

**In The Matter Of:**  
*The State of Delaware*  
*Department of Education*

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*ITMO: Kuumba Academy Charter School*  
*October 23, 2013*

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THE STATE OF DELAWARE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

.. .. .

-- PUBLIC HEARING --

IN THE MATTER OF: )  
 )  
Kuumba Academy Charter School )

.. .. .

Department of Education  
The Townsend Building  
2nd Floor Cabinet Room  
401 Federal Street  
Dover, Delaware 19901

Thursday, October 23, 2013  
5:00 p.m.

.. .. .

BEFORE: John Carwell, Charter School Officer  
Department of Education

Barbara Rutt  
State Board of Education

ATTORNEY: Catherine Hickey, DAG

.. .. .

-- Transcript of Proceedings --

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1 MR. CARWELL: Good evening, everyone.  
2 My name is John Carwell with the Department of  
3 Education. And I declare this public hearing to be  
4 open.

5 We are going to proceed in the  
6 following order: We are going to do the Kuumba  
7 Academy Charter School, Positive Outcomes Charter  
8 School, Newark Charter School, and then Reach  
9 Academy.

10 So what I am going to do now is put a  
11 sign-up sheet for Kuumba Academy, and I'm actually  
12 going to -- there are two sign-up sheets here, one  
13 for speakers and one for non-speakers. So if folks  
14 from Kuumba Academy could sign in now who desire to  
15 speak, we will get started with that public hearing.  
16 The speaker one is highlighted in yellow.

17 Good evening, everyone. I declare this  
18 public hearing to be open. My name is John Carwell,  
19 Jr. I am the Education Associate in the Charter  
20 School Office at the Department of Education. And I  
21 have been appointed by the Secretary of Education to  
22 conduct this public hearing.

23 Kuumba Academy has filed an application  
24 to renew its charter. As is required by law, the



1 matter was referred to the Charter School  
2 Accountability Committee for investigation and  
3 report.

4 This joint public hearing is being held  
5 by the Department of Education and the State Board  
6 of Education to receive public comments prior to the  
7 issuance of the final report of the Accountability  
8 Committee.

9 I would like the record to reflect the  
10 notice of the time, date, and place of today's  
11 public hearing was published in the News Journal on  
12 October 9, 2013, and the Delaware State News on  
13 October 9, 2013. In addition, notice was posted at  
14 the Charter School Accountability Committee's place  
15 of business, the Department of Education's official  
16 website, and the State Public Meeting Calendar on  
17 the State's official website on October 9, 2013.  
18 Further, the school was personally notified of the  
19 time, date, and place of today's meeting on  
20 October 7, 2013.

21 A court reporter is present so that a  
22 record of this hearing can be made. It will be  
23 necessary for each speaker to clearly identify his  
24 or herself before beginning to speak so that the



1 court reporter will be able to identify who you are.  
2 A record of this hearing will be provided to the  
3 Secretary of Education and members of the State  
4 Board of Education together with any written or  
5 electronic comments received at or before this  
6 hearing. We have not received any written comments  
7 for this hearing.

8 So we will proceed in the following  
9 manner: First, we will hear from any  
10 representatives of the charter school who wish to  
11 comment. Then we will take comments from anyone  
12 else who desires to speak. And I believe everyone  
13 has signed up, correct, for Kuumba Academy? Okay.

14 I intend to be as liberal with time as  
15 possible. And at this moment I will take comments  
16 from representatives of Kuumba Academy Charter  
17 School.

18 MS. MALDONADO: Shall we all come up at  
19 one time if we are going to speak?

20 MR. CARWELL: That's fine. Yes.

21 MS. MALDONADO: I do have a parent and  
22 student who are also on their way.

23 MR. CARWELL: So first on the list we  
24 have --



1 MS. HICKEY: Do you know how to sign  
2 your name? (Speaking to Brendan Smith)

3 BRENDAN SMITH: No.

4 MS. HICKEY: Okay.

5 MR. CARWELL: First we will hear from  
6 Ms. Maldonado.

7 MS. MALDONADO: Good evening. Thank  
8 you for the opportunity to speak this evening on  
9 behalf of the board members, staff, parents, and,  
10 most importantly, the students of Kuumba Academy  
11 Charter School.

12 The idea for Kuumba Academy was born in  
13 1997 by an empowered group of pre-K parents that  
14 joined forces with artists, volunteers, teachers,  
15 and community representatives from the Christina  
16 Cultural Arts Center in response to an outcry from  
17 parents from the City of Wilmington who wanted more  
18 for their children.

19 They were not satisfied with low  
20 expectations, ordinary curriculum, and the  
21 disconnected school environment. They were  
22 frightened by the odds against urban children, and  
23 they demanded more.

24 They demanded a school where children



1 would be recognized as an individual who can meet  
2 interests, passion, strength, and struggle. They  
3 demanded a school community that celebrated  
4 creativity and innovation, prepared their child for  
5 college, honored their culture, but, most  
6 importantly, loved them like family.

7 They demanded a school that valued the  
8 arts. They demanded a school where teachers would  
9 not take no for an answer and would go above and  
10 beyond to ensure their child's success. They  
11 demanded a school where their own voices would  
12 count.

13 Kuumba scholars are quantifiable  
14 evidence that, regardless of skin color and Zip  
15 Code, every child can succeed in the right  
16 environment. In our 12-year history, we  
17 accomplished a great deal with our students and  
18 family, and we have many success stories to  
19 celebrate, but our work is not done. We look  
20 forward with great excitement and anticipation to  
21 the opportunities that lie ahead for Kuumba Academy  
22 as we embark on our expansion and move into the  
23 community education building. We look forward to  
24 serve an expanded number of students in the City of



1       Wilmington. Thank you.

2                   MR. CARWELL: Thank you, Ms. Maldonado.  
3       Next is Ms. Connell.

4                   MS. CONNELL: Thank you. Good evening.  
5       My name is Samantha Connell, and it is my privilege  
6       to speak on behalf of the staff at Kuumba Academy.

7                   This is my fifth year with Kuumba as a  
8       teacher, but it is also the place where I began my  
9       career as an educator. Kuumba Academy is a  
10      wonderful place with a wonderful culture where  
11      leaders, staff, students come together to develop  
12      their knowledge, creativity, and character. This  
13      unique and motivating environment helped me to  
14      become the teacher I am today, a teacher who  
15      genuinely loves Kuumba.

16                  Every day I'm inspired by the  
17      persistence of the students, families, and staff of  
18      Kuumba where every moment is an exercise in  
19      bettering ourselves.

20                  I do look forward to Kuumba's charter  
21      renewal and expansion so that we can spread this  
22      message of hard work, dedication, and creativity to  
23      more of Delaware's children.

24                  MR. CARWELL: Thank you, Ms. Connell.





1 MS. CONNELL: Thank you.

2 MR. CARWELL: We'll take a few more  
3 signatures. Thank you.

4 MS. HICKEY: Mr. Smith is the next one.

5 BRENDAN SMITH: Good evening. My name  
6 is Brendan. I am a third grade student at the  
7 Kuumba Academy Charter School. I have attended  
8 school since kindergarten. I plan on staying here  
9 until twelfth grade.

10 I really love my school. I think my  
11 school is very different than other schools. We  
12 have to work hard to get smart. Our teachers  
13 believe we can do anything. All of my teachers push  
14 me to do my best, not just in reading and in math,  
15 but in drama class too.

16 I love learning all subjects,  
17 especially reading. My math teacher helps me get  
18 closer to my goal every day. I am reminded every  
19 day to try my best and not to give up when things  
20 get hard. I love the arts at my school because it  
21 makes learning exciting.

22 The best thing about going to school at  
23 Kuumba is they allow me to be creative in many ways.  
24 Last year I wrote a poem and read it in front of the



1 whole school. That really made me proud.

2 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

3 BRENDAN'S MOTHER: I'm Brendan's mom.

4 He values the arts at Kuumba so much that he wanted  
5 to share some of the artwork that he did last year.

6 (Holding up art. Applause)

7 MR. CARWELL: Well done. Mr. Cuffy.

8 MR. CUFFY: Good evening. Hello.

9 Thank you for allowing me to represent my peers and  
10 tell you why Kuumba Academy is a very special place  
11 to all of us.

12 So this is my sixth year teaching at  
13 Kuumba, and I have to say that I have enjoyed each  
14 and every year. The success of our school has come  
15 from the staff's dedication to our kids, families,  
16 and believing that we are preparing our students to  
17 change the world.

18 Each and every teacher sets a bar that  
19 we expect all of our students to reach. No matter  
20 how much money your parents have, what side of town  
21 you are from, what ethnicity you are, when you walk  
22 into our classroom, we expect the best from all of  
23 our students.

24 Kuumba provides a place for students to



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1 feel safe about being smart. Our students believe  
2 that they can achieve anything through hard work.

3 MR. CARWELL: Thank you, Mr. Cuffy.  
4 Ms. Lyons.

5 MS. LYONS: Yes. Hi, I'm Tahira Lyons,  
6 and I am a parent at Kuumba Academy. It's been a  
7 great experience. I have a fourth grader and a  
8 second grader.

9 When I went to pick my son up today,  
10 for instance, he was very excited to tell me  
11 everything that he learned today in school, all at  
12 one time, but he was very excited. This is the type  
13 of enthusiasm that I'm very excited for my children  
14 to have about their education. I know there is so  
15 much in the news about education.

16 I just want to make sure that they are  
17 presented with the best opportunity from their  
18 education. I think they are getting a great  
19 education at Kuumba Academy. The work is rigorous.  
20 The teachers are phenomenal.

21 I just sent an e-mail to a teacher,  
22 probably making me a little late to get down here  
23 today, thanking them for really helping my second  
24 grader who was having some problems phonetically.



1 And he is doing an outstanding job right now. I'm  
2 so very proud of him, as well as my daughter.

3 The arts integration part of Kuumba has  
4 just expanded and given them both such great  
5 confidence. I have never seen my children not be  
6 nervous about being on a stage or being in front of  
7 an audience like I am right now.

8 Their confidence level has just been  
9 boosted, just because they know what they can do in  
10 the classroom. When they can see -- when they bring  
11 home their paperwork for us to review from the week  
12 on a Friday and I see the grades that my children  
13 are getting at school, I know it's only through the  
14 hard work and dedication of the leadership which  
15 trickles down to everybody underneath, from the  
16 leadership on down. I know it's that they are just  
17 working with the children every day.

18 And the children are so grateful. I  
19 have even seen some children from being on school  
20 class trips and so forth where I say, "Wow, that kid  
21 is a little busy." You know how you say that. And  
22 I have seen that kid even excel, I mean, and their  
23 parents just being overwhelmed at their achievement.

24 And our school is a family school. It



1 is family. We feel like family. Our parents feel  
2 like family at our school. Our children are just --  
3 it's just -- it's a rough time right now. We hear  
4 of school shootings. We hear of so many bad things  
5 going on at school. I'm just so glad that my  
6 children are in a safe environment, that they are  
7 learning about even bullying, and things even just  
8 developing character traits.

9 I'm very proud. I'm very proud about  
10 that, very proud. I want as much confidence as I  
11 see they have standing up in front of a crowd or  
12 sitting down speaking.

13 But I just feel like Kuumba has been a  
14 blessing to my family. I remember going a couple  
15 years back, the first day coming there for parent  
16 orientation. And I remember kind of walking out of  
17 the building and crying because I felt like, from  
18 what I heard from Dr. Schiffen, who is the head of  
19 school at that time, all the things that she laid  
20 out that the school had to offer my children, it was  
21 overwhelming to me as a parent. It was very  
22 overwhelming, and I thought this is just such a  
23 great opportunity.

24 And I can tell you that it's been like



1       that ever since. I mean report card time, I'm in  
2       tears. And it's because of going to school,  
3       learning to get smart, or whatever -- I think that's  
4       their motto at the school. But they are going,  
5       learning to be smart. And I'm so just proud of  
6       them. I'm proud of the school. I just applaud our  
7       principal and all the teachers. You guys are doing  
8       such a phenomenal job in the community of  
9       Wilmington, setting our community afire. And I'm so  
10      grateful and thankful just to be a part of it.  
11      Thank you so much.

12                   MR. CARWELL: Thank you, Ms. Lyons.  
13      And Ms. Price? Oh, I'm sorry. I see. Okay.  
14      Genesis. I'm sorry.

15                   GENESIS LYONS: Hi. I'm here today  
16      with my mom. And I wanted to say about Kuumba, it's  
17      a really great school because we get to share each  
18      other's differences, and we get to share each  
19      other's cultures.

20                   And I really think that -- I feel like  
21      I'm really special in the school, because all the  
22      teachers and all the staff and everything, they all  
23      help me and push me to be the best that I can.

24                   And me and my mom, we are really happy



1       because, I mean, without Kuumba we wouldn't be able  
2       to share our differences with other people.

3               And me and my brother are really happy  
4       to be in this school, because it has really been a  
5       great year. I have been there for five years since  
6       kindergarten, and I have loved every day of school.

7               And when I get home, I love to share to  
8       all my parents what I did. And I'm really happy I'm  
9       here right now, because this year in my classes, my  
10      teachers always try and help me do my best. Like I  
11      said, in math and in reading, social studies, all  
12      sorts of things. And all these teachers here, they  
13      all supported me to be the best that I could.

14              MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

15              (Applause)

16              MR. CARWELL: Are there any others who  
17      desire to speak on behalf of Kuumba Academy Charter  
18      School?

19              If not, I want to thank you all for  
20      participating today. The Accountability Committee  
21      will consider your comments. In addition, the  
22      Secretary will consider your comments in his  
23      decision, which is then communicated to the State  
24      Board of Education.



1                               This hearing is now closed.   Thank you.  
2                               (Concluded at 5:17 p.m.)  
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CERTIFICATE

I, Lorena J. Hartnett, a Notary Public and Registered Professional Reporter, do hereby certify that the foregoing is an accurate and complete transcription of the proceeding held at the time and place stated herein, and that the said proceeding was recorded by me and then reduced to typewriting under my direction, and constitutes a true record of the testimony given by said witnesses.

I further certify that I am not a relative, employee, or attorney of any of the parties or a relative or employee of either counsel, and that I am in no way interested directly or indirectly in this action.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal of office on this 30th day of October 2013.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lorena J. Hartnett  
Registered Professional Reporter

<b>A</b>	bad (1) 12:4 bar (1) 9:18 become (1) 7:14 began (1) 7:8 beginning (1) 3:24 behalf (3) 5:9 7:6 14:17 believing (1) 9:16 best (8) 8:14,19, 22 9:22 10:17 13:23 14:10,13 bettering (1) 7:19 beyond (1) 6:10 blessing (1) 12:14 Board (4) 3:5 4:4 5:9 14:24 boosted (1) 11:9 born (1) 5:12 both (1) 11:4 Brendan (4) 5:2, 3 8:5,6 Brendan's (2) 9:3, 3 bring (1) 11:10 brother (1) 14:3 building (2) 6:23 12:17 bullying (1) 12:7 business (1) 3:15 busy (1) 11:21	Center (1) 5:16 change (1) 9:17 character (2) 7:12 12:8 Charter (13) 2:7, 7,8,19,24 3:1, 14 4:10,16 5:11 7:20 8:7 14:17 child (2) 6:4,15 children (13) 5:18,22,24 7:23 10:13 11:5,12,17,18, 19 12:2,6,20 child's (1) 6:10 Christina (1) 5:15 City (2) 5:17 6:24 class (2) 8:15 11:20 classes (1) 14:9 classroom (2) 9:22 11:10 clearly (1) 3:23 closed (1) 15:1 closer (1) 8:18 Code (1) 6:15 college (1) 6:5 color (1) 6:14 coming (1) 12:15 comment (1) 4:11 comments (7) 3:6 4:5,6,11,15 14:21,22 Committee (3) 3:2, 8 14:20 Committee's (1) 3:14 communicated (1) 14:23 community (5) 5:15 6:3,23 13:8,9 Concluded (1) 15:2 conduct (1) 2:22 confidence (3)	11:5,8 12:10 Connell (5) 7:3,4, 5,24 8:1 consider (2) 14:21,22 count (1) 6:12 couple (1) 12:14 court (2) 3:21 4:1 creative (1) 8:23 creativity (3) 6:4 7:12,22 crowd (1) 12:11 crying (1) 12:17 Cuffy (3) 9:7,8 10:3 Cultural (1) 5:16 culture (2) 6:5 7:10 cultures (1) 13:19 curriculum (1) 5:20	12:8 differences (2) 13:18 14:2 different (1) 8:11 disconnected (1) 5:21 done (2) 6:19 9:7 down (4) 10:22 11:15,16 12:12 Dr (1) 12:18 drama (1) 8:15
	<b>C</b> Calendar (1) 3:16 can (10) 3:22 6:1,15 7:21 8:13 10:2 11:9,10 12:24 13:23 card (1) 13:1 career (1) 7:9 CARWELL (15) 2:1,2,18 4:20, 23 5:5 7:2,24 8:2 9:2,7 10:3 13:12 14:14,16 celebrate (1) 6:19 celebrated (1) 6:3		<b>D</b> date (2) 3:10,19 daughter (1) 11:2 day (6) 7:16 8:18,19 11:17 12:15 14:6 deal (1) 6:17 decision (1) 14:23 declare (2) 2:3,17 dedication (3) 7:22 9:15 11:14 Delaware (1) 3:12 Delaware's (1) 7:23 demanded (6) 5:23,24 6:3,7, 8,11 Department (4) 2:2,20 3:5,15 desire (2) 2:14 14:17 desires (1) 4:12 develop (1) 7:11 developing (1)	<b>E</b> Education (14) 2:3,19,20,21 3:5,6 4:3,4 6:23 10:14,15, 18,19 14:24 Education's (1) 3:15 educator (1) 7:9 electronic (1) 4:5 else (1) 4:12 e-mail (1) 10:21 embark (1) 6:22 empowered (1) 5:13 enjoyed (1) 9:13 ensure (1) 6:10 enthusiasm (1) 10:13 environment (4) 5:21 6:16 7:13 12:6 especially (1) 8:17 ethnicity (1) 9:21 even (4) 11:19, 22 12:7,7 evening (7) 2:1, 17 5:7,8 7:4 8:5 9:8 everybody (1) 11:15 everyone (3) 2:1, 17 4:12 evidence (1) 6:14
<b>B</b>				
back (1) 12:15				

<b>excel (1)</b> 11:22 <b>excited (3)</b> 10:10, 12,13 <b>excitement (1)</b> 6:20 <b>exciting (1)</b> 8:21 <b>exercise (1)</b> 7:18 <b>expanded (2)</b> 6:24 11:4 <b>expansion (2)</b> 6:22 7:21 <b>expect (2)</b> 9:19, 22 <b>expectations (1)</b> 5:20 <b>experience (1)</b> 10:7	<b>11:6</b> 12:11 <b>Further (1)</b> 3:18	<b>herself (1)</b> 3:24 <b>Hi (2)</b> 10:5 13:15 <b>HICKEY (3)</b> 5:1,4 8:4 <b>highlighted (1)</b> 2:16 <b>history (1)</b> 6:16 <b>Holding (1)</b> 9:6 <b>home (2)</b> 11:11 14:7 <b>honored (1)</b> 6:5	<b>kindergarten (2)</b> 8:8 14:6 <b>knowledge (1)</b> 7:12 <b>Kuumba (28)</b> 2:6, 11,14,23 4:13, 16 5:10,12 6:13,21 7:6,7, 9,15,18 8:7, 23 9:4,10,13, 24 10:6,19 11:3 12:13 13:16 14:1,17 <b>Kuumba's (1)</b> 7:20	<b>MALDONADO (5)</b> 4:18,21 5:6,7 7:2 <b>manner (1)</b> 4:9 <b>many (3)</b> 6:18 8:23 12:4 <b>math (3)</b> 8:14,17 14:11 <b>matter (2)</b> 3:1 9:19 <b>mean (3)</b> 11:22 13:1 14:1 <b>meet (1)</b> 6:1 <b>Meeting (2)</b> 3:16, 19 <b>members (2)</b> 4:3 5:9 <b>message (1)</b> 7:22 <b>mom (3)</b> 9:3 13:16,24 <b>moment (2)</b> 4:15 7:18 <b>money (1)</b> 9:20 <b>more (4)</b> 5:17, 23 7:23 8:2 <b>most (2)</b> 5:10 6:5 <b>MOTHER (1)</b> 9:3 <b>motivating (1)</b> 7:13 <b>motto (1)</b> 13:4 <b>move (1)</b> 6:22 <b>much (5)</b> 9:4,20 10:15 12:10 13:11
	<b>G</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>L</b>	
	<b>Genesis (2)</b> 13:14,15 <b>genuinely (1)</b> 7:15 <b>given (1)</b> 11:4 <b>glad (1)</b> 12:5 <b>goal (1)</b> 8:18 <b>Good (6)</b> 2:1,17 5:7 7:4 8:5 9:8 <b>grade (2)</b> 8:6,9 <b>grader (3)</b> 10:7,8, 24 <b>grades (1)</b> 11:12 <b>grateful (2)</b> 11:18 13:10 <b>great (8)</b> 6:17, 20 10:7,18 11:4 12:23 13:17 14:5 <b>group (1)</b> 5:13 <b>guys (1)</b> 13:7			
<b>F</b>	<b>H</b>			
<b>families (2)</b> 7:17 9:15 <b>family (7)</b> 6:6,18 11:24 12:1,1, 2,14 <b>feel (5)</b> 10:1 12:1,1,13 13:20 <b>felt (1)</b> 12:17 <b>few (1)</b> 8:2 <b>fifth (1)</b> 7:7 <b>filed (1)</b> 2:23 <b>final (1)</b> 3:7 <b>fine (1)</b> 4:20 <b>First (4)</b> 4:9,23 5:5 12:15 <b>five (1)</b> 14:5 <b>folks (1)</b> 2:13 <b>following (2)</b> 2:6 4:8 <b>forces (1)</b> 5:14 <b>forth (1)</b> 11:20 <b>forward (3)</b> 6:20, 23 7:20 <b>fourth (1)</b> 10:7 <b>Friday (1)</b> 11:12 <b>frightened (1)</b> 5:22 <b>front (3)</b> 8:24	<b>happy (3)</b> 13:24 14:3,8 <b>hard (5)</b> 7:22 8:12,20 10:2 11:14 <b>head (1)</b> 12:18 <b>hear (4)</b> 4:9 5:5 12:3,4 <b>heard (1)</b> 12:18 <b>hearing (11)</b> 2:3, 15,18,22 3:4, 11,22 4:2,6,7 15:1 <b>held (1)</b> 3:4 <b>Hello (1)</b> 9:8 <b>help (2)</b> 13:23 14:10 <b>helped (1)</b> 7:13 <b>helping (1)</b> 10:23 <b>helps (1)</b> 8:17	<b>idea (1)</b> 5:12 <b>identify (2)</b> 3:23 4:1 <b>importantly (2)</b> 5:10 6:6 <b>individual (1)</b> 6:1 <b>innovation (1)</b> 6:4 <b>inspired (1)</b> 7:16 <b>instance (1)</b> 10:10 <b>integration (1)</b> 11:3 <b>intend (1)</b> 4:14 <b>interests (1)</b> 6:2 <b>into (2)</b> 6:22 9:22 <b>investigation (1)</b> 3:2 <b>issuance (1)</b> 3:7	<b>laid (1)</b> 12:19 <b>Last (2)</b> 8:24 9:5 <b>late (1)</b> 10:22 <b>law (1)</b> 2:24 <b>leaders (1)</b> 7:11 <b>leadership (2)</b> 11:14,16 <b>learned (1)</b> 10:11 <b>learning (5)</b> 8:16, 21 12:7 13:3,5 <b>level (1)</b> 11:8 <b>liberal (1)</b> 4:14 <b>lie (1)</b> 6:21 <b>list (1)</b> 4:23 <b>little (2)</b> 10:22 11:21 <b>look (3)</b> 6:19,23 7:20 <b>love (4)</b> 8:10,16, 20 14:7 <b>loved (2)</b> 6:6 14:6 <b>loves (1)</b> 7:15 <b>low (1)</b> 5:19 <b>Lyons (5)</b> 10:4,5, 5 13:12,15	<b>N</b>
		<b>J</b>		
		<b>job (2)</b> 11:1 13:8 <b>John (2)</b> 2:2,18 <b>joined (1)</b> 5:14 <b>joint (1)</b> 3:4 <b>Journal (1)</b> 3:11 <b>Jr (1)</b> 2:19		
		<b>K</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>name (5)</b> 2:2,18 5:2 7:5 8:5 <b>necessary (1)</b> 3:23 <b>nervous (1)</b> 11:6 <b>Newark (1)</b> 2:8 <b>News (3)</b> 3:11, 12 10:15 <b>Next (2)</b> 7:3 8:4 <b>non-speakers (1)</b> 2:13
		<b>kid (2)</b> 11:20,22 <b>kids (1)</b> 9:15 <b>kind (1)</b> 12:16	<b>makes (1)</b> 8:21 <b>making (1)</b> 10:22	

**(18) notice - studies**

<b>subjects (1) 8:16</b> <b>succeed (1) 6:15</b> <b>success (3) 6:10, 18 9:14</b> <b>supported (1) 14:13</b> <b>sure (1) 10:16</b>	<b>8:19 9:6 10:9 12:11</b> <b>urban (1) 5:22</b>	<b>Zip (1) 6:14</b>		
		<b>1</b>		
	<b>V</b>	<b>12-year (1) 6:16</b> <b>1997 (1) 5:13</b>		
	<b>valued (1) 6:7</b> <b>values (1) 9:4</b> <b>voices (1) 6:11</b> <b>volunteers (1) 5:14</b>	<b>2</b>		
<b>T</b>		<b>2013 (4) 3:12, 13,17,20</b>		
<b>Tahira (1) 10:5</b> <b>teacher (6) 7:8, 14,14 8:17 9:18 10:21</b> <b>teachers (9) 5:14 6:8 8:12,13 10:20 13:7,22 14:10,12</b> <b>teaching (1) 9:12</b> <b>tears (1) 13:2</b> <b>thankful (1) 13:10</b> <b>thanking (1) 10:23</b> <b>third (1) 8:6</b> <b>thought (1) 12:22</b> <b>today (6) 7:14 10:9,11,23 13:15 14:20</b> <b>today's (2) 3:10, 19</b> <b>together (2) 4:4 7:11</b> <b>town (1) 9:20</b> <b>traits (1) 12:8</b> <b>trickles (1) 11:15</b> <b>trips (1) 11:20</b> <b>try (2) 8:19 14:10</b> <b>twelfth (1) 8:9</b> <b>two (1) 2:12</b> <b>type (1) 10:12</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>5</b>		
	<b>walk (1) 9:21</b> <b>walking (1) 12:16</b> <b>way (1) 4:22</b> <b>ways (1) 8:23</b> <b>website (2) 3:16, 17</b> <b>week (1) 11:11</b> <b>whole (1) 9:1</b> <b>Wilmington (3) 5:17 7:1 13:9</b> <b>wish (1) 4:10</b> <b>without (1) 14:1</b> <b>wonderful (2) 7:10,10</b> <b>work (6) 6:19 7:22 8:12 10:2,19 11:14</b> <b>working (1) 11:17</b> <b>world (1) 9:17</b> <b>Wow (1) 11:20</b> <b>written (2) 4:4,6</b> <b>wrote (1) 8:24</b>	<b>5:17 (1) 15:2</b> <b>7</b> <b>7 (1) 3:20</b> <b>9</b>		
		<b>9 (3) 3:12,13,17</b>		
	<b>Y</b>			
	<b>year (7) 7:7 8:24 9:5,12, 14 14:5,9</b> <b>years (2) 12:15 14:5</b> <b>yellow (1) 2:16</b>			
	<b>Z</b>			
<b>U</b>				
<b>underneath (1) 11:15</b> <b>unique (1) 7:13</b> <b>up (6) 4:13,18</b>				

**In The Matter Of:**  
*The State of Delaware*  
*Department of Education*

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*ITMO: Newark Charter School*  
*October 23, 2013*

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THE STATE OF DELAWARE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

.. .. .

-- PUBLIC HEARING --

IN THE MATTER OF: )  
 )  
Newark Charter School )

.. .. .

Department of Education  
The Townsend Building  
2nd Floor Cabinet Room  
401 Federal Street  
Dover, Delaware 19901

Thursday, October 23, 2013  
5:35 p.m.

.. .. .

BEFORE: John Carwell, Charter School Officer  
Department of Education

Barbara Rutt  
State Board of Education

ATTORNEY: Catherine Hickey, DAG

.. .. .

-- Transcript of Proceedings --

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1                   MR. CARWELL: Good evening. I declare  
2                   this public hearing to be open. My name is John  
3                   Carwell, Jr. I'm an Education Associate at the  
4                   Charter School Office in the Department of  
5                   Education. And I have been appointed by the  
6                   Secretary of Education to conduct this public  
7                   hearing.

8                   Newark Charter School has filed an  
9                   application to renew its charter. As is required by  
10                  law, the matter was referred to the Charter School  
11                  Accountability Committee for an investigation and  
12                  report.

13                  This joint public hearing is being held  
14                  by the Department of Education and the State Board  
15                  of Education to receive public comments prior to the  
16                  issuance of the final report of the Accountability  
17                  Committee.

18                  I would like the record to reflect that  
19                  the notice of the time, date, and place of today's  
20                  public hearing was published in the News Journal on  
21                  October 9, 2013, and the Delaware State News on  
22                  October 9, 2013.

23                  In addition, notice was posted at the  
24                  Charter School Accountability Committee's official





1 place of business, on the Department of Education's  
2 official website, and on the State Public Meeting  
3 Calendar on the State's official website on  
4 October 9, 2013. Further, the school was personally  
5 notified of the date, time, and place of today's  
6 public hearing on October 7, 2013.

7 A court reporter is present so that a  
8 record of this hearing can be made. It will be  
9 necessary for each speaker to identify his or  
10 herself before beginning to speak so the court  
11 reporter will be able to note who you are.

12 The record of this hearing will be  
13 provided to the Secretary of Education and members  
14 of the State Board of Education together with any  
15 written or electronic comments received at or before  
16 this hearing.

17 And we don't have a record of any  
18 written comments today?

19 MS. HICKEY: No.

20 MR. CARWELL: Is that correct?

21 MS. HICKEY: That's correct.

22 MR. CARWELL: We will proceed in the  
23 following manner. First we will hear from  
24 representatives of the charter school who wish to



1 comment, and then we will take comments from anyone  
2 else who desires to speak. At this point we will  
3 hear from representatives of the school.

4 MR. MEECE: Mr. Carwell, my name is  
5 Gregory Meece. I'm the School Director at Newark  
6 Charter School. We are proud to share our story  
7 with members of the Accountability Committee and  
8 with the public. We appreciate this opportunity to  
9 seek approval for a five-year renewal and, ideally,  
10 two consecutive five-year periods, as is now  
11 permitted by law.

12 I have been a part of public charter  
13 schools since there have been charter schools in  
14 Delaware. The last 13 years, I have been Head of  
15 School at Newark Charter School. During those years  
16 we have prided ourselves in doing what we say we  
17 will do, doing what we have been asked to do, and  
18 doing it to the best of our ability.

19 A record of past success suggests a  
20 bright and promising future for the renewal period.  
21 We have operated in the black every year. Our  
22 financial projections show a positive balance during  
23 each of the years of the renewal period. External  
24 audits conducted each year reveal no audit findings.



1 We have achieved the capacity of enrollment with a  
2 waiting list every year. In recent years our  
3 waiting list has been as high as 2,000 and 3,000  
4 students, evidence of a strong market demand.

5 The fact that our customers are  
6 satisfied is also reflected in the low rate of  
7 student attrition. Typically, 99 percent of those  
8 enrolled in September remain enrolled through the  
9 last day of school.

10 We go one step further each year to  
11 measure whether our parents are satisfied. Our  
12 school counselor surveys parents twice each year.  
13 These surveys show the rate of parent satisfaction  
14 with the school is consistently between 99 and  
15 100 percent.

16 Our teachers and staff, too, are  
17 satisfied. Twice the News Journal named Newark  
18 Charter School "Best in the Business" award winner  
19 in the medium-sized business category. This award  
20 is based on employee-reported satisfaction in the  
21 workplace.

22 But stable enrollments, satisfied  
23 customers, and strong financials would mean little  
24 without high marks for student success. We are



1 proud that each year the Department of Education  
2 rated schools based on student performance, Newark  
3 Charter School was rated a superior school.

4 We are proud that the Department  
5 nominated our school to be considered for National  
6 Blue Ribbon school status, and we are proud when we  
7 became the first charter school in our state to win  
8 it. We are proud to be cited as the Reward School,  
9 Highest Performing School by the Department last  
10 year, and the School of Continued Excellence this  
11 year.

12 Rankings of all public schools reported  
13 in the News Journal showed that our students  
14 consistently perform at the top of the class in  
15 every subject and in every grade. For example, last  
16 year Newark Charter placed first in the state in  
17 more than half of the possible categories based on  
18 grade level and subjects tested. Our students'  
19 academic growth fall to spring exceeds the State's  
20 benchmarks.

21 Closer inspection of the data reveals  
22 more good news. When the data are disaggregated guy  
23 subpopulations, we see no discernible achievement  
24 gap. To the contrary, our subgroup populations,



1 such as low income, race, and special education not  
2 only exceed state averages for those subpopulations;  
3 they also exceed State averages for the non-subgroup  
4 populations.

5 For example, our African American and  
6 Hispanic students score higher than Delaware's  
7 Caucasian students. Our low socioeconomic status  
8 students score higher than the state proficiency  
9 rate at the 90th percentile. And our students with  
10 disabilities scores are comparable or better than  
11 non-disabled peers.

12 The academic performance framework  
13 shows that our school performs significantly higher  
14 when compared to schools with similar demographics.

15 Newark Charter School is a public  
16 school that welcomes students regardless of their  
17 backgrounds or abilities. Students are admitted  
18 through a lottery only, as intended by Delaware law.  
19 Our students with Downs Syndrome, autism, and  
20 profound learning disabilities have an equal chance  
21 of getting in as a child who is identified as gifted  
22 and talented.

23 We have 132 children with IEPs and  
24 another 100 with 504 Accommodation Plans. Our



1 percentage of minority students has decreased 13  
2 consecutive years in a row.

3 The charter school performance  
4 framework is the measuring tool used to evaluate  
5 whether a charter school should be renewed. Over  
6 the three-year period covered by these academic,  
7 financial, and organizational frameworks, there are  
8 126 separate cells upon which we were measured. We  
9 met or exceeded the target in 98.4 percent of them.

10 If a student in my school receives a  
11 grade of 98.4 on his or her report card, we consider  
12 this to be a pretty good grade.

13 What distinguishes Newark Charter  
14 School is evident to anyone who has visited. We are  
15 a community that shares a common vision of what  
16 excellence for every student looks like. We pull  
17 together in the same direction every day to achieve  
18 that vision.

19 Overcoming the odds, this school that  
20 spent its first two years in trailers has not only  
21 survived; it has thrived.

22 We are grateful to the Delaware  
23 Department of Education for having faith in us from  
24 the start and for being an essential part of our



1 continuing success. Thank you.

2 MR. CARWELL: Thank you, Mr. Meece. Is  
3 there anyone else who desires to speak? Okay.

4 If not, I want to thank you all for  
5 participating today. The Accountability Committee  
6 will consider your comments. In addition, the  
7 Secretary will consider your comments, and his  
8 decision which is then communicated to the State  
9 Board. This hearing is now closed. Thank you.

10 (Concluded at 5:39 p.m.)  
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1 CERTIFICATE

2 I, Lorena J. Hartnett, a Notary Public and  
3 Registered Professional Reporter, do hereby certify that  
4 the foregoing is an accurate and complete transcription  
5 of the proceeding held at the time and place stated  
6 herein, and that the said proceeding was recorded by me  
7 and then reduced to typewriting under my direction, and  
8 constitutes a true record of the testimony given by said  
9 witnesses.

10 I further certify that I am not a relative,  
11 employee, or attorney of any of the parties or a  
12 relative or employee of either counsel, and that I am in  
13 no way interested directly or indirectly in this action.

14 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my  
15 hand and affixed my seal of office on this 30th day of  
16 October 2013.

17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22 

23 Lorena J. Hartnett  
24 Registered Professional Reporter





	5:18	9:8	direction (1) 8:17	fall (1) 6:19
<b>A</b>	better (1) 7:10	community (1)	Director (1) 4:5	filed (1) 2:8
abilities (1) 7:17	black (1) 4:21	8:15	disabilities (2)	final (1) 2:16
ability (1) 4:18	Blue (1) 6:6	comparable (1)	7:10,20	financial (2) 4:22
able (1) 3:11	Board (3) 2:14	7:10	disaggregated (1)	8:7
academic (3)	3:14 9:9	compared (1) 7:14	6:22	financials (1) 5:23
6:19 7:12 8:6	bright (1) 4:20	Concluded (1)	discernible (1)	findings (1) 4:24
Accommodation (1)	business (3) 3:1	9:10	6:23	First (4) 3:23
7:24	5:18,19	conduct (1) 2:6	distinguishes (1)	6:7,16 8:20
Accountability (5)	<b>C</b>	conducted (1)	8:13	five-year (2) 4:9,
2:11,16,24		4:24	Downs (1) 7:19	10
4:7 9:5	Calendar (1) 3:3	consecutive (2)	During (2) 4:15,	following (1) 3:23
achieve (1) 8:17	can (1) 3:8	4:10 8:2	22	framework (2)
achieved (1) 5:1	capacity (1) 5:1	consider (3) 8:11	<b>E</b>	7:12 8:4
achievement (1)	card (1) 8:11	9:6,7	Education (10)	frameworks (1) 8:7
6:23	CARWELL (6)	considered (1) 6:5	2:3,5,6,14,15	Further (2) 3:4
addition (2) 2:23	2:1,3 3:20,22	consistently (2)	3:13,14 6:1	5:10
9:6	4:4 9:2	5:14 6:14	7:1 8:23	future (1) 4:20
admitted (1) 7:17	categories (1)	Continued (1)	Education's (1) 3:1	<b>G</b>
African (1) 7:5	6:17	6:10	electronic (1) 3:15	gap (1) 6:24
American (1) 7:5	category (1) 5:19	continuing (1) 9:1	else (2) 4:2 9:3	gifted (1) 7:21
application (1) 2:9	Caucasian (1) 7:7	contrary (1) 6:24	employee-reported (1)	Good (3) 2:1
appointed (1) 2:5	cells (1) 8:8	counselor (1) 5:12	5:20	6:22 8:12
appreciate (1) 4:8	chance (1) 7:20	court (2) 3:7,10	enrolled (2) 5:8,8	grade (4) 6:15,
approval (1) 4:9	Charter (18) 2:4,	covered (1) 8:6	enrollment (1) 5:1	18 8:11,12
Associate (1) 2:3	8,9,10,24	customers (2) 5:5,	enrollments (1)	grateful (1) 8:22
attrition (1) 5:7	3:24 4:6,12,	23	5:22	Gregory (1) 4:5
audit (1) 4:24	13,15 5:18	<b>D</b>	equal (1) 7:20	growth (1) 6:19
audits (1) 4:24	6:3,7,16 7:15	data (2) 6:21,22	essential (1) 8:24	guy (1) 6:22
autism (1) 7:19	8:3,5,13	date (2) 2:19 3:5	evaluate (1) 8:4	<b>H</b>
averages (2) 7:2,	child (1) 7:21	day (2) 5:9 8:17	evening (1) 2:1	
3	children (1) 7:23	decision (1) 9:8	evidence (1) 5:4	half (1) 6:17
award (2) 5:18,	cited (1) 6:8	declare (1) 2:1	evident (1) 8:14	Head (1) 4:14
19	class (1) 6:14	decreased (1) 8:1	example (2) 6:15	hear (2) 3:23 4:3
<b>B</b>	closed (1) 9:9	Delaware (4)	7:5	hearing (9) 2:2,7,
	Closer (1) 6:21	2:21 4:14	exceed (2) 7:2,3	13,20 3:6,8,
backgrounds (1)	comment (1) 4:1	7:18 8:22	exceeded (1) 8:9	12,16 9:9
7:17	comments (6)	Delaware's (1) 7:6	exceeds (1) 6:19	held (1) 2:13
balance (1) 4:22	2:15 3:15,18	demand (1) 5:4	Excellence (2)	herself (1) 3:10
based (3) 5:20	4:1 9:6,7	demographics (1)	6:10 8:16	HICKEY (2) 3:19,
6:2,17	Committee (4)	7:14	External (1) 4:23	21
became (1) 6:7	2:11,17 4:7	Department (7)	<b>F</b>	high (2) 5:3,24
beginning (1) 3:10	9:5	2:4,14 3:1		higher (3) 7:6,8,
benchmarks (1)	Committee's (1)	6:1,4,9 8:23	fact (1) 5:5	13
6:20	2:24	desires (2) 4:2	faith (1) 8:23	Highest (1) 6:9
best (2) 4:18	common (1) 8:15	9:3		
	communicated (1)			

Hispanic (1) 7:6	medium-sized (1) 5:19	organizational (1) 8:7	proficiency (1) 7:8	Reward (1) 6:8
<b>I</b>	MEECE (3) 4:4,5 9:2	ourselves (1) 4:16	profound (1) 7:20	Ribbon (1) 6:6
ideally (1) 4:9	Meeting (1) 3:2	Over (1) 8:5	projections (1) 4:22	row (1) 8:2
identified (1) 7:21	members (2) 3:13 4:7	Overcoming (1) 8:19	promising (1) 4:20	<b>S</b>
identify (1) 3:9	met (1) 8:9	<b>P</b>	proud (5) 4:6	same (1) 8:17
IEPs (1) 7:23	minority (1) 8:1	parent (1) 5:13	provided (1) 3:13	satisfaction (2) 5:13,20
income (1) 7:1	more (2) 6:17,22	parents (2) 5:11, 12	public (11) 2:2,6, 13,15,20 3:2, 6 4:8,12 6:12 7:15	satisfied (4) 5:6, 11,17,22
inspection (1) 6:21	<b>N</b>	part (2) 4:12 8:24	published (1) 2:20	School (31) 2:4,8, 10,24 3:4,24 4:3,5,6,15,15 5:9,12,14,18 6:3,3,5,6,7,8, 9,10 7:13,15, 16 8:3,5,10, 14,19
intended (1) 7:18	name (2) 2:2 4:4	participating (1) 9:5	pull (1) 8:16	schools (5) 4:13, 13 6:2,12 7:14
investigation (1) 2:11	named (1) 5:17	past (1) 4:19	<b>R</b>	score (2) 7:6,8
issuance (1) 2:16	National (1) 6:5	peers (1) 7:11	race (1) 7:1	scores (1) 7:10
<b>J</b>	necessary (1) 3:9	percent (3) 5:7, 15 8:9	Rankings (1) 6:12	Secretary (3) 2:6 3:13 9:7
John (1) 2:2	Newark (8) 2:8 4:5,15 5:17 6:2,16 7:15 8:13	percentage (1) 8:1	rate (3) 5:6,13 7:9	seek (1) 4:9
joint (1) 2:13	News (5) 2:20, 21 5:17 6:13, 22	percentile (1) 7:9	rated (2) 6:2,3	separate (1) 8:8
Journal (3) 2:20 5:17 6:13	nominated (1) 6:5	perform (1) 6:14	receive (1) 2:15	September (1) 5:8
Jr (1) 2:3	non-disabled (1) 7:11	performance (3) 6:2 7:12 8:3	received (1) 3:15	share (1) 4:6
<b>L</b>	non-subgroup (1) 7:3	Performing (1) 6:9	receives (1) 8:10	shares (1) 8:15
last (4) 4:14 5:9 6:9,15	note (1) 3:11	performs (1) 7:13	recent (1) 5:2	show (2) 4:22 5:13
law (3) 2:10 4:11 7:18	notice (2) 2:19, 23	period (3) 4:20, 23 8:6	record (5) 2:18 3:8,12,17 4:19	showed (1) 6:13
learning (1) 7:20	notified (1) 3:5	periods (1) 4:10	referred (1) 2:10	shows (1) 7:13
level (1) 6:18	<b>O</b>	permitted (1) 4:11	reflect (1) 2:18	significantly (1) 7:13
list (2) 5:2,3	October (4) 2:21, 22 3:4,6	personally (1) 3:4	reflected (1) 5:6	similar (1) 7:14
little (1) 5:23	odds (1) 8:19	place (3) 2:19 3:1,5	regardless (1) 7:16	socioeconomic (1) 7:7
looks (1) 8:16	Office (1) 2:4	placed (1) 6:16	remain (1) 5:8	speak (3) 3:10 4:2 9:3
lottery (1) 7:18	official (3) 2:24 3:2,3	Plans (1) 7:24	renew (1) 2:9	speaker (1) 3:9
low (3) 5:6 7:1,7	one (1) 5:10	pm (1) 9:10	renewal (3) 4:9, 20,23	special (1) 7:1
<b>M</b>	only (3) 7:2,18 8:20	point (1) 4:2	renewed (1) 8:5	spent (1) 8:20
manner (1) 3:23	open (1) 2:2	populations (2) 6:24 7:4	report (3) 2:12, 16 8:11	spring (1) 6:19
market (1) 5:4	operated (1) 4:21	positive (1) 4:22	reported (1) 6:12	stable (1) 5:22
marks (1) 5:24	opportunity (1) 4:8	possible (1) 6:17	reporter (2) 3:7, 11	staff (1) 5:16
matter (1) 2:10		posted (1) 2:23	representatives (2) 3:24 4:3	start (1) 8:24
mean (1) 5:23		present (1) 3:7	required (1) 2:9	
measure (1) 5:11		pretty (1) 8:12	reveal (1) 4:24	
measured (1) 8:8		prided (1) 4:16	reveals (1) 6:21	
measuring (1) 8:4		prior (1) 2:15		
		proceed (1) 3:22		

<b>State (10)</b> 2:14, 21 3:2,14 6:7, 16 7:2,3,8 9:8 <b>State's (2)</b> 3:3 6:19 <b>status (2)</b> 6:6 7:7 <b>step (1)</b> 5:10 <b>story (1)</b> 4:6 <b>strong (2)</b> 5:4,23 <b>student (5)</b> 5:7, 24 6:2 8:10,16 <b>students (10)</b> 5:4 6:13 7:6,7,8,9, 16,17,19 8:1 <b>students' (1)</b> 6:18 <b>subgroup (1)</b> 6:24 <b>subject (1)</b> 6:15 <b>subjects (1)</b> 6:18 <b>subpopulations (2)</b> 6:23 7:2 <b>success (3)</b> 4:19 5:24 9:1 <b>suggests (1)</b> 4:19 <b>superior (1)</b> 6:3 <b>surveys (2)</b> 5:12, 13 <b>survived (1)</b> 8:21 <b>Syndrome (1)</b> 7:19	<b>two (2)</b> 4:10 8:20 <b>Typically (1)</b> 5:7	<b>2013 (4)</b> 2:21, 22 3:4,6		
	<b>U</b>	<b>3</b>		
		<b>3,000 (1)</b> 5:3		
	<b>upon (1)</b> 8:8 <b>used (1)</b> 8:4	<b>5</b>		
	<b>V</b>	<b>5:39 (1)</b> 9:10 <b>504 (1)</b> 7:24		
	<b>vision (2)</b> 8:15,18 <b>visited (1)</b> 8:14	<b>7</b>		
	<b>W</b>	<b>7 (1)</b> 3:6		
	<b>waiting (2)</b> 5:2,3 <b>website (2)</b> 3:2,3 <b>welcomes (1)</b> 7:16 <b>win (1)</b> 6:7 <b>winner (1)</b> 5:18 <b>wish (1)</b> 3:24 <b>without (1)</b> 5:24 <b>workplace (1)</b> 5:21 <b>written (2)</b> 3:15, 18	<b>9 (3)</b> 2:21,22 3:4 <b>90th (1)</b> 7:9 <b>98.4 (2)</b> 8:9,11 <b>99 (2)</b> 5:7,14		
	<b>Y</b>			
	<b>year (9)</b> 4:21,24 5:2,10,12 6:1, 10,11,16 <b>years (6)</b> 4:14, 15,23 5:2 8:2, 20			
<b>T</b>				
<b>talented (1)</b> 7:22 <b>target (1)</b> 8:9 <b>teachers (1)</b> 5:16 <b>tested (1)</b> 6:18 <b>three-year (1)</b> 8:6 <b>thrived (1)</b> 8:21 <b>today (2)</b> 3:18 9:5 <b>today's (2)</b> 2:19 3:5 <b>together (2)</b> 3:14 8:17 <b>tool (1)</b> 8:4 <b>top (1)</b> 6:14 <b>trailers (1)</b> 8:20 <b>twice (2)</b> 5:12,17	<b>1</b>			
	<b>100 (2)</b> 5:15 7:24 <b>126 (1)</b> 8:8 <b>13 (2)</b> 4:14 8:1 <b>132 (1)</b> 7:23			
	<b>2</b>			
	<b>2,000 (1)</b> 5:3			

**In The Matter Of:**  
*The State of Delaware*  
*Department of Education*

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*ITMO: Positive Outcomes Charter School*  
*October 23, 2013*

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THE STATE OF DELAWARE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

.. .. .

-- PUBLIC HEARING --

IN THE MATTER OF: )  
 )  
Positive Outcomes Charter School )

.. .. .

Department of Education  
The Townsend Building  
2nd Floor Cabinet Room  
401 Federal Street  
Dover, Delaware 19901

Thursday, October 23, 2013  
5:15 p.m.

.. .. .

BEFORE: John Carwell, Charter School Officer  
Department of Education

Barbara Rutt  
State Board of Education

ATTORNEY: Catherine Hickey, DAG

.. .. .

-- Transcript of Proceedings --

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1 MR. CARWELL: For anyone who is  
2 representing Positive Outcomes, would you please  
3 sign in the speaker sheet here?

4 Good evening again. I declare this  
5 public hearing to be open. My name is John Carwell,  
6 Jr. I'm an Education Associate in the Charter  
7 School Office with the Department of Education. And  
8 I have been appointed by the Secretary of Education  
9 to conduct this public hearing.

10 Positive Outcomes Charter School has  
11 filed an application to renew its charter. As is  
12 required by law, the matter was referred to the  
13 Charter School Accountability Committee for  
14 investigation and report.

15 This joint public hearing is being held  
16 by the Department of Education and the State Board  
17 of Education to receive public comments prior to the  
18 issuance of the final report of the Accountability  
19 Committee.

20 I would like the record to reflect that  
21 the notice of the time, date, and place of today's  
22 public hearing was published in the News Journal on  
23 October 9 and the Delaware State News on October 9,  
24 2013. In addition, notice was posted at the Charter



1 School Accountability Committee's official place of  
2 business, on the Department of Education's official  
3 website, and on the State Public Meeting Calendar on  
4 the State's official website on October 9, 2013.

5 And, further, the school was personally notified of  
6 the time, date, and place of today's public hearing  
7 on October 7, 2013.

8 And the court reporter is present so  
9 that a record of this hearing can be made. It will  
10 be necessary for each speaker to clearly identify  
11 his or herself before beginning to speak so that the  
12 court reporter will be able to note who you are.  
13 And a record of this hearing will be provided to the  
14 Secretary of Education and members of the State  
15 Board of Education together with any written or  
16 electronic comments received at or before this  
17 hearing. And we have received none.

18 We will proceed in the following  
19 manner: First, we will hear from any  
20 representatives of the charter school who wish to  
21 comment. Then we will take comments from anyone  
22 else who desires to speak. I believe everyone has  
23 signed in.

24 So I intend to be as liberal with time



1 as possible. And at this point I will accept  
2 comments from school representatives.

3 (Ms. Hickey and Mr. Carwell reviewing  
4 document off record.)

5 MR. EMMETT: That was a response to the  
6 initial report from the Charter School  
7 Accountability Committee. It needs to be included  
8 as part of the record.

9 MR. CARWELL: Sure. Okay. So we are,  
10 as part of the record, the school's response to the  
11 initial report is an exhibit, Exhibit A.

12 MR. EMMETT: And that was an electronic  
13 copy, and you should have a hard copy coming too.

14 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

15 MR. EMMETT: Is it all right if I  
16 start?

17 MR. CARWELL: Yes.

18 MR. EMMETT: Good evening. My name is  
19 Edward Emmett, and I'm the director of Positive  
20 Outcomes Charter School. And on behalf of the  
21 Positive Outcomes Charter School board of directors,  
22 faculty, staff, parents and students, I would like  
23 to thank the Charter School Accountability  
24 Committee, the Secretary of Education, and the





1 Delaware Board of Education for consideration of our  
2 fourth charter renewal.

3 Parent support for our school continues  
4 to surpass all previous expectations. Demand for  
5 our school continuation to grow year after year.  
6 Students who attend our school come to us for  
7 various reasons. Some come to us in need of  
8 additional academic support, some in need of  
9 additional emotional support, and others come in  
10 need of greater services in the classroom to support  
11 their learning.

12 For whatever reason students attend our  
13 school, they are overcoming any obstacles and  
14 challenges that they have in front of them. Our  
15 students are succeeding when in the past they may  
16 have failed.

17 Our school exists for the sole purpose  
18 of serving students who have had difficulty in their  
19 previous school settings. Each member of our school  
20 community knows that we do whatever it takes to help  
21 a student be successful. Nothing is too hard or too  
22 difficult for us if the ultimate benefit will be the  
23 success of our students.

24 Over the past four years, our school



1 has shown significant growth and development. A  
2 review of our data demonstrates that we are meeting  
3 our expectations or constantly improving in any area  
4 that we showed deficiency.

5 Upon graduation from our school, most,  
6 if not all, of our students indicate that they did  
7 not believe that they could have accomplished these  
8 goals without our school or support.

9 Positive Outcomes looks forward to  
10 fulfilling our mission well into the future and  
11 supporting students that have difficulty in  
12 traditional schools. Thank you for your time.

13 MR. CARWELL: Thank you, Mr. Emmett.  
14 Mr. Norman.

15 MR. NORMAN: Thank you. My name is  
16 Steve Norman. I'm the principal of Positive  
17 Outcomes Charter School. I worked in the private  
18 sector for years, and so I realized at that point  
19 what we needed in the workforce, and so I was able  
20 to do my midlife crisis, as I call it, and got into  
21 education.

22 One of the great things about Positive  
23 Outcomes Charter School is that we are preparing our  
24 students for what we call life after high, and that



1 they are going out into society ready to go ahead  
2 and be successful people.

3 One of the sidebars is I have a son who  
4 graduated from there. And so, not only am I  
5 somebody who believes because I work there, but  
6 because I have a product of Positive Outcomes  
7 Charter School.

8 A couple of years ago we had an  
9 opportunity to grow, and we took that opportunity  
10 and embraced the fact that we could do better than  
11 what we were doing, and I think that has shown here  
12 in the last three years as we have moved forward.  
13 And we are looking to continue to grow and get  
14 better in what we are doing.

15 Our environment is a caring environment  
16 where student success is at the forefront. And that  
17 is the focus of our school both academically and  
18 socially.

19 Our staff is second to none. They  
20 change students' lives every day. And it's fun to  
21 watch. And it makes it great to come to work every  
22 day.

23 So I a lot of times tell what I am  
24 trying to say by a narrative, and so I have a real



1 quick narrative: We had a young man who was at the  
2 Secretary of Education's Scholar's Dinner this last  
3 May. And he was out of his element. But he went  
4 up, he got the award. He ate a meal that his mother  
5 said he wouldn't eat. And he came back. And then,  
6 while he was up getting his award, his mother leaned  
7 over to Mr. Rose here and said, "In sixth grade his  
8 sixth-grade teacher said that he would never achieve  
9 above a third-grade level." And here was a kid who  
10 was going to a scholar's dinner.

11 And those are the moments that are  
12 truly rewarding for us at the school, and I think  
13 are really indicative of what we do as an  
14 organization. Thank you.

15 MR. CARWELL: Thank you. Mr. Rose?

16 MR. ROSE: Hi. My name is Dave Rose.  
17 I'm the Special Education Coordinator. I have been  
18 in a rut. This is my 38th year in special  
19 education. I love every moment that I am doing it.

20 This is my sixth year here in Positive  
21 Outcomes. Prior to that, I was in Maryland. I  
22 worked with Queen Anne's County Board of Education.  
23 I spent a lot of time doing compliance monitoring  
24 and working with those students who I wish we had a



1 Positive Outcomes in Maryland, because every school  
2 has to have students who just don't fit in: What do  
3 we do with Jimmy? What do we do with this child?  
4 We are trying this. We are trying that. He  
5 continues to make bad choices. He just doesn't  
6 understand. The kids don't understand him. The  
7 parents are frustrated. What do we do with this  
8 child?

9 And this is like a dream come true in  
10 my sixth year. And we don't just change lives, but  
11 we save lives. I have met several of our seniors  
12 who have told me if they had not come to our school,  
13 they would be dead. That's pretty earthshattering.

14 Talking about our scholar last year,  
15 well, we think outside the box, too. So this kid  
16 does not have the best social skills in the world,  
17 because this is all new to him. And so what does he  
18 do? He goes to the State Archives and he read  
19 letters that were written during the Revolutionary  
20 War, and they are being transcribed and being put  
21 into a publication. This is what our kids do. They  
22 go out into the community.

23 We are working with a kid -- we have a  
24 senior right now who is still afraid to cross the



1 street because he once walked into a moving car. We  
2 work with those kids.

3 We have a new seventh grader. The  
4 first day of school mom came in and said, "My son  
5 has never had a friend his entire life. Can you  
6 help him?" And I saw him -- I saw him today,  
7 actually. I saw him last month, and I said,  
8 "How are you doing?" I said, "Are you making  
9 friends?" He said, "Yeah, I'm making friends." I  
10 said, "Who are your friends?" And he told me he had  
11 two friends. And now he has got three friends. And  
12 that's three more friends than he had his entire  
13 life, according to his family.

14 I mean, there is nothing else like this  
15 school. I don't know nationwide of a school that  
16 does this phenomenal job. And it is because of the  
17 great leadership and incredible staff and just  
18 fabulous parents. And everybody believes in  
19 everybody.

20 And I thank you for this opportunity,  
21 and I'm a very blessed person to work at the school.

22 MR. CARWELL: Thank you, Mr. Rose. Is  
23 there anyone else who desires to speak with regards  
24 to Positive Outcomes Charter School?



1                   If not, I want to thank you all for  
2 participating today. The Accountability Committee  
3 will consider your comments. In addition, the  
4 Secretary will consider your comments and make a  
5 decision which is then communicated to the State  
6 Board. This hearing is now closed.

7                   (Concluded at 5:29 p.m.)  
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CERTIFICATE

I, Lorena J. Hartnett, a Notary Public and Registered Professional Reporter, do hereby certify that the foregoing is an accurate and complete transcription of the proceeding held at the time and place stated herein, and that the said proceeding was recorded by me and then reduced to typewriting under my direction, and constitutes a true record of the testimony given by said witnesses.

I further certify that I am not a relative, employee, or attorney of any of the parties or a relative or employee of either counsel, and that I am in no way interested directly or indirectly in this action.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal of office on this 30th day of October 2013.



Lorena J. Hartnett  
Registered Professional Reporter



A	better (2) 7:10,14 blessed (1) 10:21 Board (6) 2:16 3:15 4:21 5:1 8:22 11:6 both (1) 7:17 box (1) 9:15 business (1) 3:2	communicated (1) 11:5 community (2) 5:20 9:22 compliance (1) 8:23 Concluded (1) 11:7 conduct (1) 2:9 consider (2) 11:3, 4 consideration (1) 5:1 constantly (1) 6:3 continuation (1) 5:5 continue (1) 7:13 continues (2) 5:3 9:5 Coordinator (1) 8:17 copy (2) 4:13,13 County (1) 8:22 couple (1) 7:8 court (2) 3:8,12 crisis (1) 6:20 cross (1) 9:24	development (1) 6:1 difficult (1) 5:22 difficulty (2) 5:18 6:11 Dinner (2) 8:2,10 director (1) 4:19 directors (1) 4:21 document (1) 4:4 dream (1) 9:9 during (1) 9:19	F	
able (2) 3:12 6:19 above (1) 8:9 academic (1) 5:8 academically (1) 7:17 accept (1) 4:1 accomplished (1) 6:7 according (1) 10:13 Accountability (6) 2:13,18 3:1 4:7,23 11:2 achieve (1) 8:8 actually (1) 10:7 addition (2) 2:24 11:3 additional (2) 5:8, 9 afraid (1) 9:24 again (1) 2:4 ago (1) 7:8 ahead (1) 7:1 Anne's (1) 8:22 application (1) 2:11 appointed (1) 2:8 Archives (1) 9:18 area (1) 6:3 Associate (1) 2:6 ate (1) 8:4 attend (2) 5:6,12 award (2) 8:4,6	C		E	fabulous (1) 10:18 fact (1) 7:10 faculty (1) 4:22 failed (1) 5:16 family (1) 10:13 filed (1) 2:11 final (1) 2:18 First (2) 3:19 10:4 fit (1) 9:2 focus (1) 7:17 following (1) 3:18 forefront (1) 7:16 forward (2) 6:9 7:12 four (1) 5:24 fourth (1) 5:2 friend (1) 10:5 friends (6) 10:9, 9,10,11,11,12 front (1) 5:14 frustrated (1) 9:7 fulfilling (1) 6:10 fun (1) 7:20 further (1) 3:5 future (1) 6:10	
B	Calendar (1) 3:3 call (2) 6:20,24 came (2) 8:5 10:4 can (2) 3:9 10:5 car (1) 10:1 caring (1) 7:15 CARWELL (9) 2:1,5 4:3,9, 14,17 6:13 8:15 10:22 challenges (1) 5:14 change (2) 7:20 9:10 Charter (15) 2:6, 10,11,13,24 3:20 4:6,20, 21,23 5:2 6:17,23 7:7 10:24 child (2) 9:3,8 choices (1) 9:5 classroom (1) 5:10 clearly (1) 3:10 closed (1) 11:6 coming (1) 4:13 comment (1) 3:21 comments (6) 2:17 3:16,21 4:2 11:3,4 Committee (5) 2:13,19 4:7, 24 11:2 Committee's (1) 3:1	D			G
back (1) 8:5 bad (1) 9:5 beginning (1) 3:11 behalf (1) 4:20 believes (2) 7:5 10:18 benefit (1) 5:22 best (1) 9:16		data (1) 6:2 date (2) 2:21 3:6 Dave (1) 8:16 day (3) 7:20,22 10:4 dead (1) 9:13 decision (1) 11:5 declare (1) 2:4 deficiency (1) 6:4 Delaware (2) 2:23 5:1 Demand (1) 5:4 demonstrates (1) 6:2 Department (3) 2:7,16 3:2 desires (2) 3:22 10:23	earthshattering (1) 9:13 eat (1) 8:5 Education (13) 2:6,7,8,16,17 3:14,15 4:24 5:1 6:21 8:17, 19,22 Education's (2) 3:2 8:2 Edward (1) 4:19 electronic (2) 3:16 4:12 element (1) 8:3 else (3) 3:22 10:14,23 embraced (1) 7:10 EMMETT (6) 4:5, 12,15,18,19 6:13 emotional (1) 5:9 entire (2) 10:5,12 environment (2) 7:15,15 evening (2) 2:4 4:18 everybody (2) 10:18,19 everyone (1) 3:22 Exhibit (2) 4:11, 11 exists (1) 5:17 expectations (2) 5:4 6:3	goals (1) 6:8 goes (1) 9:18 Good (2) 2:4 4:18 grade (1) 8:7 grader (1) 10:3 graduated (1) 7:4 graduation (1) 6:5 great (3) 6:22 7:21 10:17 greater (1) 5:10 grow (3) 5:5 7:9, 13 growth (1) 6:1	

<b>H</b>	kids (3) 9:6,21 10:2 knows (1) 5:20	8:23 month (1) 10:7 more (1) 10:12 most (1) 6:5 mother (2) 8:4,6 moved (1) 7:12 moving (1) 10:1	organization (1) 8:14 others (1) 5:9 out (3) 7:1 8:3 9:22 Outcomes (11) 2:2,10 4:20, 21 6:9,17,23 7:6 8:21 9:1 10:24 outside (1) 9:15 Over (2) 5:24 8:7 overcoming (1) 5:13	private (1) 6:17 proceed (1) 3:18 product (1) 7:6 provided (1) 3:13 public (7) 2:5,9, 15,17,22 3:3,6 publication (1) 9:21 published (1) 2:22 purpose (1) 5:17 put (1) 9:20
hard (2) 4:13 5:21 hear (1) 3:19 hearing (9) 2:5,9, 15,22 3:6,9, 13,17 11:6 held (1) 2:15 help (2) 5:20 10:6 herself (1) 3:11 Hi (1) 8:16 Hickey (1) 4:3 high (1) 6:24	<b>L</b>  last (4) 7:12 8:2 9:14 10:7 law (1) 2:12 leadership (1) 10:17 leaned (1) 8:6 learning (1) 5:11 letters (1) 9:19 level (1) 8:9 liberal (1) 3:24 life (3) 6:24 10:5,13 lives (3) 7:20 9:10,11 looking (1) 7:13 looks (1) 6:9 lot (2) 7:23 8:23 love (1) 8:19	<b>N</b>  name (4) 2:5 4:18 6:15 8:16 narrative (2) 7:24 8:1 nationwide (1) 10:15 necessary (1) 3:10 need (3) 5:7,8, 10 needed (1) 6:19 needs (1) 4:7 new (2) 9:17 10:3 News (2) 2:22,23 none (2) 3:17 7:19 Norman (3) 6:14, 15,16 note (1) 3:12 notice (2) 2:21, 24 notified (1) 3:5	<b>P</b>  Parent (1) 5:3 parents (3) 4:22 9:7 10:18 part (2) 4:8,10 participating (1) 11:2 past (2) 5:15,24 people (1) 7:2 person (1) 10:21 personally (1) 3:5 phenomenal (1) 10:16 place (3) 2:21 3:1,6 please (1) 2:2 pm (1) 11:7 point (2) 4:1 6:18 Positive (11) 2:2, 10 4:19,21 6:9,16,22 7:6 8:20 9:1 10:24 possible (1) 4:1 posted (1) 2:24 preparing (1) 6:23 present (1) 3:8 pretty (1) 9:13 previous (2) 5:4, 19 principal (1) 6:16 prior (2) 2:17 8:21	<b>Q</b>  Queen (1) 8:22 quick (1) 8:1
<b>I</b>	identify (1) 3:10 improving (1) 6:3 included (1) 4:7 incredible (1) 10:17 indicate (1) 6:6 indicative (1) 8:13 initial (2) 4:6,11 intend (1) 3:24 into (6) 6:10,20 7:1 9:21,22 10:1 investigation (1) 2:14 issuance (1) 2:18	<b>M</b>  makes (1) 7:21 making (2) 10:8,9 man (1) 8:1 manner (1) 3:19 Maryland (2) 8:21 9:1 matter (1) 2:12 may (2) 5:15 8:3 meal (1) 8:4 mean (1) 10:14 Meeting (2) 3:3 6:2 member (1) 5:19 members (1) 3:14 met (1) 9:11 midlife (1) 6:20 mission (1) 6:10 mom (1) 10:4 moment (1) 8:19 moments (1) 8:11 monitoring (1)	<b>O</b>  obstacles (1) 5:13 October (4) 2:23, 23 3:4,7 off (1) 4:4 Office (1) 2:7 official (3) 3:1,2,4 once (1) 10:1 One (2) 6:22 7:3 only (1) 7:4 open (1) 2:5 opportunity (3) 7:9,9 10:20	<b>R</b>  read (1) 9:18 ready (1) 7:1 real (1) 7:24 realized (1) 6:18 really (1) 8:13 reason (1) 5:12 reasons (1) 5:7 receive (1) 2:17 received (2) 3:16, 17 record (6) 2:20 3:9,13 4:4,8, 10 referred (1) 2:12 reflect (1) 2:20 regards (1) 10:23 renew (1) 2:11 renewal (1) 5:2 report (4) 2:14, 18 4:6,11 reporter (2) 3:8, 12 representatives (2) 3:20 4:2 representing (1) 2:2 required (1) 2:12 response (2) 4:5, 10
<b>J</b>	Jimmy (1) 9:3 job (1) 10:16 John (1) 2:5 joint (1) 2:15 Journal (1) 2:22 Jr (1) 2:6			
<b>K</b>				
kid (3) 8:9 9:15, 23				

review (1) 6:2 reviewing (1) 4:3 Revolutionary (1) 9:19 rewarding (1) 8:12 right (2) 4:15 9:24 Rose (5) 8:7,15, 16,16 10:22 rut (1) 8:18	signed (1) 3:23 significant (1) 6:1 sixth (3) 8:7,20 9:10 sixth-grade (1) 8:8 skills (1) 9:16 social (1) 9:16 socially (1) 7:18 society (1) 7:1 sole (1) 5:17 somebody (1) 7:5 son (2) 7:3 10:4 speak (3) 3:11, 22 10:23 speaker (2) 2:3 3:10 Special (2) 8:17, 18 spent (1) 8:23 staff (3) 4:22 7:19 10:17 start (1) 4:16 State (6) 2:16, 23 3:3,14 9:18 11:5 State's (1) 3:4 Steve (1) 6:16 still (1) 9:24 street (1) 10:1 student (2) 5:21 7:16 students (11) 4:22 5:6,12, 15,18,23 6:6, 11,24 8:24 9:2 students' (1) 7:20 succeeding (1) 5:15 success (2) 5:23 7:16 successful (2) 5:21 7:2 support (5) 5:3,8, 9,10 6:8 supporting (1) 6:11 Sure (1) 4:9 surpass (1) 5:4	T  Talking (1) 9:14 teacher (1) 8:8 third-grade (1) 8:9 three (3) 7:12 10:11,12 times (1) 7:23 today (2) 10:6 11:2 today's (2) 2:21 3:6 together (1) 3:15 told (2) 9:12 10:10 took (1) 7:9 traditional (1) 6:12 transcribed (1) 9:20 true (1) 9:9 truly (1) 8:12 trying (3) 7:24 9:4,4 two (1) 10:11  U  ultimate (1) 5:22 up (2) 8:4,6 Upon (1) 6:5  V  various (1) 5:7  W  walked (1) 10:1 War (1) 9:20 watch (1) 7:21 website (2) 3:3,4 wish (2) 3:20 8:24 without (1) 6:8 work (4) 7:5,21 10:2,21 worked (2) 6:17	8:22 workforce (1) 6:19 working (2) 8:24 9:23 world (1) 9:16 written (2) 3:15 9:19  Y  year (6) 5:5,5 8:18,20 9:10, 14 years (4) 5:24 6:18 7:8,12 young (1) 8:1  2  2013 (3) 2:24 3:4,7  3  38th (1) 8:18  5  5:29 (1) 11:7  7  7 (1) 3:7  9  9 (3) 2:23,23 3:4	
S  save (1) 9:11 saw (3) 10:6,6,7 scholar (1) 9:14 Scholar's (2) 8:2, 10 School (33) 2:7, 10,13 3:1,5, 20 4:2,6,20, 21,23 5:3,5,6, 13,17,19,19, 24 6:5,8,17, 23 7:7,17 8:12 9:1,12 10:4,15,15,21, 24 schools (1) 6:12 school's (1) 4:10 second (1) 7:19 Secretary (5) 2:8 3:14 4:24 8:2 11:4 sector (1) 6:18 senior (1) 9:24 seniors (1) 9:11 services (1) 5:10 serving (1) 5:18 settings (1) 5:19 seventh (1) 10:3 several (1) 9:11 sheet (1) 2:3 showed (1) 6:4 shown (2) 6:1 7:11 sidebars (1) 7:3 sign (1) 2:3				

**In The Matter Of:**  
*The State of Delaware*  
*Department of Education*

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*Reach Academy for Girls*  
*October 23, 2013*

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THE STATE OF DELAWARE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

.. .. .

-- PUBLIC HEARING --

IN THE MATTER OF: )  
 )  
Reach Academy for Girls )

.. .. .

Department of Education  
The Townsend Building  
2nd Floor Cabinet Room  
401 Federal Street  
Dover, Delaware 19901

Thursday, October 23, 2013  
5:55 p.m.

.. .. .

BEFORE: John Carwell, Charter School Officer  
Department of Education

Barbara Rutt  
State Board of Education

ATTORNEY: Catherine Hickey, DAG

.. .. .

-- Transcript of Proceedings --

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1                   MR. CARWELL:     Good evening.  I declare  
2     this public hearing to be open.  My name is John  
3     Carwell, Jr.  I am the Education Associate in the  
4     Charter School Office at the Department of  
5     Education.  And I have been appointed by the  
6     Secretary of Education to conduct this public  
7     hearing.

8                   Reach Academy for Girls has filed an  
9     application to renew its charter.  As is required by  
10    law, the matter was referred to the Charter School  
11    Accountability Committee for investigation and  
12    report.

13                  This joint public hearing is being held  
14    by the Department of Education and the State Board  
15    of Education to receive public comments prior to the  
16    issuance of the final report of the Accountability  
17    Committee.

18                  I would like the record to reflect that  
19    the notice of the time, date, and place of today's  
20    public hearing was published in the News Journal on  
21    October 9, 2013, and the Delaware State News on  
22    October 9, 2013.

23                  In addition, notice was posted at the  
24    Charter School Accountability Committee's official



1 place of business, on the Department of Education's  
2 official website, and on the State Public Meeting  
3 Calendar on the State's official website on  
4 October 9, 2013. Further, the school was personally  
5 notified of the date, time, and place of today's  
6 public hearing on October 7, 2013.

7 The court reporter is present so that a  
8 record of this hearing can be made. It will be  
9 necessary for each speaker to clearly identify his  
10 or herself before beginning to speak so the court  
11 reporter will be able to note who you are.

12 The record of this hearing will be  
13 provided to the Secretary of Education and members  
14 of the State Board of Education together with any  
15 written or electronic comments received at or before  
16 this hearing.

17 In that case, we have a video which we  
18 can label as Exhibit A we are about to cue up. And  
19 there were also some written comments; correct?

20 MS. ALLEN: Here.

21 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

22 MS. HICKEY: Is there --

23 MS. ALLEN: It's all one e-mail stream.

24 MS. HICKEY: Okay. So let's do the one



1 from Ms. Ward's student as Exhibit B and the one  
2 from Judge Toulson as Exhibit C.

3 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

4 MS. HICKEY: I'm going to put this on  
5 the letter itself --

6 MS. ALLEN: Okay. That's fine.

7 MS. HICKEY: -- so that we know who it  
8 is. Oh, this just was prepared by the student.

9 MS. ALLEN: Yes, absolutely.

10 MS. HICKEY: I didn't take time to read  
11 the letter.

12 MR. CARWELL: Thank you. So we will  
13 proceed in the following manner: First, we will  
14 hear from any representatives of the charter school  
15 who desire to speak, and we will take comments from  
16 anyone else who desires to speak. Is there anyone  
17 else who would like to speak who has not signed up  
18 yet?

19 Okay. Now, I try to be as liberal with  
20 time as possible. I may have to impose some time  
21 limits, usually two minutes. And then for,  
22 actually, representatives of the school a little bit  
23 longer, obviously, but for other speakers about two  
24 minutes.





1                   So would you like to cue up the video  
2                   first before anyone speaks? You can actually  
3                   introduce the video. Introduce yourself first.

4                   MS. ALLEN: Tara Allen, the School  
5                   Leader of Reach Academy for Girls. And I would  
6                   certainly like to thank you all for giving us the  
7                   opportunity this evening to speak on behalf of Reach  
8                   Academy.

9                   We have a video for everyone to view  
10                  with a representation of Reach Academy, and  
11                  afterward I would just like to say a few words if I  
12                  could.

13                  MR. CARWELL: Okay. Since I can't be  
14                  in two places at once, can someone hit the lights?  
15                  Thank you.

16                  (Played video)

17                  MR. CARWELL: Thank you. Ms. Allen,  
18                  you said you had some additional comments.

19                  MS. ALLEN: Just a few, and I will be  
20                  brief because I know we have a few others that would  
21                  like to say something.

22                  I don't have a speech prepared and  
23                  things of that sort. I appreciate the tears, guys.  
24                  And I'm just going to speak from the heart, because



1 my heart lies with Reach.

2 And I just would like to say that this  
3 is kind of overwhelming to see all of my staff  
4 here -- I'm not normally one who tears up -- all of  
5 my staff and parents and students here to represent  
6 us and to let you all know what you can't see on  
7 black and white.

8 Because we are so much more than what  
9 black and white shows. And we are committed, we are  
10 a family, which you can surely see. We will  
11 probably eat dinner after this. And it's just an  
12 overwhelming -- and it's an understatement for me to  
13 say how well our girls are doing inside that  
14 building and inside their hearts. They see a love  
15 at Reach. They are always there with bright smiles.  
16 And for some of them, that's their only safe haven  
17 for the day. So we certainly at the staff make sure  
18 that, once they are in our care and in our building,  
19 that they don't have to worry about anything except  
20 achieving, except being themselves, and showing who  
21 they are as a whole person, not just in reading and  
22 math, but in dance or in music or in gym or in art.

23 And that's what we are about, the whole  
24 child, the whole girl. And we are going to prove



1       these statistics wrong that boys learn faster and  
2       better than girls. We certainly are going to show  
3       that our girls at Reach are going to thrive and  
4       continue to thrive throughout their academic success  
5       at careers, not just after eighth grade, but on and  
6       on and on. Thank you.

7                   MR. CARWELL: Thank you, Ms. Allen.  
8       Mr. Maitland.

9                   MR. MAITLAND: Thank you for allowing  
10      me to speak. I think I want to speak from a  
11      different point of view, because I wasn't here in  
12      the past, and I don't really -- I mean, to be  
13      honest, I don't really care about the past. We are  
14      looking to move forward.

15                  My perspective from ten weeks at Reach,  
16      I see two administrators that bleed pink. I see an  
17      instructional coach that breaks her teachers down to  
18      build them back up to be great educators. I see  
19      students who come to school for the right reasons  
20      and are there to not only do their best in the  
21      classroom but outside of the classroom also. And I  
22      see parents who don't just care about test scores;  
23      they also care about the little things and the  
24      atmosphere of a school.



1                   Looking at the data, as a parent of a  
2                   ten-month old child and looking for schools that I  
3                   would send my daughter to, would I pick Reach if I  
4                   just picked up a newspaper or A magazine or looked  
5                   on the Internet? No, I wouldn't.

6                   But, to be honest, after ten weeks, my  
7                   answer would completely change from being in that  
8                   school. Actually, after a day, my answer would  
9                   change, to be quite honest. My answer now would be  
10                  absolutely I would send my daughter there. I  
11                  wouldn't even blink an eye.

12                 I just think that the culture there is  
13                 positive. I think that you have educators that care  
14                 more about their children and the kids in their  
15                 class than they do themselves, to be honest, taking  
16                 money out of their own pocket to help educate their  
17                 students. You don't see educators doing that every  
18                 day.

19                 I guess, to wrap it all up, I hope that  
20                 you don't -- you not only give me but the rest of  
21                 the staff, Ms. Allen and Ms. Thomas, as well, the  
22                 opportunity to show you guys that these test scores  
23                 can improve. They are only a number. They will get  
24                 better. I can promise that. But we need an



1 opportunity to show it. Thank you.

2 MR. CARWELL: Thank you, Mr. Maitland.  
3 Justine --

4 MS. ESPIRITU: I am Justine Espiritu.  
5 I'm the music teacher at Reach. I don't know the  
6 exact numbers. I don't know the exact test scores.  
7 But I do know that they are on the lower side and  
8 there is a disconnect.

9 What else I do know, that we are doing  
10 everything we can to bridge that gap and that  
11 disconnect, whether be coming in early -- There are  
12 teachers that come in -- School doesn't start until  
13 8:15. I see teachers coming in at 7:00 a.m. just to  
14 prepare for their day, just to set up, get  
15 themselves mentally prepared for their girls.

16 I see teachers staying after just to  
17 help their girls, helping them during their lunch  
18 periods, during their planning periods. I  
19 constantly do my best to just help girls with  
20 whatever I can.

21 And I see that the staff, they don't  
22 just work individually in their classrooms, but they  
23 come together as a team. There is constant  
24 collaboration every day going on. I can go into any



1 classroom. Being the music teacher, I see 468  
2 students every single week, 468. And within every  
3 single classroom I know how they operate because  
4 there is that open line of communication.

5 I am comfortable talking to the school  
6 leader. I'm comfortable talking with Ms. Thomas and  
7 Mr. Maitland. And we work as a team. We don't just  
8 work -- I don't just work myself as okay, I'm the  
9 music teacher, let me grade my lesson plans. I have  
10 so many people to back me up to help me with what I  
11 need help with. And that's what I love about Reach.

12 The other thing I love about Reach is  
13 we don't just teach our girls all academics. We  
14 focus on things that they will use in their lives,  
15 such as hygiene, such as just having your own  
16 personal empowerment, going home feeling empowered  
17 by your own self, not leaving school thinking oh, I  
18 didn't understand that one concept in school. We  
19 constantly tell them every day is a new day, and,  
20 you know, you start fresh. That's what I tell my  
21 girls every time they leave my classroom. And  
22 that's what I love about it. It's a safe  
23 environment where they can learn and where they can  
24 just come together and just grow as individuals.



1 MR. CARWELL: Thank you, Ms. Espiritu.  
2 Ms. Daye?

3 MS. DAYE: Hi, everyone. Good evening.  
4 This is Deaga. I will set her up here. This is  
5 Deaga, and Deaga is in the kindergarten. I'm not  
6 going to do is a big speech, but I just wanted to  
7 say I love the teachers, I love the staff, I love  
8 the sisterhood with all the girls.

9 And this little one here, she is in  
10 kindergarten, so she is just starting out. But I  
11 want to keep Reach around forever until she gets in  
12 the eighth grade, because it's going to be exciting  
13 to me to see her excel as a young lady.

14 And she wants to sing something real  
15 quick. Ready?

16 (She sang a song on top of the table,  
17 "I'm A Believer.")

18 (Applause)

19 MR. CARWELL: Thank you, Ms. Daye. Mr.  
20 Rodney Sampson?

21 MR. SAMPSON: Yes. Yes. That flag  
22 right there is calling my name. I pledge allegiance  
23 to the flag of the United States of America and to  
24 the republic for which it stands, one nation under



1 God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.  
2 God bless you.

3 Yes, I raised my child since she was  
4 three months old. I got full custody of her. I  
5 didn't really have anybody, you know, (crying) um,  
6 (crying - daughter hugging)

7 I love Reach Academy. You know, they  
8 bridged the gap. I could say so much about them,  
9 about us. They helped me stay strong throughout  
10 everything.

11 And thank you all. Really. Thank you  
12 all. Thank you for having us. Thank you for  
13 keeping us, you know.

14 Um, I ran through a lot of trauma in my  
15 life. I lost my mom when I was 12. So she was  
16 murdered. Her name was Christine Sammons. I named  
17 my daughter after her, and she is the apple of my  
18 eye. She is.

19 And I thank you all for being a part of  
20 me, because I couldn't do it all by myself. But  
21 thank you all for helping me stay strong. Thank  
22 you, Reach. Thank you. Thank you all.

23 (Applause)

24 MR. CARWELL: Ms. Conrad?





1 MS. CONRAD: My name is Beth Conrad.  
2 I'm a parent at Reach Academy for Girls. I have two  
3 girls at Reach Academy. They have both been there  
4 since kindergarten. My oldest has been there since  
5 day one of Reach Academy.

6 And we really -- Sorry for starting off  
7 with that! (Laughter) I was planning to cry  
8 anyway, but this will probably be best.

9 We struggled with do we want to try a  
10 new school, you know, with our daughter, a school  
11 that's just starting out? And we kind of said it  
12 since kindergarten, you know, if we send her back to  
13 a feeder school, she'll catch up.

14 But we have been so pleased with Reach  
15 Academy for Girls. I can't -- like just what they  
16 finished kindergarten knowing amazes me. They are  
17 learning so much more than we did in kindergarten.  
18 They are learning what we learned in first grade in  
19 kindergarten and beyond. My daughter came out of  
20 kindergarten knowing how to multiply.

21 So one of the things we really like  
22 about Reach and that I tell people is that they  
23 really encourage each student to advance as far as  
24 they can. If they are above and beyond already,



1 they continue to encourage them to go further, not  
2 to just settle with this is what you need to know  
3 for this grade.

4 And students that are behind, they work  
5 with them individually to bring them up so that they  
6 are in a place of understanding. They will pair the  
7 students together to help each other.

8 They teach the whole child, preparing  
9 them to be leaders in society, to be confident,  
10 strong women, while caring about others around them.  
11 The girls are given opportunities outside of the  
12 normal classroom setting to expand their experience  
13 through sports, ballet, swimming, cooking classes,  
14 etiquette classes. There is always some new  
15 opportunity that they are offering after school to  
16 enrich the girls.

17 We love the small family atmosphere at  
18 the school. I know that when my girls walk down the  
19 hallway, they are known; that if something were to  
20 happen to them, they would be safe, because any  
21 teacher in that school would know who they were,  
22 where they were supposed to be, and how to help  
23 them, you know, that they wouldn't just be, "Oh,  
24 there's a kid out in the hall."



1                   They have taught my girls to have a  
2                   love for learning in a loving and caring  
3                   environment. We are so glad that we gave Reach a  
4                   chance four years ago. And we are only excited for  
5                   what the future holds.

6                   As a former art teacher, I spent my  
7                   share of time in different schools and have seen the  
8                   way different schools work. And I have never seen  
9                   the individual character of students done anywhere  
10                  near as well as Reach Academy for Girls. So I pray  
11                  that you will give us the opportunity to have  
12                  another five years and well beyond that. I have  
13                  another one coming, too. So thank you.

14                 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

15                 (Applause)

16                 MR. CARWELL: Ms. Ford?

17                 MS. FORD: I'm Deborah Ford. My  
18                 daughter is Makenzie. I'm no better right now.  
19                 (Crying) I have a little bit different of a story.  
20                 My daughter, um, (crying) started kindergarten like  
21                 this: She would attach herself to anyone in the  
22                 world that would possibly let her leave that  
23                 building because she did not want to be at school.

24                 Poor Ms. Kimble, every day for three or



1 four weeks, had this little girl, bright blonde  
2 hair, big brown eyes, just weeping every day. And  
3 then through patience, through time, through tough  
4 love, my daughter did it. She finished  
5 kindergarten, and she stood there at the talent show  
6 on the stage by herself and sang in front of a room  
7 no less than 200 or 300 people. Five years old, she  
8 stood there in her cute little pink outfit, singing  
9 at the top of her lungs. The little girl that she  
10 had become in that year was amazing.

11 Then the unthinkable happened where we  
12 heard rumors and some things. There were some  
13 concerns. And I panicked as a mom. She was my only  
14 at that time, and my little girl had to be at the  
15 best school and have the best things. And I  
16 panicked that Reach Academy was closing, and I moved  
17 her to the feeder school in our neighborhood.

18 She got to walk to school. She got to  
19 go with the neighborhood kids. And she really  
20 enjoyed walking to school and walking home from  
21 school. But that's all I ever heard about all day  
22 long for first grade and second grade, was walking.  
23 "I really love to be picked up when it rains. I  
24 really love to walk to school. I really love to



1 take the path."

2 Tell me more about the day. "Oh, it  
3 was all right."

4 "What did you do?"

5 "I don't know."

6 And something was changing. Something  
7 was happening with Makenzie. She didn't want to  
8 participate in after-school activities. She didn't  
9 want to go to evening activities.

10 And then her report cards were coming  
11 home and her interims. This was a bright little  
12 girl who was reading at the end of kindergarten -- I  
13 think we stopped tabulating at somewhere in the  
14 third-grade level or second-grade level at the end  
15 of kindergarten, full chapter books in a matter of  
16 days.

17 And somehow at the end of third grade  
18 she was reading the same level chapter books in  
19 about a week to two weeks. She was deteriorating.  
20 She was losing her skills.

21 We have this child who was advanced,  
22 who was performing so well -- not gifted. She was  
23 tested -- but doing well above the State  
24 requirements.



1                   And I went in, and I had a meeting at  
2                   her public school. And I said, "I have some  
3                   concerns. Makenzie is not the person she was when  
4                   she walked through the school two years ago. What  
5                   are the plans for next year?" And she said, "What  
6                   do you mean? She is above level. She is above the  
7                   bar of where she needs to be. There are no plans.  
8                   She is doing just fine."

9                   There was no notice that her numbers  
10                  had deteriorated, because she was above the State  
11                  requirement. There was no notice that she was  
12                  reading the same books, even though one of her  
13                  teachers actually had their master's in reading and  
14                  was actually a reading specialist.

15                 They didn't notice that she wasn't  
16                 completing her math homework assignments, because,  
17                 again, she was above the state minimum requirements.

18                 Now, I realize that Reach Academy is  
19                 struggling with scores in achieving the number that  
20                 the State deems is appropriate. But I don't think  
21                 it's appropriate to send a child to a school and  
22                 have them lose their skills and lose who they are.

23                 Makenzie is back at Reach and is doing  
24                 an amazing job. She is back on track to where she



1       should be. She is, you know, reaching for the  
2       stars, as she tells me every day, "I'm going to  
3       reach for the stars, Mom," right before she gets  
4       onto her bus. So excited.

5                   And if she didn't have a severe sprain,  
6       believe me, she would be here to tell you all. And  
7       I know Ms. Allen can attest about what Reach means  
8       to her. And she just wanted to make sure that you  
9       all knew that if you just took a minute and spent 15  
10      minutes or half a day in the school, you would  
11      understand why Reach is so important to all of us.  
12      Thank you.

13                   (Applause).

14                   MR. CARWELL: Alexandra --

15                   MS. CARDOSO: Cardoso.

16                   MR. CARWELL: Okay. Thank you.

17                   MS. CARDOSO: Exactly how it's spelled.

18      I am the sixth, seventh, and eighth leadership  
19      teacher. I am a new teacher and fresh out of grad  
20      school.

21                   And I walked into Reach, and I knew  
22      instantly that I was supposed to be there. I knew  
23      it. I was raised in an environment where I was  
24      pushed back because of my learning styles. And I



1 walk into Reach into their environment, and I  
2 instantly see that each individual student is being  
3 seen to their needs. They are not being ignored.  
4 They are being recognized.

5 Every single day we see other teachers  
6 from elementary coming into middle school, "Oh, do  
7 you know this, this, and this? How do you know  
8 them? Oh, we know all of the students. Everyone  
9 knows everybody."

10 And every teacher at Reach understands  
11 each individual student's needs and what we need to  
12 do as their staff, as their teachers, as their  
13 administrators to encourage them to keep pushing  
14 further.

15 They know me. They know my background.  
16 And they see me, and they say, "Well, you are really  
17 smart, Ms. Cardoso. You're really smart.  
18 Obviously, it's really easy for you." I'm like no.  
19 As a matter of fact, it takes hard work. And I give  
20 them a back story.

21 And they see you can come from the  
22 bottom, the literal bottom, and you can thrive if  
23 you just put your mind to it and if you stick to  
24 people who believe in you.





1                   At Reach, every single one of us  
2                   honestly -- it blows my mind every day how much we  
3                   care and put aside our differences, our problems, to  
4                   focus on them. We don't even focus on us. Every  
5                   single conversation that we have is centered around  
6                   them.

7                   Every -- like, honestly, it's like I go  
8                   home and I say, okay, you're not talking to your  
9                   colleagues, you're not talking to your coworkers.  
10                  All right. But I can't stop talking about it,  
11                  because I will have an issue with a student doing  
12                  one thing this one day, and later that day I will  
13                  have a conversation with them. And the next day,  
14                  it's like it never existed, because they take into  
15                  account that we respect them as people. They take  
16                  into account that we see them as young women and we  
17                  respect them in how they are going to grow. We know  
18                  their stages as they are developing, and we give  
19                  them what they need.

20                  We begin with a lot of scaffolding in  
21                  the elementary years. And as they move to middle  
22                  school, we start to believe that they are becoming  
23                  young women, that they are responsible enough to  
24                  take credit for their actions as long as we are



1 accountable for what they do and how we act as their  
2 teachers.

3 And I know I keep saying it's amazing.  
4 But everyone says, "Oh, would you ever -- like  
5 charter school, charter school." And I say charter  
6 school because I walk in, and Ms. Allen and  
7 Ms. Thomas, they gave me the utmost respect, and  
8 they trusted me to do what I needed to do. And they  
9 are there for me.

10 But the bottom line is they understand  
11 that my number one goal is the girls, and they also  
12 understand that every single day they are keeping me  
13 accountable, like, "How are the girls doing? How is  
14 it going in your classroom? The girls always talk  
15 about you."

16 I'm like, "Well, I always talk about  
17 them." It's not about me. It's about them every  
18 single day, and I wouldn't have it any other way. I  
19 couldn't imagine being anywhere else.

20 And everyone is like, "Oh, it's your  
21 first year. You say that." No. I seriously cannot  
22 imagine being anywhere else except at Reach Academy.  
23 It is the epitome of what an educator wants -- where  
24 they want to be. It's where, if I was a student



1 growing up in middle school, which I don't remember  
2 a single thing that I learned in middle school at  
3 all. I remember tie-dyed shirts. That's about it.

4 And now girls are going around, and  
5 they are telling other teachers, "Oh, remember what  
6 we did in Ms. Cardoso's class; oh, remember what we  
7 did in Ms. Chavone's class; oh, remember what we did  
8 in this and this and this." And I'm like I never  
9 remembered anything that I did in any of my classes,  
10 let alone did I talk to other students about what I  
11 did in other classes after the fact.

12 And they are spreading the joy. They  
13 are like -- they bring in new students like it's --  
14 you wouldn't even tell if we had new students. You  
15 wouldn't even tell, because the girls just bring  
16 them in. "Oh, I got this, Ms. C. I see so and so  
17 is dealing with this, so and so is dealing with  
18 this. I got this." I'm like okay. And I trust  
19 them to take the leadership role in helping those  
20 students and their peers move through a tough patch  
21 that I might not be able to help them with at that  
22 time.

23 It's amazing. I love it. And I do not  
24 want to be anywhere else, and I'm pretty positive



1 every single person in this room and everybody at  
2 Reach in the community of Reach would do anything to  
3 keep this school. Thank you.

4 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

5 (Applause)

6 MR. CARWELL: Rhonda --

7 MS. LAUGHMAN: Laughman.

8 MR. CARWELL: Laughman. Okay. Thank  
9 you.

10 MS. LAUGHMAN: Thank you very much for  
11 this opportunity. I'm a little different from  
12 everyone else here. I have been with Reach since  
13 the inception of the school. However, I was on a  
14 tertiary role, in a tertiary role. I worked for the  
15 Boys and Girls Club at the time, and I ran the  
16 after-school program.

17 And this is my second career. I'm one  
18 of the old timers in the school. And I got the  
19 chance to teach here. Before I started teaching, I  
20 did a lot of instituting all over to make sure I  
21 wanted to be with elementary school kids. I wanted  
22 to make sure I could be in that room all day with  
23 these kids and not go crazy. And I realized I did.  
24 And the only place I applied was to Reach, because



1       it was the only place I wanted to be.

2                       Now, I had been in Appoquinimink. I  
3       had been at Christina. I had been in Brandywine. I  
4       didn't want to be anywhere. I wanted to be at  
5       Reach. Ms. Allen impressed me so much when I met  
6       her. The job that the teachers did with these young  
7       ladies impressed me. I was fortunate enough that  
8       Ms. Allen gave me the opportunity to teach second  
9       grade at Reach. And I never looked back.

10                      Ms. Allen is an amazing school leader.  
11       I used to work in a totally different field, dealt  
12       with people left and right. I have never met a  
13       woman that gives as much and has a high -- holds  
14       herself to a high excellence as Ms. Allen does. I'm  
15       very lucky, and I feel very proud to work for her.

16                      My students are an amazing group of  
17       young ladies. And not only do we teach what these  
18       children need to learn in reading, math, arithmetic,  
19       whatever. We also teach them life lessons. Every  
20       one of my young ladies knows every day that I love  
21       them. They also know I might not appreciate some of  
22       their behaviors, but I still love them. A lot of  
23       them don't get that at home.

24                      They know it. They will tell you. I



1 am making them accountable for their actions. You  
2 don't lie, you don't cheat in Ms. Laughman's class,  
3 you don't steal. Every one of my kids will tell you  
4 that. That's all you have to do.

5 I look at one of them, and I say, "If  
6 you do the crime," and they will all look at me and  
7 say, "you do the time." These are second grade  
8 young ladies. They are not little girls, and they  
9 know that. They are learning what it's like to be a  
10 young person, not a child. And that is one lesson  
11 that I make sure these young ladies know. They  
12 don't always learn it at home.

13 Once again, I am privileged to work  
14 with the school. I am privileged to work with  
15 Ms. Allen. And yes, our test scores need to come  
16 up. I understand that. But these young ladies, a  
17 lot of them would be overlooked at the feeder  
18 schools. We take them into our hearts, and we do  
19 whatever we can to help them succeed.

20 I had a little girl today who was so  
21 excited because she understood place value, but was  
22 so upset because I wouldn't call on her. And I had  
23 to look at her. And I said, "Honey," which is her  
24 name -- (Laughter)-- I said, "Honey, I knew you knew



1 the answer. That's why I didn't call on you. I  
2 knew you knew it. I had to make sure these other  
3 girls did."

4 "Really, Ms. Laughman?"

5 "Well, yeah!" You would have thought I  
6 gave her a million dollars. I didn't call on her  
7 because I knew she knew. This is a young lady who  
8 doesn't have a lot of success, but I made her feel  
9 so important today. And she loves to try math.

10 So that's what we are doing for our  
11 students. And I'm just one of the many. I'm  
12 nothing special at Reach. I'm just one of the many.

13 And I hope you give us a chance to go  
14 forward with that, because I feel we could do so  
15 much good in this community. I never thought I  
16 would be at an all-girls school, never. Here I am,  
17 and here I need to stay. And you need to let us  
18 stay open. I beg of you that. Thank you.

19 (Applause)

20 MR. CARWELL: Can I just take a brief  
21 pause for five minutes? I know people have been  
22 sitting here for awhile. If you need to use the  
23 restroom, it's just right down the hall. So just a  
24 five minute recess.



1 (A recess was taken.)

2 MR. CARWELL: Excuse me, everyone. I  
3 am going to call the hearing back to order. I also  
4 wanted to clarify, too, we wanted the school  
5 representatives to have an opportunity to speak  
6 first. I don't believe we actually followed that.  
7 So Reverend Casson.

8 REVEREND CASSON: Actually, I wasn't  
9 planning to speak tonight.

10 MR. CARWELL: Okay.

11 REVEREND CASSON: There are plenty of  
12 other great speakers here.

13 MR. CARWELL: Okay. I just wanted to  
14 clarify.

15 REVEREND CASSON: There is a board  
16 member, I think, who signed up. So I think they are  
17 doing fine.

18 MR. CARWELL: Excellent. Okay. And we  
19 are going to start to show the time. I will hold it  
20 up to help folks out. So the very next person is  
21 Danny Schweers.

22 MR. SCHWEERS: Yes. Thank you for  
23 hearing us. My name is Danny Schweers. I am the  
24 mayor of the village of Arden, Delaware.





1                   We are not like other communities in  
2                   the State of Delaware, other municipalities. We  
3                   were formed as the utopian community in 1900 on the  
4                   utopian principles of Henry George and his economic  
5                   philosophy, which still holds forth. All our taxes  
6                   are based on square footage of land.

7                   It's a very active community. It's  
8                   really tight. We put on the Arden Fair over Labor  
9                   Day weekend. We have 400 volunteers come out to  
10                  work those booths.

11                  This is my third year, starting my  
12                  third year on the board of Reach Academy for Girls.  
13                  This is not a community -- and I think of it as a  
14                  community -- it's not a school like other schools in  
15                  the state. It is a community of people, of parents,  
16                  students, teachers, and we can throw the board  
17                  members in there too.

18                  I see it from a distance. When I first  
19                  came on, what impressed me was -- When I first came  
20                  on, things were in chaos. The State had asked --  
21                  well, I think they had recommended that the school  
22                  be shut down. The parents came here and said, "No,  
23                  this is not what we want to do." And that continues  
24                  to be the case. It's what so impresses me, that we



1 have been going through change, change, change.

2 I feel like we are just on the start of  
3 really having things settled in terms of location,  
4 teaching staff, administration staff. It's so great  
5 to have you, Dean, on board here. And other staff  
6 members, too, that we haven't had.

7 I see great things starting to happen.  
8 I feel that this year will be our first year having  
9 a normal year, and I so look forward to it. I look  
10 forward to what the State will recommend. Thank  
11 you.

12 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

13 (Applause)

14 MR. CARWELL: Daria Ward?

15 MS. WARD: That's me. Hello. My name  
16 is Daria Ward, and this is my fourth year at Reach  
17 Academy. Just as Alex, I also was right out of  
18 college when I started at Reach.

19 And I love Reach Academy. I know I  
20 only have a minute or so to speak, but I could go on  
21 and on and on about Reach Academy.

22 MR. CARWELL: Great.

23 (Laughter)

24 MS. WARD: My involvement more so is



1 with the middle school girls. And I watch them grow  
2 from young ladies into women.

3 Last week, actually two of the girls I  
4 graduated last year, they came back, and we actually  
5 had a couple girls that have come back over the  
6 summer. They just love Reach Academy, the bond that  
7 we built with them. I still get girls that call me  
8 all the time that just basically say, "You know  
9 what? We really appreciate you. Thank you for  
10 everything that you have done, the time you have  
11 taken out."

12 Because I never leave Reach until 6:00,  
13 6:30, 7:00. But I just really love Reach, and I  
14 really hope that it can continue to stay opened for  
15 another five years. Um, that's it.

16 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

17 (Applause)

18 MR. CARWELL: Jennifer Wahl?

19 MS. WAHL: That's me. Hi. Good  
20 evening. Thank you so much for hearing us this  
21 evening. Where to begin? So much has already been  
22 said, and it's just really hard to come after  
23 everything that has already been said.

24 But I will say this: You know there is



1 a way to do things, and then there is the "Reach  
2 Way" to do things. And, honestly, I didn't really  
3 get the "Reach Way" until this summer. And as I  
4 look out here, there are so many of my colleagues  
5 here. And, in particular, Ms. Banks, this summer  
6 she held a summer institute, and from that period  
7 all of the staff was in for Reach Academy.

8 We have all been behind this move. And  
9 from day one we have all been in our classrooms  
10 from -- what was it, the middle of July? -- day  
11 after day getting our classrooms set up for first  
12 day of school, for our students.

13 We are here early. We stay late. And,  
14 by the way, mine was the green room that you guys  
15 saw on the video. (Laughter) That was my room.

16 We just all love Reach Academy.  
17 Teaching is what we do. And our girls are our  
18 loves. We love every single one of them.

19 I started out in second grade, and I  
20 teach first grade now. I have students that I  
21 taught when I was in second grade that still come  
22 see me every morning to say, "Hi, Mrs. Wall.  
23 How are you doing today?" And just throughout the  
24 hallway.



1 I go over to the middle school  
2 building. Middle school girls come up and say hi to  
3 me, give me hugs. And I have been teaching first  
4 and second grade, not middle school.

5 It's our way. It's what we do. And we  
6 would like to continue what we do.

7 Test scores, they paint a small picture  
8 of Reach Academy. What you see out here paints the  
9 rest of it. And I hope we can continue that. Thank  
10 you.

11 (Applause)

12 MR. CARWELL: Thank you. Jean Sampson?

13 DEAN SAMPSON: (Small child) I have  
14 been here at Reach Academy for four years, and I  
15 love all the after-school activities, and I love  
16 Reach Academy.

17 MR. CARWELL: Thank you.

18 (Applause)

19 MR. CARWELL: Daniel Wilson?

20 MR. WILSON: Oh, I thought I was at the  
21 end. (Laughter) They must have skipped a couple  
22 names, but it's cool. (Laughter)

23 I stand before you all elated just to  
24 be here to speak on behalf of Reach Academy. We



1 have been through so much. And this is my first  
2 year here. I'm the behavior interventionist here.

3 A symbol here in this room is the voice  
4 of Reach Academy. Sitting behind me is the voice of  
5 Reach Academy. But sitting in front of me are the  
6 people who can silence the voice of Reach Academy.

7 I believe it was Dr. Martin Luther King  
8 who said, "The ultimate measure of a man is not  
9 where he stands in his moments of comfort and  
10 convenience, but where he stands at his time of  
11 challenges and controversy."

12 So I say that to say this: To speak to  
13 the character of our school leader, when the school  
14 was first projected, why didn't she leave? And to  
15 answer your question -- I'm with you -- to answer  
16 your question as to why she didn't leave, because  
17 there is a Bone Quicha in Riverside who has no mom,  
18 who has no dad, who is living with grand mom,  
19 struggling, but can't wait to get back to Reach  
20 Academy because of what we have to offer at Reach  
21 Academy.

22 And I'm also reminded of a Bible  
23 passage that says, "The battle is not given to the  
24 swift nor the strong but to those who can endure."



1       So it does not matter how strong we are all  
2       together. If we can't endure another five more  
3       years, how good will we not be? Thank you.

4                       (Applause)

5               MR. CARWELL: Thank you, sir. In terms  
6       of the sign-ups for the speaker list, Mr. Wilson was  
7       the last one. Are there any other folks who desire  
8       to speak tonight? Would you please sign on the  
9       sign-in sheet?

10              MS. ALLEN: Mr. Carwell, there is one  
11       more right here.

12              MR. CARWELL: All right. Next is Maria  
13       Hazlett?

14              MS. BANKS: Banks.

15              MR. CARWELL: I couldn't read your  
16       handwriting. I'm sorry.

17              MS. BANKS: I did that purposely. I  
18       was thinking I could get a pass. So are you timing?  
19       (Laughter)

20              MR. CARWELL: Yes.

21              MS. BANKS: Okay, I need five minutes.  
22       I just want to let you know. Okay? I wasn't going  
23       to speak, because they needed to speak. Because my  
24       job is to be in the background, and I love the



1 background.

2 And in the background you can see  
3 things. You can see things that people can't see  
4 with the naked eye. So some things that you can't  
5 see with a naked eye: You can't see the texts that  
6 we have amongst ourselves on a daily basis that say  
7 "donuts in the refrigerator."

8 You can't see the texts that say, "Who  
9 has this book? Who has this idea?" You can't see  
10 the text that says, "I won't be there until 8:15.  
11 Can you take my post?" You can't see the text that  
12 says, "We all have a problem. Who can come to the  
13 meeting?" And everybody appears.

14 What you can't see with the naked eye,  
15 you can't see people who come to work -- they were  
16 mistaken -- 6:45 every single day. First, the green  
17 truck arrives. And after the green truck, the red  
18 van. And after the red van, the red Pontiac. And  
19 after the red Pontiac, the other red car, and then  
20 the Jeep. Then the two gray beat-up cars, because  
21 they are new, they don't have any money, and they  
22 just got there.

23 You can't see that they leave not at  
24 6:00, not at 7:00, but 7:30, and the last call is





1 8:00. And sometimes it's them, and sometimes it's  
2 me.

3 What you can't see, you can't see  
4 teachers meeting every single Tuesday and Wednesday  
5 to talk about the data that they have collected and  
6 the numbers that they are crunching in order that  
7 every girl at Reach Academy moves forward.

8 What you can't see, a cohort of eighth  
9 grade girls who are writing applications to high  
10 schools now who know that at Reach Academy you will  
11 not go to a mediocre high school; you will go to the  
12 top tier, and we will do everything we possibly can  
13 to get you there.

14 The things you can't see that are going  
15 on at Reach Academy are the things that make Reach  
16 Academy special. And, to close, I'm the type of  
17 person that does not give my heart easily. It's not  
18 going to happen. But these people have won my  
19 heart.

20 I'm asking you on behalf of these  
21 people who really have not had five years -- you are  
22 mistaken in your calculation. They came together  
23 two and a half years ago. It would be wrong of any  
24 committee, because I sit on many, to calculate their



1 time together as a five-year span -- stop that,  
2 because I will hit you later (Laughter - speaking to  
3 Mr. Carwell who is holding up time card) -- a  
4 five-year span when they have really only been  
5 together for two and a half years.

6 So now I kind of figure they are owed  
7 three more, because in that three we are only  
8 beginning to show you what we can do. It has begun,  
9 and we are proud to say that we are all in.

10 (Applause)

11 MR. CARWELL: Ms. Thomas?

12 MS. THOMAS: I wasn't going to speak  
13 either, because at least John has heard me speak  
14 before. And typically it's about the finances of  
15 Reach, and we all know what the financials are. I  
16 mean this committee probably knows what the finances  
17 are.

18 So I'm going to speak about something  
19 different. I'm going to speak from the heart. I  
20 was the first employee hired at Reach Academy for  
21 Girls, and I took the position as a job.

22 I now sit before you as Reach Academy  
23 is, with the exception of my husband and my kids, is  
24 my life. As Mr. Maitland said, I bleed pink. I'm



1       there all the time, which is not so good for my  
2       husband and my kids sometimes. But I'm there not  
3       because I have to be. I'm not there because  
4       sometimes they need me and sometimes they don't.  
5       I'm there because I want to be. I want those girls,  
6       along with all these people behind me, we want those  
7       girls to succeed.

8                       And I heard earlier Mr. Meece from  
9       Newark Charter say that they have a waiting list of  
10      2,000 girls. Those 2,000 girls have to go  
11      somewhere -- or not girls -- 2,000 kids. They have  
12      to go somewhere. So those kids who are not accepted  
13      to the Newark Charters of the world, they come to  
14      us. We embrace them. We teach them.

15                      We don't not only teach them -- our  
16      wonderful teachers teach them the academics, but  
17      they teach them about life. We, the administrative  
18      staff, teach them about life. We do girl  
19      empowerment. We do life empowerment. Because, as  
20      everyone has said here, a lot of these girls don't  
21      get it at home.

22                      So that's what they get from us, which  
23      takes a little bit longer sometimes with the  
24      academics, because we are starting from the bottom,



1 and we have to get those girls that came in maybe in  
2 second grade but came in on a kindergarten level to  
3 the level that they are supposed to be, and that  
4 sometimes takes longer.

5 And that's why I think our scores don't  
6 look the best. But if you give us the time to get  
7 those scores where they need to be, I'm sure that we  
8 can do it. We can't do it without your help. We  
9 can try. We can bleed pink. We can be here. We  
10 can cry. We can tell you all the stories that I'm  
11 sure you have heard from other schools. I am sure  
12 you have heard all of these things, because teachers  
13 are grossly underpaid and do so much, all teachers  
14 do.

15 But at Reach Academy, it's a family,  
16 and it's sometimes a harder job. But we are all in,  
17 as they all say. But we need the time to be all in.  
18 We need the time to do the things that we are  
19 promising you right now. Thank you.

20 (Applause)

21 MR. CARWELL: Thank you. Is there  
22 anyone else who desires to speak?

23 MS. ALLEN: You guys are holding your  
24 breaths, aren't you? (Laughter)



1 REVEREND CASSON: Excuse me. I will  
2 wrap it up.

3 MR. CARWELL: Sign in.

4 MR. CASSON: You haven't started the  
5 timer yet, have you?

6 MR. CARWELL: No, sir.

7 MR. CASSON: This won't take long. I  
8 just want to say, first of all, to all of you how  
9 proud I am of you. As the president of the board of  
10 Reach Academy, I am just so overwhelmingly proud  
11 tonight of the presentation that you have made  
12 before the Accountability Committee hearing. You  
13 really are spectacular. You have told the story  
14 better than we could have, and it's just wonderful.

15 And I do want to say this: And I don't  
16 say this just to be saying nice things. But we have  
17 had the benefit of, throughout the very short time  
18 that has been alluded to, of the Charter School  
19 Office and resources, resource persons from the  
20 Department of Education. We really do have to give  
21 thanks for especially since the probationary period  
22 and support that really has come to Reach Academy as  
23 a result of this.

24 And then I just thought I must say that



1 we don't want you to waste those resources, that we  
2 really -- we need this time. We are now in a  
3 facility that makes it possible, first of all, for  
4 learning to take place. It wasn't really possible  
5 before, for all kinds of reasons.

6 Secondly, as has already been said,  
7 it's only been since the summer really of 2011 that  
8 Reach has really gotten started. Before that time,  
9 all bets are off, as most of us know.

10 So this is a new beginning, a new  
11 opportunity for what I know will become one of the  
12 finest schools in Delaware. There is no question  
13 about it. And as a girl's school, we are already  
14 beginning to demonstrate. I hope that we will be  
15 able even pictorially and graphically to  
16 demonstrate how well we are really doing. But when  
17 you recognize how far we have to go with the  
18 students we receive, you will understand how far we  
19 have to go.

20 One more final thing: It has been  
21 spoken a lot in this state by the Governor, by the  
22 Secretary of Education, by Art Duncan, by all kinds  
23 of people, that early learning is essential for  
24 effective education. And I agree.



1                   We have actually begun talking about  
2                   the possibility of even at some point adding an  
3                   early learning center as apart of our own strategy.

4                   But the fact is, if that is true, and  
5                   if you really lose students if they don't have that,  
6                   then I would tell you that over nine-tenths of our  
7                   students have not had an early learning experience.  
8                   And I think that's something that has to be taken  
9                   into account, that we are having to begin really  
10                  from below the beginning with a lot of our students.  
11                  It's not to put them down any. They are the product  
12                  of an educational system that is still broken in  
13                  many ways.

14                  And so I'm urging you, as the  
15                  educators, as the system here to understand the  
16                  issues from our perspective, to give us the  
17                  opportunity to become what we know we can become.

18                  You will hear about this in time, but  
19                  already this year the trajectory is upwards in terms  
20                  of academic achievement in our school, and it's only  
21                  going to continue to go up.

22                  I thank all of you. I thank you for  
23                  listening to all of us. Again, thank you for the  
24                  support that you have given us, and we need that



1 support to continue.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes, we do.

3 (Applause)

4 MR. CARWELL: Is there anyone else who  
5 desires to speak? If not, I want to thank you all  
6 for participating this evening. The Accountability  
7 Committee will consider your comments. In addition,  
8 the Secretary will consider your comments in his  
9 decision, which is then communicated to the State  
10 Board. This hearing is now closed. Thank you.

11 (Concluded at 6:59 p.m.)  
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1 CERTIFICATE

2 I, Lorena J. Hartnett, a Notary Public and  
3 Registered Professional Reporter, do hereby certify that  
4 the foregoing is an accurate and complete transcription  
5 of the proceeding held at the time and place stated  
6 herein, and that the said proceeding was recorded by me  
7 and then reduced to typewriting under my direction, and  
8 constitutes a true record of the testimony given by said  
9 witnesses.

10 I further certify that I am not a relative,  
11 employee, or attorney of any of the parties or a  
12 relative or employee of either counsel, and that I am in  
13 no way interested directly or indirectly in this action.

14 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my  
15 hand and affixed my seal of office on this 30th day of  
16 October 2013.

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19  
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22

23 Lorena J. Hartnett  
24 Registered Professional Reporter



A			B	
	5:2 8:8 18:13, 14 28:6,8 31:3,4 43:1	16:10 18:24 22:3 23:23 25:10,16		<b>bets (1)</b> 42:9 <b>better (4)</b> 7:2 8:24 15:18 41:14
<b>able (3)</b> 3:11 23:21 42:15	<b>adding (1)</b> 43:2	<b>America (1)</b> 11:23	<b>back (12)</b> 7:18 10:10 13:12 18:23,24 19:24 20:20 25:9 28:3 31:4,5 34:19	<b>beyond (3)</b> 13:19, 24 15:12 <b>Bible (1)</b> 34:22 <b>big (2)</b> 11:6 16:2 <b>bit (3)</b> 4:22 15:19 39:23
<b>above (6)</b> 13:24 17:23 18:6,6, 10,17	<b>addition (2)</b> 2:23 44:7	<b>amongst (1)</b> 36:6	<b>background (4)</b> 20:15 35:24 36:1,2	<b>black (2)</b> 6:7,9 <b>bleed (3)</b> 7:16 38:24 40:9
<b>absolutely (2)</b> 4:9 8:10	<b>additional (1)</b> 5:18	<b>apart (1)</b> 43:3	<b>ballet (1)</b> 14:13	<b>bless (1)</b> 12:2 <b>blink (1)</b> 8:11
<b>academically (2)</b> 7:4 43:20	<b>administration (1)</b> 30:4	<b>appears (1)</b> 36:13	<b>Banks (5)</b> 32:5 35:14,14,17,21	<b>blonde (1)</b> 16:1 <b>blows (1)</b> 21:2
<b>academics (3)</b> 10:13 39:16, 24	<b>administrative (1)</b> 39:17	<b>Applause (14)</b> 11:18 12:23 15:15 19:13 24:5 27:19 30:13 31:17 33:11,18 35:4 38:10 40:20 44:3	<b>beat-up (1)</b> 36:20	<b>Board (8)</b> 2:14 3:14 28:15 29:12,16 30:5 41:9 44:10
<b>Academy (38)</b> 2:8 5:5,8,10 12:7 13:2,3,5,15 15:10 16:16 18:18 22:22 29:12 30:17, 19,21 31:6 32:7,16 33:8, 14,16,24 34:4, 5,6,20,21 37:7,10,15,16 38:20,22 40:15 41:10,22	<b>advance (1)</b> 13:23	<b>apple (1)</b> 12:17	<b>become (4)</b> 16:10 42:11 43:17,17	<b>bond (1)</b> 31:6 <b>Bone (1)</b> 34:17 <b>book (1)</b> 36:9 <b>books (3)</b> 17:15, 18 18:12
<b>advanced (1)</b> 17:21	<b>after-school (3)</b> 17:8 24:16 33:15	<b>application (1)</b> 2:9	<b>becoming (1)</b> 21:22	<b>booths (1)</b> 29:10
<b>afterward (1)</b> 5:11	<b>again (3)</b> 18:17 26:13 43:23	<b>applications (1)</b> 37:9	<b>beg (1)</b> 27:18	<b>both (1)</b> 13:3
<b>ago (3)</b> 15:4 18:4 37:23	<b>agree (1)</b> 42:24	<b>applied (1)</b> 24:24	<b>begin (3)</b> 21:20 31:21 43:9	<b>bottom (4)</b> 20:22, 22 22:10 39:24
<b>Alex (1)</b> 30:17	<b>afterward (1)</b> 5:11	<b>appointed (1)</b> 2:5	<b>beginning (5)</b> 3:10 38:8 42:10,14 43:10	<b>boys (2)</b> 7:1 24:15
<b>Alexandra (1)</b> 19:14	<b>again (3)</b> 18:17 26:13 43:23	<b>Appoquinimink (1)</b> 25:2	<b>begun (2)</b> 38:8 43:1	<b>Brandywine (1)</b> 25:3
<b>allegiance (1)</b> 11:22	<b>ago (3)</b> 15:4 18:4 37:23	<b>appropriate (2)</b> 18:20,21	<b>behalf (3)</b> 5:7 33:24 37:20	<b>breaks (1)</b> 7:17 <b>breaths (1)</b> 40:24
<b>ALLEN (19)</b> 3:20, 23 4:6,9 5:4,4, 17,19 7:7 8:21 19:7 22:6 25:5,8, 10,14 26:15 35:10 40:23	<b>Alex (1)</b> 30:17	<b>Arden (2)</b> 28:24 29:8	<b>behavior (1)</b> 34:2	<b>bridge (1)</b> 9:10 <b>bridged (1)</b> 12:8
<b>account (3)</b> 21:15,16 43:9	<b>all-girls (1)</b> 27:16	<b>arithmetic (1)</b> 25:18	<b>behaviors (1)</b> 25:22	<b>brief (2)</b> 5:20 27:20
<b>Accountability (5)</b> 2:11,16,24 41:12 44:6	<b>allowing (1)</b> 7:9	<b>around (4)</b> 11:11 14:10 21:5 23:4	<b>behind (4)</b> 14:4 32:8 34:4 39:6	<b>bright (3)</b> 6:15 16:1 17:11
<b>accountable (3)</b> 22:1,13 26:1	<b>alluded (1)</b> 41:18	<b>arrives (1)</b> 36:17	<b>Believer (1)</b> 11:17	<b>bring (3)</b> 14:5 23:13,15
<b>achievement (1)</b> 43:20	<b>alone (1)</b> 23:10	<b>art (3)</b> 6:22 15:6 42:22	<b>below (1)</b> 43:10	<b>broken (1)</b> 43:12
<b>achieving (2)</b> 6:20 18:19	<b>along (1)</b> 39:6	<b>aside (1)</b> 21:3	<b>benefit (1)</b> 41:17	<b>brown (1)</b> 16:2
<b>act (1)</b> 22:1	<b>always (5)</b> 6:15 14:14 22:14, 16 26:12	<b>assignments (1)</b> 18:16	<b>best (6)</b> 7:20 9:19 13:8 16:15,15 40:6	<b>build (1)</b> 7:18
<b>actions (2)</b> 21:24 26:1	<b>amazes (1)</b> 13:16	<b>Associate (1)</b> 2:3	<b>Beth (1)</b> 13:1	<b>building (4)</b> 6:14,
<b>active (1)</b> 29:7	<b>amazing (6)</b>	<b>atmosphere (2)</b> 7:24 14:17		
<b>activities (3)</b> 17:8, 9 33:15		<b>attach (1)</b> 15:21		
<b>actually (10)</b> 4:22		<b>attest (1)</b> 19:7		
		<b>awhile (1)</b> 27:22		

18 15:23 33:2 built (1) 31:7 bus (1) 19:4 business (1) 3:1	<b>CARWELL (43)</b> 2:1,3 3:21 4:3,12 5:13, 17 7:7 9:2 11:1,19 12:24 15:14,16 19:14,16 24:4, 6,8 27:20 28:2,10,13,18 30:12,14,22 31:16,18 33:12,17,19 35:5,10,12,15, 20 38:3,11 40:21 41:3,6 44:4	8:2 12:3 14:8 17:21 18:21 26:10 33:13 children (2) 8:14 25:18 Christina (1) 25:3 Christine (1) 12:16 clarify (2) 28:4,14 class (4) 8:15 23:6,7 26:2 classes (4) 14:13, 14 23:9,11 classroom (7) 7:21,21 10:1, 3,21 14:12 22:14 classrooms (3) 9:22 32:9,11 clearly (1) 3:9 close (1) 37:16 closed (1) 44:10 closing (1) 16:16 Club (1) 24:15 coach (1) 7:17 cohort (1) 37:8 collaboration (1) 9:24 colleagues (2) 21:9 32:4 collected (1) 37:5 college (1) 30:18 comfort (1) 34:9 comfortable (2) 10:5,6 coming (5) 9:11, 13 15:13 17:10 20:6 comments (7) 2:15 3:15,19 4:15 5:18 44:7,8 committed (1) 6:9 Committee (6) 2:11,17 37:24 38:16 41:12 44:7 Committee's (1)	2:24 communicated (1) 44:9 communication (1) 10:4 communities (1) 29:1 community (7) 24:2 27:15 29:3,7,13,14, 15 completely (1) 8:7 completing (1) 18:16 concept (1) 10:18 concerns (2) 16:13 18:3 Concluded (1) 44:11 conduct (1) 2:6 confident (1) 14:9 Conrad (3) 12:24 13:1,1 consider (2) 44:7, 8 constant (1) 9:23 constantly (2) 9:19 10:19 continue (7) 7:4 14:1 31:14 33:6,9 43:21 44:1 continues (1) 29:23 controversy (1) 34:11 convenience (1) 34:10 conversation (2) 21:5,13 cooking (1) 14:13 cool (1) 33:22 couple (2) 31:5 33:21 court (2) 3:7,10 coworkers (1) 21:9 crazy (1) 24:23	credit (1) 21:24 crime (1) 26:6 crunching (1) 37:6 cry (2) 13:7 40:10 crying (4) 12:5,6 15:19,20 cue (2) 3:18 5:1 culture (1) 8:12 custody (1) 12:4 cute (1) 16:8
<b>C</b>				<b>D</b>
calculate (1) 37:24 calculation (1) 37:22 Calendar (1) 3:3 call (6) 26:22 27:1,6 28:3 31:7 36:24 calling (1) 11:22 came (9) 13:19 29:19,19,22 31:4,5 37:22 40:1,2 can (36) 3:8,18 5:2,14 6:10 8:23,24 9:10, 20,24 10:23, 23 13:24 19:7 20:21,22 26:19 27:20 29:16 31:14 33:9 34:6,24 36:2,3,11,12 37:12 38:8 40:8,9,9,10, 10 43:17 car (1) 36:19 card (1) 38:3 CARDOSO (4) 19:15,15,17 20:17 Cardoso's (1) 23:6 cards (1) 17:10 care (6) 6:18 7:13,22,23 8:13 21:3 career (1) 24:17 careers (1) 7:5 caring (2) 14:10 15:2 cars (1) 36:20	case (2) 3:17 29:24 Casson (7) 28:7, 8,11,15 41:1, 4,7 catch (1) 13:13 center (1) 43:3 centered (1) 21:5 certainly (3) 5:6 6:17 7:2 challenges (1) 34:11 chance (3) 15:4 24:19 27:13 change (5) 8:7,9 30:1,1,1 changing (1) 17:6 chaos (1) 29:20 chapter (2) 17:15, 18 character (2) 15:9 34:13 Charter (10) 2:4, 9,10,24 4:14 22:5,5,5 39:9 41:18 Charters (1) 39:13 Chavone's (1) 23:7 cheat (1) 26:2 child (8) 6:24			dad (1) 34:18 daily (1) 36:6 dance (1) 6:22 Daniel (1) 33:19 Danny (2) 28:21, 23 Daria (2) 30:14, 16 data (2) 8:1 37:5 date (2) 2:19 3:5 daughter (9) 8:3, 10 12:6,17 13:10,19 15:18,20 16:4 day (29) 6:17 8:8,18 9:14, 24 10:19,19 13:5 15:24 16:2,21 17:2 19:2,10 20:5 21:2,12,12,13 22:12,18 24:22 25:20 29:9 32:9,10, 11,12 36:16 Daye (3) 11:2,3, 19 days (1) 17:16 Deaga (3) 11:4, 5,5 dealing (2) 23:17, 17 dealt (1) 25:11 Dean (2) 30:5

33:13 Deborah (1) 15:17 decision (1) 44:9 declare (1) 2:1 deems (1) 18:20 Delaware (4) 2:21 28:24 29:2 42:12 demonstrate (2) 42:14,16 Department (4) 2:4,14 3:1 41:20 desire (2) 4:15 35:7 desires (3) 4:16 40:22 44:5 deteriorated (1) 18:10 deteriorating (1) 17:19 developing (1) 21:18 differences (1) 21:3 different (7) 7:11 15:7,8,19 24:11 25:11 38:19 dinner (1) 6:11 disconnect (2) 9:8, 11 distance (1) 29:18 dollars (1) 27:6 done (2) 15:9 31:10 donuts (1) 36:7 down (5) 7:17 14:18 27:23 29:22 43:11 Dr (1) 34:7 Duncan (1) 42:22 during (2) 9:17, 18	earlier (1) 39:8 early (5) 9:11 32:13 42:23 43:3,7 easily (1) 37:17 easy (1) 20:18 eat (1) 6:11 economic (1) 29:4 educate (1) 8:16 Education (10) 2:3,5,6,14,15 3:13,14 41:20 42:22,24 educational (1) 43:12 Education's (1) 3:1 educator (1) 22:23 educators (4) 7:18 8:13,17 43:15 effective (1) 42:24 eighth (4) 7:5 11:12 19:18 37:8 either (1) 38:13 elated (1) 33:23 electronic (1) 3:15 elementary (3) 20:6 21:21 24:21 else (9) 4:16,17 9:9 22:19,22 23:24 24:12 40:22 44:4 e-mail (1) 3:23 embrace (1) 39:14 employee (1) 38:20 empowered (1) 10:16 empowerment (3) 10:16 39:19, 19 encourage (3) 13:23 14:1 20:13	end (4) 17:12, 14,17 33:21 endure (2) 34:24 35:2 enjoyed (1) 16:20 enough (2) 21:23 25:7 enrich (1) 14:16 environment (4) 10:23 15:3 19:23 20:1 epitome (1) 22:23 especially (1) 41:21 ESPIRITU (3) 9:4, 4 11:1 essential (1) 42:23 etiquette (1) 14:14 even (7) 8:11 18:12 21:4 23:14,15 42:15 43:2 evening (7) 2:1 5:7 11:3 17:9 31:20,21 44:6 everybody (3) 20:9 24:1 36:13 everyone (8) 5:9 11:3 20:8 22:4,20 24:12 28:2 39:20 exact (2) 9:6,6 Exactly (1) 19:17 excel (1) 11:13 excellence (1) 25:14 Excellent (1) 28:18 except (3) 6:19, 20 22:22 exception (1) 38:23 excited (3) 15:4 19:4 26:21 exciting (1) 11:12	Excuse (2) 28:2 41:1 Exhibit (3) 3:18 4:1,2 existed (1) 21:14 expand (1) 14:12 experience (2) 14:12 43:7 eye (5) 8:11 12:18 36:4,5, 14 eyes (1) 16:2	28:6 29:18,19 30:8 32:11,20 33:3 34:1,14 36:16 38:20 41:8 42:3 five (8) 15:12 16:7 27:21,24 31:15 35:2,21 37:21 five-year (2) 38:1, 4 flag (2) 11:21,23 focus (3) 10:14 21:4,4 folks (2) 28:20 35:7 followed (1) 28:6 following (1) 4:13 footage (1) 29:6 Ford (3) 15:16, 17,17 forever (1) 11:11 formed (1) 29:3 former (1) 15:6 forth (1) 29:5 fortunate (1) 25:7 forward (5) 7:14 27:14 30:9,10 37:7 four (3) 15:4 16:1 33:14 fourth (1) 30:16 fresh (2) 10:20 19:19 front (2) 16:6 34:5 full (2) 12:4 17:15 Further (3) 3:4 14:1 20:14 future (1) 15:5
<b>E</b>			<b>F</b>	
			facility (1) 42:3 fact (3) 20:19 23:11 43:4 Fair (1) 29:8 family (3) 6:10 14:17 40:15 far (3) 13:23 42:17,18 faster (1) 7:1 feeder (3) 13:13 16:17 26:17 feel (5) 25:15 27:8,14 30:2,8 feeling (1) 10:16 few (3) 5:11,19, 20 field (1) 25:11 figure (1) 38:6 filed (1) 2:8 final (2) 2:16 42:20 finances (2) 38:14,16 financials (1) 38:15 fine (3) 4:6 18:8 28:17 finest (1) 42:12 finished (2) 13:16 16:4 First (19) 4:13 5:2,3 13:18 16:22 22:21	
			<b>G</b>	
				gap (2) 9:10 12:8 gave (4) 15:3 22:7 25:8 27:6

George (1) 29:4 gets (2) 11:11 19:3 gifted (1) 17:22 girl (8) 6:24 16:1,9,14 17:12 26:20 37:7 39:18 Girls (43) 2:8 5:5 6:13 7:2,3 9:15,17,19 10:13,21 11:8 13:2,3,15 14:11,16,18 15:1,10 22:11, 13,14 23:4,15 24:15 26:8 27:3 29:12 31:1,3,5,7 32:17 33:2 37:9 38:21 39:5,7,10,10, 11,20 40:1 girl's (1) 42:13 given (3) 14:11 34:23 43:24 gives (1) 25:13 giving (1) 5:6 glad (1) 15:3 goal (1) 22:11 God (2) 12:1,2 Good (6) 2:1 11:3 27:15 31:19 35:3 39:1 Governor (1) 42:21 grad (1) 19:19 grade (16) 7:5 10:9 11:12 13:18 14:3 16:22,22 17:17 25:9 26:7 32:19,20, 21 33:4 37:9 40:2 graduated (1) 31:4	grand (1) 34:18 graphically (1) 42:15 gray (1) 36:20 great (5) 7:18 28:12 30:4,7, 22 green (3) 32:14 36:16,17 grossly (1) 40:13 group (1) 25:16 grow (3) 10:24 21:17 31:1 growing (1) 23:1 guess (1) 8:19 guys (4) 5:23 8:22 32:14 40:23 gym (1) 6:22  <b>H</b>  hair (1) 16:2 half (3) 19:10 37:23 38:5 hall (2) 14:24 27:23 hallway (2) 14:19 32:24 handwriting (1) 35:16 happen (3) 14:20 30:7 37:18 happened (1) 16:11 happening (1) 17:7 hard (2) 20:19 31:22 harder (1) 40:16 haven (1) 6:16 Hazlett (1) 35:13 hear (2) 4:14 43:18 heard (6) 16:12, 21 38:13 39:8 40:11,12	hearing (13) 2:2, 7,13,20 3:6,8, 12,16 28:3,23 31:20 41:12 44:10 heart (5) 5:24 6:1 37:17,19 38:19 hearts (2) 6:14 26:18 held (2) 2:13 32:6 Hello (1) 30:15 help (11) 8:16 9:17,19 10:10, 11 14:7,22 23:21 26:19 28:20 40:8 helped (1) 12:9 helping (3) 9:17 12:21 23:19 Henry (1) 29:4 herself (4) 3:10 15:21 16:6 25:14 Hi (4) 11:3 31:19 32:22 33:2 HICKEY (5) 3:22, 24 4:4,7,10 high (4) 25:13, 14 37:9,11 hired (1) 38:20 hit (2) 5:14 38:2 hold (1) 28:19 holding (2) 38:3 40:23 holds (3) 15:5 25:13 29:5 home (7) 10:16 16:20 17:11 21:8 25:23 26:12 39:21 homework (1) 18:16 honest (4) 7:13 8:6,9,15 honestly (3) 21:2,	7 32:2 Honey (2) 26:23, 24 hope (5) 8:19 27:13 31:14 33:9 42:14 hugging (1) 12:6 hugs (1) 33:3 husband (2) 38:23 39:2 hygiene (1) 10:15  <b>I</b>  idea (1) 36:9 identify (1) 3:9 ignored (1) 20:3 imagine (2) 22:19,22 important (2) 19:11 27:9 impose (1) 4:20 impressed (3) 25:5,7 29:19 impresses (1) 29:24 improve (1) 8:23 inception (1) 24:13 individual (3) 15:9 20:2,11 individually (2) 9:22 14:5 individuals (1) 10:24 indivisible (1) 12:1 inside (2) 6:13, 14 instantly (2) 19:22 20:2 institute (1) 32:6 instituting (1) 24:20 instructional (1) 7:17 interims (1) 17:11 Internet (1) 8:5 interventionist (1)	34:2 into (10) 9:24 19:21 20:1,1, 6 21:14,16 26:18 31:2 43:9 Introduce (2) 5:3, 3 investigation (1) 2:11 involvement (1) 30:24 issuance (1) 2:16 issue (1) 21:11 issues (1) 43:16  <b>J</b>  Jean (1) 33:12 Jeep (1) 36:20 Jennifer (1) 31:18 job (5) 18:24 25:6 35:24 38:21 40:16 John (2) 2:2 38:13 joint (1) 2:13 Journal (1) 2:20 joy (1) 23:12 Jr (1) 2:3 Judge (1) 4:2 July (1) 32:10 justice (1) 12:1 Justine (2) 9:3,4  <b>K</b>  keep (4) 11:11 20:13 22:3 24:3 keeping (2) 12:13 22:12 kid (1) 14:24 kids (9) 8:14 16:19 24:21, 23 26:3 38:23 39:2,11,12 Kimble (1) 15:24
---	---	--	--	--

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naked (3) 36:4,5, 14	number (3) 8:23 18:19 22:11	opportunity (10) 5:7 8:22 9:1 14:15 15:11 24:11 25:8 28:5 42:11 43:17	participating (1) 44:6	3:1,5 14:6 24:24 25:1 26:21 42:4
name (7) 2:2 11:22 12:16 13:1 26:24 28:23 30:15	numbers (3) 9:6 18:9 37:6		particular (1) 32:5	places (1) 5:14
	<b>O</b>		pass (1) 35:18	planning (3) 9:18 13:7 28:9
named (1) 12:16		order (2) 28:3 37:6	passage (1) 34:23	plans (3) 10:9 18:5,7
names (1) 33:22	obviously (2) 4:23 20:18	others (2) 5:20 14:10	past (2) 7:12,13	Played (1) 5:16
nation (1) 11:24	October (4) 2:21, 22 3:4,6	ourselves (1) 36:6	patch (1) 23:20	please (1) 35:8
near (1) 15:10	off (2) 13:6 42:9	out (13) 8:16 11:10 13:11, 19 14:24 19:19 28:20 29:9 30:17 31:11 32:4,19 33:8	path (1) 17:1	pleased (1) 13:14
necessary (1) 3:9	offer (1) 34:20	outfit (1) 16:8	patience (1) 16:3	pledge (1) 11:22
need (17) 8:24 10:11 14:2 20:11 21:19 25:18 26:15 27:17,17,22 35:21 39:4 40:7,17,18 42:2 43:24	offering (1) 14:15	outside (2) 7:21 14:11	pause (1) 27:21	plenty (1) 28:11
needed (2) 22:8 35:23	Office (2) 2:4 41:19	over (5) 24:20 29:8 31:5 33:1 43:6	peers (1) 23:20	pm (1) 44:11
needs (3) 18:7 20:3,11	official (3) 2:24 3:2,3	overlooked (1) 26:17	people (15) 10:10 13:22 16:7 20:24 21:15 25:12 27:21 29:15 34:6 36:3,15 37:18,21 39:6 42:23	pocket (1) 8:16
neighborhood (2) 16:17,19	old (4) 8:2 12:4 16:7 24:18	overwhelming (2) 6:3,12	performing (1) 17:22	point (2) 7:11 43:2
new (9) 10:19 13:10 14:14 19:19 23:13, 14 36:21 42:10,10	oldest (1) 13:4	overwhelmingly (1) 41:10	period (2) 32:6 41:21	Pontiac (2) 36:18, 19
Newark (2) 39:9, 13	once (3) 5:14 6:18 26:13	owed (1) 38:6	periods (2) 9:18, 18	Poor (1) 15:24
News (2) 2:20,21	one (28) 3:23, 24 4:1 6:4 10:18 11:9,24 13:5,21 15:13 18:12 21:1,12, 12 22:11 24:17 25:20 26:3,5,10 27:11,12 32:9, 18 35:7,10 42:11,20	own (4) 8:16 10:15,17 43:3	person (6) 6:21 18:3 24:1 26:10 28:20 37:17	position (1) 38:21
newspaper (1) 8:4	only (15) 6:16 7:20 8:20,23 15:4 16:13 24:24 25:1,17 30:20 38:4,7 39:15 42:7 43:20	<b>P</b>	personal (1) 10:16	positive (2) 8:13 23:24
next (4) 18:5 21:13 28:20 35:12	onto (1) 19:4	paint (1) 33:7	personally (1) 3:4	possibility (1) 43:2
nice (1) 41:16	open (3) 2:2 10:4 27:18	paints (1) 33:8	persons (1) 41:19	possible (3) 4:20 42:3,4
nine-tenths (1) 43:6	opened (1) 31:14	pair (1) 14:6	perspective (2) 7:15 43:16	possibly (2) 15:22 37:12
nor (1) 34:24	operate (1) 10:3	panicked (2) 16:13,16	philosophy (1) 29:5	post (1) 36:11
normal (2) 14:12 30:9	opportunities (1) 14:11	parent (2) 8:1 13:2	pick (1) 8:3	posted (1) 2:23
normally (1) 6:4		parents (4) 6:5 7:22 29:15,22	picked (2) 8:4 16:23	pray (1) 15:10
note (1) 3:11		part (1) 12:19	pictorially (1) 42:15	prepare (1) 9:14
notice (5) 2:19, 23 18:9,11,15		participate (1) 17:8	picture (1) 33:7	prepared (3) 4:8 5:22 9:15
notified (1) 3:5			pink (4) 7:16 16:8 38:24 40:9	preparing (1) 14:8
			place (8) 2:19	present (1) 3:7
				presentation (1) 41:11
				president (1) 41:9
				pretty (1) 23:24
				principles (1) 29:4
				prior (1) 2:15
				privileged (2) 26:13,14
				probably (3) 6:11 13:8 38:16
				probationary (1) 41:21

problem (1) 36:12 problems (1) 21:3 proceed (1) 4:13 product (1) 43:11 program (1) 24:16 projected (1) 34:14 promise (1) 8:24 promising (1) 40:19 proud (4) 25:15 38:9 41:9,10 prove (1) 6:24 provided (1) 3:13 public (8) 2:2,6, 13,15,20 3:2, 6 18:2 published (1) 2:20 purposely (1) 35:17 pushed (1) 19:24 pushing (1) 20:13 put (5) 4:4 20:23 21:3 29:8 43:11	21 20:1,10 21:1 22:22 24:2,2,12,24 25:5,9 27:12 29:12 30:16, 18,19,21 31:6, 12,13 32:1,3, 7,16 33:8,14, 16,24 34:4,5, 6,19,20 37:7, 10,15,15 38:15,20,22 40:15 41:10, 22 42:8 reaching (1) 19:1 read (2) 4:10 35:15 reading (7) 6:21 17:12,18 18:12,13,14 25:18 Ready (1) 11:15 real (1) 11:14 realize (1) 18:18 realized (1) 24:23 really (34) 7:12, 13 12:5,11 13:6,21,23 16:19,23,24, 24 20:16,17, 18 27:4 29:8 30:3 31:9,13, 14,22 32:2 37:21 38:4 41:13,20,22 42:2,4,7,8,16 43:5,9 reasons (2) 7:19 42:5 receive (2) 2:15 42:18 received (1) 3:15 recess (2) 27:24 28:1 recognize (1) 42:17 recognized (1) 20:4	recommend (1) 30:10 recommended (1) 29:21 record (3) 2:18 3:8,12 red (5) 36:17,18, 18,19,19 referred (1) 2:10 reflect (1) 2:18 refrigerator (1) 36:7 remember (5) 23:1,3,5,6,7 remembered (1) 23:9 reminded (1) 34:22 renew (1) 2:9 report (3) 2:12, 16 17:10 reporter (2) 3:7, 11 represent (1) 6:5 representation (1) 5:10 representatives (3) 4:14,22 28:5 republic (1) 11:24 required (1) 2:9 requirement (1) 18:11 requirements (2) 17:24 18:17 resource (1) 41:19 resources (2) 41:19 42:1 respect (3) 21:15, 17 22:7 responsible (1) 21:23 rest (2) 8:20 33:9 restroom (1) 27:23 result (1) 41:23 Reverend (5)	28:7,8,11,15 41:1 Rhonda (1) 24:6 right (12) 7:19 11:22 15:18 17:3 19:3 21:10 25:12 27:23 30:17 35:11,12 40:19 Riverside (1) 34:17 Rodney (1) 11:20 role (3) 23:19 24:14,14 room (6) 16:6 24:1,22 32:14, 15 34:3 rumors (1) 16:12	20:6 21:22 22:5,5,6 23:1, 2 24:3,13,18, 21 25:10 26:14 27:16 28:4 29:14,21 31:1 32:12 33:1,2,4 34:13,13 37:11 41:18 42:13 43:20 schools (8) 8:2 15:7,8 26:18 29:14 37:10 40:11 42:12 Schweers (3) 28:21,22,23 scores (8) 7:22 8:22 9:6 18:19 26:15 33:7 40:5,7 second (8) 16:22 24:17 25:8 26:7 32:19,21 33:4 40:2 second-grade (1) 17:14 Secondly (1) 42:6 Secretary (4) 2:6 3:13 42:22 44:8 self (1) 10:17 send (4) 8:3,10 13:12 18:21 seriously (1) 22:21 set (3) 9:14 11:4 32:11 setting (1) 14:12 settle (1) 14:2 settled (1) 30:3 seventh (1) 19:18 severe (1) 19:5 share (1) 15:7 sheet (1) 35:9 shirts (1) 23:3 short (1) 41:17 show (6) 7:2
<b>Q</b>			<b>S</b>	
Quicha (1) 34:17 quick (1) 11:15 quite (1) 8:9			safe (3) 6:16 10:22 14:20 same (2) 17:18 18:12 Sammons (1) 12:16 Sampson (4) 11:20,21 33:12,13 sang (2) 11:16 16:6 saw (1) 32:15 saying (2) 22:3 41:16 scaffolding (1) 21:20 School (60) 2:4, 10,24 3:4 4:14,22 5:4 7:19,24 8:8 9:12 10:5,17, 18 13:10,10, 13 14:15,18, 21 15:23 16:15,17,18, 20,21,24 18:2, 4,21 19:10,20	
<b>R</b>				
rains (1) 16:23 raised (2) 12:3 19:23 ran (2) 12:14 24:15 Reach (72) 2:8 5:5,7,10 6:1, 15 7:3,15 8:3 9:5 10:11,12 11:11 12:7,22 13:2,3,5,14, 22 15:3,10 16:16 18:18, 23 19:3,7,11,				



8:22 9:1 16:5 28:19 38:8 showing (1) 6:20 shows (1) 6:9 shut (1) 29:22 side (1) 9:7 sign (2) 35:8 41:3 signed (2) 4:17 28:16 sign-in (1) 35:9 sign-ups (1) 35:6 silence (1) 34:6 sing (1) 11:14 singing (1) 16:8 single (12) 10:2, 3 20:5 21:1,5 22:12,18 23:2 24:1 32:18 36:16 37:4 sisterhood (1) 11:8 sit (2) 37:24 38:22 sitting (3) 27:22 34:4,5 sixth (1) 19:18 skills (2) 17:20 18:22 skipped (1) 33:21 small (3) 14:17 33:7,13 smart (2) 20:17, 17 smiles (1) 6:15 society (1) 14:9 somehow (1) 17:17 someone (1) 5:14 sometimes (8) 37:1,1 39:2,4, 4,23 40:4,16 somewhere (3) 17:13 39:11, 12 song (1) 11:16 Sorry (2) 13:6 35:16	sort (1) 5:23 span (2) 38:1,4 speak (22) 3:10 4:15,16,17 5:7,24 7:10, 10 28:5,9 30:20 33:24 34:12 35:8,23, 23 38:12,13, 18,19 40:22 44:5 speaker (3) 3:9 35:6 44:2 speakers (2) 4:23 28:12 speaking (1) 38:2 speaks (1) 5:2 special (2) 27:12 37:16 specialist (1) 18:14 spectacular (1) 41:13 speech (2) 5:22 11:6 spelled (1) 19:17 spent (2) 15:6 19:9 spoken (1) 42:21 sports (1) 14:13 sprain (1) 19:5 spreading (1) 23:12 square (1) 29:6 staff (12) 6:3,5, 17 8:21 9:21 11:7 20:12 30:4,4,5 32:7 39:18 stage (1) 16:6 stages (1) 21:18 stand (1) 33:23 stands (3) 11:24 34:9,10 stars (2) 19:2,3 start (5) 9:12 10:20 21:22 28:19 30:2	started (6) 15:20 24:19 30:18 32:19 41:4 42:8 starting (6) 11:10 13:6,11 29:11 30:7 39:24 State (14) 2:14, 21 3:2,14 17:23 18:10, 17,20 29:2,15, 20 30:10 42:21 44:9 States (1) 11:23 State's (1) 3:3 statistics (1) 7:1 stay (6) 12:9,21 27:17,18 31:14 32:13 staying (1) 9:16 steal (1) 26:3 stick (1) 20:23 still (5) 25:22 29:5 31:7 32:21 43:12 stood (2) 16:5,8 stop (2) 21:10 38:1 stopped (1) 17:13 stories (1) 40:10 story (3) 15:19 20:20 41:13 strategy (1) 43:3 stream (1) 3:23 strong (5) 12:9, 21 14:10 34:24 35:1 struggled (1) 13:9 struggling (2) 18:19 34:19 student (6) 4:1,8 13:23 20:2 21:11 22:24 students (21) 6:5 7:19 8:17 10:2 14:4,7 15:9 20:8 23:10,13,14,	20 25:16 27:11 29:16 32:12,20 42:18 43:5,7, 10 student's (1) 20:11 styles (1) 19:24 succeed (2) 26:19 39:7 success (2) 7:4 27:8 summer (5) 31:6 32:3,5,6 42:7 support (3) 41:22 43:24 44:1 supposed (3) 14:22 19:22 40:3 sure (9) 6:17 19:8 24:20,22 26:11 27:2 40:7,11,11 surely (1) 6:10 swift (1) 34:24 swimming (1) 14:13 symbol (1) 34:3 system (2) 43:12, 15	32:20 39:14, 15,16,17,18 teacher (8) 9:5 10:1,9 14:21 15:6 19:19,19 20:10 teachers (16) 7:17 9:12,13, 16 11:7 18:13 20:5,12 22:2 23:5 25:6 29:16 37:4 39:16 40:12,13 teaching (4) 24:19 30:4 32:17 33:3 team (2) 9:23 10:7 tears (2) 5:23 6:4 telling (1) 23:5 tells (1) 19:2 ten (2) 7:15 8:6 ten-month (1) 8:2 terms (3) 30:3 35:5 43:19 tertiary (2) 24:14, 14 test (5) 7:22 8:22 9:6 26:15 33:7 tested (1) 17:23 texts (2) 36:5,8 thanks (1) 41:21 that! (1) 13:7 thinking (2) 10:17 35:18 third (3) 17:17 29:11,12 third-grade (1) 17:14 Thomas (5) 8:21 10:6 22:7 38:11,12 though (1) 18:12 thought (4) 27:5, 15 33:20 41:24 three (4) 12:4 15:24 38:7,7
T				
table (1) 11:16 tabulating (1) 17:13 talent (1) 16:5 talk (4) 22:14, 16 23:10 37:5 talking (6) 10:5,6 21:8,9,10 43:1 Tara (1) 5:4 taught (2) 15:1 32:21 taxes (1) 29:5 teach (12) 10:13 14:8 24:19 25:8,17,19				

thrive (3) 7:3,4 20:22 throughout (4) 7:4 12:9 32:23 41:17 throw (1) 29:16 tie-dyed (1) 23:3 tier (1) 37:12 tight (1) 29:8 timer (1) 41:5 timers (1) 24:18 timing (1) 35:18 today (3) 26:20 27:9 32:23 today's (2) 2:19 3:5 together (8) 3:14 9:23 10:24 14:7 35:2 37:22 38:1,5 told (1) 41:13 tonight (3) 28:9 35:8 41:11 took (2) 19:9 38:21 top (3) 11:16 16:9 37:12 totally (1) 25:11 tough (2) 16:3 23:20 Toulson (1) 4:2 track (1) 18:24 trajectory (1) 43:19 trauma (1) 12:14 truck (2) 36:17, 17 true (1) 43:4 trust (1) 23:18 trusted (1) 22:8 try (4) 4:19 13:9 27:9 40:9 Tuesday (1) 37:4 two (11) 4:21,23 5:14 7:16 13:2 17:19 18:4 31:3 36:20 37:23	38:5 type (1) 37:16 typically (1) 38:14  U  ultimate (1) 34:8 um (4) 12:5,14 15:20 31:15 under (1) 11:24 underpaid (1) 40:13 understands (1) 20:10 understatement (1) 6:12 understood (1) 26:21 UNIDENTIFIED (1) 44:2 United (1) 11:23 unthinkable (1) 16:11 up (22) 3:18 4:17 5:1 6:4 7:18 8:4,19 9:14 10:10 11:4 13:13 14:5 16:23 23:1 26:16 28:16,20 32:11 33:2 38:3 41:2 43:21 upset (1) 26:22 upwards (1) 43:19 urging (1) 43:14 use (2) 10:14 27:22 used (1) 25:11 usually (1) 4:21 utmost (1) 22:7 utopian (2) 29:3,4  V  value (1) 26:21	van (2) 36:18,18 video (6) 3:17 5:1,3,9,16 32:15 view (2) 5:9 7:11 village (1) 28:24 voice (3) 34:3,4, 6 volunteers (1) 29:9  W  Wahl (2) 31:18, 19 wait (1) 34:19 waiting (1) 39:9 walk (5) 14:18 16:18,24 20:1 22:6 walked (2) 18:4 19:21 walking (3) 16:20,20,22 Wall (1) 32:22 wants (2) 11:14 22:23 Ward (4) 30:14, 15,16,24 Ward's (1) 4:1 waste (1) 42:1 watch (1) 31:1 way (7) 15:8 22:18 32:1,2, 3,14 33:5 ways (1) 43:13 website (2) 3:2,3 Wednesday (1) 37:4 week (3) 10:2 17:19 31:3 weekend (1) 29:9 weeks (4) 7:15 8:6 16:1 17:19 weeping (1) 16:2 white (2) 6:7,9 whole (4) 6:21, 23,24 14:8	Wilson (3) 33:19, 20 35:6 within (1) 10:2 without (1) 40:8 woman (1) 25:13 women (4) 14:10 21:16,23 31:2 won (1) 37:18 wonderful (2) 39:16 41:14 words (1) 5:11 work (13) 9:22 10:7,8,8 14:4 15:8 20:19 25:11,15 26:13,14 29:10 36:15 worked (1) 24:14 world (2) 15:22 39:13 worry (1) 6:19 wrap (2) 8:19 41:2 writing (1) 37:9 written (2) 3:15, 19 wrong (2) 7:1 37:23  Y  yeah! (1) 27:5 year (12) 16:10 18:5 22:21 29:11,12 30:8, 8,9,16 31:4 34:2 43:19 years (11) 15:4, 12 16:7 18:4 21:21 31:15 33:14 35:3 37:21,23 38:5 young (12) 11:13 21:16,23 25:6, 17,20 26:8,10, 11,16 27:7 31:2	  1  12 (1) 12:15 15 (1) 19:9 1900 (1) 29:3  2  2,000 (3) 39:10, 10,11 200 (1) 16:7 2011 (1) 42:7 2013 (4) 2:21, 22 3:4,6  3  300 (1) 16:7  4  400 (1) 29:9 468 (2) 10:1,2  6  6:00 (2) 31:12 36:24 6:30 (1) 31:13 6:45 (1) 36:16 6:59 (1) 44:11  7  7 (1) 3:6 7:00 (3) 9:13 31:13 36:24 7:30 (1) 36:24  8  8:00 (1) 37:1 8:15 (2) 9:13 36:10  9
---	---	--	--	---

9 (3) 2:21,22  
3:4