:1  <b>eighth (1)</b>                  5:4  <b>either (10)</b>                  11:6;25:22;33:22,                  25;99:1;112:4;                  115:13;116:23;                  117:15;152:12  <b>EL (6)</b>                  80:9,11,12;81:7,9;                  82:22  <b>elementaries (1)</b>                  47:15  <b>elementary (44)</b>                  28:10,12,15,16,17,                  17,17,18,18,18,19,22;                  29:3,6;32:25;44:18,</p>	<p>21;49:10;51:8;57:19;                  58:6;62:25;63:25;                  64:10;65:9;66:3;                  67:19,24;68:1;69:18,                  21;70:21;74:19;84:5,                  18;97:17,18;98:5;                  105:22;106:6;                  159:16;161:8;                  166:15,17  <b>elevate (1)</b>                  118:9  <b>eligible (7)</b>                  9:24;108:2,7;                  118:7,25;127:4;                  134:20  <b>Elmdale (1)</b>                  28:17  <b>else (11)</b>                  8:9;10:19;21:9;                  22:23;24:15;47:10,                  18;91:5;120:3;                  125:25;147:3  <b>email (1)</b>                  13:20  <b>embedded (1)</b>                  118:2  <b>embraced (1)</b>                  157:5  <b>EMERGENCY (12)</b>                  100:2,6,11,12;                  118:8;136:25;137:8;                  140:10;146:10,14,21;                  147:3  <b>employed (1)</b>                  115:15  <b>employee (1)</b>                  130:16  <b>encourage (1)</b>                  134:22  <b>encouraged (1)</b>                  115:20  <b>encouraging (1)</b>                  115:17  <b>end (8)</b>                  13:14,18,19;33:16;                  59:2,2;105:13;165:6  <b>ended (1)</b>                  14:3  <b>ending (1)</b>                  167:9  <b>engage (12)</b>                  58:25;59:15;60:4,                  25;61:3,9,13,14;64:2,                  4,6,15  <b>engaged (2)</b>                  58:19;61:6  <b>engaging (1)</b>                  58:23  <b>English (6)</b>                  90:18;141:18,24;                  161:17,18;162:9  <b>enjoy (2)</b>                  150:21;151:18</p>	<p><b>enough (2)</b>                  157:3;158:14  <b>enroll (3)</b>                  31:6;132:25;136:8  <b>enrolled (5)</b>                  31:4;74:23;127:21;                  135:14,25  <b>enrolling (5)</b>                  50:8;116:15,21;                  131:22;132:13  <b>enrollment (3)</b>                  103:12,14;115:6  <b>enter (2)</b>                  109:10;134:23  <b>entering (1)</b>                  23:17  <b>entire (4)</b>                  22:20;102:2;103:5;                  104:22  <b>entry (2)</b>                  104:15;132:7  <b>environment (1)</b>                  163:20  <b>EPP (2)</b>                  103:12;105:3  <b>equal (2)</b>                  76:11,19  <b>equip (1)</b>                  35:22  <b>equitable (1)</b>                  80:19  <b>error (3)</b>                  106:21;123:13;                  126:6  <b>ERZs (1)</b>                  87:19  <b>ESA (1)</b>                  121:12  <b>ESOL (1)</b>                  165:11  <b>especially (9)</b>                  36:25;38:19;45:16;                  49:15;62:24;66:6;                  104:15;113:7;150:16  <b>essential (1)</b>                  149:14  <b>ESSER (1)</b>                  76:8  <b>established (3)</b>                  29:21;164:15,23  <b>establishing (3)</b>                  70:21;153:4,15  <b>ethnicities (1)</b>                  104:5  <b>evaluate (1)</b>                  111:9  <b>evaluations (2)</b>                  139:4;164:7  <b>even (33)</b>                  14:16;33:14;35:19;                  36:5,9;37:2,18;                  39:22;43:16;45:22;                  46:21;47:8,20;49:22;</p>	<p>51:1,6,12;57:21,23;                  59:9;106:7;113:20;                  117:2,18;119:16;                  120:4,5;122:3;                  128:17;129:9,13,14;                  154:4  <b>event (2)</b>                  17:5;27:9  <b>eventually (1)</b>                  67:25  <b>everybody (6)</b>                  34:15;37:1;38:25;                  110:7;114:7;156:19  <b>everyday (1)</b>                  111:19  <b>everyone (5)</b>                  7:4;116:7,20;                  146:11,12  <b>everyone's (1)</b>                  114:11  <b>evidence (12)</b>                  6:14,16;86:25;                  102:9;104:11;                  107:24;124:4,6,7,8;                  153:1;164:11  <b>evident (1)</b>                  156:23  <b>exactly (5)</b>                  16:16;81:15;                  111:15;112:6;140:19  <b>exam (12)</b>                  59:5;105:19;                  106:22;107:21,21,23;                  108:6;109:4,7;112:3;                  124:20;127:12  <b>example (2)</b>                  30:1;123:10  <b>examples (2)</b>                  30:17,19  <b>exams (7)</b>                  82:7;103:4;104:14;                  110:2;124:18,25;                  125:4  <b>exceeding (1)</b>                  42:23  <b>excellent (1)</b>                  142:17  <b>except (1)</b>                  94:2  <b>exceptions (2)</b>                  55:15;137:7  <b>exchange (1)</b>                  123:15  <b>excited (9)</b>                  8:18;76:21;82:8;                  83:18;87:8;115:23;                  123:14;148:14;                  165:25  <b>exciting (5)</b>                  74:7;75:11,21;                  143:20;145:12  <b>excuse (1)</b>                  98:23</p>
<b>E</b>				
<p><b>earlier (3)</b>                  84:19;142:23;                  171:9  <b>early (1)</b>                  37:15  <b>earn (1)</b>                  133:14  <b>east (6)</b>                  28:9;29:15,19,23,                  24;50:17  <b>easy (1)</b>                  158:24  <b>echo (1)</b>                  125:9  <b>ed (6)</b>                  28:25;59:16;85:3;                  86:17;112:17;119:16  <b>ed-prep (3)</b>                  111:22;112:8;                  135:10  <b>educating (1)</b></p>				

<p><b>existing (1)</b> 166:2</p> <p><b>exit (1)</b> 132:7</p> <p><b>expand (3)</b> 35:23;39:15; 109:14</p> <p><b>expanding (2)</b> 35:13;36:11</p> <p><b>expansive (1)</b> 161:16</p> <p><b>expectation (4)</b> 49:4;58:25;59:1; 171:20</p> <p><b>expected (2)</b> 43:7;45:15</p> <p><b>expects (1)</b> 142:13</p> <p><b>expedited (1)</b> 59:24</p> <p><b>experience (16)</b> 36:4;58:21;90:24; 107:1;108:2;111:19, 20,25;116:23;118:1; 119:21;137:10,11; 142:2;150:9;151:2</p> <p><b>experiences (1)</b> 139:23</p> <p><b>experts (2)</b> 36:22;41:5</p> <p><b>explain (1)</b> 43:25</p> <p><b>explained (1)</b> 146:24</p> <p><b>explore (1)</b> 33:1</p> <p><b>exposed (2)</b> 111:24,24</p> <p><b>extensive (1)</b> 47:3</p> <p><b>extensively (1)</b> 46:14</p> <p><b>extra (6)</b> 32:7;48:1,25;49:2; 159:7;165:25</p> <p><b>extreme (2)</b> 57:9;138:13</p> <p><b>extremely (1)</b> 168:10</p> <p><b>eye (1)</b> 43:13</p>	<p>35:16,16</p> <p><b>facilitated (1)</b> 153:7</p> <p><b>facilitator (4)</b> 75:5;78:25;84:10; 169:2</p> <p><b>facilitators (1)</b> 61:8</p> <p><b>fact (3)</b> 9:15;139:21;160:3</p> <p><b>factor (1)</b> 11:16</p> <p><b>factors (2)</b> 119:22;145:6</p> <p><b>failing (1)</b> 126:8</p> <p><b>fair (2)</b> 10:25;130:9</p> <p><b>fairest (1)</b> 170:9</p> <p><b>fairness (1)</b> 18:14</p> <p><b>fall (7)</b> 74:25;76:12;77:12, 13;79:22;80:22; 104:19</p> <p><b>familiar (2)</b> 27:5;128:21</p> <p><b>family (11)</b> 4:5,7;6:24;7:9; 19:8;21:20;22:20; 23:2;25:6;39:5;87:9</p> <p><b>famous (1)</b> 148:4</p> <p><b>fantastic (3)</b> 85:15;122:15; 168:9</p> <p><b>far (15)</b> 12:18;14:9,10; 21:1,25;24:12;63:6; 77:11;78:12;90:22; 108:13;135:13; 151:18;157:23;167:9</p> <p><b>fast (1)</b> 148:25</p> <p><b>fast-tracked (1)</b> 70:14</p> <p><b>favor (18)</b> 4:15;18:22;25:2; 53:18,20;54:13;73:7, 23;80:3;83:2;86:3; 91:12;93:10;95:12; 98:17;99:14;147:13; 172:25</p> <p><b>Fayetteville (1)</b> 151:6</p> <p><b>feasible (2)</b> 29:10;31:1</p> <p><b>federal (1)</b> 83:23</p> <p><b>feedback (7)</b> 45:21;46:1,8,11, 12;113:10;140:2</p>	<p><b>feeder (4)</b> 29:17,18,19;36:2</p> <p><b>feeders (1)</b> 50:17</p> <p><b>feeds (2)</b> 29:17,19</p> <p><b>feel (20)</b> 18:12;36:13;43:9; 45:3,11;80:24;81:23; 82:13;85:2;117:22; 129:22;139:16; 150:23,24;160:4; 170:11,12,21;171:8, 12</p> <p><b>feeling (2)</b> 171:12,13</p> <p><b>feels (2)</b> 43:6,8</p> <p><b>fell (1)</b> 160:15</p> <p><b>felt (5)</b> 27:11;39:7,19; 154:14;170:9</p> <p><b>female (1)</b> 139:10</p> <p><b>few (9)</b> 36:7;45:16;46:20; 52:21;101:11; 106:18;109:20; 123:18;143:22</p> <p><b>field (1)</b> 117:11</p> <p><b>figure (2)</b> 29:22;124:2</p> <p><b>figures (1)</b> 141:17</p> <p><b>fill (3)</b> 15:15;45:4;64:1</p> <p><b>filled (2)</b> 8:17;12:11</p> <p><b>final (1)</b> 149:2</p> <p><b>finalists (1)</b> 144:22</p> <p><b>finalize (1)</b> 154:25</p> <p><b>finally (1)</b> 6:3</p> <p><b>financial (3)</b> 115:6;121:15; 154:19</p> <p><b>find (8)</b> 32:22;44:16;48:23; 81:21;87:3;115:22; 120:3;122:17</p> <p><b>findings (7)</b> 101:8;149:11; 162:23;163:10; 164:11;165:5;166:9</p> <p><b>fine (4)</b> 43:14;95:4;150:24; 168:2</p> <p><b>finish (1)</b></p>	<p>166:22</p> <p><b>finished (2)</b> 58:20;166:24</p> <p><b>firm (1)</b> 151:13</p> <p><b>first (51)</b> 4:6,21;5:13,23; 6:23;7:18;14:18; 15:20,23;17:6;20:6, 20;21:17;23:4;25:21; 27:16;28:12,16;30:4; 52:13,14;55:2;58:20; 68:24;72:21;74:7; 86:20,21;90:17;92:5, 9;93:20;104:22; 105:21;107:19; 110:11;111:17; 114:13;116:15; 119:8;126:18; 135:22;140:6; 141:15;149:4; 150:18,18;151:6; 154:8;156:23;157:7</p> <p><b>first- (1)</b> 117:9</p> <p><b>first-year (3)</b> 76:18;78:14;79:1</p> <p><b>fits (1)</b> 42:8</p> <p><b>fitting (1)</b> 156:8</p> <p><b>Fitz (1)</b> 139:15</p> <p><b>five (26)</b> 25:20,20;26:6; 32:2;43:14,15,17; 47:16,16;52:18,19; 54:6,9;57:11,23; 66:21;84:17;93:19; 110:17;130:19; 142:5;143:3;161:20, 21,21,22</p> <p><b>five-year (1)</b> 66:23</p> <p><b>flexibility (13)</b> 27:24;30:15;31:7, 20;32:16,24;34:3,25; 36:21;37:2,21;42:20; 108:5</p> <p><b>flexible (1)</b> 27:19</p> <p><b>Florida (3)</b> 95:24;96:4;97:16</p> <p><b>fluid (1)</b> 50:13</p> <p><b>focus (2)</b> 127:10;152:6</p> <p><b>focused (1)</b> 141:5</p> <p><b>focusing (1)</b> 115:18</p> <p><b>folks (11)</b> 115:9;158:4,5;</p>	<p>159:10;160:4; 164:10,20;165:7,7; 166:13,14</p> <p><b>follow (3)</b> 115:9,11;143:11</p> <p><b>followed (1)</b> 6:2</p> <p><b>following (4)</b> 12:11;31:16;136:5; 154:7</p> <p><b>follow-up (3)</b> 17:24;114:19; 141:14</p> <p><b>football (1)</b> 10:23</p> <p><b>forcing (1)</b> 117:22</p> <p><b>forefront (1)</b> 145:16</p> <p><b>foreign (1)</b> 158:14</p> <p><b>forget (4)</b> 41:15;139:2,19; 170:11</p> <p><b>forgot (1)</b> 38:2</p> <p><b>form (2)</b> 8:17;15:14</p> <p><b>formerly (1)</b> 61:8</p> <p><b>forth (5)</b> 83:14;143:8;144:2; 145:21;160:17</p> <p><b>fortunate (1)</b> 85:2</p> <p><b>forward (14)</b> 67:2;74:2;75:12; 77:20;85:7;86:6; 87:11;102:11; 114:17;125:23; 126:25;127:4; 145:19;154:13</p> <p><b>found (2)</b> 85:2;162:10</p> <p><b>four (16)</b> 22:14;36:15;44:18; 54:24;58:17,22; 74:21;102:15; 144:21;156:1,2,11, 15;160:9;161:18,20</p> <p><b>four-year (2)</b> 135:10;144:7</p> <p><b>free (3)</b> 55:13;129:5; 144:10</p> <p><b>Freno (25)</b> 7:14,16;25:17,18, 18;26:20;40:17,24; 41:2,5,7,10,13;54:21, 24;67:8;85:14;100:7, 8;146:5,9,20;147:4, 16,17</p> <p><b>Friday (3)</b></p>
<b>F</b>				
<p><b>fabulous (1)</b> 145:19</p> <p><b>face (1)</b> 122:21</p> <p><b>faced (2)</b> 31:5;33:25</p> <p><b>faces (3)</b> 27:5,5;103:7</p> <p><b>facets (2)</b></p>				

<p>12:11;14:5;150:22  <b>friend (1)</b>  141:15  <b>friends (1)</b>  41:3  <b>front (2)</b>  5:22;62:15  <b>fulfill (1)</b>  160:21  <b>full (9)</b>  14:2;30:20;39:6;  72:1;77:23;87:23;  104:7;125:17;163:17  <b>full- (1)</b>  103:9  <b>fully (1)</b>  84:8  <b>fund (1)</b>  167:9  <b>funding (4)</b>  49:18;119:8;  129:16;167:11  <b>funds (5)</b>  76:8,22;83:24;  121:12,12  <b>funnel (1)</b>  46:2  <b>funneled (1)</b>  169:16  <b>future (2)</b>  140:4,5  <b>Futures (1)</b>  144:9</p>	<p><b>gift (1)</b>  169:2  <b>girls' (1)</b>  160:15  <b>given (8)</b>  18:6,6;22:1;42:8;  55:12;99:23;142:14;  163:18  <b>gives (1)</b>  76:15  <b>giving (5)</b>  7:8;20:12;61:22;  63:5,7  <b>glad (5)</b>  26:13;27:2,12;  122:6,6  <b>goal (5)</b>  33:3;36:11;62:14;  151:15;167:7  <b>goals (3)</b>  102:7,13,14  <b>goes (10)</b>  9:23;14:17;15:20;  17:22;24:7;84:9;  144:2;151:4;157:23;  162:25  <b>gogical (1)</b>  109:10  <b>good (44)</b>  6:4;21:15,16;27:4,  4;36:13;37:4;38:3,3,  6;51:9;55:3,4;80:25;  81:13,14;83:7;86:7,  9;88:1,3;92:1;  108:21;110:19;  115:25;128:25;  142:20;146:12;  148:12;150:4,12;  152:11;154:7,15;  156:9,18;157:15;  160:5;161:23;  162:12,20;171:16;  172:2,14  <b>governance (3)</b>  152:22,25;154:19  <b>GOVERNING (3)</b>  100:3,6;147:2  <b>Governor's (2)</b>  146:15,18  <b>grab (1)</b>  100:25  <b>grade (43)</b>  10:12;16:9;22:13,  25;29:11,12;30:8,19;  33:20;42:16;47:15;  48:21;50:1;60:15;  65:13;75:17,19,19,  20;79:4,4,4;82:5,6;  85:8;90:6,9,10,15,18;  92:15;94:3;97:24;  139:8,11,14;141:18,  24;148:2;151:3;  159:17,18;161:11</p>	<p><b>grader (1)</b>  97:23  <b>graders (1)</b>  92:16  <b>grades (8)</b>  26:4,5;40:21;  49:10;53:25;54:8;  74:19,20  <b>graduate (2)</b>  77:16;113:16  <b>graduated (4)</b>  22:24;118:13;  142:3;151:13  <b>graduates (4)</b>  74:22;105:1,3,3  <b>graduating (1)</b>  151:8  <b>grandmother (1)</b>  87:6  <b>grandson (1)</b>  87:7  <b>grant (8)</b>  6:12;9:4;17:5,8;  18:17;24:23;67:20;  137:21  <b>granted (4)</b>  8:6;21:5;32:1;  106:22  <b>granting (1)</b>  9:19  <b>graph (1)</b>  114:20  <b>great (30)</b>  5:6;25:11;30:25;  35:22;46:7;57:23;  74:2;75:13;77:9;  79:3,16;82:1;86:7;  87:11;100:1;113:2;  114:17,24;115:16;  121:25;125:14,20,20,  24;129:25;130:5,7;  169:2;171:16,19  <b>grew (1)</b>  23:1  <b>group (5)</b>  31:24;60:11;90:6;  129:19;145:5  <b>GROVE (10)</b>  95:18,20,23;96:2,6,  8,22;97:3,7;98:14  <b>grow (2)</b>  143:22;145:13  <b>growing (2)</b>  117:25;144:3  <b>grown (1)</b>  143:7  <b>growth (1)</b>  9:17  <b>GT (1)</b>  9:12  <b>guess (11)</b>  8:4;12:13;20:9;  43:5;50:23,24;81:24;</p>	<p>87:9;89:1,6;141:23  <b>guest (1)</b>  100:16  <b>Guevara (1)</b>  87:17  <b>guidance (4)</b>  84:20;99:23;  124:10;146:6  <b>guide (2)</b>  121:8;146:7  <b>guidepost (1)</b>  29:14  <b>guys (7)</b>  5:11;25:11;43:22;  168:12;169:5,11;  172:6</p>	<p>91:20,22,24;92:1,1,9,  12,19;93:19;94:9,12,  15,18;95:19;96:11,  14,18,21,23;97:4,9,  13,15,17,21,23;98:1,  5,22;99:4,18,21;  100:1  <b>Hart (1)</b>  28:18  <b>head (5)</b>  12:23;67:15;69:6;  87:18;169:8  <b>headed (1)</b>  152:8  <b>heading (1)</b>  112:7  <b>health (1)</b>  141:7  <b>hear (10)</b>  7:15;10:4;11:9;  16:23;20:19;56:24;  75:11;115:21;  157:15;168:25  <b>heard (6)</b>  76:24;113:15;  119:24;146:24;  168:17;171:2  <b>hearing (7)</b>  5:25;6:15;9:2,5;  74:2;86:6;125:23  <b>heart (3)</b>  44:25;51:20;52:7  <b>held (2)</b>  51:7;165:7  <b>HELENA (11)</b>  147:18,21;148:19;  149:19;152:16;  160:13;162:24;  164:12;168:8,21;  170:17  <b>Helena- (1)</b>  147:20  <b>HELENA-WEST (10)</b>  147:18;148:19;  149:18;152:16;  160:13;162:24;  164:12;168:7,21;  170:17  <b>help (23)</b>  22:22;27:15;37:8;  61:20;65:6;66:11;  68:10;71:11;90:5,10;  101:23;102:10,13;  104:6;107:9;121:9,  15;125:16;127:5;  128:24;152:4;  154:12;166:1  <b>helped (3)</b>  90:3,6;129:19  <b>helpful (5)</b>  34:4;36:21;40:16;  90:25;130:2  <b>helping (2)</b></p>
<b>G</b>		<b>H</b>		
<p><b>Galeazzi (15)</b>  4:5;19:4,7,8;21:19,  25;22:7,8,11,24;  23:18,22;25:5,8,9  <b>game (2)</b>  84:16;85:6  <b>gap (1)</b>  106:1  <b>gaps (4)</b>  106:7,11;151:7,10  <b>gather (1)</b>  109:18  <b>gear (1)</b>  36:25  <b>General (1)</b>  26:1  <b>Geographically (2)</b>  28:7,8  <b>George (1)</b>  28:17  <b>George's (1)</b>  35:22  <b>getaway (1)</b>  150:20  <b>gets (3)</b>  13:25;110:7;  144:16</p>	<p><b>half (6)</b>  38:7,9;105:7;  158:12;166:5,5  <b>hand (5)</b>  7:10;20:13;26:15;  56:10;143:4  <b>handed (1)</b>  156:13  <b>handful (1)</b>  143:4  <b>handle (2)</b>  5:18;29:6  <b>handled (1)</b>  48:13  <b>handout (1)</b>  24:2  <b>hang (1)</b>  41:10  <b>happen (9)</b>  31:11;32:23;60:22;  61:15;81:1;82:10;  157:6,17;163:12  <b>happened (2)</b>  46:6;163:5  <b>happening (5)</b>  44:23;46:2,6;  61:25;153:21  <b>happens (7)</b>  16:25;33:18;77:14;  114:22;115:5,8;  136:20  <b>happy (2)</b>  48:16;167:23  <b>Har-Ber (2)</b>  29:18;36:1  <b>hard (16)</b>  4:24;66:1;76:6;  86:22;99:23;110:14;  112:8;115:18;  142:12;145:24;  149:20;156:19;  158:20,20;160:1,4  <b>Harp (36)</b>  61:22;62:11;68:23;</p>			

<p>52:3;122:22  <b>helps (2)</b>                      127:1;141:12  <b>HENDERSON (25)</b>                      24:25;25:1;50:21,                      22;51:15;52:23,25;                      53:3,7,9,12,15;69:11,                      12,18,22,25;73:14,                      16,17;95:10,11;99:8,                      9;172:5  <b>hesitant (1)</b>                      43:17  <b>Hey (14)</b>                      13:21;31:7;32:2;                      46:10;48:18;121:6;                      148:11,11,11,11,11,                      11;152:18;157:1  <b>Hi (1)</b>                      10:6  <b>Hicks (23)</b>                      4:7;6:22,24;7:9;                      8:16;10:4,4,5,6,20;                      11:6,23,25;12:8,22;                      13:1,9,20;16:2,5,8;                      19:2,3  <b>high (47)</b>                      28:3,3;29:18,19;                      30:2;33:12;35:20,25,                      25;36:1,2,4;39:16;                      42:22;57:20;58:7;                      60:2;61:5;63:1;                      64:13,21,24,25;                      69:24;70:16;88:7,11,                      15,16;103:18,20;                      115:4,10;122:18,19;                      143:10,18;151:8;                      155:2;156:16,18;                      158:7,13;161:15;                      163:16;165:21;166:3  <b>higher (5)</b>                      49:11;78:10;                      102:18;113:6;119:16  <b>highest (1)</b>                      76:20  <b>HIGHLAND (4)</b>                      93:16,21;94:24;                      95:7  <b>highlight (2)</b>                      105:13;106:18  <b>high-quality (1)</b>                      84:16  <b>highs (1)</b>                      29:20  <b>high-tech (1)</b>                      139:4  <b>HILL (16)</b>                      73:21,22;109:23,                      25;114:1;137:24;                      139:16,25;147:8,11,                      12,23;148:1,10;                      172:19,21  <b>Hills (1)</b>                      28:19</p>	<p><b>hire (19)</b>                      29:11;30:11,22;                      31:1;36:19;47:24;                      50:4,18;57:22;60:9;                      82:4;116:14;117:17,                      23,24;120:20;                      127:13;134:8;164:5  <b>hired (5)</b>                      128:11;133:24;                      134:7;159:2;164:24  <b>hiring (6)</b>                      35:10;47:14,18;                      84:19;169:18;170:6  <b>Hispanic (4)</b>                      104:4;106:2,13,14  <b>history (2)</b>                      35:5;121:2  <b>hits (1)</b>                      50:15  <b>HO (1)</b>                      128:10  <b>hold (6)</b>                      31:8,20;45:7,9;                      66:21;107:19  <b>hole (1)</b>                      120:2  <b>holes (1)</b>                      156:16  <b>home (1)</b>                      58:3  <b>hone (2)</b>                      103:3;127:7  <b>honest (1)</b>                      170:16  <b>honor (2)</b>                      9:11;51:12  <b>hook (1)</b>                      143:14  <b>hope (10)</b>                      32:1;46:20;55:15;                      83:10,11,17;85:24;                      127:19;134:25;                      138:15  <b>hopefully (1)</b>                      134:18  <b>hoping (5)</b>                      72:7;81:21;134:22;                      148:24;161:1  <b>horrible (1)</b>                      117:20  <b>hosts (1)</b>                      27:8  <b>Hot (1)</b>                      62:8  <b>hour (2)</b>                      88:2;104:8  <b>hours (7)</b>                      36:5,8;58:10;                      99:20;107:25,25;                      164:18  <b>house (2)</b>                      12:3;151:4  <b>HR (3)</b></p>	<p>83:20;84:21;                      128:10  <b>huge (6)</b>                      51:24;143:1;                      164:14,20,20;170:15  <b>human (7)</b>                      55:25;61:17;63:13;                      68:12;72:15;138:20;                      167:1  <b>hundreds (2)</b>                      35:6;107:12  <b>Hunt (1)</b>                      28:18  <b>hypothetical (1)</b>                      34:11  <b>hypotheticals (1)</b>                      30:18</p>	<p>83:21  <b>incentives (1)</b>                      142:14  <b>include (1)</b>                      51:1  <b>included (5)</b>                      24:19;34:5,6;51:5,                      13  <b>including (1)</b>                      102:18  <b>inclusive (2)</b>                      90:20,21  <b>income (1)</b>                      141:6  <b>incorporate (2)</b>                      88:21;122:24  <b>incorrectly (1)</b>                      8:17  <b>increase (4)</b>                      42:15;80:19;106:7;                      170:2  <b>increased (1)</b>                      143:5  <b>increasing (2)</b>                      83:22;142:18  <b>incubators (1)</b>                      145:9  <b>indicate (2)</b>                      94:18;128:19  <b>indicates (1)</b>                      138:24  <b>individual (4)</b>                      32:22;39:4;42:23;                      63:14  <b>individually (2)</b>                      154:14,15  <b>individuals (3)</b>                      58:11;60:24;                      110:13  <b>industries (1)</b>                      35:21  <b>industry (2)</b>                      37:5;115:14  <b>influence (3)</b>                      40:2;104:9;151:16  <b>inform (2)</b>                      101:25;113:12  <b>information (14)</b>                      21:24;62:3;84:25;                      111:24;113:13;                      114:21;115:24;                      122:5;123:22;                      125:12;128:13;                      147:20;148:8;155:8  <b>informed (2)</b>                      102:10;153:15  <b>infrequently (1)</b>                      32:4  <b>infuse (1)</b>                      101:8  <b>in-house (1)</b>                      97:11  <b>initial (2)</b></p>	<p>45:20;46:12  <b>initiative (2)</b>                      70:23;121:6  <b>Innovation (8)</b>                      35:15;39:10,11,15;                      43:7;45:11;51:3,4  <b>innovative (3)</b>                      43:6,8;125:14  <b>input (1)</b>                      48:17  <b>inside (1)</b>                      101:20  <b>insights (1)</b>                      101:24  <b>Inspecting (1)</b>                      165:1  <b>instance (3)</b>                      31:19;40:20;90:7  <b>instances (9)</b>                      32:15,24;33:10;                      34:3;36:20;46:24;                      51:25;58:1;60:19  <b>in-state (1)</b>                      127:23  <b>instead (2)</b>                      92:17;118:15  <b>institution (1)</b>                      84:3  <b>institutions (2)</b>                      84:21,21  <b>instruction (9)</b>                      30:25;51:10;60:5,                      11;61:11;62:16;                      71:15;157:2,4  <b>instructional (6)</b>                      61:8;75:5;78:25;                      84:10;163:7;167:2  <b>insufficient (1)</b>                      149:12  <b>insurance (1)</b>                      141:7  <b>insure (2)</b>                      58:13;62:21  <b>integral (1)</b>                      160:12  <b>integrate (1)</b>                      114:2  <b>integrating (6)</b>                      110:4,12,21,25;                      111:17,18  <b>intend (1)</b>                      36:18  <b>intense (1)</b>                      80:23  <b>intensity (1)</b>                      52:6  <b>intensive (2)</b>                      163:7,15  <b>intent (3)</b>                      39:3;45:3;85:17  <b>intentional (2)</b>                      37:14;163:6  <b>Interest (1)</b></p>
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<p>103:11  <b>interested (4)</b>                  76:14;115:3;                  123:11;166:3  <b>interesting (1)</b>                  129:10  <b>interferes (1)</b>                  9:21  <b>interim (2)</b>                  149:19,23  <b>intern (2)</b>                  75:9;77:11  <b>internal (1)</b>                  167:8  <b>international (4)</b>                  158:9;159:3;160:8;                  165:15  <b>interns (5)</b>                  78:13;80:24;81:17,                  18;87:16  <b>internship (3)</b>                  113:20;135:11;                  137:11  <b>intervening (1)</b>                  157:2  <b>intervention (3)</b>                  60:12;156:25;                  159:24  <b>interventionist (1)</b>                  166:13  <b>interventions (1)</b>                  157:4  <b>interviews (1)</b>                  149:6  <b>into (43)</b>                  8:21;11:14,24;                  16:20;24:21;38:12;                  39:17,23;46:3;48:20;                  83:21;84:22;102:21;                  104:15;105:19;                  106:15;110:4,12,16,                  18,21;111:11;113:3;                  114:13;115:4,10,10,                  11,12,13;116:12;                  123:23;124:6,13,14;                  149:4;152:13;                  153:19;156:11;                  159:10;163:17;                  165:24;172:13  <b>introducing (2)</b>                  87:20;148:15  <b>invest (5)</b>                  129:15;138:8,9,10,                  11  <b>invested (1)</b>                  81:22  <b>investigate (2)</b>                  104:17;124:20  <b>investigating (1)</b>                  167:18  <b>investigation (1)</b>                  101:17  <b>investing (3)</b></p>	<p>120:22,24;138:3  <b>investment (1)</b>                  120:21  <b>involved (9)</b>                  51:19;60:23;82:12;                  87:15,20;119:4;                  136:6;146:1;160:24  <b>irrelevant (1)</b>                  126:19  <b>issue (17)</b>                  7:2;14:4,5;17:24;                  31:2;33:3,4,5;34:19;                  44:18;49:16;59:9;                  109:7;132:6;135:23;                  160:23;164:14  <b>issued (1)</b>                  163:9  <b>issues (3)</b>                  31:24;109:6;                  123:24  <b>item (3)</b>                  4:6,21;154:3  <b>items (1)</b>                  153:9  <b>Ivy (4)</b>                  126:3;147:23;                  148:2;156:20</p>	<p><b>Jones (2)</b>                  28:18;139:12  <b>Josh (2)</b>                  100:17;109:19  <b>Josie (1)</b>                  19:8  <b>Julie (1)</b>                  164:9  <b>July (8)</b>                  8:1;13:22;14:1;                  19:19,25;21:18,22,23  <b>jumping (1)</b>                  160:19  <b>June (5)</b>                  9:3;12:6;13:18,19;                  21:20  <b>junior (6)</b>                  28:3;29:20;30:1;                  33:12;110:24;111:10</p>	<p>170:20  <b>Khan (1)</b>                  129:5  <b>kicked (1)</b>                  151:25  <b>kids (21)</b>                  23:3,6;32:15;34:8;                  37:22;44:21;47:8,17,                  18;49:5;50:8;156:2,                  3,11;159:9;160:24;                  164:17,18;165:3;                  166:11;172:13  <b>Kim (1)</b>                  144:17  <b>kind (25)</b>                  21:17;22:3;29:14;                  30:3;39:13;45:20;                  55:21;62:5;70:14,19;                  76:15;77:22;90:5;                  106:9;113:24;114:6;                  116:6;122:4;123:19;                  137:19;143:17,18,                  167:19,21;171:11  <b>kindergarten (15)</b>                  10:12;16:9;18:13;                  22:13,20,25;23:17,                  18;24:21;32:11;                  49:15;50:12;65:11,                  13;112:16  <b>kindergartner (1)</b>                  44:22  <b>Knapp (1)</b>                  28:16  <b>knew (4)</b>                  8:20,21;34:7;151:5  <b>knowing (1)</b>                  110:18  <b>knowledge (7)</b>                  8:20;17:18;59:11,                  22;109:9;116:23;                  128:19  <b>known (1)</b>                  81:19  <b>knows (1)</b>                  30:10</p>	<p>96:9,11,25;98:20,                  23;99:6,10  <b>language (3)</b>                  66:13,17;158:14  <b>large (11)</b>                  29:4,7;35:7;38:22;                  44:4;103:16;104:3;                  106:11;158:8;                  166:20,22  <b>largely (1)</b>                  29:16  <b>larger (4)</b>                  44:12;90:5;102:1;                  103:24  <b>largest (2)</b>                  38:18;44:13  <b>last (29)</b>                  5:17;21:23;30:4,                  19;34:12,13,15;                  45:16;57:11;86:13;                  98:22;105:11;107:3;                  109:1;110:23;111:1;                  123:14;141:23;                  142:17;148:19;                  149:23;150:16;                  154:5;156:12;158:7;                  165:17;168:1;                  169:15,15  <b>last-minute (1)</b>                  13:8  <b>late (2)</b>                  19:18;164:18  <b>later (5)</b>                  8:23;104:19;                  140:18;148:4,5  <b>law (3)</b>                  9:1;17:10;151:11  <b>lawyer (2)</b>                  26:14;151:12  <b>LEA (1)</b>                  164:5  <b>lead (7)</b>                  62:22;154:6;159:4;                  161:11,13,13;167:19  <b>leader (6)</b>                  59:20;62:23;                  125:10,13;151:16;                  157:17  <b>Leaders (3)</b>                  83:25;125:13;                  138:19  <b>leadership (5)</b>                  47:3;84:1;86:14;                  149:12;160:5  <b>leading (4)</b>                  39:10;62:12,23;                  133:16  <b>lean (1)</b>                  84:22  <b>leaner (1)</b>                  157:25  <b>leaning (1)</b>                  83:21</p>	
	<b>J</b>	<b>K</b>			
	<p><b>Jacks (5)</b>                  55:8,13;62:11;                  63:15;85:14  <b>Jackson (1)</b>                  139:14  <b>JAG (2)</b>                  36:6;165:16  <b>January (2)</b>                  81:22;82:4  <b>Jessica (2)</b>                  144:15,17  <b>Jim (1)</b>                  81:7  <b>job (23)</b>                  5:6;37:8;80:25;                  82:1;84:4;85:15;                  86:15;113:6;115:13;                  140:14;141:17;                  142:17;149:13;                  150:1;151:18,18;                  152:11;154:7;156:9;                  161:23;171:19;                  172:2,6  <b>jobs (2)</b>                  35:7;76:13  <b>Johnny (1)</b>                  152:17  <b>joint (1)</b>                  31:23  <b>joking (1)</b>                  168:11  <b>Jonathan (3)</b>                  83:12,16;86:7</p>	<p><b>K-12 (4)</b>                  28:2;47:25;104:25;                  165:12  <b>K-2 (4)</b>                  69:20;93:24,25,25  <b>K-5 (2)</b>                  28:24;94:3  <b>K-6 (2)</b>                  97:14;98:5  <b>K-8 (2)</b>                  95:23;96:3  <b>Karli (8)</b>                  54:24;55:3;82:1;                  113:18;119:6;128:3;                  142:24;145:22  <b>Karli's (2)</b>                  122:1;142:16  <b>keep (8)</b>                  31:17,18;43:13;                  53:2;120:2;142:14;                  148:8;168:12  <b>keeping (5)</b>                  145:21;149:1;                  152:5;153:15;160:25  <b>Keith (8)</b>                  149:16;150:3,10;                  151:4,17;152:15,19;                  153:11  <b>Kendra (2)</b>                  26:1;40:13  <b>KEY (31)</b>                  11:10,14,17;75:23,                  24;86:8,10;87:12,17;                  120:8,12,15,17;                  123:9;125:9;135:18,                  20;136:3,5,11,13;                  142:16;143:2,6;                  150:14;152:17;                  161:2;162:3,12;                  169:16,24  <b>Key's (1)</b></p>	<b>L</b>		

<p><b>learn (5)</b> 64:17;122:23; 123:21;129:17; 136:17</p> <p><b>Learning (16)</b> 90:17;91:17;92:4; 93:1;95:24;96:5; 97:11,22;98:3; 111:22;112:20; 124:9,10;127:10; 129:6,19</p> <p><b>least (5)</b> 50:2;118:6;126:16; 163:19;170:1</p> <p><b>leave (4)</b> 35:19;58:3;122:4; 125:8</p> <p><b>leaving (4)</b> 31:13;58:4;64:7; 128:5</p> <p><b>led (1)</b> 153:6</p> <p><b>Lee (2)</b> 168:22,23</p> <p><b>left (9)</b> 11:5;23:14;40:7; 50:9;65:4;82:17; 105:1;141:16;150:16</p> <p><b>Legislation (1)</b> 126:12</p> <p><b>legislature (2)</b> 141:1,9</p> <p><b>length (2)</b> 54:5;74:25</p> <p><b>lengthy (1)</b> 153:9</p> <p><b>less (3)</b> 104:1;128:20; 143:23</p> <p><b>lessen (1)</b> 134:20</p> <p><b>letter (8)</b> 8:18,23,25;9:6,8,9; 10:1;13:12</p> <p><b>letters (1)</b> 13:18</p> <p><b>letting (2)</b> 81:1;156:20</p> <p><b>level (27)</b> 17:7;28:12;32:25; 33:19;47:15;48:21; 49:15;55:25;56:1; 60:3,15;61:17;63:25; 65:9;68:11;71:25,25; 78:24;113:5;118:10; 119:16;143:11,12,13, 19;148:20;169:7</p> <p><b>levels (3)</b> 56:2;114:10; 161:11</p> <p><b>license (52)</b> 36:16,19;37:5,11, 19;53:1;85:5;106:20,</p>	<p>23;107:5,17,18; 117:4,4,17,19,21,25; 118:14,24;120:9,25; 121:24;126:20; 127:5,14,15,17,19, 22;130:17,18,18; 131:5,8,18;132:4,4, 22;133:3,14,18,20; 135:2,24;136:19; 137:21;140:12,16; 142:9;162:5,11</p> <p><b>licensed (23)</b> 37:3,23;106:3; 155:18,20,21,22; 158:18;159:1,2,5,6,7, 11,20,21;161:5,9,19, 20;162:24;166:16; 171:3</p> <p><b>licenses (2)</b> 107:4,4</p> <p><b>licensing (1)</b> 116:10</p> <p><b>Licensure (53)</b> 26:3;27:21;28:2; 35:1,4,9,11;36:12,14, 20;43:6,8,15;53:24; 54:4,8;55:6,12,24; 57:7,15,16;66:20; 67:11,11;72:22;73:3; 82:7;100:3,6,10; 101:3,17;103:4; 104:8,11,18;105:5,9, 19;106:22;107:8,21, 21,23;112:10; 124:18;125:4; 132:11,12;133:5; 134:6;147:2</p> <p><b>lie (2)</b> 139:5;148:10</p> <p><b>lighter (1)</b> 103:18</p> <p><b>likely (5)</b> 33:5;48:23;118:7; 128:12;134:16</p> <p><b>limit (4)</b> 33:9;67:13,19;69:3</p> <p><b>limited (4)</b> 27:19;37:21; 163:19;169:11</p> <p><b>Lincoln (5)</b> 95:24;96:5;97:11, 22;98:2</p> <p><b>line (2)</b> 12:3;57:10</p> <p><b>lines (1)</b> 29:1</p> <p><b>linked (2)</b> 102:16;115:9</p> <p><b>list (4)</b> 24:3;113:13;166:8, 9</p> <p><b>listed (2)</b> 9:9;24:12</p>	<p><b>Listen (1)</b> 38:4</p> <p><b>listening (1)</b> 160:17</p> <p><b>literacy (7)</b> 56:1;61:23;68:18; 72:16;82:5;85:8; 165:13</p> <p><b>little (27)</b> 30:14,24;35:9; 42:14;43:5;45:13; 50:13;51:14;55:22; 57:7,14,25;62:18; 65:7;66:8;104:19,20; 105:19;108:14,15; 116:6;142:24;150:8, 9;166:8;169:1; 171:10</p> <p><b>lived (1)</b> 8:22</p> <p><b>lives (4)</b> 22:21;23:2;168:18, 20</p> <p><b>living (2)</b> 46:16;103:21</p> <p><b>Load (25)</b> 26:4;27:18;28:1; 34:5,8,11,20,24;40:1, 19;52:15;53:6,14; 59:8,14;62:17;63:22; 67:12;73:11;74:19; 75:6;88:17,18,19,22</p> <p><b>local (5)</b> 14:18;46:25;83:24; 84:3;86:18</p> <p><b>located (1)</b> 28:5</p> <p><b>long (14)</b> 10:24;25:6;28:9; 35:4;51:19;53:8; 70:9;99:19;119:19; 129:4;138:10;145:1; 157:3;163:21</p> <p><b>longer (2)</b> 31:17;131:4</p> <p><b>long-term (3)</b> 78:1;118:9;120:12</p> <p><b>look (41)</b> 29:7;39:2,21,25; 40:20;41:1;43:20,23; 44:9;50:10;51:5; 59:17;63:13;65:8; 85:7;105:18,25; 109:3,13;110:20; 111:4,8;114:4,12,17, 25;115:6;119:21; 121:18;124:14,17,22, 25;125:2,23;126:4; 136:20;138:16; 140:3;145:7;157:14</p> <p><b>looked (5)</b> 38:17;44:1;65:10; 110:1;148:5</p>	<p><b>looking (30)</b> 29:13;32:7;35:23; 40:21;47:14,17;50:8; 52:13;55:16;67:10; 70:20;74:2;75:12; 77:21;86:6;87:4,10; 92:23;100:5;102:2; 103:5;114:14,19; 123:9;138:15;139:3; 146:2;156:6,23; 159:14</p> <p><b>looks (6)</b> 24:4;36:6;38:21; 104:21;105:14; 155:16</p> <p><b>Lori (2)</b> 25:18;40:12</p> <p><b>lose (5)</b> 105:3;121:19,20; 140:14,23</p> <p><b>losing (1)</b> 51:23</p> <p><b>loss (2)</b> 70:20;160:18</p> <p><b>lost (9)</b> 58:5,6;69:15,16,21, 23,24;135:7;155:11</p> <p><b>lot (38)</b> 8:3;31:15;33:6; 35:2;37:12,12;41:14; 66:2;110:13,15; 113:3;121:14; 122:20,22;123:15; 125:12,15;129:1; 138:11;143:12; 144:3,20;145:20; 151:19,19;155:16,17; 156:23;157:24; 158:1;161:5;166:23, 25;167:11;170:10, 16;171:5;172:11</p> <p><b>lots (6)</b> 106:17;107:1; 119:13;157:23; 161:17;167:16</p> <p><b>love (6)</b> 23:6;29:2;41:2; 124:10;140:2;170:18</p> <p><b>loved (1)</b> 139:17</p> <p><b>low (6)</b> 105:24;106:6,10; 109:2;127:3;171:10</p> <p><b>lower (6)</b> 34:24;104:4;106:5, 7;114:3;128:18</p> <p><b>lowering (1)</b> 132:6</p> <p><b>lowest (1)</b> 165:18</p> <p><b>luck (2)</b> 83:7;172:14</p> <p><b>lunch (4)</b></p>	<p>88:1,6;89:2;168:12</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>M</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>ma'am (27)</b> 7:16,20,22;8:10, 13;14:11;16:8,22,25; 19:7;21:13,15;22:6, 8;54:1;56:23;79:7; 85:11;90:2;91:22; 94:12,15;96:18,21, 23;99:4,21</p> <p><b>MAGNOLIA (9)</b> 74:5,8,9,17,22; 76:5,25;81:16;82:4</p> <p><b>main (3)</b> 139:19,20;152:5</p> <p><b>maintain (1)</b> 44:11</p> <p><b>maintained (1)</b> 165:16</p> <p><b>major (2)</b> 117:6;156:17</p> <p><b>MAJORITY (1)</b> 18:23</p> <p><b>majors (2)</b> 112:13;143:16</p> <p><b>makes (5)</b> 17:2;33:6;78:11; 132:5;133:16</p> <p><b>making (11)</b> 9:13;37:13;53:5; 120:21;140:22; 141:17;149:1;155:7; 157:16;158:1;170:25</p> <p><b>manage (1)</b> 30:15</p> <p><b>management (1)</b> 51:9</p> <p><b>maneuvering (1)</b> 161:17</p> <p><b>manner (1)</b> 165:4</p> <p><b>many (20)</b> 6:10;28:5;32:9; 33:24;35:14,16; 49:18;57:15;58:1; 69:18;103:16; 106:12;138:17; 143:2,5,16;162:3; 165:22;166:18,19</p> <p><b>March (1)</b> 84:20</p> <p><b>Marcia (1)</b> 25:25</p> <p><b>marrying (1)</b> 125:17</p> <p><b>Massachusetts (1)</b> 123:24</p> <p><b>master (3)</b> 62:22;155:3; 157:13</p> <p><b>Masters (1)</b></p>
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<p>119:17  <b>Master's (1)</b>                      58:16  <b>MAT (4)</b>                      132:17,18,25;                      136:9  <b>matches (1)</b>                      104:24  <b>math (12)</b>                      37:4,6;60:4;74:20;                      75:20;114:3;117:6,6,                      8;129:2;161:19;                      166:5  <b>matriculate (1)</b>                      111:10  <b>MATs (2)</b>                      112:9;119:17  <b>matter (5)</b>                      6:16;9:15;26:9;                      36:22;156:7  <b>matters (3)</b>                      26:10;140:19;                      163:6  <b>Matthew (1)</b>                      88:13  <b>max (1)</b>                      8:25  <b>maximum (5)</b>                      41:18;42:5,15;                      45:4;49:23  <b>may (27)</b>                      5:25;6:4,10,14,16;                      9:21;13:14;17:20;                      34:1;43:4;70:8;72:5;                      94:6;108:2;111:9;                      117:8,13,18;132:16,                      21;133:11,11;                      135:17;140:25;                      152:12;153:21;                      156:15  <b>maybe (26)</b>                      14:25;33:22,23;                      36:5,10;37:4;39:23,                      25;43:16,23;45:12;                      51:21;52:5;118:8;                      119:19,20;127:23,23;                      129:2,3;138:7;141:9,                      10;143:4;164:1;                      166:23  <b>McCroy (15)</b>                      7:1,19,19;8:22,23;                      10:11,16,16;11:9;                      12:1,1,13;17:17;16:4,                      7  <b>McFETRIDGE (35)</b>                      11:7,13,18;16:12;                      17:13,19;18:11,17;                      51:18;53:16,17;54:3,                      6,8;71:24;72:4,9,11,                      14,18,24;73:2;82:25;                      83:1;86:1,2;87:12,                      15;90:14;91:2,4;                      93:3,6,98:10,14</p>	<p><b>McFetridge's (1)</b>                      16:23  <b>McGee (39)</b>                      100:17,21,22;                      101:6,13;108:10,17;                      113:8;114:12,24;                      115:3;121:25;                      122:15;123:2,6,18;                      140:2;145:23;                      149:16;150:11;                      152:15,19;153:5;                      154:5,16;156:15,25;                      162:9,15;164:25;                      165:23;166:1;                      167:19;168:3;                      169:24;170:8;                      171:15;172:3,15  <b>MCL (3)</b>                      59:19;60:6,6  <b>MCLs (4)</b>                      60:3,4;61:7;64:23  <b>mean (24)</b>                      10:20;43:22;44:1,                      5;47:14;60:14;65:18;                      72:6;87:23;114:12,                      14;118:12;127:16;                      130:15;132:3,6;                      142:20,21;143:5,25;                      145:5,20;155:24;                      171:22  <b>means (3)</b>                      9:9;39:5;47:9  <b>meant (1)</b>                      38:18  <b>Measure (1)</b>                      123:13  <b>measurement (2)</b>                      106:22;126:7  <b>measuring (1)</b>                      117:9  <b>mechanics (1)</b>                      35:18  <b>media (1)</b>                      144:23  <b>meet (16)</b>                      38:15;45:24;56:17;                      59:1;61:3;63:13,14;                      64:7;66:15;114:11;                      116:25;121:5;                      134:11,16;158:13,15  <b>meeting (25)</b>                      6:18;10:7,9;12:6,6,                      10,17,17;14:1,7;                      16:13;17:14,23;                      21:22,23;46:4,15;                      47:4;89:17;114:6;                      153:7;154:6,8,21;                      169:15  <b>meetings (6)</b>                      37:15;45:24;92:20;                      153:6;154:15,16  <b>MELBOURNE (7)</b>                      93:18,22;94:7,9,13,</p>	<p>24;95:8  <b>Melissa (5)</b>                      55:8,13;62:11;                      63:15;81:9  <b>member (5)</b>                      139:19;153:5;                      154:10,24;166:3  <b>members (4)</b>                      69:14;76:6;101:1;                      150:12  <b>mentioned (2)</b>                      53:9;110:1  <b>mentor (6)</b>                      75:1,6;78:21;79:2;                      121:9;169:2  <b>mentoring (4)</b>                      130:13;159:6,12;                      165:14  <b>mentors (1)</b>                      75:4  <b>mentorship (1)</b>                      78:24  <b>mess (2)</b>                      155:9,9  <b>met (6)</b>                      38:22;45:2;59:3;                      62:7;153:5;164:13  <b>methods (1)</b>                      142:9  <b>Mexico (1)</b>                      123:24  <b>Michael (1)</b>                      168:25  <b>micro-credential (1)</b>                      106:24  <b>microphone (3)</b>                      56:22;87:14;161:8  <b>middle (17)</b>                      29:20;30:1,7;                      57:20;58:7;64:13,25;                      69:23;70:16;74:20;                      82:6;89:4;105:4,22;                      106:5,7;112:17  <b>mid-semester (1)</b>                      33:20  <b>might (14)</b>                      27:15;39:22;40:11;                      42:19;59:18;60:19;                      66:4;68:10;117:15;                      121:18;126:3,23;                      128:17;162:4  <b>might've (1)</b>                      66:20  <b>miles (2)</b>                      10:12;28:9  <b>mind (4)</b>                      31:18;53:4;91:23;                      141:13  <b>mindful (1)</b>                      160:20  <b>minds (1)</b>                      170:10  <b>mine (1)</b></p>	<p>135:9  <b>minimum (3)</b>                      78:3;126:5,8  <b>minority (2)</b>                      103:20;122:19  <b>minus (3)</b>                      106:21;123:12;                      126:6  <b>minute (4)</b>                      27:20;97:1;116:5;                      148:16  <b>minutes (2)</b>                      5:25;88:2  <b>Miranda (1)</b>                      139:11  <b>mirror (1)</b>                      132:8  <b>mis- (1)</b>                      138:23  <b>missed (1)</b>                      131:24  <b>missing (1)</b>                      127:24  <b>Mississippi (1)</b>                      123:25  <b>Missouri (1)</b>                      57:10  <b>mistaken (2)</b>                      9:22;70:5  <b>misuse (1)</b>                      153:22  <b>mobile (2)</b>                      33:11;50:14  <b>model (12)</b>                      44:14;59:17,19,25;                      60:2,6,25;64:17;                      90:19;111:14,15;                      114:8  <b>moment (1)</b>                      117:14  <b>MOMENTS (1)</b>                      52:21  <b>mom's (1)</b>                      151:4  <b>Monday (4)</b>                      10:23;50:9;76:8;                      151:24  <b>money (5)</b>                      36:8;119:9;120:1,                      2;170:25  <b>Monitor (4)</b>                      28:19;102:13;                      129:9;134:14  <b>monitoring (1)</b>                      163:11  <b>month (5)</b>                      38:15;123:14;                      148:19,24,25  <b>monthly (1)</b>                      45:25  <b>months (4)</b>                      38:11;101:2,11;                      109:20</p>	<p><b>MOORE (139)</b>                      4:13,14;14:13,16,                      22,24;15:5,8,12,17;                      23:15,16,20,23;                      24:17,23;40:8,9,17,                      19,25;41:4,6,9,12,14,                      20,25;42:6,9,12,17,                      19,22;43:1;54:11,12;                      65:5,6,15,22,24;                      66:19,24;67:5,7;70:8,                      18,24;71:2,7,10,12,                      18,21,23;77:8,9,14,                      19,21,25;78:4,7,11,                      16,19,22;79:3,8,11,                      16,19;89:16,19,21,                      24;91:7,9;97:2,6,10,                      14,16,20,22,25;98:4,                      7;113:1,2,15,21;                      114:17;115:2,16;                      126:1,2,3,11,14;                      127:13;128:2,8,14,                      16;129:25;130:5,7,                      11,14,23;131:2,9,16,                      19,24;132:2,5,10,15,                      19,23;133:1,7,10,13,                      15,20,22,24;134:1,7,                      9,12,18;135:3,5,8  <b>moot (1)</b>                      17:25  <b>morale (1)</b>                      171:9  <b>more (50)</b>                      12:25;23:2,8;                      34:11,19;37:1;40:23;                      43:23;47:13,21;                      48:19;50:14,14;                      52:22;58:22;59:12;                      60:11,12;64:4;65:7,                      12,14;69:14;78:13;                      87:3;90:20,20;                      104:20;105:20;                      108:16;109:12,18;                      112:11;114:18;                      116:6;123:18;124:6,                      14;128:11,17,20;                      129:25;134:20,23;                      136:17;140:21;                      142:10;158:25;                      160:11;170:25  <b>morning (14)</b>                      5:16;7:24;12:2;                      21:15,16;27:3;54:19;                      55:3,4;81:13,14;                      150:22;152:17;                      154:22  <b>most (8)</b>                      29:6;33:5;102:20;                      118:7;128:6;139:18;                      156:5;159:24  <b>mother (3)</b>                      8:15;21:1;44:20  <b>motion (50)</b>                      4:9,11;18:10,11,</p>
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16;24;16,22;52:16, 23;53:5,13,23;54:3,7; 72:23,24;73:1,12,14, 15;79:21,23,24; 82:19,21;85:21,22, 23;91:8,93:2,3,5; 94:25;95:5,7;98:8,10, 12;99:7,8,9;146:6,8, 9,13,25;147:1;154:4; 172:18,20 <b>MOUNTAIN (12)</b> 91:18;93:14,21; 94:23;95:7,17,20,22; 96:6,7,19;98:13 <b>move (25)</b> 4:10;24:20;25:17; 29:5;32:18,21;33:11; 36:22,25;37:14;49:5, 5;61:14;66:12;67:2; 78:9;82:20;91:7; 102:10;104:25; 112:22;126:20,25; 127:3;154:13 <b>moved (8)</b> 10:12;11:23;31:11, 12;43:25;96:5; 160:16;172:19 <b>moves (1)</b> 29:11 <b>moving (12)</b> 4:20;8:21;11:24; 33:18;35:1;38:20; 77:20;87:7;97:16; 127:23;157:6;161:23 <b>much (20)</b> 25:8;27:21;30:10; 34:24;36:7;46:13,13; 49:18;56:25;74:4,12; 80:6;87:2,19;99:25; 140:13,25;160:24; 163:20;172:14 <b>multi- (1)</b> 62:22 <b>multi-classroom (1)</b> 59:20 <b>multiple (12)</b> 47:20,23;84:21; 103:2;110:5;118:20; 120:6;158:3,5,18; 165:8;171:5 <b>multi-year (1)</b> 84:15 <b>Mundell (1)</b> 144:18 <b>music (1)</b> 29:1 <b>must (2)</b> 107:19;108:6 <b>mutual (1)</b> 123:17 <b>myriads (1)</b> 156:6 <b>myself (2)</b>	27:12;150:19  <b>N</b>  <b>nailed (1)</b> 141:20 <b>name (2)</b> 140:18;168:17 <b>names (2)</b> 139:13,22 <b>narrative (1)</b> 145:2 <b>national (2)</b> 103:13;143:24 <b>nationally (1)</b> 103:15 <b>near (1)</b> 57:10 <b>nearby (1)</b> 29:9 <b>nearly (1)</b> 22:18 <b>necessarily (2)</b> 117:12;128:19 <b>necessary (3)</b> 29:8;61:2;64:23 <b>need (55)</b> 4:8;22:13,22;23:8; 28:12;32:10;34:24; 37:21;39:24;47:8; 50:12,18;57:14,22; 60:13;61:13;62:15; 63:13,14;64:2,18,23; 67:9;68:9,9;69:4; 76:4;94:6;107:9; 110:20;111:4,9; 112:19;113:11; 114:6;120:5,23; 127:6;128:1;129:14; 138:10;146:5,17; 149:3;152:24; 153:10;159:24,25; 163:6,14,22;166:13; 167:15,17;172:18 <b>needed (13)</b> 27:11;32:16;36:22; 46:23;48:4;68:19; 121:11;152:21; 155:1;158:12,14; 163:7;164:22 <b>needing (1)</b> 37:22 <b>needle (1)</b> 61:14 <b>needs (13)</b> 47:8;61:4,15;64:7; 66:16;114:11;121:5; 128:22;149:9; 154:11;155:2;157:5; 164:7 <b>neighbor (1)</b> 123:25 <b>neighborhoods (1)</b>	164:17 <b>net (1)</b> 124:2 <b>new (25)</b> 7:25;11:24;21:18; 27:5;32:10,10;38:9; 50:12;66:7;76:5; 86:16,21,21;88:7,16; 102:16;123:24; 152:15,22;160:9; 164:5;165:24; 169:21;171:10; 172:13 <b>news (2)</b> 76:13;77:9 <b>NEWTON (281)</b> 4:3,11,14,17,20; 5:8,15,20,24;7:3,6, 14,17,21,23;8:4,8,11; 10:2,5,18;11:3,15,19; 16:1,6,10,21,23; 17:12;18:8,16,20,24; 19:1,5;20:2,4,8,18, 22;21:4,8,11,14,16; 22:4,7,9;23:4,24; 24:15,22;25:1,4,10, 13,16,18;26:12,19, 20,24;27:2;37:25; 38:6;40:4;43:2;44:2, 8;45:6,12,18;47:25; 48:24;49:6;50:20; 51:16;52:9,19,22,24; 53:2,4,8,11,13,17,22; 54:2,5,7,12,15,18,21; 55:1,4,9;56:8,14,20, 25;62:2,19;63:3,5,17, 21;64:9;65:2,18,23; 67:8,16;68:3,5,8,15, 21;69:2,7;70:2; 72:19;73:1,6,9,15,18, 22,25;74:6,11,15; 75:11,22;76:24;77:2, 4,6;79:14,17,20,24; 80:2,5,7,10,14,16,21; 81:2,5,12,14;82:15, 21;83:1,4,7,15;85:1, 9,12,19,23;86:2,5; 87:6,14,25;88:9,23; 89:3,9,14,23,25; 90:12;91:2,5,8,11,14, 19,23,25;92:8,10,18, 22;93:5,9,12;94:7,11, 13,16,21;95:6,11,14; 96:12,16,19,22,24; 97:5,7;98:8,12,16,19; 99:2,5,9,13,16,19,22; 100:5,8,20;108:19, 23;109:22,24; 112:25;116:2; 118:12,20;119:3,10, 24;120:14;121:17, 22;122:12;125:20; 126:2;135:6,19,21,	22;136:2,4,8,12,14, 21;137:6,13,15,22; 140:20;142:8; 145:23;146:19,23; 147:7,9,12,15,17,19, 25;155:21;159:13; 167:25;168:4,14; 171:14,17,21;172:1, 3,8,16,20,24;173:2 <b>next (27)</b> 12:12;53:24;54:22, 22,24;64:12,24;65:1; 68:2;70:21;74:6; 83:11;93:19;95:19; 96:11;101:11; 102:23;103:6,9; 109:20;113:14; 118:10;131:6; 141:16;148:23; 155:1;157:25 <b>night (2)</b> 18:1;76:8 <b>nine (1)</b> 84:18 <b>nobody (1)</b> 34:21 <b>Nodding (4)</b> 12:23;67:15;69:6; 169:8 <b>non- (2)</b> 6:19;159:5 <b>non-certified (1)</b> 76:10 <b>non-classroom (2)</b> 159:20,22 <b>none (1)</b> 168:4 <b>non-education (1)</b> 142:4 <b>non-lawyers (1)</b> 26:9 <b>non-licensed (4)</b> 161:4,10;166:16; 171:4 <b>non-resident (10)</b> 6:1;7:1,18;9:23; 13:16;15:21;19:10; 20:19;21:3;24:21 <b>nontraditional (2)</b> 118:3;142:7 <b>norm (1)</b> 36:4 <b>normally (1)</b> 147:24 <b>northern (1)</b> 57:9 <b>northwest (1)</b> 28:6 <b>notice (5)</b> 9:1;19:19,21,23; 103:17 <b>noticed (1)</b> 41:6	<b>notified (3)</b> 12:17,18;21:20 <b>novice (1)</b> 165:13 <b>number (24)</b> 24:2;29:4;33:15; 42:2,3,7;44:6;49:24, 25;50:3,7;57:6; 60:17;69:14;70:11; 138:25;142:18,19; 143:6;158:8;162:23; 166:20,22;170:2 <b>numbers (13)</b> 29:8;34:12,13; 39:2;43:24;44:4,10; 49:10;51:5;65:8; 139:5;142:21;161:7 <b>nursing (4)</b> 110:2;111:5,6,7  <b>O</b>  <b>oath (1)</b> 5:23 <b>observations (1)</b> 149:7 <b>obvious (1)</b> 76:4 <b>Obviously (2)</b> 81:25;170:2 <b>October (2)</b> 48:9,10 <b>odd (1)</b> 30:24 <b>off (4)</b> 90:4;96:9;151:25; 164:7 <b>off- (1)</b> 103:2 <b>offer (1)</b> 9:13 <b>offered (1)</b> 33:23 <b>offers (1)</b> 98:2 <b>office (9)</b> 13:23;70:23; 101:19;146:15,18; 149:14;165:9;166:2; 167:8 <b>Officer (1)</b> 101:22 <b>official (3)</b> 19:23;107:20,20 <b>offset (1)</b> 90:5 <b>often (1)</b> 61:1 <b>old-school (1)</b> 144:25 <b>on- (1)</b> 103:2 <b>once (10)</b>
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<p>33:8;50:15;69:13; 76:13;115:23;129:6; 130:18;152:1; 170:23;172:17 <b>one (129)</b> 7:1,18;9:16;12:8, 19;13:3,4;15:23; 19:5,6,13,16,17; 20:24;21:1,6;26:20; 27:17;28:16;29:11; 30:23,24;31:1,1,2,4, 5,6,8,10,14;32:12; 34:16;35:16;36:24; 37:4;38:4,5,19,25; 39:6,10,21;44:12,19, 20;45:24;47:9,11,12, 13,21;48:19;50:2,11, 23;51:11,21;52:13, 14;53:24;54:22,22; 55:2;57:6;59:4;67:9; 68:10;75:8;76:11,12; 85:9,11;88:3;89:5; 90:23;91:6;92:9; 94:4,8,9,17,20,25; 95:8;96:8,10,17; 97:10;98:13,24; 102:15,20;103:1; 104:3;105:21,22,22, 24;110:23;111:2; 113:25,25;114:15,15, 19;119:20;125:1; 129:25;132:17; 135:9;137:24; 138:25;140:21; 144:24;145:6; 148:25;149:4,11; 151:9;152:12;155:4; 156:15;162:9,9,13, 15;165:11;170:3 <b>one-hundred (1)</b> 139:6 <b>ones (2)</b> 93:20;110:16 <b>one-time (1)</b> 33:4 <b>one-year (3)</b> 33:1;107:16; 130:20 <b>ongoing (2)</b> 70:22;125:5 <b>online (2)</b> 84:5;119:20 <b>only (32)</b> 8:20;13:2;14:4; 33:22,24;34:21;56:2; 59:20;63:22;74:24; 78:17;92:13,20; 93:23;94:2,19;97:21; 100:4,12;104:13; 116:11;118:15; 131:21;133:3,6; 143:10;156:2,15; 157:19;161:10;</p>	<p>167:12;169:11 <b>on-screen (1)</b> 112:3 <b>open (7)</b> 6:17;31:4;32:10; 61:16;76:13;155:13; 162:1 <b>opened (1)</b> 32:12 <b>open-ended (1)</b> 65:22 <b>opening (2)</b> 32:10;134:19 <b>openings (2)</b> 57:13;84:18 <b>operating (1)</b> 82:9 <b>operations (1)</b> 153:20 <b>opportunity (22)</b> 55:13;56:17;57:3; 58:3;59:15,15,25; 60:11;63:6,22;64:10; 67:13,21;69:3;70:9; 73:11;74:3;76:23; 81:16;111:21; 150:18;153:23 <b>opposed (17)</b> 4:17;18:24;25:4; 53:22;54:15;73:9,25; 80:5;83:4;86:5; 91:14;93:12;95:14; 98:19;99:16;147:15; 173:2 <b>opposite (1)</b> 96:3 <b>OPPOSITION (1)</b> 173:3 <b>option (1)</b> 108:8 <b>options (1)</b> 136:6 <b>order (6)</b> 61:14;73:11;96:14; 118:23;136:9;154:2 <b>orderly (1)</b> 165:4 <b>organization (3)</b> 60:1;142:22; 143:10 <b>organizational (1)</b> 149:12 <b>organizations (1)</b> 143:17 <b>originally (2)</b> 13:10,11 <b>others (5)</b> 49:18;50:14,20; 91:2;172:11 <b>ours (1)</b> 38:5 <b>ourselves (1)</b> 160:2</p>	<p><b>out (49)</b> 8:17;12:11;13:13, 17,23,23;15:15; 29:22;30:16;31:14; 33:18;34:12;37:3; 46:9;48:8;66:25; 68:23;70:23;87:3; 93:20;96:14;100:25; 111:3;112:1;115:22; 119:14;120:1;122:7, 21,22;123:11;124:2; 128:5,23;129:10,23; 131:6;132:4,10; 144:8,11,23;150:20; 156:13;161:21; 162:10;164:16; 165:21;167:6 <b>outcome (1)</b> 117:20 <b>outcomes (1)</b> 167:16 <b>outlook (1)</b> 170:6 <b>outset (1)</b> 102:24 <b>over (58)</b> 11:5,21;27:19; 30:8,23;31:8,21,25, 25;34:2,6,16,22;40:7; 42:8;43:2;47:9,11,13, 22;48:12;50:2;51:11; 56:7;60:16;62:25; 65:4,14;69:10;74:10; 75:14,22;77:7;82:17; 84:24;101:11; 103:12;107:2,10; 108:19;109:16,20,22; 111:10;113:19,24; 120:6;126:25;129:3, 11;135:9;136:16; 142:17;153:11,16; 155:11;165:11,24 <b>overage (2)</b> 50:10,15 <b>overages (1)</b> 65:12 <b>overload (4)</b> 46:18,23;51:24; 66:13 <b>overloaded (1)</b> 45:19 <b>overnight (1)</b> 39:17 <b>overseeing (1)</b> 30:3 <b>oversight (3)</b> 68:19;69:1;163:5 <b>over-staffed (1)</b> 158:17 <b>own (6)</b> 39:24;95:25;96:3; 132:21;142:2;145:9 <b>OZARK (7)</b></p>	<p>95:17,20,22;96:6,7, 19;98:13 <b>P</b> <b>package (1)</b> 145:7 <b>packet (2)</b> 100:23;101:15 <b>paid (2)</b> 76:11,20 <b>Panel (2)</b> 89:17,19 <b>paper/pencil (1)</b> 112:3 <b>paperwork (1)</b> 24:13 <b>paraprofessional (5)</b> 49:12;63:2;64:6; 84:13;167:4 <b>paraprofessionals (4)</b> 49:14,19,21;167:3 <b>parent (9)</b> 6:3;9:2,3;16:12; 17:14;19:9,19;22:7; 31:12 <b>parents (4)</b> 10:3;15:12,15;20:4 <b>parliamentary (1)</b> 154:20 <b>Parsons (1)</b> 28:19 <b>part (22)</b> 12:19;20:6;49:1; 58:12;59:9;83:20; 84:1;87:8;93:22; 100:23;101:9,15; 102:1;109:11; 111:22,23;112:8; 113:10;120:23; 121:12;129:3;149:5 <b>partially (1)</b> 104:13 <b>participate (1)</b> 5:24 <b>participates (1)</b> 46:4 <b>particular (12)</b> 29:11,12,12;32:9; 33:20,22,25;37:19; 47:9,13;50:16;74:13 <b>particularly (3)</b> 66:4;110:8;124:20 <b>parties (2)</b> 6:5;60:22 <b>partner (4)</b> 61:21;87:5,23; 129:7 <b>partnering (1)</b> 87:23 <b>partners (2)</b> 35:22;37:17 <b>partnership (2)</b></p>	<p>83:18;101:11 <b>partnerships (3)</b> 86:18,22;144:7 <b>party (3)</b> 5:24;6:3,19 <b>pass (24)</b> 105:18,24;106:5,6, 10;107:23;108:6,7; 109:2;115:7,8;117:2, 7,8;118:15,17,23; 126:18;133:1,2; 135:13,14;136:18; 140:15 <b>pass/fail (1)</b> 124:21 <b>passage (1)</b> 128:18 <b>passed (3)</b> 46:21;79:13;82:7 <b>passers (1)</b> 114:21 <b>passes (1)</b> 53:23 <b>passing (7)</b> 107:10,20;110:15; 111:7;113:6,16; 114:22 <b>passion (1)</b> 150:8 <b>past (12)</b> 4:25;31:3;45:10; 58:4;69:16;79:10; 92:20;93:25;112:11; 143:22;149:15; 153:22 <b>patch (1)</b> 154:12 <b>pathway (13)</b> 58:14,19,23,25; 59:6,6;107:2,5; 111:23;134:20,21; 137:14;145:4 <b>pathways (3)</b> 37:1;61:19;137:4 <b>patterns (3)</b> 29:17,18;36:2 <b>patting (1)</b> 160:2 <b>pause (5)</b> 108:9,14;150:5,12; 162:19 <b>pausing (2)</b> 116:4,18 <b>pay (10)</b> 76:16,17;83:21; 118:18;119:9; 120:12;141:7; 149:24;170:14,17 <b>payments (1)</b> 76:11 <b>pay-outs (1)</b> 167:13 <b>PD (1)</b></p>
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<p>82:13  <b>peda- (1)</b>                  109:9  <b>pedagogy (2)</b>                  112:11;118:4  <b>pending (1)</b>                  146:17  <b>people (36)</b>                  23:8;29:5;35:3;                  64:5,8,22;81:23;                  105:2;115:6;117:7,                  23;132:24;134:8,10,                  16,20,21,23,25;                  140:9,12,15;141:3,                  11;144:10;148:3;                  153:17;155:10,14;                  157:1;158:3,5;                  161:24;163:4;170:7,                  11  <b>per (1)</b>                  9:1  <b>percent (1)</b>                  139:6  <b>percentage (3)</b>                  50:24;103:17,24  <b>percentages (2)</b>                  104:3,4  <b>perfect (2)</b>                  19:16;121:11  <b>performance-based (6)</b>                  106:24;109:14;                  112:5;119:1;124:4,                  23  <b>period (5)</b>                  33:25;111:10;                  121:20;149:21;168:6  <b>periods (3)</b>                  33:23;34:9;159:8  <b>Perkins (26)</b>                  55:19,20;56:7,15,                  16,20,23;57:2;62:2;                  63:24;64:12,65:10;                  66:6,23;67:3,6;69:12,                  16,19,23;70:1;71:17,                  20,22;74:1,4  <b>permanent (8)</b>                  49:5;100:11;146:7,                  11,14,22;147:4,5  <b>permit (4)</b>                  118:9;136:23,25;                  137:8  <b>perpetuating (1)</b>                  133:9  <b>person (16)</b>                  6:8,9;12:20;25:22;                  38:15;62:7;78:23;                  85:4,11;117:2,17,25;                  126:16;127:17,18;                  128:10  <b>personal (1)</b>                  153:6  <b>personally (1)</b>                  151:16</p>	<p><b>personnel (5)</b>                  31:22;45:22;                  169:12,14,25  <b>persons (1)</b>                  5:21  <b>perspective (3)</b>                  27:22;35:3;128:16  <b>pertaining (1)</b>                  39:25  <b>PFEFFER (63)</b>                  68:10,16;86:13;                  101:1;108:9,11;                  109:5;111:12;                  114:11;115:21;                  116:4;118:12,19,22;                  119:6;120:8,11,16,                  18;121:21;122:9;                  125:22;126:10,12,15;                  127:16;128:3,5;                  130:12,15,25;131:3,                  14,17,21;132:9,11,                  16,20,24;133:2,8,11,                  14,19,21,23,25;                  134:2,8,10,13,22;                  135:4;136:16,22;                  137:2,4,18;139:21;                  140:1;145:24;156:22  <b>phenomenal (2)</b>                  84:4;157:16  <b>phone (2)</b>                  144:5;150:21  <b>pick (3)</b>                  95:3;122:13;165:3  <b>picking (2)</b>                  164:17;171:12  <b>picture (2)</b>                  9:8;150:3  <b>piece (8)</b>                  64:19;103:1;121:3;                  153:25;159:24;                  160:7;167:6;170:12  <b>pieces (6)</b>                  40:2;64:18;158:1;                  164:4;167:2,20  <b>piggyback (1)</b>                  62:6  <b>pilot (2)</b>                  43:23;53:10  <b>piloting (1)</b>                  90:16  <b>pipeline (13)</b>                  84:2;86:23;101:5;                  102:3,9,25;103:5,8;                  104:22;106:15;                  115:18;122:17;                  142:15  <b>place (15)</b>                  6:17;38:23;45:1;                  47:6;52:7;72:12;                  81:21;90:4;106:18;                  113:19,24;119:23;                  121:17;137:7;149:12  <b>placed (1)</b></p>	<p>5:23  <b>plan (20)</b>                  64:21,22;82:3;                  93:1;97:14,15;98:24;                  99:1;106:19;108:3;                  111:11;121:12,13;                  125:1;126:6;127:10;                  129:6;160:5;163:9;                  165:18  <b>planning (4)</b>                  7:8;20:12;64:18;                  154:10  <b>plans (1)</b>                  71:14  <b>plate (1)</b>                  66:2  <b>platforms (1)</b>                  144:24  <b>play (5)</b>                  9:25;11:8;39:23;                  160:12,24  <b>PLC (1)</b>                  87:15  <b>pleading (1)</b>                  44:25  <b>please (6)</b>                  20:14;26:15;31:18;                  102:15,23;103:6  <b>pleased (1)</b>                  61:5  <b>plenty (2)</b>                  22:21;88:3  <b>plug (2)</b>                  155:14;163:4  <b>plus (1)</b>                  156:17  <b>pm (2)</b>                  88:6;173:6  <b>point (16)</b>                  9:13;24:19;30:5;                  31:1;32:8;47:18;                  50:4;68:10;109:3,12,                  16;121:25;122:15;                  131:25;153:7;155:6  <b>points (2)</b>                  123:20;137:19  <b>policies (4)</b>                  16:16;46:1;101:18;                  104:9  <b>policy (14)</b>                  16:16;17:13,15;                  31:22;45:22;101:9,                  19,25;102:10;                  113:12;125:13,14,17;                  140:6  <b>poll (1)</b>                  154:23  <b>polling (1)</b>                  60:23  <b>pool (2)</b>                  35:8;59:4  <b>pop (1)</b>                  148:17</p>	<p><b>population (8)</b>                  33:11;59:13;61:4;                  90:22;104:23,24,25;                  105:12  <b>portfolio (2)</b>                  109:17;112:4  <b>portion (1)</b>                  79:13  <b>position (3)</b>                  118:14;162:10;                  165:24  <b>positions (7)</b>                  158:16;159:18,21,                  22;165:8,11;171:4  <b>positive (1)</b>                  144:19  <b>possibility (1)</b>                  53:10  <b>possible (2)</b>                  102:16;165:18  <b>possibly (2)</b>                  53:10;110:21  <b>postsecondary (3)</b>                  115:4,5,10  <b>potential (2)</b>                  104:7;125:17  <b>pour (1)</b>                  170:24  <b>poverty (2)</b>                  103:21;122:19  <b>Powell (6)</b>                  80:17;81:9,13,15;                  83:6,8  <b>power (1)</b>                  169:9  <b>PowerPoint (1)</b>                  137:17  <b>PPC (3)</b>                  46:3,8,15  <b>PPTL (1)</b>                  58:18  <b>PPTLs (1)</b>                  136:13  <b>PR (1)</b>                  144:12  <b>practice (3)</b>                  10:22;84:22;                  126:24  <b>practices (2)</b>                  11:1;90:21  <b>practicing (1)</b>                  117:25  <b>PRAIRIE (10)</b>                  95:18,20,23;96:2,6,                  7,22;97:2,7;98:14  <b>Praxis (24)</b>                  59:5;79:13;108:6,                  7;109:2,4;113:16;                  114:4;115:8,9;117:3,                  7,8;118:16,21,23;                  126:8;128:7,18;                  133:1,2;135:13,14;                  141:19</p>	<p><b>predictive (1)</b>                  104:13  <b>predictor (1)</b>                  138:25  <b>pre-educator (1)</b>                  145:4  <b>prefer (2)</b>                  60:6;88:3  <b>pre-K-2 (1)</b>                  69:20  <b>preliminary (2)</b>                  101:8;148:22  <b>premise (1)</b>                  41:16  <b>prep (12)</b>                  74:23;75:3;111:18;                  116:12,15;131:13,20,                  22;135:15;155:17;                  159:8;162:1  <b>preparation (6)</b>                  103:14;131:4,7,10;                  134:25;135:25  <b>prepping (1)</b>                  110:5  <b>preschool (4)</b>                  20:25;22:17,19;                  23:20  <b>present (15)</b>                  5:25;6:6;7:4;                  15:12;17:4;18:5;                  22:10;26:8;55:23;                  57:15,23;58:14;92:4;                  124:6;125:12  <b>presentation (12)</b>                  26:7;27:14;40:15;                  50:22;52:3;69:13;                  81:11;100:18,23;                  113:9;137:18;147:23  <b>presented (3)</b>                  6:14;31:22;150:19  <b>presenting (1)</b>                  40:9  <b>presents (1)</b>                  26:21  <b>pretty (13)</b>                  22:14;31:10;38:6;                  74:12;76:19;104:24;                  105:24;123:19;                  127:3;156:9,18;                  163:20;166:19  <b>previous (2)</b>                  66:21;149:21  <b>Previously (4)</b>                  8:22;16:6;81:18;                  98:24  <b>Pride (3)</b>                  152:1,2,5  <b>Pride's (1)</b>                  129:18  <b>primary (5)</b>                  57:18;58:6;69:19,                  20;152:6  <b>PRINCE (8)</b></p>
--	---	---	--	---

<p>89:18,22,23,25; 90:2,16;91:15,16 <b>principal (7)</b> 33:12;61:5;66:7,7, 9;84:6;141:21 <b>principals (1)</b> 66:10 <b>printed (2)</b> 100:25;156:12 <b>prior (2)</b> 8:3,20 <b>privacy (1)</b> 125:11 <b>private (1)</b> 142:5 <b>prizes (1)</b> 27:10 <b>probably (12)</b> 15:2;32:11;35:2; 40:12;108:24; 111:13;138:13; 139:16;140:24; 142:5;162:11;172:10 <b>problem (3)</b> 9:18;106:3;125:5 <b>problems (2)</b> 122:11;123:17 <b>procedures (2)</b> 5:19;154:20 <b>process (26)</b> 8:15;15:18;30:3,6; 31:16;32:5,17,23; 59:24;61:6,9;65:25; 70:12,22;84:15; 87:16;110:12,22; 111:4,8,9;150:1; 153:4,14;154:10,18 <b>processes (1)</b> 87:22 <b>product (2)</b> 151:1,1 <b>productive (1)</b> 154:16 <b>profession (2)</b> 122:4;138:15 <b>professional (3)</b> 111:11;127:24; 163:13 <b>proficiency (2)</b> 166:14,24 <b>program (42)</b> 35:14,17,24;36:6; 51:2;58:15,16;71:4; 74:23;75:3;83:25; 96:1;107:9;111:18; 112:8,10;114:1,6; 116:12,15,21;117:15, 16,18;127:22;131:5, 7,11,13,20,22; 132:12,17,18,25; 133:4;135:10,15; 136:1,18;144:2; 165:16</p>	<p><b>programs (15)</b> 35:19;37:1;97:11; 103:12,14;106:17; 112:9,10;116:11; 118:3;132:12,14; 134:23;135:1;165:5 <b>progress (1)</b> 102:13 <b>project (1)</b> 102:2 <b>promotion (1)</b> 84:1 <b>promulgate (1)</b> 100:14 <b>PROMULGATION (10)</b> 100:2,11,12; 146:11,14,22,22; 147:3,4,5 <b>proper (1)</b> 165:16 <b>proportion (3)</b> 103:19,20;122:19 <b>proposed (5)</b> 107:15;108:16; 118:10;126:4,7 <b>protected (1)</b> 125:11 <b>protocols (2)</b> 38:23;154:1 <b>proud (1)</b> 161:7 <b>provide (15)</b> 6:18;57:7;68:11, 19;78:24;84:12; 90:20;100:18;102:8; 107:20;108:5; 128:14;156:24; 157:1;159:11 <b>provided (2)</b> 21:25;107:12 <b>provides (1)</b> 165:21 <b>providing (6)</b> 62:13;95:25;107:7, 11;155:5,6 <b>provisional (34)</b> 19:20;107:3,16,18; 116:10;117:3,21,24; 118:14;120:9,25; 121:1;126:20;127:5, 15,17,19,21,22,25; 130:8,17,20,20; 131:8,18;132:3; 133:3,18;135:2,23; 137:21;146:6;162:5 <b>Public (9)</b> 41:3;59:25;63:11; 64:20,22;70:15; 100:2;142:13;147:24 <b>pull (3)</b> 43:4;96:25;157:1 <b>pulled (1)</b> 34:12</p>	<p><b>pulling (4)</b> 100:24;101:1,14; 147:22 <b>purchased (1)</b> 12:3 <b>purpose (2)</b> 9:14;167:16 <b>push (3)</b> 38:25;44:7;169:4 <b>pushed (1)</b> 163:17 <b>pushing (2)</b> 159:10;162:2 <b>put (19)</b> 10:24;13:22,25; 32:7;44:19;48:1; 64:6;69:3;76:17; 80:25;90:4;93:25; 99:24;106:18;120:1; 139:10,15;149:2; 159:4 <b>putting (8)</b> 34:1;39:6;44:21; 49:11;64:4;68:18; 140:16;160:20 <b>puzzle (1)</b> 156:8</p>	<p><b>rates (6)</b> 105:18,24;106:5,6, 10;113:7 <b>rather (3)</b> 37:23;53:19; 120:12 <b>rationale (1)</b> 24:17 <b>ratios (1)</b> 44:14 <b>REACH (8)</b> 60:10,15,20,21; 61:10;63:2;104:7; 125:17 <b>reached (4)</b> 8:25;13:22;122:7; 123:11 <b>reaching (2)</b> 122:21,22 <b>reaction (1)</b> 45:13 <b>read (7)</b> 9:25;22:1;43:9; 91:23;122:6;139:17; 161:6 <b>reading (5)</b> 24:1,5;79:8;121:2; 166:14 <b>ready (15)</b> 24:16;36:9;79:21; 82:19;85:21;88:10; 93:2;99:7;107:8; 112:1;121:8;144:22; 157:14;165:2;171:6 <b>real (5)</b> 30:18;61:21; 106:14;110:14; 139:17 <b>reality (1)</b> 66:11 <b>realize (1)</b> 156:2 <b>realized (4)</b> 151:7,9;157:10; 159:19 <b>really (86)</b> 5:14;7:15;27:10; 30:14,16,17;31:19; 32:13,24;33:20,21; 34:11,19;35:12; 36:13;38:12,17;39:4, 12;44:22;46:7,13,23; 47:7,12;48:11,18; 50:23;55:13;61:13, 24;62:14;63:18; 64:18;66:15;70:15; 81:15,23;82:8;83:18; 86:22;88:21;89:5,7; 90:3,6;102:7;108:12, 12;109:6,15;112:2; 113:11;114:2,12,14; 115:25;116:7;118:3, 5;119:15;122:21;</p>	<p>127:7,11;129:23,23; 130:3;131:25;134:5; 135:14;140:3;141:8, 20;142:20;143:5,21, 21,25;144:10;148:5, 24;154:15;161:16; 163:19;168:15;172:7 <b>realm (1)</b> 85:5 <b>reappointed (1)</b> 169:21 <b>reason (8)</b> 10:15;17:18;19:17; 29:15;71:2;121:23; 127:20;139:23 <b>reasons (2)</b> 9:7;21:25 <b>reassign (1)</b> 29:9 <b>reassigned (2)</b> 159:2,21 <b>reassigning (1)</b> 171:3 <b>rebuild (1)</b> 153:23 <b>recalibrate (1)</b> 32:20 <b>receive (10)</b> 13:13;55:25;66:25; 78:13;82:2;107:16, 18;130:13;131:9,16 <b>received (8)</b> 9:6;13:10,11; 19:24;79:9;82:11,12; 83:23 <b>receiving (3)</b> 78:18;79:5;84:11 <b>recently (2)</b> 76:1;123:11 <b>reciprocity (1)</b> 127:23 <b>recognize (1)</b> 112:19 <b>recommend (3)</b> 146:13;162:14,16 <b>recommendation (4)</b> 101:10;112:23; 116:5;140:7 <b>recommendations (5)</b> 102:10;123:3; 124:7,16;170:1 <b>recommended (1)</b> 160:14 <b>record (4)</b> 75:7;77:17;82:5; 84:11 <b>records (1)</b> 165:17 <b>recovery (1)</b> 155:23 <b>recruit (5)</b> 35:6;76:5,7,16; 84:16</p>
<b>Q</b>			<p><b>qualifications (3)</b> 108:4;134:17; 164:13 <b>Qualified (3)</b> 108:4;117:1;170:6 <b>qualify (4)</b> 136:10,24;162:5, 10 <b>quality (3)</b> 9:14;104:9;129:16 <b>quick (1)</b> 150:20 <b>quickly (3)</b> 71:13;123:19; 156:25 <b>quite (2)</b> 52:5;57:11 <b>quotes (1)</b> 151:20</p>	<p><b>raise (5)</b> 7:9;20:13;26:15; 56:10;83:21 <b>raising (1)</b> 40:25 <b>ramps (1)</b> 103:3 <b>rare (1)</b> 51:25 <b>rate (1)</b> 109:2</p>
<b>R</b>			<p><b>raise (5)</b> 7:9;20:13;26:15; 56:10;83:21 <b>raising (1)</b> 40:25 <b>ramps (1)</b> 103:3 <b>rare (1)</b> 51:25 <b>rate (1)</b> 109:2</p>	

<p><b>recruiting (1)</b> 35:5</p> <p><b>recruitment (5)</b> 76:4;101:18; 102:11;121:13; 124:19</p> <p><b>RECTOR (5)</b> 98:21,22,23;99:6, 10</p> <p><b>referencing (1)</b> 148:1</p> <p><b>Reform (1)</b> 101:21</p> <p><b>refrigeration (1)</b> 35:18</p> <p><b>regard (1)</b> 40:18</p> <p><b>register (1)</b> 153:19</p> <p><b>regrets (1)</b> 27:7</p> <p><b>regular (2)</b> 68:20;78:14</p> <p><b>reinventing (1)</b> 29:22</p> <p><b>rejected (1)</b> 19:24</p> <p><b>rejuvenated (1)</b> 171:13</p> <p><b>related (1)</b> 124:21</p> <p><b>relationship (8)</b> 46:7;104:17; 138:22;139:1,7,9,13; 141:21</p> <p><b>relatively (1)</b> 104:3</p> <p><b>RELEASE (4)</b> 100:3;146:20,21; 147:2</p> <p><b>releasing (1)</b> 37:15</p> <p><b>relevant (1)</b> 108:1</p> <p><b>relief (2)</b> 60:12;70:19</p> <p><b>remember (14)</b> 5:4;92:6;101:2; 139:12,22,22;140:17; 143:23;148:3;151:2; 156:10;165:6,14; 170:3</p> <p><b>rendered (1)</b> 17:25</p> <p><b>renew (1)</b> 131:5</p> <p><b>Renewal (1)</b> 87:18</p> <p><b>renewed (4)</b> 107:17;117:4; 130:21,23</p> <p><b>renewing (2)</b> 130:19;131:1</p>	<p><b>reorgani- (1)</b> 55:10</p> <p><b>rep (1)</b> 46:3</p> <p><b>repeat (2)</b> 33:14;95:5</p> <p><b>repeated (1)</b> 156:7</p> <p><b>report (6)</b> 86:11;148:22,23; 149:2;171:2;172:18</p> <p><b>reporting (1)</b> 68:20</p> <p><b>reports (1)</b> 127:8</p> <p><b>represent (2)</b> 105:5,11</p> <p><b>representative (2)</b> 45:23,25</p> <p><b>representing (1)</b> 10:3</p> <p><b>reprise (1)</b> 59:14</p> <p><b>request (14)</b> 6:5;12:21;27:15; 34:5;42:4,15;52:25; 54:4;57:3;59:7;88:8, 12;92:19;101:9</p> <p><b>requested (11)</b> 26:2,6;94:4,5;96:7, 7,8,8;100:19;101:3; 158:16</p> <p><b>requesting (3)</b> 28:2;42:2;88:16</p> <p><b>REQUESTS (1)</b> 25:14</p> <p><b>require (5)</b> 6:8;16:19;36:12; 112:8;131:13</p> <p><b>required (11)</b> 16:12,17;17:16; 45:22;113:16;149:9; 152:25;155:2,19; 158:3,19</p> <p><b>requirements (7)</b> 75:2;104:11;108:5; 116:25;117:1; 133:12;159:1</p> <p><b>requires (1)</b> 126:12</p> <p><b>requiring (1)</b> 131:19</p> <p><b>reschedule (1)</b> 12:12</p> <p><b>rescheduled (3)</b> 10:7,9;13:5</p> <p><b>rescind (1)</b> 132:4</p> <p><b>research (5)</b> 101:3,7;109:12; 114:18;138:24</p> <p><b>reservations (1)</b> 46:16</p>	<p><b>residency (6)</b> 17:11;111:14,15; 114:8;143:9;144:2</p> <p><b>resident (9)</b> 6:2,20,20,25;8:11; 19:9,21;21:11;24:18</p> <p><b>resign (2)</b> 170:3;171:6</p> <p><b>resolve (1)</b> 164:4</p> <p><b>resolved (1)</b> 161:3</p> <p><b>resonating (1)</b> 144:10</p> <p><b>resource (2)</b> 163:17,21</p> <p><b>resources (2)</b> 83:24;138:3</p> <p><b>respond (4)</b> 10:8;12:12;13:25; 57:14</p> <p><b>responded (2)</b> 12:10;13:4</p> <p><b>responding (2)</b> 12:19;60:24</p> <p><b>response (1)</b> 45:20</p> <p><b>responsibilities (6)</b> 60:9,21;149:13; 153:13;165:8,10</p> <p><b>responsibility (3)</b> 45:2;58:12;149:25</p> <p><b>rest (3)</b> 94:1,4;172:16</p> <p><b>Restore (2)</b> 152:1,4</p> <p><b>restored (1)</b> 171:13</p> <p><b>Restoring (1)</b> 152:1</p> <p><b>restrictive (1)</b> 163:19</p> <p><b>resubmitted (1)</b> 98:24</p> <p><b>result (2)</b> 155:13;170:13</p> <p><b>results (2)</b> 75:13;125:24</p> <p><b>retail (1)</b> 141:23</p> <p><b>retain (1)</b> 171:1</p> <p><b>retention (4)</b> 76:4;101:18; 102:11;121:13</p> <p><b>retire (1)</b> 171:6</p> <p><b>re-trained (1)</b> 166:14</p> <p><b>retrieve (1)</b> 170:14</p> <p><b>returned (1)</b> 149:21</p>	<p><b>returning (1)</b> 160:9</p> <p><b>review (16)</b> 89:11,11,12,13; 91:6,6,7,9;92:6,7,21, 21,24,24;93:4,6</p> <p><b>reviewing (1)</b> 164:6</p> <p><b>revised (1)</b> 92:15</p> <p><b>revisions (2)</b> 39:24;99:1</p> <p><b>rich (2)</b> 125:11;143:17</p> <p><b>riding (1)</b> 110:15</p> <p><b>RIF (1)</b> 165:6</p> <p><b>RIF'd (2)</b> 165:7,11</p> <p><b>right (136)</b> 7:6,8,10,17;8;8; 11:3,9;12:2,24;14:5; 16:10,10;19:1,5;20:2, 8,9,13,19;21:8;22:4, 9;23:4,12,12;25:5,10, 16;26:12,15,24,25; 30:9;31:3;32:15; 34:13;37:25;40:4,6; 42:9;44:16,25;45:1; 46:22;50:8,9;52:7; 53:13,20;54:21;56:8, 10;57:10;65:23; 67:14;68:4;69:2,5,7, 8,11;75:11,15;77:1,3; 79:20,24;80:10; 82:18;83:5;85:12,19; 87:25;88:4,5,9;89:1, 4,9,10;91:15,19,23, 25;92:7;93:13;94:21; 96:16;97:5;99:5; 100:5,20;105:1; 112:9;116:18,24; 117:5,14;118:7; 120:14;121:17; 123:1,5,8;125:10; 131:11;132:24; 133:10,22;134:12; 136:14,15,21;137:13, 22;140:7,12;144:17, 19,20;145:25; 146:23;147:7,12,19; 148:12,19;155:22; 160:7;161:8;162:22; 165:23;166:8; 167:12;169:7,23</p> <p><b>RISE (3)</b> 79:5;166:19,20</p> <p><b>Rising (4)</b> 142:18;143:1,22; 145:3</p> <p><b>risk (1)</b> 64:4</p>	<p><b>road (5)</b> 17:21;32:2;165:2; 168:18,20</p> <p><b>Roberts (1)</b> 154:1</p> <p><b>robust (2)</b> 35:17;45:21</p> <p><b>rock (2)</b> 148:13,17</p> <p><b>role (7)</b> 97:24;153:11; 159:3,4;160:12; 161:11;165:24</p> <p><b>roles (4)</b> 60:8;150:2;153:13; 166:6</p> <p><b>roll-call (1)</b> 53:18</p> <p><b>Rollins (1)</b> 28:19</p> <p><b>room (3)</b> 141:25;144:22; 148:13</p> <p><b>Ross (1)</b> 145:4</p> <p><b>route (7)</b> 33:6;112:18;119:1; 126:23;132:1; 134:24,24</p> <p><b>routes (2)</b> 29:21,25;114:5; 164:15,21,23;165:3</p> <p><b>RPEP (1)</b> 112:10</p> <p><b>rubric (2)</b> 80:24;82:2</p> <p><b>rule (7)</b> 101:9;107:15; 108:16;118:5,10; 140:9,10</p> <p><b>rules (26)</b> 9:21;11:11;20:1; 32:14;40:13,14,18; 49:16;100:3,6,10,12; 116:5,9;131:23; 135:19,20;137:20; 146:11,13,16,21,21; 147:2;154:2;162:5</p> <p><b>run (2)</b> 29:17;123:19</p> <p><b>running (5)</b> 13:19;19:23;29:25; 64:4,17</p> <p><b>rural (1)</b> 122:18</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>S</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>sad (1)</b> 31:10</p> <p><b>safe (1)</b> 165:4</p> <p><b>safety (1)</b></p>
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<p>164:14  <b>salaries (3)</b>                  44:5,13;83:22  <b>salary (6)</b>                  44:7;78:3,10;                  120:10;170:15,24  <b>same (14)</b>                  17:21;29:25;33:3,                  15;48:21;50:1;51:6;                  78:24;80:10;103:16;                  104:1;112:21;                  122:10;152:4  <b>Saracini (72)</b>                  54:25;55:1,3,3,5,                  10,21;57:4;61:16;                  62:4,5,20;63:4,10,18;                  67:8,15,25;68:4,6,22;                  69:6;70:13,19,25;                  71:5,8,11,24;72:2,5,                  10,13,15;74:8,9,12;                  80:11,12,15,17,22;                  81:3;83:11;85:14;                  113:18,18,22;119:7,                  11;125:22;128:4,6,9,                  15,23;130:3,6,10;                  131:25;132:3;137:1,                  3,7,14;142:25;143:4,                  8;145:10,12,15,24  <b>sat (1)</b>                  47:2  <b>satisfy (1)</b>                  108:4  <b>Saturday (1)</b>                  154:22  <b>SAU (16)</b>                  74:14,23;78:18;                  80:23;82:1,3;83:13,                  19;84:3,16;85:16;                  86:13;87:9,18;110:1;                  129:7  <b>Saum (9)</b>                  16:1,2;49:8,9,24;                  50:19;75:16,17,21  <b>Savannah (1)</b>                  10:4  <b>save (2)</b>                  86:11;148:14  <b>saw (3)</b>                  19:10;156:25;                  157:12  <b>saying (12)</b>                  8:18,24;9:1;10:20;                  44:20;46:19;50:11;                  65:22;89:10;118:16;                  134:3;171:23  <b>scale (2)</b>                  36:7;78:10  <b>scared (1)</b>                  140:14  <b>scenario (1)</b>                  33:8  <b>scene (1)</b>                  143:25</p>	<p><b>schedule (16)</b>                  34:17,24;155:3,12,                  16;156:1,5;157:13,                  23;158:25;159:6,9;                  161:6,16;163:24;                  170:24  <b>scheduled (5)</b>                  12:8;34:15;154:21;                  155:17,23  <b>schedules (7)</b>                  156:9,11,12,17,18;                  157:14;170:15  <b>school (170)</b>                  4:5,19,19,22,25;                  5:1,13,17;8:16;9:3,                  16,20;10:8,11,16,17;                  11:1;12:1,9;13:2,24;                  14:6;15:19;16:4,4,13,                  15;17:6;18:14;22:21;                  24:13,18;25:7,15,20;                  26:2,21;27:9;28:4;                  29:3,6,7,8,9,13,18,19,                  23,24;30:1,10,10;                  31:4,23;32:9,20;                  35:15,20;36:1,2,5,5,                  7;38:18;39:6,9,11,12;                  40:21;41:3,21,23,25;                  42:22;44:10,20;                  45:10,23;47:1,13;                  49:20;50:9,16;51:3;                  54:20;57:18,20,20;                  58:7;59:18;60:2;                  61:5;63:1;64:13,14,                  15,21,24;69:23,24;                  70:16,16;74:5,20;                  80:9;81:8,10;82:6,                  23;83:10,17;84:6,18;                  85:24;86:18;88:7,8,                  11,15,16;90:3;91:18;                  93:14,15,16,17,18;                  95:16,17,18;98:20,                  21;106:5,6,7;110:2;                  112:17;115:4,10;                  120:22;121:4,5;                  135:12;143:11,19;                  149:22;151:8,11;                  152:3;153:8;155:3;                  156:10,11,16,18;                  157:11;158:7,13;                  160:12,16;161:15;                  163:16;164:12,13,19;                  165:18,21,21;166:3;                  172:13  <b>school-choice (1)</b>                  8:24  <b>Schools (25)</b>                  8:14;10:15;28:11,                  15,22;29:15,15,20;                  32:22;35:25;36:1;                  39:11,16,17;44:18;                  49:17;50:13;64:16;                  74:17;81:22;83:17;                  95:25;111:5,6;</p>	<p>140:12  <b>science (8)</b>                  74:20;75:20;82:6;                  112:13,14;121:1;                  161:21;166:14  <b>score (9)</b>                  106:21;107:10,20,                  20,21;126:9,9;127:7;                  165:19  <b>scored (1)</b>                  165:18  <b>scores (4)</b>                  104:18;124:18,20;                  128:7  <b>scoring (1)</b>                  127:3  <b>screen (4)</b>                  81:8;100:24;                  103:10;135:17  <b>SEA (1)</b>                  47:3  <b>seat (3)</b>                  31:4,16;33:21  <b>seats (1)</b>                  31:14  <b>second (38)</b>                  4:13;18:18,19;                  24:24,25;30:7;53:16;                  54:10,11;59:7;66:9,                  24;73:4,5,20,21;80:1;                  82:24,25;86:1;91:10;                  93:7,8;95:9,10;                  98:15;99:11,12;                  105:22;108:9;131:8;                  147:8,11;148:15;                  150:5;152:24;                  172:22,23  <b>secondary (9)</b>                  28:13;29:16;33:9,                  9;34:4;96:1;105:23;                  106:9,15  <b>Seconded (17)</b>                  4:14;18:20;25:1;                  53:17;54:12;73:6,22;                  80:2;83:1;86:2;                  91:11;93:9;95:11;                  98:16;99:13;147:10;                  172:24  <b>SECRETARY (31)</b>                  11:10,14,17;12:18;                  75:23,24;86:8,10;                  87:12,17;120:8,12,                  15,17;123:9;125:9;                  135:18,20,22;136:3,                  5,11,13;142:16;                  143:2,6;150:14;                  162:3,12;169:24;                  170:20  <b>section (3)</b>                  57:9;96:11;131:22  <b>SECTIONS (4)</b>                  100:4,9;116:9;                  136:5</p>	<p><b>sector (1)</b>                  142:5  <b>seeing (5)</b>                  35:8;75:13;123:6;                  144:20;169:25  <b>seek (1)</b>                  58:13  <b>seeking (2)</b>                  61:12;86:18  <b>seem (2)</b>                  47:12;106:6  <b>seems (4)</b>                  65:21;110:7;125:5;                  130:8  <b>self-contained (1)</b>                  163:18  <b>semester (12)</b>                  30:7;32:21;74:24;                  75:1;77:12,13,15,18;                  78:9;79:22;80:22;                  110:25  <b>send (3)</b>                  13:17;19:19;31:5  <b>sending (1)</b>                  21:2  <b>senior (1)</b>                  111:11  <b>sense (6)</b>                  33:6;78:11;128:22;                  132:5;133:16;170:4  <b>sent (8)</b>                  8:18,25;13:20;                  19:20,21;21:3;24:2;                  46:9  <b>sentence (1)</b>                  135:23  <b>separate (4)</b>                  51:2;52:11;53:2,3  <b>separately (1)</b>                  70:6  <b>September (3)</b>                  62:11;68:25;                  154:21  <b>serve (2)</b>                  84:10;150:13  <b>service (1)</b>                  63:20  <b>services (4)</b>                  63:19;102:19;                  129:19;165:20  <b>session (1)</b>                  88:10  <b>sessions (2)</b>                  107:14;129:20  <b>set (13)</b>                  16:17;39:13;50:7;                  90:18,20;94:20;                  102:13;119:8,9;                  124:16;151:15;                  154:23;163:25  <b>setting (3)</b>                  153:8,11;171:19  <b>seven (3)</b></p>	<p>47:17;69:24;160:9  <b>several (11)</b>                  62:9;63:25;86:19;                  103:7;106:11;                  110:13;142:17;                  146:1;158:15;                  161:12;168:20  <b>shall (9)</b>                  5:23;6:7,17,18;                  7:11;20:15;26:16;                  56:11;135:23  <b>Shannon (1)</b>                  25:25  <b>share (6)</b>                  7:24;69:13;81:6;                  84:25;122:10;161:15  <b>shared (3)</b>                  57:4;108:13,18  <b>sharing (1)</b>                  168:24  <b>Shastady (2)</b>                  13:3,7  <b>Shaw (1)</b>                  28:19  <b>sheet (1)</b>                  52:13  <b>Sheila (2)</b>                  165:23;168:16  <b>shift (2)</b>                  33:8;39:12  <b>shifted (1)</b>                  161:4  <b>shifting (3)</b>                  161:23;165:24;                  169:19  <b>Shirley (7)</b>                  19:9,13,20,21;                  21:12;22:17,20  <b>shocked (1)</b>                  47:20  <b>shopping (1)</b>                  141:25  <b>short (5)</b>                  26:7;27:14;155:20;                  167:22;168:6  <b>shortage (3)</b>                  27:24;35:11,12  <b>shortages (1)</b>                  57:12  <b>show (5)</b>                  9:3;10:6,10;28:14;                  107:24  <b>showed (1)</b>                  9:17  <b>showing (1)</b>                  112:5  <b>shown (1)</b>                  6:5  <b>shows (1)</b>                  23:6  <b>siblings (2)</b>                  30:1;44:19  <b>side (14)</b></p>
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<p>11:20;29:17,19,23, 24,24,24;30:8,20,22; 45:5;50:11;125:18, 18 <b>significant (3)</b> 105:10;106:1; 107:11 <b>signing (1)</b> 70:10 <b>SILENCE (1)</b> 52:21 <b>silly (1)</b> 108:25 <b>silos (1)</b> 129:23 <b>similar (5)</b> 36:6;74:7;78:2; 80:18;83:12 <b>simply (1)</b> 106:12 <b>single (1)</b> 37:16 <b>sit (2)</b> 5:12;148:16 <b>sitting (1)</b> 48:4 <b>situation (5)</b> 31:5;52:1;78:2; 110:16,18 <b>situations (2)</b> 90:8;120:19 <b>six (10)</b> 24:3;30:4;34:8; 47:17;49:25;69:24; 92:3;141:17;164:21, 24 <b>sixth (1)</b> 17:9 <b>Size (42)</b> 26:4;27:18;28:1,8, 11;32:6,14;33:9; 34:2,3,19,25;38:19; 39:21,25;40:14,18, 19;41:17;42:15; 43:16;44:12;48:12; 49:16,23;51:7;52:14, 15;53:1,5,14;59:8,14; 62:17;65:7;67:12; 73:10;74:18;88:17, 18,19;90:11 <b>Size/Teaching (1)</b> 63:21 <b>sizes (5)</b> 44:11,24;51:8,12; 90:5 <b>skill (1)</b> 155:12 <b>skills (3)</b> 64:23;109:10; 117:13 <b>Skipper (2)</b> 74:16;75:24 <b>slept (2)</b></p>	<p>168:1,2 <b>slide (5)</b> 102:15,23;103:6,9; 116:17 <b>slides (5)</b> 101:14;105:20,21, 24;123:18 <b>small (1)</b> 60:11 <b>smaller (2)</b> 44:17;52:4 <b>smart (1)</b> 146:2 <b>Smith (54)</b> 25:25;26:22;27:12; 28:20;37:25;38:3,8, 10,10;43:4,12,19,22; 44:3,9;45:7;47:2; 147:19,22;148:1,7, 11,12;149:18; 150:11;151:21; 152:11;154:17; 155:1,22;156:20; 157:19,22;159:14; 162:7,13,17,22; 164:3;165:1;166:22; 168:2,10,15,20; 169:8,11,14,18,21; 171:19,22;172:2,10 <b>smoothest (1)</b> 5:4 <b>smoothly (1)</b> 5:3 <b>snapshot (1)</b> 167:21 <b>social (2)</b> 144:23;161:21 <b>socially (1)</b> 10:14 <b>solicit (1)</b> 45:25 <b>solicited (2)</b> 45:21;46:8 <b>solutions (3)</b> 30:13;123:16; 125:7 <b>somebody (8)</b> 12:14;32:2;34:7; 48:11;88:24;138:4; 162:1;170:19 <b>somehow (1)</b> 142:13 <b>someone (12)</b> 9:19;18:10;37:18; 97:7;116:13;117:24; 120:20;127:14; 131:21;138:4,12; 161:25 <b>sometimes (7)</b> 14:19;15:3;29:4; 48:12;119:18,25; 144:16 <b>somewhat (1)</b></p>	<p>106:10 <b>somewhere (4)</b> 7:7;84:17,19; 135:10 <b>son (2)</b> 10:11,22 <b>Sonoro (1)</b> 28:20 <b>soon (2)</b> 9:6;161:3 <b>sorry (11)</b> 20:23;34:21;38:2; 57:21;65:2;94:14; 96:4;116:18;126:2; 130:1;169:6 <b>sort (3)</b> 35:24;80:10; 171:11 <b>sorts (2)</b> 35:18;60:7 <b>sound (1)</b> 133:15 <b>sounds (1)</b> 63:7 <b>south (1)</b> 86:24 <b>Southern (1)</b> 75:2 <b>Southside (5)</b> 92:5,11,12,22; 93:20 <b>space (6)</b> 29:2,5,9;30:6; 32:19,22 <b>speak (5)</b> 38:1;45:13;47:4; 131:25;139:23 <b>SPEAKERS (4)</b> 7:13;20:17;26:18; 56:13 <b>speaking (2)</b> 55:7;171:7 <b>speaks (1)</b> 56:5 <b>special (12)</b> 28:25;45:5,8; 112:17;162:22,24; 163:1,8,15,24;167:1, 4 <b>specialist (2)</b> 37:5;165:13 <b>specialists (1)</b> 129:21 <b>specials (1)</b> 29:1 <b>specific (13)</b> 30:17;31:19;32:15, 24;34:3;36:19;46:23; 47:7;63:6,9;80:18; 127:9;154:11 <b>specifically (9)</b> 64:3;68:14;71:9; 72:3,7;74:20;79:1;</p>	<p>124:17;163:16 <b>speech (1)</b> 28:25 <b>spending (1)</b> 99:20 <b>spent (2)</b> 10:25;149:22 <b>split (4)</b> 31:9;39:5;88:20; 146:10 <b>spoken (1)</b> 128:23 <b>sports (7)</b> 9:11,20;10:1,21; 11:8;160:23,24 <b>spot (2)</b> 48:23;88:1 <b>spring (9)</b> 30:9,11,22;31:3; 76:12;77:14,18;78:8, 9 <b>SPRINGDALE (17)</b> 25:15,21,22,23; 26:2;27:23;28:5; 29:19;35:4,21;36:2; 38:14;43:7;44:10; 46:24;52:6;62:20 <b>Springs (1)</b> 62:8 <b>stability (1)</b> 170:5 <b>Stacy (5)</b> 26:22;38:10; 148:12;162:3;169:6 <b>staff (30)</b> 27:25;32:5;49:21; 66:1,2,10;69:14;76:6, 9,10;77:10;158:18, 20;159:1,2,5,6,7,17, 18,20,22;160:1; 161:5,9;163:2;166:3, 15;170:9,16 <b>staffed (1)</b> 84:8 <b>staffing (4)</b> 158:7;159:16; 160:7;169:18 <b>stage (1)</b> 114:15 <b>stages (1)</b> 104:21 <b>stand (6)</b> 26:14;85:17;156:4; 160:6;168:16,16 <b>standard (17)</b> 39:13;88:18; 106:20,21,23;107:4; 118:24;121:16,24; 123:13;126:6; 130:17,18;133:14; 135:2;138:18,21 <b>standardized (1)</b> 139:3</p>	<p><b>Standards (9)</b> 32:6;33:2;39:24; 48:6;65:11;88:13,19; 158:13,15 <b>standpoint (1)</b> 51:10 <b>star (1)</b> 148:17 <b>stars (1)</b> 148:13 <b>start (15)</b> 5:18;13:19;19:22; 38:12;47:12,16,22; 50:17;64:24,25; 84:19;90:3;110:11, 22,25 <b>start-date (1)</b> 157:9 <b>started (13)</b> 8:15;10:16,16; 18:14;59:24;63:12; 64:20;100:15; 101:13;144:13; 151:24;156:23;171:3 <b>starting (7)</b> 23:18;50:9;58:21; 78:8;141:15;151:24; 157:10 <b>starts (1)</b> 47:11 <b>State (38)</b> 5:18,22;6:4,7,10, 12,14,18;9:1,10;17:7, 10;28:6;38:19;40:14; 44:13;57:9;65:10; 76:20;78:2,5;101:22, 23;102:11,12,16,17; 104:25;105:16; 106:4;127:8;129:21; 130:24;141:1,6,9; 143:1;152:4 <b>stated (2)</b> 154:17;171:9 <b>STATED] (1)</b> 173:3 <b>states (14)</b> 101:6;109:13; 122:7,20,23;123:7,9, 16,22,23;124:1,2,15; 125:2 <b>state's (1)</b> 102:5 <b>statistics (1)</b> 33:13 <b>stay (4)</b> 22:14;92:16; 100:12;171:7 <b>staying (1)</b> 44:20 <b>stays (1)</b> 11:8 <b>STEAM (1)</b> 81:19</p>
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<p><b>step (4)</b> 105:4;112:23; 114:15;140:6</p> <p><b>steps (2)</b> 39:17;146:1</p> <p><b>stewards (1)</b> 36:13</p> <p><b>Stewart (5)</b> 84:5,24;85:2,11; 144:4</p> <p><b>stick (2)</b> 94:8,16</p> <p><b>still (26)</b> 12:11;31:25;32:23; 34:14;35:20;44:18; 46:15;57:23;78:20; 97:11;116:18; 118:17,22;119:3,4; 120:1,6;127:3; 138:10,14;151:3; 153:2;156:6;157:24; 164:1;166:23</p> <p><b>stipend (2)</b> 60:7;84:12</p> <p><b>stipulate (1)</b> 68:9</p> <p><b>stipulated (1)</b> 65:16</p> <p><b>stipulation (1)</b> 65:19</p> <p><b>Stone (1)</b> 168:25</p> <p><b>stop (2)</b> 88:1;130:2</p> <p><b>stories (1)</b> 160:18</p> <p><b>story (2)</b> 139:6;157:9</p> <p><b>strategy (1)</b> 83:20</p> <p><b>street (2)</b> 11:25;12:2</p> <p><b>strengthen (1)</b> 86:23</p> <p><b>strong (1)</b> 81:25</p> <p><b>structural (1)</b> 153:24</p> <p><b>struggle (2)</b> 112:3;122:16</p> <p><b>struggles (1)</b> 122:17</p> <p><b>stuck (1)</b> 117:15</p> <p><b>student (36)</b> 7:2;9:23;18:13; 19:24;21:5;23:16; 24:17,21;29:11,23; 30:23,24;31:2,11,15; 33:11,19,23;34:1; 36:5;44:14;47:21; 48:14;50:2;51:22; 59:13;61:4;74:21,24;</p>	<p>75:8;90:21;104:2,24, 25;120:17;142:22</p> <p><b>students (63)</b> 9:11;17:21;20:25; 21:7;27:19;29:4,8, 13;30:16;31:9,13,21; 32:8,9,12,18,21; 33:10,15,17,17; 34:16,18,22;35:17, 23;38:20,24;39:5; 40:22;42:23;44:6; 50:1,14;51:13,20; 60:6,15,17;61:11; 62:15;63:19;65:14; 66:16;84:8;85:8; 90:24;103:21,21; 104:2,4,6;111:16; 113:7;122:19; 125:16;127:8; 142:19;156:16,25; 163:16,24;164:22</p> <p><b>Students' (1)</b> 156:9</p> <p><b>student's (1)</b> 29:2</p> <p><b>student-teach (1)</b> 81:20</p> <p><b>studies (1)</b> 161:21</p> <p><b>study (2)</b> 121:8;136:17</p> <p><b>studying (1)</b> 111:21</p> <p><b>stuff (2)</b> 150:4;162:20</p> <p><b>sub (2)</b> 118:9;120:12</p> <p><b>subject (3)</b> 36:22;75:8;128:21</p> <p><b>subjects (3)</b> 106:8,12;161:22</p> <p><b>submit (1)</b> 15:16</p> <p><b>subs (1)</b> 78:1</p> <p><b>substitute (4)</b> 22:12,12,16;23:5</p> <p><b>substitutes (1)</b> 21:1</p> <p><b>success (2)</b> 74:3;138:25</p> <p><b>successful (5)</b> 25:6;39:14;106:25; 108:1;126:21</p> <p><b>successfully (1)</b> 133:12</p> <p><b>suddenly (1)</b> 76:14</p> <p><b>sufficient (3)</b> 7:14;162:23;163:1</p> <p><b>sufficiently (1)</b> 164:22</p> <p><b>suggestions (2)</b></p>	<p>129:5;141:10</p> <p><b>suggests (2)</b> 104:11;124:4</p> <p><b>summarizing (1)</b> 137:19</p> <p><b>summer (5)</b> 8:15;10:24,25; 82:11;129:11</p> <p><b>Summit (1)</b> 62:8</p> <p><b>Summons (2)</b> 88:12,12</p> <p><b>Sunday (1)</b> 87:8</p> <p><b>superintendent (15)</b> 8:14;17:3;19:13; 25:24,25;74:17;81:7, 9;83:17;149:18,19; 152:15,23;153:13; 169:22</p> <p><b>superintendents (5)</b> 21:19;120:20; 128:24;129:11;144:6</p> <p><b>supervisor (1)</b> 164:5</p> <p><b>supply (1)</b> 104:9</p> <p><b>support (51)</b> 37:9,12,13;49:12, 21;55:25;56:1,2,4; 61:16,20,22,23,24; 62:13,14;63:6,9; 68:11,12,17;70:22, 25;71:25,25;78:12, 13,18,25;79:6;82:3; 83:22;84:12;88:14; 92:2;107:7,12; 112:20;118:4;121:4, 15,15;148:20; 152:10;155:5,6; 159:15;163:7,13,15; 164:20</p> <p><b>supported (2)</b> 37:20;56:18</p> <p><b>supporting (1)</b> 47:5</p> <p><b>supportive (2)</b> 61:6;150:15</p> <p><b>supports (4)</b> 119:22;128:14; 165:20;167:7</p> <p><b>supposed (4)</b> 24:5;134:10; 150:24;153:18</p> <p><b>SUPT (82)</b> 7:20,22,25;8:7,10, 13;12:7,16,23;13:6; 16:22,25;17:16,20; 18:2,4;19:15;21:13, 15,17;22:6;24:7,9,11; 25:11;55:20;56:16, 23;57:2;63:24;64:12; 65:10;66:6,23;67:3,</p>	<p>6;69:16,19,23;70:1; 71:17,20,22;74:4,16; 75:19;76:2;77:1,3,5, 13,16,20,24;78:1,5,8, 15,17,20,23;79:7,9, 12,15,18;80:6,8;81:7; 83:9,16;85:13;86:9; 150:11;154:16; 156:15;162:9,15; 164:25;170:8; 171:15;172:15</p> <p><b>sure (34)</b> 9:25;15:1;20:10; 24:1,4;30:25;41:13; 43:17;58:24;61:18; 63:4;67:9;78:22; 95:5;102:24;113:13; 116:7;119:22;121:7, 8;128:24;139:19; 140:22;144:6;149:1, 3;154:6,24;155:8; 158:1,10;164:2,3; 171:14</p> <p><b>survey (1)</b> 122:2</p> <p><b>surveys (1)</b> 122:1</p> <p><b>SUTHERLIN (9)</b> 41:16,23;88:13,13, 24;89:7,12,20,22</p> <p><b>SUTTON (44)</b> 18:19,21;65:16,21; 73:5,6;79:23,25; 85:22,24;91:10,11; 95:2,4;98:15,16; 108:24;109:21; 115:17;122:6,10,13; 123:1,5,8;125:19; 140:21;142:2,9; 145:9,11,14,22; 147:1,5,9;169:6,9,13, 17,20,23;172:23,24</p> <p><b>swear (4)</b> 7:10;20:14;26:15; 56:10</p> <p><b>switch (1)</b> 109:16</p> <p><b>sworn (3)</b> 20:9,10;26:10</p> <p><b>system (8)</b> 48:6;103:1,2,4; 109:17,17;147:18,21</p> <p><b>Systems (2)</b> 88:14;148:22</p>	<p>108:15;110:11; 111:14;115:21; 142:24;144:12; 156:20;159:23</p> <p><b>talked (12)</b> 13:1;30:12;38:17; 41:14;43:11;46:14; 68:24;110:13; 123:13,21,23;161:24</p> <p><b>talking (11)</b> 13:10;40:17,25; 44:5;97:13;108:25; 114:1;135:5;149:23; 167:13;171:22</p> <p><b>Tally (4)</b> 61:22;62:11;68:23; 92:1</p> <p><b>Tanner (18)</b> 8:13,13;10:2;12:7, 14,16,23;13:6,23; 15:2;16:18,21,22,25; 17:16,20;18:2,4</p> <p><b>taught (1)</b> 37:3</p> <p><b>tax (1)</b> 141:6</p> <p><b>teach (10)</b> 37:9;58:2;59:21; 112:6;115:14; 116:24;117:21; 127:5;138:11;145:18</p> <p><b>teacher (136)</b> 22:12,16;23:5; 26:3;27:23;29:12; 30:11,22,25;31:1,17, 24;35:11;37:2,16; 43:5,8,14;44:5,7; 45:13;47:14,24;48:1, 13,15,17;50:1,5,12, 18;51:25;53:24;54:4, 8;55:23;57:7,12,25; 58:17;59:20;60:12, 14;62:22;63:14; 66:19;67:11,11; 72:22;73:2;74:23; 75:3,6,7,9,9,12; 76:16;77:17;78:3,14; 79:4;81:24;82:4; 83:22,22,23;84:11, 14;85:3,5,10;101:4, 17,18;102:2,9,11,21, 25;103:3,8;104:6,9, 22;105:16;106:15; 107:19;108:4;109:9; 111:14;112:16; 116:14,14;117:1,10, 14;121:9,13;122:1, 16;124:19;129:15; 130:8,9;133:17; 134:5;138:8,22; 139:1,8,9,10,12,13, 14;140:23;141:3,4,4, 18,18,18,24;143:9;</p>
		<b>T</b>		
		<p><b>talent (1)</b> 156:24</p> <p><b>talk (18)</b> 17:1;27:20;28:11, 13;46:11;56:3;63:18; 76:3;101:16;105:15;</p>		

<p>144:14;151:3; 155:20;158:15; 159:4,11;161:11,13; 165:14;167:4,13</p> <p><b>teachers (135)</b> 27:9;28:23;34:21, 22;35:5,6,10;36:15, 19;37:23;39:9;43:10, 10;44:24;45:17;46:3; 47:16,19,21;48:15, 21;49:12;50:25;51:4, 21;57:16,22;58:1,5,9, 12,13,14,15,17,18,22, 24;59:1,3,9,12,22,23; 60:8,10,16;61:7,19; 62:15;66:13;69:14, 17;70:20;71:14,18; 74:21,21;76:5,7,9,14, 17,18;77:6,11;79:1,2; 80:19;82:9,12;83:25; 97:12,18,19;98:6; 103:17,19,23,24,25; 104:1,5;105:8,10; 106:1,2,2,4,13,14,20; 107:1,5,9,13,16; 112:14,17,17,18; 114:9;115:7;119:25; 120:24;121:3,14,19; 122:3,18;148:3; 155:18,21,22;158:9, 21;159:3,19;160:8, 18;161:9,12,18,19, 19,20;162:4;163:8; 165:15,15;166:16; 171:2,3,4,6</p> <p><b>teaches (1)</b> 59:21</p> <p><b>Teaching (66)</b> 26:4;27:18;28:1; 34:5,8,11,20,24; 36:16,16,17;37:5,10, 11,18,18;40:1,19; 52:14,15;53:6,14; 58:16,20;59:8,14; 62:17;67:12;73:11; 74:19,24;75:6,18; 76:15;88:17,18,19, 22;90:8;103:11,14; 104:15;105:12; 107:1,6;112:6,21; 115:10,11;118:9; 119:17;120:9;129:1; 136:25;137:8; 138:18;141:16,22; 142:6,11,11;155:18; 158:23,23;160:13; 166:5</p> <p><b>team (29)</b> 37:15;38:16;46:4; 47:3;56:17;58:23; 59:23;60:14;62:7,7, 10,12;63:15;68:13, 17;86:14;87:2;100:1;</p>	<p>101:6;102:5,6; 109:19;119:14; 120:23;122:1; 142:16;164:9; 167:23;172:9</p> <p><b>teams (2)</b> 56:18;158:5</p> <p><b>TECH (2)</b> 88:7,16</p> <p><b>technical (3)</b> 35:14;36:3;37:3</p> <p><b>teetering (1)</b> 44:15</p> <p><b>telling (1)</b> 157:13</p> <p><b>Tentatively (2)</b> 154:20,23</p> <p><b>term (1)</b> 42:8</p> <p><b>terminate (1)</b> 138:2</p> <p><b>terminology (1)</b> 92:6</p> <p><b>terms (2)</b> 61:17;91:1</p> <p><b>Terry (1)</b> 139:11</p> <p><b>test (17)</b> 79:15;105:9,9,25; 106:13;107:22; 110:9,15;112:5; 117:9,13;119:18,19; 120:5;136:19; 138:13;140:15</p> <p><b>tested (1)</b> 110:7</p> <p><b>testify (2)</b> 5:22;56:9</p> <p><b>testimony (7)</b> 6:11;7:9,11;20:12, 14;26:16;56:11</p> <p><b>testing (1)</b> 165:12</p> <p><b>test-passers (2)</b> 105:6,8</p> <p><b>tests (1)</b> 111:7</p> <p><b>test-taker (1)</b> 110:19</p> <p><b>test-takers (4)</b> 105:5,6,7;114:20</p> <p><b>That'll (1)</b> 7:20</p> <p><b>theirs (1)</b> 92:15</p> <p><b>therefore (2)</b> 19:22;121:5</p> <p><b>thinking (9)</b> 39:4;46:10;48:4; 77:6;115:23;119:25; 122:2;132:6;145:17</p> <p><b>third (1)</b> 105:22</p>	<p><b>thorough (2)</b> 40:15;52:3</p> <p><b>though (8)</b> 19:13;33:15;45:22; 51:6;57:21;59:9; 120:4;132:22</p> <p><b>thought (12)</b> 43:11;64:5;94:13; 129:12;131:11; 135:6;141:3,8,22; 142:11;158:9;168:23</p> <p><b>thoughts (2)</b> 43:18;110:4</p> <p><b>threat (1)</b> 106:9</p> <p><b>three (59)</b> 32:1;34:21,22; 47:15;53:12,14; 58:14;65:12,14;67:4, 5,14;70:4;71:6,9; 72:1,5,6,22;73:3,12, 17,19;74:6,13;76:12; 81:16,17;82:13; 86:24;90:7;92:3,19; 94:5;95:19;96:8; 98:9,11;105:11,21; 106:25;107:3,17; 117:5;118:17;120:6; 130:21;135:24; 138:1,9,12,14;156:3, 11;159:18,20;160:9; 161:18,22</p> <p><b>three-year (3)</b> 59:2;66:22;121:19</p> <p><b>throughout (4)</b> 39:23;51:8;155:18, 23</p> <p><b>throwing (1)</b> 120:2</p> <p><b>Thursday (2)</b> 10:23;12:10</p> <p><b>thus (1)</b> 151:18</p> <p><b>tied (1)</b> 42:10</p> <p><b>till (1)</b> 110:23</p> <p><b>timeline (6)</b> 13:8,15,18;14:4; 19:22;70:9</p> <p><b>timelines (2)</b> 164:6,8</p> <p><b>timeliness (1)</b> 86:12</p> <p><b>timely (2)</b> 13:21;19:25</p> <p><b>times (11)</b> 31:15;34:8;64:1; 86:20;110:5;118:20; 120:6;129:1;138:17; 152:13;156:1</p> <p><b>tipping (1)</b> 47:18</p>	<p><b>tired (3)</b> 45:17;111:13; 171:13</p> <p><b>Tisher (2)</b> 26:1;27:12</p> <p><b>Title (4)</b> 49:18;121:12; 129:15;160:23</p> <p><b>TNTP (2)</b> 102:6;122:21</p> <p><b>today (30)</b> 22:3;25:21;27:8, 11,17;32:1,5,5,11; 40:10,16;52:2;55:16; 62:14;79:19;84:23; 86:25;92:4;100:9; 101:16;102:1;103:4; 113:10;114:9; 138:16;140:6; 148:13;149:8; 156:12;162:10</p> <p><b>together (7)</b> 68:19;91:21; 101:24;102:17; 130:4;152:3;156:8</p> <p><b>told (9)</b> 10:9;12:8;13:3,5; 46:19,20;86:19; 152:16;165:6</p> <p><b>tomorrow (1)</b> 138:19</p> <p><b>tonight (1)</b> 156:13</p> <p><b>took (2)</b> 141:19;151:17</p> <p><b>tools (1)</b> 124:5</p> <p><b>top (3)</b> 24:6;104:3;151:8</p> <p><b>topic (1)</b> 86:10</p> <p><b>tops (1)</b> 151:9</p> <p><b>totality (1)</b> 6:13</p> <p><b>totally (1)</b> 97:18</p> <p><b>tough (1)</b> 48:18</p> <p><b>tour (1)</b> 86:16</p> <p><b>toward (3)</b> 106:20;112:23,24</p> <p><b>Towards (2)</b> 30:6;37:1</p> <p><b>town (4)</b> 30:8;39:7;50:11; 150:20</p> <p><b>track (1)</b> 160:15</p> <p><b>traditional (9)</b> 35:25;51:8;90:24; 114:1,5;124:24;</p>	<p>134:24;136:18;137:9</p> <p><b>training (16)</b> 5:12;60:21;64:24; 79:5;82:9,11;102:12, 22;154:11,18,19; 163:14;164:6; 166:15,19,25</p> <p><b>trajectories (1)</b> 115:4</p> <p><b>transfer (12)</b> 14:21;15:4,6; 16:14;18:1;20:5; 21:22;24:3,20;29:14; 32:17;38:24</p> <p><b>transferred (1)</b> 151:13</p> <p><b>transferring (3)</b> 15:8;29:13;30:15</p> <p><b>transfers (4)</b> 15:11;17:3,8;31:14</p> <p><b>transition (1)</b> 21:19</p> <p><b>transparency (1)</b> 153:22</p> <p><b>transport (2)</b> 51:22;164:22</p> <p><b>Transportation (2)</b> 164:11,19</p> <p><b>tremendous (3)</b> 86:15;158:6; 168:13</p> <p><b>tremendously (1)</b> 143:23</p> <p><b>trend (1)</b> 103:13</p> <p><b>triggered (1)</b> 137:25</p> <p><b>Triple-A (2)</b> 9:21;11:10</p> <p><b>Tri-Region (3)</b> 92:14;93:22,25</p> <p><b>trouble (1)</b> 56:21</p> <p><b>true (6)</b> 9:8,15;45:9;46:19; 51:7;157:22</p> <p><b>truly (2)</b> 68:25;140:22</p> <p><b>trust (5)</b> 153:2,4,16,22; 154:17</p> <p><b>truth (12)</b> 7:12,12,12;20:15, 16,16;26:17,17,17; 56:12,12,12</p> <p><b>try (10)</b> 32:14;66:15;122:4, 23;124:2,20;125:3,6; 138:11;172:16</p> <p><b>trying (24)</b> 29:22;30:10;34:15; 36:25;38:20,25; 39:14;61:25;66:12,</p>
--	---	--	---	--

<p>17;83:21;87:1,3; 109:6;114:2,16; 119:11;124:1; 138:18;154:4; 155:10;160:21; 164:4;168:11</p> <p><b>Tucker (7)</b> 20:24;22:16;80:14; 81:5,7,7;83:9</p> <p><b>turn (3)</b> 27:16;39:16;84:24</p> <p><b>Turnbow (1)</b> 28:20</p> <p><b>turned (2)</b> 12:20;24:12</p> <p><b>turnover (2)</b> 57:11,25</p> <p><b>tutoring (5)</b> 107:8,11,13; 119:13;129:20</p> <p><b>twin (1)</b> 31:5</p> <p><b>twins (2)</b> 31:3,8</p> <p><b>two (59)</b> 5:17;10:12;27:17, 19;32:7;34:8;41:15; 43:24;47:9,11,12; 51:11;57:5;58:22; 59:5,13;60:3,16;61:7, 12;64:16;65:1,12; 67:10,17;69:4;76:11; 90:9;92:21;94:6,19, 24;95:8;96:7,20,22; 98:13,14,22,25;99:2, 10;105:5,25;106:21; 123:12;142:3;143:4; 144:9,21;151:20; 157:11;158:22; 160:10,11;164:15,18; 165:17;168:1</p> <p><b>two- (1)</b> 144:7</p> <p><b>two-year (1)</b> 53:10</p> <p><b>type (8)</b> 110:2;116:22; 118:8;127:15; 136:23;138:6; 165:13;167:10</p> <p><b>typical (2)</b> 14:17;85:3</p> <p><b>typically (4)</b> 15:12;34:23;50:10, 15</p> <p><b>Tyson (7)</b> 28:20;35:15,22; 39:10,17,19;51:3</p>	<p><b>Uh-oh (1)</b> 147:25</p> <p><b>UNANIMOUS (16)</b> 4:16;25:3;53:21; 54:14;73:8,24;80:4; 83:3;86:4;91:13; 93:11;95:13;98:18; 99:15;147:14;173:1</p> <p><b>uncertified (2)</b> 64:5,8</p> <p><b>uncle (1)</b> 31:12</p> <p><b>unclear (1)</b> 158:11</p> <p><b>UNDER (11)</b> 4:19;5:23;6:16; 19:25;118:8;127:14; 130:9;135:20;149:7; 162:5;170:23</p> <p><b>undergraduate (1)</b> 104:23</p> <p><b>undergraduates (1)</b> 105:1</p> <p><b>underrepresented (1)</b> 104:16</p> <p><b>under-staffed (1)</b> 158:17</p> <p><b>understated (1)</b> 138:23</p> <p><b>understood (2)</b> 47:6;135:6</p> <p><b>unique (2)</b> 122:16,17</p> <p><b>universities (4)</b> 104:23;113:5; 129:8;144:8</p> <p><b>University (8)</b> 75:3;78:24;101:20; 102:4;113:5,15; 132:17,20</p> <p><b>unless (2)</b> 17:8;48:10</p> <p><b>unlicensed (5)</b> 159:17,17;161:12, 25;162:4</p> <p><b>unlimited (1)</b> 67:23</p> <p><b>untimely (2)</b> 13:12,16</p> <p><b>up (69)</b> 5:25;6:23;11:10; 12:23;14:3;15:10; 23:1;24:5,7,8;27:19; 31:9;39:5;41:7;42:2, 5,24;44:7;45:4; 55:13,16;60:19; 62:13;64:16;65:19; 67:15;69:6;78:9; 89:8;90:19,20;92:20; 94:2;100:17,24; 101:2,14;102:15; 107:17;111:13; 114:9;116:17;117:4,</p>	<p>18;122:13;123:16; 125:6;130:21; 133:16;135:8,24; 137:15;143:11; 146:10;147:22; 148:5,17;150:6; 152:2,12;153:7; 154:12;164:17; 165:3;168:11,16,16; 169:8;171:12</p> <p><b>update (1)</b> 55:22</p> <p><b>updates (1)</b> 68:20</p> <p><b>uphold (1)</b> 138:18</p> <p><b>upon (6)</b> 6:5,15;17:17; 146:16,18;152:2</p> <p><b>use (16)</b> 27:20,25;29:14; 32:4;36:18;37:7; 49:9,14,20;67:18; 76:8,22;87:14; 121:11;129:15;167:2</p> <p><b>used (7)</b> 34:12;37:4;38:5; 103:22;117:12; 156:24;167:5</p> <p><b>uses (2)</b> 33:12;37:6</p> <p><b>using (7)</b> 37:8;97:11,22; 107:2;115:9;123:12; 124:23</p> <p><b>usually (2)</b> 22:13;138:24</p> <p><b>utilize (1)</b> 118:25</p> <p><b>utilizing (1)</b> 129:20</p>	<p><b>vetting (1)</b> 82:1</p> <p><b>VIA (1)</b> 51:3</p> <p><b>viable (1)</b> 107:5</p> <p><b>vibe (1)</b> 171:10</p> <p><b>View (6)</b> 42:10;91:18;93:14, 21;94:23;95:7</p> <p><b>virtual (17)</b> 51:2,2,4,12;71:14, 15,15,19;92:17; 95:21,22,24;96:2,4; 97:16,18;98:6</p> <p><b>virtually (2)</b> 50:25;85:18</p> <p><b>vision (2)</b> 35:13;36:11</p> <p><b>visit (2)</b> 68:25;163:11</p> <p><b>visited (2)</b> 35:15;86:13</p> <p><b>volleyball (1)</b> 160:15</p> <p><b>volume (1)</b> 52:5</p> <p><b>volunteered (1)</b> 81:18</p> <p><b>vote (1)</b> 154:4</p> <p><b>vo-tech (1)</b> 85:5</p>	<p>22,23;67:4;72:11,21; 73:2;74:18,25;79:21; 82:22;85:24;88:16; 90:3;103:17,19,23; 118:8;131:10,12,14, 15;133:5,17;134:4,4, 6;140:13;155:14; 161:25</p> <p><b>WAIVERS (27)</b> 25:14,17,20;26:3,5, 6,23;27:17;39:18; 45:10;55:14,18;56:4, 19;57:3,5,17,19; 61:12;67:12;71:3; 80:18;89:8;91:17,20; 103:22;117:23</p> <p><b>walk (2)</b> 110:18;112:1</p> <p><b>Walker (1)</b> 28:20</p> <p><b>Wallace (8)</b> 19:11;20:20,21,21, 22,24;21:6,10</p> <p><b>wants (3)</b> 17:5;36:3;84:25</p> <p><b>Ward (26)</b> 74:15,16,16;75:19; 76:2;77:1,3,5,13,16, 20,24;78:1,5,8,15,17, 20,23;79:7,9,12,15, 18;80:6,8</p> <p><b>watch (5)</b> 39:2,22,23;43:24; 89:16</p> <p><b>way (24)</b> 34:18;42:11;43:9; 46:9;48:7,7,12;51:6; 56:21;61:13;77:2; 78:1;89:10;99:20; 105:4;110:9,22; 126:24,25;133:6; 150:20;159:6,9; 170:9</p> <p><b>WAYMIRE (8)</b> 7:20,21,22,25;8:7, 10;9:7;21:18</p> <p><b>ways (5)</b> 87:4;100:14;109:8; 121:14;122:2</p> <p><b>Weatherford (2)</b> 151:3,17</p> <p><b>web (1)</b> 101:15</p> <p><b>website (1)</b> 15:14</p> <p><b>Wednesday (1)</b> 37:15</p> <p><b>week (10)</b> 8:23;22:14;32:11; 64:24;79:10;86:13; 90:23;141:16;144:3; 168:21</p> <p><b>week-and-a-half (1)</b></p>
			<b>W</b>	
			<p><b>wages (1)</b> 115:15</p> <p><b>Wagner (25)</b> 4:22,23;5:7,10,16, 21;6:23;7:4;13:9; 14:8,10,14,15,19,23, 25;15:7,9,14,22; 16:15;19:6,7,16;20:3</p> <p><b>wait (3)</b> 83:19;110:23; 152:19</p> <p><b>waiting (3)</b> 31:14,15;111:1</p> <p><b>waive (2)</b> 13:24;163:1</p> <p><b>waived (1)</b> 163:3</p> <p><b>waiver (61)</b> 14:1;26:10;27:15; 28:1,8,12;32:1,3; 33:1,6;34:5;35:4,9; 36:12,14,21;39:9; 42:1;45:4;46:9;51:7; 52:25;55:24;57:6; 58:8;59:7,10,13; 64:6;65:17,20;66:21,</p>	
		<b>V</b>		
		<p><b>vacancies (3)</b> 57:24;58:4;63:25</p> <p><b>vacancy (1)</b> 58:2</p> <p><b>vacant (2)</b> 158:15;159:18</p> <p><b>valued (5)</b> 170:10,13,21; 171:8,23</p> <p><b>various (2)</b> 104:21;136:6</p> <p><b>vary (1)</b> 49:20</p> <p><b>vendor (1)</b> 63:11</p> <p><b>verified (1)</b> 33:13</p> <p><b>versus (1)</b> 132:17</p>		
<b>U</b>				
<b>UAPB (1)</b> 151:14				

8:2 <b>weekly (1)</b> 62:9 <b>weeks (4)</b> 156:11;157:11; 158:22;168:1 <b>Welcome (9)</b> 10:5;26:13,25; 61:23;74:11,15;81:5; 83:15;100:20 <b>well-done (1)</b> 172:6 <b>Wells (2)</b> 139:8,10 <b>weren't (5)</b> 49:23;51:13; 155:10;158:10,10 <b>west (10)</b> 28:9;29:15,17,24, 24;30:8,20,22;50:17; 147:21 <b>Westside (10)</b> 19:10,11,18,23; 20:20;22:12,18,21, 24;23:21 <b>Westwood (1)</b> 28:20 <b>what's (8)</b> 31:18;32:14;44:22; 101:5;143:9,20; 144:19;160:6 <b>wheel (1)</b> 29:22 <b>whenever (1)</b> 17:1 <b>where's (1)</b> 47:17 <b>wherever (1)</b> 155:15 <b>White (2)</b> 106:1;139:10 <b>White's (1)</b> 145:5 <b>Whitlow (5)</b> 150:16;151:21; 164:2;166:21;172:10 <b>whoa (2)</b> 157:11,11 <b>whole (14)</b> 7:12;8:3;14:5; 20:15;26:17;34:16; 38:16;40:1;41:21; 52:1;56:12;94:20; 110:14;111:9 <b>who's (4)</b> 30:23;116:20; 140:17;161:25 <b>who've (1)</b> 141:2 <b>wide (2)</b> 116:1;124:2 <b>wife (2)</b> 150:19,22	<b>Wiggins (13)</b> 19:12,12,15;21:12, 13,15,17;22:5,6;24:7, 9,11;25:11 <b>Williams (1)</b> 55:11 <b>willing (4)</b> 5:11;8:5;48:14; 61:9 <b>wind (1)</b> 117:18 <b>winnners (1)</b> 143:25 <b>win-win (1)</b> 129:16 <b>Wisconsin (1)</b> 123:25 <b>wish (3)</b> 19:2;25:6;157:22 <b>wishes (1)</b> 5:24 <b>wishing (1)</b> 5:21 <b>within (10)</b> 6:20;13:14;28:10; 39:13;41:23;84:1; 106:21;111:17; 123:16;163:10 <b>without (9)</b> 17:17;36:16,16; 37:18;61:12;62:25; 64:7;71:3;154:2 <b>witnesses (1)</b> 26:9 <b>woman (1)</b> 168:17 <b>women (1)</b> 139:15 <b>wonderful (3)</b> 79:14;140:22; 143:9 <b>WOODS (35)</b> 4:10,12;11:22,23; 12:5,13,22,24;13:7; 14:5,9,12;15:18,25; 17:23;18:3,7,25; 23:25;24:1,8,10,14; 52:17;80:1,2;82:20, 22;93:8,9;96:9; 99:12,13;108:21; 141:14 <b>word (1)</b> 145:8 <b>words (1)</b> 18:5 <b>work (51)</b> 4:24;10:24;15:6; 20:7;30:6,12,16; 35:20;36:4,8;39:1; 42:3;43:20;55:14; 60:3;85:17;99:23; 101:11;102:12,16; 106:20;108:1;	111:19;113:3;121:9; 122:5;125:20,21,21; 127:7;132:10;133:8; 136:23;137:10,11; 145:24;146:3;148:2; 151:19,19;157:23,24; 158:2,6;160:5; 163:23;166:25; 168:9,13;169:1; 170:22 <b>workable (1)</b> 153:3 <b>work-based (1)</b> 111:20 <b>worked (11)</b> 5:12;56:18;65:25; 66:1,3;70:15;81:19; 110:14;149:20; 156:18;165:23 <b>Workforce (5)</b> 102:19;104:6,15; 115:12;116:1 <b>working (39)</b> 28:14;34:14;58:23; 59:16,24;61:18; 63:10;66:10;68:17; 77:22;85:7;86:22; 87:10,16;101:23; 104:16;105:17; 106:16;109:18; 110:22;118:2,7; 122:1;128:1;129:24; 138:8;140:9;142:4; 145:4;149:10;155:4, 10;158:4;161:1; 163:5;164:1,9;172:9, 11 <b>works (3)</b> 31:24;68:16; 168:21 <b>worried (1)</b> 144:16 <b>worth (1)</b> 150:17 <b>wow (1)</b> 115:23 <b>wraparound (3)</b> 63:19,20;165:20 <b>writing (1)</b> 149:2 <b>written (6)</b> 6:18;16:19;66:20; 110:10;130:1;148:23 <b>wrong (1)</b> 109:3	113:4;129:22; 157:15;158:20; 162:19;167:25; 168:5,7,8 <b>Yay (1)</b> 159:13 <b>year (68)</b> 10:17;16:4;17:9; 18:14;23:19;25:7; 30:4,4,19;31:3; 32:20;33:4,5,16,16; 34:12,13,15;37:14; 39:1,23;48:18;58:5, 20;63:8;64:13,14,14, 19,25;65:1;66:9; 68:1,2;69:17;70:14, 21;77:23;83:19; 84:19;90:3,17;94:4,8, 17,20,25;95:8;96:17; 98:24,25;108:6; 110:24;111:11; 117:10;119:8;131:6, 8;141:15,16,19,25; 144:14;151:6;152:9; 156:12;157:25; 171:16 <b>yearly (1)</b> 70:22 <b>years (74)</b> 16:7;26:6;30:4; 32:2,2;41:15;42:8; 43:14,15,18,24; 45:16;46:20;52:18, 19;53:12,14;54:6,9; 57:11;58:22;66:22; 67:4,5;70:4,11;71:6, 9;72:1,5,7,22;73:3, 12,17,19;85:4;92:19; 94:24;95:8;98:25; 99:3,10;106:25; 107:3,17;108:25; 109:1;110:17;117:5; 118:17;120:6; 130:20,21,22;135:24; 138:1,9,12,14; 140:18,18;141:23; 142:5,7,17;143:3,22; 144:9;148:4,5; 153:17;155:11; 165:17 <b>yesterday (1)</b> 163:25 <b>yolk (1)</b> 111:3 <b>you-all's (1)</b> 146:16 <b>Young (1)</b> 28:21	<b>zone (2)</b> 31:11;87:18 <b>zoned (4)</b> 15:20;29:3,5;31:4 <b>Zoom (3)</b> 6:9;7:5;25:23 <b>Zooms (1)</b> 62:9
<b>1</b>				
<b>1 (5)</b> 4:19;8:1;48:9,10; 49:18 <b>10 (5)</b> 13:24;14:2,2;24:3; 142:6 <b>100 (1)</b> 143:24 <b>10-day (1)</b> 13:15 <b>10th (1)</b> 154:21 <b>11 (3)</b> 92:3;160:8,8 <b>11:58 (1)</b> 88:6 <b>113 (4)</b> 108:6;118:6;140:8, 11 <b>12 (10)</b> 26:4,5;53:25;54:9; 57:19,21,22;58:6; 69:21;140:18 <b>12% (1)</b> 114:20 <b>1-2.0 (1)</b> 100:4 <b>12:00 (1)</b> 154:22 <b>12:45 (1)</b> 88:4 <b>12:52 (1)</b> 88:6 <b>120 (1)</b> 100:13 <b>1240 (14)</b> 25:14,17,20;26:10; 33:6;55:14;72:11; 91:17,20;133:17; 134:4,4,6;155:14 <b>1240s (2)</b> 38:12;74:6 <b>12th (3)</b> 22:13,25;160:10 <b>1-3 (1)</b> 40:21 <b>14 (1)</b> 6:21 <b>140 (2)</b> 34:16,23 <b>143 (1)</b> 34:23				
<b>Y</b>				
<b>y'all (23)</b> 40:15;43:11,12; 63:7;65:25,25;66:2, 21,25;77:21;80:6; 99:23,24;111:13;				
<b>Z</b>				
<b>zation (1)</b> 55:11				

<p><b>15 (14)</b> 58:15;85:4;140:18; 148:3;149:9,15; 150:16;152:16,19; 157:19;158:7; 159:16;164:23;170:8</p> <p><b>150 (3)</b> 34:22;36:15;119:8</p> <p><b>16 (5)</b> 57:21;161:9; 166:16,21,22</p> <p><b>162 (3)</b> 34:6,9,10</p> <p><b>17 (1)</b> 58:18</p> <p><b>18 (5)</b> 28:10,16;58:10; 107:25;141:23</p> <p><b>1-A5 (1)</b> 88:20</p> <p><b>1-A6 (2)</b> 88:20,21</p> <p><b>1st (11)</b> 10:17;21:18;62:11; 63:15;68:25;75:19; 79:4,4;139:8;148:2; 159:17</p>	<p><b>2nd (2)</b> 65:13;148:2</p> <p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>3 (2)</b> 88:7;156:1</p> <p><b>3% (6)</b> 6:25;8:25;19:17; 21:21;22:2;24:4</p> <p><b>30 (5)</b> 33:10;34:18;42:18, 23;60:18</p> <p><b>300 (2)</b> 28:23;50:24</p> <p><b>32 (2)</b> 42:24;107:3</p> <p><b>33 (2)</b> 58:5;69:17</p> <p><b>34 (1)</b> 60:19</p> <p><b>35 (2)</b> 59:3;60:19</p> <p><b>3-5 (2)</b> 66:8;69:21</p> <p><b>3rd (5)</b> 30:8,19;85:8; 139:12;151:3</p>	<p><b>6</b></p> <p><b>6 (3)</b> 57:20;58:7;147:18</p> <p><b>6% (1)</b> 114:21</p> <p><b>6-4.0 (1)</b> 100:4</p> <p><b>6th (7)</b> 21:20;75:19,20; 79:4;94:3;141:18,24</p> <p><b>7</b></p> <p><b>7 (2)</b> 57:19;58:6</p> <p><b>70% (1)</b> 33:17</p> <p><b>7-12 (3)</b> 42:22;95:21,22</p> <p><b>71b (1)</b> 29:14</p> <p><b>7th (6)</b> 82:6;92:14,16; 94:2;97:23;139:11</p>	<p><b>2</b></p>	
<p><b>2 (3)</b> 25:14;58:18;126:6</p> <p><b>2:30 (1)</b> 173:6</p> <p><b>20 (3)</b> 5:25;140:18;148:4</p> <p><b>2015 (1)</b> 4:19</p> <p><b>2022-23 (1)</b> 57:18</p> <p><b>21 (1)</b> 9:16</p> <p><b>22 (1)</b> 42:16</p> <p><b>23 (6)</b> 40:22,25;41:17,19; 42:1,2</p> <p><b>25 (9)</b> 28:9;40:23;41:1, 18;42:2,5,18;57:12; 148:4</p> <p><b>25th (1)</b> 21:23</p> <p><b>271 (1)</b> 107:2</p> <p><b>28 (2)</b> 42:18;60:18</p> <p><b>28th (2)</b> 19:20,25</p> <p><b>29th (1)</b> 160:11</p> <p><b>2-A (2)</b> 121:12;129:15</p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p><b>4 (7)</b> 55:25;56:1;61:17; 68:11;71:25;91:17; 135:20</p> <p><b>41 (1)</b> 57:16</p> <p><b>45 (2)</b> 88:2,3</p> <p><b>4-5.0 (2)</b> 100:4;135:22</p> <p><b>48 (1)</b> 76:5</p> <p><b>4-8.0 (1)</b> 100:4</p> <p><b>49 (1)</b> 122:7</p> <p><b>4j (2)</b> 92:23,23</p> <p><b>4th (2)</b> 139:14;159:18</p> <p><b>5</b></p> <p><b>5 (5)</b> 58:20;65:11;100:2; 148:20;169:7</p> <p><b>52 (1)</b> 148:5</p> <p><b>5th (2)</b> 82:5;139:15</p>	<p><b>8</b></p> <p><b>8 (7)</b> 26:4;53:25;54:8; 58:6,19;161:10; 166:16</p> <p><b>8:00 (2)</b> 10:23;154:22</p> <p><b>802 (2)</b> 142:25;143:24</p> <p><b>8-12 (1)</b> 28:2</p> <p><b>8th (8)</b> 10:12;16:9;82:6; 92:15,16;94:2;97:23, 24</p> <p><b>9</b></p> <p><b>9 (1)</b> 160:23</p> <p><b>90 (1)</b> 163:10</p> <p><b>900 (1)</b> 84:8</p> <p><b>9th (6)</b> 60:15;90:6,8,9,15, 18</p>	<p><b>8</b></p>	