

BEFORE THE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION

STATE OF NEW MEXICO

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
COMMUNITY INPUT HEARING
EXPLORE ACADEMY-SANTA FE

July 10, 2023

1:07 p.m.

Jerry Apodaca Education Building, Mabry Hall

300 Don Gaspar

Santa Fe, New Mexico

and

Via Zoom Webinar Video Teleconference

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2	<p>1 APPEARANCES</p> <p>2 COMMISSIONERS:</p> <p>3 ALAN BRAUER, Chair</p> <p>4 REBEKKA BURT, Vice Chair</p> <p>5 TIMOTHY BECK, Member</p> <p>6 STEVEN J. CARRILLO, Member</p> <p>7 PATRICIA GIPSON, Member</p> <p>8 STEWART INGHAM, Member</p> <p>9 K.T. MANIS, Member</p> <p>10 PED STAFF:</p> <p>11 CORINA CHAVEZ Director</p> <p>12 Charter School/Options for</p> <p>13 Parents and Families Division</p> <p>14 BRIGETTE RUSSELL Deputy Director</p> <p>15 Charter School/Options for</p> <p>16 Parents and Families Division</p> <p>17 LUCY VALENZUELA Technical Assistance and</p> <p>18 Training Specialist</p> <p>19 Charter School/Options for Parents</p> <p>20 and Families Division</p> <p>21 MISSY BROWN Technical Assistance and Support and</p> <p>22 Training Administrator</p> <p>23 Charter School/Options for</p> <p>24 Parents and Families Division</p> <p>25 SHARYN PEREA, Liaison to PEC</p>
3	<p>1 INDEX TO PROCEEDINGS</p> <p>2 PAGE</p> <p>3 1 Call to Order, Roll Call, 4</p> <p>4 Pledge of Allegiance,</p> <p>5 Salute to the New Mexico Flag</p> <p>6 2 Approval of the Agenda 5</p> <p>7 3 Community Input Hearing for Explore 5</p> <p>8 Academy-Santa Fe, Application and</p> <p>9 Peer Review Report</p> <p>10 A. Comments from PEC Chair 6</p> <p>11 B. Presentation by the Applicant 7</p> <p>12 C. Comments from the School District 18</p> <p>13 D. Comments from Tribal Authority 23</p> <p>14 (if applicable)</p> <p>15 E. Comments from the Public 23</p> <p>16 F. PEC Questions 30</p> <p>17 4 Recess 98</p> <p>18 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE 100</p> <p>19 ATTACHMENT:</p> <p>20 1 List of Attendees</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25</p>
4	<p>1 THE CHAIR: Good afternoon, everyone. I'm</p> <p>2 going to call our meeting to order. It is 1:02 p.m.</p> <p>3 And we're going to start with roll call.</p> <p>4 Vice Chair Burt?</p> <p>5 VICE CHAIR BURT: Thank you.</p> <p>6 Chair Brauer.</p> <p>7 THE CHAIR: Present.</p> <p>8 VICE CHAIR BURT: Vice Chair Burt is here.</p> <p>9 Secretary Armijo.</p> <p>10 (No response.)</p> <p>11 VICE CHAIR BURT: Commissioner Beck.</p> <p>12 COMMISSIONER BECK: Here.</p> <p>13 VICE CHAIR BURT: Commissioner</p> <p>14 Clahchischilliage, not present.</p> <p>15 Commissioner Ingham.</p> <p>16 COMMISSIONER INGHAM: Here.</p> <p>17 VICE CHAIR BURT: Commissioner Gipson.</p> <p>18 COMMISSIONER GIPSON: Here.</p> <p>19 VICE CHAIR BURT: Commissioner Taylor is</p> <p>20 not present.</p> <p>21 Commissioner Manis.</p> <p>22 COMMISSIONER MANIS: Here.</p> <p>23 VICE CHAIR BURT: And Commissioner</p> <p>24 Carrillo.</p> <p>25 COMMISSIONER CARRILLO: Here.</p>
5	<p>1 VICE CHAIR BURT: All right. We have a</p> <p>2 quorum of seven.</p> <p>3 THE CHAIR: Thank you.</p> <p>4 And, Commissioner Ingham, can you lead us</p> <p>5 into the Pledge, and then, Commissioner Carrillo,</p> <p>6 you can lead us into the Salute.</p> <p>7 (Pledge of Allegiance and Salute to the</p> <p>8 New Mexico Flag conducted.)</p> <p>9 THE CHAIR: Thank you. All right. Let's</p> <p>10 move into Item No. 2, Approval of the Agenda.</p> <p>11 VICE CHAIR BURT: Move to approve the</p> <p>12 agenda.</p> <p>13 THE CHAIR: Can we get a second?</p> <p>14 COMMISSIONER CARRILLO: Second.</p> <p>15 THE CHAIR: Great. All those in favor?</p> <p>16 (Commissioners so indicate.)</p> <p>17 THE CHAIR: All those opposed?</p> <p>18 (No response.)</p> <p>19 THE CHAIR: All right. That passes.</p> <p>20 That was one of the first times we did</p> <p>21 that when we didn't have anybody on the Zoom. So I</p> <p>22 had to make sure we didn't have anybody on the Zoom</p> <p>23 that we had to do a roll call.</p> <p>24 So the next item we will be doing, the</p> <p>25 main event for today, is Item No. 3, Community Input</p>

6	<p>1 Hearing for Explore Academy-Santa Fe.</p> <p>2 The Commissioners -- we have their</p> <p>3 application and their peer review reports that we've</p> <p>4 done for homework for today.</p> <p>5 I just wanted to start out and just thank</p> <p>6 the team for all the work that you've put into this.</p> <p>7 I want to thank the Charter School Division and the</p> <p>8 peer reviewers for all the extraordinary work that</p> <p>9 it takes to review an application as well.</p> <p>10 And so thank you so much for all that you</p> <p>11 all have been doing up to this point.</p> <p>12 Today we're going to be focusing in on</p> <p>13 Explore Academy. On Wednesday, we'll be going to</p> <p>14 Portales and engaging with another school out there</p> <p>15 as well.</p> <p>16 Today we're going to start out by hearing</p> <p>17 for 20 minutes from the applicant, Explore</p> <p>18 Academy-Santa Fe and their team. We'll keep the</p> <p>19 time for that.</p> <p>20 We'll then move into comments from the</p> <p>21 school district. I believe Santa Fe Public Schools</p> <p>22 will be zooming in -- or, sorry. I'm sorry.</p> <p>23 There's going to be a letter that's going to be read</p> <p>24 on behalf of Santa Fe Public Schools today. They'll</p> <p>25 have 10 minutes for that.</p>	8	<p>1 We have Leesa Leon, who's another</p> <p>2 cofounder. And she has to join virtually. She's</p> <p>3 been undergoing some cancer treatment, so she's not</p> <p>4 to be here with us. And we also have Karen</p> <p>5 Anderson, who is also one of our potential board</p> <p>6 members, and Jennifer O'Brien also joining us</p> <p>7 virtually, and then Katie Rarick joining us as well,</p> <p>8 our school business official.</p> <p>9 I'll go ahead and get started.</p> <p>10 The mission of Explore Academy-Santa Fe is</p> <p>11 to provide all students, regardless of background,</p> <p>12 with a personalized educational experience through</p> <p>13 the power of student choice, which allows each</p> <p>14 student to create a personalized and engaging</p> <p>15 educational pathway and preparation for college.</p> <p>16 The uniqueness of our school is Choice</p> <p>17 Theory. So whenever an individual has a choice,</p> <p>18 they are more engaged, happier, and more successful.</p> <p>19 Our school believes that one student</p> <p>20 provides infinite possibilities. So for every</p> <p>21 course, which we call "seminars," students have</p> <p>22 options. As students choose the flavors they want,</p> <p>23 or they find most interesting, their combination of</p> <p>24 choices, their educational pathway, becomes truly</p> <p>25 unique.</p>
7	<p>1 We'll hear any comments from tribal</p> <p>2 authorities.</p> <p>3 We'll then have comments from the public.</p> <p>4 Public comment will be limited to two minutes per</p> <p>5 speaker or group. And so if there are a lot of</p> <p>6 people in a group that want to share very similar</p> <p>7 thoughts and viewpoints, if we do have a ton of</p> <p>8 people, I may ask folks to consolidate, if that is</p> <p>9 appropriate for us to do.</p> <p>10 And then we'll finish up today with PEC</p> <p>11 questions to the applicants, and then we'll recess</p> <p>12 until Wednesday.</p> <p>13 Commission, any questions?</p> <p>14 (No response.)</p> <p>15 THE CHAIR: All right. And we have Missy</p> <p>16 or Lucy. Are you all -- you all one of the</p> <p>17 timekeepers?</p> <p>18 Okay. Great. Well, let's move into Item</p> <p>19 No. B, 20 minutes with the applicant. Welcome.</p> <p>20 MS. MEGHAN McGRAW: Hello, everyone. My</p> <p>21 name is Meghan McGraw. Thank you for your time in</p> <p>22 allowing us to speak today. I'm one of the</p> <p>23 cofounders for the proposed Explore Academy-Santa Fe</p> <p>24 school, and I will just quickly go over a couple of</p> <p>25 the other people of our team.</p>	9	<p>1 So our classes are called "flavors" at</p> <p>2 Explore Academy, and they are thematic variations of</p> <p>3 the same seminars. So flavors of the same seminar</p> <p>4 cover the same standards. And this provides</p> <p>5 students with a choice of, or to be a part, of how</p> <p>6 they want to learn, based on which flavor sounds</p> <p>7 more interesting to them.</p> <p>8 And we have a whole list of different</p> <p>9 examples of flavors.</p> <p>10 This one is Teaching Grammar Through</p> <p>11 Analysis of Musical Literature.</p> <p>12 Geometry Through Crop Circle Formations.</p> <p>13 Arguments Speaking and Listening Through</p> <p>14 TED Talks.</p> <p>15 Economics Through the Star Wars Universe.</p> <p>16 Yoga.</p> <p>17 Quadratic Equations with Angry Birds.</p> <p>18 Research Through Personality Type.</p> <p>19 Statistics Through March Madness.</p> <p>20 Ecology and Environmental Science through</p> <p>21 a Case Study of the Galapagos.</p> <p>22 The Holocaust as a Case Study for World</p> <p>23 War II.</p> <p>24 Triangle and Trigonometry through</p> <p>25 Ziplines.</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">10</p> <p>1 Throwback Flavor for PE: The Best of 2 Recess. 3 Geography Through Tolkien's Middle Earth. 4 Chemistry, Gas Laws, and Thermodynamics 5 Through Hot Air Ballooning. 6 Literature and Literary Analysis with 7 Harry Potter. 8 Imperialization Through Black Panther. 9 Probability of Extraterrestrials, 10 Combining Astronomy with Systems Equations. 11 The Economics of Sports Brands and 12 Athletic Figureheads. 13 And then Wii Sports for Physical 14 Education. 15 These are all examples of some of the 16 flavors that we would offer. 17 All right. 18 So what is the flavor? Where does it come 19 from? 20 The flavors are driven through the teacher 21 creativity. 22 So the teachers create the flavors. And 23 it's based off of teacher's interest and passion. 24 And they're put on display through the flavors that 25 they create for the students.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">12</p> <p>1 quarter, which is great, because that prepares them 2 for sixth and seventh grade, where they also 3 continue to switch at each quarter. 4 The mid/high school students choose the 5 flavors for four core content classes plus 6 electives. 7 So grades 6 and 7 switch at each quarter, 8 and grades 8 through 12 switch at each term, so at 9 each 22 days. 10 grades 8 through 12, all students must 11 earn credit for each set of standards. And if they 12 are not proficient after one seminar, they will 13 repeat that seminar until they have mastered it, and 14 then move on to the next set of standards. 15 In the course catalog, it's given for the 16 students at each course which flavors are offered. 17 So in this example, there's three different flavors 18 offered for one math course that the kids can choose 19 from. 20 And then alongside that, there's also 21 structures -- or the structure of how the flavor is 22 going to be taught provided in that course catalog 23 as well; as you see here, the K to 5, and then the 24 mid and high school structures. 25 And then I also want to just really stress</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">11</p> <p>1 Teacher/Student Synergy. Instead of 2 students being randomly placed in a random class 3 with random teachers, students are paired with 4 teachers and other students in a purposeful way, 5 creating stronger connections. 6 And then College Preparation. So flavor 7 choice extends from kindergarten through upper-level 8 majors programs, allowing students to explore 9 different career pathways through different flavors. 10 And the way that we support for choice, 11 students make choices from the flavors offered at 12 each grade level. Choices increase as students 13 develop and mature. So, obviously, kindergarteners 14 are not going to have the same choices as an 15 eleventh grader. 16 Students are provided the flexibility to 17 explore in their own way. And the course catalog 18 guides students and families with what flavors are 19 available at that time with that class or credit. 20 At the elementary school, students choose 21 themes for two core content areas; so Humanities and 22 STEM, plus the elective choice. So in grades K and 23 1, they stay with the same two core teachers all 24 year, and grades 2 and 3 switch at the semester. 25 And then grades 4 and 5 will switch each</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">13</p> <p>1 that Standards-Based Instruction, assessment, and 2 grading, instead of teaching all standards through 3 one large chunk of time, our idea is to teach less 4 standards in a shorter amount of time so that 5 students will be less overwhelmed and focus on that. 6 And then once they master that, they can move on to 7 the next set of standards. 8 Also, our school aims to serve students of 9 all backgrounds, and we'll work with our equity 10 council to ensure that we are doing this. 11 And then we also plan to provide free 12 meals and bus transportation services as well. 13 Some of the other support systems that 14 were described in the application are flex periods, 15 tutoring, inclusion, English Language Development, 16 special services, transportation, front-loading. 17 Unique to our model is the flex period. 18 It's kind of like a study hall for the kids. So 19 that provides all kids equal access and time to 20 complete their assignments throughout the school 21 day. 22 And now I'm going to hand it over to Karen 23 to talk about how our school is not a charter 24 management organization. 25 MS. KAREN ANDERSON: I'm Karen. I'm a</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">14</p> <p>1 relatively new board member.</p> <p>2 THE CHAIR: Karen, can you go ahead and</p> <p>3 spell your first and last name for the --</p> <p>4 MS. KAREN ANDERSON: K-a-r-e-n. And</p> <p>5 Anderson, A-n-d-e-r-s-o-n.</p> <p>6 So it's my understanding that Meghan and</p> <p>7 Leesa approached the person who started Explore</p> <p>8 Learning Systems about trying to open a -- how to</p> <p>9 support them in opening a charter school of our own</p> <p>10 up here. And then we gathered the board. And so my</p> <p>11 understanding is that the board will hire our own</p> <p>12 administrator, and that administrator will make all</p> <p>13 the hiring for all the other positions.</p> <p>14 Let me see my notes here.</p> <p>15 If we're approved, of course.</p> <p>16 The governing board will decide on all</p> <p>17 contract service providers, including any with</p> <p>18 Explore Learning Systems. So we will be our own</p> <p>19 entity. And if we just decide later that we don't</p> <p>20 want to teach the Explore Learning Model, and maybe</p> <p>21 want to try -- like, maybe Sesame Street came up</p> <p>22 with a teaching program, or we come up with our own,</p> <p>23 we are free to do that. We are not contracted under</p> <p>24 another entity. So --</p> <p>25 MS. MEGHAN McGRAW: We also have Jennifer</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">16</p> <p>1 where a lot of families find a big problem with the</p> <p>2 options they have. So the schools that we know</p> <p>3 about, the middle school, public school, I don't</p> <p>4 think any of the families that I know of would</p> <p>5 consider that a viable option, so they do resort to</p> <p>6 charters, or private if they can afford it.</p> <p>7 But the two charters here that most of our</p> <p>8 friends look to have a lottery system. And it's</p> <p>9 not -- there just aren't enough spaces. So a lot of</p> <p>10 times you're on a waitlist, or you're on the</p> <p>11 lottery, don't get a space. And then your middle</p> <p>12 school options, you really don't have a good option</p> <p>13 from what I've been hearing. And we're getting into</p> <p>14 that search right now.</p> <p>15 So with Explore, it's another option.</p> <p>16 It's -- the learning is exciting, and the kids will</p> <p>17 get to choose more about what they're learning, more</p> <p>18 individualized learning, smaller classrooms.</p> <p>19 So I think -- personally, I think we need</p> <p>20 more charters that cater to this learning kind of</p> <p>21 environment, where kids are really starving to just</p> <p>22 get the one-on-one and the group activity and less</p> <p>23 screen time and all of those things.</p> <p>24 So that's why I'm excited about Explore.</p> <p>25 And we're going to be doing a lot of</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">15</p> <p>1 O'Brien, who's joining virtually, and she's going to</p> <p>2 talk about community support.</p> <p>3 MS. JENNIFER O'BRIEN: Hi. I'm Jennifer</p> <p>4 O'Brien, and I'm a Santa Fe resident. I live with</p> <p>5 my husband and two children, ages 8 and 11. We've</p> <p>6 been here -- the kids were born here, raised in</p> <p>7 Santa Fe. They currently attend public school. And</p> <p>8 I've been a board member of their preschool as well</p> <p>9 as their current elementary school.</p> <p>10 We love Santa Fe, and we've had great</p> <p>11 teachers and schools so far. But we are looking for</p> <p>12 more, especially as my daughter gets into middle</p> <p>13 school.</p> <p>14 We -- after the pandemic and after the</p> <p>15 kids were online, it seems like when they went back</p> <p>16 to school, they had a lot more virtual learning at</p> <p>17 school where they were taking their Chromebook, and</p> <p>18 a lot less individualized instruction and</p> <p>19 creativity.</p> <p>20 So that has been sort of a reason why I</p> <p>21 think that enrollment has dropped maybe at public</p> <p>22 schools. And my kids have sort of -- their</p> <p>23 satisfaction with learning has gone down a little</p> <p>24 bit.</p> <p>25 And going into middle school here, that's</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">17</p> <p>1 community outreach. We're going to be reaching out</p> <p>2 to -- we're going to be setting up at the Artists</p> <p>3 Market at the Farmers Market to get the word out</p> <p>4 about this new charter. So that's going to be</p> <p>5 happening in July and then again in August. We'll</p> <p>6 be distributing fliers. We'll have a website.</p> <p>7 We're going to be promoting at different</p> <p>8 local events, just to get the word out to people in</p> <p>9 Santa Fe, because I know that people in Santa Fe --</p> <p>10 all the families that I have spoken to really,</p> <p>11 really are looking for more options in schools. And</p> <p>12 I know families that actually move away before</p> <p>13 middle school, because they just don't find the</p> <p>14 middle school options to be enough here. So, yeah.</p> <p>15 MS. KAREN ANDERSON: I would just like to</p> <p>16 say I also reflect that with my students. My</p> <p>17 students live in Pecos. It's the same thing. After</p> <p>18 COVID, there's a lot more Chromebook time, a lot</p> <p>19 more online classes. They're not excited. They</p> <p>20 feel like they're not very smart. And my girls are</p> <p>21 really, really, really intelligent. They're just</p> <p>22 not being engaged.</p> <p>23 And I'm really excited about this model.</p> <p>24 I've spoken with a few people recently. Like, if</p> <p>25 you had this option, would you send your kid to that</p>

18	<p>1 school? And it was, like, a resounding yes.</p> <p>2 If my -- I have a friend who said she</p> <p>3 would weigh in, but she said her Internet is coming</p> <p>4 in and out. She owns a business, Eldorado Dental.</p> <p>5 And she said she 100 percent would support this</p> <p>6 school. Now her daughter is already in college.</p> <p>7 But she would have liked more options.</p> <p>8 MS. MEGHAN MCGRAW: Okay. Thank you. So</p> <p>9 we look forward to answering more of your questions</p> <p>10 later.</p> <p>11 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. We're</p> <p>12 going to move on to Item No. C, Comments from the</p> <p>13 School District.</p> <p>14 And as I shared earlier, I believe we have</p> <p>15 a letter that will be read. And, Corina, is that</p> <p>16 going to be Sharyn? Or is that going to be you?</p> <p>17 Okay.</p> <p>18 DIRECTOR CORINA CHAVEZ: Commissioners, as</p> <p>19 you requested, a letter was sent to all</p> <p>20 superintendents across the state about the community</p> <p>21 input hearings. And Superintendent Hilario Chavez</p> <p>22 sent an e-mail to me and Sharyn this morning and</p> <p>23 asked that we read into the record the contents of</p> <p>24 this letter.</p> <p>25 So Sharyn will go ahead.</p>	20	<p>1 learning are offered throughout the district and at</p> <p>2 all grade levels. Duplicating this programming may</p> <p>3 lead to inefficiencies and the diversion of funds</p> <p>4 that could otherwise be used to enhance existing</p> <p>5 programs and support students.</p> <p>6 "A new charter school could impact the</p> <p>7 enrollment and resources of existing schools in the</p> <p>8 district. School enrollment in our schools is</p> <p>9 already impacted by a declining school-age</p> <p>10 population and numerous charter and private schools.</p> <p>11 Adding another such school will exacerbate the</p> <p>12 situation, potentially affecting the quality and</p> <p>13 diversity of educational opportunities in the</p> <p>14 district.</p> <p>15 "By approving the Explore Academy-Santa Fe</p> <p>16 Charter School, the New Mexico Public Education</p> <p>17 Commission may not meet the intention of the Charter</p> <p>18 Schools Act regarding implementation of different</p> <p>19 and innovative teaching methods, creation of new,</p> <p>20 innovative, and more flexible ways of educating</p> <p>21 children within the public school system, and not</p> <p>22 being contrary to the best interests of the local</p> <p>23 community or the school district in whose geographic</p> <p>24 boundaries the charter school applies to operate.</p> <p>25 "The decision to approve or reject any new</p>
19	<p>1 MS. SHARYN PEREA: "Dear Commissioners,</p> <p>2 Santa Fe Public Schools stands in strong opposition</p> <p>3 to approval of the charter applicant, Explore</p> <p>4 Academy-Santa Fe, which will replace -- which will</p> <p>5 replicate programming already available in the</p> <p>6 district, further school funding inequities, and</p> <p>7 have a potential dire impact on our existing public</p> <p>8 schools.</p> <p>9 "The Yazzie-Martinez lawsuit challenged</p> <p>10 the State's failure to sufficiently fund programs</p> <p>11 and services for low-income, Native American,</p> <p>12 English Language Learners, and students with</p> <p>13 disabilities. As such, the District's opposition is</p> <p>14 grounded in a need to protect the resources and</p> <p>15 funding provided for these students by the state in</p> <p>16 response to Yazzie-Martinez.</p> <p>17 "Approval of the charter application and</p> <p>18 diverting resources to a replicated program could</p> <p>19 undermine our efforts to provide necessary resources</p> <p>20 and improve- -- resources and improvements to our</p> <p>21 existing schools and students.</p> <p>22 "Introducing a charter school with</p> <p>23 programming similar to what the district already</p> <p>24 offers could result in a duplication of resources.</p> <p>25 Specifically, standards-based and project-based</p>	21	<p>1 charter school application should consider various</p> <p>2 factors, including the potential impact on existing</p> <p>3 public schools and the overall educational landscape</p> <p>4 in the district. It is ultimately up to the</p> <p>5 governing body responsible for approving charter</p> <p>6 applications to weigh these considerations and make</p> <p>7 a decision that best serves the needs of the</p> <p>8 community, while ensuring compliance with legal</p> <p>9 obligations, including Yazzie-Martinez.</p> <p>10 "In conclusion, instead of introducing a</p> <p>11 new charter school, it may be more beneficial to</p> <p>12 focus on collaboration and innovation within the</p> <p>13 existing schools in the community, both public and</p> <p>14 private. By working together, educators and</p> <p>15 administrators can share best practices, resources,</p> <p>16 and ideas to improve programming and address the</p> <p>17 challenging needs of students.</p> <p>18 "We stand in opposition to the applicant.</p> <p>19 "Sincerely, Hilario "Larry" Chavez,</p> <p>20 Superintendent of Schools."</p> <p>21 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Sharyn. And then,</p> <p>22 Corina, do we have -- will that be loaded up also</p> <p>23 for the Commission?</p> <p>24 DIRECTOR CORINA CHAVEZ: We are still</p> <p>25 collecting feedback on the school. Absolutely, we</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">22</p> <p>1 can upload that document and compile all the -- so 2 there's three ways that we're collecting feedback. 3 Currently, on the PEC's website there is a 4 link to a form that people can click on and 5 complete. 6 We're also, at the request of Ms. Woerner, 7 collecting e-mails if people have petitions or other 8 letters, and we will combine them all and turn them 9 into a PDF that would be included with the final 10 recommendation that comes from the Charter Schools 11 Division. 12 The third way that we're collecting input 13 from the community, in addition to verbal, but 14 written input, is -- it was a QR code when you first 15 walked in. And that is a way that people can very 16 quickly go in and click whether they support or 17 oppose the school. 18 THE CHAIR: Okay. I just wanted to make 19 sure that we were able to receive the letter from 20 your e-mail. 21 Commissioner Carrillo? 22 COMMISSIONER CARRILLO: Given that that -- 23 Mr. Chair, given that the letter was read in today's 24 meeting, I would like a hard copy of it within, 25 like, the next few minutes, so when it's time to</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">24</p> <p>1 from the Public. 2 As I mentioned earlier, this will be 3 limited to two minutes per speaker or group. 4 And you have, you know, I think folks who 5 wanted to provide comment, hopefully you already 6 signed up and connected either with Missy online or 7 in person. 8 Missy, let's start with is there anyone on 9 Zoom? 10 MS. MELISSA BROWN: Chair Brauer, we had 11 one person on Zoom, but they seem to have dropped 12 off. And we have three people in the room. 13 THE CHAIR: Great. And so let's move into 14 the -- to the -- to the public that's here in the 15 room. 16 And I think that -- would they come over 17 to your side? 18 And so when it's time for your moment to 19 share your public comment, go over to Missy on that 20 side. There's a microphone ready for you. 21 So, Missy, go ahead and call the first 22 person up please. 23 MS. MELISSA BROWN: Our first speaker is 24 Kevin. 25 MS. KAREN ANDERSON: Excuse me. I just</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">23</p> <p>1 respond to specifically this letter of the district, 2 I'm able to do so knowledgeably because I'll have it 3 in front of me. 4 So I'm wondering if our Charter Schools 5 associates could -- I don't know if the others want 6 a hard copy also, but I would love a hard copy of 7 that. 8 DIRECTOR CORINA CHAVEZ: Commissioner, I 9 can forward it to the Commission and to the founders 10 right now so that you have a copy of it. 11 COMMISSIONER CARRILLO: Okay. 12 Unfortunately, I'm not able to get on my -- it's a 13 long story, but I can't get on my district -- on 14 my -- 15 DIRECTOR CORINA CHAVEZ: We have a printed 16 hard copy that you can take -- 17 COMMISSIONER CARRILLO: Thank you very 18 much. 19 THE CHAIR: We're going to be going on to 20 Item No. D. Is there any tribal authority, any 21 tribal ed departments, either online or on Zoom? 22 Missy, anyone on Zoom? 23 MS. MELISSA BROWN: Not that I'm aware of. 24 THE CHAIR: I don't see any here. 25 We're going to move on to Item E, Comments</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">25</p> <p>1 received a message that someone's son is waiting to 2 comment, but they -- 3 FROM THE FLOOR: My name is Kevin Judd, 4 K-e-v-i-n J-u-d-d. I just want to say that I really 5 hope that this school opens in Santa Fe. I like 6 that you pick the way you learn, and there are many 7 options for students. I have friends who drive to 8 Albuquerque for school. As you all know, it's a 9 pretty long drive for school. And they don't have 10 to do that if this school opens up in Santa Fe. And 11 I would personally like to attend a school like 12 this. Thank you. 13 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Board President, I 14 think you were trying to say something. Okay. 15 MS. MELISSA BROWN: Our next speaker is 16 Lola. 17 FROM THE FLOOR: Hello. My name is Lola 18 Sok, L-o-l-a S-o-k. And I asked my mom to let me be 19 here today because I am in support of Explore 20 Academy-Santa Fe. 21 I wish there had been a chance to attend a 22 school like this in Santa Fe when I was younger, 23 because this school has a model that supports its 24 students while focusing on every skill that we are 25 supposed to learn by graduation.</p>

26	<p>1 And I love that students get to pick the 2 way they learn and the version of each class. 3 If I could go back to kindergarten and 4 start over, this would be the school that I would 5 choose. Thank you. 6 THE CHAIR: Thank you. 7 MS. MELISSA BROWN: And our final speaker 8 is Karyl Ann Armbruster. 9 THE CHAIR: Welcome back. 10 MS. KARYL ANN ARMBRUSTER: Thank you. 11 Should I spell my name? 12 THE CHAIR: Yes, please. 13 MS. KARYL ANN ARMBRUSTER: Then I won't 14 spell it. 15 Yes. I am a former teacher for 39 years. 16 I'm a special education and traditional public 17 schools. I was on this Commission for six years. I 18 have spoken for this school in prior meetings. 19 The thing that I'm hearing, since I'm sort 20 of divorced from schools right now, is enormous 21 problems with parents and with teachers, getting 22 teachers to stay. 23 I am in Los Alamos, where Justin Baiardo 24 graduated from. And that is a good school system. 25 It is. But they have the same problems. And the</p>	28	<p>1 that would be great, because you -- instead of 2 having a whole year that you pass or fail, you have 3 little parts on doing this. 4 So I do support this. I do understand 5 what the superintendent said. It's clear. But at 6 the same time, I think it's important to look at 7 something that's different and successful with the 8 children of 2023. 9 Thank you. 10 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner. 11 MS. MEGHAN MCGRAW: Chair Brauer, Leesa 12 Leon, who's one of our cofounders who could not be 13 here because she has cancer, her son is online and 14 would like to speak, if possible. He didn't speak 15 up. 16 THE CHAIR: You know, Commission, are you 17 okay with that? Okay. 18 MS. MEGHAN MCGRAW: Thank you. 19 MS. MELISSA BROWN: You have been promoted 20 to the panel. You can unmute and speak. You have 21 two minutes. 22 FROM THE PUBLIC: Aidan. 23 THE CHAIR: Aidan, can you hear us? If 24 you can, you can go ahead and start your comments. 25 MS. MEGHAN MCGRAW: It may be the phone</p>
27	<p>1 problems I'm seeing for people is it's the same. 2 It's just not enough different things. 3 And this generation, of which I am 4 obviously not a part, is different. And I think 5 that we need to change schools, much like we change 6 everything else, you know. Twenty-five years ago, 7 we didn't have cell phones and computers. 8 And I don't know who's timing this, 9 because I'm not timing it either. 10 I want to say that I think Explore teaches 11 the regular curriculum. No, they're not bilingual; 12 no, they don't have music, you know, as a specialty 13 between the charter schools. But what they have is 14 a different way of presenting the same exact 15 information. 16 They also -- unless this has changed -- 17 have it divided into smaller pieces. So you have to 18 pass that small amount before you can go to the next 19 one. So a class may be divided into three different 20 sections. And you have to pass the one with a "B" 21 or better, and then you get to go to the second 22 session. And if you don't, then you just have to do 23 it again. And you may do it with the same teacher, 24 or you may do it with someone else. 25 But I think, because I was in special ed,</p>	29	<p>1 number. Oh, Gordon O'Brien. Sorry. 2 THE CHAIR: Gordon, if you can go ahead, 3 you can start your comments. 4 MR. GORDON O'BRIEN: This is Gordon. Can 5 you hear me? 6 THE CHAIR: If you could get a little bit 7 closer and talk a little bit louder, that would be 8 great. 9 MR. GORDON O'BRIEN: I have my son here 10 who's going to make a public comment. 11 FROM THE PUBLIC: I am excited about new 12 choices in Santa Fe. Explore Academy sounds like 13 fun. I would like to choose what I learn about. 14 MR. GORDON O'BRIEN: Thank you so much. 15 THE CHAIR: Gordon, what was the name of 16 your child? 17 MR. GORDON: Shane O'Brien. And he's 18 eight years old and starting third grade at public 19 school in Santa Fe. 20 MS. MELISSA BROWN: Can you please spell 21 the name for the court reporter. 22 MR. GORDON: Sure. Shane is S-h-a-n-e. 23 O'Brien O-'-B-r-i-e-n. 24 THE CHAIR: Thank you so much. Thank you 25 for joining us today.</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">30</p> <p>1 MS. MEGHAN McGRAW: I apologize. I 2 thought it was Leesa's son, not O'Brien. 3 MR. GORDON O'BRIEN: Okay. Sorry for the 4 confusion. Thank you. 5 THE CHAIR: And that was our final public 6 speaker? Great. 7 We're going to move into 3, Item No. F, 8 Public Education Commission Questions. 9 So now we have a chance, Commission -- 10 Commissioners -- to ask any questions that we have 11 to the applicants about their application. 12 So -- and I think what we'll try to do -- 13 this isn't a one-and-done moment. But we'll try to, 14 if you all are okay with this, give you the floor to 15 kind of go through many of your questions. 16 Then we're going to give some other people 17 on our Commission the chance to ask their questions. 18 And then if there's any lingering ones, we'll kind 19 of come back. 20 But I do want to make sure we get to hear 21 from everyone. So I'll try to use your time to 22 answer the questions that are top of mind, and then 23 we'll move on to others. 24 Does that sound okay? 25 Great. So I think, Commissioner Beck, I</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">32</p> <p>1 THE CHAIR: Ms. Rarick, would you mind 2 just stating your name and -- 3 MS. KATIE RARICK: Oh, sorry. My name is 4 Katie Rarick. K-a-t-i-e R-a-r-i-c-k. I'm the 5 business manager for Explore Charter Schools. 6 And so we use that number to be an 7 average. So we know that we're going to get some 8 below; we know we're going to get some above. So we 9 try to have a number that is realistic, and knowing 10 that it's probably a strong average of where we're 11 going to get. 12 The recruitment piece, I'm going to let 13 someone from the founding team talk to you a little 14 bit more. 15 MS. KAREN ANDERSON: That will take place 16 once we've hired the main administrator. That 17 person will be putting out the search for the 18 applicants for the -- for all the jobs, including 19 the teachers, especially the teachers. 20 MS. MEGHAN McGRAW: We'll also advertise 21 and seek teachers out that way. We'll need some 22 additional support. We'll put advertisements out 23 online within the community. We'll do, like, 24 webinar workshop-type things to give information 25 about what the school is all about and what their</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">31</p> <p>1 think your hand was up first. And then Commissioner 2 Carrillo. 3 COMMISSIONER BECK: Hi. I'm in District 2 4 in Albuquerque. But I'm an ex-teacher for 13 -- 5 last 13 years of my career. 6 When looking at your first year in terms 7 of kindergarten, first, second, and sixth grade, you 8 budgeted the teacher salary at \$62,700, I believe. 9 Are you going to go with the Level 1, 2, and 3, just 10 like the State? Because I think Level 1 starts 11 at -- if I'm not mistaken -- at \$60,000. Fifty? I 12 thought it went up to 60. Are you sure? 13 MS. KATIE RARICK: It's 50, 60, 70. 14 COMMISSIONER BECK: Okay. So how do you 15 see Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 teachers coming 16 in? And where are you -- I saw where you said you 17 were going to recruit them. 18 Can you be a little more specific as to 19 where you're going to look to recruit them, and then 20 what the mix of that Level 1, Level 2, Level 3. 21 Obviously, if you're at sixty-two seven, you're 22 expecting less Level 1, more Level 2, and then 23 Level 3; is that correct? 24 MS. KATIE RARICK: Thank you, Commissioner 25 Beck. So we will have a --</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">33</p> <p>1 expectations would be and things like that. 2 MS. KATIE RARICK: And the one last thing 3 I'll say about our salary schedule is it's a little 4 bit higher than the average salary. We try to bump 5 it up about 4 to 5 percent higher than the district. 6 That's another recruitment tool that we do use. 7 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Beck, is there 8 any other question right now that you'd like to -- 9 Commissioner Carrillo? 10 COMMISSIONER CARRILLO: First, I just want 11 to comment on the Santa Fe Public Schools letter. 12 And then, later, after a go-round, I will 13 have questions. All right? 14 So with due respect to Larry Chavez and 15 the district and their board, and the argument of 16 taking resources from a district and to a charter 17 is -- has become the most BS, overused argument that 18 there is. 19 These are all our kids; these are all our 20 schools. They're public schools. It's SEG money. 21 No district has a right to that -- a right to those 22 funds. 23 And it just gets old and troubling that 24 that argument is made. And it was made at the 25 Roundhouse when it was just such a pathetic effort</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">34</p> <p>1 for Representative Lujan, Senator Mimi Stewart, and 2 the Santa Fe Public Schools board to try to 3 basically create a moratorium on charter schools 4 using those kinds of arguments, that we're taking 5 kids away. 6 And as I've said before -- and I'll 7 address some specifics in here -- and I know that 8 Santa Fe Public Schools right now, in their board -- 9 because I was on that for nine years in case -- I'm 10 not speaking out of turn; I speak of what I know. I 11 know that right now, they are doing this project 12 of -- kind of makes me laugh because the term is so 13 overused these days -- reimagining, reimagining 14 public schools. 15 And I've said numerous times, and said 16 this one time to the New Mexico School Boards 17 Association, if you want to reimagine public 18 schools, look to see what charter schools are doing 19 that's attracting kids and families; okay? 20 And I bring up again -- and I'm doing it 21 today for the record. It was Johnny -- can't 22 remember his last name -- who's the president of 23 SHRM, who said at a school boards conference, 24 basically said, "Adapt or die." 25 If you don't start reimagining the way you</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">36</p> <p>1 which the districts can really learn from, or even 2 specific ideas from specific schools that can be so 3 germane to what districts are doing all over the 4 state. 5 I'm not just picking on SFPS. I'm picking 6 on everybody. It's, like, get into 2023, okay? 7 Because it's like Johnny said, adapt or die. 8 Now, specific to this, you know, the 9 idea -- and maybe there's some school, and I'm still 10 really plugged in, that I don't know about that's 11 doing flavors, that's teaching all of these subjects 12 in a really different way, (incomprehensible) know. 13 And this is nothing -- and I agree with 14 Superintendent Chavez. If there was a school -- and 15 we did get a proposal for a school at one point this 16 year that really was just proposing a small school. 17 It wasn't any different than what the district was 18 doing. 19 And there's no way on earth I'd support 20 that kind of a charter, because then you really are 21 just looking for the small-school experience and not 22 doing what you can to increase outcomes in your own 23 district, whether it's as a parent, teachers, 24 working together. I would never support something 25 like that. But, clearly, that's not what this</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">35</p> <p>1 do things and get out of the 1980s and quit being 2 controlled by the NEA and AFT, you're never going to 3 make the progress that you want to make. 4 And I know I've kind of become kind of the 5 enemy of the unions. At one time, they supported 6 me, 12, 13 years ago. But it's -- it's not 7 something that I'm making up. You can see where 8 oftentimes where the roadblocks are. 9 And that's why I'm excited about charters. 10 And I'll admit that when I was on the 11 public schools board, no, I wasn't very excited. 12 You weren't our property. But as I learned more and 13 more, I realized, one, we can learn from one 14 another. And I did speak at the New Mexico School 15 Boards conference -- this was during the pandemic. 16 And when it was time for me to speak -- 17 and I couldn't help but notice -- and here, I had 18 just gotten off the board -- I couldn't help but 19 notice about two-thirds of the participants on that 20 Zoom call who were board members from all over the 21 state got off the call, which I personally found 22 very insulting. 23 And Joe Guillen and I have talked about 24 how we can partner together. There are things we 25 are doing, whether it's the performance framework,</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">37</p> <p>1 school is. 2 And I'm not saying whether I'll support or 3 not support this school when it comes to the vote 4 next month. What I'm saying is don't say you're 5 replicating anything when you're not. Or if you 6 are, be specific. 7 You have three working days, I believe, to 8 put something in writing that we will then see that 9 will be on the website. Be specific. What 10 elementary school do you have right now that is 11 offering education this way, in flavors? 12 What 9-12 do you have? 13 Be specific, because I have not seen it. 14 I don't believe it's happening, and people come to 15 me all the time wanting options. 16 That's why I supported THRIVE two years 17 ago. And they -- you know, they opened with, I 18 believe, like one or two above their projected 19 number. And the parents I know that have kids at 20 THRIVE, they're all happy. Their kids are happy. 21 And where you have happy families and 22 happy kids, you have successful kids in successful 23 learning environments. 24 The idea of attaching this to 25 Yazzie-Martinez, I also think is just -- it's</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">38</p> <p>1 incorrectly trying to play on more of, I believe, an 2 emotional chord. You're taking money out of the 3 mouths of these kids that need it.</p> <p>4 And, no, because the lottery system is 5 really fair. Anyone can apply. And as it's a 6 federal law, certain needs have to be addressed by 7 law. We -- a charter school can't weed people out 8 and focus on one kid while leaving others behind.</p> <p>9 The idea of impacting enrollment, yeah, 10 absolutely, COVID -- lately, I say 11 "pandemic-schmandemic," because I'm just so tired of 12 hearing that as an excuse. Yeah, a lot of districts 13 have lost kids. And -- but I think now it's less to 14 the pandemic and more in people not having faith not 15 just in SFPS, but district schools in general, so 16 they're pumping a bunch of kids into virtual 17 schools, which I've never been a huge fan of.</p> <p>18 It's no secret, because I think the social 19 aspect of education is so important, that to bring 20 up Yazzie in response to why this school should not 21 be in Santa Fe, I think is disingenuous.</p> <p>22 And the idea -- I'm sorry. I want to 23 parse out every sentence in this. But I won't.</p> <p>24 The idea, though, of this somehow takes 25 away from quality and diversity, this adds</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">40</p> <p>1 People want options, whether it's SFPS or 2 people in the state. These things are coming. Get 3 ahead of the curve. Quit keeping the seats warm in 4 the board room and start actually producing results.</p> <p>5 That's all I have for now, probably 6 specific questions to the school later.</p> <p>7 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Ingham.</p> <p>8 COMMISSIONER INGHAM: I just had one 9 question. And I can't remember who made the 10 statement that -- that you're going to use this 11 methodology and be flexible. If it didn't work, you 12 could switch to another one.</p> <p>13 And it seems like there was a lot of 14 emphasis put on this -- this system, and that I'd 15 like to have -- have you speak to what it would take 16 to have you actually bail on this and go to another 17 one. Because it does seem that this is an integral 18 part of your proposal. Thank you.</p> <p>19 MS. KAREN ANDERSON: So I just made that 20 comment to make it really clear that we are not a 21 charter organized management system. Like, we are 22 not -- in which -- you know, we're not that.</p> <p>23 I feel very passionate that this model is 24 excellent, and I can't imagine that we would want to 25 change that. And to my knowledge, the schools that</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">39</p> <p>1 diversity, as THRIVE added diversity, as another 2 school that may come here, which I believe will 3 likely come in the next few years, will add 4 diversity.</p> <p>5 And so my response to SFPS -- I'm a Demon 6 all the way through. Don't get me wrong. Santa Fe 7 High, Demon all the way through. But it's, like, 8 get with the program, really.</p> <p>9 The -- as far as the Charter Schools Act 10 and the charter schools law, no, there is nothing 11 about this school coming here that's replicating 12 something that already exists.</p> <p>13 And that's -- let me see if I have another 14 note. Stuff like this just really upsets me, as you 15 can tell, and I get kind of really passionate, and 16 then my voice goes up and people think I'm angry. 17 I'm not angry at all; I'm disappointed. I expect 18 more because I love this district.</p> <p>19 And my last thing that I would say to this 20 district is what's coming next for you probably next 21 year is a -- I wouldn't doubt it -- is a charter 22 Montessori. If you want to nip it in the bud, open 23 a magnet school, get on it right away, and open it 24 next fall, a charter Montessori. After that, open a 25 Steiner school.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">41</p> <p>1 already exist under the Explore model are very 2 successful. The students are testing higher than 3 the public schools. They're happy.</p> <p>4 So I was just throwing that out as, like, 5 we have the choice. We are in charge. Our board 6 makes the decision, not Explore Learning Systems.</p> <p>7 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Gipson.</p> <p>8 COMMISSIONER GIPSON: I wish going forward 9 that the folks that are speaking for the school 10 don't make it sound like a charter school isn't a 11 public school. You know, that's -- that's the rub 12 we've had -- that's the hurdle that charter schools 13 have to keep getting over.</p> <p>14 You know, I appreciate parent support. 15 But it's, "Oh, we tried the public school. Now 16 we're going to try a charter school." The statement 17 you just made was they're testing higher than the 18 public schools.</p> <p>19 Charter schools are public schools. And, 20 you know, that -- that's where we often get that 21 competition thing going that we're -- we're all in 22 this for the same purpose, and that's to do the best 23 we can for kids and to have these options, so that 24 it's a narrative that we need to keep training 25 ourselves that it's -- you -- it is a traditional</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">42</p> <p>1 public school.</p> <p>2 But we are public schools. So, you know,</p> <p>3 as Commissioner Carrillo says -- you know, he</p> <p>4 disagrees with the superintendent, because the</p> <p>5 superintendent says, "Oh, you're eating our SEG</p> <p>6 money." Because -- well, it's our SEG money, too,</p> <p>7 because we're all public schools, so that we're all</p> <p>8 in this for the same purpose.</p> <p>9 So, just -- you know, that's just a</p> <p>10 comment. Sure.</p> <p>11 MS. KAREN ANDERSON: So I'm really new to</p> <p>12 this, and I just need to, like, learn the</p> <p>13 terminology. I'm excited that this is a public</p> <p>14 school. And I'm just excited that -- you know. I'm</p> <p>15 hoping -- I mean, we need to revolutionize our</p> <p>16 education system. And this is the beginning for me.</p> <p>17 And I -- you know, public district schools</p> <p>18 can adapt and start using some of the methodologies</p> <p>19 that they're seeing working in the public charter</p> <p>20 schools and incorporate that into their district.</p> <p>21 COMMISSIONER GIPSON: Well, that was the</p> <p>22 whole purpose. And that's what we hope, that it's</p> <p>23 not that competition; it's a cooperation.</p> <p>24 Oftentimes, it doesn't come out that way.</p> <p>25 You know, at the interim committees that</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">44</p> <p>1 to do things. And it's hard to get a governance</p> <p>2 council and then get an equity council. So it is</p> <p>3 worrisome.</p> <p>4 The superintendent mentioned, you know,</p> <p>5 not meeting the needs of Yazzie-Martinez. And I</p> <p>6 don't think, on the surface, the school does not</p> <p>7 meet that. That's not a concern.</p> <p>8 A hurdle that I always struggle with is</p> <p>9 the fact that students have to provide a Chromebook.</p> <p>10 To me, that's a hurdle for students to attend.</p> <p>11 And someone can come up and say, "Well, we</p> <p>12 provide them if they're -- if they can't afford it."</p> <p>13 But that alone makes a parent feel, "Oh,</p> <p>14 if I can't afford the Chromebook," or, "I don't want</p> <p>15 my child...," somehow because there's -- I don't</p> <p>16 know how -- if there is an identifier or not. But</p> <p>17 it's not their Chromebook; it's the school's</p> <p>18 Chromebook.</p> <p>19 To me, if a parent is looking for a</p> <p>20 school, and that's something that -- you know, we're</p> <p>21 a public school. Public schools should provide all</p> <p>22 of the necessary whatevers for students.</p> <p>23 So for a parent to see that, that is</p> <p>24 always -- you know, I've had a concern about that</p> <p>25 from the get-go.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">43</p> <p>1 the Legislature has, one of the interim committees</p> <p>2 is the Legislative Education Study Committee. And</p> <p>3 one of the concerns that they're studying this</p> <p>4 interim cycle is chronic absenteeism.</p> <p>5 And there was an individual, who's name I</p> <p>6 can't recall right now, that they brought in from</p> <p>7 California, because they were ushering people in</p> <p>8 from out of state to try to fix us, you know. So</p> <p>9 that's -- that's a vexing issue on my part.</p> <p>10 But one of the comments that this person</p> <p>11 made was that one of the underlying reasons for</p> <p>12 chronic absenteeism is often that students don't</p> <p>13 feel like they're heard and seen in the school.</p> <p>14 So I was concerned. And I'm not trying to</p> <p>15 talk about a school. But there's a -- there's a</p> <p>16 chronic absenteeism in the newest school that opened</p> <p>17 of the Explore model. And that's worrisome to me,</p> <p>18 you know, just saying. Because is that the reason,</p> <p>19 you know, that they're -- so I'm just -- because I</p> <p>20 support the model. I do. But I worry about -- I</p> <p>21 worry about that.</p> <p>22 So I just -- you know. And I know we all</p> <p>23 struggle with the equity councils in terms of trying</p> <p>24 to get them going and meaningful. And I know it's</p> <p>25 hard, because it's hard to get people to volunteer</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">45</p> <p>1 So I do -- you know, I do worry about</p> <p>2 that. Because I do worry about -- you know, is that</p> <p>3 a reason why some aren't felt heard.</p> <p>4 So, you know, at this point in time, I</p> <p>5 don't have -- I mean, I understand the model, so I</p> <p>6 really don't have questions about the model.</p> <p>7 There's just a couple of -- I'm waning.</p> <p>8 THE CHAIR: All right. I have a few</p> <p>9 questions for you all.</p> <p>10 In terms of the uniqueness of</p> <p>11 Explore-Santa Fe, I am familiar with the flavors. I</p> <p>12 think that I am also familiar with the -- just, the</p> <p>13 process -- processes and protocols that you all use</p> <p>14 within your academic frameworks, and it's worked, by</p> <p>15 and large, with your other schools.</p> <p>16 How are you considering adapting, like,</p> <p>17 the flavors and the process to make it specific to</p> <p>18 Santa Fe?</p> <p>19 I'm just curious how -- how Explore, like,</p> <p>20 shifts -- like, how does it shift from the original</p> <p>21 school to, you know, to Rio Rancho, to Las Cruces,</p> <p>22 to Nevada -- I think there's one in Nevada; right?</p> <p>23 Am I right?</p> <p>24 How do you differentiate between them?</p> <p>25 How does the academics look different here than what</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">46</p> <p>1 it would in some of the other areas?</p> <p>2 MS. MEGHAN MCGRAW: I think when it comes</p> <p>3 down to it, it really is up to the teacher; so what</p> <p>4 the teacher creates based off of the standards that</p> <p>5 they've reviewed, and then they create a flavor off</p> <p>6 of that.</p> <p>7 So the flavors could vary from</p> <p>8 Albuquerque's location to here. It could also be</p> <p>9 community-driven. If there's events going on in the</p> <p>10 community, we could do flavors based around those,</p> <p>11 or the community that's attending Explore in</p> <p>12 Santa Fe.</p> <p>13 So it's up to the teacher, really, and the</p> <p>14 student interest, too, of how flexible we are to</p> <p>15 change our flavors from school to school.</p> <p>16 Does that answer?</p> <p>17 THE CHAIR: In terms of -- sorry. I have</p> <p>18 a bunch of questions that I didn't -- I didn't put</p> <p>19 them in order. And so I'm trying to put them in</p> <p>20 order as I ask them.</p> <p>21 One thing that jumped out to me was the</p> <p>22 community outreach. I think that the peer reviewers</p> <p>23 did mention that there was only one institution that</p> <p>24 was listed, the Santa Fe Chamber of Commerce, that</p> <p>25 you all have a relationship with or have met.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">48</p> <p>1 And I am so excited -- like, just before the meeting</p> <p>2 I reached out to Casa de Familia.</p> <p>3 There was a gentleman who, in Eldorado,</p> <p>4 had an after-school or homeschool STEM class in the</p> <p>5 public. It was called "Make Time."</p> <p>6 I reached out to him. My children were</p> <p>7 participating in Gerard's House, which is for</p> <p>8 children that are bereaving someone that was close</p> <p>9 to them.</p> <p>10 And there's a -- you know, more heavily</p> <p>11 Hispanic there. I live in Pecos and Glorieta. I</p> <p>12 will be reaching out to people there.</p> <p>13 I'm excited to contact the pueblos.</p> <p>14 I am excited to go through every -- like,</p> <p>15 find every organization that does programming with</p> <p>16 children. There's, like, YouthWorks on Cerrillos</p> <p>17 Road. I'm excited to learn about what they do. I'm</p> <p>18 very excited to do the community outreach myself.</p> <p>19 MS. MEGHAN MCGRAW: I think, Jenn, if you</p> <p>20 wanted to speak about the Railyard and the boots</p> <p>21 and --</p> <p>22 MS. JENNIFER O'BRIEN: Sure. Yeah, sure.</p> <p>23 I also am fairly new to the board. But I am a</p> <p>24 Santa Fe resident. My husband has a business here.</p> <p>25 I had a small business here until that last year.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">47</p> <p>1 There's just so many institutions in</p> <p>2 Santa Fe, so many -- you know, the grasstops, like</p> <p>3 the Chambers -- like the Chamber -- but, also, like,</p> <p>4 the grassroots organizations, congregations, other</p> <p>5 places that you meet people.</p> <p>6 Just thinking about what other</p> <p>7 organizations have you been meeting with, how have</p> <p>8 you extended a hand to connect with them to support</p> <p>9 the process of writing this application, but also</p> <p>10 I'm tying that to recruitment as well. How are you</p> <p>11 creating a true, like, community connection and</p> <p>12 partnership with different institutions?</p> <p>13 MS. KAREN ANDERSON: So one of the</p> <p>14 organizations that -- and I'll let other folks talk</p> <p>15 to other organizations -- but one of the</p> <p>16 organizations that we are working with in Santa Fe</p> <p>17 is Respect. And they work with girls, primarily,</p> <p>18 but all children, to understand boundaries, to be</p> <p>19 able to use words, to make sure people understand</p> <p>20 what they mean. It's a youth empowerment group.</p> <p>21 And we've had several conversations with them, and</p> <p>22 we plan to partner with them.</p> <p>23 One thing, Commissioners, I am very new to</p> <p>24 this board. I don't think I've been out here a</p> <p>25 month. I just learned about the community support.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">49</p> <p>1 So we have a lot of community partners</p> <p>2 that we are going to be reaching out to.</p> <p>3 The Railyard, I've had a relationship with</p> <p>4 them through my business. And they're going to be</p> <p>5 helping us with -- we've got at least two dates that</p> <p>6 we're going to be doing the market, the Artists</p> <p>7 Market there. We're going to set up a booth to</p> <p>8 reach out directly -- that's a very busy market --</p> <p>9 to families. We're going to be doing a family movie</p> <p>10 night.</p> <p>11 We have a lot of connections in Santa Fe.</p> <p>12 We're just starting maybe the ball rolling a little</p> <p>13 bit later than you guys may have expected. But we</p> <p>14 will cover that. Like, we have a lot of community</p> <p>15 partners here. And Santa Fe is my home. It's</p> <p>16 important to our family. And I know a lot of people</p> <p>17 in this town.</p> <p>18 And I think that with the amount of</p> <p>19 families that are looking for something like this</p> <p>20 school and looking for choice, I don't think it's</p> <p>21 going to be hard at all to bring a lot of people in.</p> <p>22 I really think it's going to be something people are</p> <p>23 really hoping for. So we will continue to make</p> <p>24 those connections.</p> <p>25 THE CHAIR: Yeah. I think for me, like,</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">50</p> <p>1 it -- I think it's important to make connections. 2 It's important to inform the public. It's also 3 important to, like, move from informing and 4 providing information to moving into collaboration 5 and co-creation. So I think there's really great 6 opportunities to do that.</p> <p>7 I think it would be awesome to have had 8 some of these organizations that you all have worked 9 with to be connected, to be present in this room 10 with us today, too. It's something for me that's 11 important, as a Commissioner, to see that, to see 12 there's real true community organizing that's 13 happened around the school.</p> <p>14 So I -- could you share a little bit -- 15 and, sorry, Commissioners. You have gone through 16 this a little bit more than I have with other 17 Explores that have opened recently -- 'cause -- I'd 18 love for you to explain a little bit about the 19 relationship between the home office, Explore 20 Learning? Is that what the name of the -- what's 21 the home office relationship with the school?</p> <p>22 And I may have a follow-up question to 23 that as well. I'm just thinking about how is 24 that -- what are the connections and what are some 25 of the roles and responsibilities and divisions of</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">52</p> <p>1 support in terms of, like, facilities and budget and 2 many things that I don't have expertise in, that's 3 kind of the relationship and the support that 4 they're helping us with currently.</p> <p>5 Do you want to add anything to that? 6 MS. KATIE RARICK: Yes. So I work with 7 several of the Explore schools.</p> <p>8 And how it works is that Explore Learning 9 Systems is there to support the school. But each 10 school is run as its own LEA. They are truly 11 independent. They have their own foundation that 12 supports them. They work like any other charter 13 school. They have additional support in Explore 14 Learning Systems.</p> <p>15 So if they want a specific curriculum, ELS 16 will come and train them on that for professional 17 development. But it does not operate like a 18 standard CMO or management organization that you 19 would find in Texas or California or Nevada. They 20 are truly stand-alone schools. But they get the 21 additional support from ELS if they are asked.</p> <p>22 THE CHAIR: Ms. Rarick, what is the -- if 23 any, what is the service fee or administrative fee 24 that a school would pay into receiving any types of 25 supports from -- or is it a la carte? I would love</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">51</p> <p>1 labor that would be helpful for me to kind of 2 understand how that relationship works?</p> <p>3 MS. MEGHAN MCGRAW: So I -- myself and 4 Leesa Leon, who's not able to be here -- but we both 5 reached out. We both live here in Santa Fe. We 6 contacted Justin Baiardo, the founder of the model, 7 directly, because we wanted this for our community.</p> <p>8 I reached out for support, because, 9 obviously, he's the founder of the model and an 10 expert in all of this.</p> <p>11 So I am a teacher myself and very new to 12 this and eager to learn more and attend all of the 13 trainings and all of those things. But it was us 14 who reached out to him for support in how do we get 15 this going. Just what do we -- how do we need to 16 start.</p> <p>17 So it'll be up to us, if approved, if we 18 want to continue working with Explore Learning 19 Systems, or if we want to contract someone else for 20 support.</p> <p>21 So, as Karen has mentioned, too, we have a 22 lot to learn ourselves as a board. And so once 23 we're approved, if we're approved, we can decide 24 that. And if we want to continue working with them 25 for support, or if we want to find someone else for</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">53</p> <p>1 to hear a bit more about that.</p> <p>2 MS. KATIE RARICK: It very much depends on 3 what the school opts into. It also depends on the 4 enrollment. ELS does has an RFP, that if the 5 schools want to opt into, they can.</p> <p>6 So the price can range anywhere from 7 \$40,000 up, again, depending on enrollment, very 8 similar to other contracting fees that are based on 9 enrollment and services offered.</p> <p>10 THE CHAIR: So it's a -- it's contracted 11 services, not a percentage.</p> <p>12 MS. KATIE RARICK: Yes. Nope.</p> <p>13 THE CHAIR: Okay. Katie, while you're 14 with us here, I saw, within the review, the peer 15 review, that there was a question around the Fund 16 1100 (verbatim) exceeding revenue.</p> <p>17 Can you clarify that portion of the 18 budget? And how would you -- like, was there 19 something that was clarified from their review for 20 you?</p> <p>21 I just want to give you a chance to kind 22 of respond.</p> <p>23 MS. KATIE RARICK: Yes. Thank you. I 24 appreciate that.</p> <p>25 So our budget does balance. And, in fact,</p>

54	<p>1 over the course of five years, it shows we would</p> <p>2 have a million dollars in a fund balance. All of</p> <p>3 the revenue is accounted for. In fact, all of the</p> <p>4 revenue is fairly conservative.</p> <p>5 We only included operative funds, lease</p> <p>6 allocation funds, transportation, USDA, Title I,</p> <p>7 Title II, and IDEA.</p> <p>8 The reality is they will probably get</p> <p>9 more -- access to more funds than that over the five</p> <p>10 years.</p> <p>11 What the reviewer was pointing out is that</p> <p>12 all the expenses were sitting in 11000 in the</p> <p>13 Operational Fund.</p> <p>14 The reason we traditionally do these</p> <p>15 projected budgets that way is because we don't know</p> <p>16 what is going to be on the application for those</p> <p>17 Title funds. So we include the revenue, and then we</p> <p>18 put all of the expenses in Operational first so we</p> <p>19 don't miss anything; and, second, because we're not</p> <p>20 actually sure what expenses are going to hit.</p> <p>21 But all the revenue and all the expenses</p> <p>22 for the five years are included. And they show,</p> <p>23 starting the first year, having a 2 percent fund</p> <p>24 balance, growing up to 8 percent by the end of year</p> <p>25 five.</p>	56	<p>1 background. So our hope is to -- in reaching those</p> <p>2 different communities within Santa Fe, that we can</p> <p>3 have people from all different backgrounds to work</p> <p>4 on that.</p> <p>5 THE CHAIR: Go ahead.</p> <p>6 MS. KAREN ANDERSON: I just feel like we</p> <p>7 want the equity council and the board and the</p> <p>8 student population to reasonably reflect the</p> <p>9 community that is here, like the percentages.</p> <p>10 THE CHAIR: Speaking of reflecting the</p> <p>11 community, I was thinking about your recruitment</p> <p>12 plans.</p> <p>13 One of the -- did I just hear -- this is</p> <p>14 my final question for right now. Like, how are you</p> <p>15 planning to ensure that the student population here</p> <p>16 in Santa Fe is represented within your school?</p> <p>17 And I'd love to hear about, like, where</p> <p>18 are you recruiting. I know I've heard -- you know,</p> <p>19 I'm not very familiar with Santa Fe -- but the</p> <p>20 Railyards. There could be some families that are</p> <p>21 there. But there are a lot of families where that</p> <p>22 feels like a million miles away from where they live</p> <p>23 and that's not accessible.</p> <p>24 So I'd love to hear, like, a thorough</p> <p>25 understanding about how are you ensuring that you</p>
55	<p>1 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Two more questions</p> <p>2 for right now.</p> <p>3 One is around your equity councils. It's</p> <p>4 something that I've played a role in over the last</p> <p>5 couple of years as well, working with different</p> <p>6 districts, so it's something that's near to me and</p> <p>7 the things that I just really deeply care about.</p> <p>8 I saw that there were some questions from</p> <p>9 the peer reviewers also about how you all are</p> <p>10 thinking about equity councils, how you're thinking</p> <p>11 about staffing to support that; although, staffing</p> <p>12 is not a requirement for equity councils.</p> <p>13 But I was just curious. As the founding</p> <p>14 team, how are you thinking about your equity</p> <p>15 councils? What have you learned from others, either</p> <p>16 here or in Santa Fe that are not Explore Academy</p> <p>17 equity councils? Or what have you learned from the</p> <p>18 equity councils that Explore Academy schools have</p> <p>19 been doing?</p> <p>20 MS. MEGHAN MCGRAW: Well, I think the</p> <p>21 important thing is that when we continue, or as we</p> <p>22 continue to do our community outreach, our plan is</p> <p>23 to try to recruit an equity council of 15 members or</p> <p>24 so: staff, admin, community members.</p> <p>25 And we want to recruit from a diverse</p>	57	<p>1 are really deeply recruiting students so that your</p> <p>2 school is representative of the communities of</p> <p>3 Santa Fe?</p> <p>4 MS. KAREN ANDERSON: Okay. So if we are</p> <p>5 approved, we plan to send press releases to local</p> <p>6 print and digital publications, host information</p> <p>7 sessions, distribute fliers to businesses and</p> <p>8 organizations that serve students, including health</p> <p>9 clinics, homeless shelters, family entertainment</p> <p>10 centers, et cetera. Booths at more events.</p> <p>11 I mean, I don't know why it was popping in</p> <p>12 my head, like, if there's a low-rider car show, why</p> <p>13 not go there? Like, let's really, like, try and</p> <p>14 find where the community -- where different</p> <p>15 communities get together and do our booths there and</p> <p>16 talk to people there.</p> <p>17 I mean, I really want our school and our</p> <p>18 teachers and our, you know, equity council and all</p> <p>19 to reflect, again, the percentages that our</p> <p>20 community has.</p> <p>21 MS. MEGHAN MCGRAW: So I think actually</p> <p>22 going in the different communities within Santa Fe</p> <p>23 and making connections with those people.</p> <p>24 MS. KAREN ANDERSON: And outlying areas,</p> <p>25 like the pueblos. Like, maybe go to the -- some of</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">58</p> <p>1 the powwows or the -- the festivals that they have, 2 if they're -- like, I really want to outreach. I 3 really want to outreach in these communities. Like, 4 that's what I want to do.</p> <p>5 MS. JENNIFER O'BRIEN: And then also 6 letting people know. Just like the Santa Fe Public 7 Schools, even elementary is a lottery system. And 8 people know about it, and they come from all over. 9 It's very diverse who is at any given elementary 10 school, because you can come from any area of 11 Santa Fe.</p> <p>12 It's the same type of thing. We'd let 13 people know through advertising and putting the word 14 out there, so people know they do have a choice for 15 this different type of public school experience.</p> <p>16 Because I know that the people that join 17 the lotteries for the elementary schools, the public 18 schools, it's very popular. Again, huge waitlist. 19 So I think that finding that same pool of 20 people, they're going to be looking for charter as 21 well.</p> <p>22 MS. KAREN ANDERSON: I think this is 23 important to point out that this isn't a Santa Fe 24 school district or local charter school. This is a 25 State charter school. So we're going to look beyond</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">60</p> <p>1 they're just starting this process; right? 2 And she -- I ended up showing her the -- I 3 mean, it was the middle school/high school course 4 catalog, and just showing her all the variety that 5 teachers are coming up with and how cool it was. 6 And she was, like, "I don't know if the 7 elementary school" -- which, obviously, that's not a 8 good fit for elementary. 9 She was, "This is incredible. It's 10 amazing." 11 Families understand the model. They can 12 get it. The students' and teachers' appreciation 13 for the model, I think is pretty much unmatched. 14 Because as a teacher -- I know all the teachers who 15 are up here -- I didn't get to make my own courses. 16 They didn't. 17 They gave me -- which I really liked the 18 curriculum I taught. But if I didn't, that's what I 19 taught. 20 So the buy-in from families choosing the 21 school, the teachers choosing to teach at the 22 school, where they get to choose what they teach, 23 and then students choosing those teachers and how 24 they're going to learn it, I mean it just -- it all 25 makes sense.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">59</p> <p>1 Santa Fe. We're going to look to the outlying 2 areas: Pojoaque, Glorieta, Lamy, like, outside.</p> <p>3 THE CHAIR: Vice Chair Burt. Questions? 4 VICE CHAIR BURT: Yes, thanks. Hello. So 5 full disclosure, I'm a really big fan of Explore, 6 because I had a daughter go to Explore-Albuquerque 7 when they opened middle school, and I have a 8 daughter that's currently there at 9 Explore-Albuquerque. So I feel very familiar with 10 the model, very, very familiar as a parent, and then 11 seeing my kids actually go through it.</p> <p>12 So I -- and, like -- so, like Commissioner 13 Gipson said, the model, love it. And I'll always 14 have been a fan of Mr. Baiardo starting it and so 15 grateful that it's an available option in schools.</p> <p>16 So I did -- I also -- you know, I think -- 17 when I think of how to -- how does Explore-Santa Fe 18 become unique to Santa Fe, I think it's inherent in 19 the way that teachers are able to develop the 20 courses.</p> <p>21 I actually had a really long conversation. 22 I have a friend whose daughter is going into 23 kindergarten next year. And, like, if you know 24 anyone who has a kid going into kindergarten, they 25 are conflicted beyond any parent ever, because</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">61</p> <p>1 My question is going to be my concern for, 2 basically -- I mean -- and I've talked to Justin 3 about this before. I think oftentimes schools are 4 really successful based off of their founder, and 5 that founder creating the model and then 6 implementing it. 7 And so my concern is the farther away -- I 8 don't know how stretched Justin is. And so when I 9 think of, you know, the success of a charter school, 10 especially when starting off, to me, it often comes 11 from the passion of the founder creating something 12 and then seeing it through. 13 And so I appreciate Meghan and Leesa, you 14 guys reaching out. But I think when I see that -- 15 you know, I guess one of my questions is, Meghan, 16 are you going to apply to be the principal? 17 MS. MEGHAN MCGRAW: I don't think so. 18 That's a big responsibility. But I do currently 19 teach in the model. So I know it very well. And I 20 love it. I commute to work from here every day. So 21 that's how passionate I am about it. 22 So I think that just having the experience 23 of it and wanting to be a part of it, my plan down 24 the line would, of course, be to find a replacement 25 for myself. And I would love to teach in the school</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">62</p> <p>1 here if it was approved.</p> <p>2 VICE CHAIR BURT: Okay. Yeah, because I</p> <p>3 think, like, one of the things that I wish for</p> <p>4 future Explores is that the person who wants to lead</p> <p>5 the school is the person applying.</p> <p>6 I think that's where I kind of -- like,</p> <p>7 where my concern comes from. Like, I think we</p> <p>8 see -- like, to not to have someone hired until</p> <p>9 December or January -- like, they kind of have to</p> <p>10 buy into it, and then they're kind of following</p> <p>11 along with it. They're not the ones that create- --</p> <p>12 like, they're not the owner of it.</p> <p>13 And so I guess my question is is what's</p> <p>14 the -- what do you guys do about that?</p> <p>15 I mean, I don't know -- with Las Cruces</p> <p>16 and Rio Rancho -- I don't care about out of state.</p> <p>17 I literally -- I don't care about them at all. The</p> <p>18 in-state, how do you replicate Justin in Santa Fe is</p> <p>19 my question.</p> <p>20 MS. KATIE RARICK: I can speak a little</p> <p>21 bit to Explore-Rio Rancho at least. I was a little</p> <p>22 bit part of that process.</p> <p>23 So you really do look for the best</p> <p>24 administrators in the area. And then they interview</p> <p>25 them, and they -- it's a pretty rigorous interview</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">64</p> <p>1 guys are Explore Learning, but not yet?</p> <p>2 Or -- so that's where I think, like that</p> <p>3 interweaving part -- what is the level of your three</p> <p>4 involvement in this school compared to the governing</p> <p>5 board? What does that look like, like, as part of</p> <p>6 the founding team on the paperwork? You'll have to</p> <p>7 go to a microphone, just because they won't be able</p> <p>8 to hear you online. Thank you, Karen.</p> <p>9 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Hi. My named is Karen</p> <p>10 Woerner. K-a-r-e-n W-o-e-r-n-e-r. Thank you,</p> <p>11 Elisha.</p> <p>12 So I think what was meant, really, by the</p> <p>13 founding team was, initially, we didn't -- we,</p> <p>14 Justin, Elisha, and I, help support the group</p> <p>15 that -- as Meghan shared, Justin wasn't looking to</p> <p>16 open -- I'll be honest, Commissioners -- sorry --</p> <p>17 Justin wasn't looking to open a school in Santa Fe.</p> <p>18 But Meghan and Leesa really wanted a school in</p> <p>19 Santa Fe. They're both from this area.</p> <p>20 So, of course, they asked Justin for</p> <p>21 support because they want that model.</p> <p>22 So Justin, Elisha, and I have been</p> <p>23 providing support, just because we believe in the</p> <p>24 model and we want it for more kids. That's why I'm</p> <p>25 involved at all.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">63</p> <p>1 process.</p> <p>2 And for those of you who went through</p> <p>3 Teach for America, similar to that. There is a -- a</p> <p>4 whole -- what is it called? -- to make sure that</p> <p>5 their personality matches the school, a whole</p> <p>6 interview process, and to make sure that they are an</p> <p>7 excellent fit. And I will say the principal that</p> <p>8 they've hired for Rio Rancho is that.</p> <p>9 And to make sure that they're invested and</p> <p>10 that they understand the model, I think one of the</p> <p>11 reasons it takes till December is because they spend</p> <p>12 a lot of time looking for that person.</p> <p>13 So at least in my experience with the</p> <p>14 other school leaders at the schools, they have found</p> <p>15 the right fit.</p> <p>16 VICE CHAIR BURT: So what is -- I know you</p> <p>17 guys have seen the peer review papers. And I think</p> <p>18 a lot of it is about how does the founding team,</p> <p>19 Explore Learning System and Explore-Santa Fe, how</p> <p>20 does that interweave or not interweave?</p> <p>21 And I do think -- like, I understand some</p> <p>22 of the concern. Like, when I saw that the -- it</p> <p>23 says the founding team and governing council will</p> <p>24 hire the principal, it is a little confusing.</p> <p>25 Because is that Explore Learning Systems because you</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">65</p> <p>1 But when you refer to "the founding team,"</p> <p>2 we didn't have a governing board identified. By</p> <p>3 "founding team," we really meant Meghan and Leesa,</p> <p>4 primarily, with our support. And we've since</p> <p>5 developed the governing board.</p> <p>6 So as we were writing the application, we</p> <p>7 really didn't have all the governing board members</p> <p>8 decided -- or potential board members decided. And,</p> <p>9 in fact, some in the application have dropped out</p> <p>10 because of the commitment, which is by some --</p> <p>11 (incomprehensible).</p> <p>12 So the founding team did not mean, as the</p> <p>13 peer review team took it to mean, ELS or Explore</p> <p>14 Learning Systems. It was not meant to be that way.</p> <p>15 But, of course, we're going to support them. We</p> <p>16 love this model. We're going to help whatever they</p> <p>17 need help with until it's time to contract in an</p> <p>18 RFP.</p> <p>19 I did want to speak to, if I may, Vice</p> <p>20 Chair Burt, speak to your comment about come in with</p> <p>21 the head administrator. I love that, and I see what</p> <p>22 you're saying. But there's a flip side to that that</p> <p>23 is problematic.</p> <p>24 The governing board isn't yet a governing</p> <p>25 board. They need to hire -- if they're going to be</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">66</p> <p>1 a truly independent governing board, they need to 2 pick their head administrator, not have a head 3 administrator find a governing board to bring here, 4 right? It's backwards that way. 5 So I think it's a little bit problematic 6 to have a head administrator apply and then get a 7 governing board, because then it puts the cart 8 before the horse, so to speak. 9 I mean -- and so in this case, the 10 governing board will -- and the founding team -- 11 Justin, Elisha, and I will help. We'll help them 12 find out what to do. They need to post jobs on the 13 website, post jobs on Indeed, help them screen -- 14 the interview process Katie is talking about is a 15 Behavioral Event Interview, pretty intense 16 interview. It will screen out poor leaders. In 17 fact, I wouldn't want to be interviewed that way. 18 So the governing board will really decide on their 19 head administrator. 20 And Katie spoke to how that works. 21 But I think the peer review team was 22 confusing, or wanting to confuse, Explore Learning 23 Systems as the founding team. And that is not what 24 was meant. But I agree it was probably confusing. 25 VICE CHAIR BURT: I think it's just when</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">68</p> <p>1 it's the head administrator coming with the idea, "I 2 want to run this school." 3 VICE CHAIR BURT: Just a proposed 4 administrator -- like, when you think about a 5 first-year charter school that doesn't have a model. 6 When Justin first came his very first time, he was 7 the proposed administrator; right? He wasn't 8 technically hired? There was no governing board 9 yet. And it wasn't until after the application gets 10 approved, then he has to get -- then that founder 11 has to get hired as a head administrator. So it is, 12 like, still up for grabs. It's not a for-sure 13 thing. 14 But, typically, we see people who are 15 applying end up becoming the applicant to be a head 16 administrator in the first year. 17 So it's, like, this, like -- to me, it's 18 just like this ownership piece that's a little 19 bit -- which makes this -- just what you -- what's 20 happening with Explore spreading unique; right? 21 It's just different than what we see with a new 22 charter, generally. 23 Like, generally, it's a new charter with a 24 new idea and someone who owns it and then goes and 25 applies to the governing board to become the head</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">67</p> <p>1 you look at the page that the founders -- like, 2 Primary Contact, Founder; right? Second Contact, 3 Founder -- Founder, Founder -- like, the Founder 4 page is the five -- right? -- the five folks. So I 5 think that's what -- it's inherently confusing. 6 So I'm going to be really blunt and ask 7 just a really straightforward question. Are you 8 guys getting paid in any way to do this application 9 or this support? 10 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Absolutely not. 11 VICE CHAIR BURT: All right. That was 12 just like my straightforward -- 13 MS. KAREN WOERNER: I know. 14 VICE CHAIR BURT: But I still am -- I 15 guess maybe this is more just, like, a future idea 16 of Explore Learning System developing, like, a 17 principal track, like, coaching people, you know, to 18 become, you know, Explore people before they get to, 19 like, this stage. Just throwing out -- you don't 20 have to respond or anything. 21 MS. KAREN WOERNER: May I -- I like your 22 idea. I think it's great, from the passion and the 23 commitment from the beginning. But I'm interested 24 to know how that would be perceived by the 25 Commission, given that -- like you just described --</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">69</p> <p>1 administrator in that first year. 2 So it's just a different process. 3 I don't know if it's right or wrong. It's 4 just different than what a brand new charter with a 5 brand new idea looks like. 6 And I think that when you start -- I mean, 7 this isn't a replication. But that's, like -- it 8 kind of feels more "replication-ey" doing it this 9 way. 10 So -- but it's mostly just, like, 11 that's -- I think, like, just seeing through the -- 12 through the application the responsible group, just 13 trying to define those lines for me is helpful to 14 try to figure out where -- if it's -- and I do -- 15 like, I understand. I understand it now. And I 16 appreciate you, like, going through with me through 17 the questioning. 18 So now my next part is going to be what I 19 told the last school in Santa Fe that opened. And, 20 generally, most schools in New Mexico, there are 21 good Santa Fe schools for affluent families. You 22 know, if you live in an affluent area in Santa Fe, 23 you can go to your neighborhood school or you can go 24 to a private school. You have really good options. 25 Not a lot of families in Santa Fe have</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">70</p> <p>1 that option. And there's a lot of Santa Fe families 2 who are left behind and or have to go to the school 3 in their neighborhood, and it may not be a great 4 school. 5 And I know we have schools that will say, 6 "Those are the students we want. That's the 7 students we want. We want the students who are 8 underserved." 9 But I will never put down the power of a 10 White mom to find the best school for her child, 11 especially a White affluent mom. Like, she's in the 12 know. She's going to hear about this. She's going 13 to know. She's going to hear you. 14 And you may get flooded with a bunch of 15 people who had great options already, hear about 16 this, and -- like, oh, this is a great option for 17 many students. And I actually think students with 18 disabilities, this is a great option for them. 19 Students -- English Learners, this is a great 20 option, because it gives a lot of personalized 21 attention to students. And with small classes, 22 that's very -- that is super desirable for families. 23 So how do you get students on the south 24 side of Santa Fe? Like, are you considering looking 25 at locations on the south side? And how are you</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">72</p> <p>1 after this meeting, I'll learn more how to reach out 2 to those students. And, you know, that's what I 3 want, like I said. 4 I want the school to reflect the 5 community, the real community, you know. I don't 6 think we need to reach out to the White, affluent 7 mom. 8 MS. ELISHA BAIARDO: Hi. Elisha Baiardo, 9 E-l-i-s-h-a. I think you can spell Baiardo at this 10 point. 11 One of two things: 12 When Justin first applied, as a point of 13 correction, he was Meghan's position. He applied as 14 a teacher. After his school was approved and he 15 started recruiting all the rest of us, the principal 16 was actually in that group that got recruited, and 17 then the board hired her. He did kind of the same 18 process, because he really wanted to teach in the 19 model. And I'm sure looking back, he wishes he had 20 just stayed teaching in the model sometimes. So -- 21 me, too, because I taught English in the model. 22 I just wanted to speak to the 23 transportation thing, because it's really a 24 logistical problem more than anything else, because 25 I'm the one who designs the transportation route for</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">71</p> <p>1 trying to actually get students who need you the 2 most to come to Explore-Santa Fe? 3 You know, students who don't speak 4 English, families who don't speak English. How are 5 you, you know, trying to reach out? And 6 transportation. I mean, if -- I can imagine it 7 getting pretty costly if you're going to look 8 outside of the Santa Fe area. 9 I know you provide transportation which is 10 a massive equity issue for me, and I appreciate 11 schools that go through the effort to provide 12 transportation, because it's a massive undertaking. 13 And I know you have a good time, like, trying to get 14 out of Albuquerque and you go to the outside areas. 15 But this is even more spread out; right? 16 Like, outside of Santa Fe, like, you could be 17 getting students a little further away than just a 18 suburb. So what does that look like? 19 MS. KAREN ANDERSON: I feel like I 20 answered part of that question. I personally am 21 excited to go to these underserved communities and 22 the festivals and the things that they have and 23 reach those students. I mean, that's my short 24 answer. 25 I have a lot to learn. I'm sure that</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">73</p> <p>1 most of the schools. 2 So one of the things that has been most 3 effective for outlying communities is utilizing 4 points where, if you live far, where would you 5 already be headed for whatever reason? 6 So, for example, if your school is in the 7 middle of Albuquerque but, there are people in 8 Belen, Los Lunas, Bosque Farms that really want to 9 go, we just surveyed parents and said, "This is your 10 campus. Where do you already come in?" And that's 11 how we ended up finding the movie theater and the 12 Isleta Pueblo/Rail Runner stop. 13 Everyone's like, "That would be amazing. 14 That's a 20-minute drive from our house." It's 15 actually closer than their public school ride, or 16 their traditional school ride, or whatever it is. 17 Wherever the bus would pick them up at the corner, 18 that's where we help to compete with. 19 So I think it's actually a very similar 20 thing. We do utilize the Rail Runner stops. So a 21 lot of parents, especially as the school 22 matriculates into high school, they send their kids 23 on the Rail Runner, or they come with their kids on 24 the Rail Runner. 25 And that happens up and down from Santa</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">74</p> <p>1 Fe, you know, up and down. But looking at stops, 2 where if you are in Glorieta or Pecos, where is a 3 place that the bus can start first thing in the 4 morning that's close to you, and then make their way 5 logistically through stops into the city center or 6 wherever it's located at a city. 7 So it's a logistical problem. I have a 8 couple of logistical crazy people that help me, 9 someone who did Gas Company for tons of years and 10 knows, like, where all the right turns are in every 11 city. 12 So these type of things really help. 13 Like, "Hey, this is a problem. I need 14 this route to be under an hour and 15 minutes. 15 Please help me." 16 So that's kind of what I would help them 17 with, if we do it. If not, I will just let them see 18 every other Explore's stuff from the back end and 19 say, "This is how you should do it. It gets the 20 most kids in with the least drive time." 21 Because if you live 40 miles out of town, 22 you're going to have a long drive in anyway. Bus, 23 car, long ride. But if we can get the parents to 24 drive as little as possible to a stop, that's my 25 goal. Hopefully, that helps.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">76</p> <p>1 CEO of SHRM, because it was disrespectful, is Johnny 2 Taylor, not just some guy. It was Johnny Taylor who 3 delivered those remarks that I believe were so 4 relevant. 5 The next thing is relative to SFPS and 6 just what people think. Only -- there's not this 7 charter drain here. We've opened one charter in ten 8 years, okay? THRIVE. ¡Hijole! Don't blame the 9 charters for taking kids. It's just not happening. 10 Now -- and I have said this before here. 11 I -- sometimes -- not sometimes, quite a bit -- come 12 from a place of the private sector -- right? -- in 13 bringing what I know from having been a business 14 owner and worked in the private sector my whole 15 life, you know, except for these service positions 16 that I've held. 17 And so I would say you've opened your -- 18 you know, I'm going to call it a unit. You've 19 opened your unit in Albuquerque. And it has its 20 results. You've opened your unit in Las Cruces. 21 You're now opening a third unit in Rio Rancho. 22 So if I were in the private sector, I 23 would say, "Seriously? You want a fourth unit? 24 What do you have to show me from the first two? 25 What are your results from the first two that are</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">75</p> <p>1 VICE CHAIR BURT: That does. Well, I know 2 I remember just going to different parent meetings. 3 Like, everything was out on my living room. All 4 your responses are, like, laid out everywhere, and 5 we map it all out. 6 And it's always been great, like, options 7 for me. 8 MS. ELISHA BAIARDO: We project it to 9 (inaudible due to simultaneous speaking) this in my 10 living room to meet them. 11 And then we do -- we have to collect 12 feedback, because we're always wrong. We're still 13 wrong. And parents know better than we do where 14 their stops should be. 15 And I say that without -- with no sarcasm. 16 Then we go and we change everything the week before 17 school starts. But it does make the first week of 18 school much smoother that way. 19 VICE CHAIR BURT: Okay. I think those are 20 my main questions. And I think -- thanks for 21 clarifying just the wonkiness of Explore expanding 22 and what that looked like. 23 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Vice Chair. 24 Commissioner Carrillo. 25 COMMISSIONER CARRILLO: Straightaway, the</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">77</p> <p>1 going to convince me to approve your business plan 2 for a fourth unit?" 3 Now, don't get me wrong. I'm very excited 4 about Rio Rancho; okay? And I love the model. 5 But as you go into this idea of having a 6 fourth unit, it gives me pause when I look at the 7 results of the first two units relative to the 8 districts that they're in and the state and what I'd 9 like personally to see as benchmarks of achievement; 10 okay? 11 So it makes me -- it gives me more pause 12 around having a fourth unit. 13 And so I'm curious. So, you know, I'm 14 some venture capitalist that you're coming to me 15 with a business plan. You want to open a fourth 16 unit. Tell me why. Why should I give you a fourth 17 unit when -- yeah, go ahead and answer any way you 18 want -- when the first units aren't performing as 19 you thought they would or that we need them to? 20 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Commissioner Carrillo, 21 Commissioners, thank you for the question. I'm 22 happy to try to address that. 23 I do want to say that, first of all, the 24 first unit that's been opened the longest, the one 25 in Albuquerque, it has -- the very first year it</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">78</p> <p>1 opened, I think -- and Justin, correct me if I'm 2 wrong -- but I think it was a "D" score back in the 3 school grades. 4 The next year, "A", and every year after 5 that, "A". When it switched to the new system, 6 they've been a Spotlight School, including the 7 latest release in '22, Spotlight School, which means 8 in the top 25 percent of all schools in the state. 9 So very proud of the school in 10 Albuquerque, and its success is pretty obvious. We 11 can get into more details. But that tells you the 12 picture of a very successful school. 13 Las Cruces, we only have one year of data, 14 because the first year they were open is '21-'22, 15 which, as you know -- and I know you don't like the 16 COVID excuse -- it was the first year after COVID, 17 first year for the school to open. 18 I'm not as happy of the results there as 19 I'd like to be, not quite as high scoring as I'd 20 like. But, again, it was the first year. I expect, 21 from what we've seen in the data that's not been 22 released yet -- but there has been significant 23 improvement in Las Cruces that will be coming out 24 here hopefully this summer. 25 So I think the model has been very</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">80</p> <p>1 That is not what the Explore model is 2 like. The Explore model is Standards-Based 3 Instruction, assessment, and grading. 4 When I first went to Explore Academy in 5 Albuquerque, when I was working for the PED, and saw 6 the model, it blew me away that a high school -- a 7 high school -- was doing Standards-Based grading. 8 "There's no extra points for extra credit. 9 You're here to learn. You're learning it, or you're 10 not. There's no extra points for having the paper 11 signed. That's a responsibility of the student. 12 You know, there are consequences for not doing your 13 work, and that is you're not going to learn." 14 But -- and they have the tutoring in place 15 and the flex periods to help support those kids that 16 struggle with those things. So true Standards-Based 17 grading is not happening, I would say, in this 18 country at a high school level. But it is at 19 Explore. Kids are learning standards and then 20 moving on. 21 Also, small class sizes, 14 to 18 kids in 22 a class. I don't think Santa Fe class sizes are 23 that small. 24 And I would question -- mentioned this 25 talking to someone earlier -- if charter schools, on</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">79</p> <p>1 successful. 2 Rio Rancho, of course, is just opening 3 this year. But high demand, high interest in a 4 school, another community that has very good schools 5 as well. 6 So I think it, you know, it is a very 7 successful model. As was mentioned, I think maybe 8 Commissioner Burt earlier, about anybody that looks 9 at -- I like to show the catalog. And there were 10 some pictures of the catalog in the slide show 11 earlier. To me, that describes the real crux of the 12 model. 13 While I'm on that, if I could respond to 14 some of the comments from the Santa Fe Public 15 Schools about that. 16 But the model attracts parents and adults 17 alike. As soon as they look at the catalog, they 18 say to me, "I wish I could have gone to a school 19 like that," over and over again. Not only students, 20 but adults, wish they had had that opportunity. 21 While it's not replicating anything in 22 Santa Fe -- I want to address a little bit. Yes, 23 Santa Fe, of course, uses Standards-Based 24 Instruction. Of course they use some projects-based 25 projects. Sure. Every school does.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">81</p> <p>1 their very limited budget, can afford 14 to 18 kids 2 per class, why are large districts not able to do 3 that? Just throwing that out there. 4 The short seminars of 22 days at the high 5 school level. Ask any master scheduler in Santa Fe 6 if they want to reschedule their kids every 22 days 7 based on whether they learn those standards or not. 8 It's a nightmare. Master schedulers don't like to 9 do the whole year of algebra for the kid. Every 22 10 days, they are being scheduled into a different 11 class. 12 And if they didn't pass the class, master 13 those -- are deficient in these standards, they 14 don't just move on because the teacher has to move 15 on to the next section. 16 Also, the SEG money follows the kid. So 17 we're not taking away from resources. We're taking 18 the kids with the money per pupil. The charter 19 schools are funded, per pupil, SEG, same as 20 Santa Fe. 21 So, yeah, they will have less -- they may 22 have less students. They'll have the -- the money 23 that goes with those students will go to the school 24 where they attend. 25 To the Yazzie-Martinez argument, taking</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">82</p> <p>1 resources from Santa Fe, I do think that this model, 2 to your point about reaching underserved kids, this 3 model is good for all kids, including those kids who 4 really struggle and need the extra help. And that's 5 really -- to make it a Yazzie-Martinez argument as 6 to why to prevent charter schools is not a good 7 argument, in my opinion. Small class size, making 8 sure they're learning, scheduling them every few 9 days, grading them on what they learn, not on what 10 extra credit they did, et cetera, et cetera, I just 11 want to say we're not replicating programs that are 12 in Santa Fe currently.</p> <p>13 MS. MEGHAN McGRAW: And just to add on why 14 should we have this here, I mean, the kids are so 15 happy just being in the classroom. They're excited 16 about learning. They love coming to school. 17 Teachers are happy. Everyone's just a happy big 18 family.</p> <p>19 And, I mean, it's -- I love my job, and 20 I -- the kids love it, and they're engaged and -- I 21 mean, they tell me all the time, "I love this 22 school. This school is so fun. At my old school, I 23 had so many kids in my class. At my old school, my 24 teacher didn't pay attention to me." 25 And just the feedback from the families as</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">84</p> <p>1 fifth-graders and have to kind of mix that in and 2 hope that at sixth grade, when it's pivotal before 3 she goes to middle school, that they get the same 4 education.</p> <p>5 That really took us by surprise. But this 6 is what's going on. And, you know, it's a bigger 7 class size with a merged classroom.</p> <p>8 COMMISSIONER CARRILLO: Yeah, I agree. 9 I'm not a fan of mixed grades, because there's 10 always a portion of a classroom that's not getting 11 their needs met. And it's also way too much to ask 12 of a teacher, and generally at the last minute.</p> <p>13 So correct me if I'm wrong. And the 14 person who probably knows -- Bekka probably knows 15 the answer to this -- Spotlight School. That's more 16 based on growth than it is on proficiency scores.</p> <p>17 VICE CHAIR BURT: So the last one was 18 weird, because there was a new test, and there was 19 no other baseline data. So it -- there was a 20 student growth percentile that was put in there. 21 But it was mostly proficiency this last one. But 22 that's not the norm. Like, this upcoming year that 23 we get it will be more -- 24 COMMISSIONER CARRILLO: On growth. 25 VICE CHAIR BURT: Yeah.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">83</p> <p>1 well, I just want to give that to this community as 2 well.</p> <p>3 MS. JENNIFER O'BRIEN: I just want to 4 spotlight one thing that's --</p> <p>5 COMMISSIONER CARRILLO: If the absenteeism 6 increases in schools around the state, they will 7 have small class sizes.</p> <p>8 MS. KAREN ANDERSON: I was going to speak 9 to the absenteeism. My kids are going through 10 additional struggles. My younger child missed a lot 11 of school this year just because she's struggling 12 with a lot and she did not want to be at school. 13 She hates it there.</p> <p>14 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Carrillo -- I 15 believe, Jennifer, you wanted to share something as 16 well.</p> <p>17 MS. JENNIFER O'BRIEN: Yes. Thank you. I 18 just wanted to say what's happening at my kids' 19 public school this year, that they don't have enough 20 students because enrollment has dropped. And so now 21 they're going to merge the fifth- and sixth-grade 22 classrooms together is the plan, which is not 23 something that we signed up for. So there's less 24 instruction, more of the Chromebook learning. And 25 my daughter is going to be in class with</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">85</p> <p>1 COMMISSIONER CARRILLO: Terrific. I 2 appreciate very much -- I can't remember who made 3 the comment -- I'm sorry. Use my words.</p> <p>4 Who is it that said, "I wish I could have 5 gone there when I was a kid?"</p> <p>6 I think -- yeah. And I think that when it 7 was time to approve Las Cruces, and you were 8 presenting the model, I believe if we went back in 9 the record, I would have said exactly that. Why 10 couldn't this have been around when I was going to 11 grade school?</p> <p>12 No. Clearly, I love the model. And my -- 13 just as I stated, the overarching concern is is the 14 model ready for a fourth unit? You know. And 15 that's something I'm going to be mulling over and 16 looking at really kind of drilling down more to 17 numbers from Albuquerque and from Las Cruces. Super 18 excited, of course, about Rio Rancho. And, you 19 know, I think we voted unanimously, if I'm 20 remembering, for that school.</p> <p>21 So let's see. There was a note that I had 22 here -- how's the -- maybe I missed it. How's the 23 property search going, because that's a real tough 24 one up here? 25 MS. MEGHAN McGRAW: I'll let Justin answer</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">86</p> <p>1 that.</p> <p>2 MR. JUSTIN BAIARDO: Trying to hold out as</p> <p>3 long as I could. For the record, Justin Baiardo.</p> <p>4 J-u-s-t-i-n B-a-i-a-r-d-o.</p> <p>5 The facility search is a challenge. This</p> <p>6 atmosphere is -- this market is very different than</p> <p>7 any other market around.</p> <p>8 But we feel well equipped with the support</p> <p>9 that we feel we can provide the schools. And,</p> <p>10 again, that's a one-time -- like, whatever we can do</p> <p>11 to help. Doesn't mean, like, it's a recurring</p> <p>12 relationship. But if we can help provide the</p> <p>13 school, like we did in Rio Rancho -- with the</p> <p>14 facility that the school and the foundation would</p> <p>15 come to own from day one, if that's a path that</p> <p>16 makes the most sense, then, yeah, I think we have</p> <p>17 the leverage and the tools and resources to support</p> <p>18 that.</p> <p>19 It's about what's existing. And I think</p> <p>20 you're not going to find a 40- to 60,000 square foot</p> <p>21 building in Santa Fe that pops up vacant like you</p> <p>22 might in larger places.</p> <p>23 Realistically, I think where we're</p> <p>24 strategically pivoting toward is looking at -- at</p> <p>25 something with, like, an incubator space for the</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">88</p> <p>1 been talking to landlords at that point in time,</p> <p>2 talking to landowners at that point in time, talking</p> <p>3 to investors at that point in time.</p> <p>4 But after submitting the application, we</p> <p>5 took a bit of a pause knowing that we can only go so</p> <p>6 far with those negotiations. Those conversations</p> <p>7 only lead to a point of, like, "Are you a school</p> <p>8 yet? Can you do these things?"</p> <p>9 And we can't. While we're still in</p> <p>10 communication with them, we haven't made much</p> <p>11 further progress in those areas, simply because</p> <p>12 there's a legitimacy of this school needing to</p> <p>13 become a school before those steps are taken.</p> <p>14 COMMISSIONER CARRILLO: Well, that's</p> <p>15 always one of the hardest pieces. They want to see</p> <p>16 a lease. There's no lease until you get an</p> <p>17 approval. It's challenging. So I appreciate you</p> <p>18 having to work through that.</p> <p>19 In terms of when it comes to a principal,</p> <p>20 I'm sure you do this anyway. But, you know, there's</p> <p>21 one of our charters up here that's now getting</p> <p>22 another head learner. And I think the head learner</p> <p>23 that they have was only there for a couple of years,</p> <p>24 and the one before that.</p> <p>25 And it's just -- and you know, that</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">87</p> <p>1 short term, existing, where we can look at K, 1, 2,</p> <p>2 and 6 starting, growing, allowing that school and</p> <p>3 the students going to that school for the first</p> <p>4 couple of years, and, while all that's happening,</p> <p>5 looking at financing, purchasing something --</p> <p>6 (inaudible) now that construction prices -- I say</p> <p>7 construction prices are coming back to earth. But</p> <p>8 that's changed in the last few weeks also.</p> <p>9 But that might be the way to go to build</p> <p>10 the school what it needs to -- to be successful and,</p> <p>11 you know, to operate in long term.</p> <p>12 But I think initially, short term, opening</p> <p>13 would be an incubator space, you know, two- to</p> <p>14 three-year space, to allow the school to come in,</p> <p>15 not be overburdened by rent payments and to be able</p> <p>16 to operate with flexibility within a budget, but</p> <p>17 also be able to grow within it knowing that that</p> <p>18 will not be its permanent home.</p> <p>19 COMMISSIONER CARRILLO: And in that vein,</p> <p>20 have you -- I know THRIVE has -- have you been in</p> <p>21 talks -- because you talk about building a place --</p> <p>22 with Homewise at all?</p> <p>23 MR. JUSTIN BAIARDO: A little bit. The</p> <p>24 facility search was -- when we looked, prior to</p> <p>25 submitting the application in April or May, we had</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">89</p> <p>1 happens with superintendents, too, just a revolving</p> <p>2 door, that everyone's going on to what's next.</p> <p>3 And I would just hope that when it comes</p> <p>4 to looking for that principal -- whether or not it</p> <p>5 is you, Meghan -- there's someone that's just</p> <p>6 committing to, I would say, minimum eight years,</p> <p>7 someone who loves Santa Fe, wants to stay in</p> <p>8 Santa Fe, wants to see the first round of kids go</p> <p>9 from kinder all the way through. Because it's that</p> <p>10 continuity of instruction and continuity of</p> <p>11 community that makes a big difference.</p> <p>12 When I was on the board and going to</p> <p>13 conferences, those school boards that were most</p> <p>14 successful in the country have superintendents with</p> <p>15 tenures of eight to twelve years and tenures for</p> <p>16 school board members -- I'm not joking -- ten to</p> <p>17 twenty years. Not a revolving door like Santa Fe,</p> <p>18 where everyone is just going to run for another</p> <p>19 office. No, it's got to be this commitment to the</p> <p>20 kids, like wholeheartedly to the kids.</p> <p>21 So one of the things I've said -- and this</p> <p>22 has to do with some of the schools and the different</p> <p>23 mission statements that they have throughout the</p> <p>24 state. And I've -- because you -- I think you</p> <p>25 mentioned this, Meghan -- the kids are happy. I</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">90</p> <p>1 refer to it as the "happiness index." 2 And I referred to this when we were 3 looking at RioGAFAs. And when I was trying to get 4 Santa Fe Public to consider the idea of being an 5 arts-embedded district. Every school uses art in 6 every class in one way or another. 7 And it was Guilford County, North Carolina 8 schools that did that. The transition was not as 9 hard. Sometimes for the teachers who had been there 10 forever, it was harder. 11 Truancy went way down. Grades went way, 12 way up. And the thing I refer to as the "happiness 13 index" went way up, because you're reaching kids 14 where they are, using their creative minds -- 15 right? -- and they totally dug it. 16 But at the same time, scores -- and I -- 17 you know, kind of old-school on this -- scores have 18 to follow. Like, it's great -- there's a school 19 here where they -- the proficiency rates are 20 consistently in the mid 70s. But for math, it's in, 21 like, the low 20s. 22 I don't care how happy you are. You've 23 got to be able to do some basic math, pass algebra 24 one and geometry. Huge red flag. 25 And so as much as I value the happiness</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">92</p> <p>1 But my -- I guess my concern is that, 2 generally, when we see an application, that 3 community outreach has already happened. Now 4 it's -- now we're going to go out and do it. 5 So I worry about that a little bit, 6 because there's so much else that has to go on. 7 So, usually, the strength is in the 8 application. And that application shows that the 9 community outreach has already happened, and that, 10 generally, that within that founding team is someone 11 who potentially will be a head administrator, so 12 that they have developed that deep understanding of 13 the -- of the system and not have to get into it 14 later on. 15 I think sometimes that's the -- I think 16 that's the struggle of the second unit is the fact 17 that there's been multiple head administrators, 18 because that person wasn't invested early on in that 19 system. And the governance council wasn't really -- 20 certainly, wasn't well formed at the application 21 time. 22 So to, you know, build that strong team 23 with the governing councils -- I'm using "governance 24 council" instead of "founding team," because I think 25 we're getting confused here -- you know, is</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">91</p> <p>1 index, I also am absolutely committed to our job as 2 stewards of taxpayer dollars to make sure that these 3 kids are learning the basics, no matter what. And I 4 love Explore as a tool to make that happen. And 5 you've heard me say it. 6 So the main thing for me is -- in going 7 through all the material and everything else, are we 8 ready for a fourth unit? I do think there needs to 9 be an Explore in Santa Fe. But that's kind of 10 what's going on for me there. 11 And then Homewise was working with THRIVE 12 also around building. There's no 50,000 -- I've 13 tried to, like, text you when I see something going 14 on on the market. And, no, it's really hard to find 15 property up here. 16 Community outreach? 17 No, we're good. 18 Okay. That's all I have for now. Thank 19 you. 20 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Gipson. 21 COMMISSIONER GIPSON: I'm going to tag on 22 to Commissioner Burt's a little bit in the sense 23 that I -- you know, I wholeheartedly agree, kids are 24 happy. Kids want those choices. It's a great 25 system.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">93</p> <p>1 difficult. 2 And to me, there's that -- the weakness -- 3 the big weakness in this application is in the fact 4 that a lot of the work that should have been done 5 with that community wasn't done to start with, you 6 know. And that's -- I worry about not that the 7 system doesn't work, but that it -- the plan doesn't 8 work, because there wasn't a good foundation that 9 was there to start with. That's -- you know, that's 10 my concern. 11 THE CHAIR: Commissioner Carrillo. 12 COMMISSIONER CARRILLO: I want to echo 13 what Ms. Gipson said around the community piece not 14 being really until now. Because I know that I 15 met -- I don't remember who I exactly met with. But 16 it was probably about a year ago; right? We met at 17 Pecos Trail Cafe -- in terms of -- and I was 18 thrilled that there were people that wanted to have 19 an Explore up here. 20 And I told you I was thrilled. But I also 21 told you the extent to which I was not able to be 22 involved at that level on the community side. 23 So that was a note I had here: "Community 24 outreach, why not until now?" 25 So I would completely echo what Ms. Gipson</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">94</p> <p>1 was saying there.</p> <p>2 The -- I wrote this note down. And I'm</p> <p>3 not trying to be, like, nitpicky. But I've heard --</p> <p>4 or just kind of nitty -- I hate that -- I've heard a</p> <p>5 number of people say a number of times, "We're</p> <p>6 learning a lot." "We have a lot to learn." "This</p> <p>7 is new." "We're doing this." "We're doing that."</p> <p>8 And my challenge is these are taxpayer</p> <p>9 dollars. And there's -- you're not -- there's no,</p> <p>10 like, learning on the run. There are things that</p> <p>11 have to be known before we open this school.</p> <p>12 Because, as you've probably witnessed in</p> <p>13 New Mexico, and what we're going through now, once</p> <p>14 you're chartered, closing a charter is extremely</p> <p>15 difficult, probably more difficult than murdering</p> <p>16 somebody on Fifth Avenue and being elected</p> <p>17 president, you know? I mean, it's -- you all</p> <p>18 remember that quote. Please say you remember that</p> <p>19 quote.</p> <p>20 But it's very difficult. So, I mean, I</p> <p>21 think this Commission and the people that are on</p> <p>22 this Commission now are -- are looking much more</p> <p>23 deeply into this decision and what it means. And,</p> <p>24 you know, it's -- it's harder to get out of a</p> <p>25 marriage, a corporation, anything, if things go</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">96</p> <p>1 not only with spreading the word about the school</p> <p>2 and getting that support, but also with the long,</p> <p>3 lengthy implementation year work that needs to be</p> <p>4 done.</p> <p>5 And I just really wanted to share that we</p> <p>6 acknowledge that more could have been done on</p> <p>7 community support. We strongly believe that this</p> <p>8 school is wanted and needed and will serve this</p> <p>9 community well, based on all these people who are</p> <p>10 from the area that want to run the school or get it</p> <p>11 off the ground.</p> <p>12 So I just wanted to share that with you</p> <p>13 and acknowledge that we do know that more could have</p> <p>14 been done, and we are prepared to do what it takes</p> <p>15 and work really hard this summer, and then,</p> <p>16 hopefully, if approved, continue that hard work.</p> <p>17 As you all know, the implementation year</p> <p>18 is harder than the application year. So lots to</p> <p>19 learn and lots to do. But it will -- it will lead</p> <p>20 to a successful school if approved in August. Thank</p> <p>21 you.</p> <p>22 COMMISSIONER CARRILLO: Chair, one more.</p> <p>23 So thank you. Just want to take a moment to thank</p> <p>24 Kevin and Lola. I'm paraphrasing him. But Ben</p> <p>25 Franklin said the decision is made by those that</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">95</p> <p>1 awry.</p> <p>2 So there you got it. There you have it.</p> <p>3 That was something that I was hearing that I wanted</p> <p>4 to relay to you.</p> <p>5 MS. KAREN WOERNER: Chair Brauer, if I</p> <p>6 may, I kind of want to address the community support</p> <p>7 piece. And I don't really want to throw anyone</p> <p>8 under the bus, but I'm going to have to answer the</p> <p>9 question if it alleviates some of your concerns.</p> <p>10 As we mentioned repeatedly, Meghan and</p> <p>11 Leesa were the first driving forces behind this,</p> <p>12 probably, whom you may have met with.</p> <p>13 But it was mentioned earlier that Leesa</p> <p>14 has a really serious battle with cancer going on</p> <p>15 right now. And she even participated in the</p> <p>16 capacity interview virtually, but with her camera</p> <p>17 off, because she was getting a treatment.</p> <p>18 So I don't want to blame her because</p> <p>19 others could have done more.</p> <p>20 But the team was relying on her and her</p> <p>21 community efforts to do a lot of that work. And so</p> <p>22 we are behind.</p> <p>23 Again, this team that they've put together</p> <p>24 since then is pretty strong. And I have every</p> <p>25 confidence that they will do what needs to be done,</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">97</p> <p>1 show up.</p> <p>2 So that you're here today, it's very</p> <p>3 important. It speaks a lot to, you know, your</p> <p>4 beliefs about this school. And I would just</p> <p>5 encourage you, in the future, especially when the</p> <p>6 Roundhouse is in session, if there is something</p> <p>7 you're passionate about, they love to hear from</p> <p>8 young people.</p> <p>9 And when we hear from young people, it</p> <p>10 matters more than anything. You know, you count</p> <p>11 more than all the lobbyists lined up. I'm not</p> <p>12 kidding you. So just continue that -- your power;</p> <p>13 okay?</p> <p>14 THE CHAIR: Commissioners, any other</p> <p>15 questions?</p> <p>16 Seeing none, we're going to move into</p> <p>17 recess until Wednesday, 9:00 a.m., in the great city</p> <p>18 of Portales, New Mexico.</p> <p>19 Before we close out, though, I just wanted</p> <p>20 to make a note that members of the public still may</p> <p>21 make comments about the school. Petitions or other</p> <p>22 written feedback electronically regarding the</p> <p>23 charter school application is up for three business</p> <p>24 days following the school's hearing. Comments may</p> <p>25 be submitted via e-mail at</p>

1 Charter.Schools@PED.nm.gov, or by completing the
2 form associated with each school on the PEC's
3 website. That's 2023 New Mexico Applications on our
4 website there.

5 So you can direct other members of your
6 team and the public in general to make comments.

7 So written comments for Explore
8 Academy-Santa Fe will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. on
9 July the 13th, 2023. And we'll strictly enforce
10 that, just to make sure that it's in equity with
11 other schools that we're working on as well.
12 Commissioner.

13 COMMISSIONER CARRILLO: I'm sorry. The
14 Commission knows I often have a "Columbo" moment.
15 Do you remember Columbo? You guys don't, I'm sure.
16 That's how the show ends: "Oh, by the way..." --
17 I'm sorry. I was just looking at my notes.

18 Because we've said a number of times, "If
19 we're approved."

20 So let's just say you weren't approved.
21 Are you coming back next year to do this? Like,
22 you're committed to Explore-Santa Fe?

23 That's completely what I wanted to hear.
24 Thank you. Great.

25 THE CHAIR: All right. Well, thank you

1 BEFORE THE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION
2 STATE OF NEW MEXICO

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4
5 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

6 I, Cynthia C. Chapman, RMR, CCR #219, Certified
7 Court Reporter in the State of New Mexico, do hereby
8 certify that the foregoing pages constitute a true
9 transcript of proceedings had before the said NEW
10 MEXICO PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION, held in the State
11 of New Mexico and County of Santa Fe, in the matter
12 therein stated.

13 In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my
14 hand on July 17, 2023.

15
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18 Cynthia C. Chapman, RMR-CRR, NM CCR #219
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1 very much for all the effort, and thank you again to
2 the CSD team and everyone involved in this process.
3 So we are in recess until Wednesday.
4 (Proceedings in recess at 2:57 p.m.)

1 RECEIPT

2 JOB NUMBER: 8449N CC Date: 7/10/23
3 PROCEEDINGS: Community Input Hearing Proceedings
4 CASE CAPTION: In Re: Explore Academy-Santa Fe

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A

<p>A-n-d-e-r-s-o-n 14:5</p> <p>a.m 97:17</p> <p>able 22:19 23:2,12 47:19 51:4 59:19 64:7 81:2 87:15,17 90:23 93:21</p> <p>absenteeism 43:4,12,16 83:5,9</p> <p>absolutely 21:25 38:10 67:10 91:1</p> <p>academic 45:14</p> <p>academics 45:25</p> <p>Academy 6:13 9:2 29:12 55:16 55:18 80:4</p> <p>Academy-Santa 1:10 3:6 6:1,18 7:23 8:10 19:4 20:15 25:20 98:8 101:4</p> <p>accepted 98:8</p> <p>access 13:19 54:9</p> <p>accessible 56:23</p> <p>accounted 54:3</p> <p>achievement 77:9</p> <p>acknowledge 96:6,13</p> <p>Act 20:18 39:9</p> <p>activity 16:22</p> <p>adapt 34:24 36:7 42:18</p> <p>adapting 45:16</p> <p>add 39:3 52:5 82:13</p> <p>added 39:1</p> <p>Adding 20:11</p> <p>addition 22:13</p> <p>additional 32:22 52:13,21 83:10</p> <p>address 21:16 34:7 77:22 79:22 95:6</p> <p>addressed 38:6</p> <p>adds 38:25</p> <p>admin 55:24</p> <p>administrative 52:23</p> <p>administrator 2:16 14:12,12 32:16 65:21 66:2,3,6,19 68:1,4 68:7,11,16 69:1 92:11</p> <p>administrators 21:15 62:24 92:17</p> <p>admit 35:10</p> <p>adults 79:16,20</p> <p>advertise 32:20</p> <p>advertisements 32:22</p> <p>advertising 58:13</p> <p>affluent 69:21,22 70:11 72:6</p>	<p>afford 16:6 44:12,14 81:1</p> <p>AFT 35:2</p> <p>after-school 48:4</p> <p>afternoon 4:1</p> <p>agenda 3:5 5:10,12</p> <p>ages 15:5</p> <p>ago 27:6 35:6 37:17 93:16</p> <p>agree 36:13 66:24 84:8 91:23</p> <p>ahead 8:9 14:2 18:25 24:21 28:24 29:2 40:3 56:5 77:17</p> <p>Aidan 28:22,23</p> <p>aims 13:8</p> <p>Air 10:5</p> <p>Alamos 26:23</p> <p>ALAN 2:3</p> <p>Albuquerque 1:22 25:8 31:4 71:14 73:7 76:19 77:25 78:10 80:5 85:17 100:19</p> <p>Albuquerque's 46:8</p> <p>algebra 81:9 90:23</p> <p>alike 79:17</p> <p>Allegiance 3:3 5:7</p> <p>alleviates 95:9</p> <p>allocation 54:6</p> <p>allow 87:14</p> <p>allowing 7:22 11:8 87:2</p> <p>allows 8:13</p> <p>alongside 12:20</p> <p>amazing 60:10 73:13</p> <p>America 63:3</p> <p>American 19:11</p> <p>amount 13:4 27:18 49:18</p> <p>Analysis 9:11 10:6</p> <p>Anderson 8:5 13:25 14:4,5 17:15 24:25 32:15 40:19 42:11 47:13 56:6 57:4,24 58:22 71:19 83:8</p> <p>angry 9:17 39:16,17</p> <p>Ann 26:8,10,13</p> <p>answer 30:22 46:16 71:24 77:17 84:15 85:25 95:8</p> <p>answered 71:20</p> <p>answering 18:9</p> <p>anybody 5:21,22 79:8</p> <p>anyway 74:22 88:20</p> <p>Apodaca 1:11</p> <p>apologize 30:1</p> <p>applicable 3:11</p> <p>applicant 3:9 6:17 7:19 19:3 21:18 68:15</p>	<p>applicants 7:11 30:11 32:18</p> <p>application 3:6 6:3,9 13:14 19:17 21:1 30:11 47:9 54:16 65:6,9 67:8 68:9 69:12 87:25 88:4 92:2,8,8,20 93:3 96:18 97:23</p> <p>applications 21:6 98:3</p> <p>applied 72:12,13</p> <p>applies 20:24 68:25</p> <p>apply 38:5 61:16 66:6</p> <p>applying 62:5 68:15</p> <p>appreciate 41:14 53:24 61:13 69:16 71:10 85:2 88:17</p> <p>appreciation 60:12</p> <p>approached 14:7</p> <p>appropriate 7:9</p> <p>approval 3:5 5:10 19:3,17 88:17</p> <p>approve 5:11 20:25 77:1 85:7</p> <p>approved 14:15 51:17,23,23 57:5 62:1 68:10 72:14 96:16,20 98:19,20</p> <p>approving 20:15 21:5</p> <p>April 87:25</p> <p>area 58:10 62:24 64:19 69:22 71:8 96:10</p> <p>areas 11:21 46:1 57:24 59:2 71:14 88:11</p> <p>argument 33:15,17,24 81:25 82:5,7</p> <p>arguments 9:13 34:4</p> <p>Armbruster 26:8,10,13</p> <p>Armijo 4:9</p> <p>art 90:5</p> <p>Artists 17:2 49:6</p> <p>arts-embedded 90:5</p> <p>asked 18:23 25:18 52:21 64:20</p> <p>aspect 38:19</p> <p>assessment 13:1 80:3</p> <p>assignments 13:20</p> <p>Assistance 2:13,15</p> <p>associated 98:2</p> <p>associates 1:20 23:5 100:18</p> <p>Association 34:17</p> <p>Astronomy 10:10</p> <p>Athletic 10:12</p> <p>atmosphere 86:6</p> <p>attaching 37:24</p> <p>ATTACHMENT 3:16</p> <p>attend 15:7 25:11,21 44:10 51:12 81:24</p>
---	--	--

Attendees 3:17
attending 46:11
attention 70:21 82:24
ATTORNEY 101:6,11,16,21
attracting 34:19
attracts 79:16
August 17:5 96:20
authorities 7:2
authority 3:11 23:20
available 11:19 19:5 59:15
Avenue 94:16
average 32:7,10 33:4
aware 23:23
awesome 50:7
awry 95:1

B

B 3:9 7:19 27:20
B-a-i-a-r-d-o 86:4
back 15:15 26:3,9 30:19 72:19
 74:18 78:2 85:8 87:7 98:21
background 8:11 56:1
backgrounds 13:9 56:3
backwards 66:4
Baiardo 26:23 51:6 59:14 72:8,8
 72:9 75:8 86:2,3 87:23
bail 40:16
balance 53:25 54:2,24
ball 49:12
Ballooning 10:5
based 9:6 10:23 46:4,10 53:8
 61:4 81:7 84:16 96:9
baseline 84:19
basic 90:23
basically 34:3,24 61:2
basics 91:3
battle 95:14
Bean 1:20 100:18
Beck 2:4 4:11,12 30:25 31:3,14
 31:25 33:7
becoming 68:15
beginning 42:16 67:23
behalf 6:24
Behavioral 66:15
Bekka 84:14
Belen 73:8
beliefs 97:4
believe 6:21 18:14 31:8 37:7,14
 37:18 38:1 39:2 64:23 76:3

83:15 85:8 96:7
believes 8:19
Ben 96:24
benchmarks 77:9
beneficial 21:11
bereaving 48:8
best 10:1 20:22 21:7,15 41:22
 62:23 70:10
better 27:21 75:13
beyond 58:25 59:25
big 16:1 59:5 61:18 82:17 89:11
 93:3
bigger 84:6
bilingual 27:11
Birds 9:17
bit 15:24 29:6,7 32:14 33:4 49:13
 50:14,16,18 53:1 62:21,22 66:5
 68:19 76:11 79:22 87:23 88:5
 91:22 92:5
Black 10:8
blame 76:8 95:18
blew 80:6
blunt 67:6
board 8:5 14:1,10,11,16 15:8
 25:13 33:15 34:2,8 35:11,18,20
 40:4 41:5 47:24 48:23 51:22
 56:7 64:5 65:2,5,7,8,24,25 66:1
 66:3,7,10,18 68:8,25 72:17
 89:12,16
boards 34:16,23 35:15 89:13
body 21:5
booth 49:7
booths 57:10,15
boots 48:20
born 15:6
Bosque 73:8
boundaries 20:24 47:18
brand 69:4,5
Brands 10:11
Brauer 2:3 4:6 24:10 28:11 95:5
BRIGETTE 2:10
bring 34:20 38:19 49:21 66:3
bringing 76:13
brought 43:6
BROWN 2:15 23:23 24:10,23
 25:15 26:7 28:19 29:20
BS 33:17
bud 39:22
budget 52:1 53:18,25 81:1 87:16

budgeted 31:8
budgets 54:15
build 87:9 92:22
building 1:11 86:21 87:21 91:12
bump 33:4
bunch 38:16 46:18 70:14
Burt 2:3 4:4,5,8,8,11,13,17,19,23
 5:1,11 59:3,4 62:2 63:16 65:20
 66:25 67:11,14 68:3 75:1,19
 79:8 84:17,25
Burt's 91:22
bus 13:12 73:17 74:3,22 95:8
business 8:8 18:4 32:5 48:24,25
 49:4 76:13 77:1,15 97:23
businesses 57:7
busy 49:8
buy 62:10
buy-in 60:20

C

C 1:20 2:1 3:1,10 18:12 100:6,17
Cafe 93:17
California 43:7 52:19
call 3:3,3 4:2,3 5:23 8:21 24:21
 35:20,21 76:18
called 9:1 48:5 63:4
camera 95:16
campus 73:10
cancer 8:3 28:13 95:14
capacity 95:16
capitalist 77:14
CAPTION 101:4
car 57:12 74:23
care 55:7 62:16,17 90:22
career 11:9 31:5
Carolina 90:7
Carrillo 2:4 4:24,25 5:5,14 22:21
 22:22 23:11,17 31:2 33:9,10
 42:3 75:24,25 77:20 83:5,14
 84:8,24 85:1 87:19 88:14 93:11
 93:12 96:22 98:13
cart 66:7
carte 52:25
Casa 48:2
case 9:21,22 34:9 66:9 101:4
catalog 11:17 12:15,22 60:4 79:9
 79:10,17
cater 16:20
cause 50:17

CC 101:2
CCR 1:20 100:6,17
cell 27:7
center 74:5
centers 57:10
CEO 76:1
Cerrillos 48:16
certain 38:6
certainly 92:20
CERTIFICATE 3:15 100:5
Certified 100:6
certify 100:8
cetera 57:10 82:10,10
Chair 2:3,3 3:8 4:1,4,5,6,7,8,8,11
 4:13,17,19,23 5:1,3,9,11,13,15
 5:17,19 7:15 14:2 18:11 21:21
 22:18,23 23:19,24 24:10,13
 25:13 26:6,9,12 28:10,11,16,23
 29:2,6,15,24 30:5 32:1 33:7
 40:7 41:7 45:8 46:17 49:25
 52:22 53:10,13 55:1 56:5,10
 59:3,3,4 62:2 63:16 65:20 66:25
 67:11,14 68:3 75:1,19,23,23
 83:14 84:17,25 91:20 93:11
 95:5 96:22 97:14 98:25
challenge 86:5 94:8
challenged 19:9
challenging 21:17 88:17
Chamber 46:24 47:3
Chambers 47:3
chance 25:21 30:9,17 53:21
change 27:5,5 40:25 46:15 75:16
changed 27:16 87:8
Chapman 1:20 100:6,17
charge 41:5
charter 2:9,11,14,16 6:7 13:23
 14:9 17:4 19:3,17,22 20:6,10,16
 20:17,24 21:1,5,11 22:10 23:4
 27:13 32:5 33:16 34:3,18 36:20
 38:7 39:9,10,21,24 40:21 41:10
 41:12,16,19 42:19 52:12 58:20
 58:24,25 61:9 68:5,22,23 69:4
 76:7,7 80:25 81:18 82:6 94:14
 97:23
Charter.Schools@PED.nm.gov
 98:1
chartered 94:14
charters 16:6,7,20 35:9 76:9
 88:21

Chavez 2:8 18:18,21 21:19,24
 23:8,15 33:14 36:14
Chemistry 10:4
child 29:16 44:15 70:10 83:10
children 15:5 20:21 28:8 47:18
 48:6,8,16
choice 8:13,16,17 9:5 11:7,10,22
 41:5 49:20 58:14
choices 8:24 11:11,12,14 29:12
 91:24
choose 8:22 11:20 12:4,18 16:17
 26:5 29:13 60:22
choosing 60:20,21,23
chord 38:2
Chromebook 15:17 17:18 44:9
 44:14,17,18 83:24
chronic 43:4,12,16
chunk 13:3
Circle 9:12
city 74:5,6,11 97:17
Clahchischilliage 4:14
clarified 53:19
clarify 53:17
clarifying 75:21
class 11:2,19 26:2 27:19 48:4
 80:21,22,22 81:2,11,12 82:7,23
 83:7,25 84:7 90:6
classes 9:1 12:5 17:19 70:21
classroom 82:15 84:7,10
classrooms 16:18 83:22
clear 28:5 40:20
clearly 36:25 85:12
click 22:4,16
clinics 57:9
close 48:8 74:4 97:19
closer 29:7 73:15
closing 94:14
CMO 52:18
co-creation 50:5
coaching 67:17
code 22:14
cofounder 8:2
cofounders 7:23 28:12
collaboration 21:12 50:4
collect 75:11
collecting 21:25 22:2,7,12
college 8:15 11:6 18:6
Columbo 98:14,15
combination 8:23

combine 22:8
Combining 10:10
come 10:18 14:22 24:16 30:19
 37:14 39:2,3 42:24 44:11 52:16
 58:8,10 65:20 71:2 73:10,23
 76:11 86:15 87:14
comes 22:10 37:3 46:2 61:10
 62:7 88:19 89:3
coming 18:3 31:15 39:11,20 40:2
 60:5 68:1 77:14 78:23 82:16
 87:7 98:21
comment 7:4 24:5,19 25:2 29:10
 33:11 40:20 42:10 65:20 85:3
comments 3:8,10,11,12 6:20 7:1
 7:3 18:12 23:25 28:24 29:3
 43:10 79:14 97:21,24 98:6,7
Commerce 46:24
Commission 1:1 7:13 20:17
 21:23 23:9 26:17 28:16 30:8,9
 30:17 67:25 94:21,22 98:14
 100:1,10
Commissioner 4:11,12,13,15,16
 4:17,18,19,21,22,23,25 5:4,5,14
 22:21,22 23:8,11,17 28:10
 30:25 31:1,3,14,24 33:7,9,10
 40:7,8 41:7,8 42:3,21 50:11
 59:12 75:24,25 77:20 79:8 83:5
 83:14 84:8,24 85:1 87:19 88:14
 91:20,21,22 93:11,12 96:22
 98:12,13
Commissioners 2:2 5:16 6:2
 18:18 19:1 30:10 47:23 50:15
 64:16 77:21 97:14
commitment 65:10 67:23 89:19
committed 91:1 98:22
Committee 43:2
committees 42:25 43:1
committing 89:6
communication 88:10
communities 56:2 57:2,15,22
 58:3 71:21 73:3
community 1:9 3:6 5:25 15:2
 17:1 18:20 20:23 21:8,13 22:13
 32:23 46:10,11,22 47:11,25
 48:18 49:1,14 50:12 51:7 55:22
 55:24 56:9,11 57:14,20 72:5,5
 79:4 83:1 89:11 91:16 92:3,9
 93:5,13,22,23 95:6,21 96:7,9
 101:3

community-driven 46:9
commute 61:20
Company 74:9
compared 64:4
compete 73:18
competition 41:21 42:23
compile 22:1
complete 13:20 22:5
completely 93:25 98:23
completing 98:1
compliance 21:8
computers 27:7
concern 44:7,24 61:1,7 62:7
63:22 85:13 92:1 93:10
concerned 43:14
concerns 43:3 95:9
conclusion 21:10
conducted 5:8
conference 34:23 35:15
conferences 89:13
confidence 95:25
conflicted 59:25
confuse 66:22
confused 92:25
confusing 63:24 66:22,24 67:5
confusion 30:4
congregations 47:4
connect 47:8
connected 24:6 50:9
connection 47:11
connections 11:5 49:11,24 50:1
50:24 57:23
consequences 80:12
conservative 54:4
consider 16:5 21:1 90:4
considerations 21:6
considering 45:16 70:24
consistently 90:20
consolidate 7:8
constitute 100:8
construction 87:6,7
contact 48:13 67:2,2
contacted 51:6
content 11:21 12:5
contents 18:23
continue 12:3 49:23 51:18,24
55:21,22 96:16 97:12
continuity 89:10,10
contract 14:17 51:19 65:17

contracted 14:23 53:10
contracting 53:8
contrary 20:22
controlled 35:2
conversation 59:21
conversations 47:21 88:6
convince 77:1
cool 60:5
cooperation 42:23
copy 22:24 23:6,6,10,16
core 11:21,23 12:5
Corina 2:8 18:15,18 21:22,24
23:8,15
corner 73:17
corporation 94:25
correct 31:23 78:1 84:13
correction 72:13
costly 71:7
council 13:10 44:2,2 55:23 56:7
57:18 63:23 92:19,24
councils 43:23 55:3,10,12,15,17
55:18 92:23
count 97:10
country 80:18 89:14
County 90:7 100:11
couple 7:24 45:7 55:5 74:8 87:4
88:23
course 8:21 11:17 12:15,16,18,22
14:15 54:1 60:3 61:24 64:20
65:15 79:2,23,24 85:18
courses 59:20 60:15
court 1:21 29:21 100:7
cover 9:4 49:14
COVID 17:18 38:10 78:16,16
crazy 74:8
create 8:14 10:22,25 34:3 46:5
create- 62:11
creates 46:4
creating 11:5 47:11 61:5,11
creation 20:19
creative 90:14
creativity 10:21 15:19
credit 11:19 12:11 80:8 82:10
Crop 9:12
Cruces 45:21 62:15 76:20 78:13
78:23 85:7,17
crux 79:11
CSD 99:2
curious 45:19 55:13 77:13

current 15:9
currently 15:7 22:3 52:4 59:8
61:18 82:12
curriculum 27:11 52:15 60:18
curve 40:3
cycle 43:4
Cynthia 1:20 100:6,17

D

D 3:1,1,11 23:20 78:2
data 78:13,21 84:19
Date 101:2,8,13,18,23
dates 49:5
daughter 15:12 18:6 59:6,8,22
83:25
day 13:21 61:20 86:15
days 12:9 34:13 37:7 81:4,6,10
82:9 97:24
de 48:2
Dear 19:1
December 62:9 63:11
decide 14:16,19 51:23 66:18
decided 65:8,8
decision 20:25 21:7 41:6 94:23
96:25
declining 20:9
deep 92:12
deeply 55:7 57:1 94:23
deficient 81:13
define 69:13
DEL'D 101:8,13,18,23
delivered 76:3 101:8,13,18,23
demand 79:3
Demon 39:5,7
Dental 18:4
departments 23:21
depending 53:7
depends 53:2,3
Deputy 2:10
described 13:14 67:25
describes 79:11
designs 72:25
desirable 70:22
details 78:11
develop 11:13 59:19
developed 65:5 92:12
developing 67:16
development 13:15 52:17
die 34:24 36:7

difference 89:11
different 9:8 11:9,9 12:17 17:7
 20:18 27:2,4,14,19 28:7 36:12
 36:17 45:25 47:12 55:5 56:2,3
 57:14,22 58:15 68:21 69:2,4
 75:2 81:10 86:6 89:22
differentiate 45:24
difficult 93:1 94:15,15,20
digital 57:6
dire 19:7
direct 98:5
directly 49:8 51:7
Director 2:8,10 18:18 21:24 23:8
 23:15
disabilities 19:13 70:18
disagrees 42:4
disappointed 39:17
disclosure 59:5
disingenuous 38:21
Disks 101:7,12,17,22
display 10:24
disrespectful 76:1
distribute 57:7
distributing 17:6
district 3:10 6:21 18:13 19:6,23
 20:1,8,14,23 21:4 23:1,13 31:3
 33:5,15,16,21 36:17,23 38:15
 39:18,20 42:17,20 58:24 90:5
District's 19:13
districts 36:1,3 38:12 55:6 77:8
 81:2
diverse 55:25 58:9
diversion 20:3
diversity 20:13 38:25 39:1,1,4
diverting 19:18
divided 27:17,19
Division 2:9,11,14,17 6:7 22:11
divisions 50:25
divorced 26:20
document 22:1 101:7,12,17,22
doing 5:24 6:11 13:10 16:25 28:3
 34:11,18,20 35:25 36:3,11,18
 36:22 49:6,9 55:19 69:8 80:7,12
 94:7,7
dollars 54:2 91:2 94:9
Don 1:12
door 89:2,17
doubt 39:21
drain 76:7

drilling 85:16
drive 25:7,9 73:14 74:20,22,24
driven 10:20
driving 95:11
dropped 15:21 24:11 65:9 83:20
due 33:14 75:9
dug 90:15
Duplicating 20:2
duplication 19:24

E

E 2:1,1 3:1,1,1,12 23:25
E-l-i-s-h-a 72:9
e-mail 18:22 22:20 97:25
e-mails 22:7
eager 51:12
earlier 18:14 24:2 79:8,11 80:25
 95:13
early 92:18
earn 12:11
earth 10:3 36:19 87:7
eating 42:5
echo 93:12,25
Ecology 9:20
Economics 9:15 10:11
ed 23:21 27:25
educating 20:20
education 1:1,11 10:14 20:16
 26:16 30:8 37:11 38:19 42:16
 43:2 84:4 100:1,10
educational 8:12,15,24 20:13
 21:3
educators 21:14
effective 73:3
effort 33:25 71:11 99:1
efforts 19:19 95:21
eight 29:18 89:6,15
either 23:21 24:6 27:9 55:15
Eldorado 18:4 48:3
elected 94:16
elective 11:22
electives 12:6
electronically 97:22
elementary 11:20 15:9 37:10
 58:7,9,17 60:7,8
eleventh 11:15
Elisha 64:11,14,22 66:11 72:8,8
 75:8
ELS 52:15,21 53:4 65:13

emotional 38:2
emphasis 40:14
empowerment 47:20
encourage 97:5
ended 60:2 73:11
ends 98:16
enemy 35:5
enforce 98:9
engaged 8:18 17:22 82:20
engaging 6:14 8:14
English 13:15 19:12 70:19 71:4,4
 72:21
enhance 20:4
enormous 26:20
enrollment 15:21 20:7,8 38:9
 53:4,7,9 83:20
ensure 13:10 56:15
ensuring 21:8 56:25
entertainment 57:9
entity 14:19,24
environment 16:21
Environmental 9:20
environments 37:23
equal 13:19
Equations 9:17 10:10
equipped 86:8
equity 13:9 43:23 44:2 55:3,10
 55:12,14,17,18,23 56:7 57:18
 71:10 98:10
especially 15:12 32:19 61:10
 70:11 73:21 97:5
et 57:10 82:10,10
event 5:25 66:15
events 17:8 46:9 57:10
everybody 36:6
everyone's 73:13 82:17 89:2
ex-teacher 31:4
exacerbate 20:11
exact 27:14
exactly 85:9 93:15
example 12:17 73:6
examples 9:9 10:15
exceeding 53:16
excellent 40:24 63:7
excited 16:24 17:19,23 29:11
 35:9,11 42:13,14 48:1,13,14,17
 48:18 71:21 77:3 82:15 85:18
exciting 16:16
excuse 24:25 38:12 78:16

Exhibits 101:7,12,17,22
exist 41:1
existing 19:7,21 20:4,7 21:2,13
 86:19 87:1
exists 39:12
expanding 75:21
expect 39:17 78:20
expectations 33:1
expected 49:13
expecting 31:22
expenses 54:12,18,20,21
experience 8:12 36:21 58:15
 61:22 63:13
expert 51:10
expertise 52:2
Expires 100:19
explain 50:18
explore 1:10 3:6 6:1,13,17 7:23
 8:10 9:2 11:8,17 14:7,18,20
 16:15,24 19:3 20:15 25:19
 27:10 29:12 32:5 41:1,6 43:17
 45:19 46:11 50:19 51:18 52:7,8
 52:13 55:16,18 59:5 63:19,25
 64:1 65:13 66:22 67:16,18
 68:20 75:21 80:1,2,4,19 91:4,9
 93:19 98:7 101:4
Explore's 74:18
Explore-Albuquerque 59:6,9
Explore-Rio 62:21
Explore-Santa 45:11 59:17
 63:19 71:2 98:22
Explores 50:17 62:4
extended 47:8
extends 11:7
extent 93:21
extra 80:8,8,10 82:4,10
extraordinary 6:8
Extraterrestrials 10:9
extremely 94:14

F

F 3:13 30:7
facilities 52:1
facility 86:5,14 87:24
fact 44:9 53:25 54:3 65:9 66:17
 92:16 93:3
factors 21:2
fail 28:2
failure 19:10

fair 38:5
fairly 48:23 54:4
faith 38:14
fall 39:24
Familia 48:2
familiar 45:11,12 56:19 59:9,10
families 2:9,11,14,17 11:18 16:1
 16:4 17:10,12 34:19 37:21 49:9
 49:19 56:20,21 60:11,20 69:21
 69:25 70:1,22 71:4 82:25
family 49:9,16 57:9 82:18
fan 38:17 59:5,14 84:9
far 15:11 39:9 73:4 88:6
Farmers 17:3
Farms 73:8
farther 61:7
favor 5:15
Fe 1:10,12 3:6 6:1,18,21,24 7:23
 8:10 15:4,7,10 17:9,9 19:2,4
 20:15 25:5,10,20,22 29:12,19
 33:11 34:2,8 38:21 39:6 45:11
 45:18 46:12,24 47:2,16 48:24
 49:11,15 51:5 55:16 56:2,16,19
 57:3,22 58:6,11,23 59:1,17,18
 62:18 63:19 64:17,19 69:19,21
 69:22,25 70:1,24 71:2,8,16 74:1
 79:14,22,23 80:22 81:5,20 82:1
 82:12 86:21 89:7,8,17 90:4 91:9
 98:8,22 100:11 101:4
federal 38:6
fee 52:23,23
feedback 21:25 22:2 75:12 82:25
 97:22
feel 17:20 40:23 43:13 44:13 56:6
 59:9 71:19 86:8,9
feels 56:22 69:8
fees 53:8
felt 45:3
festivals 58:1 71:22
Fifth 94:16
fifth- 83:21
fifth-graders 84:1
Fifty 31:11
figure 69:14
Figureheads 10:12
final 22:9 26:7 30:5 56:14
financing 87:5
find 8:23 16:1 17:13 48:15 51:25
 52:19 57:14 61:24 66:3,12

70:10 86:20 91:14
finding 58:19 73:11
finish 7:10
first 5:20 14:3 22:14 24:21,23
 31:1,6,7 33:10 54:18,23 68:6,6
 68:16 69:1 72:12 74:3 75:17
 76:24,25 77:7,18,23,24,25
 78:14,16,17,20 80:4 87:3 89:8
 95:11
first-year 68:5
fit 60:8 63:7,15
five 54:1,9,22,25 67:4,4
fix 43:8
flag 3:4 5:8 90:24
flavor 9:6 10:1,18 11:6 12:21
 46:5
flavors 8:22 9:1,3,9 10:16,20,22
 10:24 11:9,11,18 12:5,16,17
 36:11 37:11 45:11,17 46:7,10
 46:15
flex 13:14,17 80:15
flexibility 11:16 87:16
flexible 20:20 40:11 46:14
fliers 17:6 57:7
flip 65:22
flooded 70:14
floor 25:3,17 30:14
focus 13:5 21:12 38:8
focusing 6:12 25:24
folks 7:8 24:4 41:9 47:14 67:4
follow 90:18
follow-up 50:22
following 62:10 97:24
follows 81:16
foot 86:20
for-sure 68:12
forces 95:11
foregoing 100:8
forever 90:10
form 22:4 98:2
Formations 9:12
formed 92:20
former 26:15
forward 18:9 23:9 41:8
found 35:21 63:14
foundation 52:11 86:14 93:8
founder 51:6,9 61:4,5,11 67:2,3
 67:3,3,3 68:10
founders 23:9 67:1

founding 32:13 55:13 63:18,23
64:6,13 65:1,3,12 66:10,23
92:10,24
four 12:5
fourth 76:23 77:2,6,12,15,16
85:14 91:8
framework 35:25
frameworks 45:14
Franklin 96:25
free 13:11 14:23
friend 18:2 59:22
friends 16:8 25:7
front 23:3
front-loading 13:16
full 59:5
fun 29:13 82:22
fund 19:10 53:15 54:2,13,23
funded 81:19
funding 19:6,15
funds 20:3 33:22 54:5,6,9,17
further 19:6 71:17 88:11
future 62:4 67:15 97:5

G

G 3:1
Galapagos 9:21
Gas 10:4 74:9
Gaspar 1:12
gathered 14:10
general 38:15 98:6
generally 68:22,23 69:20 84:12
92:2,10
generation 27:3
gentleman 48:3
geographic 20:23
Geography 10:3
geometry 9:12 90:24
Gerard's 48:7
germane 36:3
get-go 44:25
getting 16:13 26:21 41:13 67:8
71:7,17 84:10 88:21 92:25
95:17 96:2
Gipson 2:5 4:17,18 41:7,8 42:21
59:13 91:20,21 93:13,25
girls 17:20 47:17
give 30:14,16 32:24 53:21 77:16
83:1
given 12:15 22:22,23 58:9 67:25

gives 70:20 77:6,11
Glorieta 48:11 59:2 74:2
go 7:24 8:9 14:2 18:25 22:16
24:19,21 26:3 27:18,21 28:24
29:2 30:15 31:9 40:16 48:14
56:5 57:13,25 59:6,11 64:7
69:23,23 70:2 71:11,14,21 73:9
75:16 77:5,17 81:23 87:9 88:5
89:8 92:4,6 94:25
go-round 33:12
goal 74:25
goes 39:16 68:24 81:23 84:3
going 4:2,3 6:12,13,16,23,23
11:14 12:22 13:22 15:1,25
16:25 17:1,2,4,7 18:12,16,16
23:19,19,25 29:10 30:7,16 31:9
31:17,19 32:7,8,11,12 35:2
40:10 41:8,16,21 43:24 46:9
49:2,4,6,7,9,21,22 51:15 54:16
54:20 57:22 58:20,25 59:1,22
59:24 60:24 61:1,16 65:15,16
65:25 67:6 69:16,18 70:12,12
70:13 71:7 74:22 75:2 76:18
77:1 80:13 83:8,9,21,25 84:6
85:10,15,23 86:20 87:3 89:2,12
89:18 91:6,10,13,21 92:4 94:13
95:8,14 97:16
good 4:1 16:12 26:24 60:8 69:21
69:24 71:13 79:4 82:3,6 91:17
93:8
Gordon 29:1,2,4,4,9,14,15,17,22
30:3
gotten 35:18
governance 44:1 92:19,23
governing 14:16 21:5 63:23 64:4
65:2,5,7,24,24 66:1,3,7,10,18
68:8,25 92:23
grabs 68:12
grade 11:12 12:2 20:2 29:18 31:7
84:2 85:11
grader 11:15
grades 11:22,24,25 12:7,8,10
78:3 84:9 90:11
grading 13:2 80:3,7,17 82:9
graduated 26:24
graduation 25:25
Grammar 9:10
grassroots 47:4
grasstops 47:2

grateful 59:15
great 5:15 7:18 12:1 15:10 24:13
28:1 29:8 30:6,25 50:5 67:22
70:3,15,16,18,19 75:6 90:18
91:24 97:17 98:24
ground 96:11
grounded 19:14
group 7:5,6 16:22 24:3 47:20
64:14 69:12 72:16
grow 87:17
growing 54:24 87:2
growth 84:16,20,24
guess 61:15 62:13 67:15 92:1
guides 11:18
Guilford 90:7
Guillen 35:23
guy 76:2
guys 49:13 61:14 62:14 63:17
64:1 67:8 98:15

H

hall 1:11 13:18
hand 13:22 31:1 47:8 100:14
happen 91:4
happened 50:13 92:3,9
happening 17:5 37:14 68:20 76:9
80:17 83:18 87:4
happens 73:25 89:1
happier 8:18
happiness 90:1,12,25
happy 37:20,20,21,22 41:3 77:22
78:18 82:15,17,17 89:25 90:22
91:24
hard 22:24 23:6,6,16 43:25,25
44:1 49:21 90:9 91:14 96:15,16
harder 90:10 94:24 96:18
hardest 88:15
Harry 10:7
hate 94:4
hates 83:13
head 57:12 65:21 66:2,2,6,19
68:1,11,15,25 88:22,22 92:11
92:17
headed 73:5
health 57:8
hear 7:1 28:23 29:5 30:20 53:1
56:13,17,24 64:8 70:12,13,15
97:7,9 98:23
heard 43:13 45:3 56:18 91:5 94:3

94:4
hearing 1:9 3:6 6:1,16 16:13
 26:19 38:12 95:3 97:24 101:3
hearings 18:21
heavily 48:10
held 76:16 100:10
Hello 7:20 25:17 59:4
help 35:17,18 64:14 65:16,17
 66:11,11,13 73:18 74:8,12,15
 74:16 80:15 82:4 86:11,12
helpful 51:1 69:13
helping 49:5 52:4
helps 74:25
hereunto 100:13
Hey 74:13
Hi 15:3 31:3 64:9 72:8
high 12:24 39:7 73:22 78:19 79:3
 79:3 80:6,7,18 81:4
higher 33:4,5 41:2,17
Hijole 76:8
Hilario 18:21 21:19
hire 14:11 63:24 65:25
hired 32:16 62:8 63:8 68:8,11
 72:17
hiring 14:13
Hispanic 48:11
hit 54:20
hold 86:2
Holocaust 9:22
home 49:15 50:19,21 87:18
homeless 57:9
homeschool 48:4
Homewise 87:22 91:11
homework 6:4
honest 64:16
hope 25:5 42:22 56:1 84:2 89:3
hopefully 24:5 74:25 78:24 96:16
hoping 42:15 49:23
horse 66:8
host 57:6
Hot 10:5
hour 74:14
house 48:7 73:14
how's 85:22,22
huge 38:17 58:18 90:24
Humanities 11:21
hurdle 41:12 44:8,10
husband 15:5 48:24

I

idea 13:3 36:9 37:24 38:9,22,24
 54:7 67:15,22 68:1,24 69:5 77:5
 90:4
ideas 21:16 36:2
identified 65:2
identifier 44:16
II 9:23 54:7
imagine 40:24 71:6
impact 19:7 20:6 21:2
impacted 20:9
impacting 38:9
Imperialization 10:8
implementation 20:18 96:3,17
implementing 61:6
important 28:6 38:19 49:16 50:1
 50:2,3,11 55:21 58:23 97:3
improve 21:16
improve- 19:20
improvement 78:23
improvements 19:20
in-state 62:18
inaudible 75:9 87:6
include 54:17
included 22:9 54:5,22
including 14:17 21:2,9 32:18
 57:8 78:6 82:3
inclusion 13:15
incomprehensible 36:12 65:11
incorporate 42:20
incorrectly 38:1
increase 11:12 36:22
increases 83:6
incredible 60:9
incubator 86:25 87:13
independent 52:11 66:1
index 90:1,13 91:1
indicate 5:16
individual 8:17 43:5
individualized 15:18 16:18
inefficiencies 20:3
inequities 19:6
infinite 8:20
inform 50:2
information 27:15 32:24 50:4
 57:6
informing 50:3
Ingham 2:5 4:15,16 5:4 40:7,8

inherent 59:18
inherently 67:5
initially 64:13 87:12
innovation 21:12
innovative 20:19,20
input 1:9 3:6 5:25 18:21 22:12,14
 101:3
institution 46:23
institutions 47:1,12
instruction 13:1 15:18 79:24
 80:3 83:24 89:10
insulting 35:22
integral 40:17
intelligent 17:21
intense 66:15
intention 20:17
interest 10:23 46:14 79:3
interested 67:23
interesting 8:23 9:7
interests 20:22
interim 42:25 43:1,4
Internet 18:3
interview 62:24,25 63:6 66:14,15
 66:16 95:16
interviewed 66:17
interweave 63:20,20
interweaving 64:3
introducing 19:22 21:10
invested 63:9 92:18
investors 88:3
involved 64:25 93:22 99:2
involvement 64:4
Isleta 73:12
issue 43:9 71:10
it'll 51:17
item 5:10,24,25 7:18 18:12 23:20
 23:25 30:7

J

J 2:4
J-u-d-d 25:4
J-u-s-t-i-n 86:4
January 62:9
Jenn 48:19
Jennifer 8:6 14:25 15:3,3 48:22
 58:5 83:3,15,17
Jerry 1:11
job 1:25 82:19 91:1 100:25 101:2
jobs 32:18 66:12,13

Joe 35:23
Johnny 34:21 36:7 76:1,2
join 8:2 58:16
joining 8:6,7 15:1 29:25
joking 89:16
Judd 25:3
July 1:10 17:5 98:9 100:14
jumped 46:21
Justin 26:23 51:6 61:2,8 62:18
 64:14,15,17,20,22 66:11 68:6
 72:12 78:1 85:25 86:2,3 87:23

K

K 11:22 12:23 87:1
K-a-r-e-n 14:4 64:10
K-a-t-i-e 32:4
K-e-v-i-n 25:4
K.T 2:6
Karen 8:4 13:22,25,25 14:2,4
 17:15 24:25 32:15 40:19 42:11
 47:13 51:21 56:6 57:4,24 58:22
 64:8,9,9 67:10,13,21 71:19
 77:20 83:8 95:5
Karyl 26:8,10,13
Katie 8:7 31:13,24 32:3,4 33:2
 52:6 53:2,12,13,23 62:20 66:14
 66:20
keep 6:18 41:13,24
keeping 40:3
Kevin 24:24 25:3 96:24
kid 17:25 38:8 59:24 81:9,16
 85:5
kidding 97:12
kids 12:18 13:18,19 15:6,15,22
 16:16,21 33:19 34:5,19 37:19
 37:20,22,22 38:3,13,16 41:23
 59:11 64:24 73:22,23 74:20
 76:9 80:15,19,21 81:1,6,18 82:2
 82:3,3,14,20,23 83:9 89:8,20,20
 89:25 90:13 91:3,23,24
kids' 83:18
kind 13:18 16:20 30:15,18 34:12
 35:4,4 36:20 39:15 51:1 52:3
 53:21 62:6,9,10 69:8 72:17
 74:16 84:1 85:16 90:17 91:9
 94:4 95:6
kinder 89:9
kindergarten 11:7 26:3 31:7
 59:23,24

kindergarteners 11:13
kinds 34:4
know 16:2,4 17:9,12 23:5 24:4
 25:8 27:6,8,12 28:16 32:7,8
 34:7,10,11 35:4 36:8,10,12
 37:17,19 40:22 41:11,14,20
 42:2,3,9,14,17,25 43:8,18,19,22
 43:22,24 44:4,16,20,24 45:1,2,4
 45:21 47:2 48:10 49:16 54:15
 56:18,18 57:11,18 58:6,8,13,14
 58:16 59:16,23 60:6,14 61:8,9
 61:15,19 62:15 63:16 67:13,17
 67:18,24 69:3,22 70:5,12,13
 71:3,5,9,13 72:2,5 74:1 75:1,13
 76:13,15,18 77:13 78:15,15
 79:6 80:12 84:6 85:14,19 87:11
 87:13,20 88:20,25 90:17 91:23
 92:22,25 93:6,9,14 94:17,24
 96:13,17 97:3,10
knowing 32:9 87:17 88:5
knowledge 40:25
knowledgeably 23:2
known 94:11
knows 74:10 84:14,14 98:14

L

L-o-l-a 25:18
la 52:25
labor 51:1
laid 75:4
Lamy 59:2
landlords 88:1
landowners 88:2
landscape 21:3
Language 13:15 19:12
large 13:3 45:15 81:2
larger 86:22
Larry 21:19 33:14
Las 45:21 62:15 76:20 78:13,23
 85:7,17
lately 38:10
latest 78:7
laugh 34:12
law 38:6,7 39:10
Laws 10:4
lawsuit 19:9
LEA 52:10
lead 5:4,6 20:3 62:4 88:7 96:19
leaders 63:14 66:16

learn 9:6 25:6,25 26:2 29:13
 35:13 36:1 42:12 48:17 51:12
 51:22 60:24 71:25 72:1 80:9,13
 81:7 82:9 94:6 96:19
learned 35:12 47:25 55:15,17
learner 88:22,22
Learners 19:12 70:19
learning 14:8,18,20 15:16,23
 16:16,17,18,20 20:1 37:23 41:6
 50:20 51:18 52:8,14 63:19,25
 64:1 65:14 66:22 67:16 80:9,19
 82:8,16 83:24 91:3 94:6,10
lease 54:5 88:16,16
leaving 38:8
Leesa 8:1 14:7 28:11 51:4 61:13
 64:18 65:3 95:11,13
Leesa's 30:2
left 70:2
legal 21:8
Legislative 43:2
Legislature 43:1
legitimacy 88:12
lengthy 96:3
Leon 8:1 28:12 51:4
let's 5:9 7:18 24:8,13 57:13 85:21
 98:20
letter 6:23 18:15,19,24 22:19,23
 23:1 33:11
letters 22:8
letting 58:6
level 11:12 31:9,10,15,15,15,20
 31:20,20,22,22,23 64:3 80:18
 81:5 93:22
levels 20:2
leverage 86:17
Liaison 2:18
License 100:19
life 76:15
liked 18:7 60:17
limited 7:4 24:3 81:1
line 61:24
lined 97:11
lines 69:13
lingering 30:18
link 22:4
list 3:17 9:8
listed 46:24
Listening 9:13
literally 62:17

Literary 10:6
Literature 9:11 10:6
little 15:23 28:3 29:6,7 31:18
 32:13 33:3 49:12 50:14,16,18
 62:20,21 63:24 66:5 68:18
 71:17 74:24 79:22 87:23 91:22
 92:5
live 15:4 17:17 48:11 51:5 56:22
 69:22 73:4 74:21
living 75:3,10
loaded 21:22
lobbyists 97:11
local 17:8 20:22 57:5 58:24
located 74:6
location 46:8
locations 70:25
logistical 72:24 74:7,8
logistically 74:5
Lola 25:16,17 96:24
long 23:13 25:9 59:21 74:22,23
 86:3 87:11 96:2
longest 77:24
look 16:8 18:9 28:6 31:19 34:18
 45:25 58:25 59:1 62:23 64:5
 67:1 71:7,18 77:6 79:17 87:1
looked 75:22 87:24
looking 15:11 17:11 31:6 36:21
 44:19 49:19,20 58:20 63:12
 64:15,17 70:24 72:19 74:1
 85:16 86:24 87:5 89:4 90:3
 94:22 98:17
looks 69:5 79:8
Los 26:23 73:8
lost 38:13
lot 7:5 15:16,18 16:1,9,25 17:18
 17:18 38:12 40:13 49:1,11,14
 49:16,21 51:22 56:21 63:12,18
 69:25 70:1,20 71:25 73:21
 83:10,12 93:4 94:6,6 95:21 97:3
lots 96:18,19
lotteries 58:17
lottery 16:8,11 38:4 58:7
louder 29:7
love 15:10 23:6 26:1 39:18 50:18
 52:25 56:17,24 59:13 61:20,25
 65:16,21 77:4 82:16,19,20,21
 85:12 91:4 97:7
loves 89:7
low 90:21

low-income 19:11
low-rider 57:12
Lucy 2:13 7:16
Lujan 34:1
Lunas 73:8

M

Mabry 1:11
Madness 9:19
magnet 39:23
main 5:25 32:16 75:20 91:6
majors 11:8
making 35:7 57:23 82:7
management 13:24 40:21 52:18
manager 32:5
Manis 2:6 4:21,22
map 75:5
March 9:19
market 17:3,3 49:6,7,8 86:6,7
 91:14
marriage 94:25
massive 71:10,12
master 13:6 81:5,8,12
mastered 12:13
matches 63:5
material 91:7
math 12:18 90:20,23
matriculates 73:22
matter 91:3 100:11
matters 97:10
mature 11:13
McGRAW 7:20,21 14:25 18:8
 28:11,18,25 30:1 32:20 46:2
 48:19 51:3 55:20 57:21 61:17
 82:13 85:25
meals 13:12
mean 42:15 45:5 47:20 57:11,17
 60:3,24 61:2 62:15 65:12,13
 66:9 69:6 71:6,23 82:14,19,21
 86:11 94:17,20
meaningful 43:24
means 78:7 94:23
meant 64:12 65:3,14 66:24
meet 20:17 44:7 47:5 75:10
meeting 4:2 22:24 44:5 47:7 48:1
 72:1
meetings 26:18 75:2
Meghan 7:20,21 14:6,25 18:8
 28:11,18,25 30:1 32:20 46:2

48:19 51:3 55:20 57:21 61:13
 61:15,17 64:15,18 65:3 82:13
 85:25 89:5,25 95:10
Meghan's 72:13
MELISSA 23:23 24:10,23 25:15
 26:7 28:19 29:20
member 2:4,4,5,5,6 14:1 15:8
members 8:6 35:20 55:23,24
 65:7,8 89:16 97:20 98:5
mention 46:23
mentioned 24:2 44:4 51:21 79:7
 80:24 89:25 95:10,13
merge 83:21
merged 84:7
message 25:1
met 46:25 84:11 93:15,15,16
 95:12
methodologies 42:18
methodology 40:11
methods 20:19
Mexico 1:2,12,22 3:4 5:8 20:16
 34:16 35:14 69:20 94:13 97:18
 98:3 100:2,7,10,11,19
microphone 24:20 64:7
mid 12:24 90:20
mid/high 12:4
middle 10:3 15:12,25 16:3,11
 17:13,14 59:7 60:3 73:7 84:3
miles 56:22 74:21
million 54:2 56:22
Mimi 34:1
mind 30:22 32:1
minds 90:14
minimum 89:6
minute 84:12
minutes 6:17,25 7:4,19 22:25
 24:3 28:21 74:14
missed 83:10 85:22
mission 8:10 89:23
Missy 2:15 7:15 23:22 24:6,8,19
 24:21
mistaken 31:11
mix 31:20 84:1
mixed 84:9
model 13:17 14:20 17:23 25:23
 40:23 41:1 43:17,20 45:5,6 51:6
 51:9 59:10,13 60:11,13 61:5,19
 63:10 64:21,24 65:16 68:5
 72:19,20,21 77:4 78:25 79:7,12

79:16 80:1,2,6 82:1,3 85:8,12
85:14
mom 25:18 70:10,11 72:7
moment 24:18 30:13 96:23 98:14
money 33:20 38:2 42:6,6 81:16
81:18,22
Montessori 39:22,24
month 37:4 47:25
moratorium 34:3
morning 18:22 74:4
mouths 38:3
move 5:10,11 6:20 7:18 12:14
13:6 17:12 18:12 23:25 24:13
30:7,23 50:3 81:14,14 97:16
movie 49:9 73:11
moving 50:4 80:20
mulling 85:15
multiple 92:17
murdering 94:15
music 27:12
Musical 9:11

N

N 2:1 3:1,1
name 7:21 14:3 25:3,17 26:11
29:15,21 32:2,3 34:22 43:5
50:20
named 64:9
narrative 41:24
Native 19:11
NEA 35:2
near 55:6
necessary 19:19 44:22
need 16:19 19:14 27:5 32:21 38:3
41:24 42:12,15 51:15 65:17,25
66:1,12 71:1 72:6 74:13 77:19
82:4
needed 96:8
needing 88:12
needs 21:7,17 38:6 44:5 84:11
87:10 91:8 95:25 96:3
negotiations 88:6
neighborhood 69:23 70:3
Nevada 45:22,22 52:19
never 35:2 36:24 38:17 70:9
new 1:2,12,22 3:4 5:8 14:1 17:4
20:6,16,19,25 21:11 29:11
34:16 35:14 42:11 47:23 48:23
51:11 68:21,23,24 69:4,5,20

78:5 84:18 94:7,13 97:18 98:3
100:2,7,9,11,19
newest 43:16
night 49:10
nightmare 81:8
nine 34:9
nip 39:22
nitpicky 94:3
nitty 94:4
NM 1:20 100:17
NMPED 101:6
Nope 53:12
norm 84:22
North 90:7
note 39:14 85:21 93:23 94:2
97:20
notes 14:14 98:17
notice 35:17,19
number 29:1 32:6,9 37:19 94:5,5
98:18 101:2
numbers 85:17
numerous 20:10 34:15
NW 1:21 100:18

O

O 3:1,1
O'Brien 8:6 15:1,3,4 29:1,4,9,14
29:17,23 30:2,3 48:22 58:5 83:3
83:17
O'-B-r-i-e-n 29:23
obligations 21:9
obvious 78:10
obviously 11:13 27:4 31:21 51:9
60:7
offer 10:16
offered 11:11 12:16,18 20:1 53:9
offering 37:11
offers 19:24
office 50:19,21 89:19
official 8:8
oftentimes 35:8 42:24 61:3
oh 29:1 32:3 41:15 42:5 44:13
70:16 98:16
okay 7:18 18:8,17 22:18 23:11
25:14 28:17,17 30:3,14,24
31:14 34:19 36:6 53:13 57:4
62:2 75:19 76:8 77:4,10 91:18
97:13
old 29:18 33:23 82:22,23

old-school 90:17
once 13:6 32:16 51:22 94:13
one-and-done 30:13
one-on-one 16:22
one-time 86:10
ones 30:18 62:11
online 15:15 17:19 23:21 24:6
28:13 32:23 64:8
open 14:8 39:22,23,24 64:16,17
77:15 78:14,17 94:11
opened 37:17 43:16 50:17 59:7
69:19 76:7,17,19,20 77:24 78:1
opening 14:9 76:21 79:2 87:12
opens 25:5,10
operate 20:24 52:17 87:11,16
Operational 54:13,18
operative 54:5
opinion 82:7
opportunities 20:13 50:6
opportunity 79:20
oppose 22:17
opposed 5:17
opposition 19:2,13 21:18
opt 53:5
option 16:5,12,15 17:25 59:15
70:1,16,18,20
options 8:22 16:2,12 17:11,14
18:7 25:7 37:15 40:1 41:23
69:24 70:15 75:6
opts 53:3
order 3:3 4:2 46:19,20
organization 13:24 48:15 52:18
organizations 47:4,7,14,15,16
50:8 57:8
organized 40:21
organizing 50:12
original 45:20
outcomes 36:22
outlying 57:24 59:1 73:3
outreach 17:1 46:22 48:18 55:22
58:2,3 91:16 92:3,9 93:24
outside 59:2 71:8,14,16
overall 21:3
overarching 85:13
overburdened 87:15
overused 33:17 34:13
overwhelmed 13:5
owner 62:12 76:14
ownership 68:18

owns 18:4 68:24

P**P** 2:1,1 3:1**p.m** 1:11 4:2 98:8 99:4**page** 3:2 67:1,4**pages** 100:8**paid** 67:8**paired** 11:3**pandemic** 15:14 35:15 38:14**pandemic-schmandemic** 38:11**panel** 28:20**Panther** 10:8**paper** 80:10**papers** 63:17**paperwork** 64:6**paraphrasing** 96:24**parent** 36:23 41:14 44:13,19,23
59:10,25 75:2**parents** 2:9,11,14,17 26:21 37:19
73:9,21 74:23 75:13 79:16**parse** 38:23**part** 9:5 27:4 40:18 43:9 61:23
62:22 64:3,5 69:18 71:20**participants** 35:19**participated** 95:15**participating** 48:7**partner** 35:24 47:22**partners** 49:1,15**partnership** 47:12**parts** 28:3**pass** 27:18,20 28:2 81:12 90:23**passes** 5:19**passion** 10:23 61:11 67:22**passionate** 39:15 40:23 61:21
97:7**path** 86:15**pathetic** 33:25**pathway** 8:15,24**pathways** 11:9**PATRICIA** 2:5**pause** 77:6,11 88:5**pay** 52:24 82:24**payments** 87:15**PDF** 22:9**PE** 10:1**PEC** 2:18 3:8,13 7:10**PEC's** 22:3 98:2**Pecos** 17:17 48:11 74:2 93:17**PED** 2:7 80:5**peer** 3:7 6:3,8 46:22 53:14 55:9
63:17 65:13 66:21**people** 7:6,8,25 17:8,9,24 22:4,7
22:15 24:12 27:1 30:16 37:14
38:7,14 39:16 40:1,2 43:7,25
47:5,19 48:12 49:16,21,22 56:3
57:16,23 58:6,8,13,14,16,20
67:17,18 68:14 70:15 73:7 74:8
76:6 93:18 94:5,21 96:9 97:8,9**perceived** 67:24**percent** 18:5 33:5 54:23,24 78:8**percentage** 53:11**percentages** 56:9 57:19**percentile** 84:20**PEREA** 2:18 19:1 101:6**performance** 35:25**performing** 77:18**period** 13:17**periods** 13:14 80:15**permanent** 87:18**person** 14:7 24:7,11,22 32:17
43:10 62:4,5 63:12 84:14 92:18**personality** 9:18 63:5**personalized** 8:12,14 70:20**personally** 16:19 25:11 35:21
71:20 77:9**petitions** 22:7 97:21**phone** 28:25**phones** 27:7**Physical** 10:13**pick** 25:6 26:1 66:2 73:17**picking** 36:5,5**picture** 78:12**pictures** 79:10**piece** 32:12 68:18 93:13 95:7**pieces** 27:17 88:15**pivotal** 84:2**pivoting** 86:24**place** 32:15 74:3 76:12 80:14
87:21**placed** 11:2**places** 47:5 86:22**plan** 13:11 47:22 55:22 57:5
61:23 77:1,15 83:22 93:7**planning** 56:15**plans** 56:12**play** 38:1**played** 55:4**please** 24:22 26:12 29:20 74:15
94:18**Pledge** 3:3 5:5,7**plugged** 36:10**plus** 11:22 12:5**point** 6:11 36:15 45:4 58:23
72:10,12 82:2 88:1,2,3,7**pointing** 54:11**points** 73:4 80:8,10**Pojoaque** 59:2**pool** 58:19**poor** 66:16**popping** 57:11**pops** 86:21**popular** 58:18**population** 20:10 56:8,15**Portales** 6:14 97:18**portion** 53:17 84:10**position** 72:13**positions** 14:13 76:15**possibilities** 8:20**possible** 28:14 74:24**post** 66:12,13**potential** 8:5 19:7 21:2 65:8**potentially** 20:12 92:11**Potter** 10:7**power** 8:13 70:9 97:12**powwows** 58:1**practices** 21:15**preparation** 8:15 11:6**prepared** 96:14**prepares** 12:1**preschool** 15:8**present** 4:7,14,20 50:9**Presentation** 3:9**presenting** 27:14 85:8**president** 25:13 34:22 94:17**press** 57:5**pretty** 25:9 60:13 62:25 66:15
71:7 78:10 95:24**prevent** 82:6**price** 53:6**prices** 87:6,7**primarily** 47:17 65:4**Primary** 67:2**principal** 61:16 63:7,24 67:17
72:15 88:19 89:4**print** 57:6**printed** 23:15

prior 26:18 87:24
private 16:6 20:10 21:14 69:24
 76:12,14,22
Probability 10:9
probably 32:10 39:20 40:5 54:8
 66:24 84:14,14 93:16 94:12,15
 95:12
problem 16:1 72:24 74:7,13
problematic 65:23 66:5
problems 26:21,25 27:1
proceedings 1:9 99:4 100:9
 101:3,3
process 45:13,17 47:9 60:1 62:22
 63:1,6 66:14 69:2 72:18 99:2
processes 45:13
producing 40:4
professional 1:21 52:16
proficiency 84:16,21 90:19
proficient 12:12
program 14:22 19:18 39:8
programming 19:5,23 20:2
 21:16 48:15
programs 11:8 19:10 20:5 82:11
progress 35:3 88:11
project 34:11 75:8
project-based 19:25
projected 37:18 54:15
projects 79:25
projects-based 79:24
promoted 28:19
promoting 17:7
property 35:12 85:23 91:15
proposal 36:15 40:18
proposed 7:23 68:3,7
proposing 36:16
protect 19:14
protocols 45:13
proud 78:9
provide 8:11 13:11 19:19 24:5
 44:9,12,21 71:9,11 86:9,12
provided 11:16 12:22 19:15
providers 14:17
provides 8:20 9:4 13:19
providing 50:4 64:23
public 1:1 3:12 6:21,24 7:3,4
 15:7,21 16:3 19:2,7 20:16,21
 21:3,13 24:1,14,19 26:16 28:22
 29:10,11,18 30:5,8 33:11,20
 34:2,8,14,17 35:11 41:3,11,15

41:18,19 42:1,2,7,13,17,19
 44:21,21 48:5 50:2 58:6,15,17
 73:15 79:14 83:19 90:4 97:20
 98:6 100:1,10
publications 57:6
Pueblo/Rail 73:12
pueblos 48:13 57:25
pumping 38:16
pupil 81:18,19
purchasing 87:5
purpose 41:22 42:8,22
purposeful 11:4
put 6:6 10:24 32:22 37:8 40:14
 46:18,19 54:18 70:9 84:20
 95:23
puts 66:7
putting 32:17 58:13

Q

QR 22:14
Quadratic 9:17
quality 20:12 38:25
quarter 12:1,3,7
question 33:8 40:9 50:22 53:15
 56:14 61:1 62:13,19 67:7 71:20
 77:21 80:24 95:9
questioning 69:17
questions 3:13 7:11,13 18:9 30:8
 30:10,15,17,22 33:13 40:6 45:6
 45:9 46:18 55:1,8 59:3 61:15
 75:20 97:15
quickly 7:24 22:16
quit 35:1 40:3
quite 76:11 78:19
quorum 5:2
quote 94:18,19

R

R 2:1 3:1
R-a-r-i-c-k 32:4
Rail 73:20,23,24
Railyard 48:20 49:3
Railyards 56:20
raised 15:6
Rancho 45:21 62:16,21 63:8
 76:21 77:4 79:2 85:18 86:13
random 11:2,3
randomly 11:2
range 53:6

Rarick 8:7 31:13,24 32:1,3,4
 33:2 52:6,22 53:2,12,23 62:20
rates 90:19
reach 49:8 71:5,23 72:1,6
reached 48:2,6 51:5,8,14
reaching 17:1 48:12 49:2 56:1
 61:14 82:2 90:13
read 6:23 18:15,23 22:23
ready 24:20 85:14 91:8
real 50:12 72:5 79:11 85:23
realistic 32:9
Realistically 86:23
reality 54:8
realized 35:13
really 12:25 16:12,21 17:10,11
 17:21,21,21,23 25:4 36:1,10,12
 36:16,20 38:5 39:8,14,15 40:20
 42:11 45:6 46:3,13 49:22,23
 50:5 55:7 57:1,13,17 58:2,3
 59:5,21 60:17 61:4 62:23 64:12
 64:18 65:3,7 66:18 67:6,7 69:24
 72:18,23 73:8 74:12 82:4,5 84:5
 85:16 91:14 92:19 93:14 95:7
 95:14 96:5,15
reason 15:20 43:18 45:3 54:14
 73:5
reasonably 56:8
reasons 43:11 63:11
REBEKKA 2:3
REC'D 101:9,14,19,24
recall 43:6
RECEIPT 101:1
receive 22:19
received 25:1
receiving 52:24
recess 3:14 7:11 10:2 97:17 99:3
 99:4
recommendation 22:10
record 18:23 34:21 85:9 86:3
recruit 31:17,19 55:23,25
recruited 72:16
recruiting 56:18 57:1 72:15
recruitment 32:12 33:6 47:10
 56:11
recurring 86:11
red 90:24
refer 65:1 90:1,12
referred 90:2
reflect 17:16 56:8 57:19 72:4

reflecting 56:10
regarding 20:18 97:22
regardless 8:11
regular 27:11
reimagine 34:17
reimagining 34:13,13,25
reject 20:25
relationship 46:25 49:3 50:19,21
 51:2 52:3 86:12
relative 76:5 77:7
relatively 14:1
relay 95:4
release 78:7
released 78:22
releases 57:5
relevant 76:4
relying 95:20
remarks 76:3
remember 34:22 40:9 75:2 85:2
 93:15 94:18,18 98:15
remembering 85:20
rent 87:15
repeat 12:13
repeatedly 95:10
replace 19:4
replacement 61:24
replicate 19:5 62:18
replicated 19:18
replicating 37:5 39:11 79:21
 82:11
replication 69:7
replication-ey 69:8
Report 3:7
REPORTED 1:20
reporter 29:21 100:7
REPORTER'S 3:15 100:5
Reporting 1:21
reports 6:3
representative 34:1 57:2
represented 56:16
request 22:6
requested 18:19
requirement 55:12
reschedule 81:6
Research 9:18
resident 15:4 48:24
resort 16:5
resounding 18:1
resources 19:14,18,19,20,24 20:7

21:15 33:16 81:17 82:1 86:17
respect 33:14 47:17
respond 23:1 53:22 67:20 79:13
response 4:10 5:18 7:14 19:16
 38:20 39:5
responses 75:4
responsibilities 50:25
responsibility 61:18 80:11
responsible 21:5 69:12
rest 72:15
result 19:24
results 40:4 76:20,25 77:7 78:18
revenue 53:16 54:3,4,17,21
review 3:7 6:3,9 53:14,15,19
 63:17 65:13 66:21
reviewed 46:5
reviewer 54:11
reviewers 6:8 46:22 55:9
revolutionize 42:15
revolving 89:1,17
RFP 53:4 65:18
ride 73:15,16 74:23
right 5:1,9,19 7:15 10:17 16:14
 23:10 26:20 33:8,13,21,21 34:8
 34:11 37:10 39:23 43:6 45:8,22
 45:23 55:2 56:14 60:1 63:15
 66:4 67:2,4,11 68:7,20 69:3
 71:15 74:10 76:12 90:15 93:16
 95:15 98:25
rigorous 62:25
Rio 45:21 62:16 63:8 76:21 77:4
 79:2 85:18 86:13
RioGAFa 90:3
RMR 100:6
RMR-CRR 1:20 100:17
Road 48:17
roadblocks 35:8
role 55:4
roles 50:25
roll 3:3 4:3 5:23
rolling 49:12
room 24:12,15 40:4 50:9 75:3,10
round 89:8
Roundhouse 33:25 97:6
route 72:25 74:14
rub 41:11
run 52:10 68:2 89:18 94:10 96:10
Runner 73:12,20,23,24
RUSSELL 2:10

S

S 2:1 3:1
S-h-a-n-e 29:22
S-o-k 25:18
salary 31:8 33:3,4
Salute 3:4 5:6,7
Santa 1:12 6:21,24 15:4,7,10
 17:9,9 19:2 25:5,10,22 29:12,19
 33:11 34:2,8 38:21 39:6 45:18
 46:12,24 47:2,16 48:24 49:11
 49:15 51:5 55:16 56:2,16,19
 57:3,22 58:6,11,23 59:1,18
 62:18 64:17,19 69:19,21,22,25
 70:1,24 71:8,16 73:25 79:14,22
 79:23 80:22 81:5,20 82:1,12
 86:21 89:7,8,17 90:4 91:9
 100:11
sarcasm 75:15
satisfaction 15:23
saw 31:16 53:14 55:8 63:22 80:5
saying 37:2,4 43:18 65:22 94:1
says 42:3,5 63:23
schedule 33:3
scheduled 81:10
scheduler 81:5
schedulers 81:8
scheduling 82:8
school 3:10 6:7,14,21 7:24 8:8,16
 8:19 11:20 12:4,24 13:8,20,23
 14:9 15:7,9,13,16,17,25 16:3,3
 16:12 17:13,14 18:1,6,13 19:6
 19:22 20:6,8,11,16,21,23,24
 21:1,11,25 22:17 25:5,8,9,10,11
 25:22,23 26:4,18,24 29:19
 32:25 34:16,23 35:14 36:9,14
 36:15,16 37:1,3,10 38:7,20 39:2
 39:11,23,25 40:6 41:9,10,11,15
 41:16 42:1,14 43:13,15,16 44:6
 44:20,21 45:21 46:15,15 49:20
 50:13,21 52:9,10,13,24 53:3
 56:16 57:2,17 58:10,15,24,24
 58:25 59:7 60:3,7,21,22 61:9,25
 62:5 63:5,14 64:4,17,18 68:2,5
 69:19,23,24 70:2,4,10 72:4,14
 73:6,15,16,21,22 75:17,18 78:3
 78:6,7,9,12,17 79:4,18,25 80:6
 80:7,18 81:5,23 82:16,22,22,22
 82:23 83:11,12,19 84:3,15
 85:11,20 86:13,14 87:2,3,10,14

88:7,12,13 89:13,16 90:5,18
 94:11 96:1,8,10,20 97:4,21,23
 98:2
school's 44:17 97:24
school-age 20:9
school/high 60:3
School/Options 2:9,11,14,16
schools 6:21,24 15:11,22 16:2
 17:11 19:2,8,21 20:7,8,10,18
 21:3,13,20 22:10 23:4 26:17,20
 27:5,13 32:5 33:11,20,20 34:2,3
 34:8,14,18,18 35:11 36:2 38:15
 38:17 39:9,10 40:25 41:3,12,18
 41:19,19 42:2,7,17,20 44:21
 45:15 52:7,20 53:5 55:18 58:7
 58:17,18 59:15 61:3 63:14
 69:20,21 70:5 71:11 73:1 78:8
 79:4,15 80:25 81:19 82:6 83:6
 86:9 89:22 90:8 98:11
Science 9:20
score 78:2
scores 84:16 90:16,17
scoring 78:19
screen 16:23 66:13,16
search 16:14 32:17 85:23 86:5
 87:24
seats 40:3
second 5:13,14 27:21 31:7 54:19
 67:2 92:16
secret 38:18
Secretary 4:9
section 81:15
sections 27:20
sector 76:12,14,22
see 12:23 14:14 23:24 31:15
 34:18 35:7 37:8 39:13 44:23
 50:11,11 61:14 62:8 65:21
 68:14,21 74:17 77:9 85:21
 88:15 89:8 91:13 92:2
seeing 27:1 42:19 59:11 61:12
 69:11 97:16
seek 32:21
seen 37:13 43:13 63:17 78:21
SEG 33:20 42:5,6 81:16,19
semester 11:24
seminar 9:3 12:12,13
seminars 8:21 9:3 81:4
Senator 34:1
send 17:25 57:5 73:22

sense 60:25 86:16 91:22
sent 18:19,22
sentence 38:23
serious 95:14
Seriously 76:23
serve 13:8 57:8 96:8
serves 21:7
service 1:21 14:17 52:23 76:15
services 13:12,16 19:11 53:9,11
Sesame 14:21
session 27:22 97:6
sessions 57:7
set 12:11,14 13:7 49:7 100:13
setting 17:2
seven 5:2 31:21
seventh 12:2
SFPS 36:5 38:15 39:5 40:1 76:5
Shane 29:17,22
share 7:6 21:15 24:19 50:14
 83:15 96:5,12
shared 18:14 64:15
Sharyn 2:18 18:16,22,25 19:1
 21:21 101:6
shelters 57:9
shift 45:20
shifts 45:20
short 71:23 81:4 87:1,12
shorter 13:4
show 54:22 57:12 76:24 79:9,10
 97:1 98:16
showing 60:2,4
shows 54:1 92:8
SHRM 34:23 76:1
side 24:17,20 65:22 70:24,25
 93:22
signed 24:6 80:11 83:23
significant 78:22
similar 7:6 19:23 53:8 63:3 73:19
simply 88:11
simultaneous 75:9
Sincerely 21:19
sitting 54:12
situation 20:12
six 26:17
sixth 12:2 31:7 84:2
sixth-grade 83:21
sixty-two 31:21
size 82:7 84:7
sizes 80:21,22 83:7

skill 25:24
slide 79:10
small 27:18 36:16 48:25 70:21
 80:21,23 82:7 83:7
small-school 36:21
smaller 16:18 27:17
smart 17:20
smoother 75:18
social 38:18
Sok 25:18
somebody 94:16
someone's 25:1
son 25:1 28:13 29:9 30:2
soon 79:17
sorry 6:22,22 29:1 30:3 32:3
 38:22 46:17 50:15 64:16 85:3
 98:13,17
sort 15:20,22 26:19
sound 30:24 41:10
sounds 9:6 29:12
south 70:23,25
space 16:11 86:25 87:13,14
spaces 16:9
speak 7:22 28:14,14,20 34:10
 35:14,16 40:15 48:20 62:20
 65:19,20 66:8 71:3,4 72:22 83:8
speaker 7:5 24:3,23 25:15 26:7
 30:6
speaking 9:13 34:10 41:9 56:10
 75:9
speaks 97:3
special 13:16 26:16 27:25
Specialist 2:13
specialty 27:12
specific 31:18 36:2,2,8 37:6,9,13
 40:6 45:17 52:15
specifically 19:25 23:1
specifics 34:7
spell 14:3 26:11,14 29:20 72:9
spend 63:11
spoke 66:20
spoken 17:10,24 26:18
Sports 10:11,13
spotlight 78:6,7 83:4 84:15
spread 71:15
spreading 68:20 96:1
square 86:20
staff 2:7 55:24
staffing 55:11,11

stage 67:19
stand 21:18
stand-alone 52:20
standard 52:18
standards 9:4 12:11,14 13:2,4,7
 46:4 80:19 81:7,13
standards-based 13:1 19:25
 79:23 80:2,7,16
stands 19:2
Star 9:15
start 4:3 6:5,16 24:8 26:4 28:24
 29:3 34:25 40:4 42:18 51:16
 69:6 74:3 93:5,9
started 8:9 14:7 72:15
starting 29:18 49:12 54:23 59:14
 60:1 61:10 87:2
starts 31:10 75:17
starving 16:21
state 1:2 18:20 19:15 31:10 35:21
 36:4 40:2 43:8 58:25 62:16
 77:8 78:8 83:6 89:24 100:2,7,10
State's 19:10
stated 85:13 100:12
statement 40:10 41:16
statements 89:23
stating 32:2
Statistics 9:19
stay 11:23 26:22 89:7
stayed 72:20
Steiner 39:25
STEM 11:22 48:4
steps 88:13
STEVEN 2:4
stewards 91:2
Stewart 2:5 34:1
stop 73:12 74:24
stops 73:20 74:1,5 75:14
story 23:13
Straightaway 75:25
straightforward 67:7,12
strategically 86:24
Street 1:21 14:21 100:18
strength 92:7
stress 12:25
stretched 61:8
strictly 98:9
strong 19:2 32:10 92:22 95:24
stronger 11:5
strongly 96:7

structure 12:21
structures 12:21,24
struggle 43:23 44:8 80:16 82:4
 92:16
struggles 83:10
struggling 83:11
student 8:13,14,19 46:14 56:8,15
 80:11 84:20
students 8:11,21,22 9:5 10:25
 11:2,3,4,8,11,12,16,18,20 12:4
 12:10,16 13:5,8 17:16,17 19:12
 19:15,21 20:5 21:17 25:7,24
 26:1 41:2 43:12 44:9,10,22 57:1
 57:8 60:23 70:6,7,7,17,17,19,21
 70:23 71:1,3,17,23 72:2 79:19
 81:22,23 83:20 87:3
students' 60:12
study 9:21,22 13:18 43:2
studying 43:3
stuff 39:14 74:18
subjects 36:11
submitted 97:25
submitting 87:25 88:4
suburb 71:18
success 61:9 78:10
successful 8:18 28:7 37:22,22
 41:2 61:4 78:12 79:1,7 87:10
 89:14 96:20
sufficiently 19:10
Suite 1:21 100:18
summer 78:24 96:15
super 70:22 85:17
superintendent 18:21 21:20 28:5
 36:14 42:4,5 44:4
superintendents 18:20 89:1,14
support 2:15 11:10 13:13 14:9
 15:2 18:5 20:5 22:16 25:19
 28:4 32:22 36:19,24 37:2,3
 41:14 43:20 47:8,25 51:8,14,20
 51:25 52:1,3,9,13,21 55:11
 64:14,21,23 65:4,15 67:9 80:15
 86:8,17 95:6 96:2,7
supported 35:5 37:16
supports 25:23 52:12,25
supposed 25:25
sure 5:22 22:19 29:22 30:20
 31:12 42:10 47:19 48:22,22
 54:20 63:4,6,9 71:25 72:19
 79:25 82:8 88:20 91:2 98:10,15

surface 44:6
surprise 84:5
surveyed 73:9
switch 11:24,25 12:3,7,8 40:12
switched 78:5
Synergy 11:1
system 16:8 20:21 26:24 38:4
 40:14,21 42:16 58:7 63:19
 67:16 78:5 91:25 92:13,19 93:7
systems 10:10 13:13 14:8,18 41:6
 51:19 52:9,14 63:25 65:14
 66:23

T

T 3:1
tag 91:21
take 23:16 32:15 40:15 96:23
taken 88:13
takes 6:9 38:24 63:11 96:14
talk 13:23 15:2 29:7 32:13 43:15
 47:14 57:16 87:21
talked 35:23 61:2
talking 66:14 80:25 88:1,2,2
talks 9:14 87:21
taught 12:22 60:18,19 72:21
taxpayer 91:2 94:8
Taylor 4:19 76:2,2
teach 13:3 14:20 60:21,22 61:19
 61:25 63:3 72:18
teacher 10:20 26:15 27:23 31:8
 46:3,4,13 51:11 60:14 72:14
 81:14 82:24 84:12
teacher's 10:23
Teacher/Student 11:1
teachers 10:22 11:3,4,23 15:11
 26:21,22 31:15 32:19,19,21
 36:23 57:18 59:19 60:5,14,21
 60:23 82:17 90:9
teachers' 60:12
teaches 27:10
teaching 9:10 13:2 14:22 20:19
 36:11 72:20
team 6:6,18 7:25 32:13 55:14
 63:18,23 64:6,13 65:1,3,12,13
 66:10,21,23 92:10,22,24 95:20
 95:23 98:6 99:2
Technical 2:13,15
technically 68:8
TED 9:14

Teleconference 1:13
tell 39:15 77:16 82:21
tells 78:11
ten 76:7 89:16
tenures 89:15,15
term 12:8 34:12 87:1,11,12
terminology 42:13
terms 31:6 43:23 45:10 46:17
 52:1 88:19 93:17
Terrific 85:1
test 84:18
testimony 100:13
testing 41:2,17
Texas 52:19
text 91:13
thank 4:5 5:3,9 6:5,7,10 7:21
 18:8,11 21:21 23:17 25:12,13
 26:5,6,10 28:9,10,18 29:14,24
 29:24 30:4 31:24 40:18 53:23
 55:1 64:8,10 75:23 77:21 83:17
 91:18 96:20,23,23 98:24,25
 99:1
thanks 59:4 75:20
theater 73:11
thematic 9:2
themes 11:21
Theory 8:17
Thermodynamics 10:4
thing 17:17 26:19 33:2 39:19
 41:21 46:21 47:23 55:21 58:12
 68:13 72:23 73:20 74:3 76:5
 83:4 90:12 91:6
things 16:23 27:2 32:24 33:1
 35:1,24 40:2 44:1 51:13 52:2
 55:7 62:3 71:22 72:11 73:2
 74:12 80:16 88:8 89:21 94:10
 94:25
think 15:21 16:4,19,19 24:4,16
 25:14 27:4,10,25 28:6 30:12,25
 31:1,10 37:25 38:13,18,21
 39:16 44:6 45:12,22 46:2,22
 47:24 48:19 49:18,20,22,25
 50:1,5,7 55:20 57:21 58:19,22
 59:16,17,18 60:13 61:3,9,14,17
 61:22 62:3,6,7 63:10,17,21 64:2
 64:12 66:5,21,25 67:5,22 68:4
 69:6,11 70:17 72:6,9 73:19
 75:19,20 76:6 78:1,2,25 79:6,7
 80:22 82:1 85:6,6,19 86:16,19

86:23 87:12 88:22 89:24 91:8
 92:15,15,24 94:21
thinking 47:6 50:23 55:10,10,14
 56:11
third 1:21 22:12 29:18 76:21
 100:18
thorough 56:24
thought 30:2 31:12 77:19
thoughts 7:7
three 12:17 22:2 24:12 27:19
 37:7 64:3 97:23
three-year 87:14
thrilled 93:18,20
THRIVE 37:16,20 39:1 76:8
 87:20 91:11
throw 95:7
Throwback 10:1
throwing 41:4 67:19 81:3
till 63:11
time 6:19 7:21 11:19 13:3,4,19
 16:23 17:18 22:25 24:18 28:6
 30:21 34:16 35:5,16 37:15 45:4
 48:5 63:12 65:17 68:6 71:13
 74:20 82:21 85:7 88:1,2,3 90:16
 92:21 101:9,14,19,24
timekeepers 7:17
times 5:20 16:10 34:15 94:5
 98:18
timing 27:8,9
TIMOTHY 2:4
tired 38:11
Title 54:6,7,17
today 5:25 6:4,12,16,24 7:10,22
 25:19 29:25 34:21 50:10 97:2
today's 22:23
told 69:19 93:20,21
Tolkien's 10:3
ton 7:7
tons 74:9
tool 33:6 91:4
tools 86:17
top 30:22 78:8
totally 90:15
tough 85:23
town 49:17 74:21
track 67:17
traditional 26:16 41:25 73:16
traditionally 54:14
Trail 93:17

train 52:16
training 2:13,16 41:24
trainings 51:13
transcript 1:9 100:9 101:7,12,17
 101:22
transition 90:8
transportation 13:12,16 54:6
 71:6,9,12 72:23,25
treatment 8:3 95:17
Triangle 9:24
tribal 3:11 7:1 23:20,21
tried 41:15 91:13
Trigonometry 9:24
troubling 33:23
Truancy 90:11
true 47:11 50:12 80:16 100:8
truly 8:24 52:10,20 66:1
try 14:21 30:12,13,21 32:9 33:4
 34:2 41:16 43:8 55:23 57:13
 69:14 77:22
trying 14:8 25:14 38:1 43:14,23
 46:19 69:13 71:1,5,13 86:2 90:3
 94:3
turn 22:8 34:10
turns 74:10
tutoring 13:15 80:14
twelve 89:15
twenty 89:17
Twenty-five 27:6
two 7:4 11:21,23 15:5 16:7 24:3
 28:21 37:16,18 49:5 55:1 72:11
 76:24,25 77:7
two- 87:13
two-thirds 35:19
tying 47:10
type 9:18 58:12,15 74:12
types 52:24
typically 68:14

 U

ultimately 21:4
unanimously 85:19
undergoing 8:3
underlying 43:11
undermine 19:19
underserved 70:8 71:21 82:2
understand 28:4 45:5 47:18,19
 51:2 60:11 63:10,21 69:15,15
understanding 14:6,11 56:25

92:12
undertaking 71:12
Unfortunately 23:12
unions 35:5
unique 8:25 13:17 59:18 68:20
uniqueness 8:16 45:10
unit 76:18,19,20,21,23 77:2,6,12
 77:16,17,24 85:14 91:8 92:16
units 77:7,18
Universe 9:15
unmatched 60:13
unmute 28:20
upcoming 84:22
upload 22:1
upper-level 11:7
upsets 39:14
USDA 54:6
use 30:21 32:6 33:6 40:10 45:13
 47:19 79:24 85:3
uses 79:23 90:5
ushering 43:7
usually 92:7
utilize 73:20
utilizing 73:3

V

vacant 86:21
VALENZUELA 2:13
value 90:25
variations 9:2
variety 60:4
various 21:1
vary 46:7
vein 87:19
venture 77:14
verbal 22:13
verbatim 53:16
version 26:2
vexing 43:9
viable 16:5
Vice 2:3 4:4,5,8,8,11,13,17,19,23
 5:1,11 59:3,4 62:2 63:16 65:19
 66:25 67:11,14 68:3 75:1,19,23
 84:17,25
Video 1:13
viewpoints 7:7
virtual 15:16 38:16
virtually 8:2,7 15:1 95:16
voice 39:16

volunteer 43:25
vote 37:3
voted 85:19

W

W-o-e-r-n-e-r 64:10
waiting 25:1
waitlist 16:10 58:18
walked 22:15
waning 45:7
want 6:7 7:6 8:22 9:6 12:25
 14:20,21 23:5 25:4 27:10 30:20
 33:10 34:17 35:3 38:22 39:22
 40:1,24 44:14 51:18,19,24,25
 52:5,15 53:5,21 55:25 56:7
 57:17 58:2,3,4 64:21,24 65:19
 66:17 68:2 70:6,7,7 72:3,4 73:8
 76:23 77:15,18,23 79:22 81:6
 82:11 83:1,3,12 88:15 91:24
 93:12 95:6,7,18 96:10,23
wanted 6:5 22:18 24:5 48:20
 51:7 64:18 72:18,22 83:15,18
 93:18 95:3 96:5,8,12 97:19
 98:23
wanting 37:15 61:23 66:22
wants 62:4 89:7,8
War 9:23
warm 40:3
Wars 9:15
wasn't 35:11 36:17 64:15,17 68:7
 68:9 92:18,19,20 93:5,8
way 11:4,10,17 22:12,15 25:6
 26:2 27:14 32:21 34:25 36:12
 36:19 37:11 39:6,7 42:24 54:15
 59:19 65:14 66:4,17 67:8 69:9
 74:4 75:18 77:17 84:11 87:9
 89:9 90:6,11,11,12,13 98:16
ways 20:20 22:2
we'll 6:13,18,20 7:1,3,10,11 13:9
 17:5,6 30:12,13,18,23 32:20,21
 32:22,23 66:11 98:9
we're 4:3 6:12,16 14:15 16:13,25
 17:1,2,7 18:11 22:2,6,12 23:19
 23:25 30:7,16 32:7,8,10 34:4
 40:22 41:16,21,21 42:7,7 44:20
 49:6,7,9,12 51:23,23 54:19
 58:25 59:1 65:15,16 75:12,12
 81:17,17 82:11 86:23 88:9
 91:17 92:4,25 94:5,7,7,13 97:16

98:11,19
we've 6:3 15:5,10 32:16 41:12
 47:21 49:5 65:4 76:7 78:21
 98:18
weakness 93:2,3
webinar 1:13 32:24
website 17:6 22:3 37:9 66:13
 98:3,4
Wednesday 6:13 7:12 97:17 99:3
weed 38:7
week 75:16,17
weeks 87:8
weigh 18:3 21:6
weird 84:18
Welcome 7:19 26:9
went 15:15 31:12 63:2 80:4 85:8
 90:11,11,13
weren't 35:12 98:20
whatevers 44:22
whereof 100:13
White 70:10,11 72:6
wholeheartedly 89:20 91:23
Wii 10:13
wish 25:21 41:8 62:3 79:18,20
 85:4
wishes 72:19
witnessed 94:12
Woerner 22:6 64:9,10 67:10,13
 67:21 77:20 95:5
wondering 23:4
wonkiness 75:21
word 17:3,8 58:13 96:1
words 47:19 85:3
work 6:6,8 13:9 40:11 47:17 52:6
 52:12 56:3 61:20 80:13 88:18
 93:4,7,8 95:21 96:3,15,16
worked 45:14 50:8 76:14
working 21:14 36:24 37:7 42:19
 47:16 51:18,24 55:5 80:5 91:11
 98:11
works 51:2 52:8 66:20
workshop-type 32:24
World 9:22
worrisome 43:17 44:3
worry 43:20,21 45:1,2 92:5 93:6
wouldn't 39:21 66:17
writing 37:8 47:9 65:6
written 22:14 97:22 98:7
wrong 39:6 69:3 75:12,13 77:3

78:2 84:13 wrote 94:2	14 80:21 81:1 15 55:23 74:14 1630 1:21 100:18 17 100:14 18 3:10 80:21 81:1 1980s 35:1	7/10/23 101:2 70 31:13 70s 90:20
X	2	8
X 3:1	2 3:5 5:10 11:24 31:3,9,15,20,22 54:23 87:1 2:57 99:4 20 6:17 7:19 20-minute 73:14 201 1:21 100:18 2023 1:10 28:8 36:6 98:3,9 100:14 20s 90:21 21-'22 78:14 219 1:20 100:6,17 22 12:9 78:7 81:4,6,9 23 3:11,12 25 78:8	8 12:8,10 15:5 54:24 8449N 100:25 101:2 8449N(CC) 1:25 87102 1:22 100:19
Y	3	9
Yazzie 38:20 Yazzie-Martinez 19:9,16 21:9 37:25 44:5 81:25 82:5 yeah 17:14 38:9,12 48:22 49:25 62:2 77:17 81:21 84:8,25 85:6 86:16 year 11:24 28:2 31:6 36:16 39:21 48:25 54:23,24 59:23 68:16 69:1 77:25 78:4,4,13,14,16,17 78:20 79:3 81:9 83:11,19 84:22 93:16 96:3,17,18 98:21 years 26:15,17 27:6 29:18 31:5 34:9 35:6 37:16 39:3 54:1,10,22 55:5 74:9 76:8 87:4 88:23 89:6 89:15,17 Yoga 9:16 young 97:8,9 younger 25:22 83:10 youth 47:20 YouthWorks 48:16	3 3:6 5:25 11:24 30:7 31:9,15,20 31:23 30 3:13 300 1:12 39 26:15	9-12 37:12 9:00 97:17 98 3:14
Z	4	
Ziplines 9:25 Zoom 1:13 5:21,22 23:21,22 24:9 24:11 35:20 zooming 6:22	4 3:3,14 11:25 33:5 40 74:21 40- 86:20 40,000 53:7	
0	5	
1	6	
1 3:3,17 11:23 31:9,10,15,20,22 87:1 1:02 4:2 1:07 1:11 10 1:10 6:25 100 3:15 18:5 11 15:5 1100 53:16 11000 54:12 12 12:8,10 35:6 12/31/23 100:19 13 31:4,5 35:6 13th 98:9	5 3:5,6 11:25 12:23 33:5 5:00 98:8 50 31:13 50,000 91:12	
	7	
	7 3:9 12:7	