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BEFORE
OF TUNKHANNOCK AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
e: Mehoopany Charter School

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
HEATHER McPHERSON, Superintendent
JOHN G. AUDI Esquire, Solicitor
BILL WEIDNER, Member
SHANA GREGORY, Manager
LORI BENNETT, Member
JOHN BURKE, Member
PHILLIP FARR, Member
PJ OSHEA, Member
HOLLY ARNOLD, Member
ROBERT PARRY, Member
WILLIAM PREBOLA, Member
BILL SWILLEY, Member
MARY GENE EAGAN, Member

the Tunkhannock High School
5 Tiger Drive, Tunkhannock, Pennsylvania
g at 8:17 p.m. before Kenneth A. Regan
Reporter, Notary Public in the Commonwealth
Pennsylvania.

VERITEXT LEGAL SOLUTIONS
Mid-Atlantic Region
4949 Liberty Lane, Suite 200
Allentown, PA 18106

1 APPERANCES:

2 On behalf of the Mehoopany Charter School:

3 LATSHA, DAVIS & McKENNA
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5 350 Eagleview Boulevard
6 Suite 100
7 Exton, PA 19341
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6

7

8 Also Present:

9 RYAN SCHUMM, CHARTER CHOICES
10 JESSE BEAN, CHARTER CHOICES
11 REBECCA PETERSON, FOUNDATION and SCHOOL BOARD
12 KAREN WARGO, FOUNDATION and SCHOOL BOARD
13 ANNIE SHAFER, SCHOOL BOARD
14 SUMMER COSTELLO, SCHOOL BOARD
15 DR. YOLANDA PAVESKI, FOUNDATION
16 JERRY FURMAN, FOUNDATION

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1 MS. McPHERSON: I am the superintendent of
2 the Tunkhannock Area School District, and I'm only going to
3 speak briefly just to sort of set some ground rules and to
4 give you some background information on this public
5 hearing, the purpose of this public meeting and how things
6 are going to be handled tonight. So I'm going to be doing
7 a welcome, which is what I'm doing. This is changed up a
8 little bit. I want to give you an overview of the charter
9 school law and how this process works and what this
10 timeline works -- how this timeline works.

11 Then the charter school was going to
12 do a presentation. They have asked if they can provide
13 parent comments prior to the presentation of the
14 application. We have agreed so there's a little bit of a
15 change there. The Tunkhannock Area School Board will then
16 entertain. They will ask questions about the application
17 to the charter school representatives that are here. If
18 there are questions from the community, we would ask that
19 you would submit them to us.

20 There will be -- we are going to
21 request of the charter school representatives a second
22 public hearing in which we will present those questions as
23 well, but the community is welcome to comment, all right.
24 So if you have comments that you would like to make about
25 the charter school, you are welcome to do so. And then we

1 will have some closing remarks, and that should wrap things
2 up for this first public hearing. We are required to have
3 one. We would like to request that we have two at least at
4 a minimum.

5 So the purpose of this public
6 meeting, I'm not going to read all of these to you, but
7 basically, that the charter school has a chance to step
8 forward, and they have a chance to -- we have an
9 opportunity. They have an opportunity to present their
10 application to us as -- as the Tunkhannock School District.
11 The hearing provides a forum for this board to ask some
12 questions specifically about their application. And the
13 other function of this is so that the board members have an
14 opportunity to reach out to you as a community of
15 Tunkhannock and to hear your questions and to hear your
16 comments in terms of how you are looking at the impact of a
17 charter school on the school district itself.

18 The Charter School Law is part of Act
19 22 of 1997. And this is important because in the law, it
20 basically was set out so the charter schools were created
21 in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and that they were
22 supposed to do these things. They were supposed to improve
23 student learning. They were supposed to increase
24 opportunities for students. They were supposed to
25 encourage the use of different and innovative teaching

1 methods. They are to create new professional
2 opportunities. They are to provide parents and pupils with
3 expanded choices and the types of opportunities available.
4 And they are supposed to hold schools established under the
5 Charter School Law accountable for meeting academic
6 standards and a method of establishing accountability.
7 This is all coming from the law so at a very minimum, any
8 charter school application must meet those criteria. Any
9 vision of a charter school in the Commonwealth of
10 Pennsylvania at a minimum has to meet those criteria.

11 This is also from the basic education
12 circular. At the heart of these tenants is the idea that
13 the charter schools will serve as laboratories of
14 innovation on behalf of all of Pennsylvania schools.
15 Again, from the beck, it is the responsibility of the
16 charter applicant to demonstrate how the proposed charter
17 school will enhance student learning opportunities and
18 offer substantively unique and innovative educational
19 options for the community. That is their job in their
20 application is to establish that the opportunity that they
21 have provided or that they propose to provide will enhance
22 student learning and offer unique and innovative
23 educational opportunities and options in this community,
24 okay. That's their charge.

25 I want to -- I want you to understand

1 that this board will not take a vote tonight. This is a
2 long and drawn out process. I have given -- I have laid
3 out some timelines that are basically, we start on November
4 15, which is when they submitted their application to us.
5 I have given you the worst case scenario. I realize things
6 could move along a lot faster, but I have no control at
7 some -- at one point, we could petition the community and
8 then have it go to the Court of Common Pleas. I have no
9 control over when a hearing would take place. They have no
10 control over that, okay. So -- so this is all theoretical,
11 but I want you to understand what the worst case scenario
12 could be and how long this process could take.

13 All right. So they submitted their
14 -- their application to us by November 15, which is what
15 the law states. This board then, the LEA; the Local
16 Education, has an obligation to schedule a public hearing
17 within 45 days. We have done that. We got it on November
18 15. We scheduled a public hearing for December 7. There
19 has to be at least 45 days between December 7 and them
20 taking a vote, all right. They are not allowed to vote on
21 this for 45 days, and that's good because it allows the
22 community to comment. It allows us to ask more questions.
23 It allows us to have another public hearing if we wish, but
24 they must take a vote within 75 days. And so that pushes
25 our timeline out that the earliest they could vote would be

1 the 21st of January. The latest that they could vote would
2 be the 20th of February. So somewhere in that timeline
3 there will be a vote, okay. So that's why I'm just trying
4 to give you an idea here.

5 If the application is denied by this
6 board, the charter school has two options. They can
7 resubmit their application to this board and then the --
8 then the timelines would kick in again, some different
9 timelines, or the charter school could seek to appeal the
10 decision to the charter school appeal board in Harrisburg.
11 So they can appeal it to the state, all right. Now in
12 order to do that, they must get either two percent -- they
13 have to get a petition signed by people over the age of 18,
14 and it has to be two percent of the local population of
15 Tunkhannock, which comes in at a little less than 400. So
16 they have to get 400 signatures from the Tunkhannock Area.

17 If they intend, as their application
18 says, to draw students from Elk Lake, to draw students from
19 Wyalusing and to draw students from Sullivan County, they
20 will also need two percent of signatures from adults over
21 the age of 18 from those communities as well, okay. And
22 they have to do that within 60 days so they have to do that
23 sometime in April.

24 Then they have to take that petition
25 to the Court of Common Pleas, and the judge would have to

1 say yes, this is -- this is sufficient -- a sufficient
2 petition or insufficient petition. Basically, what they
3 are doing is they are making sure that when, you know, John
4 Doe says he lives in the Tunkhannock School District, he
5 really does, okay. But once that hurdle is -- is over and
6 the -- and the petition has been validated, then the
7 petition is forwarded to Harrisburg to the Charter School
8 Appeals Board, okay. And once that happens, they have to
9 review it within 30 days once they accept it. And then
10 once they review it, then they have to make a decision on
11 it within 60 days.

12 Now this stuff could happen really
13 quick, I just don't know. The decision of the Charter
14 Appeals Board to reverse the decision of this board, okay,
15 if they decide to reverse the decision of this board, then
16 -- I'm sorry, the LEA requires the school district to grant
17 the application, all right. So these guys have 10 days in
18 which they have to sign the -- the charter. So if the
19 Charter Appeals Board reverses their decision and says yes,
20 we are putting our stamp of approval on this charter
21 school, these guys have 10 days in which to sign the
22 charter. If they don't, the Charter Appeals Board will
23 sign the charter, and it will move forward. These guys
24 then could take that to appellate review with the
25 Commonwealth Court.

1 Here's our ground rules tonight. And any of
2 you that came to our public hearing to a consolidation will
3 find these to be very familiar, but we are here for a very
4 important purpose, and we want to give this the time and
5 the attention that it needs so here are my expectations:
6 That you will participate in the process. We welcome your
7 comments. We welcome your questions. If you are going to
8 stand at the microphone, we ask you to limit your comments
9 to two minutes, okay; that you will think outside the box;
10 that each of you will take it very seriously to listen to
11 each other, to reflect and to think about the issues.

12 Furthermore, we ask you to challenge your
13 preconceptions and your misconceptions about what it means
14 to have a charter school in the Tunkhannock Area School
15 District. Be open-minded and listen and think. And the
16 last thing is that we will all be respectful to each other
17 because our kids are watching. Thank you.

18 MR. AUDI: With that, we ask the Mehoopany
19 Charter School's representative to -- to open this hearing
20 and make any comments.

21 MR. POLLAK: Thank you, sir. My name is
22 Joshua Pollak; P-O-L-L-A-K, solicitor for Mehoopany Charter
23 School. My understanding is that we will proceed with our
24 presentations; is that correct?

25 MR. AUDI: Yes.

1 MR. POLLAK: Okay. So I think the floor is
2 open to public comment.

3 MR. AUDI: Okay. That's fair. The floor
4 is open to public comment. If anyone cares to make a
5 comment, please come to the microphone and remember you
6 have two minutes.

7 MS. ARNOLD: Will we have a second as well?
8 I believe we should if there are people that need to speak
9 first but --

10 MR. AUDI: I -- I -- I -- I think it would
11 only be fair that if there's questions afterwards, that the
12 community has to right to ask them. The reason we are
13 having the public comments prior to the presentation is
14 that the attorney representing -- Mr. Pollak, the attorney
15 representing the charter school, noted to me that the
16 meeting was starting at 8:00 and that a lot of the parents
17 that would be coming would have to get home to get their --
18 their students to bed and ready for school the next day so
19 they asked if we could flip it, and I said that they would
20 be allowed to do that.

21 So if anybody -- if anyone needs to
22 leave early or wants to leave early, then I would say that
23 this is a good time to make your comments. However, if you
24 want to hear the presentation and have comments thereafter,
25 that's fine as well.

1 MR. POLLAK: The charter school certainly
2 doesn't have any opposition to public comment prior to and
3 after the hearing, but as you have indicated, Mr. Audi,
4 questions from the audience, the charter school is not
5 appropriate as it is the board, the administration and
6 solicitor that has read the 2,000 page application and the
7 charter school is prepared for questions from those
8 individuals that have read that application.

9 MR. AUDI: So noted. We will -- the board
10 will entertain questions. And if we see fit to have them
11 asked, we will certainly ask them from this end. But we
12 don't want -- what we don't want is people leaving here
13 with an unanswered question. So if you -- if you have a
14 comment, that's great, and that's the point of it.

15 I understand it's hard to comment if
16 you haven't seen the presentation yet. If you have some --
17 if you want to make your comments ahead of time, those
18 people do know what they want to say, I was presuming,
19 Mr. Pollak, that you were talking about people that you
20 would be bringing who are part of your process. If they
21 have comments, now would be a great time.

22 MR. POLLAK: Except we wanted to make this
23 a more family-friendly event. Starting a hearing at or
24 after 8 p.m. is atypical for a charter application hearing
25 that I attended, so that's why I proposed that these public

1 comments take place prior to the presentation.

2 MR. AUDI: Why don't we get moving then?
3 If you have anybody then on your end that wants to make
4 comments, now would be the right time.

5 MR. POLLAK: There is no error, and there
6 are some individuals in opposition to, but it was not our
7 desire to counsel those individuals.

8 MR. AUDI: Okay. That's fine. If there's
9 no -- I see a person standing.

10 MR. ZELNA: My name is Alexander Zelna. My
11 last name is Z-E-L-N-A. I'm a graduate from Tunkhannock
12 Area High School in the Class of 2015. I'm at Misericordia
13 currently studying for national security. I thank you for
14 allowing us to speak today. This school overall as a high
15 school, I have many great experiences, many bad. Teachers
16 are very accommodating, treating students as a person
17 rather than a number, but there were times where I did have
18 struggles. Specifically, it happened in algebra class.

19 This was the driving force of why I appear
20 today. I was a student -- mechanical engineering student
21 at Wilkes University. As a result of this, I ended up not
22 succeeding in that degree. I feel that a charter school is
23 definitely an option. I think that it gives students, it
24 gives parents another option. If they see that, feel that
25 an institution like this does not provide what the student

1 needs, it gives them another way. It is also possible that
2 a charter could provide for future planning, such as
3 balancing a checkbook, loans, credit scores, budgeting, all
4 things that are very necessary to becoming an adult, all
5 those things that I had to learn on my own. In that
6 respect, I feel that the school failed me in preparing me
7 for my future. So maybe a charter school could provide
8 this option and give students a chance to succeed.

9 In conclusion, I appreciate the education that
10 I received here. I appreciate the dedicated teachers who
11 are instrumental in molding me into a polished student;
12 however, there are deficiencies here that need to be filled
13 with ultimate options. Therefore, a charter, I challenge
14 you to introspect, be better than you are today. For the
15 sake of the students, please consider alternate options.
16 I'm sure the futures are bright and full of success. Thank
17 you.

18 (Applause.)

19 MR. AUDI: Any other comments? If there's
20 no other comments, we will move forward with the opening
21 charter presentation.

22 MR. FURMAN: I'm Jerry Furman. I'm on the
23 foundation program. I have a lot of feedback.
24 F-U-R-M-A-N. I would like to introduce people who are here
25 tonight who are on the foundation board or have been named

1 to be on the charter school board or are otherwise involved
2 in this process. So Rebecca Peterson is on the foundation
3 and the school board; Karen Wargo is on both; Annie Shafer
4 is a foundation member; Summer Costello is on the school
5 board; Ryan Schumm is with Charter Choices, one of our
6 consultants; Jesse Bean, charter consultant; our legal
7 counsel has introduced himself; Dr. Yolanda Paveski, who is
8 on our foundation.

9 So I want to thank you for letting us make our
10 presentation about the plans for the Mehoopany Charter
11 School. I know you have received the applications, several
12 -- several hundred pages. I do want to highlight our
13 thought process of how we got to where we are and what we
14 plan to do and how we plan to approach the charter school.

15 So if we go back, the mission we have adopted
16 for the charter school is to prepare students for working,
17 living in the ever changing technological world. Our model
18 will engage students in critical thinking, particularly in
19 the areas of computer science and engineering to project
20 based learning and rigorous standards of aligned curriculum
21 and an emphasis of teamwork helping students in developing
22 strong character and becoming responsible, contributing
23 participants in their own education.

24 So why would we want to start the charter
25 school? Well, obviously, the -- the impetus for all this

1 was the geographical placement of the school for students
2 in the general Mehoopany Area; Mehoopany Township,
3 Winville, Forkston, North Branch and Washington Township.
4 Step back and look at it. Those particular townships where
5 we are focused makes up almost 50 percent of the area of
6 Tunkhannock School District. We felt that taking away that
7 access to a local school inhibits the ability of parents to
8 be actively involved in the education that lightens the day
9 for our kindergarten through sixth grade students, fifth
10 grade students by up to 22 hours with all the additional
11 travel time. We just think that distance is negative in
12 building a strong community school.

13 So we looked at what are the options. Do we
14 just say, okay, well, we will just put our kids on the bus
15 and let them go or we can look at cyber options? Cyber
16 schools are fairly prevalent in the state. There are great
17 tenant schools around with other school districts and
18 homeschooling options. But when we talk to parents in
19 Mehoopany, the feeling was wouldn't it be better for the
20 Tunkhannock Area School District to offer our kids,
21 children in the area a free public, high quality, local
22 option?

23 And we feel we have some good support from
24 parents and people within those communities. So we think
25 with the battles we face, it's an idea at this time of

1 season. It's time to look at a charter school for some
2 unique educational opportunities serving a geographic area
3 and certainly the students in the geographic area. So we
4 wanted to build on what we felt was a very strong, historic
5 performance of the previous school and then introduce a
6 student center project based technology approach stem work.

7 We have a vision appearing of the children of
8 our world area communities to take their place within the
9 expanding energy sector that is bringing new high tech jobs
10 to the towns and cities in the region. And rather than
11 reinforcing and forget the current projectory, whereby
12 students of Wyoming County come unprepared for the demands
13 of this emerging economy, our desire is to interrupt this
14 trend and make sure that our managing companies, as well as
15 other organizations have a ready supply of skilled, savvy
16 labor to meet the needs of every level of organization,
17 technicians and engineers, architects, accountants,
18 programmers, attorneys, et cetera.

19 In order to accomplish this mission and the
20 mission of our charter school, we -- we will require having
21 a new approach to teaching and learning and really school
22 design in general. Rather than organizing the school
23 experience around seat time and credit accumulation,
24 students at Mehoopany Charter School will have the freedom
25 to explore their passions and interests, particularly in

1 the stem at their own pace and will have additional
2 extracurricular opportunities such as coding, robotics,
3 engineering, et cetera that mirror the needs of a changing
4 economy that we live in.

5 Teaching our students in this fashion will
6 require reorganization, a school operation, instruct --
7 instruction delivery around use of local devices, tablets
8 and cloud based platforms and resources, such as Google
9 Classroom and Chrome Books. These changes enable greater
10 collaboration, innovative design, project based learning
11 and a more holistic approach to assessment which is vital
12 by a digital portfolio.

13 So we did a lot of research as we were
14 starting to go in the direction of the charter school. So
15 according to William Science and the Hartford Graduate
16 School of Education, and I quote, we need to take a broader
17 approach to education for our young people if we really
18 want them to be successful in the 21st century. So over
19 the next five years, an opening charter school would enact
20 a plan for developing a state of the art learning facility
21 to include a variety of stem focused learning spaces,
22 provide a greater appearance of student choices and
23 partnership while introducing multiple pathways for
24 students that leads to success in high school, college and
25 the 21st century marketplace.

1 We are focused and organized around the
2 following concepts: A standard of aligned project based
3 engineering education beginning in kindergarten with
4 engineering as an element of engineering everywhere;
5 computer science beginning in kindergarten code -- code HS
6 and enhanced daily phys ed using go no plus and other
7 learning based exercises; perform regular breaks multiple
8 times every day, teaching kids to thrive with the
9 resiliency and grit; restore discipline; acknowledging
10 having our children learn that relationships are essential
11 to community building. In order to build those
12 relationships, there is a certain amount of discipline that
13 is required.

14 We feel we can add approximately six to 12
15 days to the school year and an additional 50 minutes of
16 instruction time per day. So all of this is in an
17 environment where we feel every teacher is a reading
18 teacher and developing communication skills and has some
19 additional teaching training to make sure our students have
20 the communication skills that are critical to the success
21 in the 21st century.

22 When we talk about engineering, engineering is
23 defined -- when we talk about engineering, we are talking
24 about designing things so we have laws of nature, et cetera
25 and other factors. Well, science attempts to discover what

1 is. Engineering is concerned with extending the capability
2 through a modified national world. That's what we are
3 looking at with engineering.

4 Engineers identify and solve problems using
5 highly creative and designed processes so our goal is for
6 the students to learn and be able to use the designed
7 process that really tackles practical issues and problems
8 that kind have been pressed historically by distinguishing
9 engineering. The -- the open-ended problem-solving method
10 known as engineering design, which I learned kind of as a
11 scientific method is what we are trying to do is provide
12 real world focus on abstract concepts children can learn
13 from kindergarten on. It will have a positive impact on
14 learning in not only engineering but also in other science
15 subject texts such as mathematics and science.

16 So why do we feel engineering is important for
17 K to six, K to five environments? So if you have ever
18 watched your children play, if you don't have children, if
19 you ever watched children play at a very early age, you
20 know they are fascinated with building things. Well, they
21 are just as fascinated with taking things apart and -- and
22 just naturally seeing how they work. In other words,
23 children are natural born engineers. With children in an
24 engineering school setting, research suggest several
25 positive results. Suggests that we are going to be

1 building science from math skills. We will have classroom
2 equity in the current standpoint that the engineering
3 design process removes mistakability.

4 Instead of -- instead, failure is an important
5 part of the problem-solving process and a positive way to
6 learn. It is equally important. There is no single right
7 answer in engineering. One problem can have many
8 solutions. One classroom instruction includes engineering.
9 All students can see themselves as a success. 21st century
10 skills are going to require hands on project based learning
11 as students learn to work together and answer questions
12 like how large can I make somebody, what material do I use
13 for this, maybe have them collaborate, which is critical.
14 Think critically to communicate with one another.

15 Career success, classroom engineering
16 activities often requires students to work in teams where
17 they must collaborate and communicate effectively. In the
18 21st century, these skills are critical for success in
19 everything. Research has shown that when engineering is
20 part of elementary instruction, students become more aware
21 of diverse opportunities for engineering, science and
22 technical careers and are more likely to see those careers
23 as options.

24 Finally, some of our -- some of the most
25 pressing problems we face as a country, energy, healthcare

1 and environment, engineering and technical literacy will be
2 critical for all of us to make informed decisions in the
3 21st century. When we talk about technological skills,
4 survival and success in the 21st century requires the
5 depths in understanding using technology. Our goal is to
6 build foundations through technology skills beginning in
7 kindergarten by teaching coding. I think again, we have
8 all seen two and three-year-olds very easily pick up a
9 phone, a tablet. They learn very quickly how to use
10 passwords, how to find -- find their games, finally
11 learning how to play. So we want to build on that, which
12 leads into the coding.

13 The enhanced phys ed is one that I guess when
14 we first started looking at this, I didn't really
15 understand, but classrooms that have physical exercise and
16 activity tend to boost students' results. Students are
17 more physically fit, perform better academically, exercise
18 their brain cells, movement, cognition. And education
19 research tells us the majority of school age students are
20 primarily -- they are not only advanced anesthetically
21 process, they create the movement and understand concepts.
22 The brain is attached to attract novelty. The brain pays
23 attention to movement. The brain interacts with people and
24 things in the environment. Learning is easier to store.
25 Your memory retrieval if it has an emotional base. The

1 brain operates from concrete experience.

2 Using movement in the classroom is a
3 brain-friendly endeavor purposely and carefully engages the
4 whole brain. So resiliency based a lot of this on
5 publications, including teaching kids to thrive, and then
6 it focuses on things like mindfulness, growing in mindset,
7 perseverance, resilience, responsibility, honesty,
8 integrity, empathy and gratitude. So by -- by taking all
9 these together, we feel that the self and social skills
10 work together to improve the school climate, as well as
11 give all learners the essentials they need to enter the
12 workforce and go get a formal education and/or deal with
13 future challenges yet unknown.

14 We feel teaching the skills that lead to
15 thrive -- thrive requires, first of all, that as educators,
16 we let go of some things and then teach them in a different
17 way. We need to let go of a system that's bordered by
18 control and immediate quantifiable markers in a form of
19 grades and scores. But we think there's an ultimate
20 benefit producing more students who are future ready and
21 able to thrive no matter what the circumstance is.

22 Students in the 21st century are going to have to be able
23 to adapt quickly to changing events. And we also think if
24 we start teaching that, maybe the parents -- we as parents,
25 the educators will become better at thriving.

1 We plan to use a restorative discipline model
2 that's really based on promoting values and principals
3 based on inclusiveness, collaboration and approaches for
4 the community. The discipline approach acknowledges a
5 relationship essential to the building community; that we
6 build systems and address misbehavior and harm in a way
7 that strengthens relationships. We focus on the harm done
8 rather than only on the rule-breaking. We give a voice to
9 the person who has been harmed, and it leads to an
10 engagement in collaborative problem-solving, empowers
11 growth and change. The rest of interpersonal conflict as
12 part of living in our relationships with others, and
13 enhance the responsibility for the -- enhance the ability
14 of the students to learn responsibility. We think taking
15 together all of these things will promote the discriminated
16 critical thought processes, as well as developing the
17 ability of our students to strive in our community and
18 contribute to that community.

19 One quick point in terms of where we would put
20 the school. We have signed a contingent leased purchase
21 arrangement for property at 1600 Scottsville Road in
22 Mehoopany. We have entered into some preliminary
23 engagement with a company that's supplied temporary
24 buildings for the first year. And again, it's still the
25 most ideal. The school board said it does not make sense,

1 but the most ideal would be to use the existing building in
2 Mehoopany, but we are going to go ahead with the option on
3 this land and building the school once it's approved.

4 Finally, we -- we feel that there's been a
5 significant amount of community support in the area we are
6 talking about. We have done some pre-enrollment, if you
7 will, asking people if they are interested, getting some
8 pre-enrollment information. As of the date we filed the
9 application, November 15, we have had 101 families complete
10 pre-enrollment forms. 130 children were pre-enrolled for
11 grades K through eight. Since we are not really going up
12 to eight right now, we have 106 children pre-enrolled
13 through grades K through five. 91 of those are from
14 Tunkhannock School District. Some are previously cyber
15 students and others. We expect these numbers to increase
16 as families in Mehoopany and surrounding areas become
17 increasingly aware of the school's plans, and we support
18 our projected opening enrollment of 125 students in grades
19 K through five. We have 218 petition signatures. 131 of
20 those electronic and 87 handwritten.

21 We have received some letters of support from
22 government agencies and Wyoming County Commissioners, the
23 Mehoopany Board of Women, North Branch and Washington
24 Township supervisors. And we have also received some
25 support from local industries that obviously would look --

1 look at the different type of student we are going to turn
2 out.

3 In conclusion, we would like to say we look
4 forward to partnering with Tunkhannock Area School District
5 in providing quality education to our children, and we look
6 -- we look at -- we step back proposing to do some
7 different things in terms of how teachers interact with
8 students, how students learn. To paraphrase, we are
9 looking to take a laboratory. One of the analogies could
10 be we are able, in our size, to maneuver in the water like
11 a speedboat and not like an aircraft carrier with a school
12 district this size. We would work at it so we can make
13 changes to fine tune things quicker than a larger school
14 district can.

15 At this point, that's our formal presentation.
16 And again, that is just summarizing what's in the
17 application.

18 MR. POLLAK: Mr. Audi, with your
19 permission, I would like to reserve time for closing.

20 MR. AUDI: Certainly. Would you also --
21 I'm assuming that -- let's -- for formal sake, let's move
22 the application and all of the exhibits, which have been
23 printed and are put out here in a binder into the record.

24 MR. POLLAK: Thank you, sir.

25

1 * * * * *

2 (Application and all exhibits have been
3 admitted into the record.)

4 * * * * *

5 MR. AUDI: Okay. I think at this time, we
6 could ask them if any of the board members have questions.

7 MR. BURKE: So I'll start. The board did
8 put together a few questions which I'm not sure who we are
9 addressing them to, but let me first start with the -- so
10 the application, and you did mention this in -- in the --
11 the words you just said, that you are recruiting Elk Lake,
12 Wyalusing and Sullivan Counties, but when I looked at the
13 budget, it does appear that you are just proposing the
14 reimbursement rates from Tunkhannock. Help me understand
15 where that's coming from.

16 MR. SCHUMM: Ryan Schumm; S-C-H-U-M-M.
17 Good evening, Ryan Schumm from Charter Choices. Our
18 program represents over 40 charter schools in Pennsylvania.
19 We provide business management and financial management for
20 our 40-plus clients in Pennsylvania. We have been at it
21 for about 12 years. We crafted many charter school budgets
22 year over year and many applicant budgets. The assumption
23 of this budget was that 100 percent of the students would
24 come from Tunkhannock School District and a lot of our
25 expenditures that are built into this budget for a student

1 basis and so those can and would scale with a different
2 level of enrollment.

3 MR. BURKE: So based off what I know with
4 Tunkhannock's reimbursement rate, the schools that you are
5 pulling from, their reimbursement rates are lower than
6 Tunkhannock's. And so when I reviewed the budget, it looks
7 like in year one, you end up with a 10,000-dollar fund
8 balance. Could you help me understand how that looks with
9 a lower reimbursement rate based on the rates you are
10 talking about?

11 MR. SCHUMM: The school district tuition
12 rates for charter schools fluctuate year after year. It's
13 strictly based on the amount of the money the school
14 district spends in the current year, which drives the
15 commission they are obligated to pay the charter school in
16 the subsequent year. So we see volatility in the charter
17 school rates from district to district, and certainly
18 within each district from the year over year.

19 So this assumption again is built on the most
20 recent available Tunkhannock School District rate. If you
21 would compare that rate to other local district rates, it
22 would appear higher in the '16-'17 school year. We don't
23 know what it is yet for the current school year, the
24 '17-'18 school year. That would be for the '18-'19 school
25 year.

1 MR. BURKE: Okay. So it also appears that
2 the budget is operating almost at 100 percent enrollment,
3 so we are moving the class sizes and everything throughout
4 the application. When -- when we have the fund balance
5 left at 10,700, what would that look like when you would
6 operate at possibly less than 100 percent enrollment?

7 MR. SCHUMM: Sure. The year one budget
8 captures many additional revenue startup costs. Certainly,
9 there are more costs in year one on average with a brand
10 new school than we would see in the ongoing years. As I
11 stated, a lot of our expenditures, the line item
12 expenditures are based on per student expense assumption,
13 so as the number of students would fall, those line items
14 and the correlated expenditures would -- would also fall.

15 MS. ARNOLD: Things such as -- you know, to
16 ask about the line items that would reduce, I'm -- I'm --
17 I'm expecting based on the numbers that your expenses are
18 going to be similar to ours in the sense, you know,
19 prospectively, that salary and benefits are -- are a major
20 part of your -- your budget. So losing -- if only expect,
21 you know, estimate a 10,000 -- excuse me, a 10,000-dollar
22 fund balance at the end of year one, you -- you are not
23 going to -- the amount of per student is going to be
24 significantly less in the sense that if you have 10 less
25 students, that's, what, 160,000 less dollars if they are

1 not special ed from Tunkhannock?

2 MR. SCHUMM: Possibly.

3 MS. ARNOLD: Right. So your -- if you lost
4 10 students, that's not going to reduce your staffing
5 requirements or your staffing plan. If you lose them
6 between five grades, two kids from each grade when you are
7 only planning on one teacher anyway, you know, you can see
8 the -- the concern about -- you say the line items go down
9 with the number of students, but when you are estimating
10 10,000 dollars less at the beginning of the first year, how
11 do you reconcile that? You know, the line items aren't
12 going down that much.

13 MR. SCHUMM: Could you repeat the question
14 please?

15 MS. ARNOLD: The question is: You -- I'm
16 questioning the idea that the line items would drop with
17 the same correlation of the income from each student if a
18 student wasn't there.

19 MR. BURKE: Because you have significant
20 fixed expenses. I mean, there's only certain amount of
21 variable expenses in the budget and so if you are losing
22 top line revenue, clearly you are going save a little bit
23 of variable expenses, but a good portion of the total
24 budget and staffing alone is almost 1.2 million of the --
25 of your expenses so that doesn't even take a look at

1 building costs or anything like that. So those wouldn't --
2 those don't go away.

3 If you lose ten students, you still have to
4 staff grades one through five. You still have to staff
5 your CEO, you still have to staff your special ed teacher,
6 so those don't move regardless of your -- of your
7 enrollment. So if you are running at 100 percent
8 enrollment at 25 students or whatever number per class, you
9 won't -- you won't have any money left at the end.

10 MR. SCHUMM: Okay. And I do respectfully
11 ask that you repeat the question.

12 MR. AUDI: Do you want me to repeat it?

13 MR. BURKE: Sure.

14 MR. AUDI: Your budget shows a
15 10,000-dollar surplus at the end of the year. You have a
16 10,000-dollar loan, but your budget is premised on only
17 receiving funding reimbursement from this school district.
18 If we say you have 10 less students, which would drop your
19 funding level significantly, how do you -- how would you
20 pay for your fixed expenses that will not drop in
21 proportion to the funding that will drop?

22 MR. SCHUMM: Sure. I understand. Thank
23 you. We are confident that there is enough flexibility
24 within these budget assumptions, which are on the most
25 expensive case scenario line item by line item, that we

1 could adjust it down to enrollment scenarios that might
2 vary from the current projection.

3 MR. BURKE: So let's -- let's go deeper
4 into that. So when we look at the benefits that are listed
5 in the payroll expense detail, I believe that the law
6 requires the schools -- the charter school to offer the
7 same benefits as the local district. So I, first of all,
8 see that the teaching assistants have no benefits listed on
9 the exhibit.

10 MR. SCHUMM: Okay. I would not -- would
11 not agree necessarily with that statement.

12 MR. BURKE: They have no health insurance,
13 no dental, no medical reimbursement, no dental
14 reimbursement listed.

15 MR. POLLAK: So there is language in the
16 Charter School Law relating to the same healthcare benefits
17 as the -- the school district, but I refer you to a recent
18 state charter school board case, Gillingham School District
19 -- I'm sorry, Gillingham Charter School rather versus the
20 Pottsville School District that clarifies that the same
21 benefits just refers to the actual care item and not the
22 actual contribution, deductibles, et cetera offered.

23 MR. SCHUMM: In other words, we are
24 confident that the budget expenditures for employee
25 benefits included in this application's budget are adequate

1 to meet the requirements of the charter school.

2 MR. BURKE: Okay. So it appears that you
3 are providing a line item of approximately 10,000 dollars
4 per teacher for health insurance. Can you help me
5 understand the assumptions there? What type of plan are
6 you providing for your teachers?

7 MR. SCHUMM: I don't have a specific plan
8 detail in terms of co-pays for prescription of generic
9 drugs or any of those types of details, although my 12
10 years of experience of providing budgets and 12 years of
11 data from expenditure details for charter schools in
12 Pennsylvania, we are confident that these amounts are
13 adequate to meet the requirements of the Charter School
14 Law.

15 MR. AUDI: Let me ask you this: Are you --
16 are you covering the family as well or just the individual
17 employee?

18 MR. SCHUMM: These budget assumptions do
19 not cover the entire families. This is average amount
20 spent per employee, which will certainly vary based on any
21 variable, including market rates next year and the insurer,
22 the underwriter and what's available on this marketplace.
23 So these are budget assumptions that -- that we do believe
24 will capture the requirements that the charter school
25 provides for health insurance.

1 MR. AUDI: You are aware that our benefit
2 levels that we provide here under contract are for family?
3 Are you aware of that?

4 MR. SCHUMM: I'm not aware of the details
5 or the details of any of the --

6 MR. AUDI: And are you aware that we may
7 require you to provide the same level of coverage under the
8 law?

9 MR. SCHUMM: We believe that the amounts
10 budgeted for health insurance expenditures in this
11 application are adequate to meet the requirements of the
12 Charter School Law.

13 MR. AUDI: Okay. Family coverage?

14 MR. SCHUMM: Of the requirements of the
15 Charter School Law.

16 MR. AUDI: Okay.

17 MS. McPHERSON: So does case law change the
18 fact that the law that we are looking at says that all
19 employees -- and that includes teaching assistants because
20 we do offer healthcare benefits to our support staff. So
21 my question is: Did the case law change the original law
22 in such a way that charter schools no longer have to
23 provide healthcare benefits to all employees?

24 MR. POLLAK: The statute itself hasn't
25 changed. You should consult your solicitor as to what that

1 case that I cited states.

2 MS. McPHERSON: So you are unable to
3 clarify that question for me?

4 MR. POLLAK: The statute has not changed.

5 MS. McPHERSON: What does that mean, sir?

6 MR. POLLAK: The statutory language the
7 statute --

8 MS. McPHERSON: So all means all?

9 MR. POLLAK: All -- all means all, that is
10 correct.

11 MS. McPHERSON: Thank you.

12 MS. ARNOLD: And there is no provision for
13 that, correct?

14 MS. McPHERSON: In your budget, there is no
15 provision for healthcare benefits for teaching assistants.

16 MR. POLLAK: Our budget -- our budget
17 stands as it states.

18 MS. McPHERSON: Okay.

19 MR. AUDI: So let the record reflect that
20 the budget does not reflect benefits for teaching
21 assistants.

22 MR. BURKE: So the provision for food
23 service is not intended to generate for schools so the MCS
24 budget reflects the line item that has the revenue for the
25 food service. Can you explain this please?

1 MR. SCHUMM: That would be revenues that
2 come in from national school lunch program reimbursement.

3 MS. ARNOLD: But what is your -- there's no
4 line item for what you will be spending on food.

5 MR. SCHUMM: The correlated expenditures
6 for this food service program will be captured in line
7 items 2300 of 390: Other purchase service professional
8 technical services. Now the year one is another 35,000
9 dollars a year.

10 MR. FARR: What is there besides the food
11 service; anything?

12 MR. SCHUMM: The balance we required for
13 food service would be Pennsylvania's purchase services.

14 MR. FARR: So that 35,000 the first year
15 includes food service and other things?

16 MR. SCHUMM: If necessary.

17 MR. PARRY: You said 35,000 dollars is the
18 amount that you capped from your expense of the food
19 services the first year?

20 MR. SCHUMM: That would be the amount
21 budgeted for, among other things, providing food service.

22 MR. PARRY: Okay. And you have 120
23 students, and you go 186 days because you said you're going
24 to go six extra days, that's \$1.50 a day for lunch.

25 MR. SCHUMM: We believe the budget

1 expenditures are adequate and that the revenue projections
2 are --

3 MR. PARRY: I'm -- I'm just throwing it out
4 there. It's a number so...

5 MR. BURKE: Okay. So I also see on the MCS
6 application, references to cultural art teachers on page 26
7 and board language instruction on page 63. Please let us
8 know where that is in the budget as well.

9 MR. SCHUMM: There -- there are several
10 positions built into the budget that are not identified for
11 specific titles. That would include, I'm looking at the
12 year two; 2019-2020 detail: Special teachers and
13 intervention specialists. And those positions are
14 placeholders to meet the needs of the student population
15 for the school to realize once the school was chartered.

16 MR. FARR: So they will not be there the
17 first year; those positions?

18 MR. SCHUMM: The first year does include
19 part-time intervention specialists, and four academic
20 teachers, homeroom teachers, if you will, would be expected
21 to cover most of that ground during the first year.

22 MR. FARR: So the academic teachers will be
23 doing the foreign language?

24 MR. SCHUMM: And specialists.

25 MR. BEAN: Good evening, Jesse Bean;

1 Charter Choices; B-E-A-N. The first year would be that
2 core teachers at the elementary grades will be doing, I
3 would characterize it as activity based enrichment in the
4 arts and music and economy. So we are talking about basic
5 vocabulary, very introductory conversation in Spanish. So
6 I would not think of this as a comprehensive Spanish
7 curriculum in the early years for the elementary students,
8 but as my colleague mentioned in the budget, there is a
9 placeholder for full-time instruction if the board for the
10 school wants to go in that direction.

11 MR. BURKE: So for the record, there's no
12 specialist teachers in year one?

13 MS. McPHERSON: And then in your -- and
14 then in subsequent years going forward, there is one
15 specialist teacher who is going to be a contact specialist
16 in the arts and music and foreign language?

17 MR. SCHUMM: So the specific duties of
18 employees are certainly not fully defined in the
19 application budget. Those duties would be prescribed by
20 the charter school board and the administration once the
21 student population and their needs are realized.

22 MS. McPHERSON: So there's a chance that
23 they would not be required to be a content specialist?

24 MR. BEAN: Yeah. Could you please rephrase
25 the question?

1 MS. McPHERSON: Is there a part of it that
2 you are not understanding?

3 MR. SCHUMM: What I -- I'll rephrase
4 because it wasn't directed to me so I'm just wanting to ask
5 respectfully if you can rephrase the question or -- or just
6 repeat it.

7 MS. McPHERSON: Our teachers are certified
8 content specialists, right?

9 MR. BEAN: Correct.

10 MS. McPHERSON: They are specialists.

11 MR. BEAN: Yes.

12 MS. McPHERSON: And so they can be hired
13 when they are certified and -- and are credentialed in
14 their field. And what I'm asking is: If you are only
15 going to have one specialist teacher, that teacher is not
16 necessarily going to be required to have that content
17 certification as our teachers are?

18 MR. BEAN: I think our goal would be to
19 have certified folks. You would be able to -- you would
20 have the dexterity to place them in the content core
21 classroom, grade level classroom or teaching a special
22 subject, yes.

23 MS. McPHERSON: And you are going to have
24 one?

25 MR. BEAN: In year two, we would have one.

1 In year three, we would have one. And then years four and
2 five of the budget, we would be adding a second person.

3 MS. McPHERSON: Okay. So in year two, you
4 are going to have seven grade levels, K to six?

5 MR. BEAN: Right.

6 MS. McPHERSON: And you are going to have
7 one specialist teacher with multiple certifications --

8 MR. FARR: Language, art and music.

9 MS. McPHERSON: Okay.

10 MR. BURKE: So -- so that brings another
11 question. So I look at the annual starting salaries at
12 15,000 dollars for these teachers. So what -- what type of
13 pool would you be hiring from expecting some of those
14 things you said with multiple dual certifications when you
15 are competing with public schools that are paying equal or
16 higher starting salaries with significantly better benefits
17 than are listed in your application? Where will you find
18 these teachers?

19 MR. BEAN: I think that's certainly a
20 challenge. It's a challenge no matter where in the State
21 of Pennsylvania. There's always competition for great
22 talent. I think the teaching approach here is really to do
23 recruiting in a variety of capacities, to online, social
24 media, teacher fairs, university partnerships. Over the
25 long haul, we have advised our clients to build an internal

1 pipeline of student teachers, encourage student teachers to
2 get dual certified, but you are naming a challenge that the
3 school faces.

4 MR. BURKE: It's more challenging obviously
5 depending on the benefit level, and I do think one of the
6 other concerns that I am hoping you could address in the
7 hiring guidelines are stability within the school.

8 Starting up a charter school obviously is going to be very
9 challenging, and we have a situation where we are looking
10 at teacher salaries that again are at or below starting
11 salaries with local districts and clearly benefits lower
12 than neighboring districts. What do you expect the tenure
13 for those teachers to be when they have -- if they are able
14 to have multiple certifications, can teach language, art,
15 Spanish, music? Don't you think they would have a better
16 opportunity to earn more wages and get better benefits for
17 their family at a neighboring district?

18 MR. BEAN: Which is -- which is a question,
19 and I'm going to reference my own experience as a school
20 administrator in multiple urban settings in the east and
21 west coast, and it's typical for and has been typical for
22 my teachers to receive salaries of 10 to 20 percent lower
23 than some of the surrounding school districts. So to be
24 drawing on the assumption that our teachers at the charter
25 school will be making a comparable salary I think exceeds

1 the national average of -- in terms of the differential
2 between charter limits and authorizing district.

3 I think what attracted my teachers and what I
4 anticipate would attract folks to an opening charter school
5 would be the opportunity to be part of a really unique
6 educational program and a truly groundbreaking opportunity,
7 and that I think will help attract folks that have a
8 disposition and skill set to be part of a pilot like this,
9 a program like this. Retaining them is always going to be
10 a challenge and people have life circumstances, but I think
11 in this case, the same kinds of challenges will be
12 obtaining the right people.

13 MS. ARNOLD: I'm curious to know -- well,
14 this is a two-part question: What is going to be the
15 ongoing role of Charter Choices with an opening charter
16 school, and where is that amount reflected in the budget?

17 MR. SCHUMM: I'll do the second question
18 first. In the budget that is line item 2500-330, and --
19 and that is in there as an assumption. The assumption is
20 that once the charter -- would be charter school board
21 engage Charter Choices to provide accounting and financial
22 management services.

23 MR. PREBOLA: I have a question, if I can
24 just go back to the health benefit. I don't know if it was
25 asked. The health benefit, at least the application, I --

1 I believe assumes that there is a 10 percent premium share
2 for the benefit?

3 MR. SCHUMM: That's correct.

4 MR. PREBOLA: So -- so I'm going to -- I'm
5 going to go back to the question that I believe Mr. Burke
6 had asked about the health benefit. Right now, we have our
7 support staff paying zero percent of the premium, and our
8 teachers are paying a maximum of four percent of the
9 premium. So I know there was some discussion about the
10 current statute of law, so can I ask: Are you mirroring
11 the same benefits package dollar-wise in your budget? And
12 the answer is no because you are asking for a 10 percent
13 premium. And that's for all employees, correct?

14 MR. SCHUMM: I would certainly agree this
15 budget does assume that employees would contribute 10
16 percent towards their health insurance premium.

17 MR. BURKE: Okay. So continuing on that
18 theme, I see on page 177, the application for hiring a
19 school nurse. And you let me know where that is in your
20 budget.

21 MR. SCHUMM: The budget allocated money for
22 people in health services; line item 2400-330. And that
23 budget amount assumes on a contracted basis, although the
24 charter school board may decide not to convert that into
25 employee and those -- and those costs towards internal

1 employee.

2 MR. BURKE: So that says 35,000, correct;
3 the 30 -- the 2400-330?

4 MR. SCHUMM: Year one amount is 35,000
5 dollars.

6 MR. BURKE: So that's an RN staffed
7 full-time contracted at 35,000?

8 MR. SCHUMM: We don't know what the person
9 -- who that person would be, but the budget does allocate
10 35,000 for contracted services for --

11 MR. PARRY: And if you hire that person,
12 then you are going to have workmen's comp, FICA, all your
13 -- all your additional costs coming. So you are looking
14 for an RN, which is our understanding what you need for
15 like 28,000 for 186 years -- or 186 days?

16 MS. ARNOLD: Can I ask where that -- what
17 resources make that number feasible? You know, like what
18 comparables -- where are you finding someone who can do the
19 official work of the school nurse for 35,000 dollars a year
20 contracted or not? I mean, an RN makes significantly more
21 than that. What would bring them in there for 35,000
22 dollars a year?

23 MR. SCHUMM: We believe our experience has
24 shown that that amount of money on a contracted basis, that
25 would be serviceable for 125 students.

1 MR. FARR: Contracted with who? Do you
2 have a source?

3 MR. SCHUMM: We don't have a specific
4 vendor identified, no.

5 MS. McPHERSON: And -- and can I clarify
6 because I believe the nurse narrative says that person will
7 be in the -- in the school every single day. I believe
8 that's what your narrative says. Your application.

9 MR. SCHUMM: I -- I don't have the
10 narrative in front of me.

11 MS. McPHERSON: Well, I can find it for
12 you.

13 MS. ARNOLD: I -- I guess to some extent,
14 I'm -- I'm a little bit uncomfortable with the idea of
15 trust that this number works. We -- I would like to know
16 where this number is coming from because I can say that I'm
17 going to hire somebody for a certain amount of money, and
18 having no reference to that for our region, that number
19 doesn't mean a whole lot.

20 MR. SCHUMM: I can -- I can tell you that
21 other charter schools in Pennsylvania are able to serve a
22 school of a similar size with that amount of money on a
23 contracted basis for people in health services.

24 MS. ARNOLD: 186 days of the year?

25 MR. SCHUMM: For people in health services

1 for the --

2 MR. FARR: Who are they -- what are they
3 using?

4 MR. SCHUMM: I don't know the specific
5 vendors.

6 MS. ARNOLD: Are they using an RN? Like
7 what is the qualification? What is the criteria that you
8 are setting forth for the school nurse at this charter?

9 MR. BEAN: Jesse Bean again at Charter
10 Choices. I can speak to my own experience as a CEO of a
11 charter school in Philadelphia. We have an RN who provided
12 services. The cost was more, about 30 percent more for a
13 student population of almost 500 students, and the nurse
14 was there all day, every day. I think the daily presence
15 of -- you can contract -- or I mean, the nursing services
16 that are contracted offer a range of levels of engagement
17 so we would be looking at probably a part-time nurse who
18 could be there for a portion of the day. And you can
19 supplement that by getting your staff certified first-aid
20 and having folks who are available for emergency services,
21 as needed.

22 MS. ARNOLD: So if the narrative says all
23 day, 186 days, the narrative is incorrect to the
24 assumption?

25 MR. SCHUMM: Does it say all day, every

1 day?

2 MS. McPHERSON: It says at all times during
3 the school day.

4 MS. ARNOLD: PJ, do you happen to know
5 offhand how much we pay for a nurse for a day?

6 MR. OSHEA: I don't know that.

7 MS. McPHERSON: Mary Gene, do you know?

8 MS. EAGAN: I'm sorry?

9 MS. McPHERSON: Do you know the rates at
10 which we pay Fayat for nursing staff?

11 MS. EAGAN: For Fayat, it's significantly
12 higher than what we were paying LCN. About 42 dollars an
13 hour, I'll say.

14 MS. McPHERSON: 42 dollars --

15 MS. EAGAN: Somewhere in that neighborhood.

16 MS. McPHERSON: An hour. Okay.

17 MS. EAGAN: But I would have to look. I --
18 I would have to get that number.

19 MS. ARNOLD: And those are -- and those are
20 the numbers that we are experiencing that we have actually
21 paid out to these --

22 MR. PARRY: And you said the day was
23 longer. So in an eight-hour day, that comes about double
24 the number -- what the number is.

25 MR. FARR: And a number of services folks

1 are volunteers. They are not paid.

2 MS. BENNETT: Can I -- can I ask a question
3 about the nursing services? If you have a specialized
4 student that's got multiple handicap issues, they are going
5 to need a private nurse. Did you -- where in your budget
6 is that accounted for because some have feeding tubes, some
7 need to be changed, and that could be K through eight, K
8 through six. No matter what the age is, they need a
9 specific nurse with them at all times throughout the day,
10 and I don't see that reflected anywhere in your budget. So
11 how are you going to accommodate that for a special
12 education student?

13 MR. SCHUMM: Special education contracted
14 services are in line 1200-329. That provides funds for
15 contracted services to meet the needs of a specific IEP.
16 Obviously, we don't know the population at this point. We
17 don't know what the IEP would contain or how many special
18 education students would attend the school. The revenue
19 assumptions on this budget and the enrollment assumptions
20 are in the 16 percent special ed rate.

21 MR. BURKE: So let's ask another question
22 about that 1200-329 line item. So it's 100,000 dollars.
23 Is that where the counselor, school psychologist, OT, PT,
24 speech, hearing is all reflected? Where are they
25 reflected?

1 MR. SCHUMM: Any contracted services that
2 would be required to meet the needs of an IEP on a
3 contracted basis are in that line.

4 MS. BENNETT: For 100,000 dollars?

5 MR. SCHUMM: Year one allocation is 100,000
6 dollars.

7 MR. BURKE: Just to note, we are
8 experiencing significantly more costs for a similar amount
9 of students to provide speech, PT, OT, hearing, vision,
10 school psychologist. Those are some pretty significant
11 costs. That could be -- that literally could be one
12 student is 100,000.

13 MS. McPHERSON: And if the student applies
14 to your charter school, the -- whose needs would it exceed;
15 that line item?

16 MR. SCHUMM: Well, the charter school would
17 be obligated to provide services to meet the needs of every
18 IEP student that enrolled to the school.

19 MS. McPHERSON: Right.

20 MR. SCHUMM: The budget does not assume any
21 revenues for special contingency funds. If there were
22 students with extreme special needs, the school would
23 consider seeking additional revenue through state and
24 federal programs, if appropriate.

25 MS. BENNETT: Do you know that process?

1 MR. SCHUMM: Which process?

2 MS. BENNETT: Do you know how to apply for
3 that process of needing to bill for medical assistance and
4 how to get that service all set up so that you are able to
5 do that?

6 MR. SCHUMM: I'm aware of the cumbersome
7 process for receiving medical access.

8 MS. ARNOLD: Who would be -- who would be
9 completing that? Who would be the point person who is
10 coordinating all that, and all the paperwork, and all the
11 submissions, and all the, you know, approvals and
12 pre-authorizations? Who -- whose role would that be?
13 Whose responsibility in the district? Or not the district,
14 I'm sorry, in the charter?

15 MR. SCHUMM: Sure. That would most likely
16 be coordinated between the chief administrator of the
17 charter school, special education employees at the charter
18 school and business service contractors, if there was one.

19 MS. ARNOLD: You mentioned special
20 education employees; however, the budget reflects the
21 hiring of one special education teacher for 20 students who
22 will bring with them their varying intellectual, physical
23 and emotional challenges. How would one teacher meet the
24 daily needs of these students using the framework that was
25 listed in the application of inclusion, pullout,

1 co-teaching, et cetera?

2 MR. PARRY: Also being the person who is
3 going to go after the cumbersome Medicare reimbursements
4 and that? Again, I'm not trying to be argumentative.
5 Maybe realistic is, you know...

6 MR. AUDI: I think didn't Holly ask the
7 question?

8 MS. ARNOLD: Yes.

9 MR. AUDI: I would like to hear an answer
10 to that question. Do you need to repeat it?

11 MS. ARNOLD: Remember the budget reflects
12 the hiring of one special education teacher for 20 students
13 who will bring with them varying intellectual, physical and
14 emotional challenges. How will one teacher meet the daily
15 needs of these students using the framework of inclusion,
16 pullout, co-teaching, et cetera and be in charge or be
17 significantly responsible for the Medicaid reimbursements
18 and applications and whatnot? That's you are talking about
19 one person and an estimation of 20 students on an
20 aggressive education style. How -- how is that person
21 going to fill all those shoes?

22 MR. SCHUMM: We believe that the funds
23 allocated in this budget for special education services,
24 whether they are contracted or for internal employees,
25 would be adequate to meet the needs of the assumed special

1 education population.

2 MS. ARNOLD: So any -- any additional help
3 would come out of that 100,000 dollars that's also paying
4 for the OT, PT, school counselor, school psychologist fund?
5 Is that --

6 MR. SCHUMM: The school would be obligated
7 to meet the needs of special education students as
8 determined by their IEPs.

9 MR. SWILLEY: If I may, so you are saying
10 to us that one teacher is going to handle 20 students when
11 we are talking about emotional support, learning support,
12 autistic children who are high functioning, autistic
13 children who are low functioning, and you expect one
14 teacher to do this? Do you have any background in special
15 education?

16 MR. SCHUMM: I have a degree in education,
17 not special education.

18 MR. SWILLEY: I think your numbers are way
19 off.

20 MR. SCHUMM: And yeah, I would be happy to
21 answer the question. And I sincerely -- could you repeat
22 the question? I want to know what I'm answering.

23 MR. SWILLEY: Sure. I asked you: You
24 expect one individual to deal with 20 students whose
25 mixture is emotional support, learning support, autism,

1 both high functioning and low functioning, and let's throw
2 in just for -- just for the heck of it, you get a Downs
3 child who is high functioning or low functioning, you are
4 expecting one teacher to handle that entire caseload?

5 MR. SCHUMM: We believe that this budget
6 does capture --

7 MR. SWILLEY: Yes or no?

8 MR. SCHUMM: -- appropriate expenditures --

9 MR. SWILLEY: Yes or no?

10 MR. SCHUMM: -- to meet the needs of
11 special education students. As with almost everything in
12 this budget, we are making assumptions about the students
13 and student population, which is not known at this point.
14 We do not know who will show up and enroll in this charter
15 school, and we believe that this budget provides a roadmap
16 for meeting the needs of the students who are assumed in
17 this budget.

18 MR. AUDI: Are you suggesting you will base
19 your acceptance of students based on their needs and
20 expense?

21 MR. SCHUMM: I'm suggesting we meet the
22 needs of any students that chooses to enroll. The budget
23 assumes a 16 percent special education ratio. We believe
24 that this budget captures enough expenditure to meet the
25 needs of that assumed population. We don't know who will

1 choose to enroll here.

2 MS. ARNOLD: So provided you have not met
3 your enrollment maximum for that year, you will -- you are
4 -- you are committing to take every single student who
5 chooses to enroll?

6 MR. POLLAK: Of course we are comitted. We
7 are obligated to meet the statutory requirement to take any
8 student that seeks enrollment so long as there's space in
9 the charter school.

10 MR. BURKE: Okay. So another question:
11 The technology staff you referred to in the application in
12 multiple places, specifically page 19, disposition, I don't
13 see it reflected in the budget. Can you help me
14 understand? Is it in the budget somewhere?

15 MR. SCHUMM: The budget assumes that
16 technology expertise would be on a contracted basis. We
17 found in line item 1100-329 and 1100-390. And the
18 expenditures for tech hardware and equipment are in line
19 item 1100-750.

20 MR. BURKE: Okay. So obviously, I know
21 this was stated in terms of the focus of the -- the MCS.
22 And so as I think about research, online science, math,
23 engineering experiences and however it goes, can you help
24 me break down the 125,000-dollar investment and understand
25 what is in that to fully help fit grades K through five in

1 year one?

2 MR. SCHUMM: That line item doesn't --
3 doesn't tie to specific expenditures or assumed
4 expenditures for any program, although we do believe it is
5 adequate to fund the activities described in the
6 application.

7 MR. BURKE: So you believe you can buy all
8 the hardware, technology, computer, Google Chrome Books,
9 all of the different programs that are associated with that
10 for 125,000?

11 MR. SCHUMM: We believe that among all of
12 the line items for contracted services and hardware in --
13 in the budget, that we can address all of the items and
14 programs and objectives that are contained in the
15 application.

16 MR. BURKE: Do you -- so for the type of
17 individual that you are going to -- so with all this
18 technology, I'm assuming you are going to need some pretty
19 expansive technology expert -- expertise, and so that's
20 going to go through contracted services, which is fine.
21 About how much an hour are you assuming that individual is
22 getting paid that is covering that 10,000, 75,000 and 125?
23 So that would include those resources and all of the
24 equipment to provide the services that the charter state.

25 MR. SCHUMM: That doesn't make any

1 assumptions about the number of hours that we may need or
2 the contracted hourly rate that we might obtain from the
3 services.

4 MR. BURKE: So how did you come up with
5 those numbers then?

6 MR. SCHUMM: We believe that the numbers
7 here are adequate to capture all of the programs that are
8 described in the application.

9 MR. FARR: How did you come up with the
10 number?

11 MR. SCHUMM: The assumptions in this budget
12 and -- and the actual numbers are based on about 12 years
13 of experience working with charter schools in the
14 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the costs, expenditures
15 and reimbursements that they received to operate charter
16 schools in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

17 MS. McPHERSON: Charter schools who have a
18 stem and an engineering focus? That seems to me that --
19 that technology would be really important.

20 MR. SCHUMM: I would agree.

21 MS. McPHERSON: And -- and this is very
22 specialized. By their own definition, a very specialized
23 charter school. So to use assumptions on typical charter
24 schools might not capture their needs. I would be
25 interested -- I -- I want you to answer this question

1 first, the question that's on the table: How you came up
2 with these numbers, and then I have another question.

3 MR. SCHUMM: Sure. We believe the numbers
4 in the budget on the expense and revenue side are adequate
5 and appropriate based on the 10 years of experience working
6 with charter schools in Pennsylvania.

7 MS. McPHERSON: Can you tell me next year,
8 what the technology in every classroom will look like?
9 What will be there? What will be in each of those
10 classrooms? How much technology, what devices and how
11 many?

12 MR. BEAN: So in the application, we didn't
13 go into detail about what each would provide. And we will
14 say this. And to go back -- I think this ties to the
15 previous question about where we get to scale this. There
16 is tremendous technology that's available in its open
17 source. Google Chrome Books are incredibly phenomenal for
18 schools so the planned year would be not to purchase Mac
19 Book. It would be to do Chrome Books, to use Google
20 Classroom, which is a great open source, to use Google
21 Trainers to train teachers in using this platform. And
22 then this would also include the coding curriculum that we
23 outlined in the application. And I think what we have
24 talked about, it's not necessarily mapped out in great
25 detail, but we talked about something like a make or space,

1 we were thinking about technology like a 3D printer, some
2 robotics equipment, some circuitry boards.

3 MS. McPHERSON: But the last time I
4 checked, those things were not open source. They don't
5 give away Chrome Books, they don't give away Codeable, and
6 they don't give away Engineering is Everywhere, all right.
7 There are costs associated with these things. And when I
8 asked you how many Chrome Books are going to be in the
9 first grade classroom, you can't tell me. I can tell you
10 how many Chrome Books or how many Apple iPads or somebody
11 in here can are in our first grade classrooms. So like I'm
12 asking how you got these numbers if you can't even tell me
13 how many devices are going to be in the rooms? Is there
14 going to be a Promethean board in every room?

15 MR. BEAN: Yes.

16 MS. McPHERSON: Is there going to be a
17 projector in every room?

18 MR. BEAN: Yes. So I think the idea would
19 be elementary grades in each grade level would share a
20 cart. And then middle school, the idea would be a one for
21 one.

22 MS. McPHERSON: Each grade level would
23 share one cart?

24 MR. BEAN: Correct.

25 MS. McPHERSON: Meaning one cart for six

1 grade levels?

2 MR. BEAN: No. One cart -- one cart per
3 grade level. And then the middle school level, one device
4 per child.

5 MS. McPHERSON: So next year, there will be
6 one cart in the kindergarten classroom, one cart in the
7 first grade classroom, one cart in the second grade
8 classroom, one cart in the third, one cart in the fourth,
9 one cart in the fifth, a projector.

10 MR. BEAN: That's the intent.

11 MS. McPHERSON: That's the intent. And
12 then when you add in the infrastructure for servers and
13 switches and Wi-Fi hubs, your contention is -- and
14 technical support for this every single day because this is
15 a technology based charter school, it's not going to want
16 the system to go down; that you believe that the 125,000
17 dollars and the additional 85,000 dollars that you say is
18 in the budget for these things is adequate to cover all of
19 that?

20 MR. BEAN: We do.

21 MS. McPHERSON: Thank you.

22 MR. AUDI: I have a question. Are there
23 other expenditures coming out of those line items, such as
24 professional educational services, purchased professional
25 services and ESL: English as a second language?

1 MR. SCHUMM: Correct.

2 MR. AUDI: So they are also contributing to
3 line items.

4 MR. SCHUMM: This budget acknowledges that
5 we don't know what our student populations will be next
6 year, and we believe we have adequate resources built into
7 these line items. Some of them are general and specific
8 line items to meet the needs of a student population -- the
9 unknown student population that may hold the charter
10 school.

11 MR. AUDI: So less money available for the
12 technology than what might appear because other -- other
13 issues are being siphoned off those line items, correct?

14 MR. SCHUMM: It's possible.

15 MR. AUDI: Substitutes, where are they?

16 MR. SCHUMM: In contracted purchased
17 services.

18 MS. McPHERSON: Is that 329; the same line
19 item you are referring to?

20 MR. SCHUMM: It is.

21 MS. McPHERSON: Thank you.

22 MR. SCHUMM: As well as 390, the line item
23 below it as well.

24 MR. BURKE: So we have identified -- I
25 still have several more questions. We have identified a

1 lot of issues that could result in additional expenditures.
2 Would it be fair to say that it's possible that one of
3 these line items could be overspent by 12,000 dollars?

4 MR. SCHUMM: You know, I can tell you that
5 anything is possible.

6 MR. BURKE: Sure. So you ended the fund
7 balance of just under 1,000 dollars. All of these
8 questions we have asked identified multiple things that
9 could possibly be overspent. And I understand from the
10 experience with charter schools, it looks like these
11 numbers were -- were arrived at by similar models, but when
12 we identify all of these questions that we had, you have
13 11,000 dollars left at the end of year one. Where does the
14 -- where does the working capital come from to start up
15 this -- the charter school?

16 MR. SCHUMM: Sure. Two thoughts on that
17 statement and question. One is that this budget
18 acknowledges that the first year of a brand new school --
19 charter school is difficult and -- and that the margins are
20 certainly smallest in the first year. Just at the same
21 time, the variables are greater or more unknowns than any
22 other year. This budget also assumes that the per pupil
23 tuition rate from the school district equals that of the
24 2016-2017 school year, which are the most recently
25 available certified charter school tuition rates from

1 Tunkhannock School District.

2 The typical increase in the rates and regular
3 special education is two to five percent, and this budget
4 assumes a zero percent increase over last year's tuition
5 rate. So it is possible -- and again, another unknown
6 variable that the district rate will increase this year and
7 then again next year yielding an increase in the charter
8 school tuition rate. Since that is another unknown
9 variable, we budget a flat assumption on tuition based on
10 last year's charter school tuition --

11 MR. PARRY: But it's such a slim margin.
12 What happens if we get to the first week of May -- and this
13 is a serious question -- and it's Friday afternoon and we
14 can't make payroll? Where does the charter -- I don't
15 understand where would the charter school go when you
16 don't --

17 MR. SCHUMM: So I don't want to entertain
18 too many hypotheticals, but --

19 MR. PARRY: Well, your whole budget is
20 hypothetical so...

21 (Laughter.)

22 MR. SCHUMM: So the administration and the
23 business services at the charter school wouldn't allow that
24 to happen. They would notice trends and make adjustments
25 during the school year, as needed, if there were --

1 MR. PARRY: What adjustments would you make
2 in March when you figure out we are out of money? Like
3 what do you --

4 MR. SCHUMM: I don't see that that scenario
5 would ever occur.

6 MR. PARRY: You are not paying 941 taxes.
7 I mean, there's only so much money there.

8 MR. SCHUMM: The charter school would pay
9 all of its payroll taxes. And I don't see a hypothetical
10 -- hypothetical situation that's realistic where the school
11 would -- would find themselves in a position really where
12 it wouldn't be able to make payroll.

13 MR. PARRY: You are -- you are talking
14 about 2,000,000 dollars in the budget that's got 10,000
15 dollars of wiggle room at the end? I mean, I can think of
16 a on the of situations where you're going to run out of
17 money somewhere at the end of the year.

18 MR. SCHUMM: And we could hypothetically
19 assume that the school district tuition rate increases
20 three percent each year, which is typical, which would be
21 over a six percent increase of the revenue assumptions that
22 are in this budget. We simply don't know.

23 MR. PARRY: And with consolidation that,
24 you know, us looking to lower the costs, again,
25 hypothetically, it could go down a little bit.

1 MR. SCHUMM: That is unlikely but very
2 possible.

3 MR. FARR: Where does the capital that you
4 start with come from?

5 MR. SCHUMM: I'm sorry?

6 MR. FARR: Where is the working capital to
7 start come from? You indicated in your documents that you
8 are looking at local, temporary buildings, which have
9 costs. You siphon all that to counter the costs. You have
10 sewer connections, water into the property, some sort of a
11 driveway paving or somewhere to park cars and school buses
12 to drive on it. Where does the money come from for that?
13 You got to have all these in place before you open your
14 doors, all the furniture and equipment to start up. That's
15 all front loaded, right?

16 MR. SCHUMM: Let me rephrase the question
17 to make sure I understand. You are talking about where
18 does the money come for expenditures realized prior to the
19 first day of school?

20 MS. McPHERSON: Yes.

21 MR. FARR: Working calendar, yes.

22 MR. SCHUMM: The charter school can bill
23 Department of Education for July and August tuition. And
24 if that was successful, which we believe it would, some of
25 the capital would come from there. It's also possible that

1 the charter school obtain a line of credit from a bank,
2 working line of credit prior to opening this --

3 MR. PARRY: The line of credit is nowhere
4 in the budget, though, is it? Where is -- I mean, granted,
5 the interest is very low, but again, we have only got
6 10,000. I mean, I'm just a negative person so don't take
7 it the wrong way.

8 (Laughter.)

9 MR. SCHUMM: Understood.

10 MR. PARRY: But I just don't see where the
11 -- this is just too close to call.

12 MR. SCHUMM: This does acknowledge that the
13 first year of operation is by far the most challenging
14 year.

15 MR. AUDI: I have a question about your
16 contingency funds. I represent any number of school
17 districts in the area, and it's not uncommon for a student
18 to come into a district that will cost the district
19 hundreds and thousands of dollars where, for example, a
20 computer system needs to be purchased that could read the
21 student's eyes and communicate with the student through the
22 student's eyes. The districts have to find the money to do
23 that and so where is your contingency plan for such an
24 event? And it's not uncommon.

25 MR. SCHUMM: So we believe that the budget

1 under the assumptions of the 16 percent special ed and
2 unknown --

3 (Laughter.)

4 MR. SCHUMM: I'll add a little bit more to
5 the standard, but I do believe we get the standard answer
6 correctly because it's true that it does capture adequate
7 expenses to meet the needs of the student population of 16
8 percent special education. The charter school would use
9 additional revenue that are available to some very extreme
10 special education situations.

11 MR. AUDI: Sometimes the only revenue is
12 taxation. You don't have that ability.

13 MR. SCHUMM: I would agree the charter
14 schools do not have the ability to -- to levee taxes.

15 MR. FARR: Have you explored the option you
16 mentioned of working capital, a line of credit from the
17 bank? Have you explored that to find what the
18 possibilities are?

19 MR. SCHUMM: We have a track record of
20 success with obtaining lines of credit for brand new
21 charter schools over the last 10 years, yes.

22 MR. FARR: How many?

23 MR. SCHUMM: I don't know the specific
24 number, but I would guess between 15 and 20.

25 MS. ARNOLD: Where is that payment

1 reflected in this budget?

2 MR. SCHUMM: Any -- any line of credit
3 would be with the exception of the interest payment, which
4 we would try to keep as minimal as possible, would be a
5 wash. The line of credit revenue would be paid back. The
6 operating funds line of credit money would be used for
7 items that are in our expensive budget already whether it's
8 curriculum or purchase services --

9 MR. BURKE: But there is no interest
10 currently reflected in this budget.

11 MR. SCHUMM: There is. That would come out
12 of line item 2300-390.

13 MR. BURKE: So -- so if it is reflected,
14 how much of a line of credit is there reflected; what
15 interest rate?

16 MR. SCHUMM: It does make assumptions on a
17 total amount that would be required. It's possible that
18 zero would be required. We don't know.

19 MR. BURKE: It won't be zero required
20 because you are going to need to purchase these items
21 before the school begins, correct?

22 MR. SCHUMM: The school might be able to
23 get tuition revenue in time to meet the needs of any
24 working capital that's prior to the first day of school.

25 MS. ARNOLD: And does that come from the

1 school district or is that a separate fund from the state?
2 Like is this a prepayment on something or is this in
3 addition to the money that the school district would pay
4 during enrollment?

5 MR. SCHUMM: Charter schools can bill the
6 school districts from the student sending district the
7 first week of the month beginning with July. I think the
8 answer to your question, that would be the normal, regular
9 tuition installment that would be due.

10 MS. ARNOLD: And that would be in addition
11 to the two point however many million that you would
12 anticipate getting from the district?

13 MR. SCHUMM: No. It would be one
14 installment of that.

15 MS. ARNOLD: If anybody else has -- if
16 nobody else has anything else on that, I have another
17 question. When you talk about one technology cart in
18 kindergarten and one technology cart in first grade, how --
19 how is that -- I mean, I would say we are offering more
20 technology here in our elementary schools now. Is that a
21 fair statement? I mean, how is that unique and innovative
22 --

23 MS. McPHERSON: Yes.

24 MS. ARNOLD: How -- how is that -- when you
25 are -- you are marketing yourselves as a tech school and a

1 stem school when you aren't even up to the same standard as
2 the actual home district that you are applying in, how is
3 that unique and innovative?

4 MR. BEAN: So when we talk about having one
5 cart per grade level, you are talking about 125 students in
6 year one across sixth grade, so classes are about 18 to 25
7 students on average. One kindergarten cart of 20 is
8 essentially one to one so I don't know that it's reasonable
9 to expect more devices than there are students to be
10 available. If that's the expectation, that's not an
11 expectation the charter school intends to meet.

12 I think the real -- the real differentiator or
13 the real innovative piece of this is how the technology is
14 to be used, and I think in our -- in our narrative, we try
15 to reflect the idea that students from the passive users of
16 technology to active creators of new products and
17 performances. So when you think about project based
18 learning, you are thinking about students creating videos,
19 public service announcements, web design, applications,
20 coding. So I think the technology may look the same, but
21 the goal of the charter school is to think creatively about
22 how to use it.

23 I think what I appreciate about this now is it
24 really done its homework and research, educational
25 technology and project based learning, and they have the

1 potential really to be a laboratory for innovation. It may
2 not look perfect in year one or even in year five, but we
3 believe the intention of this group is to do right by kids
4 and to provide new opportunities for them. And I hope this
5 to really be a partner in the network for the school
6 district.

7 MR. BURKE: So I heard you just talk about
8 some of the innovative things, but in the application, it
9 specifically describes the use of Reading Wonders, My Math
10 and Inspire Science. How does your choice of traditional
11 resources make this innovative and unique compared to what
12 we are doing in this district?

13 MR. BEAN: As I said, the real -- the real
14 differentiator and real unique piece of this is really
15 around the stem pushed out subjects and less so mathematics
16 and social sciences. They are going to be periodic
17 information that the charter school gears towards being
18 offered, what we really try to highlight is what's really
19 innovative.

20 MR. BURKE: So -- so how -- how about your
21 selection of an alternative site on Hunter Highway in
22 Tunkhannock, how does that fulfill the what I heard was the
23 most significant reason for establishing a charter school,
24 namely geographic displacement?

25 MR. BEAN: Okay. So the thinking here

1 certainly would be the desire to be in the area, but the
2 out of necessity, that backup plan would allow the school
3 to open on time on a temporary basis with the intent over
4 the next couple of years of finding space and moving.

5 MS. ARNOLD: But does that not eliminate
6 the directing of the geographic displacement? If they can
7 go to the old Wal-Mart in Tunkhannock, it -- it would be
8 essentially exactly the same, if not closer, to come to the
9 Tunkhannock School District buildings.

10 MR. BEAN: Again, I think the idea is that
11 that would be a temporary and secondary option.

12 MR. AUDI: If anyone doesn't mind, I think
13 that given the hour -- I don't know, is there another
14 question? Okay. One more question. Then we are going to
15 ask if someone here has any comment.

16 MR. BURKE: So the last one that the board
17 currently plans to ask would be: How does this location of
18 a charter school in Mehoopany equitably address the
19 geographic displacement of TASD students residing in other
20 communities such as Mill City and Evans Falls?

21 MR. POLLAK: May I have one moment?

22 MR. BURKE: Sure.

23 MS. PETERSON: Rebecca Peterson;
24 P-E-T-E-R-S-O-N. We noted geographic displacement as one
25 of the reasons for the charter school, but it wasn't --

1 there are several reasons which are listed in our
2 application.

3 MS. McPHERSON: In your needs assessment,
4 that is listed as the primary reason. In your narrative.

5 MS. PETERSON: And we identified the
6 township as the area where we are so -- the community
7 support was coming from, and -- and that was the -- we are
8 addressing the geographic displacement with them.

9 MS. McPHERSON: The first and most
10 significant reason is geographic displacement. I am
11 reading from page 74.

12 MR. POLLAK: Is there a question? I
13 believe Ms. Peterson addressed that issue.

14 MS. McPHERSON: There was a question.

15 MR. POLLAK: And I believe she addressed
16 the -- the question that the local homes are strongly from
17 Mehoopany.

18 MR. BURKE: So the question was: So how
19 does location of the charter school in Mehoopany adequately
20 address the geographic displacement of other students from
21 TASD preconsolidation from the Mill City and Evans Falls
22 communities?

23 MR. POLLAK: The charter school would offer
24 those families another option for the school district,
25 albeit one that is -- is not necessarily closer to the

1 charter school than -- than the school district.

2 MS. ARNOLD: Can -- can you rephrase -- can
3 you rephrase or restate that?

4 MR. POLLAK: The charter school would offer
5 another option to those families, albeit one that is not
6 closer -- that is not necessarily as close for those
7 families as the school district.

8 MR. AUDI: So geographic displacement does
9 not address Mill City and Evans Falls?

10 MR. POLLAK: The other -- the other issues
11 -- the other reasons identified in the application for
12 submission are certainly applicable as it relates to those
13 areas as indicated by the superintendant. The primary
14 purpose as it relates to the geographic displacement
15 relates most pointedly to Mehoopany.

16 MR. AUDI: And they will be -- and they
17 will be just as far in your -- in your second choice as
18 they would be currently?

19 MR. POLLAK: We also indicated in our
20 response that it be a temporary location and certainly not
21 our preference as a locational entity. It is -- it is our
22 preference to be located in Mehoopany.

23 MS. McPHERSON: So the second -- the
24 sentence that reads in the needs assessment directly
25 following that talks about the fact that -- that there is a

1 concern for children to spend an hour on the bus going to
2 school and an hour going on the bus home again. So the
3 option that you are offering children from Evans Falls and
4 Mill City are even longer bus rides. So in terms of -- I
5 just -- I just need in my -- in my mind, okay.

6 MR. POLLAK: Sure.

7 MS. McPHERSON: This is not about
8 innovation. This is not about being a laboratory of
9 innovation and best practices, which is what the law
10 requires. This is about location, location, location.

11 MR. POLLAK: You are absolutely incorrect,
12 ma'am.

13 MS. McPHERSON: Okay. That is my opinion.

14 MS. ARNOLD: When was the -- when was the
15 charter school --

16 MR. PREBOLA: I didn't hear the answer to
17 the question, I'm sorry.

18 MR. POLLAK: I don't think there was a
19 question, sir. She just indicated it was her opinion.

20 MR. AUDI: Her opinion -- I'll clarify it
21 for the record -- was that their primary interest was in
22 location. And Mr. -- Mr. Pollak said that he -- that she's
23 incorrect in her opinion. Was that a fair summary?

24 MR. POLLAK: She indicated -- she made a
25 statement. I took it as a statement -- as a factual

1 statement that she indicated it was her opinion. This
2 gentleman took it as a question. That's how I recount.

3 MS. MCPHERSON: What -- I guess what I'm
4 asking is: So there is the same concern of an hour-long
5 bus ride for any child coming from Evans Falls or Mill City
6 in order to access this charter school. Is that true?

7 MR. SCHUMM: Madam Superintendent, this
8 charter school is called Mehoopany Charter School. It is
9 our intent to locate this charter school in Mehoopany.
10 There is a concern for geographic displacement for the
11 community of Mehoopany. There was an agreement many years
12 ago to ensure that there was a school for kids grades K to
13 six in Mehoopany. There is no longer a school in Mehoopany
14 for kids grades K to six. We are looking to ensure that
15 there is one going forward.

16 MS. ARNOLD: Are you able to provide us
17 with any legal documentation of this agreement that you are
18 referencing?

19 MR. POLLAK: I believe that would be in the
20 hands of the school district.

21 MS. ARNOLD: We are not the ones saying
22 that there is an agreement so --

23 MR. POLLAK: Do you deny that there's an
24 agreement?

25 MS. ARNOLD: I have seen minutes from those

1 meetings. I have not seen any -- any agreements. Has
2 anybody else seen agreements?

3 MR. POLLAK: Did you see minutes from a
4 meeting saying that there's an agreement?

5 MS. ARNOLD: No, I did not.

6 MR. POLLAK: So which minutes are you
7 referring to then?

8 MS. ARNOLD: Minutes from 19 whatever it
9 was.

10 MR. POLLAK: Saying that there's an
11 agreement?

12 MS. ARNOLD: There's -- that there's not --
13 nothing. There's nothing about it. When the -- when the
14 schools all came together when there was supposedly this
15 agreement that I keep hearing referred to over and over
16 again because it showed up in a book by a very
17 well-respected, however, not a legal document, former
18 teacher that everybody keeps referencing this document of a
19 legal agreement, and I have yet to see anybody produce such
20 documents.

21 MR. POLLAK: So you are saying there are
22 minutes from a meeting in 1950 saying nothing about it?

23 MR. AUDI: We are asking you if you have
24 proof of a legal document that you referred to?

25 MR. POLLAK: I said it was -- it was -- it

1 would be in the hands -- I said it would be in the hands of
2 the school district.

3 MR. AUDI: Do you have it? Can you access
4 it?

5 MR. POLLAK: I said it would be in the
6 hands of --

7 MR. AUDI: Can you provide it for the
8 record?

9 MR. POLLAK: I would -- I would ask the
10 school district to do that.

11 MR. AUDI: We don't have it. We don't even
12 know what you are referencing. So if you have a reference
13 --

14 MR. POLLAK: I believe -- I believe at
15 least one member of the school board knows what I'm
16 referencing.

17 MS. ARNOLD: That is not true. There is
18 not anything. What I'm saying is, we reviewed -- well,
19 I'll say I reviewed some of the minutes from the time when
20 a lot of these schools were coming together in a joint
21 district, and there's no reference in any of them of any
22 document existing. So I'm asking what proof do you have of
23 a legal document because if I could see it, I would be
24 happy to have that discussion; but I don't feel that a
25 rumor is relevant to a legal proceeding.

1 MR. POLLAK: I didn't reference a teacher.
2 I didn't reference 1950. You did, ma'am.

3 MS. ARNOLD: You said that there was an
4 agreement.

5 MR. POLLAK: And then you referenced
6 minutes. You referenced 1950. You referenced --

7 MR. AUDI: This isn't an argument. Either
8 you have an agreement or you don't. If you don't have it,
9 that's fine, say so.

10 MR. POLLAK: I -- I would ask the school
11 district to --

12 MR. AUDI: Do you have the agreement that
13 you referenced?

14 MR. POLLAK: I -- I ask the school
15 district.

16 MR. AUDI: You have 2,000 pages of
17 documents for your charter school. Is it in one of these
18 2,000 pages?

19 MR. POLLAK: Absolutely not, no.

20 MR. AUDI: Okay. Thank you. Any further
21 questions from the board?

22 MR. WEIDNER: They referenced several other
23 charter schools they are getting these numbers from. Were
24 they in a rural district or are they in a fairly populated
25 area?

1 MR. POLLAK: I think there's been reference
2 to a number of different school districts. In response,
3 there was a number of different answers so if you could
4 specify --

5 MR. WEIDNER: The ones you made reference
6 to that where you were getting your numbers for your
7 budget, are they rural districts or are they more populated
8 like cities?

9 MR. POLLAK: I understand, sir, but as it
10 relates to nursing services, as it relates to technology, I
11 think generally speaking, you know, Jesse has vast
12 experience. Jesse worked in Downtown Philadelphia. I have
13 been counsel for dozens of charter schools throughout the
14 Commonwealth. Jesse and Ryan worked with dozens of charter
15 schools throughout the Commonwealth so we certainly have
16 experience with working with rural charter schools,
17 suburban charter schools, urban charter schools.

18 MR. AUDI: Is it fair to say that you are
19 resting on your documentation that you submitted with your
20 exhibits with your application?

21 MR. POLLAK: Yes, sir.

22 MR. AUDI: Thank you.

23 MR. FARR: So you have worked with suburban
24 and urban charter schools?

25 MR. POLLAK: And rural.

1 MR. FARR: Rural?

2 MR. POLLAK: Absolutely.

3 MR. FARR: Where? You don't remember them?

4 MR. POLLAK: I said, where do I begin, sir?

5 I mean, Evergreen Charter School, Hyndman Charter School.

6 I worked -- I have worked with 60 or 70 charter schools so

7 I can provide references.

8 MR. AUDI: Your application's complete. We

9 agreed that it's complete after November 30.

10 MR. FARR: Okay.

11 MR. PARRY: I have one -- just one last

12 question really quick. I am assuming that the foundation

13 and the board are all just donating their time free of --

14 like we do, right?

15 MR. POLLAK: Yes, sir.

16 MR. PARRY: Okay. But your three firms all

17 stand to fill the charter school's customers, correct?

18 MR. POLLAK: We are vendors.

19 MR. PARRY: Yes. I mean, there's nothing

20 wrong there, but I just wanted to make sure that you are

21 the three people that have a vested financial interest in

22 this?

23 MR. POLLAK: We have charter school

24 applicants first and foremost so I think those speak for

25 myself.

1 MR. PARRY: Okay. That was it.

2 MR. AUDI: All right. If there is no
3 further questions from the board, I think we are well past
4 time for public comment. So I would ask if there's public
5 comment, if you would please come up to the podium, state
6 your name, and you will have two minutes of opportunities
7 to speak. And I will be timing everyone.

8 (Laughter.)

9 MS. SICK: My name is Barbie Sick; S-I-C-K.
10 I really appreciate the information that you provided
11 tonight and the research that you have done, but I think
12 the thing that you failed to research is our school
13 district. Do you know that we are the premier robotics and
14 engineering school district in Northeastern Pennsylvania?

15 (Applause.)

16 MS. SICK: You cannot find a district
17 higher than us in engineering and robotics until you -- no
18 one comes close to us until you reach the Allentown area.
19 We have had a robotics program in this district since 1997.
20 I have been up with it since day one. We have reached
21 national and international awards. We have come in fourth
22 place -- the board knows this. We have come in fourth
23 place in the world in St. Louis in 2012, I think. I may
24 have my number off. In 2003, we won the national award.
25 The technology that you say you are going to offer doesn't

1 even come close to what the district has.

2 And I'm speaking to you not only as a mentor
3 of this program, I'm speaking to you as a parent of four
4 children who came through the school district kindergarten
5 through 12th grade, and I know what they received
6 education-wise in engineering and robotics all the way
7 through. My son is top level engineering, and I feel sorry
8 that he wasn't able to succeed with the program that he
9 succeeded in because my son was a scholarship student at
10 Northeastern University coming through this program. We
11 have students who have graduated at the top schools around
12 the country that went through our robotics program and
13 chose not to go through the robotics program, just at our
14 science and engineering program here at the school.

15 So I think of all the wonderful research you
16 did, you failed to look where you needed to look most, and
17 that's what this school district already offers. Thank
18 you.

19 (Applause.)

20 MR. AUDI: You have two seconds left.

21 (Laughter.)

22 MR. SHERWOOD: Don Sherwood;
23 S-H-E-R-W-O-O-D. And I want to thank these folks for their
24 passion. What we wanted when I was on the school board was
25 parents who were interested in what happened. Parental

1 involvement is the greatest thing to success in school, and
2 we obviously have this from this group application and --
3 but, Mr. Furman, I believe your vision far out seated your
4 professionals. Your -- your talk was inspiring. It
5 sounded to me like our new superintendant when she talked
6 about all the things that could be done today to improve
7 education. And I think we can do that, but I would think
8 we might better work together than work against each other.

9 And the issue of the geographic displacement
10 and the ride on the bus I think is really a red herring.
11 Bus routes can be designed when we don't have to be taking
12 all the kids to the outlying districts. I believe -- and
13 I'm not speaking for the board, but when you said that an
14 hour to two hours longer on the bus, I believe we could get
15 a pledge out of this board that no student would spend 20
16 minutes more on the bus than they are spending now. And
17 I'm not sure that all those students from Washington
18 Township would get here quicker, but once you -- the big
19 deal on buses -- and I used to spend a lot of time on
20 busing. The big deal on bus ing is all the times the --
21 the bus stops and picks up the kids, once the bus is loaded
22 and it's coming into the little borough of Mehoopany, it
23 only takes it ten minutes to get to Roslyn. It's not
24 another -- it's not another 40. Thank you.

25 (Applause.)

1 MR. DOMSTOCK: My name is Steve Domstock.
2 I'm in support of the charter school. One of the things
3 you brought up in the power point was to keep an
4 open-minded view of all this. Seems like there's a lot of
5 worst case scenarios coming up tonight. You got to think
6 about the best case scenario, too. That's all I ask.
7 (Applause.)

8 MS. HENNING: My name is Tina Henning. I'm
9 also from Mehoopany; H-E-N-N-I-N-G. And I agree with
10 Steve, what he said about an open mind. My kids grew up in
11 Mehoopany, and I'm very disappointed that when it came time
12 for the board's questions, 99% percent of them were based
13 on show me the line item, show me the line item. I'm very
14 disappointed that it was brought up bad instead of what is
15 the education changes? I understand that we have a great
16 robotics team. I actually worked with a gentleman that
17 helped with that so I know that we have a great robotics
18 team, but it does not start in the early ages.

19 If we can do that with our younger kids, and I
20 know. My grandson is fantastic with tearing things apart
21 and putting them together, and he would really be thrilled
22 to have this as an education class. Do we have more breaks
23 between classes? My grandson is one of the special
24 children, and he needs special attention, and he needs
25 those breaks in between classes and not having hours

1 between recess and lunch. And I know I'm misparaphrasing
2 but take it from me, kids cannot keep going and not have
3 breaks in between classes. And if this charter school
4 allowed them to do that, I think that's a big benefit.
5 Thank you.

6 (Applause.)

7 MR. AUDI: Any additional comments from
8 anyone in the audience?

9 MR. ANDRAS: Darryl Andras; A-N-D-R-A-S.
10 Recently reelected for the second term of council
11 supervisor of North Branch Township. I would ask my people
12 in the township and then we could go to see if he would
13 come and speak on behalf of president's North Branch. We,
14 the residential North Branch, do support the charter
15 school. That truly hasn't been the division. Of course,
16 we would like it to be closer to home, but we also respect
17 and appreciate you individuals for the checks and balance.
18 Thank you.

19 (Applause.)

20 MS. DeMARCO: I'm Ann DeMarco;
21 D-E-M-A-R-C-O. I am a parent of five. I have been coming
22 to school board meetings for 12 years so I know what this
23 process is like. I started coming when my child was going
24 to be in a kindergarten classroom so in that process, I
25 have seen so much change here. I have seen five new board

1 members in the last few years, a new superintendant who
2 listens and responds. I see changes just as I started
3 teaching three years ago and have been holding positive,
4 but I want to piggyback on what Barb said about what's
5 going on in the classroom.

6 Now I have been teaching here in the district
7 now for three years. In my classroom, I use a Promethean
8 board, I use -- I have five desktop computers my students
9 use, and I have a projector that I use for my computer.
10 Last year with my fourth grade, the students created an
11 election time, a brochure using power point to teach about
12 citizenship in the United States. They created these.
13 They took five aspects of citizenship that they thought
14 needed to be known. At the end of the year, they used the
15 technology to create a slideshow to teach about United
16 States. They used interactive learning. They used, like
17 Mr. Furman referred to, the many parts of their brain.

18 In my supervision to teach, I was observed two
19 weeks ago by my building administrator. I met with her
20 yesterday, and she encouraged me to use new techniques in
21 my classrooms. But again, we are encouraging students to
22 use many parts of their brain. So that innovation is
23 happening here in Tunkhannock. I have a senior in high
24 school who is looking to study engineering. He has taken
25 full advantage of all those opportunities and is looking

1 forward to a great career of his own.

2 Talking about the elementary level of
3 technology in our classrooms, in technology, they are using
4 code fillers, code robot, iPads, HP touch screen laptops.
5 They are celebrating 15 years of coding in kindergarten.
6 Thank you.

7 (Applause.)

8 I also wanted to highlight the fact that
9 Roslyn money last year, 98 percent of the students were
10 proficient or advanced on their science PSSAs. I think
11 that says something about the early education, and I didn't
12 even get to talk about the great breaks we provide to give
13 our kids those breaks. This is happening now in
14 Tunkhannock. Please come see it.

15 (Applause.)

16 MS. WARGO: Karen Wargo; W-A-R-G-O. I
17 support the Mehoopany Charter School. And if you read
18 through all of the things that the school would offer the
19 students, I read through everything, and I thought, wow, if
20 I had a kid, I would want my kid to go to this school. It
21 just sounds amazing, and I think with dedication, it will
22 be amazing. Thank you.

23 (Applause.)

24 MS. COSTELLO: C-O-S-T-E-L-L-O. My
25 children attend elementary school now. We love our school,

1 and we are sad to see it going. I have emotional ties to
2 it, but I also have geographic ties to it. We live very
3 close to the school and would really be disappointed to
4 have our children have to travel into town for that
5 purpose. So I support the Mehoopany Elementary --
6 Mehoopany Charter School and do intend to enroll my
7 students -- my children there.

8 I'm excited about the programs they intend to
9 offer. I have also read through the application, and I'm
10 inspired by the approach by the efforts to increase the
11 technology exposure for these young children, and I'm glad
12 it's happening in the other schools at this time. However,
13 Mehoopany will not have that opportunity unless they intend
14 to bus our students into town, and -- and the influence in
15 that environment is quite different than our little small
16 town school. Thank you.

17 (Applause.)

18 MR. AUDI: Any further comments? You
19 waited this long, you might as well take advantage of it.

20 MS. HENNING: Becky H-E-N-N-I-N-G. Again,
21 special needs. We keep talking about special needs. I
22 have a son who is not perfect. He does have a little bit
23 of a problem here and there. He is very technically
24 inclined. You can give him something, he will tear it
25 apart and put it back together and we're fine. But when

1 you are talking about special needs, you are also looking
2 at the extra special. How many kids are enrolled --
3 pre-enrolled, I should say, for the charter school that is
4 getting the extra work; that can have -- work better in the
5 smaller classes? We keep talking about special needs, but
6 what are they looking at? How many of them are actually
7 enrolled in both the Tunkhannock or the charter school? I
8 have already said that my kids will be going to the charter
9 school if it goes through.

10 (Applause.)

11 MR. AUDI: Thank you. Additional comments?

12 MS. THOMAS: Karen Thomas. I came here
13 open-minded. I wanted to learn about the charter school
14 and what it had to benefit our students, and I am so
15 impressed with our school board. I have never -- I have
16 seen what you all do, but today I really saw the work and
17 collaboration that you put together going over this
18 application because I feared for the students that are
19 going to go to a charter school that comes in front of a
20 board so unprepared, fills out an application so poorly and
21 has no one here to represent that understands the details.

22 And I -- I put a few thoughts together. You
23 keep -- you said that you have a lot of pre-enrollments,
24 but then you couldn't tell us how many students would be in
25 special education. That was your exact response. Speaking

1 to special education, the comment was made that we do not
2 know the numbers since we don't know who will apply here.
3 Well, what is the pre-enrollment? Don't you reflect that
4 information?

5 I want to know who is the "we" that you keep
6 referring to? It seems there has been significant failure
7 in this -- in this group, if one even exists. There has
8 been a failure in understanding, by the way, the reps here
9 today to understand the information in the application and
10 a failure by this supposed group of the funds needed for
11 the costs running the school. It just seems like you are
12 so unprepared in knowing how the teachers there can take
13 care of the children. It seems there's going to be lot of
14 volatility and the amount of teachers that -- maybe
15 volatility is not the right word, but --

16 (Time expired.)

17 MS. THOMAS: Sorry, I'll quickly wrap up.
18 If you are keeping -- you are paying teachers 50,000
19 dollars a year or less and you are only insuring the
20 teacher and not their family, I think you are only going to
21 get the bottom level teachers that are in the market to be
22 hired. And as soon as they have an opportunity to leave,
23 they are going to leave and all these poor children are
24 going to be stranded needing another teacher, another
25 probably poor quality teacher.

1 And let's go back to the food cost. I think
2 you calculated that the cost would be \$1.50 a day to feed a
3 child. I'm afraid to feed my daughter school food now.
4 She's only allowed to get one meal a week from the school
5 if she wants to. What are you going to feed a child for
6 \$1.50? So that's just a few thoughts. I'm sorry I have
7 been so poetic about this, but I just wanted to make sure
8 they are heard.

9 (Applause.)

10 MR. AUDI: Thank you.

11 MR. BONNICE: Levi Bonnie; B-O-N-N-I-C-E.
12 I would like to first thank the board for all of the work
13 that they have done. I think you guys are working together
14 great. It's nice to see you guys care so much about what's
15 happening. Secondly, I would like to say what Mr. Sherwood
16 said was exactly correct. I think what we need to do here
17 is work together instead of working apart. We really
18 needed to see what you guys are doing in the school. And I
19 think if everyone would get together on that, we could do a
20 lot better than trying to do it two separate places.

21 (Applause.)

22 MS. BONNICE: Alyssa Bonnie;
23 B-O-N-N-I-C-E. Once again, I came with the intention of
24 not speaking tonight, but I have been inspired, and I can't
25 help but to sit here frustrated after seeing all of the

1 work that you have all put into this and thinking that it
2 could have been put into spending time and efforts on the
3 consolidation process for all the children rather than just
4 one small geographic school district.

5 (Applause.)

6 MR. AUDI: Any further comments?

7 MR. BURKE: So I think it's important to
8 note as we think about where our school is going with the
9 charter school, that the public realizes that this funding
10 comes from Tunkhannock. So if the charter school is opened
11 and they hit the current forecasted numbers of the two to
12 four million dollars of revenue over the next five years,
13 four million dollars of revenue is approximately 10 percent
14 of the Tunkhannock area's total operating budget. We are
15 working diligently at consolidation to try to save money so
16 we can reinvest that in our kids's education.

17 It's very important to realize that if that
18 funding is lost, there is less available for our children,
19 and that includes everybody in Mehoopany. The kids in
20 Mehoopany have to reintegrate in the eighth grade at the
21 end of this process with the Tunkhannock Area School
22 District, and it's the board's job to make sure that we
23 have those resources and programs available for all kids,
24 including those from the Mehoopany region. So we need to
25 make sure that -- that the charter school is sustainable,

1 which is why I personally asked so many questions around
2 the budget. It wasn't to nitpick the charter. We want to
3 make sure that if the charter school is opened, that it
4 would remain open with a 10,000-dollar fund reserve at the
5 end.

6 I hope you have seen multiple examples of
7 things that could go wrong that would have this charter
8 school literally running out of money. And so I think it's
9 again very important to realize that this funding comes
10 from Tunkhannock and would take away funding from current
11 programs at the district.

12 Good point. So the other thing to note, too,
13 is that charter schools are not responsible for the
14 transportation costs of students and so Tunkhannock and/or
15 neighboring districts the children would come from are
16 responsible for that. And you have already heard that the
17 benefit structure is definitely very different and so
18 there's no Peters costs and health care costs are very
19 different. So I did want to clarify that because we have
20 been asking questions around where this money comes from.
21 It doesn't come from outside of the district, it comes from
22 the district.

23 MR. AUDI: Before -- I know you reserve an
24 opportunity for closing and we will certainly provide that,
25 but before you close, I think we should tell you that the

1 administration has requested an opportunity to have an
2 additional hearing and presentation on what the school has
3 to offer in response to the petition, and we would be doing
4 that on January 24 commencing right after the board meeting
5 at 8:00 in the evening. So that would be the second and
6 likely --

7 MS. McPHERSON: 25th. The 25th.

8 MR. AUDI: The 25th. I'm sorry. I put in
9 the wrong date. The 25th of January at 8:00, so the record
10 will reflect that. Certainly, I know Attorney Pollak has
11 requested an opportunity to do a closing. I'll give you
12 the opportunity to do it now or if you would like to do it
13 at the conclusion of the second day hearing, that's your
14 call.

15 MR. POLLAK: Thank you, sir. And I will
16 withhold my closing until the second hearing because of
17 this late hour, although I would like to reserve a few
18 minutes now for Mr. Schumm to address those comments
19 relating to funding of the charter school and to clear up
20 some misperceptions relating to funding that frankly have
21 -- we have -- we have heard that these -- these comments
22 relating to funding charter schools, how charter schools
23 are funded, moneys from the school districts to charter
24 schools, transportation issues and the like since 1997 when
25 the Charter School Law was enacted. I think it's important

1 for Mr. Schumm to address those issues before we close this
2 evening.

3 MR. AUDI: I will give him a brief
4 opportunity. Go ahead.

5 MR. SCHUMM: Okay. Now I will talk fast to
6 get this in, and I do appreciate the lateness of the hour.
7 And I think it is important that -- to clear up some of the
8 misperceptions about charter school funding. Clearly, it's
9 a hot topic. It's personal because of many reasons,
10 children and property taxes being two at the top of the
11 list.

12 I think it's important to recognize that
13 districts do not lose per people revenue in a material way
14 when students choose to attend a charter school. The state
15 revenue per people were still given to the school district
16 and the parents who own property and attend the charter --
17 whose children attend the charter school still pay their
18 property taxes, and the school district still collects
19 those taxes.

20 So with revenue not being materially affected,
21 what the district does realize is the impact of the
22 expenses. It is the expense of charter school tuition.
23 And there we see an actual discount compared to the cost of
24 educating a student in the district. A number that's been
25 referenced earlier was operational costs, which amounts

1 many, many, many costs included in the charter school's
2 operation for running an entire school.

3 Most recently available data from the
4 Department of Education from 2015-2016 school year,
5 Tunkhannock Area School District adds 2,511 students and a
6 total average expenditure of 19,409 dollars per student.
7 The charter school's tuition rates for that year would have
8 been less than 17,000 dollars or almost 2,500 dollars less
9 than the per person cost in the district. The question
10 then is can a district reduce operating costs that includes
11 the 125 students? If it can't, I suggest you have a
12 problem that's much larger than a charter school that
13 represents five percent of the total.

14 And regarding the transportation issue, it's
15 important to note the district does provide transportation
16 for its students who live within a certain radius of the
17 charter school be 100 percent of the students in this
18 school district, and those costs are deducted from
19 calculation for charter school revenue, so there is a
20 discount given to districts that factor in the costs for
21 doing that, and that cost I expect would actually be less
22 than docking them, which you would do anyway, to locations
23 further away. Thank you.

24 (Applause.)

25 MR. AUDI: I think that rather than do a

1 response tonight on that, we will make that part of our
2 presentation for the next meeting. Certainly, we can
3 address that, and we will.

4 So I think this concludes tonight's
5 presentation. I thank Mehoopany Charter School
6 participants for coming and enlightening us with the
7 application process and their intentions, and I think we
8 all thank you, but I'm not speaking for the board. We
9 thank the community. We think it's tremendous to have you
10 here and show the interest that you have shown, and we are
11 extremely appreciative of that and we would ask that you
12 come back and finish the process with us on January 25 at
13 8:00. I don't know if the superintendant has anything
14 further to add or if Attorney Pollak has anything to add.

15 MR. POLLAK: I do not. Thank you everyone
16 for your time.

17 MR. AUDI: Thank you all.

18 * * * * *

19 (Whereupon, the meeting concluded at
20 10:37 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the proceedings and evidence are contained fully and accurately in the notes of testimony taken by me in the proceedings of the above cause, and that this is a true and correct transcript thereof.

DATE: 1/3/18

Ken A. Regan
Court Reporter

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1	15,000 39:12	22 4:19 15:10	7 6:18,19
1,000 60:7	16 27:22 47:20 52:23 65:1,7	2300 35:7	70 79:6
1.2 29:24	160,000 28:25	2300-390 66:12	74 71:11
1.50 35:24 90:2,6	1600 23:21	24 93:4	75 6:24
1/3/18 97:9	17 27:22,24	2400-330 42:22 43:3	75,000 54:22
10 8:17,21 28:24 29:4 30:18 40:22 42:1,12,15 56:5 65:21 91:13	17,000 95:8	25 30:8 68:6 96:12	8
10,000 27:7 28:21 28:21 29:10 30:15 30:16 32:3 54:22 62:14 64:6 92:4	177 42:18	2500-330 41:18	8 11:24
10,700 28:5	18 7:13,21 27:24 27:24 68:6	25th 93:7,7,8,9	85,000 58:17
100 2:4 26:23 28:2 28:6 30:7 95:17	18106 1:25	26 36:6	87 24:20
100,000 47:22 48:4 48:5,12 51:3	186 35:23 43:15,15 44:24 45:23	28,000 43:15	8:00 10:16 93:5,9 96:13
101 24:9	19 27:24 53:12 75:8	3	8:17 1:19
106 24:12	19,409 95:6	30 8:9 43:3 45:12 79:9	9
10:37 96:20	19341 2:4	329 59:18	91 24:13
11,000 60:13	1950 75:22 77:2,6	35,000 35:8,14,17 43:2,4,7,10,19,21	941 62:6
1100-329 53:17	1997 4:19 80:19 93:24	350 2:3	98 86:9
1100-390 53:17	2	390 35:7 59:22	99 83:12
1100-750 53:19	2,000 11:6 77:16 77:18	3d 57:1	a
12 18:14 26:21 32:9,10 55:12 84:22	2,000,000 62:14	4	ability 15:7 23:13 23:17 65:12,14
12,000 60:3	2,500 95:8	40 26:18,20 82:24	able 19:6 22:21,22 25:10 38:19 40:13 44:21 49:4 62:12 66:22 74:16 81:8
120 35:22	2,511 95:5	42 46:12,14	absolutely 73:11 77:19 79:2
1200-329 47:14,22	20 40:22 49:21 50:12,19 51:10,24 65:24 68:7 82:15	45 6:17,19,21	abstract 19:12
125 24:18 43:25 54:22 68:5 95:11	200 1:24	4949 1:24	academic 5:5 36:19,22
125,000 53:24 54:10 58:16	2003 80:24	5	academically 21:17
12th 81:5	2012 80:23	5 1:18	accept 8:9
130 24:10	2015 12:12	50 15:5 18:15	acceptance 52:19
	2015-2016 95:4	50,000 89:18	access 15:7 49:7 74:6 76:3
	2016-2017 60:24	500 45:13	accommodate 47:11
	2019-2020 36:12	6	
	20th 7:2	60 7:22 8:11 79:6	
		610-524-8454 2:5	

accommodating 12:16 accomplish 16:19 accountability 5:6 accountable 5:5 accountants 16:17 accounted 47:6 accounting 41:21 accumulation 16:23 accurately 97:4 acknowledge 64:12 acknowledges 23:4 59:4 60:18 acknowledging 18:9 act 4:18 active 68:16 actively 15:8 activities 20:16 54:5 activity 21:16 37:3 actual 31:21,22 55:12 68:2 94:23 adapt 22:23 add 18:14 58:12 65:4 96:14,14 adding 39:2 addition 67:3,10 additional 15:10 17:1 18:15,19 28:8 43:13 48:23 51:2 58:17 60:1 65:9 84:7 88:11 93:2 address 23:6 40:6 54:13 70:18 71:20 72:9 93:18 94:1 96:3	addressed 71:13 71:15 addressing 26:9 71:8 adds 95:5 adequate 31:25 32:13 33:11 36:1 50:25 54:5 55:7 56:4 58:18 59:6 65:6 adequately 71:19 adjust 31:1 adjustments 61:24 62:1 administration 11:5 37:20 61:22 93:1 administrator 40:20 49:16 85:19 admitted 26:3 adopted 14:15 adult 13:4 adults 7:20 advanced 21:20 86:10 advantage 85:25 87:19 advised 39:25 afraid 90:3 afternoon 61:13 age 7:13,21 19:19 21:19 47:8 agencies 24:22 ages 83:18 aggressive 50:20 ago 74:12 85:3,19 agree 31:11 42:14 55:20 65:13 83:9 agreed 3:14 79:9 agreement 74:11 74:17,22,24 75:4	75:11,15,19 77:4,8 77:12 agreements 75:1,2 ahead 11:17 24:2 94:4 aid 45:19 aircraft 25:11 albeit 71:25 72:5 alexander 12:10 algebra 12:18 aligned 14:20 18:2 allentown 1:25 80:18 allocate 43:9 allocated 42:21 50:23 allocation 48:5 allow 61:23 70:2 allowed 6:20 10:20 84:4 90:4 allowing 12:14 allows 6:21,22,23 alternate 13:15 alternative 69:21 alyssa 90:22 amazing 86:21,22 amount 18:12 24:5 27:13 28:23 29:20 32:19 35:18 35:20 41:16 42:23 43:4,24 44:17,22 48:8 66:17 89:14 amounts 32:12 33:9 94:25 analogies 25:9 andras 84:9,9 anesthetically 21:20 ann 84:20 annie 2:10 14:3	announcements 68:19 annual 39:11 answer 20:7,11 42:12 50:9 51:21 55:25 65:5 67:8 73:16 answering 51:22 answers 78:3 anticipate 41:4 67:12 anybody 10:21 12:3 67:15 75:2 75:19 anyway 29:7 95:22 apart 19:21 83:20 87:25 90:17 appeal 7:9,10,11 appeals 8:8,14,19 8:22 appear 12:19 26:13 27:22 59:12 appearance 17:22 appearing 16:7 appears 28:1 32:2 appellate 8:24 apperances 2:1 applause 13:18 80:15 81:19 82:25 83:7 84:6,19 86:7 86:15,23 87:17 88:10 90:9,21 91:5 95:24 apple 57:10 applicable 72:12 applicant 5:16 26:22 applicants 79:24 application 3:14 3:16 4:10,12 5:8
---	---	---	---

<p>5:20 6:4,14 7:5,7 7:17 8:17 11:6,8 11:24 24:9 25:17 25:22 26:2,10 28:4 33:11 36:6 37:19 39:17 41:25 42:18 44:8 49:25 53:11 54:6,15 55:8 56:12,23 69:8 71:2 72:11 78:20 82:2 87:9 88:18,20 89:9 96:7</p> <p>application's 31:25 79:8</p> <p>applications 14:11 50:18 68:19</p> <p>applies 48:13</p> <p>apply 49:2 89:2</p> <p>applying 68:2</p> <p>appreciate 13:9,10 68:23 80:10 84:17 94:6</p> <p>appreciative 96:11</p> <p>approach 14:14 16:6,21 17:11,17 23:4 39:22 87:10</p> <p>approaches 23:3</p> <p>appropriate 11:5 48:24 52:8 56:5</p> <p>approval 8:20</p> <p>approvals 49:11</p> <p>approved 24:3</p> <p>approximately 18:14 32:3 91:13</p> <p>april 7:23</p> <p>architects 16:17</p> <p>area 1:1 3:2,15 7:16 9:14 12:12 15:2,5,20,21 16:2 16:3,8 24:5 25:4</p>	<p>64:17 70:1 71:6 77:25 80:18 91:21 95:5</p> <p>area's 91:14</p> <p>areas 14:19 24:16 72:13</p> <p>argument 77:7</p> <p>argumentative 50:4</p> <p>arnold 1:12 10:7 28:15 29:3,15 34:12 35:3 41:13 43:16 44:13,24 45:6,22 46:4,19 49:8,19 50:8,11 51:2 53:2 65:25 66:25 67:10,15,24 70:5 72:2 73:14 74:16,21,25 75:5,8 75:12 76:17 77:3</p> <p>arrangement 23:21</p> <p>arrived 60:11</p> <p>art 17:20 36:6 39:8 40:14</p> <p>arts 37:4,16</p> <p>asked 3:12 10:19 11:11 41:25 42:6 51:23 57:8 60:8 92:1</p> <p>asking 24:7 38:14 42:12 57:12 74:4 75:23 76:22 92:20</p> <p>aspects 85:13</p> <p>assessment 17:11 71:3 72:24</p> <p>assistance 49:3</p> <p>assistants 31:8 33:19 34:15,21</p> <p>associated 54:9 57:7</p>	<p>assume 42:15 48:20 62:19</p> <p>assumed 50:25 52:16,25 54:3</p> <p>assumes 42:1,23 52:23 53:15 60:22 61:4</p> <p>assuming 25:21 54:18,21 79:12</p> <p>assumption 26:22 27:19 28:12 40:24 41:19,19 45:24 61:9</p> <p>assumptions 30:24 32:5,18,23 47:19 47:19 52:12 55:1 55:11,23 62:21 65:1 66:16</p> <p>atlantic 1:23</p> <p>attached 21:22</p> <p>attempts 18:25</p> <p>attend 47:18 86:25 94:14,16,17</p> <p>attended 11:25</p> <p>attention 9:5 21:23 83:24</p> <p>attorney 10:14,14 93:10 96:14</p> <p>attorneys 16:18</p> <p>attract 21:22 41:4 41:7</p> <p>attracted 41:3</p> <p>atypical 11:24</p> <p>audi 1:5 9:18,25 10:3,10 11:3,9 12:2,8 13:19 25:18,20 26:5 30:12,14 32:15 33:1,6,13,16 34:19 50:6,9 52:18 58:22 59:2,11,15</p>	<p>64:15 65:11 70:12 72:8,16 73:20 75:23 76:3,7,11 77:7,12,16,20 78:18,22 79:8 80:2 81:20 84:7 87:18 88:11 90:10 91:6 92:23 93:8 94:3 95:25 96:17</p> <p>audience 11:4 84:8</p> <p>august 63:23</p> <p>authorizations 49:12</p> <p>authorizing 41:2</p> <p>autism 51:25</p> <p>autistic 51:12,12</p> <p>available 5:3 27:20 32:22 45:20 56:16 59:11 60:25 65:9 68:10 91:18 91:23 95:3</p> <p>average 28:9 32:19 41:1 68:7 95:6</p> <p>award 80:24</p> <p>awards 80:21</p> <p>aware 20:20 24:17 33:1,3,4,6 49:6</p>
b			
<p>b 37:1 90:11,23</p> <p>back 14:15 15:4 25:6 41:24 42:5 56:14 66:5 87:25 90:1 96:12</p> <p>background 3:4 51:14</p> <p>backup 70:2</p> <p>bad 12:15 83:14</p> <p>balance 27:8 28:4 28:22 35:12 60:7</p>			

<p>84:17 balancing 13:3 bank 64:1 65:17 barb 85:4 barbie 80:9 base 21:25 52:18 based 14:20 16:6 17:8,10 18:2,7 20:10 22:4 23:2,3 27:3,9,13 28:12,17 32:20 37:3 52:19 55:12 56:5 58:15 61:9 68:17,25 83:12 basic 5:11 37:4 basically 4:7,20 6:3 8:2 basis 27:1 42:23 43:24 44:23 48:3 53:16 70:3 battles 15:25 bean 2:9 14:6 36:25,25 37:24 38:9,11,18,25 39:5 39:19 40:18 45:9 45:9 56:12 57:15 57:18,24 58:2,10 58:20 68:4 69:13 69:25 70:10 beck 5:15 becky 87:20 becoming 13:4 14:22 bed 10:18 beginning 18:3,5 21:6 29:10 67:7 begins 66:21 behalf 2:2 5:14 84:13 believe 10:8 31:5 32:23 33:9 35:25</p>	<p>42:1,5 43:23 44:6 44:7 50:22 52:5 52:15,23 54:4,7,11 55:6 56:3 58:16 59:6 63:24 64:25 65:5 69:3 71:13 71:15 74:19 76:14 76:14 82:3,12,14 benefit 22:20 33:1 40:5 41:24,25 42:2,6 84:4 88:14 92:17 benefits 28:19 31:4,7,8,16,21,25 33:20,23 34:15,20 39:16 40:11,16 42:11 bennett 1:8 47:2 48:4,25 49:2 best 73:9 83:6 better 13:14 15:19 21:17 22:25 39:16 40:15,16 82:8 88:4 90:20 big 82:18,20 84:4 bill 1:6,15 49:3 63:22 67:5 binder 25:23 bit 3:8,14 29:22 44:14 62:25 65:4 87:22 board 2:9,10,10 2:11 3:15 4:11,13 6:1,15 7:6,7,10 8:8,14,14,15,19,22 11:5,9 13:25 14:1 14:3,5 23:25 24:23 26:6,7 31:18 36:7 37:9 37:20 41:20 42:24 57:14 70:16 76:15</p>	<p>77:21 79:13 80:3 80:22 81:24 82:13 82:15 84:22,25 85:8 88:15,20 90:12 93:4 96:8 board's 83:12 91:22 boards 57:2 bonnice 90:11,11 90:22,22 book 56:19 75:16 books 17:9 54:8 56:17,19 57:5,8,10 boost 21:16 bordered 22:17 born 19:23 borough 82:22 bottom 89:21 boulevard 2:3 box 9:9 brain 21:18,22,22 21:23 22:1,3,4 85:17,22 branch 15:3 24:23 84:11,13,14 brand 28:9 60:18 65:20 break 53:24 breaking 23:8 breaks 18:7 83:22 83:25 84:3 86:12 86:13 brief 94:3 briefly 3:3 bright 13:16 bring 43:21 49:22 50:13 bringing 11:20 16:9 brings 39:10</p>	<p>broader 17:16 brochure 85:11 brought 83:3,14 budget 26:13,23 26:25 27:6 28:2,7 28:20 29:21,24 30:14,16,24 31:24 31:25 32:18,23 34:14,16,16,20,24 35:25 36:8,10 37:8,19 39:2 41:16,18 42:11,15 42:20,21,23 43:9 47:5,10,19 48:20 49:20 50:11,23 52:5,12,15,17,22 52:24 53:13,14,15 54:13 55:11 56:4 58:18 59:4 60:17 60:22 61:3,9,19 62:14,22 64:4,25 66:1,7,10 78:7 91:14 92:2 budgeted 33:10 35:21 budgeting 13:3 budgets 26:21,22 32:10 build 16:4 18:11 21:6,11 23:6 39:25 building 15:12 18:11 19:20 20:1 23:5 24:1,3 30:1 85:19 buildings 23:24 63:8 70:9 built 26:25 27:19 36:10 59:6 burke 1:9 26:7 27:3 28:1 29:19</p>
---	---	---	---

<p>30:13 31:3,12 32:2 34:22 36:5 37:11 39:10 40:4 42:5,17 43:2,6 47:21 48:7 53:10 53:20 54:7,16 55:4 59:24 60:6 66:9,13,19 69:7,20 70:16,22 71:18 91:7 bus 15:14 73:1,2,4 74:5 82:10,11,14 82:16,20,21,21 87:14 buses 63:11 82:19 business 26:19 49:18 61:23 busing 82:20 buy 54:7</p>	<p>career 20:15 86:1 careers 20:22,22 carefully 22:3 cares 10:4 carrier 25:11 cars 63:11 cart 57:20,23,25 58:2,2,6,6,7,8,8,9 67:17,18 68:5,7 case 6:5,11 30:25 31:18 33:17,21 34:1 41:11 83:5,6 caseload 52:4 cause 97:6 celebrating 86:5 cells 21:18 center 16:6 century 17:18,25 18:21 20:9,18 21:3,4 22:22 ceo 30:5 45:10 certain 18:12 29:20 44:17 95:16 certainly 11:1,11 16:3 25:20 27:17 28:8 32:20 37:18 39:19 42:14 60:20 70:1 72:12,20 78:15 92:24 93:10 96:2 certification 38:17 certifications 39:7 39:14 40:14 certified 38:7,13 38:19 40:2 45:19 60:25 certify 97:3 cetera 16:18 17:3 18:24 31:22 50:1 50:16</p>	<p>challenge 9:12 13:13 39:20,20 40:2 41:10 challenges 22:13 41:11 49:23 50:14 challenging 40:4,9 64:13 chance 4:7,8 13:8 37:22 change 3:15 23:11 33:17,21 84:25 changed 3:7 33:25 34:4 47:7 changes 17:9 25:13 83:15 85:2 changing 14:17 17:3 22:23 character 14:22 characterize 37:3 charge 5:24 50:16 charter 1:2 2:2,8,9 3:8,11,17,21,25 4:7,17,18,20 5:5,8 5:9,13,16,16 7:6,9 7:10 8:7,13,18,19 8:20,22,22,23 9:14 9:19,22 10:15 11:1,4,7,24 12:22 13:2,7,13,21 14:1 14:5,6,10,14,16,24 16:1,20,24 17:14 17:19 26:17,18,21 27:12,15,16 31:6 31:16,18,19 32:1 32:11,13,24 33:12 33:15,22 37:1,20 40:8,24 41:2,4,15 41:15,20,20,21 42:24 44:21 45:8 45:9,11 48:14,16 49:14,17,17 52:14</p>	<p>53:9 54:24 55:13 55:15,17,23,23 56:6 58:15 59:9 60:10,15,19,25 61:7,10,14,15,23 62:8 63:22 64:1 65:8,13,21 67:5 68:11,21 69:17,23 70:18,25 71:19,23 72:1,4 73:15 74:6 74:8,8,9 77:17,23 78:13,14,16,17,17 78:24 79:5,5,6,17 79:23 83:2 84:3 84:14 86:17 87:6 88:3,7,8,13,19 91:9,10,25 92:2,3 92:7,13 93:19,22 93:22,23,25 94:8 94:14,16,17,22 95:1,7,12,17,19 96:5 chartered 36:15 checkbook 13:3 checked 57:4 checks 84:17 chief 49:16 child 52:3 58:4 74:5 84:23 90:3,5 children 15:21 16:7 18:10 19:12 19:18,18,19,23,23 24:10,12 25:5 51:12,13 73:1,3 81:4 83:24 86:25 87:4,7,11 89:13,23 91:3,18 92:15 94:10,17 choice 69:10 72:17 choices 2:8,9 5:3 14:5 17:22 26:17</p>
c			
<p>c 26:16 80:9 84:21 86:24 90:11,23 97:1,1 calculated 90:2 calculation 95:19 calendar 63:21 call 64:11 93:14 called 74:8 capability 19:1 capacities 39:23 capital 60:14 63:3 63:6,25 65:16 66:24 capped 35:18 capture 32:24 52:6 55:7,24 65:6 captured 35:6 captures 28:8 52:24 care 31:21 89:13 90:14 92:18</p>			

<p>37:1 41:15,21 45:10 choose 53:1 94:14 chooses 52:22 53:5 chose 81:13 chrome 17:9 54:8 56:17,19 57:5,8,10 circuitry 57:2 circular 5:12 circumstance 22:21 circumstances 41:10 cited 34:1 cities 16:10 78:8 citizenship 85:12 85:13 city 70:20 71:21 72:9 73:4 74:5 clarifies 31:20 clarify 34:3 44:5 73:20 92:19 class 12:12,18 28:3 30:8 83:22 classes 68:6 83:23 83:25 84:3 88:5 classroom 17:9 20:1,8,15 22:2 38:21,21 56:8,20 57:9 58:6,7,8 84:24 85:5,7 classrooms 21:15 56:10 57:11 85:21 86:3 clear 93:19 94:7 clearly 29:22 40:11 94:8 clients 26:20 39:25 climate 22:10 close 64:11 72:6 80:18 81:1 87:3</p>	<p>92:25 94:1 closer 70:8 71:25 72:6 84:16 closing 4:1 25:19 92:24 93:11,16 cloud 17:8 coast 40:21 code 18:5,5 86:4,4 codeable 57:5 coding 17:2 21:7 21:12 56:22 68:20 86:5 cognition 21:18 collaborate 20:13 20:17 collaboration 17:10 23:3 88:17 collaborative 23:10 colleague 37:8 collects 94:18 college 17:24 come 10:5 16:12 26:24 35:2 51:3 55:4,9 60:14 63:4 63:7,12,18,25 64:18 66:11,25 70:8 80:5,21,22 81:1 84:13 86:14 92:15,21 96:12 comes 7:15 46:23 80:18 88:19 91:10 92:9,20,21 coming 5:7 10:17 26:15 43:13 44:16 58:23 71:7 74:5 76:20 81:10 82:22 83:5 84:21,23 96:6 comitted 53:6</p>	<p>commencing 93:4 comment 3:23 6:22 10:2,4,5 11:2 11:14,15 70:15 80:4,5 89:1 comments 3:13,24 4:16 9:7,8,20 10:13,23,24 11:17 11:21 12:1,4 13:19,20 84:7 87:18 88:11 91:6 93:18,21 commission 27:15 commissioners 24:22 committing 53:4 common 6:8 7:25 commonwealth 1:20 4:21 5:9 8:25 55:14,16 78:14,15 communicate 20:14,17 64:21 communication 18:18,20 communities 7:21 15:24 16:8 70:20 71:22 community 3:18 3:23 4:14 5:19,23 6:7,22 10:12 15:12 18:11 23:4 23:5,17,18 24:5 71:6 74:11 96:9 comp 43:12 companies 16:14 company 23:23 comparable 40:25 comparables 43:18 compare 27:21</p>	<p>compared 69:11 94:23 competing 39:15 competition 39:21 complete 24:9 79:8,9 completing 49:9 comprehensive 37:6 computer 14:19 18:5 54:8 64:20 85:9 computers 85:8 concepts 18:2 19:12 21:21 concern 29:8 73:1 74:4,10 concerned 19:1 concerns 40:6 concluded 96:19 concludes 96:4 conclusion 13:9 25:3 93:13 concrete 22:1 confident 30:23 31:24 32:12 conflict 23:11 connections 63:10 consider 13:15 48:23 consolidation 9:2 62:23 91:3,15 consult 33:25 consultant 14:6 consultants 14:6 contact 37:15 contain 47:17 contained 54:14 97:4 content 37:23 38:8 38:16,20</p>
--	---	---	---

<p>contention 58:13 contingency 48:21 64:16,23 contingent 23:20 continuing 42:17 contract 33:2 45:15 contracted 42:23 43:7,10,20,24 44:1 44:23 45:16 47:13 47:15 48:1,3 50:24 53:16 54:12 54:20 55:2 59:16 contractors 49:18 contribute 23:18 42:15 contributing 14:22 59:2 contribution 31:22 control 6:6,9,10 22:18 conversation 37:5 convert 42:24 coordinated 49:16 coordinating 49:10 core 37:2 38:20 correct 9:24 34:10 34:13 38:9 42:3 42:13 43:2 57:24 59:1,13 66:21 79:17 90:16 97:6 correctly 65:6 correlated 28:14 35:5 correlation 29:17 cost 45:12 64:18 90:1,2 94:23 95:9 95:21</p>	<p>costello 2:11 14:4 86:24 costs 28:8,9 30:1 42:25 43:13 48:8 48:11 55:14 57:7 62:24 63:9,9 89:11 92:14,18,18 94:25 95:1,10,18 95:20 council 84:10 counsel 12:7 14:7 78:13 counselor 47:23 51:4 counter 63:9 counties 26:12 country 20:25 81:12 county 7:19 16:12 24:22 couple 70:4 course 53:6 84:15 court 6:8 7:25 8:25 97:12 cover 32:19 36:21 58:18 coverage 33:7,13 covering 32:16 54:22 crafted 26:21 create 5:1 21:21 85:15 created 4:20 85:10 85:12 creating 68:18 creative 19:5 creatively 68:21 creators 68:16 credentialed 38:13 credit 13:3 16:23 64:1,2,3 65:16,20</p>	<p>66:2,5,6,14 criteria 5:8,10 45:7 critical 14:18 18:20 20:13,18 21:2 23:16 critically 20:14 cultural 36:6 cumbersome 49:6 50:3 curious 41:13 current 16:11 20:2 27:14,23 31:2 42:10 91:11 92:10 currently 12:13 66:10 70:17 72:18 curriculum 14:20 37:7 56:22 66:8 customers 79:17 cyber 15:15,15 24:14</p>	<p>43:15 44:24 45:23 deal 22:12 51:24 82:19,20 december 6:18,19 decide 8:15 42:24 decision 7:10 8:10 8:13,14,15,19 decisions 21:2 dedicated 13:10 dedication 86:21 deducted 95:18 deductibles 31:22 deeper 31:3 deficiencies 13:12 defined 18:23 37:18 definitely 12:23 92:17 definition 55:22 degree 12:22 51:16 delivery 17:7 demands 16:12 demarco 84:20,20 demonstrate 5:16 denied 7:5 dental 31:13,13 deny 74:23 department 63:23 95:4 depending 40:5 depths 21:5 described 54:5 55:8 describes 69:9 design 16:22 17:10 19:10 20:3 68:19 designed 19:5,6 82:11 designing 18:24</p>
		d	
		<p>d 81:23 84:9,21 daily 18:6 45:14 49:24 50:14 darryl 84:9 data 32:11 95:3 date 24:8 93:9 97:9 daughter 90:3 davis 2:2 day 10:18 15:8 18:8,16 35:24 44:7 45:14,14,18 45:23,25 46:1,3,5 46:22,23 47:9 58:14 63:19 66:24 80:20 90:2 93:13 days 6:17,19,21,24 7:22 8:9,11,17,21 18:15 35:23,24</p>	

desire 12:7 16:13 70:1 desktop 85:8 detail 31:5 32:8 36:12 56:13,25 details 32:9,11 33:4,5 88:21 determined 51:8 developing 14:21 17:20 18:18 23:16 device 58:3 devices 17:7 56:10 57:13 68:9 dexterity 38:20 different 4:25 7:8 22:16 25:1,7 27:1 54:9 78:2,3 87:15 92:17,19 differential 41:1 differentiator 68:12 69:14 difficult 60:19 digital 17:12 diligently 91:15 directed 38:4 directing 70:6 direction 17:14 37:10 directly 72:24 disappointed 83:11,14 87:3 discipline 18:9,12 23:1,4 discount 94:23 95:20 discover 18:25 discriminated 23:15 discussion 42:9 76:24	displacement 69:24 70:6,19,24 71:8,10,20 72:8,14 74:10 82:9 disposition 41:8 53:12 distance 15:11 distinguishing 19:8 district 1:1 3:2 4:10,17 8:4,16 9:15 15:6,20 24:14 25:4,12,14 26:24 27:11,14,17 27:17,18,20,21 30:17 31:7,17,18 31:20 40:17 41:2 49:13,13 60:23 61:1,6 62:19 64:18,18 67:1,3,6 67:12 68:2 69:6 69:12 70:9 71:24 72:1,7 74:20 76:2 76:10,21 77:11,15 77:24 80:13,14,16 80:19 81:1,4,17 85:6 91:4,22 92:11,21,22 94:15 94:18,21,24 95:5,9 95:10,15,18 districts 15:17 40:11,12,23 64:17 64:22 67:6 78:2,7 82:12 92:15 93:23 94:13 95:20 diverse 20:21 division 84:15 docking 95:22 document 75:17 75:18,24 76:22,23	documentation 74:17 78:19 documents 63:7 75:20 77:17 doe 8:4 doing 3:6,7 8:3 36:23 37:2 69:12 90:18 93:3 95:21 dollar 27:7 28:21 30:15,16 42:11 53:24 92:4 dollars 28:25 29:10 32:3 35:9 35:17 39:12 43:5 43:19,22 46:12,14 47:22 48:4,6 51:3 58:17,17 60:3,7,13 62:14,15 64:19 89:19 91:12,13 95:6,8,8 domstock 83:1,1 don 81:22 donating 79:13 doors 63:14 double 46:23 downs 52:2 downtown 78:12 dozens 78:13,14 dr 2:11 14:7 draw 7:18,18,19 drawing 40:24 drawn 6:2 drive 1:18 63:12 drives 27:14 driveway 63:11 driving 12:19 drop 29:16 30:18 30:20,21 drugs 32:9 dual 39:14 40:2	due 67:9 duties 37:17,19 <p style="text-align: center;">e</p> e 1:2 2:3 12:11 37:1 70:24,24 81:23 83:9 84:21 86:24 87:20 90:11 90:23 97:1,1 eagan 1:16 46:8,11 46:15,17 eagleview 2:3 earlier 94:25 earliest 6:25 early 10:22,22 19:19 37:7 83:18 86:11 earn 40:16 easier 21:24 easily 21:8 east 40:20 economy 16:13 17:4 37:4 ed 18:6 21:13 29:1 30:5 47:20 65:1 educating 94:24 education 5:11 6:16 13:9 14:23 15:8 17:16,17 18:3 21:18 22:12 25:5 47:12,13,18 49:17,20,21 50:12 50:20,23 51:1,7,15 51:16,17 52:11,23 61:3 63:23 65:8 65:10 81:6 82:7 83:15,22 86:11 88:25 89:1 91:16 95:4 educational 5:18 5:23 16:2 41:6 58:24 68:24
--	--	--	---

<p>educators 22:15 22:25</p> <p>effectively 20:17</p> <p>efforts 87:10 91:2</p> <p>eight 24:11,12 46:23 47:7</p> <p>eighth 91:20</p> <p>either 7:12 77:7</p> <p>election 85:11</p> <p>electronic 24:20</p> <p>element 18:4</p> <p>elementary 20:20 37:2,7 57:19 67:20 86:2,25 87:5</p> <p>eliminate 70:5</p> <p>elk 7:18 26:11</p> <p>emergency 45:20</p> <p>emerging 16:13</p> <p>emotional 21:25 49:23 50:14 51:11 51:25 87:1</p> <p>empathy 22:8</p> <p>emphasis 14:21</p> <p>employee 31:24 32:17,20 42:25 43:1</p> <p>employees 33:19 33:23 37:18 42:13 42:15 49:17,20 50:24</p> <p>empowers 23:10</p> <p>enable 17:9</p> <p>enact 17:19</p> <p>enacted 93:25</p> <p>encourage 4:25 40:1</p> <p>encouraged 85:20</p> <p>encouraging 85:21</p> <p>endeavor 22:3</p>	<p>ended 12:21 19:9 60:6</p> <p>energy 16:9 20:25</p> <p>engage 14:18 41:21</p> <p>engagement 23:10 23:23 45:16</p> <p>engages 22:3</p> <p>engineering 12:20 14:19 17:3 18:3,4 18:4,22,22,23 19:1 19:3,9,10,14,16,24 20:2,7,8,15,19,21 21:1 53:23 55:18 57:6 80:14,17 81:6,7,14 85:24</p> <p>engineers 16:17 19:4,23</p> <p>english 58:25</p> <p>enhance 5:17,21 23:13,13</p> <p>enhanced 18:6 21:13</p> <p>enlightening 96:6</p> <p>enrichment 37:3</p> <p>enroll 52:14,22 53:1,5 87:6</p> <p>enrolled 24:10,12 48:18 88:2,3,7</p> <p>enrollment 24:6,8 24:10,18 27:2 28:2,6 30:7,8 31:1 47:19 53:3,8 67:4 89:3</p> <p>enrollments 88:23</p> <p>ensure 74:12,14</p> <p>enter 22:11</p> <p>entered 23:22</p> <p>entertain 3:16 11:10 61:17</p>	<p>entire 32:19 52:4 95:2</p> <p>entity 72:21</p> <p>environment 18:17 21:1,24 87:15</p> <p>environments 19:17</p> <p>equal 39:15</p> <p>equally 20:6</p> <p>equals 60:23</p> <p>equipment 53:18 54:24 57:2 63:14</p> <p>equitably 70:18</p> <p>equity 20:2</p> <p>error 12:5</p> <p>esl 58:25</p> <p>esquire 1:5 2:3</p> <p>essential 18:10 23:5</p> <p>essentially 68:8 70:8</p> <p>essentials 22:11</p> <p>establish 5:20</p> <p>established 5:4</p> <p>establishing 5:6 69:23</p> <p>estimate 28:21</p> <p>estimating 29:9</p> <p>estimation 50:19</p> <p>et 16:18 17:3 18:24 31:22 50:1 50:16</p> <p>evans 70:20 71:21 72:9 73:3 74:5</p> <p>evening 26:17 36:25 93:5 94:2</p> <p>event 11:23 64:24</p> <p>events 22:23</p> <p>evergreen 79:5</p>	<p>everybody 75:18 91:19</p> <p>evidence 97:4</p> <p>exact 88:25</p> <p>exactly 70:8 90:16</p> <p>example 64:19</p> <p>examples 92:6</p> <p>exceed 48:14</p> <p>exceeds 40:25</p> <p>exception 66:3</p> <p>excited 87:8</p> <p>excuse 28:21</p> <p>exercise 21:15,17</p> <p>exercises 18:7</p> <p>exhibit 31:9</p> <p>exhibits 25:22 26:2 78:20</p> <p>existing 24:1 76:22</p> <p>exists 89:7</p> <p>expanded 5:3</p> <p>expanding 16:9</p> <p>expansive 54:19</p> <p>expect 24:15 28:20 40:12 51:13,24 68:9 95:21</p> <p>expectation 68:10 68:11</p> <p>expectations 9:5</p> <p>expected 36:20</p> <p>expecting 28:17 39:13 52:4</p> <p>expenditure 32:11 52:24 95:6</p> <p>expenditures 26:25 28:11,12,14 31:24 33:10 35:5 36:1 52:8 53:18 54:3,4 55:14 58:23 60:1 63:18</p>
--	--	--	---

<p>expense 28:12 31:5 35:18 52:20 56:4 94:22</p> <p>expenses 28:17 29:20,21,23,25 30:20 65:7 94:22</p> <p>expensive 30:25 66:7</p> <p>experience 16:23 22:1 32:10 40:19 43:23 45:10 55:13 56:5 60:10 78:12 78:16</p> <p>experiences 12:15 53:23</p> <p>experiencing 46:20 48:8</p> <p>expert 54:19</p> <p>expertise 53:16 54:19</p> <p>expired 89:16</p> <p>explain 34:25</p> <p>explore 16:25</p> <p>explored 65:15,17</p> <p>exposure 87:11</p> <p>extending 19:1</p> <p>extent 44:13</p> <p>exton 2:4</p> <p>extra 35:24 88:2,4</p> <p>extracurricular 17:2</p> <p>extreme 48:22 65:9</p> <p>extremely 96:11</p> <p>eyes 64:21,22</p>	<p>fact 33:18 72:25 86:8</p> <p>factor 95:20</p> <p>factors 18:25</p> <p>factual 73:25</p> <p>failed 13:6 80:12 81:16</p> <p>failure 20:4 89:6,8 89:10</p> <p>fair 10:3,11 60:2 67:21 73:23 78:18</p> <p>fairly 15:16 77:24</p> <p>fairs 39:24</p> <p>fall 28:13,14</p> <p>falls 70:20 71:21 72:9 73:3 74:5</p> <p>familiar 9:3</p> <p>families 24:9,16 32:19 71:24 72:5 72:7</p> <p>family 11:23 32:16 33:2,13 40:17 89:20</p> <p>fantastic 83:20</p> <p>far 64:13 72:17 82:3</p> <p>farr 1:10 35:10,14 36:16,22 39:8 44:1 45:2 46:25 55:9 63:3,6,21 65:15,22 78:23 79:1,3,10</p> <p>fascinated 19:20 19:21</p> <p>fashion 17:5</p> <p>fast 94:5</p> <p>faster 6:6</p> <p>fayat 46:10,11</p> <p>feared 88:18</p> <p>feasible 43:17</p>	<p>february 7:2</p> <p>federal 48:24</p> <p>feed 90:2,3,5</p> <p>feedback 13:23</p> <p>feeding 47:6</p> <p>feel 12:22,24 13:6 15:23 18:14,17 19:16 22:9,14 24:4 76:24 81:7</p> <p>feeling 15:19</p> <p>felt 15:6 16:4</p> <p>fi 58:13</p> <p>fica 43:12</p> <p>field 38:14</p> <p>fifth 15:9 58:9</p> <p>figure 62:2</p> <p>filed 24:8</p> <p>fill 50:21 79:17</p> <p>filled 13:12</p> <p>fillers 86:4</p> <p>fills 88:20</p> <p>finally 20:24 21:10 24:4</p> <p>financial 26:19 41:21 79:21</p> <p>find 9:3 21:10,10 39:17 44:11 62:11 64:22 65:17 80:16</p> <p>finding 43:18 70:4</p> <p>fine 10:25 12:8 25:13 54:20 77:9 87:25</p> <p>finish 96:12</p> <p>firms 79:16</p> <p>first 4:2 10:9 21:14 22:15 23:24 26:9 29:10 31:7 35:14,19 36:17,18 36:21 37:1 41:18 45:19 56:1 57:9 57:11 58:7 60:18</p>	<p>60:20 61:12 63:19 64:13 66:24 67:7 67:18 71:9 79:24 90:12</p> <p>fit 11:10 21:17 53:25</p> <p>five 17:19 19:17 24:13,19 29:6 30:4 39:2 53:25 61:3 69:2 84:21 84:25 85:8,13 91:12 95:13</p> <p>fixed 29:20 30:20</p> <p>flat 61:9</p> <p>flexibility 30:23</p> <p>flip 10:19</p> <p>floor 10:1,3</p> <p>fluctuate 27:12</p> <p>focus 19:12 23:7 53:21 55:18</p> <p>focused 15:5 17:21 18:1</p> <p>focuses 22:6</p> <p>folks 38:19 41:4,7 45:20 46:25 81:23</p> <p>following 18:2 72:25</p> <p>food 34:22,25 35:4 35:6,10,13,15,18 35:21 90:1,3</p> <p>force 12:19</p> <p>forecasted 91:11</p> <p>foreign 36:23 37:16</p> <p>foremost 79:24</p> <p>forget 16:11</p> <p>forkston 15:3</p> <p>form 22:18</p> <p>formal 22:12 25:15,21</p>
<p>f</p>			
<p>f 13:24 97:1</p> <p>face 15:25 20:25</p> <p>faces 40:3</p> <p>facility 17:20</p>			

former 75:17 forms 24:10 forth 45:8 forum 4:11 forward 4:8 8:23 13:20 25:4 37:14 74:15 86:1 forwarded 8:7 found 53:17 foundation 2:9,10 2:11,12 13:23,25 14:2,4,8 79:12 foundations 21:6 four 36:19 39:1 42:8 81:3 91:12 91:13 fourth 58:8 80:21 80:22 85:10 framework 49:24 50:15 frankly 93:20 free 15:21 79:13 freedom 16:24 friday 61:13 friendly 11:23 22:3 front 44:10 63:15 88:19 frustrated 90:25 fulfill 69:22 full 13:16 37:9 43:7 85:25 fully 37:18 53:25 97:4 function 4:13 functioning 51:12 51:13 52:1,1,3,3 fund 27:7 28:4,22 51:4 54:5 60:6 67:1 92:4	funded 93:23 funding 30:17,19 30:21 91:9,18 92:9,10 93:19,20 93:22 94:8 funds 47:14 48:21 50:22 64:16 66:6 89:10 furman 2:12 13:22 13:22 82:3 85:17 furniture 63:14 further 77:20 80:3 87:18 91:6 95:23 96:14 furthermore 9:12 future 13:2,7 22:13,20 futures 13:16	gillingham 31:18 31:19 give 3:4,8 7:4 9:4 13:8 22:11 23:8 57:5,5,6 86:12 87:24 93:11 94:3 given 6:2,5 70:13 94:15 95:20 gives 12:23,24 13:1 glad 87:11 go 6:8 14:15 15:15 17:14 18:6 22:12 22:16,17 24:2 29:8 30:2 31:3 35:23,24 37:10 41:24 42:5 50:3 54:20 56:13,14 58:16 61:15 62:25 70:7 81:13 84:12 86:20 88:19 90:1 92:7 94:4 goal 19:5 21:5 38:18 68:21 goes 53:23 88:9 going 3:2,6,6,11 3:20 4:6 9:7 19:25 20:10 22:22 24:2 24:11 25:1 28:18 28:23,23 29:4,12 29:22 35:23 37:14 37:15 38:15,16,23 39:4,6 40:8,19 41:9,14 42:4,5 43:12 44:17 47:4 47:11 50:3,21 51:10 54:17,18,20 57:8,13,14,16 58:15 62:16 66:20 69:16 70:14 73:1 73:2 74:15 80:25	84:2,23 85:5 87:1 88:8,17,19 89:13 89:20,23,24 90:5 91:8 good 6:21 10:23 15:23 26:17 29:23 36:25 92:12 google 17:8 54:8 56:17,19,20 government 24:22 grade 15:9,10 29:6 38:21 39:4 57:9 57:11,19,22 58:1,3 58:7,7 67:18 68:5 68:6 81:5 85:10 91:20 grades 22:19 24:11,13,18 29:6 30:4 37:2 53:25 57:19 74:12,14 graduate 12:11 17:15 graduated 81:11 grandson 83:20,23 grant 8:16 granted 64:4 gratitude 22:8 great 11:14,21 12:15 15:16 39:21 56:20,24 83:15,17 86:1,12 90:14 greater 17:9,22 60:21 greatest 82:1 gregory 1:7 grew 83:10 grit 18:9 ground 3:3 9:1 36:21 groundbreaking 41:6
	g		
	g 1:5,19 83:9 86:16 87:20 games 21:10 gears 69:17 gene 1:16 46:7 general 15:2 16:22 59:7 generally 78:11 generate 34:23 generic 32:8 gentleman 74:2 83:16 geographic 16:2,3 69:24 70:6,19,24 71:8,10,20 72:8,14 74:10 82:9 87:2 91:4 geographical 15:1 getting 24:7 45:19 54:22 67:12 77:23 78:6 88:4		

<p>group 69:3 82:2 89:7,10 growing 22:6 growth 23:11 guess 21:13 44:13 65:24 74:3 guidelines 40:7 guys 8:17,21,23 90:13,14,18</p>	<p>healthcare 20:25 31:16 33:20,23 34:15 hear 4:15,15 10:24 50:9 73:16 heard 69:7,22 90:8 92:16 93:21 hearing 3:5,22 4:2 4:11 6:9,16,18,23 9:2,19 11:3,23,24 47:24 48:9 75:15 93:2,13,16 heart 5:12 heather 1:4 heck 52:2 help 26:14 27:8 32:4 41:7 51:2 53:13,23,25 90:25 helped 83:17 helping 14:21 henning 83:8,8 87:20 herring 82:10 high 1:17 12:12,14 15:21 16:9 17:24 51:12 52:1,3 85:23 higher 27:22 39:16 46:12 80:17 highlight 14:12 69:18 86:8 highly 19:5 highway 69:21 hire 43:11 44:17 hired 38:12 89:22 hiring 39:13 40:7 42:18 49:21 50:12 historic 16:4 historically 19:8 hit 91:11</p>	<p>hold 5:4 59:9 holding 85:3 holistic 17:11 holly 1:12 50:6 home 10:17 68:2 73:2 84:16 homeroom 36:20 homes 71:16 homeschooling 15:18 homework 68:24 honesty 22:7 hope 69:4 92:6 hoping 40:6 hot 94:9 hour 46:13,16,23 54:21 70:13 73:1 73:2 74:4 82:14 93:17 94:6 hourly 55:2 hours 15:10 55:1 82:14 83:25 hp 86:4 hs 18:5 hubs 58:13 hundred 14:12 hundreds 64:19 hunter 69:21 hurdle 8:5 hyndman 79:5 hypothetical 61:20 62:9,10 hypothetically 62:18,25 hypotheticals 61:18</p>	<p>ideal 23:25 24:1 identified 36:10 44:4 59:24,25 60:8 71:5 72:11 identify 19:4 60:12 iep 47:15,17 48:2 48:18 ieps 51:8 immediate 22:18 impact 4:16 19:13 94:21 impetus 14:25 important 4:19 9:4 19:16 20:4,6 55:19 91:7,17 92:9 93:25 94:7 94:12 95:15 impressed 88:15 improve 4:22 22:10 82:6 inclined 87:24 include 17:21 36:11,18 54:23 56:22 included 31:25 95:1 includes 20:8 33:19 35:15 91:19 95:10 including 22:5 32:21 91:24 inclusion 49:25 50:15 inclusiveness 23:3 income 29:17 incorrect 45:23 73:11,23 increase 4:23 24:15 61:2,4,6,7 62:21 87:10</p>
<p>h</p>			
<p>h 26:16 81:23 83:9 87:20 handicap 47:4 handle 51:10 52:4 handled 3:6 hands 20:10 74:20 76:1,1,6 handwritten 24:20 happen 8:12 46:4 61:24 happened 12:18 81:25 happening 85:23 86:13 87:12 90:15 happens 8:8 61:12 happy 51:20 76:24 hard 11:15 hardware 53:18 54:8,12 harm 23:6,7 harmed 23:9 harrisburg 7:10 8:7 hartford 17:15 haul 39:25 health 31:12 32:4 32:25 33:10 41:24 41:25 42:6,16,22 44:23,25 92:18</p>		<p>i</p> <p>idea 5:12 7:4 15:25 29:16 44:14 57:18,20 68:15 70:10</p>	

increases 62:19 increasingly 24:17 incredibly 56:17 indicated 11:3 63:7 72:13,19 73:19,24 74:1 individual 32:16 51:24 54:17,21 individuals 11:8 12:6,7 84:17 industries 24:25 influence 87:14 information 3:4 24:8 69:17 80:10 89:4,9 informed 21:2 infrastructure 58:12 ing 82:20 inhibits 15:7 innovation 5:14 69:1 73:8,9 85:22 innovative 4:25 5:18,22 17:10 67:21 68:3,13 69:8,11,19 inspire 69:10 inspired 87:10 90:24 inspiring 82:4 installment 67:9 67:14 institution 12:25 instruct 17:6 instruction 17:7 18:16 20:8,20 36:7 37:9 instrumental 13:11 insufficient 8:2	insurance 31:12 32:4,25 33:10 42:16 insurer 32:21 insuring 89:19 integrity 22:8 intellectual 49:22 50:13 intend 7:17 87:6,8 87:13 intended 34:23 intends 68:11 intent 58:10,11 70:3 74:9 intention 69:3 90:23 intentions 96:7 interact 25:7 interactive 85:16 interacts 21:23 interest 64:5 66:3 66:9,15 73:21 79:21 96:10 interested 24:7 55:25 81:25 interests 16:25 internal 39:25 42:25 50:24 international 80:21 interpersonal 23:11 interrupt 16:13 intervention 36:13 36:19 introduce 13:24 16:5 introduced 14:7 introducing 17:23 introductory 37:5	introspect 13:14 investment 53:24 involved 14:1 15:8 involvement 82:1 ipads 57:10 86:4 issue 71:13 82:9 95:14 issues 9:11 19:7 47:4 59:13 60:1 72:10 93:24 94:1 item 28:11 30:25 30:25 31:21 32:3 34:24 35:4 41:18 42:22 47:22 48:15 53:17,19 54:2 59:19,22 66:12 83:13,13 items 28:13,16 29:8,11,16 35:7 54:12,13 58:23 59:3,7,8,13 60:3 66:7,20	47:7,7 53:25 74:12,14 80:9 karen 2:10 14:3 86:16 88:12 keep 66:4 75:15 83:3 84:2 87:21 88:5,23 89:5 keeping 89:18 keeps 75:18 ken 97:11 kenneth 1:19 kick 7:8 kid 86:20,20 kids 9:17 15:14,20 18:8 22:5 29:6 69:3 74:12,14 82:12,21 83:10,19 84:2 86:13 88:2,8 91:19,23 kids's 91:16 kind 19:8,10 kindergarten 15:9 18:3,5 19:13 21:7 58:6 67:18 68:7 81:4 84:24 86:5 kinds 41:11 know 8:3,13 11:18 14:11 19:20 27:3 27:23 28:15,18,21 29:7,11 36:8 41:13,24 42:9,19 43:8,17 44:15 45:4 46:4,6,7,9 47:16,17 48:25 49:2,11 50:5 51:22 52:14,25 53:20 59:5 60:4 62:22,24 65:23 66:18 68:8 70:13 76:12 78:11 80:13 81:5 83:17,20
		j	
		january 7:1 93:4,9 96:12 jerry 2:12 13:22 jesse 2:9 14:6 36:25 45:9 78:11 78:12,14 job 5:19 91:22 jobs 16:9 john 1:9 8:3 joint 76:20 joshua 2:3 9:22 jpollak 2:5 judge 7:25 july 63:23 67:7	
		k	
		k 9:22 19:17,17 24:11,13,19 39:4	

<p>84:1,22 89:2,2,5 92:23 93:10 96:13 knowing 89:12 known 19:10 52:13 85:14 knows 76:15 80:22</p>	<p>lead 22:14 leads 17:24 21:12 23:9 learn 13:5 18:10 19:6,12 20:6,11 21:9 23:14 25:8 88:13 learned 19:10 learners 22:11 learning 4:23 5:17 5:22 14:20 16:21 17:10,20,21 18:7 19:14 20:10 21:11 21:24 51:11,25 68:18,25 85:16 leased 23:20 leave 10:22,22 89:22,23 leaving 11:12 left 28:5 30:9 60:13 81:20 legal 1:22 14:6 74:17 75:17,19,24 76:23,25 letters 24:21 letting 14:9 levee 65:14 level 16:16 27:2 30:19 33:7 38:21 40:5 57:19,22 58:3,3 68:5 81:7 86:2 89:21 levels 33:2 39:4 45:16 58:1 levi 90:11 liberty 1:24 life 41:10 lightens 15:8 limit 9:8 limits 41:2</p>	<p>line 28:11,13,16 29:8,11,16,22 30:25,25 32:3 34:24 35:4,6 41:18 42:22 47:14 47:22 48:3,15 53:17,18 54:2,12 58:23 59:3,7,8,13 59:18,22 60:3 64:1,2,3 65:16 66:2,5,6,12,14 83:13,13 lines 65:20 list 94:11 listed 31:4,8,14 39:17 49:25 71:1 71:4 listen 9:10,15 listens 85:2 literacy 21:1 literally 48:11 92:8 little 3:8,14 7:15 29:22 44:14 62:25 65:4 82:22 87:15 87:22 live 17:4 87:2 95:16 lives 8:4 living 14:17 23:12 loaded 63:15 82:21 loan 30:16 loans 13:3 local 6:15 7:14 15:7,21 17:7 24:25 27:21 31:7 40:11 63:8 71:16 locate 74:9 located 72:22</p>	<p>location 70:17 71:19 72:20 73:10 73:10,10,22 locational 72:21 locations 95:22 long 6:2,12 39:25 53:8 74:4 87:19 longer 33:22 46:23 73:4 74:13 82:14 look 15:4,15 16:1 24:25 25:1,3,5,6 28:5 29:25 31:4 39:11 46:17 56:8 68:20 69:2 81:16 81:16 looked 15:13 26:12 looking 4:16 19:3 21:14 25:9 33:18 36:11 40:9 43:13 45:17 62:24 63:8 74:14 85:24,25 88:1,6 looks 27:6,8 60:10 lori 1:8 lose 29:5 30:3 94:13 losing 28:20 29:21 lost 29:3 91:18 lot 6:6 10:16 13:23 17:13 22:4 26:24 28:11 44:19 60:1 76:20 82:19 83:4 88:23 89:13 90:20 louis 80:23 love 86:25 low 51:13 52:1,3 64:5 lower 27:5,9 40:11 40:22 62:24</p>
<p>I</p>			
<p>I 9:22,22 12:11 86:24,24 labor 16:16 laboratories 5:13 laboratory 25:9 69:1 73:8 laid 6:2 lake 7:18 26:11 land 24:3 lane 1:24 language 31:15 34:6 36:7,23 37:16 39:8 40:14 58:25 laptops 86:4 large 20:12 larger 25:13 95:12 late 93:17 lateness 94:6 latest 7:1 latsha 2:2 laughter 61:21 64:8 65:3 80:8 81:21 law 3:9 4:18,19 5:5,7 6:15 31:5,16 32:14 33:8,12,15 33:17,18,21,21 42:10 73:9 93:25 laws 18:24 lcn 46:12 ldylaw.com 2:5 lea 6:15 8:16</p>			

lunch 35:2,24 84:1	mcperson 1:4 3:1	mehoopany 1:2	minimum 4:4 5:7
m	33:17 34:2,5,8,11	2:2 9:18,22 14:10	5:10
m 13:24 26:16,16	34:14,18 37:13,22	15:2,2,19 16:24	minutes 9:9 10:6
84:21	38:1,7,10,12,23	23:22 24:2,16,23	18:15 74:25 75:3
ma'am 73:12 77:2	39:3,6,9 44:5,11	70:18 71:17,19	75:6,8,22 76:19
mac 56:18	46:2,7,9,14,16	72:15,22 74:8,9,11	77:6 80:6 82:16
madam 74:7	48:13,19 55:17,21	74:13,13 82:22	82:23 93:18
major 28:19	56:7 57:3,16,22,25	83:9,11 86:17	mirror 17:3
majority 21:19	58:5,11,21 59:18	87:5,6,13 91:19,20	mirroring 42:10
making 8:3 40:25	59:21 63:20 67:23	91:24 96:5	misbehavior 23:6
52:12	71:3,9,14 72:23	member 1:6,8,9	misconceptions
management	73:7,13 74:3 93:7	1:10,11,12,13,14	9:13
26:19,19 41:22	mcs 34:23 36:5	1:15,16 14:4	misericordia
manager 1:7	53:21	76:15	12:12
managing 16:14	meal 90:4	members 4:13	misparaphrasing
maneuver 25:10	mean 29:20 34:5	26:6 85:1	84:1
mapped 56:24	43:20 44:19 45:15	memory 21:25	misperceptions
march 62:2	62:7,15 64:4,6	mention 26:10	93:20 94:8
margin 61:11	67:19,21 79:5,19	mentioned 37:8	mission 14:15
margins 60:19	meaning 57:25	49:19 65:16	16:19,20
markers 22:18	means 9:13 34:8,9	mentor 81:2	mistakability 20:3
market 32:21	mechanical 12:20	met 53:2 85:19	mixture 51:25
89:21	media 39:24	method 5:6 19:9	model 14:17 23:1
marketing 67:25	medicaid 50:17	19:11	models 60:11
marketplace	medical 31:13	methods 5:1	modified 19:2
17:25 32:22	49:3,7	microphone 9:8	molding 13:11
mart 70:7	medicare 50:3	10:5	moment 70:21
mary 1:16 46:7	meet 5:8,10 16:16	mid 1:23	money 27:13 30:9
material 20:12	32:1,13 33:11	middle 57:20 58:3	42:21 43:24 44:17
94:13	36:14 47:15 48:2	mill 70:20 71:21	44:22 59:11 62:2
materially 94:20	48:17 49:23 50:14	72:9 73:4 74:5	62:7,17 63:12,18
math 20:1 53:22	50:25 51:7 52:10	million 29:24	64:22 66:6 67:3
69:9	52:21,24 53:7	67:11 91:12,13	86:9 91:15 92:8
mathematics	59:8 65:7 66:23	mind 70:12 73:5	92:20
19:15 69:15	68:11	83:10	moneys 93:23
matter 22:21	meeting 3:5 4:6	minded 9:15 83:4	month 67:7
39:20 47:8	5:5 10:16 52:16	88:13	move 6:6 8:23
maximum 42:8	75:4,22 93:4 96:2	mindfulness 22:6	13:20 25:21 30:6
53:3	96:19	mindset 22:6	movement 21:18
mckenna 2:2	meetings 75:1	minimal 66:4	21:21,23 22:2
	84:22		

<p>moving 12:2 28:3 70:4</p> <p>multiple 17:23 18:7 39:7,14 40:14,20 47:4 53:12 60:8 92:6</p> <p>music 37:4,16 39:8 40:15</p>	<p>89:10 90:18</p> <p>needing 49:3 89:24</p> <p>needs 9:5 10:21 13:1 16:16 17:3 36:14 37:21 47:15 48:2,14,17,22 49:24 50:15,25 51:7 52:10,16,19 52:22,25 55:24 59:8 64:20 65:7 66:23 71:3 72:24 83:24,24 87:21,21 88:1,5</p> <p>negative 15:11 64:6</p> <p>neighborhood 46:15</p> <p>neighboring 40:12 40:17 92:15</p> <p>network 69:5</p> <p>never 88:15</p> <p>new 5:1 16:9,21 28:10 60:18 65:20 68:16 69:4 82:5 84:25 85:1,20</p> <p>nice 90:14</p> <p>nitpick 92:2</p> <p>normal 67:8</p> <p>north 15:3 24:23 84:11,13,14</p> <p>northeastern 80:14 81:10</p> <p>notary 1:20</p> <p>note 48:7 91:8 92:12 95:15</p> <p>noted 10:15 11:9 70:24</p> <p>notes 97:4</p> <p>notice 61:24</p>	<p>novelty 21:22</p> <p>november 6:3,14 6:17 24:9 79:9</p> <p>number 12:17 28:13 29:9 30:8 36:4 43:17 44:15 44:16,18 46:18,24 46:24,25 55:1,10 64:16 65:24 78:2 78:3 80:24 94:24</p> <p>numbers 24:15 28:17 46:20 51:18 55:5,6,12 56:2,3 57:12 60:11 77:23 78:6 89:2 91:11</p> <p>nurse 42:19 43:19 44:6 45:8,13,17 46:5 47:5,9</p> <p>nursing 45:15 46:10 47:3 78:10</p>	<p>offered 31:22 69:18</p> <p>offering 67:19 73:3</p> <p>offers 81:17</p> <p>offhand 46:5</p> <p>official 43:19</p> <p>ohn 1:5</p> <p>okay 5:24 6:10 7:3 7:21 8:5,8,14 9:9 10:1,3 12:8 15:14 26:5 28:1 30:10 31:10 32:2 33:13 33:16 34:18 35:22 36:5 39:3,9 42:17 46:16 53:10,20 69:25 70:14 73:5 73:13 77:20 79:10 79:16 80:1 94:5</p> <p>old 70:7</p> <p>olds 21:8</p> <p>once 8:5,8,9,10 24:3 36:15 37:20 41:20 82:18,21 90:23</p> <p>ones 74:21 78:5</p> <p>ongoing 28:10 41:15</p> <p>online 39:23 53:22</p> <p>open 9:15,19 10:2 10:4 19:9 56:16 56:20 57:4 63:13 70:3 83:4,10 88:13 92:4</p> <p>opened 91:10 92:3</p> <p>opening 13:20 17:19 24:18 41:4 41:15 64:2</p> <p>operate 28:6 55:15</p> <p>operates 22:1</p>
<p>n</p>	<p>n 12:11 13:24 37:1 70:24 83:9,9,9 84:9 87:20,20,20 90:11,11,23,23</p> <p>name 9:21 12:10 12:11 80:6,9 83:1 83:8</p> <p>named 13:25</p> <p>naming 40:2</p> <p>narrative 44:6,8 44:10 45:22,23 68:14 71:4</p> <p>national 12:13 19:2 35:2 41:1 80:21,24</p> <p>natural 19:23</p> <p>naturally 19:22</p> <p>nature 18:24</p> <p>necessarily 31:11 38:16 56:24 71:25 72:6</p> <p>necessary 13:4 35:16</p> <p>necessity 70:2</p> <p>need 7:20 10:8 13:12 17:16 22:11 22:17 43:14 47:5 47:7,8 50:10 54:18 55:1 66:20 73:5 90:16 91:24</p> <p>needed 45:21 61:25 81:16 85:14</p>	<p>o</p>	<p>o 9:22 70:24 81:23 81:23 84:21 86:16 86:24,24 90:11,23</p> <p>objectives 54:14</p> <p>obligated 27:15 48:17 51:6 53:7</p> <p>obligation 6:16</p> <p>observed 85:18</p> <p>obtain 55:2 64:1</p> <p>obtaining 41:12 65:20</p> <p>obviously 14:25 24:25 40:4,8 47:16 53:20 82:2</p> <p>occur 62:5</p> <p>offer 5:18,22 15:20 31:6 33:20 45:16 71:23 72:4 80:25 86:18 87:9 93:3</p>

<p>operating 28:2 66:6 91:14 95:10</p> <p>operation 17:6 64:13 95:2</p> <p>operational 94:25</p> <p>opinion 73:13,19 73:20,23 74:1</p> <p>opportunities 4:24 5:2,3,17,23 16:2 17:2 20:21 69:4 80:6 85:25</p> <p>opportunity 4:9,9 4:14 5:20 40:16 41:5,6 87:13 89:22 92:24 93:1 93:11,12 94:4</p> <p>opposition 11:2 12:6</p> <p>option 12:23,24 13:8 15:22 24:2 65:15 70:11 71:24 72:5 73:3</p> <p>options 5:19,23 7:6 13:13,15 15:13,15,18 20:23</p> <p>order 7:12 16:19 18:11 74:6</p> <p>organization 16:16</p> <p>organizations 16:15</p> <p>organized 18:1</p> <p>organizing 16:22</p> <p>original 33:21</p> <p>oshea 1:11 46:6</p> <p>ot 47:23 48:9 51:4</p> <p>outlined 56:23</p> <p>outlying 82:12</p> <p>outside 9:9 92:21</p> <p>overall 12:14</p>	<p>overspent 60:3,9</p> <p>overview 3:8</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">p</p> <hr/> <p>p 9:22 70:24</p> <p>p.m. 1:19 11:24 96:20</p> <p>pa 1:25 2:4</p> <p>pace 17:1</p> <p>package 42:11</p> <p>page 11:6 36:6,7 42:18 53:12 71:11</p> <p>pages 14:12 77:16 77:18</p> <p>paid 46:21 47:1 54:22 66:5</p> <p>paperwork 49:10</p> <p>paraphrase 25:8</p> <p>parent 3:13 81:3 84:21</p> <p>parental 81:25</p> <p>parents 5:2 10:16 12:24 15:7,18,24 22:24,24 81:25 94:16</p> <p>park 63:11</p> <p>parry 1:13 35:17 35:22 36:3 43:11 46:22 50:2 61:11 61:19 62:1,6,13,23 64:3,10 79:11,16 79:19 80:1</p> <p>part 4:18 11:20 20:5,20 23:12 28:20 36:19 38:1 41:5,8,14 45:17 96:1</p> <p>participants 14:23 96:6</p> <p>participate 9:6</p> <p>particular 15:4</p>	<p>particularly 14:18 16:25</p> <p>partner 69:5</p> <p>partnering 25:4</p> <p>partnership 17:23</p> <p>partnerships 39:24</p> <p>parts 85:17,22</p> <p>passion 81:24</p> <p>passions 16:25</p> <p>passive 68:15</p> <p>passwords 21:10</p> <p>pathways 17:23</p> <p>paveski 2:11 14:7</p> <p>paving 63:11</p> <p>pay 27:15 30:20 46:5,10 62:8 67:3 94:17</p> <p>paying 39:15 42:7 42:8 46:12 51:3 62:6 89:18</p> <p>payment 65:25 66:3</p> <p>payroll 31:5 61:14 62:9,12</p> <p>pays 21:22 32:8</p> <p>pennsylvania 1:18 1:21 4:21 5:10,14 26:18,20 32:12 39:21 44:21 55:14 55:16 56:6 80:14</p> <p>pennsylvania's 35:13</p> <p>people 7:13 10:8 11:12,18,19 13:24 15:24 17:17 21:23 24:7 41:10,12 42:22 44:23,25 79:21 84:11 94:13 94:15 95:9</p>	<p>percent 7:12,14,20 15:5 26:23 28:2,6 30:7 40:22 42:1,7 42:8,12,16 45:12 47:20 52:23 61:3 61:4 62:20,21 65:1,8 83:12 86:9 91:13 95:13,17</p> <p>perfect 69:2 87:22</p> <p>perform 18:7 21:17</p> <p>performance 16:5</p> <p>performances 68:17</p> <p>periodic 69:16</p> <p>permission 25:19</p> <p>perseverance 22:7</p> <p>person 12:9,16 23:9 39:2 43:8,9 43:11 44:6 49:9 50:2,19,20 64:6</p> <p>personal 94:9</p> <p>personally 92:1</p> <p>peters 92:18</p> <p>peterson 2:9 14:2 70:23,23 71:5,13</p> <p>petition 6:7 7:13 7:24 8:2,2,6,7 24:19 93:3</p> <p>phenomenal 56:17</p> <p>philadelphia 45:11 78:12</p> <p>phillip 1:10</p> <p>phone 21:9</p> <p>phys 18:6 21:13</p> <p>physical 21:15 49:22 50:13</p> <p>physically 21:17</p> <p>pick 21:8</p> <p>picks 82:21</p>
--	---	---	---

<p>piece 68:13 69:14 piggyback 85:4 pilot 41:8 pipeline 40:1 pj 1:11 46:4 place 6:9 12:1 16:8 38:20 63:13 80:22 80:23 placeholder 37:9 placeholders 36:14 placement 15:1 places 53:12 90:20 plan 14:14,14 17:20 23:1 29:5 32:5,7 64:23 70:2 planned 56:18 planning 13:2 29:7 plans 14:10 24:17 70:17 platform 56:21 platforms 17:8 play 19:18,19 21:11 pleas 6:8 7:25 please 10:5 13:15 29:14 34:25 36:7 37:24 80:5 86:14 pledge 82:15 plus 18:6 26:20 podium 80:5 poetic 90:7 point 6:7 11:14 23:19 25:15 47:16 49:9 52:13 67:11 83:3 85:11 92:12 pointedly 72:15 polished 13:11 pollak 2:3 9:21,22 10:1,14 11:1,19,22</p>	<p>12:5 25:18,24 31:15 33:24 34:4 34:6,9,16 53:6 70:21 71:12,15,23 72:4,10,19 73:6,11 73:18,22,24 74:19 74:23 75:3,6,10,21 75:25 76:5,9,14 77:1,5,10,14,19 78:1,9,21,25 79:2 79:4,15,18,23 93:10,15 96:14,15 pool 39:13 poor 89:23,25 poorly 88:20 populated 77:24 78:7 population 7:14 36:14 37:21 45:13 47:16 51:1 52:13 52:25 59:8,9 65:7 populations 59:5 portfolio 17:12 portion 29:23 45:18 position 62:11 positions 36:10,13 36:17 positive 19:13,25 20:5 85:3 possibilities 65:18 possible 13:1 59:14 60:2,5 61:5 63:2,25 66:4,17 possibly 28:6 29:2 60:9 potential 69:1 pottsville 31:20 power 83:3 85:11 practical 19:7</p>	<p>practices 73:9 pre 24:6,8,10,10 24:12 49:12 88:3 88:23 89:3 prebola 1:14 41:23 42:4 73:16 preconceptions 9:13 preconsolidation 71:21 preference 72:21 72:22 preliminary 23:22 premier 80:13 premised 30:16 premium 42:1,7,9 42:13,16 prepare 14:16 prepared 11:7 preparing 13:6 prepayment 67:2 prescribed 37:19 prescription 32:8 presence 45:14 present 2:8 3:22 4:9 presentation 3:12 3:13 10:13,24 11:16 12:1 13:21 14:10 25:15 93:2 96:2,5 presentations 9:24 president's 84:13 pressed 19:8 pressing 20:25 presuming 11:18 pretty 48:10 54:18 prevalent 15:16 previous 16:5 56:15</p>	<p>previously 24:14 primarily 21:20 primary 71:4 72:13 73:21 principals 23:2 printed 25:23 printer 57:1 prior 3:13 10:13 11:2 12:1 63:18 64:2 66:24 private 47:5 probably 45:17 89:25 problem 19:9 20:5 20:7 23:10 87:23 95:12 problems 19:4,7 20:25 proceed 9:23 proceeding 76:25 proceedings 1:3 97:3,5 process 3:9 6:2,12 9:6 11:20 14:2,13 19:7 20:3,5 21:21 48:25 49:1,3,7 84:23,24 91:3,21 96:7,12 processes 19:5 23:16 produce 75:19 producing 22:20 products 68:16 professional 5:1 35:7 58:24,24 professionals 82:4 proficient 86:10 program 13:23 26:18 35:2,6 41:6 41:9 54:4 80:19 81:3,8,10,12,13,14</p>
--	--	--	---

programmers 16:18	providing 25:5 32:3,6,10 35:21	question 11:13 29:13,15 30:11 33:21 34:3 37:25 38:5 39:11 40:18 41:14,17,23 42:5 47:2,21 50:7,10 51:21,22 53:10 55:25 56:1,2,15 58:22 60:17 61:13 63:16 64:15 67:8 67:17 70:14,14 71:12,14,16,18 73:17,19 74:2 79:12 95:9	rates 26:14 27:5,9 27:12,17,21 32:21 46:9 60:25 61:2 95:7
programs 48:24 54:9,14 55:7 87:8 91:23 92:11	provision 34:12,15 34:22	pssas 86:10	ratio 52:23
project 14:19 16:6 17:10 18:2 20:10 68:17,25	psychologist 47:23 48:10 51:4	pt 47:23 48:9 51:4	reach 4:14 80:18
projected 24:18	public 1:20 3:4,5 3:22 4:2,5 6:16,18 6:23 9:2 10:2,4,13 11:2,25 15:21 39:15 68:19 80:4 80:4 91:9	publications 22:5	reached 80:20
projection 31:2	pulling 27:5	pulling 27:5	read 4:6 11:6,8 64:20 86:17,19 87:9
projections 36:1	pullout 49:25 50:16	pullout 49:25 50:16	reading 18:17 69:9 71:11
projector 57:17 58:9 85:9	pupil 60:22	pupil 60:22	reads 72:24
projectory 16:11	pupils 5:2	pupils 5:2	ready 10:18 16:15 22:20
promethean 57:14 85:7	purchase 23:20 35:7,13 56:18 66:8,20	purchase 23:20 35:7,13 56:18 66:8,20	real 19:12 68:12 68:12,13 69:13,13 69:14
promote 23:15	purchased 58:24 59:16 64:20	purchased 58:24 59:16 64:20	realistic 50:5 62:10
promoting 23:2	purpose 3:5 4:5 9:4 72:14 87:5	purpose 3:5 4:5 9:4 72:14 87:5	realize 6:5 36:15 91:17 92:9 94:21
proof 75:24 76:22	purposely 22:3	purposely 22:3	realized 37:21 63:18
property 23:21 63:10 94:10,16,18	pushed 69:15	pushed 69:15	realizes 91:9
proportion 30:21	pushes 6:24	pushes 6:24	really 8:5,12 16:21 17:17 19:7 21:14 23:2 24:11 39:22 41:5 55:19 62:11 68:24 69:1,5,14,18 69:18 79:12 80:10 82:10 83:21 87:3 88:16 90:17
propose 5:21	put 15:14 23:19 25:23 26:8 87:25 88:17,22 91:1,2 93:8	put 15:14 23:19 25:23 26:8 87:25 88:17,22 91:1,2 93:8	reason 10:12 69:23 71:4,10
proposed 5:16 11:25	putting 8:20 83:21	putting 8:20 83:21	reasonable 68:8
proposing 25:6 26:13	q	q	reasons 70:25 71:1 72:11 94:9
prospectively 28:19	qualification 45:7	qualification 45:7	rebecca 2:9 14:2 70:23
provide 3:12 5:2 5:21 12:25 13:2,7 17:22 19:11 26:19 33:2,7,23 41:21 48:9,17 54:24 56:13 69:4 74:16 76:7 79:7 86:12 92:24 95:15	quality 15:21 25:5 89:25	quality 15:21 25:5 89:25	
provided 5:21 45:11 53:2 80:10	quantifiable 22:18	quantifiable 22:18	
provides 4:11 32:25 47:14 52:15			
		r	
		r 13:24 70:24 81:23 84:9,21 86:16 97:1	
		radius 95:16	
		range 45:16	
		rate 27:4,9,20,21 47:20 55:2 60:23 61:5,6,8 62:19 66:15	

receive 40:22 received 13:10 14:11 24:21,24 55:15 81:5 receiving 30:17 49:7 recess 84:1 recognize 94:12 reconcile 29:11 record 25:23 26:3 34:19 37:11 65:19 73:21 76:8 93:9 recount 74:2 recruiting 26:11 39:23 red 82:10 reduce 28:16 29:4 95:10 reelected 84:10 refer 31:17 reference 40:19 44:18 76:12,21 77:1,2 78:1,5 referenced 77:5,6 77:6,13,22 94:25 references 36:6 79:7 referencing 74:18 75:18 76:12,16 referred 53:11 75:15,24 85:17 referring 59:19 75:7 89:6 refers 31:21 reflect 9:11 34:19 34:20 68:15 89:3 93:10 reflected 41:16 47:10,24,25 53:13 66:1,10,13,14	reflects 34:24 49:20 50:11 regan 1:19 97:11 regarding 95:14 regardless 30:6 region 1:23 16:10 44:18 91:24 regular 18:7 61:2 67:8 reimbursement 26:14 27:4,5,9 30:17 31:13,14 35:2 reimbursements 50:3,17 55:15 reinforcing 16:11 reintegrate 91:20 reinvest 91:16 relates 72:12,14 72:15 78:10,10 relating 31:16 93:19,20,22 relationship 23:5 relationships 18:10,12 23:7,12 relevant 76:25 remain 92:4 remarks 4:1 remember 10:5 50:11 79:3 removes 20:3 reorganization 17:6 repeat 29:13 30:11 30:12 38:6 50:10 51:21 rephrase 37:24 38:3,5 63:16 72:2 72:3 reporter 1:20 97:12	represent 64:16 88:21 representative 9:19 representatives 3:17,21 representing 10:14,15 represents 26:18 95:13 reps 89:8 request 3:21 4:3 requested 93:1,11 require 16:20 17:6 20:10 33:7 required 4:2 18:13 35:12 37:23 38:16 48:2 66:17,18,19 requirement 53:7 requirements 29:5 32:1,13,24 33:11 33:14 requires 8:16 20:16 21:4 22:15 31:6 73:10 research 17:13 19:24 20:19 21:19 53:22 68:24 80:11 80:12 81:15 reserve 25:19 92:4 92:23 93:17 residential 84:14 residing 70:19 resilience 22:7 resiliency 18:9 22:4 resources 17:8 43:17 54:23 59:6 69:11 91:23 respect 13:6 84:16	respected 75:17 respectful 9:16 respectfully 30:10 38:5 responds 85:2 response 72:20 78:2 88:25 93:3 96:1 responsibility 5:15 22:7 23:13 23:14 49:13 responsible 14:22 50:17 92:13,16 rest 23:11 restate 72:3 resting 78:19 restorative 23:1 restore 18:9 resubmit 7:7 result 12:21 60:1 results 19:25 21:16 retaining 41:9 retrieval 21:25 revenue 28:8 29:22 34:24 36:1 47:18 48:23 56:4 62:21 65:9,11 66:5,23 91:12,13 94:13,15,20 95:19 revenues 35:1 48:21 reverse 8:14,15 reverses 8:19 review 8:9,10,24 reviewed 27:6 76:18,19 ride 74:5 82:10 rides 73:4 right 3:23 6:13,20 7:11 8:17 10:12
---	--	--	---

<p>12:4 20:6 24:12 29:3 38:8 39:5 41:12 42:6 48:19 57:6 63:15 69:3 79:14 80:2 89:15 93:4 rigorous 14:20 rn 43:6,14,20 45:6 45:11 road 23:21 roadmap 52:15 robert 1:13 robot 86:4 robotics 17:2 57:2 80:13,17,19 81:6 81:12,13 83:16,17 role 41:15 49:12 room 57:14,17 62:15 rooms 57:13 roslyn 82:23 86:9 routes 82:11 rule 23:8 rules 3:3 9:1 rumor 76:25 run 62:16 running 30:7 89:11 92:8 95:2 rural 77:24 78:7 78:16,25 79:1 ryan 2:8 14:5 26:16,17 78:14</p>	<p>save 29:22 91:15 savvy 16:15 saw 88:16 saying 51:9 74:21 75:4,10,21,22 76:18 says 7:18 8:4,19 33:18 43:2 44:6,8 45:22 46:2 86:11 scale 27:1 56:15 scenario 6:5,11 30:25 62:4 83:6 scenarios 31:1 83:5 schedule 6:16 scheduled 6:18 scholarship 81:9 school 1:1,2,17 2:2 2:9,10,10,11 3:2,9 3:11,15,17,21,25 4:7,10,17,17,18 5:5,8,9,17 7:6,9,10 8:4,7,16,21 9:14 9:14,23 10:15,18 11:1,4,7 12:12,14 12:15,22 13:6,7 14:1,3,4,11,14,16 14:25 15:1,6,7,12 15:17,20 16:1,5,20 16:21,22,24 17:6 17:14,16,19,24 18:15 19:24 21:19 22:10 23:20,25 24:3,14 25:4,11,13 26:21,24 27:11,13 27:15,17,20,22,23 27:24,24 28:10 30:17 31:6,16,17 31:18,18,19,20 32:1,13,24 33:12 33:15 35:2 36:15</p>	<p>36:15 37:10,20 40:3,7,8,19,23,25 41:4,16,20 42:19 42:24 43:19 44:7 44:22 45:8,11 46:3 47:18,23 48:10,14,16,18,22 49:17,18 51:4,4,6 52:15 53:9 55:23 57:20 58:3,15 59:10 60:15,18,19 60:23,24,25 61:1,8 61:10,15,23,25 62:8,10,19 63:11 63:19,22 64:1,16 65:8 66:21,22,24 67:1,3,6,25 68:1 68:11,21 69:5,17 69:23 70:2,9,18,25 71:19,23,24 72:1,1 72:4,7 73:2,15 74:6,8,8,9,12,13 74:20 76:2,10,15 77:10,14,17 78:2 79:5,5,23 80:12,14 81:4,14,17,24 82:1 83:2 84:3,15,22 85:24 86:17,18,20 86:25,25 87:3,6,16 88:3,7,9,13,15,19 89:11 90:3,4,18 91:4,8,9,10,21,25 92:3,8 93:2,19,23 93:25 94:8,14,15 94:17,18,22 95:2,4 95:5,12,17,18,19 96:5 school's 9:19 24:17 79:17 95:1 95:7</p>	<p>schools 4:20 5:4 5:13,14 15:16,17 26:18 27:4,12 31:6 32:11 33:22 34:23 39:15 44:21 55:13,16,17,24 56:6,18 60:10 65:14,21 67:5,20 75:14 76:20 77:23 78:13,15,16,17,17 78:24 79:6 81:11 87:12 92:13 93:22 93:22,24 schumm 2:8 14:5 26:16,16,17 27:11 28:7 29:2,13 30:10,22 31:10,23 32:7,18 33:4,9,14 35:1,5,12,16,20,25 36:9,18,24 37:17 38:3 41:17 42:3 42:14,21 43:4,8,23 44:3,9,20,25 45:4 45:25 47:13 48:1 48:5,16,20 49:1,6 49:15 50:22 51:6 51:16,20 52:5,8,10 52:21 53:15 54:2 54:11,25 55:6,11 55:20 56:3 59:1,4 59:14,16,20,22 60:4,16 61:17,22 62:4,8,18 63:1,5 63:16,22 64:9,12 64:25 65:4,13,19 65:23 66:2,11,16 66:22 67:5,13 74:7 93:18 94:1,5 science 14:19 17:15 18:5,25 19:14,15 20:1,21</p>
<p>s</p>			
<p>s 26:16 70:24 80:9 81:23 84:9 86:24 sad 87:1 sake 13:15 25:21 salaries 39:11,16 40:10,11,22 salary 28:19 40:25</p>			

<p>53:22 69:10 81:14 86:10</p> <p>sciences 69:16</p> <p>scientific 19:11</p> <p>scores 13:3 22:19</p> <p>scottsville 23:21</p> <p>screen 86:4</p> <p>season 16:1</p> <p>seat 16:23</p> <p>seated 82:3</p> <p>second 3:21 10:7 39:2 41:17 58:7 58:25 72:17,23 84:10 93:5,13,16</p> <p>secondary 70:11</p> <p>secondly 90:15</p> <p>seconds 81:20</p> <p>sector 16:9</p> <p>security 12:13</p> <p>see 11:10 12:9,24 20:9,22 27:16 28:10 29:7 31:8 36:5 42:18 47:10 53:13 62:4,9 64:10 75:3,19 76:23 84:12 85:2 86:14 87:1 90:14 90:18 94:23</p> <p>seeing 19:22 90:25</p> <p>seek 7:9</p> <p>seeking 48:23</p> <p>seeks 53:8</p> <p>seen 11:16 21:8 74:25 75:1,2 84:25,25 88:16 92:6</p> <p>selection 69:21</p> <p>self 22:9</p> <p>sending 67:6</p> <p>senior 85:23</p>	<p>sense 23:25 28:18 28:24</p> <p>sentence 72:24</p> <p>separate 67:1 90:20</p> <p>serious 61:13</p> <p>seriously 9:10</p> <p>serve 5:13 44:21</p> <p>servers 58:12</p> <p>service 34:23,25 35:6,7,11,13,15,21 49:4,18 68:19</p> <p>serviceable 43:25</p> <p>services 35:8,13 35:19 41:22 42:22 43:10 44:23,25 45:12,15,20 46:25 47:3,14,15 48:1,17 50:23 54:12,20,24 55:3 58:24,25 59:17 61:23 66:8 78:10</p> <p>serving 16:2</p> <p>set 3:3 4:20 41:8 49:4</p> <p>setting 19:24 45:8</p> <p>settings 40:20</p> <p>seven 39:4</p> <p>sewer 63:10</p> <p>shafer 2:10 14:3</p> <p>shana 1:7</p> <p>share 42:1 57:19 57:23</p> <p>sherwood 81:22 81:22 90:15</p> <p>shoes 50:21</p> <p>show 52:14 83:13 83:13 96:10</p> <p>showed 75:16</p> <p>shown 20:19 43:24 96:10</p>	<p>shows 30:14</p> <p>sick 80:9,9,16</p> <p>side 56:4</p> <p>sign 8:18,21,23</p> <p>signatures 7:16,20 24:19</p> <p>signed 7:13 23:20</p> <p>significant 24:5 29:19 48:10 69:23 71:10 89:6</p> <p>significantly 28:24 30:19 39:16 43:20 46:11 48:8 50:17</p> <p>similar 28:18 44:22 48:8 60:11</p> <p>simply 62:22</p> <p>sincerely 51:21</p> <p>single 20:6 44:7 53:4 58:14</p> <p>siphon 63:9</p> <p>siphoned 59:13</p> <p>sir 9:21 25:24 34:5 73:19 78:9,21 79:4,15 93:15</p> <p>sit 90:25</p> <p>site 69:21</p> <p>situation 40:9 62:10</p> <p>situations 62:16 65:10</p> <p>six 18:14 19:17 35:24 39:4 47:8 57:25 62:21 74:13 74:14</p> <p>sixth 15:9 68:6</p> <p>size 25:10,12 44:22</p> <p>sizes 28:3</p> <p>skill 41:8</p> <p>skilled 16:15</p>	<p>skills 18:18,20 20:1,10,18 21:3,6 22:9,14</p> <p>slideshow 85:15</p> <p>slim 61:11</p> <p>small 87:15 91:4</p> <p>smaller 88:5</p> <p>smallest 60:20</p> <p>social 22:9 39:23 69:16</p> <p>solicitor 1:5 9:22 11:6 33:25</p> <p>solutions 1:22 20:8</p> <p>solve 19:4</p> <p>solving 19:9 20:5 23:10</p> <p>somebody 20:12 44:17 57:10</p> <p>son 81:7,9 87:22</p> <p>soon 89:22</p> <p>sorry 8:16 31:19 46:8 49:14 63:5 73:17 81:7 89:17 90:6 93:8</p> <p>sort 3:3 63:10</p> <p>sounded 82:5</p> <p>sounds 86:21</p> <p>source 44:2 56:17 56:20 57:4</p> <p>space 53:8 56:25 70:4</p> <p>spaces 17:21</p> <p>spanish 37:5,6 40:15</p> <p>speak 3:3 10:8 12:14 45:10 79:24 80:7 84:13</p> <p>speaking 78:11 81:2,3 82:13 88:25 90:24 96:8</p>
--	--	--	--

<p>special 29:1 30:5 36:12 38:21 47:11 47:13,17,20 48:21 48:22 49:17,19,21 50:12,23,25 51:7 51:14,17 52:11,23 61:3 65:1,8,10 83:23,24 87:21,21 88:1,2,5,25 89:1</p> <p>specialist 37:12,15 37:15,23 38:15 39:7</p> <p>specialists 36:13 36:19,24 38:8,10</p> <p>specialized 47:3 55:22,22</p> <p>specific 32:7 36:11 37:17 44:3 45:4 47:9,15 54:3 59:7 65:23</p> <p>specifically 4:12 12:18 53:12 69:9</p> <p>specify 78:4</p> <p>speech 47:24 48:9</p> <p>speedboat 25:11</p> <p>spend 73:1 82:15 82:19</p> <p>spending 35:4 82:16 91:2</p> <p>spends 27:14</p> <p>spent 32:20</p> <p>st 80:23</p> <p>stability 40:7</p> <p>staff 30:4,4,5 33:20 42:7 45:19 46:10 53:11</p> <p>staffed 43:6</p> <p>staffing 29:4,5,24</p> <p>stamp 8:20</p> <p>stand 9:8 79:17</p>	<p>standard 18:2 65:5,5 68:1</p> <p>standards 5:6 14:20</p> <p>standing 12:9</p> <p>standpoint 20:2</p> <p>stands 34:17</p> <p>start 6:3 14:24 22:24 26:7,9 60:14 63:4,7,14 83:18</p> <p>started 21:14 84:23 85:2</p> <p>starting 10:16 11:23 17:14 39:11 39:16 40:8,10</p> <p>startup 28:8</p> <p>state 7:11 15:16 17:20 31:18 39:20 48:23 54:24 67:1 80:5 94:14</p> <p>stated 28:11 53:21</p> <p>statement 31:11 60:17 67:21 73:25 73:25 74:1</p> <p>states 6:15 34:1,17 85:12,16</p> <p>statute 33:24 34:4 34:7 42:10</p> <p>statutory 34:6 53:7</p> <p>stem 16:6 17:1,21 55:18 68:1 69:15</p> <p>step 4:7 15:4 25:6</p> <p>steve 83:1,10</p> <p>stops 82:21</p> <p>store 21:24</p> <p>stranded 89:24</p> <p>strengthens 23:7</p> <p>strictly 27:13</p>	<p>strive 23:17</p> <p>strong 14:22 15:12 16:4</p> <p>strongly 71:16</p> <p>structure 92:17</p> <p>struggles 12:18</p> <p>student 4:23 5:17 5:22 12:20,20,25 13:11 16:6 17:22 25:1 26:25 28:12 28:23 29:17,18 36:14 37:21 40:1 40:1 45:13 47:4 47:12 48:12,13,18 52:13 53:4,8 59:5 59:8,9 64:17,21 65:7 67:6 81:9 82:15 94:24 95:6</p> <p>student's 64:21,22</p> <p>students 4:24 7:18 7:18,19 10:18 12:16,23 13:8,15 14:16,18,21 15:1,9 15:10 16:3,12,24 17:5,24 18:19 19:6 20:9,11,16,20 21:16,16,19 22:20 22:22 23:14,17 24:15,18 25:8,8 26:23 28:13,25 29:4,9 30:3,8,18 35:23 37:7 43:25 45:13 47:18 48:9 48:22 49:21,24 50:12,15,19 51:7 51:10,24 52:11,12 52:16,19,22 68:5,7 68:9,15,18 70:19 71:20 81:11 82:17 85:8,10,21 86:9,19 87:7,14 88:14,18</p>	<p>88:24 92:14 94:14 95:5,11,16,17</p> <p>study 85:24</p> <p>studying 12:13</p> <p>stuff 8:12</p> <p>style 50:20</p> <p>subject 19:15 38:22</p> <p>subjects 69:15</p> <p>submission 72:12</p> <p>submissions 49:11</p> <p>submit 3:19</p> <p>submitted 6:4,13 78:19</p> <p>subsequent 27:16 37:14</p> <p>substantively 5:18</p> <p>substitutes 59:15</p> <p>suburban 78:17 78:23</p> <p>succeed 13:8 81:8</p> <p>succeeded 81:9</p> <p>succeeding 12:22</p> <p>success 13:16 17:24 18:20 20:9 20:15,18 21:4 65:20 82:1</p> <p>successful 17:18 63:24</p> <p>sufficient 8:1,1</p> <p>suggest 19:24 95:11</p> <p>suggesting 52:18 52:21</p> <p>suggests 19:25</p> <p>suite 1:24 2:4</p> <p>sullivan 7:19 26:12</p> <p>summarizing 25:16</p>
---	---	---	---

<p>summary 73:23 summer 2:11 14:4 superintendent 72:13 74:7 82:5 85:1 96:13 superintendent 1:4 3:1 supervision 85:18 supervisor 84:11 supervisors 24:24 supplement 45:19 supplied 23:23 supply 16:15 support 15:23 24:5,17,21,25 33:20 42:7 51:11 51:11,25,25 58:14 71:7 83:2 84:14 86:17 87:5 supposed 4:22,22 4:23,24 5:4 89:10 supposedly 75:14 sure 8:3 13:16 16:14 18:19 26:8 28:7 30:13,22 49:15 51:23 56:3 60:6,16 63:17 70:22 73:6 79:20 82:17 90:7 91:22 91:25 92:3 surplus 30:15 surrounding 24:16 40:23 survival 21:4 sustainable 91:25 swilley 1:15 51:9 51:18,23 52:7,9 switches 58:13 system 22:17 58:16 64:20</p>	<p>systems 23:6</p> <hr/> <p>t</p> <p>t 70:24 86:24 97:1 97:1 table 56:1 tablet 21:9 tablets 17:7 tackles 19:7 take 6:1,9,12,24 7:24 8:24 9:10 12:1 16:8 17:16 25:9 29:25 53:4,7 64:6 84:2 87:19 89:12 92:10 taken 85:24 97:5 takes 82:23 talent 39:22 talk 15:18 18:22 18:23 21:3 67:17 68:4 69:7 82:4 86:12 94:5 talked 56:24,25 82:5 talking 11:19 18:23 24:6 27:10 37:4 50:18 51:11 62:13 63:17 68:5 86:2 87:21 88:1,5 talks 72:25 tasd 70:19 71:21 taxation 65:12 taxes 62:6,9 65:14 94:10,18,19 teach 22:16 40:14 85:11,15,18 teacher 18:17,18 29:7 30:5 32:4 37:15 38:15,15 39:7,24 40:10 49:21,23 50:12,14 51:10,14 52:4</p>	<p>75:18 77:1 89:20 89:24,25 teachers 12:15 13:10 25:7 32:6 36:6,12,20,20,22 37:2,12 38:7,17 39:12,18 40:1,1,13 40:22,24 41:3 42:8 56:21 89:12 89:14,18,21 teaching 4:25 16:21 17:5 18:8 18:19 21:7 22:5 22:14,24 31:8 33:19 34:15,20 38:21 39:22 50:1 50:16 85:3,6 team 83:16,18 teams 20:16 teamwork 14:21 tear 87:24 tearing 83:20 tech 16:9 53:18 67:25 technical 20:22 21:1 35:8 58:14 technically 87:23 technicians 16:17 techniques 85:20 technological 14:17 21:3 technology 16:6 21:5,6 53:11,16 54:8,18,19 55:19 56:8,10,16 57:1 58:15 59:12 67:17 67:18,20 68:13,16 68:20,25 78:10 80:25 85:15 86:3 86:3 87:11</p>	<p>tell 44:20 56:7 57:9,9,12 60:4 88:24 92:25 tells 21:19 temporary 23:23 63:8 70:3,11 72:20 ten 30:3 82:23 tenant 15:17 tenants 5:12 tend 21:16 tenure 40:12 term 84:10 terms 4:16 23:19 25:7 32:8 41:1 53:21 73:4 testimony 97:5 texts 19:15 thank 9:17,21 12:13 13:16 14:9 25:24 30:22 34:11 58:21 59:21 77:20 78:22 81:17,23 82:24 84:5,18 86:6,22 87:16 88:11 90:10,12 93:15 95:23 96:5 96:8,9,15,17 theme 42:18 theoretical 6:10 thereof 97:7 thing 9:16 80:12 82:1 92:12 things 3:5 4:1,22 6:5 13:4,5 18:24 19:20,21 21:24 22:6,16 23:15 25:7,13 28:15 35:15,21 39:14 57:4,7 58:18 60:8 69:8 82:6 83:2,20</p>
--	--	--	--

<p>86:18 92:7 think 9:9,11,15 10:1,10 12:23 15:11,24 20:14 21:7 22:19,23 23:14 26:5 37:6 38:18 39:19,22 40:5,15,25 41:3,7 41:10 45:14 50:6 51:18 53:22 56:14 56:23 57:18 62:15 67:7 68:12,14,17 68:20,21,23 70:10 70:12 73:18 78:1 78:11 79:24 80:3 80:11,23 81:15 82:7,7,10 83:5 84:4 86:10,21 89:20 90:1,13,16 90:19 91:7,8 92:8 92:25 93:25 94:7 94:12 95:25 96:4 96:7,9 thinking 14:18 57:1 68:18 69:25 91:1 third 58:8 thomas 88:12,12 89:17 thought 14:13 23:16 85:13 86:19 thoughts 60:16 88:22 90:6 thousands 64:19 three 21:8 39:1 62:20 79:16,21 85:3,7 thrilled 83:21 thrive 18:8 22:5 22:15,15,21</p>	<p>thriving 22:25 throw 52:1 throwing 36:3 tie 54:3 ties 56:14 87:1,2 tiger 1:18 time 9:4 10:23 11:17,21 12:4 15:11,25 16:1,23 18:16 25:19 26:5 36:19 37:9 43:7 45:17 57:3 60:21 66:23 70:3 76:19 79:13 80:4 82:19 83:11 85:11 87:12 89:16 91:2 96:16 timeline 3:10,10 6:25 7:2 timelines 6:3 7:8,9 times 12:17 18:8 46:2 47:9 82:20 timing 80:7 tina 83:8 titles 36:11 today 12:14,20 13:14 82:6 88:16 89:9 tonight 3:6 6:1 9:1 13:25 80:11 83:5 90:24 96:1 tonight's 96:4 top 29:22 81:7,11 94:10 topic 94:9 total 29:23 66:17 91:14 95:6,13 touch 86:4 town 87:4,14,16 towns 16:10 township 15:2,3 24:24 71:6 82:18</p>	<p>84:11,12 townships 15:4 track 65:19 traditional 69:10 train 56:21 trainers 56:21 training 18:19 transcript 1:3 97:6 transportation 92:14 93:24 95:14 95:15 travel 15:11 87:4 treating 12:16 tremendous 56:16 96:9 trend 16:14 trends 61:24 true 65:6 74:6 76:17 97:6 truly 41:6 84:15 trust 44:15 try 66:4 68:14 69:18 91:15 trying 7:3 19:11 50:4 90:20 tubes 47:6 tuition 27:11 60:23,25 61:4,8,9 61:10 62:19 63:23 66:23 67:9 94:22 95:7 tune 25:13 tunkhannock 1:1 1:17,18 3:2,15 4:10,15 7:15,16 8:4 9:14 12:11 15:6,20 24:14 25:4 26:14,24 27:20 29:1 61:1 69:22 70:7,9</p>	<p>85:23 86:14 88:7 91:10,14,21 92:10 92:14 95:5 tunkhannock's 27:4,6 turn 25:1 two 4:3 7:6,12,14 7:20 9:9 10:6 21:8 29:6 36:12 38:25 39:3 41:14 60:16 61:3 67:11 80:6 81:20 82:14 85:18 90:20 91:11 94:10 type 25:1 32:5 39:12 54:16 types 5:3 32:9 typical 40:21,21 55:23 61:2 62:20</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">u</p> <hr/> <p>u 13:24 26:16 ultimate 13:13 22:19 unable 34:2 unanswered 11:13 uncomfortable 44:14 uncommon 64:17 64:24 understand 5:25 6:11 11:15 21:15 21:21 26:14 27:8 30:22 32:5 53:14 53:24 60:9 61:15 63:17 78:9 83:15 89:9 understanding 9:23 21:5 38:2 43:14 89:8 understands 88:21 understood 64:9</p>
--	---	--	---

<p>underwriter 32:22 unique 5:18,22 16:2 41:5 67:21 68:3 69:11,14 united 85:12,15 university 12:21 39:24 81:10 unknown 22:13 59:9 61:5,8 65:2 unknowns 60:21 unprepared 16:12 88:20 89:12 urban 40:20 78:17 78:24 use 4:25 17:7 19:6 20:12 21:9 23:1 24:1 55:23 56:19 56:20 65:8 68:22 69:9 85:7,8,9,9,20 85:22 users 68:15</p>	<p>view 83:4 vision 5:9 16:7 48:9 82:3 vital 17:11 vocabulary 37:5 voice 23:8 volatility 27:16 89:14,15 volunteers 47:1 vote 6:1,20,20,24 6:25 7:1,3</p>	<p>89:8 94:13 web 68:19 week 61:12 67:7 90:4 weeks 85:19 weidner 1:6 77:22 78:5 welcome 3:7,23,25 9:6,7 went 81:12 west 40:21</p>	<p>workmen's 43:12 works 3:9,10,10 44:15 world 14:17 16:8 19:2,12 80:23 worst 6:5,11 83:5 wow 86:19 wrap 4:1 89:17 wrong 64:7 79:20 92:7 93:9 wyalusing 7:19 26:12 wyoming 16:12 24:22</p>
<p>v</p>	<p>w</p>		<p>y</p>
<p>validated 8:6 values 23:2 variable 29:21,23 32:21 61:6,9 variables 60:21 variety 17:21 39:23 vary 31:2 32:20 varying 49:22 50:13 vast 78:11 vendor 44:4 vendors 45:5 79:18 veritext 1:22 versus 31:19 vested 79:21 videos 68:18</p>	<p>w 81:23 86:16 wages 40:16 waited 87:19 wal 70:7 want 3:8 5:25,25 6:11 9:4 10:24 11:12,12,17,18 14:9,12,24 17:18 21:11 30:12 51:22 55:25 58:15 61:17 81:23 85:4 86:20 89:5 92:2,19 wanted 11:22 16:4 79:20 81:24 86:8 88:13 90:7 wanting 38:4 wants 10:22 12:3 37:10 90:5 wargo 2:10 14:3 86:16,16 wash 66:5 washington 15:3 24:23 82:17 watched 19:18,19 watching 9:17 water 25:10 63:10 way 13:1 20:5 22:17 23:6 33:22 51:18 64:7 81:6</p>	<p>whatnot 50:18 wi 58:13 wiggle 62:15 wilkes 12:21 william 1:14 17:15 winville 15:3 wise 42:11 81:6 wish 6:23 withhold 93:16 women 24:23 won 80:24 wonderful 81:15 wonders 69:9 word 89:15 words 19:22 26:11 31:23 work 16:6 19:22 20:11,16 22:10 25:12 43:19 82:8 82:8 88:4,4,16 90:12,17 91:1 worked 78:12,14 78:23 79:6,6 83:16 workforce 22:12 working 14:16 55:13 56:5 60:14 63:6,21 64:2 65:16 66:24 78:16 90:13,17 91:15</p>	<p>yeah 37:24 51:20 year 18:15 21:8 23:24 26:22,22 27:7,12,12,14,16 27:18,18,22,23,24 27:25 28:7,9,22 29:10 30:15 32:21 35:8,9,14,19 36:12 36:17,18,21 37:1 37:12 38:25 39:1 39:3 43:4,19,22 44:24 48:5 53:3 54:1 56:7,18 58:5 59:6 60:13,18,20 60:22,24 61:6,7,25 62:17,20 64:13,14 68:6 69:2,2 85:10 85:14 86:9 89:19 95:4,7 year's 61:4,10 years 17:19 26:21 28:10 32:10,10 37:7,14 39:1 43:15 55:12 56:5 65:21 70:4 74:11 84:22 85:1,3,7</p>

86:5 91:12 yesterday 85:20 yielding 61:7 yolanda 2:11 14:7 young 17:17 87:11 younger 83:19
z
z 12:11 zelna 12:10,10 zero 42:7 61:4 66:18,19