					3	
			1	I N	N D E X	
			1	<u> </u>		
	1	BEFORE THE HUNTINGDON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD	2			
	2			FROM THE AUDIENCE:	PAGE	
	3		3			
	4 5					
	6		4	HEATHER BORDER	48	
	IN RE:	BRADY HENDERSON MILL CREEK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	5	HOLLY ZEWBE	52	
	8	MICHAEL HONGITHE CHAIRMAN	6	PEG VLASAK	55	
	BEFORE: 9	MICHAEL HONSTINE, CHAIRMAN TAMMY PETERSON JANICE METZGAR	7	CATRINA REAMER	64	
	10	PETER ROTHSTEIN DENNY REIF	8 9	JEFFREY HODGSON	67	
	11	DICK SCIALABBA DONNA K.G. ISENBERG	10	DANA WAITE PIPER TANNER	69 75	
	12	DAVID BERGER	11	RICHARD REAMER	81	
	13	JILL ADAMS, SUPERINTENDENT CARL BEARD, BOARD SOLICITOR	12	KARA ROONEY-POORMAN	82	
	14 15 HEARING:	FEBRUARY 17, 2011	13	JAKE TANNER	85	
	16	6:30-10:45 P.M.	14	MICHELLE BARTOL	85	
	17 PLACE:	HUNTINGDON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT	15	RHONDA HAMMON	99	
	18	2400 CASSADY AVENUE SCHOOL AUDITORIUM	16	KELLY BENSON	101	
	19	HUNTINGDON, PA 16652	17	KATHRYN BANEY	106	
	20 REPORTER:	HEATHER GOSS BORING	18	FRED BROWN	110	
	21		19	KAREN ITINGER	112	
	22		20	LAUREN ITINGER	117	
	23	BORING COURT REPORTING, INC.	21	LAURA BEATTY	118	
	24	121 CHARLES STREET CENTRE HALL, PA 16828	22	LISA BEATTY	121	
	25 (8	314) 364-1793 Fax (814) 364-2485 boringreporting@verizon.net	23	CAMERON MORTER	121	
	BOR	ING COURT REPORTING , INC. (814) 364-1793	24			
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			2	BORING COURT REPO	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
1		<u>I N D E X</u>			4	
2	BY THE HASD:	<u>PAGE</u>	1	T A	1.D.E.Y.	
3	CARL BEARD	5	2		N D E X	
4	JILL ADAMS SEAN POWERS	11,47 14	3 4	Co	ontinued	
5	JEFFREY COPPES MELISSA STUCK	16,31 24,39,44				
6	ANDREW SOCIE	41	5	FROM THE AUDIENCE:	<u>PAGE</u>	
7		5 V U 1 B 1 T C	6			
8		<u>EXHIBITS</u>	7	MARSHAWN WORTHY	121	
9		PRODUCED	8	STEPHANIE MILLLER	123	
10	<u>EXHIBITS</u>	AND MARKED	9	DAVID BERGER	126	
11		(NONE)	10	CHARIE BURKET	129	
12		·/	11	HAYLIE SCOTT	132	
13			12	MIKE HETRICK	133	
			13	POLLY GIPE	135	
14			14	LARRY HOUCK	138	
15			15	CATHY TROUP	142	
16			16	PATRICIA RUX	154	
17			17	JEAN FINKLE	156	
18			18	KAREN MORRIS	159	
19			19			
l			20			
20			1			
20			21			
			21 22			
21						
21 22			22			
21 22 23 24			22 23			
21 22 23	BORING COU	RT REPORTING , INC. (814) 364-1793	22 23 24	BORING COURT REPO	ORTING , INC. (814) 364-1793	

MR. BEARD: All board member are present for the start of the hearing, except for Dr. Long who was excused for the evening.

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4 Excuse me, everybody, we're at our 5 designated time. We're a little bit over. Good 6 evening. My name is Carl Beard. I'm the Solicitor 7 for the Huntingdon Area School District. And this 8 evening we're here at a duly advertised Section 780 9 hearing.

10 I do have some introductory remarks that 11 I'd like to make that are kind of a formal beginning 12 for this type of hearing. We will have a PowerPoint, 13 some of this may be a little repetitive, but as 14 you've been informed before, the hearing is being held pursuant to Section 780 of the Public School 15 16 Code of 1949 as amended, which requires the 17 scheduling of the public hearing not less than three 18 months before a determination is made whether Brady 19 Henderson, you know, should be permanently closed.

that this hearing shall be held publicly. It's in accordance with Act 38, which is also known as Section 780 of the Public School Code. Act 38 provides as follows: In the event of a permanent

closing of a public school or substantially all of

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The provision of the school code provides

2 gradation of classification or for other reasons and 3 other such reasons that have been held by the courts 4 in Pennsylvania to also include economic and 5 budgetary reasons. 6 The purpose of this hearing is

existing school buildings, the purposes of better

7 informational. It's like a legislative hearing where 8 people come and testify before a group, or if you 9 watch Congress or the Pennsylvania General Assembly, 10 the purpose is for the Board to review certain facts 11 and details of the school closing so they can later 12 consider these facts and again consideration of the 13 final decision may not be made by law for at least 90 14 days after this hearing.

15 We will have an agenda outlined in the 16 PowerPoint primarily, the first part would be for 17 background. The superintendent along with other 18 administrators here in the district will provide 19 background information, outline financial capital 20 issues and cover that and, you know, of course it's 21 going to be done by PowerPoint. We want to let you 22 know that after this evening, if there's not 23 sufficient copies available, it will also be made 24 available on the district's website as well.

> Once we go through the PowerPoint and the BORING COURT REPORTING, INC. (814) 364-1793

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the school facilities, the board of school directors 1

2 shall hold a public hearing on question not less than

three months prior to the decision of the board 3

4 related to the closing of the school.

5 Notice of the hearing shall be given in a 6 newspaper of general circulation of the school 7 district at least 15 days prior to the day of such 8 hearing. And by resolution that was adopted by the 9 board of the school directors on January 17, 2011, a 10 notice was published in "The Daily News," Huntingdon, 11 PA, on January 28th, 2011 saying Thursday, February 12 17, 2011, at 6:30 p.m., as the date and time of the hearing. 13

14 You know, as far as my role, you know, upon 15 review of the school code and with the Board's 16 resolution, I advised board that I would say here is 17 well, the hearing has been duly properly advertised 18 and convened pursuant to what's required by the 19 school code for one of these hearings. In the school 20 code will be a slide up here, in Section 1311, is set 21 forth reasons and the authority for the school board 22 to close a school.

23 That section permits the closing of school 24 for the following reasons, on account of a small 25 number of pupils attendance, condition of that

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1 presentation, ultimately we will receive, going into

2 part two of the presentation, would be to receive

3 comments and testimony and, you know, hear, you know

4 before the board. As can you see there is a

5 stenographic record being maintained just in the case

6 when you build a school, you have an Act 34 hearing,

7 it needs to be stenographically recorded. Excuse me,

8 at the same time in the potential closing of the

9 school, likewise you need a stenographic record for a

10 Section 780 or Act 38 hearing.

11 As far as the coming up for, you know, 12 comments or, you know, testifying that, you know, 13 having information for the board, we would ask that 14 because of the stenographer, please state your name, your address, whether you're a resident. If you want 15 16 to add whether you're a parent or staff member, that 17 is clearly up to you.

Last evening when we had the presentation on Jackson-Miller, it was a really well-organized presentation. It was very orderly and very considerate exchange by those that were in attendance and we believe the same will occur this evening.

23 Just as we said before, even with the 24 Act 34 hearings, when we were building -- looking at 25 building a school, we said that the record would

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- remain open for 30 days. The same thing is true 1
- 2 here. If there is something that you did say or
- 3 you'd like to say or something that you think of
- 4 after somebody else does a presentation and you would
- 5 like the superintendent and the board to have a copy
- 6 of that, by all means, submit that to Ms. Adams or
- 7 through Jan Shaffer, the Board Secretary. Even as
- 8 today, Ms. Adams received letters and comments from
- 9 people that were in attendance and that information
- 10 will be passed along to the board of school directors
- 11 and ultimately, all of that information will become
- 12 part of the packet of testimony that will be
- 13 considered by the board.

14 And as always, we have our committee 15 meetings and we have our regular meetings and as 16 you've done in the past, you have the opportunity 17 during the public comment period to outline 18 information you would like the board to consider, 19

both at the committee and the regular meeting. 20 We also wanted to at least let you know

21 that this evening will also be an opportunity for 22 questions and answers. We may not have an answer to

23 everything. I know that I'm taking notes as long as,

24 as well as the administration. We know that some

25 additional questions may come up over transportation BORING COURT REPORTING, INC. (814) 364-1793

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- issues, but this is the beginning of the process. As 1
- 2 these questions are, in fact, presented, the
- 3 administration will gather information and they will
- 4 bring that back and it will be presented to the board
- 5 in a written form so this will be an ongoing process
- 6 as we proceed along the way.

7 As you can see, here is the -- tonight's 8 agenda. I'm not going to read it to you, actually, 9 some people may actually see that what some of the 10 provisions are. We have ten areas that we'd like to 11 cover. Ms. Adams is going to come back and do the 12 mission, vision and values.

13 As far as format for participation, 14 speakers will have up to five minutes to share 15 comments and information. We'll try to abide by

16 that. We were a little flexible last evening, as

- 17 well. Just be mindful of the other people behind you
- 18 that would like to say something as well. We don't
- 19 have the latitude to have 25 or 30 people designate
- 20 their five minutes to give one particular present or
- 21 an hour, an hour and a half to present information.
- 22 I believe, as I said, if you can just have, give the
- 23 stenographer your name and address and if you'd be
- 24 kind enough to state whether you are resident of the
- 25 school district. And as I said before, the comments

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2 I've already covered Section 780 of the 3 School Code. That will be in the PowerPoint and be 4 on the website, also covered Section 1311.

5 At this point, I'm going to go back to the 6 mission of the district and turn it over to Ms. Adams 7 to proceed with the background portion of tonight's 8 presentation. Thank you.

9 MS. ADAMS: Good evening to the audience 10 and to the school board. We come, the administrative 11 team of the Huntingdon Area School District with a 12 heavy heart this evening, to present to you 13 information that will lead us to, in the future, 14 decisions about what we need to do with our 15 elementary program.

16 I wanted to start this evening with the 17 Huntingdon Area School District mission, vision, and 18 values because this, this document, these pieces of 19 information were created by a team through our 20 strategic plan, and the information that you will be 21 presented tonight, as you were last night, was 22 created by a team. And we will present that 23 together.

Our Director of Elementary Education Mr. Coppes, our Assistant Principal Mr. Powers, our BORING COURT REPORTING, INC. (814) 364-1793

Business Manager Mrs. Stuck, and our Buildings and 1

2 Grounds Coordinator Mr. Socie, will speak this

3 evening, but this is a work of the whole team. And I

4 want to recognize those people as well as recognize

5 Mrs. Faranberg and Mrs. Shaffer and the bus

us with this project.

6 contractors that have been working with them to help 7

8 It has been and will be -- we will continue 9 to incorporate ideas that we, that are brought to us 10 by our faculty, our staff, students. We heard last 11 night parents, community, so this is a work in 12 progress.

14 really has to do with funding, funding for education, 15 and where we find ourselves right now. Primarily 16 we're looking at issues with Act 48 and I'm not going

Okay. What brings us here this evening

17 to read this. You can read it, but it has to do with

18 district funds and our fund balance and the way that

19 we used that in our property taxes and our limits and

20 the limits that have been set on us. It has to do

21 with Act 1 limits and the amount of tax revenues that

22 can be collected and the adjusted tax index for

23 2011-2012 has been set at 1.9 percent and you can see

24 the amount, and we have talked about what that amount

25 will bring into the school district.

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We are looking at primarily three critical
 issues tonight: Critical Issue Number 1, the
 decrease in student enrollment in the Huntingdon Area
 School District, the decrease in the local, state,
 and federal funding in our district. We are not
 alone in the increased costs that we find happening
 everywhere.

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Number 1, the decrease in student enrollment. We have declined enrollment from the year 2000 to 2011. We're at 460 students, which is an 18 percent decline. You can see the Huntingdon area population history and we have that from 1996 to 2010 and I won't go through that with you.

14 I do want to point out this number at the 15 bottom, minus 22. We feel that one of the things 16 that has happened for us in terms of that number being lower than the ones preceding it is that we 17 were able to develop a charter, cyber charter school, 18 19 and we feel as though we are bringing some of those 20 students back who left or we're keeping students who have needs that we're not able to take care of 21 22 through our regular program.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education
 has an enrollment projection and you can see it right
 there. And this is the one that we use, we use as we
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by building. These are determined for the Department
 of Education. Whenever we're involved in a building
 project, whether it's a renovation or an original
 building project and they are used to determine the

reimbursements that we get from the State, that is
where those numbers come from.
The next column enrollment in '99 and 200

7 The next column enrollment in '99 and 2000.
8 The reason that year is up there is that's the first
9 year that the elementary program was under the
10 configuration that it's in now with those buildings
11 -- sorry for blocking some of you.

12 The next column shows percentage of 13 capacity at that point. And you'll see that Brady 14 Henderson Mill Creek was at 68 percent of capacity in 15 the year '99-'00. The total, this number here, the 16 total capacity for the district, the average was 85 17 percent that year. And then when we project for the 18 next year, again using the procedure that Ms. Adams 19 talked about, the four-year average for kindergarten, 20 we project Brady Henderson at 115 and about 21 51 percent capacity. The District has moved next 22 year from 85 to 66 percent. So it is affecting the 23 whole district.

This just shows enrollment currently this year or at least recently this year. The numbers BORING COURT REPORTING , INC. (814) 364-1793

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do planning in the future. And the next slide is our

2 13-year enrollment history. And it includes the

3 2011-2012 projection. And what we did with our

4 kindergartners, we took a four-year projection, a

5 four-year average, the last four years in order to

6 get -- to have a number for that particular class.

And Mr. Powers will take some time now and talk about building capacities, student populations, and change over time.

9 and change over time.
10 MR. POWERS: Thank you. My name is Sean
11 Powers. I'm the Assistant Principal for the

12 elementary schools. I'm going to talk a little bit

13 about zooming in on the individual buildings and how

14 things have changed over time. At first before I

15 start with that, though, I want to say that for

16 everything I'm going to be talking about is pretty

17 much all numbers. And I want to make it clear that

18 we all believe that teaching in learning is about way

19 more than that, it's about way more than numbers. It

20 just is. It is about kids and relationships and all

21 them as individuals. All the individuals that are

22 part of our schools. But the numbers are important,

23 too, and we can't just ignore them, so we're going to

24 take some more time to look at those.

This slide shows building capacities first BORING COURT REPORTING, INC. (814) 364-1793

1 change every day. Brady, I believe, was at 119

2 today. Some of those grades are different. That is

3 what all the individual schools look like if you

4 looked at the grades in each school.

5 And this shows class sizes for Brady6 Henderson and Jackson Miller, its actual class sizes

7 because there is only one or less class per grade.

8 The Jackson Miller shows a combined second and third

9 grade for 17 and a combined fourth and fifth grade

10 for 20. That is why the chart looks different there.

The other thing I'll point out about this
is the average across the district is just a little
bit over 18 students per class. Brady Henderson is
actually a little bit higher than the average,
average students per class.

16 And Mr. Jeff Coppes is going to take the 17 next bit. Thank you.

17 MR. COPPES: Good evening. I'd just like 18 19 to welcome all of you as well and thank you for 20 coming to this evening's meeting. We know these are 21 really difficult decisions for our students and our 22 families and our community and we'd just like to also 23 just extend our appreciation to our staff, whether it's this school, or Jackson, for coming everyday at 24 25

school, doing what's really right, focusing on their

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students, your children, because that's what really matters, even though they are challenged with this themselves, so we appreciate that.

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4 One area that parents really look at when 5 you think about school consolidation is that I have 6 my child in a grade school. Are the other school's 7 grade schools well? And that is really a fair and 8 legitimate concern. And we have these external 9 assessments, all of our schools do, all of our 10 districts in Pennsylvania, state assessments and 11 you've heard of PSSA. That is one way we measure our 12 schools. But I do believe, and Sean alluded to the 13 fact as well, we measure our schools here in 14 Huntingdon by a more active work place, and we really 15 believe it is just more than just a lot of numbers, 16 you are going to see numbers tonight to look at, 17 we'll reflect and think about. But our school had 18 talked about creative staff, our goal has really been 19 always for the last ten years and our staff has, and 20 all the schools have worked hard, is to really move 21 away from a system of schools to a three school 22 system. And that may be confusing to you, but that 23 means really having a school district, where right 24 now we have four elementary schools, where one third 25 grade classroom, Brady is in the same thing as a BORING COURT REPORTING, INC.

staff works hard in the district to build a vision.

It really started -- I can remember the day back in

3 June 2001 when we really talked about having schools

4 where children want to come to school to read and

5 write, not because they have to learn to read and

6 write, but because they just have to. They are dying

7 to. And we support our staff with that, with well

8 over 300 days of staff development and a right of

9 research group approaches. And to do that, we

10 brought in outsiders to help build our vision. But

11 that may encourage leadership within our district and

12 some of them are here tonight to support their

13 efforts, during a really sharp learning curve and we

14 like 18 teacher leadership teams across our district

15 that are really working to sustain the vision of what 16

we worked on.

17

Our goal is the best first instructions and 18 create a culture where children feel valued and 19 respected. We looked at best teacher resources, we 20 looked at consistent time blocks. If you have math 21 at Jackson Miller at 75 minutes -- you have Jackson, 22 we have math at Brady at 75 minutes or Standing Stone 23 or Southside. And those things have huge impact on 24 our student achievement scores, 60s in mathematics to 25 mid-80s right now. And one of the greatest things

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third grade classroom as Jackson Miller or Standing 1 2 Stone or Southside. And that really wasn't always 3 the case.

4 Our staff really deserves a lot of credit 5 across the district for that. That means the same 6 kind of learning opportunities, which means the 7 content, the quality of instruction approaches, we 8 know there are best practices. There are ways to 9 teach, but we know there are best practices. The 10 same bridge learning resources, the same kind of 11 support service in our school, and really the most 12 important, the same kind of highly skilled, highly 13 trained caring educators and support staff.

14 Our goal has been to try to make sure 15 schools are between 85 and 90 percent consistent. We 16 do want to have some leeway with our staff and our 17 schools and parent groups. That flexibility makes 18 these schools unique. But we are a school system and 19 our goal has been to create a system where we have 20 children -- Sean talked about it earlier -- everyday 21 we have children enrolled, but it's not always across 22 the district, we have children that move from one 23 school to another school almost every single day. 24 And it's really important for those children that go to school that have the same kind of vision and our 25

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1 we've added most recently that was really a true

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2 safety net for children who at risk and it's called

3 the response intervention model, known now as

4 responsive instruction intervention, where children

5 are identified by the needs that they have and we are

6 doing research based approaches with standard

7 approaches to help those children move forward and be

8 more successful, especially in the area of

9 leadership.

10 This chart shows student achievement grades 11 two through five as measured by two assessments, one 12 assessment is called the Terra Nova. And the Terra 13 Nova is a test that's a nationally norm test that we 14 give to all second grade students in our schools to 15 see if they're on target with their learning. And 16 also, you know, if you have a child in grades three 17 through five, they have to take the state assessment 18

called the PSSA. It's interesting, this is like a nine-year -- well, I'm sorry -- this is a nine-year chart which really kinds of shows our journey when we started really looking at data across the district, analyzing it, and trying to use that to prove student learning with a goal of one- to two-percent improvement per year. You're going to have a great

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Page 17 to 20 of 163

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fluctuation year after year based on the population 1 2 of the students you have that year. You could have a 3 really strong class in mathematics one year and next 4 year maybe not quite so strong. So we got to figure 5 out as educators ways to improve that consistently.

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I think that's the nine-year average. If you look at nine years, there is one way of looking over time and you can see our district average in reading is 68, which that's okay, but it can be a lot better and mathematics is at 76. But if you look at reading, we are kind of consistent across the district, you know, over that nine-year period. And 13 mathematics, which is pretty consistent, we have one 14 school that's just a little bit higher in mathematics, but you still can't always compare schools to schools, because schools have different personas, sometimes it's the students they have.

But I think what's really interesting for our teachers is to look at this one, you know, if you look at the first three years in our reading scores and the last three years, we go from an average of 60 percent proficiency in all four of our schools district wide, to 75 is a growth of 15 percent. And

25 what that means how many more children are more BORING COURT REPORTING, INC. (814) 364-1793

you figure 150 students in a grade level per year,

1 but have a great instruction every day in a way 2 people really read and learn and that will be 3 reflective on test scores.

4 This is amazing right now across our 5 district. Our district average in January is 79 6 percent. That is 14 percent higher than it's ever 7 been since we've given 4Sight across the district.

8 And that's great not only to think of what we're 9 going to do on state assessment, but that's great

10 because we believe that by May we can have 90 percent

11 of our kids either proficient or advanced in 12 mathematics, and that's really a doable, a doable 13 goal and a challenge for our schools. And that's 14 amazing for us not because what it looks at state 15 assessment, but because our students have been

successful and our educators have been successful.

17 Mathematics is lower and it's an obvious one. You know, much of the content at third, four, 18 19 fifth grade has not been tested. These are end of 20 the year assessments. This is what we want our kids 21 to be proficient in reading and math at the end of 22 year, not in January, but in the end of year. If 23 you've never done a square root, all of a sudden 24 seventh and eighth grader says do the square root 25 problem, you would no idea how to do that unless

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successful, not just proficient, but advanced.

Mathematics, the first three-year average was 65, now to 83. That's a growth of 18 percent growth, and that's huge. The research on school improvement talks if you get two percent growth per year, that's amazing and they have.

And I think the next one is another really compelling slide, you know, we have variations from year to year with some of our schools. But this is 10 one, I think, is powerful. And it's powerful because 11 it looks at an assessment called a 4Sight. A 4Sight is really designed -- I'm sorry -- 4Sight is designed 12 to help --

14 MR. BEARD: Jeff.

15 MR. COPPES: I'm sorry. You all know I talk fast, I guess I click fast as well. 16

The 4Sight assessment is an important assessment that we give to all of our students in grades three, four, and five. And it is designed to 19 20 help our teachers identify the strengths and the 21 challenges of all of our students in both reading and 22 math. We give this assessment in September; we give 23 it in November; we give it in January, and we give it in May. And we believe, truly believe, that our

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school should be about not just practice for tests,

1 somebody took the time to show you. Some content of

2 mathematics has just not been exposed to for 3 students. Will they be at 59 at the end of year, no.

4 We'll be 80, 85, like we've been consistently because

5 of having the system, a school system, not a system 6 of schools.

7 So I think that's pretty compelling data of 8 the schools. At a later time you want to look at the 9 charts and just reflect on them because there are a 10 lot of numbers there. But if you have questions, 11 please call us because we interested in helping you 12 with that.

13 MS. STUCK: Hello. My name is Mindy Stuck 14 and I'm the business administrator for the school 15 district. I'm going to talk about critical issue 16 number two, which has to do with finances and our 17 economic condition.

18 If you attended the board meeting on Monday 19 evening where we adopted the preliminary budget, we 20 discussed at length the decrease in the local, state, 21 and federal funding. In particular, the state has 22 supplanted one billion dollars of school subsidy 23 money this year. The Huntingdon Area School District 24 could potentially receive 1.2 million dollars

25 reduction in spending. Again, we won't know this for BORING COURT REPORTING, INC. (814) 364-1793

sure until March 8th, when the Governor presents his 1 2 budget, but we are being cautioned by our 3 professional agencies.

4 Critical issue number two, again decrease 5 in funding. On this slide we are showing actually 6 the State contribution to all the education and 7 highlighting here the supplanted funds. Starting in 8 '09-'10, they supplanted basic ed. funding with the 9 stimulus moneys of about 655 million dollars. And 10 you can see they did it again in '10-'11 and then 11 actually back earlier this month, they supplanted it 12 further with the federal edu jobs moneys. Those 13 funds we were actually hoping would help to offset 14 the elimination of the air funds which run out this year. However, the government did supplant them 15 16 further and as can you see the funding level that we are at in '10-'11 is back to about the '06-'07 17 funding level. 18

The way that translates to Huntingdon Area School District is we receive 922 thousand dollars of stimulus moneys in '09-'10, 930 in the current year, and our totally subsidy dollars have some been supplanted by approximately an additional 600 -- I mean, \$265,000.

> In addition to a decrease in the revenue BORING COURT REPORTING, INC. (814) 364-1793

side, we are also looking at increases in the expense

2 side. We are looking at retirement increase, health

3 care, and unknowns with the employment contracts,

4 charter school costs, and special education,

5 including English Language Learners. Our increase,

if you look at our preliminary budget from the final 6

7 budget that was adopted last year shows an increase

8 of 1.4 million dollars or 5.5 percent.

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This chart shows the history and the projections of the employer's contribution to the retirement system. In '09 you can see we were paid at a rate 4.76 and then 4.785 [sic], the current year we are at 5.64, next year it jumps to 8.65 percent. And then as you can see, it takes very big jump as we go further.

16 MS. ADAMS: I just wanted to mention at 17 this point in terms of retirement, it was stated on 18 Monday night that the school district has not and is not paying its share of the retirement costs, and you 19 20 can see that that's not so. You can see with this 21 information, that the school district is doing what 22 it needs to do and is doing. In fact, we could not 23 spend extra. We have had people talk to us about 24 that, well do we send more. You cannot do that and

25 it doesn't work that way. However, Mrs. Stuck will

BORING COURT REPORTING, INC. (814) 364-1793 talk with you about what we have done to try to ward

this off and help ourselves a little bit in this

3 area.

4 MS. STUCK: So you see, last year's rate 5 was 5.64. When it was first set by the Pennsylvania

School Employees Retirement Systems Board, it was at

7 8.22 percent and we have that included in our budget.

8 And at the recommendation of PSBA, I believe, PASA

9 and PASCO they recommended you keep that higher

10 amount in and then move those additional funds that

11 are unexpended into a designated fund balance which

12 we plan to do this year. And again, they will help

13 to offset these large increases that are predicted in

14 the future. This chart shows the actual history as

it applies at Huntingdon School District for the 15

16 PSERS rate. As you can see, these are the rates

17 going back at '08-'09. This is our cost that we pay

18 in and it shows the increase that we are looking at.

19 All these numbers I'm actually estimating based on an

20 average, I mean, based on a total salary of 11.7 21 million.

22 Health care costs continue to increase, not

23 just for school districts, but for everyone across

24 the state. This current year we had a 20 percent

25 increase in our rates. Next year we're predicted at

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1 ten percent increase. Our actual rates are actually

2 higher than what is shown based on the actual dollars

3 here, but due to some retirement and so on, our

4 actual overall costs went down.

5 Other uncertainty that we're facing is we

are without contracts for all four negotiating 6

7 classes of employees. Charter school costs

8 continually take -- continue to take an increased

9 share of our general fund dollars. As you can see in

10 '08- '09, we reached actually our all-time high of

11 \$770,000. This year -- or our actually most recent

12 year that we have a full year of data for it,

13 '09-'10, we were at \$658,000 and that showed a

14 decline. We're hoping that we can attribute that to

15 the online programs that we are offering within the

16 district and we are able to bring back some of the

17 students that were choosing the charter school

18 option.

19 Charter school costs per child, non special 20 ed. student is nearly \$8,000. A special ed. student

21 is over \$16,000. Special education over the past

22 eight years, the district has spent almost, well,

23

12.7 million dollars more than it's received in special ed. subsidies. Additionally, our English, 24

English language learner population has increased

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significantly. At '08-'09, we had six students. In 1 2 the current school year, we're looking at 18 3 students. We now have two full-time staff positions 4 serving those students.

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This shows some of the history of the special ed. costs. This is our subsidy that we 7 receive from the State. These are expenditures and 8 this is the difference that has passed on to the local tax payers. We can see in the column the expenditure increase.

11 MS. ADAMS: Recently the administrators 12 along with a few board members and a few community 13 members attended a cyber course in our high school 14 here called the New Fiscal Reality and it was 15 conducted by Dr. Hartman from Penn State. And some 16 of the areas that we talked about and we looked at 17 after we went through the New Fiscal Reality program 18 have to do with, all of this information has to do 19 with difficult adjustments that will be necessary in 20 our future to conduct our -- to conduct our business 21 with our students.

We have uncertainty of our local, state, and federal revenues. As I said before, we have rising expenditures. We have to focus on the relationship between spending and student outcomes,

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with student outcomes being our most important goal.

2 By using -- but what we do with this in this area is

3 really look at the data that we have and you've seen

4 a lot of numbers so far. But we're interested in

5 trying to use data to drive our decision.

We need to reconsider standard operating procedures and we have. We have begun that task and will continue to look at every area and all of the services that we have available at the school district to determine what is required and what is

essential versus comfortable and historic. 12 Some of the key components or the key 13 points that we have been considering and we feel we

14 need to consider, of course, our primary objective is 15 to provide the most thorough and efficient 16 educational programs and services for the students of 17 this district. Our goals are always our educational

18 opportunities, our academic progress, we look at our 19 special education services and facilities, our class

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size, our instructional supplies, our equipment, our

21 attendance boundaries. We've been perusing the

22 transportation guidelines and our efficiency or lack

23 of that efficiency in that area, our staffing needs,

24 teaching support staff and administration. We're

25 combing the salaries and benefits instructions and

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training and looking at our building operation costs,

all while we are looking at the mandates that we have

3 before us, such as No Child Left Behind, IDEA, State

4 standards, the ever-increasing AYP percentages. They

5 will be more difficult every year, it's ten percent

until we get to the year 2012, 2013, '14, and then we

7 have Keystone exams coming upon us as well.

8 What I must look at in terms of my position

9 in this district is cost effectiveness. In my

10 capacity as a commissioned officer of the State of

11 Pennsylvania, I am charged by the Pennsylvania

12 Constitution, Article 3, Section 14, to provide the

13 most -- to provide for the maintenance and support of

14 a thorough and efficient system of public education

15 to serve the needs of the Commonwealth.

With that being said, this team that I work

17 with, we presented the following options for

18 consideration to you as the board. And this evening

19 we will look at our option one, three, four, five,

20 six, and eight because they pertain primarily to

21 Jackson -- or excuse me, Brady Henderson Mill Creek

22 Elementary School. We reviewed the other options

23 last evening. We will present now some information

24 about these options and in an attempt to help you

understand what our thinking is in these six areas. 25

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MR. COPPES: As Ms. Adams said Option 1 is

2 business as usual. And that means keeping all four

3 elementary schools exactly where they are. And I'm

4 even though this is Jackson Miller, I want to show

you the figures that we're going through so. Again

6 Ms. Adams talked about kindergarten is based on a

7 four-year average. We are in the process of

8 kindergarten registration right now and honestly we

have people register the day before school starts.

10 We never know those numbers until the school day

11 starts.

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12 But you can see that Jackson Miller was 13 anticipating enrollment as 63. Average class size at

14 that school would be 16. At Brady school here

15 tonight talking about, our kindergarten enrollment

16 based on four years before this was 19. We went back

17 four years because we had that data readily

18 available, but also that was the year we had our

19 largest groups, so kind of if you look across the

20 history that number is probably going to be higher

21 than most likely but we're erring on that side.

You can see we're anticipating that total enrollment at Brady around 115 children with a class

24 size average of 19. Okay. I guess I don't need them 25 glasses.

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The next slide is the Southside. We are anticipating 53 students with a total enrollment of 325.

Thanks, Jill, I will need those at some point. Thank you.

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6 With an average class size of 18. And as 7 we talk about these options, remove them, or you can 8 see Standing Stone, kindergarten is 67, projected 9 enrollment 404, with a class size average, again, of 10 19. These are options when we go through these. 11 These are not recommendations. These are more of a 12 staffing recommendation. You are going to see in the 13 next few slides a variety of staffing options. We 14 are not making those stands. We are looking at how 15 our schools can be configured first and then we're 16 going to be looking at our budget before we can even think about these things. So this is not showing 17 18 anything about our recommendation for cutting staff. 19 This is what we can do with staffing for each of our 20 schools with the number of available classrooms that 21 we have.

Okay. So our first option, Option 3, that deals with Brady Henderson is really the idea of having Brady at Southside. And can you see there is our enrollment figures for Brady at 515 [sic] and our BORING COURT REPORTING, INC. (814) 364-1793

Southside enrollment figures of 325. Now that 1 2 Number 440 of total enrollment, give you an idea of first year Southside was had 400 students in that, 3 within a capacity of 425.

4 5 Now these columns show what way we could 6 put classrooms actually at Southside. This column 7 here represents just with the present Southside 8 teachers. We have 18 classroom teachers. We have 9 three in every grade and you can see what the class 10 size would be. The building would have 18 teachers 11 at that recommendation or that option with the 12 average class size of 24, but you can see like for 13 this one area right here, we'd have three teachers 14 for 28, we all know that is way too many students, 15 you know. Even if we had the 19, which would be one 16 extra room, you can see class size, well, going from 17 24 down to 18 for kindergarten which is much more 18 manageable. No one would really ever be successful in kindergarten with 24 children. And you can see 19

21 large class of 28. 22 With 20 rooms can you see that kindergarten 23 would be 18, first graders would be 23, those are huge numbers for first grade. If you're a first 24 grade teacher you know that. Twenty-one in the 25

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how the class size goes down to 18. We still have a

second grade, we've had 20 in the third grade. There

again, still that big bubble of 28 children over

there. With the 21 rooms for the Southside teachers,

4 and the three extra teachers in that building alone,

that shows that number drops from 28 to 21 and then of the 22 rooms that are available at Southside,

7 you'd have 22 teachers running with a class size

8 average of 20.

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All right. That's just, again, those are options. Those are not recommendations, nor are they staffing recommendations. We want to pose these options to you. You may have options that we haven't thought about that we would like feedback on as well.

14 Option 4 talks about Brady and Standing 15 Stone combined. And you can see, there again, the 16 Brady's figure is 115, 404 Standing Stone, with an 17 enrollment of 519. Just as a point of reference, the 18 first year Standing Stone was open in '99-2000, we 19 had 510 children in the school and with the capacity 20 of 575. There again, we are showing you with the 21 present staff, Standing Stone staff alone, that's all

22 the other available rooms. Obviously 33 in a

23 classroom, 32 in a classroom, that is something that 24 we wouldn't be supporting, but we want you to see

25 what those numbers as we go through the process of

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1 making decisions.

2 You can see where 23 would be, classrooms 3 would be obviously, we would probably 26 drop in and

4 kindergarten, so there is 22 to 17, which is much

5 more manageable and kind of realistic to our

6 kindergarten class sizes now across the district.

7 You can see where 24 drops the class size down to 22,

8 but look, we still got 32 here, so that is really out

9 of control. Is 25 great? No. But realistically we

10 have one in three right now in the second grade. We

11 got Standing Stone with one with 27 right now in

12 fifth grade, so we have those. Are they ideal? No.

13 With 26, you can see they drop the class 14 size to 20 and then there's a 27th room, 28, more 15 teachers we'll call them. We are back kind of to the 16 district average right now of 19. If you remember 17 right in Sean's presentation at 18.26. So that's

18 just Option 4. We're not saying it's a

19 recommendation. It's just an option.

20 Option 5 really looks at, wow, putting 21 Brady, Jackson, and Standing Stone all in one school.

22 What would that look like? There is the Brady

23 enrollment at 115, Jackson 63, Standing Stone at 404,

again at 582. The capacity of that building is 575, 24

25 which is that reimbursable number with the first

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Page 33 to 36 of 163

enrollment at that school has a history of 510. You 1 can see these large numbers. Again, we're not 2 3 recommending. We are showing you if you use this 4 group of teachers and you add teachers across the 5 way. With 28 available rooms, you can see and you 6 will be able to reflect on this when you look on our 7 PowerPoint on the Internet, we're down to having 8 around five classrooms of some grades with that class 9 size average of 21.

10 Option 6 is one where we look at Brady with 11 two different kinds of bus route options. There's 12 Brady's Bus 3 students, 42 with the Standing Stone 13 children, and the children who ride Bus 43 and 44 14 would attend Southside. Then again you can see these 15 figures. And please note under the kindergarten 16 Brady Henderson, there is two asterisks there. It's 17 really hard of hard to predict, we are doing an 18 average to figure out what the kindergarten 19 enrollment could be at each of our schools, but it's 20 kind of hard to tell by bus routes at this point. So 21 to do that in a way, it may be not completely 22 accurate, we took all the children that ride those 23 buses and we divided by sixth grade to figure out that percentage of those children would be in that 24 25 grade level in kindergarten.

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1 So you see what the class sizes would be 2 with Bus 3 and Bus 42 at Standing Stone, with just 3 the Standing Stone teachers there, you would have 22 4 teachers with a class size average of 21. Going down 5 to 23 teachers with a class size of 20. 24 teachers would be a class size of 19. 25 teachers would be a 6 7 class size of 18. 26 rooms or 26 teachers would be a 8 class size of 18. 27 will be bring you 17. And 28 9 would be bring you 16. So these last two categories, 10 actually the last four, would be lower than the 11 district average right now that we have in our four 12 existing schools.

13 The bottom row shows Brady Henderson 14 children from Bus 43 and 44 as Southside. And again 15 those numbers are based on dividing the number of 16 children that are present 43 and 44 by six to get a 17 number. It is going to probably vary from that, 18 folks, we just don't know those numbers yet for 19 children. You can see the overall average is 385 the 20 first year Southside was in existence. They had 400 21 children there with a capacity of 425. And you can 22 see just present Southside teachers are at 18 23 existing classrooms and we have 21. We got a bubble 24 here of 25, kind of slow with Brady right now. Not ideal, but it's there. And you see with 19 teachers, 25

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that drops to 20, with 20 rooms available, it would be 20 and 19, with 21 it would be 18, and 22 would be 3 18, because those are rounded numbers, folks. Okay.

4 The last option takes the same model but 5 also puts Jackson Miller in the equation. Should 6 Jackson Miller be closed in the consolidation 7 process? And you can see the number there, it's 514 8 for the total, again the first year at Standing Stone 9 was 510, with a capacity of 575. You see these 10 ridiculous large numbers, you need to see those. I 11 mean, we are not recommending those, we're saying 12 that is what it would be, just with those teachers,

14 average of 18. 15 Similar thing with Brady, Southside would 16 be the same going through the bottom of the previous 17 slide.

all the way down to the 28 rooms with a class size

18 MS. STUCK: We took a look at how moving 19 students from Brady Henderson would affect our 20 transportation costs. And when looking at 21 transportation, you can either maximize your savings 22 and that would probably equate to students spending

23 more time on buses and crowded buses or you can look 24 at minimizing the amount of time that students spend 25 on the bus. Again, it's more costly and may not be

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1 the most efficient transportation system. Our hope

2 is to find a space in the middle that will keep

3 everyone happy and we do want to minimize the amount

4 of time that students are on the bus.

5 For the first run-through just to get an 6 idea of increasing costs, we wanted to make sure that 7 children would not be on the bus longer than an hour. 8 In the Brady Henderson model, I believe all students 9 were on the bus 50 minutes or less. And again this 10 is just a starting point. We could definitely 11 decrease those times by adding vans to the outlying

12 areas, which could pick those children up and get 13

them directly to the school. Because when students

14 are on a large bus, it's not just the distance 15

traveled, but the number of stops that adds to the 16 time that child is on the bus.

17 Currently the Brady Henderson estimated 18 cost of elementary, which this is a pretty close 19 number, but again we have some middle school and high 20 school students also on some of those runs. So what 21 we're really looking at here is to tell you what is

22 the increase in cost by adding the distance. And we

23 actually took the longer distance to Southside on the

24 option versus the shorter distance just to Standing

25 Stone. So I believe we used Option 7 when

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calculating this increase. 1

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Right now we pay approximately 200 -- or 2 3 the overall gross cost is about \$221,000 per year. 4 The school district is responsible for 21 percent of 5 that cost or \$46,000. With the increased mileage 6 next year, we're looking at an expense of 200 and 7 about 57 thousand dollars or \$53,920 the school 8 district would be responsible for. The increase that 9 we're looking at there is \$7,710.

Again, this is a work in progress and we will continue to look at many different options. We are working with our contractors and our hope is to minimize the ride for the students.

MS. ADAMS: The next few slides with information will be presented to you by Mr. Socie, and what he's looking at here is the financial implications for each consolidation option as it 17 relates to Brady Henderson HVAC costs and the projected roofing costs for that particular building.

MR. SOCIE: I'd like to cover some elementary school long and short range projected HVAC costs and roofing costs basically for all the elementary schools starting with Southside.

24 Boiler life expectancy. Boiler life 25 expectancy at Southside is 20 years. At that time BORING COURT REPORTING, INC. (814) 364-1793

we'd be looking at a cost of \$75,000 to replace those 1

2 boilers. Southside has chillers, 15-year life

3 expectancy on the chillers that are there. To

4 replace those chiller barrels in 15 years, it would

be approximately \$60,000. The energy management or 5

control system at Southside, the system that is there 6

7 now is really no longer supported by the manufacturer

8 and we're looking at having to upgrade that for a

9 cost of about \$75,000.

10 Brady Henderson Mill Creek, the boiler life expectancy there is 15 years. Boiler replacement 11 12 cost would again be around \$75,000. Brady Henderson 13 does not have chillers, they actually have split 14 units. Each individual classroom has its own air 15 conditioning unit. Their life expectancy is between 16 one and five years with a cost that would probably be 17 spread out over that five years of about \$100,000, 18 and that's for approximately 24 classrooms.

The energy management control system at Brady is the original pneumatic system and we would be looking at replacing that when we explore the pipe and unit vent replacement.

23 Standing Stone is similar to Southside with 24 the cost for its HVAC system. Jackson Miller, the 25 boiler life expectancy there is approximately five

BORING COURT REPORTING, INC. (814) 364-1793 years, boiler replacement cost of \$30,000. Again,

they are similar to Brady Henderson, they have split

3 units. Probably 80 percent of that school has air

4 conditioning. The energy management system there is

5 similar to the one at Southside where we would be

6 looking at upgrading that system because it's no

7 longer supported by the manufacturer.

8 Projected roofing costs at Southside 9 estimated rubber membrane roof life expectancy is 10 10 years. Estimated rubber roof membrane replacement 11 cost is \$545,940. Yearly roof maintenance there is 12 \$5,940. That roof maintenance basically, we spend 13 that money to ensure that we're going to get another 14 10 years out of that roof and not five years.

15 Southside has shingles. Life expectancy on 16 the shingles portion of that roof is one to three 17 years with replacement cost of \$120,000. There is 18 drain repair costs associated with Southside where we 19 have to actually lower some drains that are no longer 20 draining the surface of that roof to ensure that we 21 get that ten years left out of that life expectancy.

22 And we'll be working on that this year along with,

23 you know, a similar situation at Standing Stone.

24 Brady Henderson has a rubber membrane roof 25 with a life expectancy of seven years. To replace

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1 that roof would be approximately \$240,000, yearly

2 roof maintenance cost of \$2,516.

3 Jackson Miller, estimated roof life 4 expectancy is seven years. To replace that roof is 5 \$164,000, yearly roof maintenance costs of \$1,722.

6 Thank you.

7 MS. STUCK: Okay. We have for you now a 8 cost savings considerations in the Brady Henderson 9 building if it were closed. We showed a history 10 going back to '07-'08, utilities and maintenance 11 costs were at about \$62,000, estimated for next year 12 at about 89. Year to date this year, we're at about 13 50,000 and we're estimating it, year end, to be about 14 88.

For computer access, we can see we've gone from about 12 thousand and it's pretty consistent at about \$13,000.

18 On staffing, the way we looked at this is 19 we have the current staff that is at Brady Henderson 20 and then we equate that to a starting position. The 21 reason we're doing this is if we were to look at 22 eliminating all the staff, but as you can see when we 23 looked at those other options, we didn't feel that 24 that was something we would do. The staff at Brady

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has seniority and they would be retained and people

Page 41 to 44 of 163

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at the lower end of the scale would be bumped out. 1 Also we projected that out into '11-'12. 2 3 The reason for the increase, a lot of it has to do 4 with the increase and the benefit cost in health 5 insurance and retirement. Miscellaneous include 6 insurance and mileage for itinerants to travel to the

building and there would actually be a reduction in

cost due to transportation.

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To give a breakdown, the utilities and maintenance that you saw in the first row is broken down, by phone, electric, natural gas, pest control, repairs and maintenance, security, refuse, copier, water, sewer, and maintenance supplies. As you can see these come to the total cost for the buildings for Brady Henderson. Also we did a similar chart for the computer access broken out by the WAM, anti-virus software, e-mail filtering and the library software for the total.

As far as staffing for '09-'10, this shows the current teaching staff, the para-staff and this is salaries and benefits, clerical, custodial, 22 cafeteria and total and then we equate that to a starting salary. When you see the starting that is actually higher than the current, that would be because of the benefits chosen. When we estimate a BORING COURT REPORTING, INC. (814) 364-1793 1 Option 7, again, Jackson Miller is thrown 2 into the picture as well, with a savings of a million 3 dollars down to \$525,000.

4 MS. ADAMS: Those were a lot of figures, a 5 lot of numbers, and I know that we want to give the 6 audience an opportunity to have access to our 7 materials and these materials will be on the website 8 for the school district.

9 But in conclusion, I want say that we, this 10 team, has worked and will continue to work to see 11 that we create the best plan that we can together 12 with you, the school board, and this community. But 13 the options are here that we have presented this 14 evening. We will ask that you put those together 15 with those given to you last night and we will 16 conclude this evening.

17 I just want to say, though, to this 18 audience that the team that I've been working with I 19 know we have well over 200 years in this group in 20 education. I don't know how many years have been 21 spent in this particular district. I have spent my 22 professional life in this district. So your children 23 are the most important thing to me. Not a building, 24 not anybody's particular agenda, it is what is best 25 for the children of our school district. And I stake BORING COURT REPORTING, INC. (814) 364-1793

1 starting, we estimate an average insurance cost.

2 Under miscellaneous, our insurance is about 3 3,600 a year and we estimated the number of trips 4 that we need to send people to Brady Henderson versus 5 staying at the main campus here.

We look at Option 3. We took the savings 7 and again, the full savings would be realized if all staff were eliminated. Again, we said that is not our recommendation. We are just matching the savings 10 with each of the particular columns. So if all Brady went to Southside and we chose to stay with the 12 current Southside teachers, there with be a savings 13 of 615,000. If we went to 21 teachers, an increase of four, it would be down to 418,000.

Option 4, you can see similarly, we have the numbers below. Each time we move over, we are adding our -- actually we are subtracting the savings because we are adding one teacher.

19 Option 5, this is Brady, Jackson, and 20 Standing Stone combined. The savings would be a 21 million dollars, down to \$722,000.

22 Option 6, savings along the bottom. This 23 is splitting Brady, half to Southside, half to 24 Standing Stone. See the savings of 615,000 down to 25 123,000.

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my career on the decisions that we make in the 1 2 future.

3 With that being said, I'll turn the 4 presentation over to Attorney Beard.

5 MR. BEARD: Thank you, Ms. Adams, and 6 everybody that has presented. At this point in time 7 this is an opportunity for any of you that would like 8 to come up and naturally, in an orderly fashion, and 9 present. This went fairly well last night. We would 10 just let the person do their thing and provide what 11 they would like the Board to hear and actually it was 12 very orderly, we went through about 18 people last 13 night. So whoever wants to be the first person. If 14 there's anything for the Board to consider this

15 evening, by all means, please come up to the podium, state your name, address, and indicate whether you're 16

17 a resident or not. We should be able to figure it 18 out based on the address, so. If there is any takers

19 we can start working it through that point.

20 HEATHER BORDER: Good evening. My name is 21 Heather Border. My address is 259 Standing Stone 22 Avenue in Huntingdon. I'm a district resident. I am

23 also a teacher at Brady Henderson Elementary School.

24 This hearing this evening is definite 25 evidence of hard times, hard times for all of us.

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(Brief pause.) And I fear more difficult times ahead 1 2 of us. The State of Pennsylvania has a new governor, 3 I'm sure everybody knows, a governor who is not

4 exactly pro public education. He wants to be sure

5 that parents have a choice in their children's

6 education, that being taxpayer-funded private

7 education. And my reason for making this point is I

8 fear that if Brady Henderson Mill Creek Elementary

9 School closes, the threat of all of these parents

10 here saying they're going send their children to a

11 private school, it does become more real. It becomes

12 more like a promise.

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13 These parents loved their Blue Ribbon 14 School. A Blue Ribbon School, that is the highest 15 honor an American school can achieve. This little 16 school does big things. Things just as well, if not 17 better, than a private education would. Why would 18 our parents ever choose to choose an alternative 19 education for their children when it has been 20 nationally proven that Brady Henderson Mill Creek 21 Elementary School is a quality school? 22 This school remaining open, I feel, will 23 play a vital role and benefit our school district as

tirelessly pass this bill. We need schools like BORING COURT REPORTING, INC. (814) 364-1793

our governor is working, as of yesterday, to

Brady Henderson in our school district with this new governor.

3 (Audience claps.)

MS. BORDER: Maybe closing Brady looks like a savings today, but tomorrow could be a disaster to

6 this school district that I care so much about.

7 Regression as defined by Webster is the 8 shift toward a lower or less perfect state. Is that 9 what we want for our school district? I know I 10 don't. I am proud of this school district. It is a

11 district that has a tremendous staff who have

12 achieved numerous state-acknowledged awards that hang

13 in our school. And yes, it has also achieved a

14 nationally-acknowledged award.

In a time when high stakes testing looms over all of us, as well as the PSSA proficiency level rising every year, teachers, students, administrators and school boards are going to find this goal very difficult to achieve, especially if our classrooms are overcrowded. School closings, and I know the number were presented tonight, but I still fear overloaded classes are not going to get this district those AYP awards that we presently are so used to

24 receiving. And herein lies the regression, is that

25 how we want to be known? Less than perfect?

BORING COURT REPORTING, INC. (814) 364-1793 1 And finally, I would like to take a moment

2 to express my gratitude to the wonderful community of

3 the Brady Henderson Mill Creek. Eighteen years of my

4 life I've been a part of this community and I don't

5 even live there. From the students to the parents to

6 the bus drivers, and to the staff, they are all an

7 important part of my life. It is my second home. I

8 don't know too many people who can say their place of

9 employment is like home, but I can. If I, as an

10 adult, feel this way, one can only imagine how our

11 students feel.

12 As quoted from a 2006 "Altoona Mirror" 13 article featuring Brady Henderson, "Safe Haven", that

14 is what kids and parents think of this school.

15 Research has shown that children who feel a strong 16

sense of community and a strong sense of belonging at 17 an early age, go on to do well in their future years

18 of schooling. I respectfully plead that you, the

19 Huntingdon School Board, consider these crucial

20 facts, keep Brady Henderson Elementary School alive.

21 Again, I am proud of the Brady Henderson 22 Mill Creek community. I am proud of the school

23 district. I am proud to say I'm a member of this

24 school district. This school district has what many

25

other school districts wish they had, but I am mostly

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1 proud to be a teacher at Brady. Thank you.

> 2 (Audience claps.)

3 MS. ZERBE: Holly Zerbe, my address is

4 10023 Sugar Grove Road, Huntingdon. And I'm coming

5 this evening as a kindergarten teacher at Brady

6 Henderson and as a parent of a child at Brady

7 Henderson Elementary.

8 I'm coming tonight because I would like to 9 voice my concerns with the closing of this awesome 10 school. Our school is an amazing place for staff and

11 students. The small family-like atmosphere is like

12 no other building I've ever been a part of. It's

13 something you can't understand if you haven't been a 14

part of it. We are truly a family. The school is my

15 second home, just as Mrs. Border had said. 16

I know that all of our elementary schools are fabulous. I taught at Standing Stone and 18 Southside. They are wonderful hardworking teachers

19 at both of these buildings. All of the kids at this

20 district are receiving an excellent education. I'm

21 not trying to say that teachers at Brady are better,

22 we just have an opportunity that the others do not.

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We work in a small building where we all know each

24 other. When a parent walks in, every teacher in our

building knows which child they are there to pick up

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that day. When a grandparent walks in the building, 1

2 we know which children belong to those grandparents.

3 And when a teacher talks about successes or struggles

4 with one of their students, all the teachers in that

5 school understand that child and understand that

6 situation and we're there for each other. We can

7 work together as a team to do what is best for that

8 particular child in that particular situation.

Since there is only one classroom for each grade level, we know who each other child or who each child's teacher will be the next year and we talk 12 about those students as individuals and as a class to 13 the next year's teacher. So when I go to Mrs. Newton 14 throughout my year who is the first grade teacher, I will go to her and talk to her about my classroom and

16 then over the summer we communicate, she is ready

17 when those kids arrive in her room to hit the ground

18 running. She knows what she needs to do to get that

19 class to do -- to be successful. She knows what to

20 expect. She is pre-prepared to teach in whatever way

21 they need to be taught and that happens the entire

22 way across the board at our school.

There is a sense of safety and security within each of our students. To know every teacher

25 in the building is a safe feeling. Daily students

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1 are greeted by me -- by the staff members. They go

2 through our lunch line calling the servers

3 Aunt Romona and Aunt Tracey. When served their

4 lunch, daily they are all greeted by name. On the

5 playground, all the students play together and know

6 each other.

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We are only a little halfway through the school year and already my kindergarten students know all of every other child in the school. Brady Henderson is their second home as well and their second family as well.

12 And I know you've heard several times that 13 our school is the heart of our community. I live 14 within the community and I teach at this 15 award-winning school. Our school is the heart of 16 community. I think that's one of the biggest reasons 17 for our successes. The community support is 18 overwhelming. We have parents and grandparents 19 volunteering in our schools. We have a group of 20 community members who every year plan events for our 21 students and we have the most supportive parents I've 22 ever worked with.

23 Closing the school would not only affect 24 the students and teachers who are fortunate to be a 25 part of this educational experience, it would be

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And I want leave you with one last thought 2 3 and it's in rhyme, but I think like a kindergarten 4 teacher and mother of a four- and six-year-old, that 5 is just how my brain is wired.

6 We have four elementary schools that 7 continue to excel. Why would we change something

8 that is working so well? 9 MS. VLASAK: Good evening, my name is 10 Peg Vlasak. My address is 10037 School House Hollow

11 Road, Huntingdon. I would like to start out tonight

12 by thanking all of you on the school board for your

13 time and effort. I feel like we have all been down a

14 long journey from September till now and many of us realize that this is a volunteer position that you 15

16 guys are in. It's filled countless hours of your

17 time and a lots of personal sacrifice.

18 That being said, I would also like to 19 discuss the issue at hand tonight and that is the 20 closing -- wow, I didn't think I'd get that emotional 21 -- the closing of our beloved Blue Ribbon School, 22 Brady Henderson Mill Creek. Obviously it is hard for 23 me even to say that.

24 So why are we closing Brady Henderson? I 25 think that is the crux of why we are all here and why (814) 364-1793

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you are here tonight and that's what we have to stay 1

focused on. I came to Jackson Miller's presentation

3 last night as well and we sit through the

4 presentation given to you and given to us by our

5 administration and it's full of numbers, and the

6 numbers to us, when we sit out here, prove sort of

7 how costly and how unworthy Brady is to this school

8 district. And what I'd like to do tonight is maybe

point out to you just the opposite of that and maybe

10 point out some errors that I've had to a chance to

11 find in that report and maybe actually point out to

12 you how some of those numbers actually argue in our 13 favor.

14 First of all, this is kind of been driving 15 me crazy. There are not 115 students at Brady 16 Henderson, I believe there is more than, like, 123. 17 I know that is a small discrepancy, but it's driving 18 me nuts.

19 When looking at student-teacher ratios, we 20 are highly comparable to Southside and Standing Stone. Our 4Sight test scores are not only

21 22 comparable to its two schools, but in some ways we

23 are a little bit better here and there. And in

24 looking at what we saw last night for Jackson Miller

25 and what we know as parents from these wonderful

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1 educators we have, smaller size does reflect better academic performance. Anybody who's in education 2 3 kind of knows that.

4 And it's really amazing to me to think 5 about how none of the kids at Brady Henderson Mill 6 Creek Elementary slipped through the cracks. Like 7 they said, they all know our kids. Our kids all know 8 them. On a personal note, something I don't have 9 written down here, today my husband became very ill 10 and he normally picks up our kids. I couldn't get 11 there on time. I called the secretary, Chrissy, I 12 said, hey, it's Peg, I'm running a little late, a 13 little unexpected glitch, but I'll be down to pick up 14 Olivia and Hunter. Will you let them know? Sure, 15 I'll let them know. That is how it is at Brady. 16 That is not how it is everywhere else. I pull up, 17 all the kids are out on the playground, it's a 18 beautiful day and it broke my heart. I thought this

19 is going to be gone soon if this continues. 20 And then I sit here and I listen to Mr. 21 Coppes, he tells us that one of our best scenarios, 22 or what I shouldn't say that, one of our many 23 options, is not only to close down our beloved Brady 24 Henderson and tear our kids away from their beloved 25 school, but let's rip them apart too. Let's not only

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1 take them away from their elementary school, but let 2 me go home and explain to my daughter Olivia, that

3 she will no longer to going to school with her best

4 friend Jake. I would like someone else to have to

5 explain that to her. I find it hard to believe that

that what's best for our children. It's not best for 6 7

my children.

impossible situation.

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8 We have longer bus routes. Although I keep 9 hearing they are not longer, I know how long it takes 10 to get from my house to Brady and my house to 11 Standing Stone or Southside. I know how long it 12 takes. And then I look at these ridiculously large 13 numbers. I'm not an elementary school teacher, but 14 I'm a high school teacher, and I know that huge 15 classrooms are not good for education. And they are 16 right. We are all under this pressure to bring up 17 our AYP scores, whether you're in elementary or 18 whether you're in high school, it's hard enough to do 19 and then you overcrowd your classrooms, it's an

21 So again, I ask, why are we closing Brady 22 Henderson? As Ms. Adams stated, we have many budget 23 woes in our district. Many of these budget woes 24 cannot be prevented. Governmental cutbacks, we have 25 a governor who is definitely not in favor of public

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1 education, but some things can be controlled.

2 Maybe -- I'd like you to take some things 3 into consideration. We have administrative salaries

4 that when we, as our community group, asked for Right

5 To Know Request from your school district, we

6 compared it with other Right To Know Requests from

other local school districts, our administrative 7

8 salaries are a quarter of a million dollars more than

9 the other districts we examined. In times when

10 schools are being closed and education is paying the

11 price, why do these administrators demand a view to

12 increase their salaries? All the while blaming these

13 teachers and these school buildings for the cost of

14 education.

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(Audience claps.)

MS. VLASAK: We all agree that education 18 for our children is top priority. I know you didn't 19 volunteer to do this because you thought it would all 20 be fun. You care about education. That's why you 21 are here.

Something I would like to point out to you in your preliminary budget, we've sat down and we have looked through it. There are programs like the special programs, that's Line 1200, it shows in your

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preliminary budget a cut of 20 and a half percent 1

2 from last year's final budgets. However, Line 2300

3 supports services for administration, goes up nine

4 percent. Now while I acknowledge it's a preliminary

budget; I know that's not set in stone, it seems like

6 one of those obvious reflections to me of what your

7 administration holds as important and what they hold

8 as valued and then the tough position they put you

9 in, because in the end, the community sees you voting

10 on this stuff.

11 Once more, why are we closing Brady? Is it 12 because we need to or is it because Brady has become 13 the scapegoat of the administration's mismanagement 14 of funds? It is due to the fact --

(Audience claps.)

16 MS. VLASAK: It is due to the fact that the 17 administration tells you that there will be a

18 \$500,000 proposed savings for BHMC to pay for the

19 \$850,000 a year mortgage for the proposed new middle

20 school? Again, I ask you why are we closing

21 Brady Henderson Mill Creek Elementary?

22 It has been given to me, some information 23 has been given to me that PNC's own prospectus calls 24 for more than nine mills worth of payment in 25

2011-2012, increasing over time to 19 mills by 2036,

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61 for the payment of that middle school. It seems odd 1 1 night's discussion, we are all looking at -- sorry --2 that the closing of these schools and the building of we are looking at all areas and principles in seeing 3 that middle school seem to go hand in hand. Why are 3 where we can cut down. I want you, the elected 4 we closing Brady? 4 members of our board, to know that we, the community, 5 5 (Audience clasps.) the parents, the teachers, the students, and 6 MS. VLASAK: Mr. Shellava, you have 6 definitely our children, not only the ones that are 7 7 there, but the ones that are hoping to go there, are commented that you worry that closing this school 8 will divide our community. I can't stress how right 8 counting on you to hold her to that quote. 9 9 he is about that. Not that we Brady people, as we Please do not examine what stares you in 10 seem to be called now with a kind of negative tone to 10 the face, but some of the things that lie beneath. 11 it, didn't like people in Standing Stone or 11 We've asked you since September to do a feasibility 12 Southside, I grew up in Huntingdon, I have tons of 12 study by the Department of Education of the entire 13 13 friends who live in Huntingdon, my children have school district to see where wasteful spending 14 friends who live in Huntingdon, I do things in 14 occurs. Please do not make Brady Henderson Mill Huntingdon. I consider myself as much a member of 15 15 Creek the scapegoat of an administration that says 16 Mill Creek. But we Brady 16 Huntingdon as I do one thing but does another. people really, really struggle because we don't want 17 17 (Audience claps.) 18 18 to be forced to send our children to Southside or MS. VLASAK: In closing tonight, I would 19 Standing Stone or even worse, have them divided up 19 like to read something that was given to me by my 20 and sent a little bit here and a little bit there. 20 daughter, she is home sick with bronchitis and really 21 21 And it tends to lead to ill contempt and resentment, wanted to come tonight. I had to fight with her to 22 22 people become angry about it. And, yeah, the keep her in bed and not allow her to come. But she 23 community becomes divided, so you were right about 23 typed this up in our home computer because she had 24 24 that. planned to speak to you in front of all these people 25 Another one of you said that you were tired 25 tonight.

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district. And Mrs. Border was absolutely right. We would never, ever, pull our kids from Brady Henderson Mill Creek. But it's not a threat. It's a reality if you close our school. While you have the power to affect our future and definitely affect our children's future, you can't force us to take our children to Southside and Standing Stone. And --(Audience claps.) MS. VLASAK: Please be aware that you're

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2 they want to pull their children from the school

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of being threatened by all those Brady people that

13 14 your school district will lose precious funding from 15 the children who will be withdrawn. I asked an 16 administrator today how much money will they lose. I 17 was told that each child that will leave the 18 district, will cost approximately \$8,000 to you. And 19 if they are a special needs child, it could go up to 20 24,000. Your district will also be responsible for 21 paying your children's transportation to neighboring 22 private schools. It all adds up. It certainly 23 doesn't help your financial situation by closing the 24 school. 25 So to quote your superintendent from last

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1 This is what she says: There is so much to 2 say, but there is just one important thing that comes 3 to mind, my school is the best. Also you have all 4 been hearing lots of Brady Henderson, it's a Blue 5

Ribbon School and that's right. No one other schools 6 have that Blue Ribbon. And I doubt anyone else will

7 get one because we worked our butts off to keep it 8 that way. We worked hard for getting the highest

9 score, 4Sight scores, and we worked hard for our PSSA

10 scores. And I have the best teachers and friends, 11

and the saddest thing is that the people could lose 12 this and I would not like that to happen. And I will

13 cry my heart out if this will happen and I want to

14 know is this really what you are going to do or are

15 you going to make a big mistake? And that is

16 submitted by my daughter, Olivia Vlasak who is in

17 third grade at Mrs. Estep's class.

18 Thank you. MS. REAMER: Good evening. My name is 20 Catrina Reamer. I live at 267 Standing Stone Avenue 21 in Huntingdon and I am a resident of Huntingdon 22 County. I am also a second grade teacher at Brady 23 Henderson Mill Creek Elementary. I'm also a proud 24 parent of two children in the third grade at Brady

25 Henderson.

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1 I thought long and hard about what I wanted to say this evening, whether I wanted to speak as a 2 3 teacher, a parent, or both. The truth is I sat here 4 month after month and have heard parents and 5 community members speak on behalf of keeping Brady 6 Henderson open. I've been absolutely amazed and 7 touched by what the parents and community members 8 have said in support of our school and teachers. 9 They have presented factual information, numbers, and 10 many possible solutions, as well as pleading to 11 emotional side of the administration and board 12 members. I can't think of anything else that I could 13 possibly say that hasn't already been said. I'm not 14 sure what else could persuade the Huntingdon Area 15 School Board to see things differently, but the 16 bottom line is I feel I owe it to my students, my 17 children, and all these amazing people that are here 18 tonight that have been fighting so hard for our 19 school. I want to take this opportunity to commend 20 you and thank you for your persistence, determination 21 and good fight. 22 When I was hired by Huntingdon School 23 District just four short years ago, I was thrilled to 24 be hired at Brady Henderson. I remember Ms. Border

1 or see in the cafeteria that day while on duty. In no way is this a slam against the larger 2 3 elementary schools in the district. I know those 4 teachers are great. After all we are all Huntingdon 5 employees and held to a higher standard, something I 6 am proud of. But how could the teachers be expected 7 to know 350 plus students when they may never have 8 had them in their classroom? The only regret I may 9 have is that I might have to tell my children that 10 they can no longer come to Brady Henderson, a school 11 they love. 12

I'm asking you one last time to please think long and hard about this very important decision that lies in your hands and that affects so many families and young lives. Thank you.

MR. HODGSON: My name is Jeffery Hodgson,

Post Office Box 370, Pine Grove Mills, PA, 16828.

(Court reporter clarification.)

MR. HODGSON: Good evening. My name is Jeffrey Hodgson and I currently teach fifth grade at Brady Henderson. I stand before you tonight as someone who is concerned about the future of the students of Brady Henderson.

When I think of Brady Henderson I imagine a
 vibrant hub for the small town of Mill Creek. One
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1 what it is. I absolutely love the small school

- 2 concept and the friendliness and collaboration
- 3 between colleagues. I can't think of anywhere else I

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4 would want to teach. My young children were going to

saying welcome to the Brady bunch, and that's exactly

- 5 start school the following year and I intended to
- **6** send them to Southside where they could get on and
- 7 off the school bus at their baby-sitter's home. The
- 8 longer I was a part of Brady Henderson, I saw the
- **9** warmth and personal relationships the teachers have
- **10** with all the students. I can honestly say every
- 11 teacher knows every student in the school. Where
- 12 else can you say that? Maybe that doesn't sound like
- 13 a big deal to those that have never been a part of a
- 14 small school such as Brady, but for those that have,
- **15** it means the world.

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16 As the summer approached, I made the 17 decision I wanted my own children to attend Brady 18 Henderson if it was possible. I was thrilled when 19 Mr. Coppes later called me that summer to let me know 20 that they could. I have never regretted that 21 decision. They love their school, their teachers, 22 and their friends. It's so reassuring as a parent to 23 know that the adults who care for my children all day 24 long, actually know who they are and that they are

not just another young face they pass in the hall or

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1 could almost think of this school as the heart of the

- 2 community where the community comes together to
- 3 benefit its children. The community members look to
- 4 the local school as a place for educating its
- 5 youngest population. The children view the school as
- 6 a small, safe, and nurturing environment. I have
- 7 seen a great deal of pride exhibited by the parents
- 8 and members of the community in the four short years
- 9 I've been at Brady.

10 People at this town take great satisfaction 11 in this Blue Ribbon School. This award wasn't handed 12 to us. This award was bestowed on Brady Henderson 13 Mill Creek School because of its supportive parents, 14 hardworking students and dedicated staff. This award 15 shows that small schools can succeed, make the grade, 16 and provide a secure setting for students to grow and 17 learn.

While growing up I attended a large
neighboring district. I feel I received an adequate
education, however, I feel I missed out on what we
have here at Huntingdon, and especially at Brady
Henderson. What we have is the small town atmosphere
where children are nurtured, known, and challenged to
meet their full potential.

It is such a humbling feeling to really and BORING COURT REPORTING, INC. (814) 364-1793

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truly get to the know the students at Brady. Each of 1

2 the 121 students at Brady are not numbers, like I

3 experienced growing up. Each student is an

4 individual with a personality, with dream, hopes,

5 challenges, fears, and successes. After having

6 taught in a small school, I can honestly say that the

7 small school approach does pay off and will continue

8 to pay off for as long as we support this concept and

9 see the value it has on students, a community and

10 achievement. Sometimes we can't put a price tag on

11 the everlasting benefits.

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(Audience claps.)

MR. HODGSON: As we evaluate the needs of the schools, I ask that you would please consider the benefits of a small environment. Brady Henderson is a great school and should continue to educate for generations to come. Thank you.

MS. WAITE: Good evening. My name is Dana Waite, W-A-I-T-E. My address is with 125 Spring Run, Big Valley Pike, Mill Creek. I have been a resident of Brady Township for the past 32 years. I'm a 22 grandparent of two boys that attend Brady Henderson.

23 First of all, I'd like to thank you, the 24 school board, for your relentless hours that you 25 contribute to the school district. You are faced

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with a very difficult decision that will affect many 1 2 lives for years to come. It is my wish that you will hear and listen to all of the facts with an open mind 3 and not have your decision already made.

I retired as a para educator eight years ago. I worked for the district for 15 years and 6 7 during that time I considered most of you my friends. Jill, she was a principal at Alfarata when I worked

9 there and Jeff was a teacher. I worked on contract

10 negotiations for the support staff and game managers

11 for different sporting events. I was there when

12 Patty Morgan and Port Williams and Jeff Miles and

Sean Powers first came to the district. We all have 13

14 strived to keep the children first. However,

15 somewhere along the line it seems that the almighty

16 dollar has taken place of the children in our

17 district.

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(Audience claps.)

MS. WAITE: My role now is a child care provider. I care for six children and three of my grandchildren. Some days I see that seven children get on the school bus via Bus Number 43 and those that need care after school, I see that they get safely off the bus at my house.

25 One of the children would normally ride BORING COURT REPORTING, INC. (814) 364-1793 Bus 3 home unless there is a need for her to come to

my house. You see, her parents work two jobs to make 2

3 ends meet. So on your options list, Option 6 and 7,

4 wouldn't work. I am not alone in this situations, as

5 many child care providers have the same situation in

6 in their families and homes. 7 I have attended meeting after meeting since

8 September. I want my grandchildren to attend Brady

9 Henderson. It is a Blue Ribbon School with great

10 test scores and a community that stands behind the

11 children and their wonderful teachers that strive to

12 educated our children. We take pride in being Brady.

We may be a small community but we have

14 many businesses that locate to our area because of 15 our great elementary school. We not only have four

16 churches, but places to eat and drink in our

17 community, a fire department, a hotel, bowling alley,

18 sporting good stores, repair shops, industries, and

19 let's not forget the many farms that support their

20 families. All of these are taxpaying contributors to

21 the school district.

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At board meeting after board meeting we heard from you the board that you wish to hear the elderly. This past week they spoke and continue to speak with one wish: To stop the building of the

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1 middle school. Now, you say it's too late. It's not

2 too late. It would be better to lose two million

3 dollars now than 22 million dollars later.

(Audience claps.)

5 MS. WAITE: Four years ago it was a good 6

idea. Building a new middle school was considered 7 then, our economy was booming. It was able to

8 sustain the financial idea of a new middle school.

9 Now we can't afford it. Our economy has changed

10 since the collapse two years ago. The government

11 isn't going to help bail the district out. We don't

12 even know how much money the district can count on

13 this year.

14 People struggle to make ends meet on a 15 daily basis. Many find it hard to even pay the 16 yearly property taxes they have, let alone, consider 17 raising them. How many people will lose their homes 18 because of this endeavor?

19 (Audience claps.) 20 MS. WAITE: Ms. Adams is pushing so hard to 21 get this decision passed and won't be living in our 22 district once she retires. As a mother and 23 grandmother, she hopes to move to be close to her 24 family, or so she stated to me in December. So

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higher taxes and tearing the community apart won't

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repeatedly the education of our students is foremost 1 on our minds. However I can't help but think that 2 3 our students are seen as numbers and money and not 4 the individuals they truly are with the options 5 given, especially Option 6 and 7.

6 I'd like to share a story with you, as most 7 of you know, my son Jake is in the third grade at 8 Brady Henderson Elementary School. Jake's class is 9 so legendary, it is sort of legendary at Brady 10 Henderson Mill Creek, as you can see. They are 11 challenging bunch, not due to their behaviors, but 12 due to the thirst for knowledge and learning they 13 possess. These are 18 kids that I have never seen 14 want to learn as much as they do. Any teacher that teachers this group of children truly does earn their 15 16 salary and are challenged daily as educators and, frankly, as a sidebar deserve a raise. 17

Jake and three of his friends have been a close circle of friends since kindergarten and hit it off right away. Each bring their own unique qualities to 22 their circle of friends. These boys are pretty amazing. They can tell you anything about animals, birds, dinosaurs, geography in our world that you 25 want to know. They can tell you all about World War

Jake and three of his friends (brief pause)

district to eliminate the separation of Brady

Henderson Mill Creek. I also have an Option Number

3 10, combine the Jackson Miller students into Brady

4 Henderson Mill Creek Elementary School. We are to be

5 looked at separate entities and schools in this

6 process, thanks to Mr. Berger. The options presented

7 are perceived as all or nothing: Close two schools

8 or none at all. This option would be a viable option

9 as the Jackson Miller students would be placed into a

10 small school setting that would embrace them.

I just have a few parting words.

12 Ms. Adams, you spoke of the, what did you say, 200 or

13 400 years of education combined that your team has

14 that has worked on these options and prospectus. I

15 would encourage you to go back to your roots.

16 Reflect on when you, yourself as educators sat in a

17 classroom with a group of students in front of you

18 day in and day out. Remember the connections you

19 made to those students. That is what you're asking

20 these teachers to do on a daily basis and they do it

21 wonderfully, as do all of these teachers in this

22 district. But what you're asking them to do is look

23 at their students and say, I'm sorry, but we have to 24

close your school.

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I think you need to go back to how it felt BORING COURT REPORTING, INC. (814) 364-1793

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1 II as if they were there and fought it themselves.

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2 They continue to push each other and the parameters

of what they've learned. This has been supported and 3

4 encouraged by the Brady Henderson Mill Creek

5 teachers. They inspire and challenge each other to

become lifelong learners and continue to develop the 6

7 foundation that is started in the elementary school

8 needed to become productive middle and high school

9 students.

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10 This group of four friends were brought together because of where they live. They were 11 12 not -- they do not know each other before they set 13 foot in Brady Henderson Mill Creek the first day of 14 kindergarten. Based on an option presented, they 15 could potentially be separated because of where they 16 live. Mine son would go to Southside and his three 17 very close buddies would go to Standing Stone. Is it 18 truly emotionally, mentally, and academically in the best interest of any and all children at this age to 19 20 basically divide a school down the middle in order to 21 save money?

I would like to present some other options for consolidation to you. Last night you heard an Option Number 8. I would like to present an Option Number 9. Realign all elementary schools within the

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1 as an educator, it's not about money. Money isn't all it's about. Theirs is a human factor here. 2

(Audience claps.)

MS. TANNER: In this audience there are students that attend Brady Henderson Mill Creek Elementary School. If you attend Brady, could you pleads stand up?

8 (Thereupon undetermined amount of audience 9 members stand.)

MS. TANNER: There are not money; they are not a number. They are individuals and they deserve 12 to be treated that way. I understand that money is 13 the bottom line. But what you are tasked with is a 14 quality of education. You are to provide our 15 children with a quality of education. That's the bottom line here. Not money.

17 To the school board, the challenge ahead of 18 you will not be easy. It is my hope and prayer you 19 will ask the questions that need to be asked and push 20 for the answers that you deserve and alternatives 21 from your administration. To add to your to-do list, 22 Mr. Coppes spoke of children that we have 23 transitioned throughout our district from elementary 24 schools, you know, to the middle school, to the high

25 school, I would like for you to honestly ask your BORING COURT REPORTING, INC. (814) 364-1793

1 administration to perhaps get you the names and 2 contact information of the families that transitioned 3 from one elementary school to another and maybe have 4 the opportunity to discuss with those parents the 5 challenges that their children saw and the successes 6 that happened in this transition for this children 7 also. 8

It's time to honestly put down the numbers and put down the data and realize that these kids are students, they are humans, just as every other child is in this district. My son is Jake Robert Tanner and he deserves to be acknowledged and treated in that way in this process. Thank you.

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MR. REAMER: Good evening, my name is Richard Reamer. I live at 267 Standing Stone. My wife spoke previously. I come here as a parent. I also come here as her husband.

18 Those two options 6 and 7 that are up 19 there, I get really angry. Mrs. Tanner, Jake's mom, 20 Piper, my son happens to be one of the fantastic four 21 that she's talking about. And I'd really hate for 22 Caden not to have to go to school with Jake. You 23 know, how do you tell a nine-year-old, sorry, buddy,

your friends has to go to that school because of

25 numbers of money. It's about the kids.

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Mrs. Adams, you said it's about the kids. 2 Are you and Mr. Coppes going to be the ones that go and tell these kids well, I'm sorry because you live here, you know, you can see your friends after school, but during school, well, they have to go over

6 here? No. It has to be up to the parents that tell 7 them that. 8 You know, I'm usually really put together

and don't get upset, I'm a little angry because it's all about numbers. It's not about numbers. It's about the kids. It's always about the kids. You said it was about the kids.

(Audience claps.)

MR. REAMER: You know, I appreciate the time that you folks, you know, you volunteered to do this job. You've got a tough one. And I think that sometimes you're listening to us, but you're not hearing us. I really hope tonight that you hear us, that you're not just listening. Thank you.

20 MS. ROONEY-POORMAN: Good evening, my name 21 is Kara Rooney-Poorman. And I live at 10161 Dotsview 22 Lane and that's Huntingdon, PA.

(Court reporter clarification.)

24 MS. ROONEY-POORMAN: I'm here this evening 25 to speak to you on behalf of my children who couldn't

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come this evening. They wrote each of you a letter 1 2 and I'm going to read them to you.

3 My first grader, her name is Bria Poorman 4 and she wrote: Dear Sir, Madam, big people on the 5 Board, I would miss Brady Henderson if you close my 6 school. Brady Henderson is the best school I've ever 7 been to. I would be very scared -- let that be a

8 footer because all three letters -- going to a big

9 school. I would miss my teacher Mrs. Newton. She is

10 the best. Please do not close my school. It will

11 make me very sad. Love Bria Poorman, first grader.

12 The second one is from my son, Tony: I'm 13 scared to go to a big school if you close Brady 14 Henderson. I like it. It's small and fun. I would 15 miss my friends and my teacher Mrs. Reamer. 16 Mrs. Reamer makes learning fun and I like going to 17 school everyday. Please do not close my school. 18 That is Tony and he's in the second grade.

The last one: Dear, Sir and Madam, please do not send us to a different school because not all of us are ready to go to such a big school with lots of kids. I'm scared of being crowded into classrooms full of strangers that is too small for me to work in and concentrate in. The hallways will be really crowded and the lunchroom, too. I'm concerned that I (814) 364-1793

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1 will not have enough time to eat my lunch. My school

2 does a lot of fun family functions. I'm nervous that

3 Standing Stone won't continue with our functions

4 because there won't be any room to have all of those

5 students there. I also worry that there won't be a

6 space to hold these types of things. I also worry

7 about all of the teachers, Mr. Hodgson is the best

8 teacher ever. I would never learn from anyone else

9 the way I learned from him. The teachers make me

10 feel safe. All of the teachers talk to me. I'm

11 afraid the teachers at the new school won't talk to

me and won't know my name. So in conclusion, I feel 12

13 sending us to a new school is a bad idea. Thanks for

14 reading this and please make the best choice. Love

15 Kalin Shope, fifth grade.

16 In November we lost -- I lost my father. I 17 made one phone call to Mrs. Newton because I had to 18 leave town. And I told her what happened and I said, 19 I have to trust that you can kind of keep an eye on 20 my kids for me, you know, while they are at school, 21 if there is a problem, I have to leave town. Just

22 give me a call and I'll have someone pick them up if

23 you feel they can't handle it. I left that evening

24 knowing all three of my children would be in the best

25 hands capable because of they were in the hands of

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these teachers right here in this front row --1 (Audience claps.) 2

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MS. ROONEY-POORMAN: -- who gave them an 4 extra hug that day when I couldn't be there, and made 5 me feel secure that I could be have with this 6 emergency. I never would have been able to do it at 7 a bigger school and I never would have been able to do it without the teachers that our children have. So thank you.

JAKE TANNER: Hi, my name is Jake Tanner 11 and I'm a student at Brady Henderson. And how would 12 the students feel if you shut our school and the 13 teachers, it's just so sad, all my friends and all my favorite teachers. I just say please don't shut our school.

16 UNIDENTIFIED LITTLE GIRL: I can't do it. 17 MS. BARTOL: I have no idea what she was 18 going to say because she wouldn't tell me, so better 19 watch out.

I'm sorry, Michelle Bartol, 8359 Bartol 21 Lane. So, you know, I guess the guestion is we've 22 all been asking, so why are we closing Brady? You presented a few options, certainly the number of 24 classrooms at Southside hasn't changed since April 25 30, 2010. In that particular presentation, a couple

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of options were reviewed.

2 Number 8 option, Brady and Southside combined with only Southside staff. Those that they 3 4 talked about, were certainly on this document talking 5 about class sizes ranging from 21 to 27. There would 6 be a reduction of seven teachers that was listed.

7 Your only document acknowledged that the 8 class sizes averaging 24 and 25 on the elementary 9 level are excessive and not conducive to strong 10 academic achievement. This would seem to contradict 11 the effort you need to put forward towards increasing 12 performance as compared to some of the hefty AYP 13 goals that we have coming up over the next couple of 14 vears.

15 Another option on that document, Brady and 16 Southside with all present staff. Class size ranges 17 from 16 to 19 on the elementary level. Mr. Coppes, 18 you gave me the number of rooms with various 19 scenarios in your presentation -- some of your 20 scenarios -- sorry -- some of the scenarios require 21 perhaps the need to construct additional classrooms. 22 I don't know. Is that right? I'm a little 23 disappointed, I think I used that word the other 24 night, just off the cuff, disappointed is the word

25 that I feel. I'm disappointed that that might be

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failed to be mentioned as part of the some of these 1 2 options presented.

3 In the document, in addition, you're taking 4 away from all the students at Southside because to 5 actually have the space, according to this 6 information, you need to use a computer room, a large 7 group, instruction room, primary learning support 8 classroom, intermediate learning support classroom, a 9 book room, and construct additional classrooms. And 10 nowhere in any of these presentations did the 11 administration talk about a second building project 12 adding on to our elementaries. When were you 13 planning on discussing this? After two buildings

15 Jill, why is the Board not informed of 16 these very important potential trade-offs? I always 17 find that the best decisions come when there is 18 discussion amongst a group, and this is a very 19 important group that needs time to discuss and look 20 at options. You need time to discuss with each 21 other. 22

Seems to me this kind of information perhaps should have been discussed before we even started these 780 Hearing processes. You know, I was looking at the diagrams that you have up there, and BORING COURT REPORTING, INC. (814) 364-1793

were closed? After it was too late?

1 you know, as you attempt to bring your class sizes to

within a reasonable range to be effective as a

3 district, the numbers of savings from left to right

4 change drastically. They change drastically. And

5 over time as we begin this process and a couple years

6 go by and the class sizes are large and everybody is

7 crowded and it doesn't work very well, you will go

8 back to the way that you are now. You'll have great

9 class sizes and that will cost money, but in the

10 meantime we will have closed Brady Henderson.

11 Since PSSA scores need to improve, it 12 appears to me that its seems like we're just taking a 13 step backwards. According to Jill, the educations of 14 our students are first and foremost on our minds. I 15 think we're having trouble balancing a lot of

16 different balls. I don't think that education is 17 first and foremost on our minds. I think we have

18 trouble balancing all of these balls.

(Audience claps.)

MS. BARTOL: I think we're choosing between death by fire or death by drowning. If you close Brady, you either need to build onto the existing elementaries or risk losing the gains you have made over the last ten years in academic achievement.

When you look at your charts, Jeff, class BORING COURT REPORTING , INC.

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by design.

sizes were bigger on the left and you guys, I don't 1 2 know, it's not just the class size, but -- and you 3 made a lot of changes and you done a good job -- but 4 I can't imagine you to want to blow that. I mean if education is your career, you do not want to blow 6 that.

7 Setting yourself up to solve these kinds of 8 questions is really just too much for me comprehend. 9 I really can't. These steps seem to me to take us 10 backwards. I've been saying since November, the 11 middle school, the elementary, program choices, 12 teacher compensation, which I'm saying this for Dave 13 Berger because I do support a tax increase to pay the 14 teachers. I do support that. I don't support a tax increase to put bridges in the ground or new 15 16 buildings when we perhaps don't need them.

17 So you have all these balls. The 18 elementary is the program choice, the teacher 19 compensation, retirement, which is going to continue 20 to balloon. The continued lack of funding. Those 21 are all decisions that must be made in consideration 22 of each other. Not by themselves, not in the linear 23 process.

24 As we go down this road and if the middle 25 school is a done deal, I fear for my town. I fear BORING COURT REPORTING, INC. (814) 364-1793

1 for my town. Not only will we be crushed by school 2 taxes for the next 20 years, unfortunately our students will begin a decline in academic achievement 3 4 where there was a rise, because you know each year as 5 the funding goes down, but we're mortgaged out, you 6 are going to have to make choices. And the easy 7 choices --8 (Audience claps.)

MS. BARTOL: And I feel -- I just feel this board is backed in a corner. The easy choices from one year to the next without a lot of long-term planning is to make the class sizes bigger, cut the teacher, cut music, cut whatever stuff is easy to cut. And in the meantime your scores will be going down and you can't do anything about it. You are not going to be able to do anything about.

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You know, it sort of reminds me of the discount rate in higher ed. today, that is what it reminds me of. The discount rate of higher ed is uncontrollable. We cannot control it. That is going to happen with this. Five years down the line, you are not going to be able to control your expenses. And you will have so many fixed costs that the only option you have is the quality of these kids and what they experience. That is going to be the only

BORING COURT REPORTING, INC. (814) 364-1793 I'm going to read this statement again because it

13 14 means, it is everything to me. I don't see why other

option. You won't be able to do anything else.

You are doing a good job. Okay.

So Jill, you say it's all about the

students and to have two options up there that split

Brady by the bus ride. Oh, my gosh, that's amazing.

That's amazing. Not only are you closing my school,

you are taking my friends. So personally I have been

You know, I just -- I just have to say that

trying to understand this and I -- you know, it is

quite difficult. And I'm starting to believe that's

Okay. That was an add in.

15 people aren't -- more people don't make this 16

connection but, again, the PA prospectus for the 17 middle school calls for more than nine mills worth of

18 a payment in 2011 and '12 and that increases over

19 time with interest to 19 mills by 2036. Is that not 20 right?

MR. REIF: It is, yes and no.

22 MS. BARTOL: Yes and no. Well, you know,

23 it's the same amount of money. But at any rate, you

24 know the question is, so why are we closing Brady? I

25 don't know. I don't know. Thanks.

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1 MRS. ADAMS: Ms. Bartol, I just wanted to 2 say to you that in our options, there is no second 3 building program. I don't know what you're referring 4 to there and there are no added renovations to our

5 proposals.

6 MS. BARTOL: No, it's right here in this 7 document. I'm referencing your document.

8 MR. COPPES: Actually maybe I can address 9 this, your statement regarding the rooms. You know,

10 as each year, every school district has to look at

11 enrollment figures and staffing options in the

12 budgets and what you have there probably is something

13 that -- they were related to this process. I'm not

14 sure exactly the document but you obviously have it.

15 They talk about the rooms. This is what 16 would be available at those schools without 17 construction costs. All right. You absolutely could 18 add rooms if you wanted to, but these are available 19 rooms. I'll be specific with them.

20 At Standing Stone, we'll start with there 21 first. We have classrooms right now, full-size 22 classrooms, that have sometimes programs with four or 23 five students in those. All right. We also have a lot of small group instruction rooms that are 24 25 designed for special education, Title 1 that would be

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Page 89 to 92 of 163

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more effective ways.

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2 Right now we have four classrooms right now 3 and I can -- I can be -- talk about those. Three are 4 existing classrooms of the district. One is a Head 5 Start classroom that if our finances tell us that we 6 have to consolidate, there may not be a need for that 7 Head Start pre-K classroom. It would be relocated at 8 another classroom in the community. It is a Head 9 Start classroom at Standing Stone. Just like we have 10 at Brady, the pre-K Count 1, that went away with the 11 funding. This one could be located at a Head Start 12 facility or what the governor proposed with the 13 economics, probably will not exist next year the way 14 the funding is.

Yes, you did reference a computer lab. And 16 that is -- when schools do consolidate, they look at 17 the rooms they have available. We have computer labs 18 there, just like we have at Brady. But it is interesting to note when we first bought into the compass learning program, which is now or still can be used by a lot by our teachers, not as much as 22 before, I will track monthly usage of the computers students usage by students, are we getting our bang out of our buck that our kids have access to those and how that relates to academic gains.

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I can tell you by far Brady Henderson had the largest computer usage as a building compared to even larger buildings because these teachers use it the way most school districts are trying to do. If you walk across computer labs across any

4 5 6 school district in any state, by far there are large 7 gaps in the day when they're never being used. This 8 group of teachers have learned how to master this. 9 They have four or five stations in their rooms that 10 we worked hard for them. And those students had 11 greater access to computers because everyday during 12 guided reading, they had a station to go to, and so 13 just to allow time to go to the computer lab. We 14 don't go to another room to use an overhead 15 projector, but for some reason we do that. That's just an option. So a computer lab could be used. 16 You know, it's definitely large enough.

17 18 The other room would basically, over at 19 Standing Stone, is we have another option. We do have a large group room that will hold a hundred 20 21 people in, actually. We use that some occasionally 22 for chorus practice. We use it for drug and alcohol 23 lessons, AIDS instruction. We already talked to 24 Andrea Croyle, that could be a classroom. It could 25 be. But also I've already talked to Andrea Croyle, a BORING COURT REPORTING, INC. (814) 364-1793 1 music teacher, and she is very willing to relocate,

if need be, make that the music instruction room and 2

3 have the music room available for student usage.

4 Those are six classrooms at Standing Stone that we 5 can use.

6 Can we add on? Absolutely. I mean, 7 there's no plans. There has been no discussions. If 8 you go to the playground entrance to that school, you 9 see an overhang there with concrete. Those are 10 designed, actually, for expansion rooms at \$1999 --11 or \$89,000 to build on. That is what they cost back 12 then. Be tremendous amount of money now. So that 13 school has rooms and the other rooms can be used in

At Southside, we definitely have rooms that are -- that are workable as well. Right how we have a learning support room with small group instruction in that room. We have another learning support room that has, it's smaller in size, but it would be able to be a classroom. We have a lab there that could be used the same way for repurposing those computers in classrooms, have four or five stations insurance-type

23 whether a primary child, K through 1 or somebody do

24 forced study hour or compass learning. But we have 25

the same issue with the music phase room or the LGI,

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1 so there are options without expanding.

2 Those notes you have there, Michelle, they 3 do say that as an option, way back a year ago if we 4 had to do that. What will we explore, but we never 5 really talked about it since that point. But those 6 are rooms that if we have to consolidate are doable 7 classrooms for students. Do you have any further 8 questions about that?

9 UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: I do. 10 MR. COPPES: Go ahead.

11 UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: So are you 12 guaranteeing us that if you close the schools, you 13 are not going to build onto Southside and Standing 14 Stone?

15 MR. COPPES: I'm not recommending that at 16 all. We never discussed that with the Board at this 17 point.

18 MS. BARTOL: What about other 19 administration?

20 MR. BEARD: You are going to have give the 21 stenographer an opportunity to state your --

22 MR. COPPES: These options relate to the 23 usage of those rooms and those rooms only. That's 24 the plan on that, those would be chosen, only those 25 rooms.

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1	MS. BARTOL: But the rooms as they're	1	student faculty/ratio and the number of classroom.	
2	currently being used you would be displacing those	2	MR. COPPES: Right.	
3	students or.	3	MS. BARTOL: So perhaps we need a more	
4	MR. COPPES: For other rooms.	4	in-depth understanding for each of those options than	
5	MS. BARTON: For other rooms somewhere	5	we actually see in the building and see where the	
6	else?	6	kids will be enhanced	
7	MR. COPPES: For other rooms, yes.	7	MR. COPPES: Sure.	
8	MS. BARTOL: Both of those options do say	8	MS. BARTOL: and fit in there.	
9	construct additional classrooms, what is "class size	9	MR. COPPES: Be glad to do that.	
10	excessive"?	10	MS. BARTOL: Okay.	
11	MR. COPPES: What date is that, Michelle?	11	MR. COPPES: Be glad to do that.	
12	MS. BARTOL: April 30, 2010.	12	MS. HAMMON: Hi, my name is Rhonda Hammon,	
13	MR. COPPES: Okay. All of these plans,	13	H-A-M-M-O-N. I'm a resident in the Huntingdon Area	
14	conducive plans, have been worked on extensively	14	School District. My address the 11865 Big Valley	
15	probably since January of this year, knowing that	15	Pike, Mill Creek. I wasn't planning on speaking	
16	these hearings will be coming up, so maybe it was	16	tonight. I didn't bring a paper. I'm totally	
17	said then, but that's not our plan now.	17	shocked. I actually came as a taxpayer and I am	
18	MS. BARTOL: No, the only thing I would	18	shocked at this presentation.	
19	have to say is that the number of students are the	19	I have two daughters. I don't stand to	
20	same and the building sizes are the same, so if Brady	20	lose anything. They are 19 and 21, one will graduate	
21	and Southside combine is an option, then it's kind of	21	from the Air Force Academy this May, the other one	
22	all similar.	22	attends University of Pitt. She is in her second	
23	MR. COPPES: I'm not I'm unclear what	23	year, Dean's list, math/chemistry major. My	
24	you are saying. The figures we have here were based	24	daughters are where they are because of the teachers,	
25	on the enrollment figures a couple weeks ago when we	25	either some of them I know, some that are gone.	
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1	called the secretary for the most recent updates of	1	I can't even believe that this, this little	
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	called the secretary for the most recent updates of		I can't even believe that this, this little	
2	called the secretary for the most recent updates of our enrollment figures.	2	I can't even believe that this, this little paltry amount of money is how you are going to save	
3	called the secretary for the most recent updates of our enrollment figures. MS. BARTON: I know, I just the numbers	2	I can't even believe that this, this little paltry amount of money is how you are going to save money. Look. I expected to see all of the expenses	
2 3 4	called the secretary for the most recent updates of our enrollment figures. MS. BARTON: I know, I just the numbers are fairly similar.	2 3 4	I can't even believe that this, this little paltry amount of money is how you are going to save money. Look. I expected to see all of the expenses of the district. How can we save money? You're	
2 3 4 5	called the secretary for the most recent updates of our enrollment figures. MS. BARTON: I know, I just the numbers are fairly similar. MR. COPPES: Pardon me?	2 3 4 5	I can't even believe that this, this little paltry amount of money is how you are going to save money. Look. I expected to see all of the expenses of the district. How can we save money? You're giving me a million dollar figure and you're talking	
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2 3 4 5 6 7 8	called the secretary for the most recent updates of our enrollment figures. MS. BARTON: I know, I just the numbers are fairly similar. MR. COPPES: Pardon me? MS. BARTOL: The numbers are similar, I would think from April 30, 2010 to today. MR. COPPES: I would say you can't	2 3 4 5 6 7 8	I can't even believe that this, this little paltry amount of money is how you are going to save money. Look. I expected to see all of the expenses of the district. How can we save money? You're giving me a million dollar figure and you're talking about millions and millions of dollars you're spending, millions at least. I might be exaggerating and you're giving me this little amount and that's	
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1 Benson. My address is 2810 Issett's Lane, James

2 Creek, Huntingdon School District. My son is a first

3 grader at Brady Henderson Elementary School. He is

- 4 currently eight years old. A few days after his
- 5 third birthday, my son, Scott, was diagnosed as
- 6 autistic. Immediately following his diagnosis, Scott
- 7 was enrolled in Little Bear Preschool in Mount Union,
- 8 Pennsylvania. Little Bear is a preschool dedicated
- 9 to autistic children. Although it was a struggle,
- 10 Scott did will there and learned a lot. During his
- 11 time at Little Bear, we moved to Petersburg,
- 12 Pennsylvania, Juniata Valley School District. But he
- 13 remained enrolled at Little Bear until he was old
- 14 enough to start kindergarten.

15 Scott started kindergarten in Juniata

16 Valley Elementary School for the 2008-2009 school

17 year. Their autistic support program was good and

18 they had the proper services in place. The school

19 worked hard at developing a curriculum that would

20 benefit him, but unfortunately the adjustment to a

21 bigger school was very difficult for Scott. And

22 although he sincerely tried, he didn't do very well

23 in school. Scott's comprehension was an obstacle

that his teachers and therapists were having 24

25 difficulty overcoming.

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In January of his 2008-2009 kindergarten 2 school year we moved to James Creek, Pennsylvania,

3 Huntingdon Area School District. At that time the

4 Huntingdon Area School District did not have an

5 autistic support program. It was decided by the

6 school district that Scott would be sent to Kistler 7 Elementary School, Mount Union School District.

8 Although Scott liked the teachers and children at

9 Kistler Elementary School, his academic progress was 10 very, very slow. His comprehension was still a major

11 obstacle and he was having difficulty adjusting to

12 the change of being in a new school and having new

13 people around him. His teachers came up with several

14 different strategies for helping him, but progress

15 remained slow. And even after attending summer

16 school, he wasn't ready for first grade and it was

17 decided that he would repeat kindergarten starting in

18 the fall.

19

20

In the fall of 2009, Scott started his second year of kindergarten at the Brady Henderson

21 Elementary School. Although it was his second year

22 of kindergarten, it was his first year enrolled at

23 Brady Henderson and I wasn't sure what to expect.

24 Their autistic support program was new in the area

25 and I was privately concerned that they wouldn't be BORING COURT REPORTING, INC.

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able to give Scott the help he needed, but I knew had 1 2 to at least give them a chance.

3 In early December 2009, of the 2009-2010 4

school year, Scott went through an extensive testing 5 by Huntingdon Area School District to see where he

was at academically. During the IEP meeting

6

7 following his testing, the school psychologist

8 explained to me that although the results of Scott's

9 intelligence testing showed that he was at the

10 average to superior range in comparison to other

11 children of his age, his academic testing results

12 showed that he was well below average to far below

13 average range. At this point in the meeting, I

14 thought for sure they were going to tell me that

15 Scott needed to attend another school, one

16 specifically for autistic children. But the team of

17 teachers, therapists and parent educators attending

18 the meeting from Brady Henderson surprised me and

19 immediately got to work developing a curriculum for

20 Scott based on the test results given by the

21 Huntingdon Area School District school psychologist.

In the months following the IEP meeting, I

23 was astonished by the change in Scott's academic

24 process and as well as his behavioral and social

progress. In just a few months, he went from

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struggling to naming the letters of the alphabet to

2 reading and writing as well as spelling and sounding

3 out new words. The team at Brady Henderson

4 Elementary School had worked miracles for Scott. And

5 not only did he fully participate in his lessons, he

6 actually understood what he was being taught.

By the end of the 2009-2010 school year,

8 Scott was spending most of his day with his

9 kindergarten class and was only pulled out of class

10 briefly for his special education classes. He

11 finished the year proficient in most areas after

12 starting year at a below basic level. He graduated

13 kindergarten with the rest of his class and is

14 currently doing exceptionally well in his first grade

15 class.

19

20

16 To date the only complaint I've had from 17 his first grade teacher is that he is working ahead 18 of the class in math, but he is doing it very well.

(Audience claps.)

MS. BENSON: As a mom who has had to watch

21 his son struggle for every little baby step progress

22 he has made, I can't even begin to tell you how

23 grateful I am to the team at Brady Henderson for

24 giving Scott the guidance and support he needs to 25

turn those baby steps into giant leaps forward.

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Brady Henderson is an incredible school and
I know without a doubt that should you decide to
close it, Scott's academic progress would come to a
screeching halt and it would be a strategy beyond
words to do that to him or any other child that is
enrolled there. There has to be a way to save this
school and I am begging you to find a way to do so.

I have heard a lot mentioned about numbers

8 I have heard a lot mentioned about numbers 9 tonight. In the envelopes I passed out to you are 10 copies of his report cards backing up my claims that 11 Brady Henderson and these teachers accomplished what 12 several other schools could not accomplish. They got 13 him reading, writing, doing math when after several 14 years in school he was barely speaking, definitely 15 not in sentences. His -- being able to understand 16 him, just in the past couple years, his speech

therapist from preschool is able to work with him
now. And she has told me several times that she
cannot believe how far he's come in the past several
years.

21 Mrs. Zerbe, you are my hero.

22 (Audience claps.)

MS. BENSON: You got the ball rolling.

24 Even when nobody else could, you got the ball

25 rolling.

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106

 $\,$ Mrs. Newton, you picked up where she left off and I thank you so much. I am so very, very proud of him.

4 MS. NEWTON: We are, too.

MS. BANEY: Hello, my name is Katie Baney. My address 10966 Pine Thistle Road, Huntingdon. I actually came not expecting to speak tonight either and the longer I sat, the longer I thought that I would like to talk.

My family, we grew up, we went to Brady Henderson, my mom went to Brady Henderson, my sisters and I went to Brady Henderson, there was a fire, we went to another school, it was very scary. I don't want my kids to go through that.

My husband and I moved away for a short time, my kids began school in another small district and they went to a school just exactly like Brady Henderson and that's where I teach, in another school exactly like Brady Henderson. And that is the only place that I wanted my children.

We decided to come back home and my
husband's father wasn't doing well, my parents were
getting older, they needed us there. So we moved
back home and we waited and we hung it and we made
sure that we'd come home that it was within the Brady

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Henderson guidelines. We didn't want to go out run
 out and buy the first house we saw. We took our
 time.

Some of you look like you're on a speeding train and you don't know how to get off and I feel terrible for you. Because I know your hearts and I know that you don't want this to happen. It's not too late. And I did take some notes because I don't want to forget to say anything important that I am thinking.

11 I don't believe any of you are bad people. 12 I do believe that you are make something really 13 horrible decisions. I went to school with at least 14 some one of your children. I was in the marching 15 band with your daughter, and I don't think you'd be 16 very happy if your daughter's childhood elementary 17 school had been ripped apart at the seams. You're a 18 mother, you all care about the community.

I know a lots of you personally and I know I met you this summer (indicating) at the baseball field at the Standing Stone school. I know your daughter through baseball, I know you through other events. I know you are all good people, I know you want to make the best decision. I honestly don't think this is. I'm sorry, that's my opinion.

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108

I want to relay one chilling experience to
you that is an example of why my children will not
attend one of the larger elementary schools. I
substituted for a few years and one of the elementary
schools there was horrible experience. If you want
details, I can prove to you this happened, but I

7 don't want to expose anybody now. 8 I was in for a first grade teacher and when 9 I went into -- I was already in the room and a young 10 man came into the classroom immediately and he 11 panicked and he was screaming at the door, that's not 12 my teacher, that's not my teacher. And one of the 13 teachers from in the building said to him, it's all 14 right, it's just a substitute, go ahead in. And he 15 came in and he told me his name, and I took care of 16 him, there were other children there, and they 17 started coming in and they said, oh, we have a new

20 new student's name on the attendance sheet and sent
21 it to the office. This is eight o'clock in the
22 morning, right, whatever time they do those things.
23 This is the first grade classroom. At

student, we have a new student. I got him a desk, I

got him a name tag, I ordered him lunch. I wrote the

11:00, 11:30, whatever time they have kindergarten atthat time to go home, I get a frantic call to my

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first grade classroom, do you have this child? That 1 2 kid was here for the bell this morning, but we can't 3 find him now and the kindergartners are supposed to

4 be going home.

5 This child was in my care for three hours 6 and no one else knew where he was? The other teacher 7 did not know his name? Did not even know which 8 classroom he supposed to be in? That is a perfect 9 example of why my children will not be going to 10 either of those bigger schools. I am sure the 11 teachers are fine people, but there are entirely too many kids there for my taste.

12 13 My memories at Brady Henderson are 14 wonderful and I never dreamed this would be 15 happening, never in a million years. I hate to say I 16 am not above sending my children to one of the 17 private schools around here. I am certainly not. As 18 long as my elementary school remains open, my 19 district is open to me taking my child there and I 20 may just have to do that. Please don't make me. I 21 love Brady Henderson. My children love Brady 22 Henderson and this is my home. I'm a Bear Cat. This 23 where is I came from. I want my kids to be Bear Cats

> MR. BROWN: My name is Fred Brown, I'm from BORING COURT REPORTING, INC. (814) 364-1793

1 neighborhood school system, especially for the

2 elementary students. I have seen and appreciated the

3 benefits of the local neighborhood school with my own

4 three children and now with my four grandchildren 5 that attend the school.

6 The points I want to make are these: I 7 feel a quality education at an elementary level comes 8 from quality, caring, dedicated teachers and staff.

(Audience claps.)

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10 MR. BROWN: Secondly, I think we have to 11 have proper facilities to create a learning

12 environment. And third, I think we need to have that 13 leg of parents and community support and involvement.

14 I think you have these three right now at Brady

15 Henderson, as evidenced in the fact of testimony that

16 you've had this evening as well as in the example of

17 the recognition of the National Blue Ribbon School

18 program. In light of your upcoming decisions to keep

19 the school open or consolidate it or consolidate the

20 students to other schools, you know, I'm in support 21 of keeping Brady Henderson School open.

I would like you to consider these things in my support of that position. The student/teacher ratio is very acceptable right now. The school is providing a very good environment for learning. You

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Brady Township, Huntingdon Area School District, and 1

2 I'll try to make my comments brief because I know

3 it's been a long evening and I appreciate the

too. Please let them stay here. Thank you.

4 opportunity to share my comments with you.

As I shared, I'm a lifelong resident of 6 Brady Township, but I come with unique heritage to 7 Brady Henderson School. My father was on the school

8 board whenever the schools were consolidated and was

9 president of the board whenever Brady Henderson was

10 built with the joint board. At that time the

11 consolidation was because of as we know the baby

12 boom, there was a big growing need for a lot of room

13 and facilities for the upcoming generation and also

14 to update the one-room schools, of which I came out

15 of.

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16 I was one of those students that came out 17 of the one-room school system and moved into Brady 18 Henderson in 1959. About 25 years ago, I also had 19 the opportunity to sit on the school board in your 20 seats. And at that time, we also experienced, as the 21 teachers and the students, the fire event. And I can 22 appreciate the tough decisions that you folks need to 23 make, especially in these times of economic stress. 24

We back then decided as a board it was time 25 to rebuild the schools because we believed in the

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(814) 364-1793 Page 109 to 112 of 163 112

1 have a good team effort by the teacher staff present,

2 parents, and community to support the education of

3 these students. If it's not broke, please don't try

4 to fix it.

(Audience claps.)

6 MR. BROWN: My challenge to you is this, if 7 you decide to close the Brady Henderson School, will

8 the cost savings at this time be worth the risk of

9 losing the support of the parents and the community?

10 It will no longer be called our school. It will be

11 called their school.

I understand that you need to be 13 financially responsible and I appreciate that, we all need to look at ways that we can be more efficient. But please keep the school open as long as you can for the benefit of the kids and this community. You can get as much opportunity to develop a solid

education foundation as they can. Thank you for your time.

MS. ITINGER: My name is Karen Itinger, address is 10408 Big Valley Pike, Mill Creek.

(Court reporter clarification.

MS. ITINGER: I'm a resident and a taxpayer of Huntingdon School District, but mostly I come to you tonight as a concerned, yet proud parent, of two BORING COURT REPORTING, INC.

Brady Henderson students. I'm extremely concerned 1 about the well-being of our beloved school as well as 2 3 to financially save our district. I was lucky enough 4 to receive my elementary education in the Blue Ribbon

5 School many year ago. My mother, Vickie Brown 6 retired four years ago after teaching there for over

7 30 years.

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(Audience claps.)

MS. ITINGER: She is, as well as many other dedicated teachers and faculty, are why I had a quality education there. Now all these years later, there are still several familiar faces from my Brady days and I know they are contributing to the quality education that my children are now receiving.

A deep part of my concern is that, you the board, do not seem to value the guidance, support, and care that our Brady staff provided our children on a daily basis, as you seem to believe the closing our schooling is the right decision to be made in order to cut costs and fulfill a plan of our superintendent to consolidate our elementary schools.

From the beginning of this process, I have been completely appalled at the way some of you on the school board and administration have handled this sensitive situation. You have not been forthright

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and honest with those who are affected the most if 1 2 you decide to close Brady Henderson. We have heard that the heating system cannot be repaired. We have 3 4 heard that the enrollment is down. And now we are 5 being told there is not enough money to keep the only 6 Blue Ribbon School in your district open.

I am still confused with how you think closing Brady Henderson will save the taxpayer and the district money if you continue to pursue the construction the 20 to 22 million dollar middle school.

I have attended each school board meeting and work session since October. And each time I 13 14 leave I am thoroughly disgusted with some of the 15 annoyed expressions shown on several of the board 16 members faces, the crossed arms putting up a barrier, and not being open to any other options, and the arrogance with which some of you speak, as if what we, the concerned parents, children, and community members have to say does not matter.

21 I respect --22

(Audience claps.) MS. ITINGER: I truly respect the position you hold, but the reason you are in that position is because of people like me. I expect you to make

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sounds educated decisions and to keep the taxpayers 1

2 and students' interests at heart. Since October I

3 have yet to feel comfortable with the decisions and

4 comments that have been made by you even after the

5 community that put you in this position has asked you 6 to stop the process and reconsider.

7 Right now the community is pleading with

8 you to utilize the facilities that we have. We do 9 not need to build a new middle school and cost the

10 taxpayers an exorbitant increase in taxes that many

11 cannot afford in an already struggling Huntingdon 12 economy.

13 You also do not need to take our Brady 14 students from the school they love with the teachers 15 and staff that know every child by name and genuinely

16 want to know what is going on in each child's life

17 outside of the school. For instance, when my

18 daughter, Lauren was in the second grade, our dog Max

19 died. Lauren was devastated because this was our

20 family pet and she loved him very much. Her teacher,

21 Mrs. Reamer, cried with her and gave her a small

22 stuffed dog that Lauren sleeps with every night to

23 this day. What caring and loving teachers we have,

24 do not disrupt this family-like environment in which

25 our children thrive. It's a place where everyone

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116

1 shares in each others sorrows and everyone celebrates 2

each others joys. 3 Please do not put the relationships that

have developed among the teachers, children, and

5 parents and community to rest. Allow them to

6 continue to grow and thrive as they have done for so

7 many years. Allow Brady Henderson to be the learning

8 center of the educational foundation for my children 9 and many others.

10 Do not put the young children on a long bus 11 ride to a large strange school. It is beyond 12 comprehension as to why you would close a remodeled 13 and functioning school to save dollars, yet you 14 refuse to stop the construction of a school costing 15 millions when there are options that you have not 16

explored that involve utilizing your existing 17 buildings.

18 In these tough economic times, you the 19 board and administration should be reinforcing what 20 we, as parents, are having to apply at home. You can 21 not live beyond your means. It can only end up

22 making the situation worse. This is certainly not

23 the message you have been sending to our children or 24 our struggling community. In the words of Theodore

25 Roosevelt: Do what you can with what you have where BORING COURT REPORTING, INC. (814) 364-1793

Page 113 to 116 of 163

you are. Thank you for your time. 1

2 (Audience claps.)

3 LAUREN ITINGER: My name is Lauren Itinger 4 and I am a four grader at Brady Henderson Elementary 5 School. Please don't close my school.

6 I have four reasons why you shouldn't close 7 my school. Number one, it's a Blue Ribbon School. 8 Number two, I have great teachers. Number three, I

9 have great friends that I wouldn't want to get

10 separated from, and number four I love my school. It 11 is a great and all the teachers there help us with a

12 lot of things. And I hope you know that we kids want 13

our school to stay open just as much as the adults 14 do.

I won't -- I wouldn't want to go anywhere 16 else because it is close to my house and I would have to ride the bus for about an hour. That means I 17 would have to get up earlier and get home a lot later. Do you think kids want to ride the bus that long? No, we don't.

20 21 Also, our teachers care about us. I know 22 that I can count on my teachers and they want me to 23 be the best student I can be. Because of them, I always get really good report cards. They make sure 24

25 I do well on my 4Sight and my PSSA tests. Just

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- 1 because they are great teachers, I would like to stay
- 2 at Brady Henderson when I get to sixth grade. I
- 3 think that would be a good idea because I don't think
- 4 I'll be wanting to ride the bus with the high school
- kids yet and then I would have to go to school that
- 6 -- then I won't have to go to a school that I don't
- 7 know yet.

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- 8 Since I heard that you, the school board, 9 have been wanting to close Brady Henderson, I want
- 10 know why you want to close Brady. It's a perfectly
- 11 good school. I have been coming to all the meetings
- 12 here at the high school and I have worn my SOS shirt
- 13 to every meeting because I want you to know that I
- 14 love and care where I go to school.
- 15 I beg you to listen to me and all of the 16 other people here tonight and keep my school open.
- 17 It's the only Blue Ribbon school in Huntingdon, so
- 18 please don't close my school. Thank you for
- 19 listening to me
- 20 MS. BEATTY: Hi, I'm Laura Beatty.
- 21 I live at 10545 Cricket Lane and I am a resident of
- 22 Mill Creek and the district.
- 23 Boy, there is a lot of good ones to follow
- 24 here, I'll tell you. If you care about our children,
- 25 and that is, as far as I'm concerned, at this time

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crucial. I find it very difficult to believe that

you care about children.

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(Audience claps.)

4 MS. BEATTY: Knowing all that we know, we,

5 quite a few of us, find it very difficult to believe

6 you care about our children. I have heard so many

7 just break-your-heart remarks about Mill Creek over

8 the years, and I was not from Mill Creek, but I

9 married from Mill Creek. And it has always been

10 given such a bad reputation. These people have

11 proven, these children have proven we are great. And

12 we are not, like Mr. Coppes so many times referred to

13 us, as poor. We are not poor. It all depends on

14 what you think of as poor. We've proven we are 15 great.

16 Our children will suffer in many ways if 17 this happens. We already know from experience 18 assembly-line education will produce poorly-educated 19 children. The basics, the foundation is what makes 20 them strong, we have at Brady. They will be our next 21 generation of unemployed, uneducated.

22 I will borrow a few words from our 23 preamble: We the people have entrusted, elected you 24 and pray you will lead them at Brady Henderson.

25 Brady has the best foundation they could get and they

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1 don't need a bridge. We have plenty of schools and

- 2 they need bridges. We want to spend money on schools
- 3 that needs because it wasn't done right. Oh, our
- 4 solution is we will build, we'll put a bridge up.
- 5 How much is that going to cost? How much is it going
- 6 to cost when you have to dig down when you don't
- 7 where the bottom is until you reach where it's stable
- 8 enough to hold it? It's ridiculous.

9 We have a fine school. We have fine 10 educators. We are a loving community. Where are you

11 people coming from? Do you not see what's happening:

12 People losing their jobs. People losing their homes

13 and they want to build a school. Again. Right on

14 the swamp again they are going fix it with a bridge.

15 We don't need it.

16 Why are we even entertaining this? I don't 17 understand. Leave well enough alone. Our school is

18 strong, unlike your school. It doesn't need a

19 bridge. Our children are strong, they don't need a

20 bridge. And I will again repeat myself, Ms. Adams

21 made this statement: If we always do what we always

22 did, we will always get what we always got.

(Audience claps.)

MS. BEATTY: I'm sorry. I could not help

25 myself but repeat it again because it's true. If we

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we got. We got a Blue Ribbon School. We got great 2

3 educators. We got loving families. And we will

4 prove Mill Creek is great. It is not a poor little

stupid town. It's got love. You can't put a price

6 on that. Thank you.

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LISA BEATTY: My name Lisa Beatty. I live in Mill Creek. I want to stay at Brady Henderson.

9 This is the best school ever. They treat us good.

10 They don't do nothing. They just let us do stuff and 11 it's really fun.

12 CAMERON MORTER: Hi, my name is Cameron 13 Morter, I live, my address is 9869 at Mill Creek.

14 And it's a shame to -- not -- to close, to close the

school. I mean Brady Henderson is the best school I 15

16 ever had and it's so fun. I don't -- I don't want to

17 leave it and I don't want to be ripped out of that

18 school. So please don't rip it.

MARSHAWN WORTHY: My name is Marshawn

20 Worthy. I live at 10245 Wall Street, Mill Creek,

21 Pennsylvania. Brady Henderson should stay a school

22 to educate kids. While I attended Brady Henderson, I

23 received a very good education. I learned my

multiplication tables and all the different types of 24

25 writing, which as an eighth grader we work on a lot.

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121

The teacher support is a big subject with

3 while I attended was very supportive. If I didn't

4 understand something they would help me until I did.

Brady Henderson. Every teacher that has worked there

5 And I was so close to all the teachers, they were

6 like family and I could talk to them about anything.

I was recently going through depression and was sent away for help and one of the teachers at

9 Brady Henderson sent me a card:

Dear Marshawn, I've been thinking about you

11 everyday. You need to work through it. So many

12 people love your sense of humor and kindness. So

13 many people love you, Marshawn Worthy. Life is

14 definitely hard, isn't it? Talk to people. Talk to

15 me. I am so sorry you are away but I am so very

16 happy you are trying help yourself. I love you and I

17 will pray for you everyday. Hi five, sista. Love,

18 Mrs. Border.

And it was said that closing the school is 20 going to help the kids, well, I am here to tell you

21 it's not going to help them at all. It's going to

22 tear them apart. They are not going to get the same

23 one-on-one time with the teacher that they need and

24 the middle school and high school kids and elementary

25 school kids are all going to be crammed on one bus

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and our bus right now, Bus 43, is already crammed 1 2 with too many kids. That's all I have to say.

3 UNIDENTIFIED LITTLE GIRL: I am a

4 student at Brady Henderson. I don't want our school

5 to close. It is great. School is really fun.

6 STEPHANIE MILLER: I am Stephanie

7 Miller. I live at 11258 Purdy Lane in Mill Creek.

8 I'm a resident of the school district and I am a

9 proud parent of a third grade student at Brady

10 Henderson.

11 You've heard a lot of our Blue Ribbon 12 school tonight, the question I have for you is: What

13 is a Blue Ribbon School? To be honest with you,

14 before I got involved with the campaign to keep my

15 child's Blue Ribbon School open, I didn't really know

16 the answer to this question. And from the statements

17 I've heard made by some of you, the board members,

18 like it's no big deal or it's not important, I think

19 maybe you've been misled in your way of thinking

20 about it too.

21 The Blue Ribbon school's program is the 22 United States Government program created to honor

23 schools. The Blue Ribbon award is considered the

24 highest honor an American school can achieve. Blue

25 Ribbon Schools are nationally recognized as some of

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124

1 America's most successful schools. The award

2 acknowledges and validates the hard work of students,

3 the staff members, families and communities in

4 reaching high levels of student achievement.

5 Moreover, Blue Ribbon Schools report a

6 renewed sense of pride and accomplishment at their

7 school as indicated by the roadside sign along the

8 Route 22 and the blue banner proudly displayed in our

9 school's hallway.

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Our own school district website

11 predominantly headlines, this is verbatim from our

12 website: On November 12th, 2007 the Brady Henderson

13 Mill Creek Elementary became a 2007 National No Child

Left Behind Blue Ribbon School. To become NCLB Blue

15 Ribbon School is to join an elite group. Only 5,510

16 schools have won the award over its quarter century

17 history. During the 2007-2008 school year, of the

18 more than 133 thousand U.S. schools, only 287 schools

19 were honored. In Pennsylvania, only 13 schools were

20 received this esteemed award. It is quite an honor

21 to be named one of only 287 schools in the entire

22 country that is bestowed with this distinguished

23 honor. This prestigious award is a testament to the

24 commitment of the entire community and all involved

including students, families, teachers, support staff

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8 and everyone of your teachers for making that happen. 9 (Audience claps.) 10 MS. MILLER: Just a couple points on some 11 things that were presented here tonight and a 12 question that I have about something that I just 13 found about out about, when you are talking about 14 moving our kids to Southside, what are we going to do 15 about the ceiling collapse that just happened 16 recently?

17 (No response.)

18 MS. MILLER: Are we worried about that 19 happening in other rooms, or?

20 UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: Standing

21 Stone.

22 MS. MILLER: Okay. The other thing, 23 Mr. Coppes, that you were talking about the 24 attendance numbers, and we were looking back at the

25 numbers from April of last year, and I just want to

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point out to you that the attendance numbers today 1 2 are higher than they were last April. So when you 3 are talking about consolidating the classes and 4 moving the kids together, you know, those numbers are 5 a bit increased since then.

The last point I wanted to make was that in Pennsylvania you are not permitted to eliminate teachers to save money. And I just wanted to make sure that the school board was all aware of that.

10 Thank you.

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11 MR. BERGER: Dave Berger, 10145 Tanglewood 12 Drive, Huntingdon. When I step away from the table, 13 I'm just what I would call a hyper-informed citizen. 14 I lose my, you know, without the rest of board, I 15 really don't have any authority, but I can still 16 express my opinion, so I would like to do that, I 17 jotted it down, I also didn't plan on speaking, but I 18 wrote some stuff down.

With the beautiful weather, we've been 20 having, the sugar maples are starting to -- the sap is starting to flow, so I've been out since Saturday 22 bright and early everyday tapping trees. We used to 23 run lines into milk jugs and go out and collect the milk jugs, bring it back and cook it down. Nowadays we are running lines into a big tank, comes right to

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the sugar shack. The point I'm making, the metaphor 1

here is on the decisions we make about infrastructure

3 and proximity and that sort of thing will pay back

4 over exponentially or multiply over time. So I'm

talking about if we have a building that's closer to

6 home, we won't have all the issues of transportation,

7 the kids won't have to ride as much on the bus. I'm

8 very opposed to kids spending that much time on the 9

bus. And also when some of you had mentioned about

10 if we pull a good school out of a community, we lose 11 this, we look at the numbers and costs but I don't

12 know how you can calculate the cost of the community

13 support, so then there's something there that doesn't

14 -- I think has great value but it's not -- it doesn't

15 register on the bottom line.

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I, some of my fellow board members were singled out by name for not, in past meetings, for not representing their regions. I support the -- the keeping Brady Henderson open, but I don't -- I represent Region 3. That school is not in my district, in my region rather.

I hear from my neighbors a lot, what are you waiting for? Why do you keep those little schools open because they cost per student so much more than the bigger schools. I believe in quality

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128

127

1 and equality, so when I tell them is it fair that

2 because you live in the borough you have better

3 access to your elementary school? I think not. I

4 think you, I believe, I'll just say, I believe in the

5 neighborhood schools.

7 to say, is the comment on what I perceive as kind of 8 a double standard on the middle school. I've talked 9 to some middle school teachers who have heard some of

One thing I wanted, a little more difficult

10 the comments that you all have made about that the

11 middle school isn't necessary and our school is

12 better and I'm sure you don't mean it this way, but

13 the way it's perceived by some of them is that

14 they're not as important as your teachers or middle

15 school students are not as important as elementary

16 students somehow. We've heard, you know, consolidate

17 someone, it's all right to consolidate, just don't

18 consolidate my kids

19 I would also say some of the personal 20 attacks that they feel -- it feels almost mean and I 21 think from my perspective that it undermines your 22 cause a little bit. I -- I -- you know, when you say 23 Jill and Mindy because they are going to leave or 24 they don't pay taxes in the district, that they don't 25 care at all about taxes, that it doesn't sound right.

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132

Somebody said something about we make faces, that's 1 2 one that I cringed about because I think it 3 undermines your cause if you're, you know, just be

4 nice, you know, you don't have to be mean. 5 And I would say finally this, you all have 6 been through quite an ordeal in the last months. I 7 know it's taken -- I think about this all the time, 8 all day long and it's taken guite a toll on me, I am 9 sure it has on the rest of the board. I can't 10 imagine what the administration has to -- has gone 11 through on some of this stuff, you know, what you 12 read in the papers and opinion lines is, I would say, 13 ridiculous. It's very hard and sometimes I feel like 14 I run out of fight because it's -- I'm running out of fight because it's -- because of the meanness. But I 15 16 think it's a good cause. I believe in your school. 17 I will fight the fight because I think that I agree,

you for your time. 20 (Audience claps.)

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21 MS. BURKET: My name is Cherie Burket, 22 C-H-E-R-I-E, and I live at 9053 Glenburg Drive, 23 Huntingdon.

24 The first time I attended Brady Henderson 25 was not as a student but as a parent. We moved from BORING COURT REPORTING, INC. (814) 364-1793

don't get rid of something that's working. So thank

grandson that I am raising, in a few years I was 1 hoping he would get to have the pleasure of going to

3 Brady Henderson. Now if the school is closing, I'm 4 not sure what I'll do.

5 But one more thought, the school board can either be seen as heroic for doing everything 7 possible to keep these schools open or they can be 8 reviled as the architect of its own looming 9 financial disaster. Thank you.

10 MR. BEARD: The stenographer has really done 11 a yeoman's job here and she doesn't even have to 12 record this if she doesn't want to, but I think her 13 fingers are going to fall off if she doesn't take 14 break and I'm going to defer to the her as to how 15 much time she needs to get some Gatorade and recoup.

(Recess taken at 9:47 p.m. to 10:05 p.m.)

17 MR. BEARD: All board members are present for the start of the hearing, except for Dr. Long who 18 19 was excused for the evening. Put it at the 20 beginning. 21

Any members of the board who are within 22 shouting distance, please come back, we are going to 23 start. You don't have to put that on the record, but 24 I guess she did.

Okay. It is approximately, we broke at BORING COURT REPORTING, INC. (814) 364-1793

130

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1 the school district we was in to the Huntingdon

2 School District and my daughter was in the fifth

3 grade at the time. I think I was probably more

4 nervous than she was, but that all went away the

5 first time we stepped in Brady. She got the pleasure

6 of having Mrs. Vickie Brown and that day, that first

7 day of school that we went, Mrs. Brown met us

8 actually at the door and she knew she was getting a

9 new student and she wanted my daughter, Julie to feel

10 the comfort of what Brady Henderson gives. And when

11 I left that morning, I felt good about Julie being

12 where she was and that, to me, is what makes a great

teacher is the heart that they put in everyone at 13

14 that school.

15 But if we start overcrowding the schools, 16 there is going to be no one-on-one between teachers 17 and students. The teachers won't have the 18 relationships with the students and the parents.

19 They won't have time to talk personally with the

20 students and learn and understand what the students,

21 their learning abilities. And by closing Brady we

22 will no longer have any control over our children's

23 education. And we choose to live where we live

24 because of us being in a small community and being a

25 big part of our children's education. And I have a

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1 9:47. It is now 10:08, so we will reconvene and

whoever the next speaker presenter is, by all means

3 step up and say your piece.

4 HAYLIE SCOTT: My name is Haylie Scott. My 5 address is 10167 Deer Acres Drive. Before I start, I 6 want to say you may have had this to you, but I don't

7 think you had it this bad. You don't now it feels

8 when you're going through something like this.

9 Hi, my name is Haylie Scott. I'm a fourth 10 grader. My teacher is Mrs. Border at Brady 11 Henderson. Please, please, don't shut down our

12 school.

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13 I have a few reasons why you shouldn't 14 close our school. Number one, we are a Blue Ribbon

School. Number two, we have great teachers that know 16 every single student and what would they do for a

17 job? Number three, some people would want to

18 graduate fifth grade from Brady because we want to

19 finish where we started. Number four, something

20 very, very important, it would affect me if you split

21 us up. We may not be with our friends. That would

22 also mean you would be breaking friendships.

Our school is not just made of bricks. It is made of great students and caring teachers and

staff. Once again we are a Blue Ribbon School and we

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love Brady Henderson. Please don't shut down our 1 2 school.

133

3 MR. HETRICK: My name is Mike Hetrick, 4 H-E-T-R-I-C-K. Address is 11649 Big Valley Pike, 5 Mill Creek, Pennsylvania. I have a student who 6 attends this Blue Ribbon School that we are trying to 7 shut down. I have a piece of paper in front of me 8 that has all kinds of numbers on it. I'm tired of 9 talking about numbers. We are going to talk about 10 students. 11

There was a student, Jake Tanner somewhere 12 here tonight spoke about his friend Caden that he hangs around with all the time. And as I was sitting there listening to that scenario that Jake may go one way and Caden may go another. I thought what if? You all live in a community of your own, I take it, somewhere, you got neighbors. You got family, you got friends around you. What if one day you were coming home, somebody is at your front door and said you can't go in here now, but we have another building that is almost as nice as this one

you got everything you need over there. Just go BORING COURT REPORTING, INC. (814) 364-1793

halfway across the city and you can go there tonight,

but you can't take your best friend with you, your

partner, your husband, your wife. Just, it's okay,

there. How would you feel? These kids are going to

2 feel that exact same way. They're in a comfort zone where they're at.

3 4 You're at a comfort zone where you are at in your 5 life. These guys will adjust probably, but it's

6 hard. These guys know each other. My son knows more 7 people than I do and I've been behind the retail

8 counter for 26 years.

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9 So with that being said, some of the 10 numbers that I saw tonight, I work in the building 11 trade industry and have for 26 years, and some of the 12 numbers that I saw for replacement costs and repairs 13 to some of these buildings are odd, I'll say. And I 14 think to myself, why would we put 1.1 million dollars 15 in roofing for two buildings that will last ten years 16 at best when I know there is products out there that 17 will last 50 years or more. So do your homework; 18 check those things out. If you need help, there is local help. There is all kinds of help around if you 19 20 guys don't know where to go. 21

But base your decision from your hearts 22 tonight. These people need their school. These kids 23 need their school. My son needs his Blue Ribbon 24 School. Thank you. 25

MS. GIPE: Good evening, my name is Polly BORING COURT REPORTING, INC. (814) 364-1793

Gipe. My address is 13104 Big Valley Pike. I'm a concerned parent of three at the Huntingdon School 3 District. I have a question: Why close Brady

4 Henderson Mill Creek Elementary School?

5 I would like to recap what has been said 6 tonight. First off the enrollment, Brady Henderson 7 Mill Creek Elementary enrollment has only changed 8 approximately on average six students in the last ten 9 years. So that can't be a reason to close it.

10 Class sizes, according to the 11 Administration's presentation tonight, Brady 12 Henderson has the largest average class size, yet 13 Brady Henderson, according to January 2011, 4Sight 14 results in both reading and math are one of the best 15 out of four elementaries. So that can't be a reason 16 to close it.

Administration mentioned decrease in

19 entire school district. The administration has not 20 shown real evidence that the Brady Henderson Mill 21 Creek Elementary cost of operation is excessive. 22 They have not only shown tonight that they want to 23 eliminate seven teachers or move them into a better 24 performing students into a poor performing school, so 25 again, that's not a reason to close a Blue Ribbon

funding from state and federal, which affects the

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1 School.

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2 Maintenance costs, yes, Brady is in need of 3 heating pipes, which from our previous meetings we 4 found out that would be probably 40,000 to replace 5 them. Looking at the numbers that they presented, it looks like Standing Stone and Southside needs new 7 roofs and that's going to cost 80 to \$120,000 to 8 replace with an addition of \$8,000 for drain repairs. 9 So that just proves that Brady Henderson is in better 10 shape than those elementary schools.

11 I do have a question, though. There was no 12 mention of where the special needs students, like the 13 autistic students, where will they go? Can anybody 14 answer that?

15 MR. COPPES: They will go to Standing 16 Stone. There is a special case classroom that will 17 be available. It's much larger than the size that 18 they need by far, so that would be appropriate that 19 they would go there.

20 MS. GIPE: So they would go to Standing 21 Stone?

22 MR. COPPES: I understand they would go 23

there.

24 MS. GIPE: In my opinion, the 25 administration has failed to show that closing the

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Brady Henderson School District will benefit the 1 school district as a whole. With Option 6 and 7 the 2 **3** administration wants not only to close Brady 4 Henderson but to split the students up. If you 5 consider this option, it will tear our community 6 apart.

7 Many parents will seek other educational 8 options there are for children, such as private 9 schools, charter schools, home school. It was said 10 Monday night, that you cannot have seventh graders 11 with the twelfth graders. But then the 12 administration suggested tonight having 13 kindergartners with twelfth graders on a school bus 14 for an hour.

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And also in previous meetings the 16 administration restates that we're in a financial crisis but gave themselves an incredible raise to their already excessive salaries. The administration can't have it both ways.

20 Brady Henderson Mill Creek Elementary is 21 heart and soul of the community. I feel the 22 administration put the board in a corner with a tough 23 decision ahead. I pray for you and I pray for the 24 children's sake that you, the board members, make the 25 wise decision to keep Brady Henderson Mill Creek

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> > 138

Elementary open and the keep the traditions 1 2 established over 50 years ago alive in this community 3 and the school.

4 This is my daughter, Emily, she didn't plan 5 to speak tonight, but since her friend spoke, she would like to say something. With technology she has 6 7 her notes on her Nintendo DS. Do you want me to read 8 it? My name is Emily Gipe. I'm a second grader at 9 Brady Henderson Mill Creek Elementary. Please don't 10 close Brady. I think Brady is the best school. It's the best school I ever went to. I don't want Brady 11

12 Henderson closed. Thank you. 13 MR. HOUCK: Yes, Dick, I am back. My name 14 is Harry Houck, Stone Creek Ridge Road. I am here 15 tonight as a concerned citizen, taxpayer, not here to 16 make a big day for myself. Just call me John Doe and 17 certainly not to be known as some loud mouth from 18 Stone Creek Ridge. Tonight as I walked through the 19 front door, I turn my attention to two -- nine 20 members of this board giving them my greatest and 21 respect and attention. You volunteered your time to 22 serve on this board because you thought you could 23 make a difference. So these people here tonight must 24 have thought so also, they voted for you. So tonight

25 I ask each of you, address this board I hope we have

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the attention and respect I have given you. 1

2 My first question to you, do you still 3 believe in an democracy, where majority rules, the 4 overwhelming support of putting sixth graders back to 5 the elementary school and the seventh and eighth 6 graders to the high school? Close no schools. Stop 7 the middle school. Certainly as the majority that is 8 not even an option by this administration.

9 Last night I stood here and talked to you 10 about children from the McAlevy's Fort area and was 11 at that time we asked the board, the administration 12 to put that as an option, still I haven't seen it in 13 your thing. I spoke Monday night on behalf of my 14 friends who were shut-ins. Tonight I'm going to talk 15 for residents of Brady Henderson Mill Creek and their 16 children.

First, I am concerned about the expenditures that were done on the two elementary schools already built. What type of contractors were you using? Being a contractor from for 45 years, I simply can't imagine that you left some contractor put shingles on that would only last that short a period of time. The heating system at Brady Henderson, I would like to know when you were first notified that you had a problem there. I would like BORING COURT REPORTING, INC. (814) 364-1793

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1 that information.

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2 I would also like to see what guarantees 3 you had from your contractor on the flooring, on the 4 roofing, and what brands they used, what method of 5 fastener. I would also like that information made 6 available to me at the next meeting.

7 In 1950 the State told board members time 8 to consolidate, board members from Brady Henderson 9 Township and Mill Creek Borough found a piece on

10 ground on top of a hill and built a beautiful

11 building. They called it Brady Henderson Mill Creek

12 Elementary School. At the same time board members

13 from Jackson Miller would do the same and call it

14 Jackson Miller Elementary. What a great idea. No

15 more coal-fired furnaces, no more treated with

16 creosote floors for teachers to deal with, a decent

17 lunchroom for hot balanced meals, no more paper bags.

18 How proud those board members must have been.

19 Next over the past 15 years my wife and I 20 have had the privilege of being involved with a group 21 of volunteers for the Mill Creek area called the Mill 22 Creek Party Plan. Along with the great support of 23 the community and the elementary school

24 administrators and these beautiful teachers, we were

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able to provide a Halloween party and a Christmas

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party for the children of that school. We have been 1 2 told there is no other community in this county that 3 provides this type of programs for their children.

4 I don't know how many of you have ever 5 stood in front of 130 children, saw the smiles and 6 heard the laughter during one of our programs. This 7 year as I stood in front of these children, I wonder 8 if this would be the last time I would have this 9 great opportunity. It certainly has been a pleasure 10 to work with the people of this great community and 11 have had the opportunity to walk the halls and visit 12 the classrooms of this great building.

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So tonight I ask each and every board member, please go, walk through these beautiful buildings and as a resident of this community, it is my hope you are not willing to board up two great schools that the men and woman of the '50s were able to construct with such great success over the past 50 vears.

Lost my place, excuse me. Tonight, I wonder why this board and administration does not get it, yet it has been given to you facts and figures. I have no facts and I have no figures, but even petitions for over three months I have come to these meetings. Last night we were told again that wasn't

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an option. So tonight you were given my opinion but 1 2 remember, number one, it's not possible, but do not 3 want to lose your home to taxes to satisfy this 4 administration's eqo. 5

My dad taught me never to debt. Work for what you want. Tonight I have done my work so now I will bed. Walk the street of this great town, listen to the people who voted for you. Please hear what they are saying.

Tonight I only have one hope, I can stand in front of these children at this great school next 12 year, five years, ten years, and may these children from our community not only be known as the Mill Creekers, but also can say, yes, I have completed six 15 great years at Brady Henderson Mill Creek Blue Ribbon School. Thank you.

16 17 MS. TROUP: My name is Cathy, C-A-T-H-Y. 18 Troup, T-R-O-U-P. My address is 12025 Cumminsville 19 Lane, Huntingdon. I first just want to say what an 20 outstanding community Brady Henderson Mill Creek area 21 is. You guys should just be proud of yourself in the 22 community support. I'm from the Jackson Miller area 23 and I'm just impressed by all the support you guys 24 have come out, wonderful teaching staff that you have. I wasn't aware of this when I moved out of 25

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1 this community five years ago, and I'm fortunate I did move into another great community, but I just 3 want to let you guys knows what a great job you are 4 doing.

Last night I presented an option to the

6 school board and I promised that I would deliver that 7 in writing, which I have done. I also come up with 8 another option and I'm going to go ahead verbally and 9 tell you the options again and these are not maybe my 10 most favorable options because I don't want to see 11 any student in our district lose their home school, I 12 don't want to see any staff lose their positions, we 13 have wonderful teachers in this district, but I just 14 want to make it known for the public that there are 15 other options available that can be explored and by 16 doing this, I'm hoping that you as well will go ahead 17 and list other options that you feel are, you know, 18 viable solutions that the school board and 19 administrators can at least explore.

The first option was to stop the middle school project, which I understand is difficult to do but, it is still doable. I understand we are going to lose money, as do most of the community members, but the loss that we are going to take up front is a lot more than what we're going to take overall.

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1 I also do agree that the middle school 2 students need their own building. They need their 3 own place to exist. That I do understand and agree

4 with, but why does it have to be a 22 million dollar 5 building? We prove everyday in Jackson Miller and in

6 Brady Henderson it can be done in the smaller 7 building that doesn't have, you know, everything that

8 a 22 million dollar building would have.

Possibly for that and there is many 9 10 solutions would be to put the middle school students 11 in a wing of the high school, keep them separate from 12 them except maybe it could be a benefit that the 13 students that excel or need higher level classes 14 could integrate with them and take the higher level 15 or advanced classes and right there they are. They 16 are already in the building. There is no more 17 worrying about getting them there safely.

worried about putting all these different age levels together. But as a parent, I think I should be more concerned about that. I think it is the responsibility of the parent to teach their children what is right and what is wrong and I do that everyday with my own children. I send them to the school, you know, every single day and to the staff

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And I understand your concerns that you are

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- there and I trust that staff is going to guide them, 1
- 2 but ultimately it is my responsibility as a parent to
- 3 teach them what is right, what is wrong. I have
- 4 complete faith in my parenting and in my school
- 5 district that if I sent my children to seventh grade
- 6 and in a section of the high school where the ninth
- 7
- or twelfth graders were, that they would be safe and
- 8 they would be the taken care of, and with my guidance
- 9 they would be able to persevere. They would be 10 outstanding citizens and they would do what is right.
- 11 I'm hoping that other parents feel the same way, with
- 12 their parenting, they can teach their children these 13 thinas.

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I also think that a possibility would be moving the sixth graders back into the elementary schools if we decide the best option would be to put the seventh and eighth graders in a separate wing of the high school. That way we don't have three grades there, but two to integrate into the, you know, the high school setting. It would be a very -- I think it would work out very well for our students.

I do speak as an individual who was also taken from a small school. I attended Jackson Miller and I was taken out of that elementary school and I was taken to the State College School District, which

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is a much larger school district than this one, and 1

- 2 it's not an easy transition. I did it with the
- support of the school, with my family, you know, I 3
- 4 made it. But it was difficult, and I'm, you know,
- here to state that it is a difficult transition. 5

I do understand the middle school 7 closing -- or I'm sorry, the middle school building

- 8 project brings up many issues. There is going to be
- 9 costs to us. There could possible litigation against
- 10 the district. Mr. Beard made that quite clear to us
- 11 and I think the community is aware of that. Those
- 12 are all things that we need to consider: Is the
- initial loss, you know, better than the loss over 13
- 14 time and those are all things we should look at.

15 My other option includes using existing

buildings that are already standing as the new middle

- 17 school location, such as Southside or Standing Stone.
- 18 I think the more feasible would be Standing Stone
- because its location and its capacity. We could move 19
- 20 the students from the locations of the three existing
- 21 elementary schools into -- integrate them into the
- 22 other schools, so say that Standing Stone was the one
- 23 that was used for the middle school. Those students
- 24 could be integrated into Jackson Miller, Brady, and
- into Southside. And like I said, this is not my 25

BORING COURT REPORTING, INC. (814) 364-1793 ideal situation. I don't want any child to lose

their school. But I think all options should be

3 explored by our district.

4 This would eliminate the unnecessary 5 closing of any of the current buildings and we

6 wouldn't have them sitting there with the school

7 district funding them, you know, paying their

8 maintenance costs and things like that.

9 The other thing that I think is important 10 for the school board to consider is when you are 11 talking about the possible closing of these two

12 elementary schools, you have to consider your

13 savings. And I am using Jackson Miller numbers

14 because that is my home school, but I looked over the

15 paperwork and it states that we would save

16 approximately \$116,000. Then you have the charter

17 school issue. In our area they are, there is a group

18 that is trying to form a charter school and they are

19 doing a wonderful job. The cost of the charter

20 school tuition is \$8,000 for a regular education and

21 16,000 for a special education. Just the founding

22 committee of that charter school could put what we

would cover those costs, 14 students into that school 23

24 and erase the entire savings of the Jackson Miller

25 building. Right there it goes.

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So I guess I'm asking, why? Why are we

looking at saving \$116,000 in saving the school and

3 turn around and put all that money into a charter

4 school. And I'm here to tell you it's going to

5 happen because the residents that I've talked to in,

6 you know, the Jackson Miller area, are not sending

7 their children to Huntingdon. They are sending them

8 to a charter school. So right there is your money:

Your 116,000 and that -- that's just with the 14

10 students that I counted on my hands tonight from the

11 founding committee of the charter school. It could

12 be the same way for Brady Henderson, the savings, it

13 could go right to another district. We have such a

14 great school, can we keep it open and try to work

15 with what we have?

16 The other numbers I have are just some 17 things I just kind of tossed around. Thirteen years 18 of schooling, that's, you know, kindergarten to 19 twelfth grade we have 13 years of schooling, if we 20 decided that the middle school should be just seven 21 and eighth grade students, that's two years out of 22 your thirteen years of schooling. That's 15 percent 23 of your education. If you count sixth, seventh and 24 eighth grade, that is three years, that is 23 percent

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of your entire education before college. So do I

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need a 22 million dollar building for 23 percent of 1 2 my education? I really don't think so. I think --(Audience claps.)

3 4 MS. TROUP: I think the years that we're 5 spending in elementary school, if we were in 6 elementary school for six years, that is 46 percent 7 of our education. And if we were there seven years, 8 if we moved sixth grade back that would be 54 percent 9 of our education. And I just think those numbers are 10 something we should think about. You know, do we 11 really need that? 12

Along with those numbers I was thinking 13 about this bus ride. I live three miles from Jackson 14 Miller. My children are on the bus are for minutes. Explain to me how they are going come 17 miles into 15 16 town in under an hour when they go in a bus for 45 minutes for three miles. They are dismissed from 17 school at 3:15, they don't get off the bus until 18 19 around 4:00, and that's depending on which way they 20 have to go because of road conditions.

With that being said, there is 180 days in the school year, my children are going to be on a bus for 360 hours a year, just to go to and from school without any delays. That is an hour, which I don't really see feasible. If you figure that out, that

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- they are going to be on the school bus basically 33 1
- 2 percent of their school year and I'm not counting
- that into the school hours, but 33 percent of the 3
- 4 school year they would be on a school bus. That's
- 5 just unacceptable. Unacceptable to me. I base that
- on six hours of instruction a day and if you 6

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- 7 calculate that's 15 days, and I'm not talking school
- 8 days, I'm talking 24-hour days, 15 24-hour days my
- 9 children are going to spend on a school bus. I just,
- 10 those numbers are really, really surprising to me and
- I just think that everyone needs to be aware and look 11
- 12 it from a different perspective to see what else is
- 13 out there.

The other thing that I have included in my 15 request in writing for the options, and these are some questions that possibly Mr. Beard could answer tonight. But I would also like to request additional

- 18 hearings be held for both schools. I have not heard
- anything about an additional hearing. I've only 19
- 20 heard in 90 days a decision could be made, and I
- 21 think that's unacceptable as well. You been
- 22 presented with several options in writing and
- 23 verbally. I think they need to be explored and I
- 24 think the community needs to see what you come up
- 25 with, see the results and we need to have time to BORING COURT REPORTING, INC.

come back to more hearings to be able to voice our opinion as well. So, Mr. Beard, is that a

3 possibility?

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4 (Audience claps.)

5 MR. BEARD: Anything is a possibility in the scheme of things, but as I said, when the process

7 started, the key here is to start presenting

8 information. It's not a final product but it will be

9 envisioned, just like the questions came up last 10

night on transportation.

MS. TROUP: Right.

12 MR. Beard; that is a work in progress and 13 we'll continue that information when we come back.

14 There really isn't a need to convene a separate

hearing unless the board thought that there was a 15

16 need for a special commission or some special area.

But through all the years that I've been 18 out there, even Mr. Levin, he's been around for a 19 long time, as well as his father, I never really seen 20 additional 780 hearings unless they were just a continuation, continuation, continuation.

MS. TROUP: I guess that I'm requesting then to the board of directors, I am requesting that you put that on your agenda to vote on, that we are allowed to have a continuum of 780 hearings for both

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152

- 1 schools based on the facts that we've given you other
- 2 options to explore and they are viable solutions.
- 3 And I feel that the public should have a say and we
- should be able to see this, you know, the answers
- 5 before a decision is made. And if you would like
- that in writing, I will be glad to do that as well. 6
- 7 It is in writing on this paper, but if you need me to
- 8 state it further, that is perfectly fine as well. I
- 9 don't know if there's any answer you can give me for
- 10 that or not.

(No response.)

MS. TROUP: No? Okay.

13 As I promised you, I would have these in 14 writing, so these are for you. Basically in closing, 15 I would just like to thank you for your time. And I 16 encourage all community members to please send in

17 your options that you have come up with for the 18 school board, as well as please request additional

19 hearings.

20 The process states that 90 days from the 21 date of the hearing a decision can be made and at 22 that time, you know, we're going to be pretty shocked 23 if we don't have time to be able to review the

24 information and maybe give some other viable options. 25 And last thing, Mr. Beard, I would like to

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MR. BEARD: Sort of like an auction,

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take a moment to reflect. How did it feel to leave

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other schools that are similar and Brady fell in that

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sorry for that, for me. It was wrong on my part to

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11 or submit anything as well for the Board's 12 consideration. Thank you. 13 MS. ADAMS: There is not much more I can say. We thank you so very much for your input. It 14 15 will be taken to heart and we will be working with 16 the district, with the board members, and Mrs. Troup. 17 We'll get the schedule for you so you know what you 18 our intentions are in terms of having the public back 19 together again. MS. TROUP: Thank you. 20 21 MS. ADAMS: Thank you all. Good night. 22 23 (Hearing concluded at 10:53 p.m.) 24 25

•	4.3 (4) 24:24	142 (4) 4:45	2026 rg 60:25 01:10
\$	1.2 [1] - 24:24 - 1.4 [1] - 26:8	142 [1] - 4:15 15 [9] - 6:7, 21:23, 42:4,	2036 [2] - 60:25, 91:19 21 [10] - 35:3, 35:5, 37:9,
	1.9 [1] - 12:23	42:11, 70:6, 140:19,	38:4, 38:23, 39:2, 41:4,
\$1,722 [1] - 44:5	1.9 [1] - 12.23 10 [3] - 43:9, 43:14, 79:3	148:22, 150:7, 150:8	46:13, 86:5, 99:20
\$100,000 [1] - 42:17	10(5) - 43.9, 43.14, 79.3	15-year [1] - 42:2	22 [13] - 13:15, 35:6, 35:7,
\$116,000 [2] - 147:16, 148:2	10023 [1] - 52:4 10037 [1] - 55:10	150 [1] - 21:24	36:4, 36:7, 38:3, 39:2,
\$120,000 [2] - 43:17, 136:7	101 [1] - 3:16	154 [1] - 4:16	72:3, 114:10, 124:8, 144:4,
\$13,000 [1] - 44:17	10145 [1] - 126:11	156 [1] - 4:17	144:8, 149:1
\$16,000 [1] - 28:21	10161 [1] - 82:21	159 [1] - 4:18	23 [5] - 34:23, 36:2, 38:5,
\$164,000 [1] - 44:5	10167 [1] - 132:5	16 [3] - 32:14, 38:9, 86:17	148:24, 149:1
\$1999 [1] - 95:10	10245 [1] - 121:20	16,000 [1] - 147:21	2300 [1] - 60:2
\$2,516 [1] - 44:2	10408 [1] - 112:21	16,31 [1] - 2:5	24 [7] - 34:12, 34:17, 34:19,
\$221,000 [1] - 41:3	10545 [1] - 118:21	16652 [1] - 1:18	36:7, 38:5, 42:18, 86:8
\$240,000 [1] - 44:1	106 [1] - 3:17	16828 [2] - 1:24, 67:17	24,000 [1] - 62:20
\$265,000 [1] - 25:24	10966 [1] - 106:6	17 [8] - 1:15, 6:9, 6:12, 16:9,	24,39,44 [1] - 2:5
\$30,000 [1] - 43:1	10:05 [1] - 131:16	36:4, 38:8, 149:15, 163:14	24-hour [2] - 150:8
\$46,000 [1] - 41:5	10:08 [1] - 132:1	18 [19] - 13:11, 16:13, 19:14,	2400 [1] - 1:17
\$5,940 [1] - 43:12	10:53 [1] - 162:23	22:3, 29:2, 33:6, 34:8,	25 [6] - 10:19, 36:9, 38:6,
\$500,000 [1] - 60:18	11,47 [1] - 2:4	34:10, 34:17, 34:20, 34:23,	38:24, 86:8, 110:18
\$525,000 [1] - 47:3	11,4 7 [1] - 2.4 11.7 [1] - 27:20	38:7, 38:8, 38:22, 39:2,	259 [1] - 48:21
\$53,920 [1] - 41:7	11.7 [1] - 27.20 110 [1] - 3:18	39:3, 39:14, 48:12, 77:13	26 [6] - 36:3, 36:13, 38:7,
\$545,940 [1] - 43:11	110 [1] - 3.10 112 [1] - 3:19	18.26 [1] - 36:17	134:8, 134:11
\$60,000 [1] - 42:5	11258 [1] - 123:7	180 [1] - 149:21	267 [2] - 64:20, 81:15
\$62,000 [1] - 44:11	11256 [1] - 123.7 115 [5] - 15:20, 32:23, 35:16,	19 [12] - 32:16, 32:24, 33:10,	27 [3] - 36:11, 38:8, 86:5
\$658,000 [1] - 28:13	36:23, 56:15	34:15, 36:16, 38:6, 38:25,	27th [1] - 36:14
\$7,710 [1] - 41:9	116,000 [1] - 148:9	39:2, 60:25, 86:17, 91:19,	28 [8] - 34:14, 34:21, 35:2,
\$722,000 [1] - 46:21	11649 [1] - 133:4	99:20	35:5, 36:14, 37:5, 38:8,
Ψ122,000 - TO.2			
\$75,000 [3] - 42:1, 42:9,		1949 [1] - 5:16	39:13
	117 [1] - 3:20	1949 [1] - 5:16 1950 [1] - 140:7	39:13 2810 [1] - 101:1
\$75,000 [3] - 42:1, 42:9,	117 [1] - 3:20 11722 [1] - 154:16		
\$75,000 [3] - 42:1, 42:9, 42:12	117 [1] - 3:20 11722 [1] - 154:16 11766 [1] - 75:9	1950 [1] - 140:7	2810 [1] - 101:1
\$75,000 [3] - 42:1, 42:9, 42:12 \$770,000 [1] - 28:11	117 [1] - 3:20 11722 [1] - 154:16 11766 [1] - 75:9 118 [1] - 3:21	1950 [1] - 140:7 1959 [1] - 110:18 1996 [1] - 13:12	2810 [1] - 101:1 287 [2] - 124:18, 124:21 28th [1] - 6:11
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\$75,000 [3] - 42:1, 42:9, 42:12 \$770,000 [1] - 28:11 \$8,000 [4] - 28:20, 62:18, 136:8, 147:20 \$850,000 [1] - 60:19 \$89,000 [1] - 95:11	117 [1] - 3:20 11722 [1] - 154:16 11766 [1] - 75:9 118 [1] - 3:21 11865 [1] - 99:14 119 [1] - 16:1 11:00 [1] - 108:24 11:30 [1] - 108:24 12 [2] - 44:16, 158:16 12.7 [1] - 28:23 1200 [1] - 59:25	1950 [1] - 140:7 1959 [1] - 110:18 1996 [1] - 13:12 2 20 [14] - 16:10, 27:24, 34:22, 35:1, 35:8, 36:14, 38:5, 39:1, 39:2, 41:25, 60:1,	2810 [1] - 101:1 287 [2] - 124:18, 124:21 28th [1] - 6:11 3 3 3 [7] - 31:12, 33:22, 37:12, 38:2, 46:6, 71:1, 127:20 3,600 [1] - 46:3 30 [10] - 9:1, 10:19, 11:1, 85:25, 97:12, 98:7, 113:7,
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\$75,000 [3] - 42:1, 42:9, 42:12 \$770,000 [1] - 28:11 \$8,000 [4] - 28:20, 62:18, 136:8, 147:20 \$850,000 [1] - 60:19 \$89,000 [1] - 95:11 '06-'07 [1] - 25:17 '07-'08 [1] - 44:10 '08 [1] - 28:10 '08-'09 [2] - 27:17, 29:1	117 [1] - 3:20 11722 [1] - 154:16 11766 [1] - 75:9 118 [1] - 3:21 11865 [1] - 99:14 119 [1] - 16:1 11:00 [1] - 108:24 11:30 [1] - 108:24 12 [2] - 44:16, 158:16 12.7 [1] - 28:23 1200 [1] - 59:25 12025 [1] - 142:18 121 [5] - 1:24, 3:22, 3:23, 4:7,	1950 [1] - 140:7 1959 [1] - 110:18 1996 [1] - 13:12 2 20 [14] - 16:10, 27:24, 34:22, 35:1, 35:8, 36:14, 38:5, 39:1, 39:2, 41:25, 60:1, 90:2, 114:10 200 [4] - 41:2, 41:6, 47:19,	2810 [1] - 101:1 287 [2] - 124:18, 124:21 28th [1] - 6:11 3 3 [7] - 31:12, 33:22, 37:12, 38:2, 46:6, 71:1, 127:20 3,600 [1] - 46:3 30 [10] - 9:1, 10:19, 11:1, 85:25, 97:12, 98:7, 113:7, 159:3, 162:7, 162:8 300 [1] - 19:8
\$75,000 [3] - 42:1, 42:9, 42:12 \$770,000 [1] - 28:11 \$8,000 [4] - 28:20, 62:18, 136:8, 147:20 \$850,000 [1] - 60:19 \$89,000 [1] - 95:11 '06-'07 [1] - 25:17 '07-'08 [1] - 44:10 '08 [1] - 28:10 '08-'09 [2] - 27:17, 29:1 '09 [2] - 26:11, 28:10	117 [1] - 3:20 11722 [1] - 154:16 11766 [1] - 75:9 118 [1] - 3:21 11865 [1] - 99:14 119 [1] - 16:1 11:00 [1] - 108:24 11:30 [1] - 108:24 12 [2] - 44:16, 158:16 12.7 [1] - 28:23 1200 [1] - 59:25 12025 [1] - 142:18 121 [5] - 1:24, 3:22, 3:23, 4:7, 69:2	1950 [1] - 140:7 1959 [1] - 110:18 1996 [1] - 13:12 2 20 [14] - 16:10, 27:24, 34:22, 35:1, 35:8, 36:14, 38:5, 39:1, 39:2, 41:25, 60:1, 90:2, 114:10 200 [4] - 41:2, 41:6, 47:19, 79:12 2000 [2] - 13:10, 15:7	2810 [1] - 101:1 287 [2] - 124:18, 124:21 28th [1] - 6:11 3 3 3 [7] - 31:12, 33:22, 37:12, 38:2, 46:6, 71:1, 127:20 3,600 [1] - 46:3 30 [10] - 9:1, 10:19, 11:1, 85:25, 97:12, 98:7, 113:7, 159:3, 162:7, 162:8
\$75,000 [3] - 42:1, 42:9, 42:12 \$770,000 [1] - 28:11 \$8,000 [4] - 28:20, 62:18, 136:8, 147:20 \$850,000 [1] - 60:19 \$89,000 [1] - 95:11 '06-'07 [1] - 25:17 '07-'08 [1] - 44:10 '08 [1] - 28:10 '08-'09 [2] - 27:17, 29:1 '09 [2] - 26:11, 28:10 '09-'10 [4] - 25:8, 25:21,	117 [1] - 3:20 11722 [1] - 154:16 11766 [1] - 75:9 118 [1] - 3:21 11865 [1] - 99:14 119 [1] - 16:1 11:00 [1] - 108:24 11:30 [1] - 108:24 12 [2] - 44:16, 158:16 12.7 [1] - 28:23 1200 [1] - 59:25 12025 [1] - 142:18 121 [5] - 1:24, 3:22, 3:23, 4:7, 69:2 123 [2] - 4:8, 56:16 123,000 [1] - 46:25 125 [1] - 69:19	1950 [1] - 140:7 1959 [1] - 110:18 1996 [1] - 13:12 2 20 [14] - 16:10, 27:24, 34:22, 35:1, 35:8, 36:14, 38:5, 39:1, 39:2, 41:25, 60:1, 90:2, 114:10 200 [4] - 41:2, 41:6, 47:19, 79:12 2000 [2] - 13:10, 15:7 2001 [1] - 19:3	2810 [1] - 101:1 287 [2] - 124:18, 124:21 28th [1] - 6:11 3 3 [7] - 31:12, 33:22, 37:12, 38:2, 46:6, 71:1, 127:20 3,600 [1] - 46:3 30 [10] - 9:1, 10:19, 11:1, 85:25, 97:12, 98:7, 113:7, 159:3, 162:7, 162:8 300 [1] - 19:8 32 [3] - 35:23, 36:8, 69:21
\$75,000 [3] - 42:1, 42:9, 42:12 \$770,000 [1] - 28:11 \$8,000 [4] - 28:20, 62:18, 136:8, 147:20 \$850,000 [1] - 60:19 \$89,000 [1] - 95:11 '06-'07 [1] - 25:17 '07-'08 [1] - 44:10 '08 [1] - 28:10 '08-'09 [2] - 27:17, 29:1 '09 [2] - 26:11, 28:10 '09-'10 [4] - 25:8, 25:21, 28:13, 45:19	117 [1] - 3:20 11722 [1] - 154:16 11766 [1] - 75:9 118 [1] - 3:21 11865 [1] - 99:14 119 [1] - 16:1 11:00 [1] - 108:24 11:30 [1] - 108:24 12 [2] - 44:16, 158:16 12.7 [1] - 28:23 1200 [1] - 59:25 12025 [1] - 142:18 121 [5] - 1:24, 3:22, 3:23, 4:7, 69:2 123 [2] - 4:8, 56:16 123,000 [1] - 46:25 125 [1] - 69:19 126 [1] - 4:9	1950 [1] - 140:7 1959 [1] - 110:18 1996 [1] - 13:12 2 20 [14] - 16:10, 27:24, 34:22, 35:1, 35:8, 36:14, 38:5, 39:1, 39:2, 41:25, 60:1, 90:2, 114:10 200 [4] - 41:2, 41:6, 47:19, 79:12 2000 [2] - 13:10, 15:7 2001 [1] - 19:3 2003 [1] - 159:2	2810 [1] - 101:1 287 [2] - 124:18, 124:21 28th [1] - 6:11 3 3 [7] - 31:12, 33:22, 37:12, 38:2, 46:6, 71:1, 127:20 3,600 [1] - 46:3 30 [10] - 9:1, 10:19, 11:1, 85:25, 97:12, 98:7, 113:7, 159:3, 162:7, 162:8 300 [1] - 19:8 32 [3] - 35:23, 36:8, 69:21 325 [2] - 33:3, 34:1
\$75,000 [3] - 42:1, 42:9, 42:12 \$770,000 [1] - 28:11 \$8,000 [4] - 28:20, 62:18, 136:8, 147:20 \$850,000 [1] - 60:19 \$89,000 [1] - 95:11 '06-'07 [1] - 25:17 '07-'08 [1] - 44:10 '08 [1] - 28:10 '08-'09 [2] - 27:17, 29:1 '09 [2] - 26:11, 28:10 '09-'10 [4] - 25:8, 25:21,	117 [1] - 3:20 11722 [1] - 154:16 11766 [1] - 75:9 118 [1] - 3:21 11865 [1] - 99:14 119 [1] - 16:1 11:00 [1] - 108:24 12 [2] - 44:16, 158:16 12.7 [1] - 28:23 1200 [1] - 59:25 12025 [1] - 142:18 121 [5] - 1:24, 3:22, 3:23, 4:7, 69:2 123 [2] - 4:8, 56:16 123,000 [1] - 46:25 125 [1] - 69:19 126 [1] - 4:9 129 [1] - 4:10	1950 [1] - 140:7 1959 [1] - 110:18 1996 [1] - 13:12 2 20 [14] - 16:10, 27:24, 34:22, 35:1, 35:8, 36:14, 38:5, 39:1, 39:2, 41:25, 60:1, 90:2, 114:10 200 [4] - 41:2, 41:6, 47:19, 79:12 2000 [2] - 13:10, 15:7 2001 [1] - 19:3 2003 [1] - 159:2 2006 [3] - 51:12, 158:14,	2810 [1] - 101:1 287 [2] - 124:18, 124:21 28th [1] - 6:11 3 3 [7] - 31:12, 33:22, 37:12, 38:2, 46:6, 71:1, 127:20 3,600 [1] - 46:3 30 [10] - 9:1, 10:19, 11:1, 85:25, 97:12, 98:7, 113:7, 159:3, 162:7, 162:8 300 [1] - 19:8 32 [3] - 35:23, 36:8, 69:21 325 [2] - 33:3, 34:1 33 [3] - 35:22, 150:1, 150:3
\$75,000 [3] - 42:1, 42:9, 42:12 \$770,000 [1] - 28:11 \$8,000 [4] - 28:20, 62:18, 136:8, 147:20 \$850,000 [1] - 60:19 \$89,000 [1] - 95:11 '06-'07 [1] - 25:17 '07-'08 [1] - 44:10 '08 [1] - 28:10 '08-'09 [2] - 27:17, 29:1 '09 [2] - 26:11, 28:10 '09-'10 [4] - 25:8, 25:21, 28:13, 45:19 '10-'11 [2] - 25:10, 25:17	117 [1] - 3:20 11722 [1] - 154:16 11766 [1] - 75:9 118 [1] - 3:21 11865 [1] - 99:14 119 [1] - 16:1 11:00 [1] - 108:24 11:30 [1] - 108:24 12 [2] - 44:16, 158:16 12.7 [1] - 28:23 1200 [1] - 59:25 12025 [1] - 142:18 121 [5] - 1:24, 3:22, 3:23, 4:7, 69:2 123 [2] - 4:8, 56:16 123,000 [1] - 46:25 125 [1] - 69:19 126 [1] - 4:9 129 [1] - 4:10 12th [1] - 124:12	1950 [1] - 140:7 1959 [1] - 110:18 1996 [1] - 13:12 2 20 [14] - 16:10, 27:24, 34:22, 35:1, 35:8, 36:14, 38:5, 39:1, 39:2, 41:25, 60:1, 90:2, 114:10 200 [4] - 41:2, 41:6, 47:19, 79:12 2000 [2] - 13:10, 15:7 2001 [1] - 19:3 2003 [1] - 159:2 2006 [3] - 51:12, 158:14, 159:2	2810 [1] - 101:1 287 [2] - 124:18, 124:21 28th [1] - 6:11 3 3 [7] - 31:12, 33:22, 37:12, 38:2, 46:6, 71:1, 127:20 3,600 [1] - 46:3 30 [10] - 9:1, 10:19, 11:1, 85:25, 97:12, 98:7, 113:7, 159:3, 162:7, 162:8 300 [1] - 19:8 32 [3] - 35:23, 36:8, 69:21 325 [2] - 33:3, 34:1 33 [3] - 35:22, 150:1, 150:3 34 [2] - 8:6, 8:24
\$75,000 [3] - 42:1, 42:9, 42:12 \$770,000 [1] - 28:11 \$8,000 [4] - 28:20, 62:18, 136:8, 147:20 \$850,000 [1] - 60:19 \$89,000 [1] - 95:11 '06-'07 [1] - 25:17 '07-'08 [1] - 44:10 '08 [1] - 28:10 '08-'09 [2] - 27:17, 29:1 '09 [2] - 26:11, 28:10 '09-'10 [4] - 25:8, 25:21, 28:13, 45:19 '10-'11 [2] - 25:10, 25:17 '11-'12 [1] - 45:2	117 [1] - 3:20 11722 [1] - 154:16 11766 [1] - 75:9 118 [1] - 3:21 11865 [1] - 99:14 119 [1] - 16:1 11:00 [1] - 108:24 11:30 [1] - 108:24 12 [2] - 44:16, 158:16 12.7 [1] - 28:23 1200 [1] - 59:25 12025 [1] - 142:18 121 [5] - 1:24, 3:22, 3:23, 4:7, 69:2 123 [2] - 4:8, 56:16 123,000 [1] - 46:25 125 [1] - 69:19 126 [1] - 4:9 129 [1] - 4:10 12th [1] - 124:12 13 [2] - 124:19, 148:19	1950 [1] - 140:7 1959 [1] - 110:18 1996 [1] - 13:12 2 20 [14] - 16:10, 27:24, 34:22, 35:1, 35:8, 36:14, 38:5, 39:1, 39:2, 41:25, 60:1, 90:2, 114:10 200 [4] - 41:2, 41:6, 47:19, 79:12 2000 [2] - 13:10, 15:7 2001 [1] - 19:3 2003 [1] - 159:2 2006 [3] - 51:12, 158:14, 159:2 2007 [2] - 124:12, 124:13	2810 [1] - 101:1 287 [2] - 124:18, 124:21 28th [1] - 6:11 3 3 [7] - 31:12, 33:22, 37:12, 38:2, 46:6, 71:1, 127:20 3,600 [1] - 46:3 30 [10] - 9:1, 10:19, 11:1, 85:25, 97:12, 98:7, 113:7, 159:3, 162:7, 162:8 300 [1] - 19:8 32 [3] - 35:23, 36:8, 69:21 325 [2] - 33:3, 34:1 33 [3] - 35:22, 150:1, 150:3 34 [2] - 8:6, 8:24 350 [1] - 67:7
\$75,000 [3] - 42:1, 42:9, 42:12 \$770,000 [1] - 28:11 \$8,000 [4] - 28:20, 62:18, 136:8, 147:20 \$850,000 [1] - 60:19 \$89,000 [1] - 95:11 '06-'07 [1] - 25:17 '07-'08 [1] - 44:10 '08 [1] - 28:10 '08-'09 [2] - 27:17, 29:1 '09 [2] - 26:11, 28:10 '09-'10 [4] - 25:8, 25:21, 28:13, 45:19 '10-'11 [2] - 25:10, 25:17 '11-'12 [1] - 45:2 '12 [1] - 91:18	117 [1] - 3:20 11722 [1] - 154:16 11766 [1] - 75:9 118 [1] - 3:21 11865 [1] - 99:14 119 [1] - 16:1 11:00 [1] - 108:24 11:30 [1] - 108:24 12 [2] - 44:16, 158:16 12.7 [1] - 28:23 1200 [1] - 59:25 12025 [1] - 142:18 121 [5] - 1:24, 3:22, 3:23, 4:7, 69:2 123 [2] - 4:8, 56:16 123,000 [1] - 46:25 125 [1] - 69:19 126 [1] - 4:9 129 [1] - 4:10 12th [1] - 124:12 13 [2] - 124:19, 148:19 13-year [1] - 14:2	1950 [1] - 140:7 1959 [1] - 110:18 1996 [1] - 13:12 2 20 [14] - 16:10, 27:24, 34:22, 35:1, 35:8, 36:14, 38:5, 39:1, 39:2, 41:25, 60:1, 90:2, 114:10 200 [4] - 41:2, 41:6, 47:19, 79:12 2000 [2] - 13:10, 15:7 2001 [1] - 19:3 2003 [1] - 159:2 2006 [3] - 51:12, 158:14, 159:2 2007 [2] - 124:12, 124:13 2007-2008 [1] - 124:17	2810 [1] - 101:1 287 [2] - 124:18, 124:21 28th [1] - 6:11 3 3 [7] - 31:12, 33:22, 37:12, 38:2, 46:6, 71:1, 127:20 3,600 [1] - 46:3 30 [10] - 9:1, 10:19, 11:1, 85:25, 97:12, 98:7, 113:7, 159:3, 162:7, 162:8 300 [1] - 19:8 32 [3] - 35:23, 36:8, 69:21 325 [2] - 33:3, 34:1 33 [3] - 35:22, 150:1, 150:3 34 [2] - 8:6, 8:24 350 [1] - 67:7 360 [1] - 149:23
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\$75,000 [3] - 42:1, 42:9, 42:12 \$770,000 [1] - 28:11 \$8,000 [4] - 28:20, 62:18, 136:8, 147:20 \$850,000 [1] - 60:19 \$89,000 [1] - 95:11 '06-'07 [1] - 25:17 '07-'08 [1] - 44:10 '08 [1] - 28:10 '08-'09 [2] - 27:17, 29:1 '09 [2] - 26:11, 28:10 '09-'10 [4] - 25:8, 25:21, 28:13, 45:19 '10-'11 [2] - 25:10, 25:17 '11-'12 [1] - 45:2 '12 [1] - 91:18 '14 [1] - 31:6 '50s [1] - 141:17 '99 [1] - 15:7 '99-'00 [1] - 15:15 '99-2000 [1] - 35:18	117 [1] - 3:20 11722 [1] - 154:16 11766 [1] - 75:9 118 [1] - 3:21 11865 [1] - 99:14 119 [1] - 16:1 11:00 [1] - 108:24 12 [2] - 44:16, 158:16 12.7 [1] - 28:23 1200 [1] - 59:25 12025 [1] - 142:18 121 [5] - 1:24, 3:22, 3:23, 4:7, 69:2 123 [2] - 4:8, 56:16 123,000 [1] - 46:25 125 [1] - 69:19 126 [1] - 4:9 129 [1] - 4:10 12th [1] - 124:12 13 [2] - 124:19, 148:19 13-year [1] - 14:2 130 [1] - 141:5 13104 [1] - 135:1 1311 [2] - 6:20, 11:4 13149 [1] - 156:16 132 [1] - 4:11 133 [2] - 4:12, 124:18	1950 [1] - 140:7 1959 [1] - 110:18 1996 [1] - 13:12 20 [14] - 16:10, 27:24, 34:22, 35:1, 35:8, 36:14, 38:5, 39:1, 39:2, 41:25, 60:1, 90:2, 114:10 200 [4] - 41:2, 41:6, 47:19, 79:12 2000 [2] - 13:10, 15:7 2001 [1] - 19:3 2003 [1] - 159:2 2006 [3] - 51:12, 158:14, 159:2 2007 [2] - 124:12, 124:13 2007-2008 [1] - 124:17 2008-2009 [2] - 101:16, 102:1 2009 [2] - 102:19, 103:3 2009-2010 [2] - 103:3, 104:7 2010 [4] - 13:13, 85:25, 97:12, 98:7 2011 [7] - 1:15, 6:9, 6:11, 6:12, 13:10, 91:18, 135:13 2011-2012 [3] - 12:23, 14:3,	2810 [1] - 101:1 287 [2] - 124:18, 124:21 28th [1] - 6:11 3 3 [7] - 31:12, 33:22, 37:12, 38:2, 46:6, 71:1, 127:20 3,600 [1] - 46:3 30 [10] - 9:1, 10:19, 11:1, 85:25, 97:12, 98:7, 113:7, 159:3, 162:7, 162:8 300 [1] - 19:8 32 [3] - 35:23, 36:8, 69:21 325 [2] - 33:3, 34:1 33 [3] - 35:22, 150:1, 150:3 34 [2] - 8:6, 8:24 350 [1] - 67:7 360 [1] - 149:23 364-2485 [1] - 1:25 370 [1] - 67:17 38 [3] - 5:22, 5:23, 8:10 385 [1] - 38:19
\$75,000 [3] - 42:1, 42:9, 42:12 \$770,000 [1] - 28:11 \$8,000 [4] - 28:20, 62:18, 136:8, 147:20 \$850,000 [1] - 60:19 \$89,000 [1] - 95:11 '06-'07 [1] - 25:17 '07-'08 [1] - 44:10 '08 [1] - 28:10 '08-'09 [2] - 27:17, 29:1 '09 [2] - 26:11, 28:10 '09-'10 [4] - 25:8, 25:21, 28:13, 45:19 '10-'11 [2] - 25:10, 25:17 '11-'12 [1] - 45:2 '12 [1] - 91:18 '14 [1] - 31:6 '50s [1] - 141:17 '99 [1] - 15:7 '99-'00 [1] - 15:15 '99-2000 [1] - 35:18	117 [1] - 3:20 11722 [1] - 154:16 11766 [1] - 75:9 118 [1] - 3:21 11865 [1] - 99:14 119 [1] - 16:1 11:00 [1] - 108:24 12 [2] - 44:16, 158:16 12.7 [1] - 28:23 1200 [1] - 59:25 12025 [1] - 142:18 121 [5] - 1:24, 3:22, 3:23, 4:7, 69:2 123 [2] - 4:8, 56:16 123,000 [1] - 46:25 125 [1] - 69:19 126 [1] - 4:9 129 [1] - 4:10 12th [1] - 124:12 13 [2] - 124:19, 148:19 13-year [1] - 14:2 130 [1] - 141:5 13104 [1] - 156:16 132 [1] - 4:11 133 [2] - 4:12, 124:18 135 [1] - 4:13	1950 [1] - 140:7 1959 [1] - 110:18 1996 [1] - 13:12 20 [14] - 16:10, 27:24, 34:22, 35:1, 35:8, 36:14, 38:5, 39:1, 39:2, 41:25, 60:1, 90:2, 114:10 200 [4] - 41:2, 41:6, 47:19, 79:12 2000 [2] - 13:10, 15:7 2001 [1] - 19:3 2003 [1] - 159:2 2006 [3] - 51:12, 158:14, 159:2 2007 [2] - 124:12, 124:13 2007-2008 [1] - 124:17 2008-2009 [2] - 101:16, 102:1 2009 [2] - 102:19, 103:3 2009-2010 [2] - 103:3, 104:7 2010 [4] - 13:13, 85:25, 97:12, 98:7 2011 [7] - 1:15, 6:9, 6:11, 6:12, 13:10, 91:18, 135:13 2011-2012 [3] - 12:23, 14:3, 60:25	2810 [1] - 101:1 287 [2] - 124:18, 124:21 28th [1] - 6:11 3 3 [7] - 31:12, 33:22, 37:12, 38:2, 46:6, 71:1, 127:20 3,600 [1] - 46:3 30 [10] - 9:1, 10:19, 11:1, 85:25, 97:12, 98:7, 113:7, 159:3, 162:7, 162:8 300 [1] - 19:8 32 [3] - 35:23, 36:8, 69:21 325 [2] - 33:3, 34:1 33 [3] - 35:22, 150:1, 150:3 34 [2] - 8:6, 8:24 350 [1] - 67:7 360 [1] - 149:23 364-1793 [1] - 1:25 364-2485 [1] - 1:25 370 [1] - 67:17 38 [3] - 5:22, 5:23, 8:10 385 [1] - 38:19 3:15 [1] - 149:18
\$75,000 [3] - 42:1, 42:9, 42:12 \$770,000 [1] - 28:11 \$8,000 [4] - 28:20, 62:18, 136:8, 147:20 \$850,000 [1] - 60:19 \$89,000 [1] - 95:11 '06-'07 [1] - 25:17 '07-'08 [1] - 44:10 '08 [1] - 28:10 '08-'09 [2] - 27:17, 29:1 '09 [2] - 26:11, 28:10 '09-'10 [4] - 25:8, 25:21, 28:13, 45:19 '10-'11 [2] - 25:10, 25:17 '11-'12 [1] - 45:2 '12 [1] - 91:18 '14 [1] - 31:6 '50s [1] - 141:17 '99 [1] - 15:7 '99-'00 [1] - 15:15 '99-2000 [1] - 35:18 1 1[8] - 12:21, 13:2, 13:8, 32:1,	117 [1] - 3:20 11722 [1] - 154:16 11766 [1] - 75:9 118 [1] - 3:21 11865 [1] - 99:14 119 [1] - 16:1 11:00 [1] - 108:24 11:30 [1] - 108:24 12 [2] - 44:16, 158:16 12.7 [1] - 28:23 1200 [1] - 59:25 12025 [1] - 142:18 121 [5] - 1:24, 3:22, 3:23, 4:7, 69:2 123 [2] - 4:8, 56:16 123,000 [1] - 46:25 125 [1] - 69:19 126 [1] - 4:9 129 [1] - 4:10 12th [1] - 124:12 13 [2] - 124:19, 148:19 13-year [1] - 14:2 130 [1] - 141:5 13104 [1] - 135:1 1311 [2] - 6:20, 11:4 13149 [1] - 156:16 132 [1] - 4:11 133 [2] - 4:12, 124:18 135 [1] - 4:13 138 [1] - 4:14	1950 [1] - 140:7 1959 [1] - 110:18 1996 [1] - 13:12 20 [14] - 16:10, 27:24, 34:22, 35:1, 35:8, 36:14, 38:5, 39:1, 39:2, 41:25, 60:1, 90:2, 114:10 200 [4] - 41:2, 41:6, 47:19, 79:12 2000 [2] - 13:10, 15:7 2001 [1] - 19:3 2003 [1] - 159:2 2006 [3] - 51:12, 158:14, 159:2 2007 [2] - 124:12, 124:13 2007-2008 [1] - 124:17 2008-2009 [2] - 101:16, 102:1 2009 [2] - 102:19, 103:3 2009-2010 [2] - 103:3, 104:7 2010 [4] - 13:13, 85:25, 97:12, 98:7 2011 [7] - 1:15, 6:9, 6:11, 6:12, 13:10, 91:18, 135:13 2011-2012 [3] - 12:23, 14:3, 60:25 2012 [1] - 31:6	2810 [1] - 101:1 287 [2] - 124:18, 124:21 28th [1] - 6:11 3 3 [7] - 31:12, 33:22, 37:12, 38:2, 46:6, 71:1, 127:20 3,600 [1] - 46:3 30 [10] - 9:1, 10:19, 11:1, 85:25, 97:12, 98:7, 113:7, 159:3, 162:7, 162:8 300 [1] - 19:8 32 [3] - 35:23, 36:8, 69:21 325 [2] - 33:3, 34:1 33 [3] - 35:22, 150:1, 150:3 34 [2] - 8:6, 8:24 350 [1] - 67:7 360 [1] - 149:23 364-1793 [1] - 1:25 364-2485 [1] - 1:25 370 [1] - 67:17 38 [3] - 5:22, 5:23, 8:10 385 [1] - 38:19 3:15 [1] - 149:18
\$75,000 [3] - 42:1, 42:9, 42:12 \$770,000 [1] - 28:11 \$8,000 [4] - 28:20, 62:18, 136:8, 147:20 \$850,000 [1] - 60:19 \$89,000 [1] - 95:11 '06-'07 [1] - 25:17 '07-'08 [1] - 44:10 '08 [1] - 28:10 '08-'09 [2] - 27:17, 29:1 '09 [2] - 26:11, 28:10 '09-'10 [4] - 25:8, 25:21, 28:13, 45:19 '10-'11 [2] - 25:10, 25:17 '11-'12 [1] - 45:2 '12 [1] - 91:18 '14 [1] - 31:6 '50s [1] - 141:17 '99 [1] - 15:7 '99-'00 [1] - 15:15 '99-2000 [1] - 35:18	117 [1] - 3:20 11722 [1] - 154:16 11766 [1] - 75:9 118 [1] - 3:21 11865 [1] - 99:14 119 [1] - 16:1 11:00 [1] - 108:24 12 [2] - 44:16, 158:16 12.7 [1] - 28:23 1200 [1] - 59:25 12025 [1] - 142:18 121 [5] - 1:24, 3:22, 3:23, 4:7, 69:2 123 [2] - 4:8, 56:16 123,000 [1] - 46:25 125 [1] - 69:19 126 [1] - 4:9 129 [1] - 4:10 12th [1] - 124:12 13 [2] - 124:19, 148:19 13-year [1] - 14:2 130 [1] - 141:5 13104 [1] - 156:16 132 [1] - 4:11 133 [2] - 4:12, 124:18 135 [1] - 4:13	1950 [1] - 140:7 1959 [1] - 110:18 1996 [1] - 13:12 20 [14] - 16:10, 27:24, 34:22, 35:1, 35:8, 36:14, 38:5, 39:1, 39:2, 41:25, 60:1, 90:2, 114:10 200 [4] - 41:2, 41:6, 47:19, 79:12 2000 [2] - 13:10, 15:7 2001 [1] - 19:3 2003 [1] - 159:2 2006 [3] - 51:12, 158:14, 159:2 2007 [2] - 124:12, 124:13 2007-2008 [1] - 124:17 2008-2009 [2] - 101:16, 102:1 2009 [2] - 102:19, 103:3 2009-2010 [2] - 103:3, 104:7 2010 [4] - 13:13, 85:25, 97:12, 98:7 2011 [7] - 1:15, 6:9, 6:11, 6:12, 13:10, 91:18, 135:13 2011-2012 [3] - 12:23, 14:3, 60:25	2810 [1] - 101:1 287 [2] - 124:18, 124:21 28th [1] - 6:11 3 3 [7] - 31:12, 33:22, 37:12, 38:2, 46:6, 71:1, 127:20 3,600 [1] - 46:3 30 [10] - 9:1, 10:19, 11:1, 85:25, 97:12, 98:7, 113:7, 159:3, 162:7, 162:8 300 [1] - 19:8 32 [3] - 35:23, 36:8, 69:21 325 [2] - 33:3, 34:1 33 [3] - 35:22, 150:1, 150:3 34 [2] - 8:6, 8:24 350 [1] - 67:7 360 [1] - 149:23 364-1793 [1] - 1:25 364-2485 [1] - 1:25 370 [1] - 67:17 38 [3] - 5:22, 5:23, 8:10 385 [1] - 38:19 3:15 [1] - 149:18

4.785 [1] - 26:12 **68** [2] - 15:14, 21:9 91:1, 95:19, 103:1, 105:15, 27:10, 86:21, 87:9, 97:9, 40,000 [1] - 136:4 69 [1] - 3:9 105:17, 140:25, 141:17, 150:17, 150:19, 151:20, **6:30** [1] - 6:12 145:9, 151:1, 152:4, 152:18 **400** [3] - 34:3, 38:20, 79:13 **6:30-10:45** [1] - 1:15 152:23 additionally [1] - 28:24 **404** [3] - 33:9, 35:16, 36:23 absolutely [5] - 62:3, 65:6, additions [1] - 75:22 **41** [1] - 2:6 66:1, 92:17, 95:6 address [20] - 8:15, 10:23, **418,000** [1] - 46:14 7 academic [10] - 30:18, 57:2, 48:16, 48:18, 48:21, 52:3, **42** [2] - 37:12, 38:2 86:10, 88:24, 90:3, 93:25, 55:10, 69:19, 92:8, 99:14, **425** [2] - 34:4, 38:21 **7** [6] - 40:25, 47:1, 71:3, 77:5, 102:9, 103:11, 103:23, 101:1, 106:6, 112:21, **43** [5] - 37:13, 38:14, 38:16, 81:18, 137:2 105:3 121:13, 132:5, 133:4, 70:22, 123:1 70 [1] - 159:3 academically [2] - 78:18, 135:1, 138:25, 142:18, **44** [3] - 37:13, 38:14, 38:16 **75** [4] - 3:10, 19:21, 19:22, 103:6 157:5 440 [1] - 34:2 21:23 Academy [1] - 99:21 adds [2] - 40:15, 62:22 **45** [2] - 139:20, 149:16 76 [1] - 21:10 acceptable [1] - 111:24 adequate [1] - 68:19 **46** [1] - 149:6 **780** [8] - 5:8, 5:15, 5:23, 8:10, access [6] - 44:15, 45:16, adjust [2] - 134:5, 155:25 **460** [1] - 13:10 11:2, 87:24, 151:20, 47:6, 93:24, 94:11, 128:3 adjusted [2] - 12:22, 156:6 48 [2] - 3:4, 12:16 151:25 accomplish [1] - 105:12 adjusting [1] - 102:11 4:00 [1] - 149:19 **79** [1] - 23:5 accomplished [1] - 105:11 adjustment [1] - 101:20 **4Sight** [9] - 22:11, 22:12, accomplishment [3] - 124:6, adjustments [1] - 29:19 22:17, 23:7, 56:21, 64:9, 8 158:21, 159:5 administration [35] - 9:24, 117:25, 135:13 accordance [1] - 5:22 10:3, 30:24, 56:5, 60:3, according [4] - 87:5, 88:13, 60:7, 60:17, 63:15, 65:11, 5 8[2] - 78:24, 86:2 135:10, 135:13 74:16, 75:2, 76:2, 76:17, 8.22 [1] - 27:7 account [1] - 6:24 80:21, 81:1, 87:11, 96:19, 8.65 [1] - 26:13 **5** [3] - 2:3, 36:20, 46:19 accurate [1] - 37:22 113:24, 116:19, 129:10, 80 [3] - 24:4, 43:3, 136:7 **5,510** [1] - 124:15 135:17, 135:19, 136:25, accurately [1] - 163:5 **81** [1] - 3:11 **5.5** [1] - 26:8 achieve [3] - 49:15, 50:19, 137:3, 137:12, 137:16, 814 [2] - 1:25 **5.64** [2] - 26:13, 27:5 137:18, 137:22, 139:8, 123:24 82 [1] - 3:12 **50** [4] - 40:9, 134:17, 138:2, 139:11, 141:21, 156:12, achieved [2] - 50:12, 50:13 83 [1] - 22:3 141:18 157:12, 161:16, 161:20 achievement [7] - 19:24, 8359 [1] - 85:20 **50,000** [1] - 44:13 administration's [2] - 60:13, 20:10, 69:10, 86:10, 88:24, **85** [6] - 3:13, 3:14, 15:16, **51** [1] - 15:21 142:4 90:3, 124:4 15:22, 18:15, 24:4 **510** [3] - 35:19, 37:1, 39:9 Administration's [1] acknowledge [1] - 60:4 88 [1] - 44:14 **514** [1] - 39:7 135:11 acknowledged [4] - 50:12, 89 [1] - 44:12 **515** [1] - 33:25 administrative [3] - 11:10, 50:14, 81:12, 86:7 8th [1] - 25:1 59:3, 59:7 **519** [1] - 35:17 acknowledges [1] - 124:2 administrator [2] - 24:14, **52** [1] - 3:5 Acres [1] - 132:5 9 62:16 **53** [2] - 33:2, 158:10 **Act** [6] - 5:22, 8:6, 8:10, 8:24, administrators [9] - 7:18, **54** [1] - 149:8 12:16, 12:21 29:11, 50:17, 59:11, 73:23, **55** [1] - 3:6 9 [1] - 78:25 act [1] - 5:23 74:22, 75:4, 140:24, **57** [1] - 41:7 action [1] - 154:7 **90** [10] - 7:13, 18:15, 23:10, 143:19 **575** [3] - 35:20, 36:24, 39:9 150:20, 152:20, 153:1, active [1] - 17:14 adopted [3] - 6:8, 24:19, 26:7 **582** [1] - 36:24 153:2, 153:8, 153:11, actual [5] - 16:6, 27:14, 28:1, adult [1] - 51:10 **59** [1] - 24:3 153:13 28:2, 28:4 adults [2] - 66:23, 117:13 9053 [1] - 129:22 **Adams** [15] - 9:6, 9:8, 10:11, advance [1] - 154:8 6 922 [1] - 25:20 11:6, 15:18, 32:1, 32:6, advanced [3] - 22:1, 23:11, 930 [1] - 25:21 48:5, 58:22, 72:20, 79:12, 144:15 9869 [1] - 121:13 82:1, 120:20, 161:19, **6** [6] - 37:10, 46:22, 71:3, advertised [4] - 5:8, 6:17, 162:5 99 [1] - 3:15 77:5, 81:18, 137:2 153:19, 160:14 9948 [1] - 159:16 **ADAMS** [10] - 1:13, 2:4, 11:9, 60 [1] - 21:21 advice [1] - 156:11 9:47 [2] - 131:16, 132:1 26:16, 29:11, 41:14, 47:4, **600** [1] - 25:23 advised [1] - 6:16 92:1, 162:13, 162:21 60s [1] - 19:24 affect [8] - 39:19, 54:23, add [6] - 8:16, 37:4, 80:21, Α **615,000** [2] - 46:13, 46:24 62:7, 62:8, 70:1, 73:1, 91:2, 92:18, 95:6 63 [2] - 32:13, 36:23 74:5, 132:20 added [2] - 20:1, 92:4 **64** [1] - 3:7 abide [1] - 10:15 affected [1] - 114:1 adding [6] - 40:11, 40:22, **65**[1] - 22:3 abilities [1] - 130:21 affecting [1] - 15:22 46:17, 46:18, 87:12, 98:14 **655** [1] - 25:9 able [21] - 13:18, 13:21, affects [2] - 67:14, 135:18 addition [3] - 25:25, 87:3, **66** [1] - 15:22 28:16, 37:6, 48:17, 72:7, afford [3] - 72:9, 115:11, 136:8 **67** [2] - 3:8, 33:8 85:6, 85:7, 90:16, 90:22,

additional [10] - 9:25, 25:23,

158:7

afraid [2] - 84:11, 155:20 age [4] - 51:17, 78:19, 103:11, 144:19 agencies [1] - 25:3 agenda [5] - 7:15, 10:8, 47:24, 151:24, 154:3 ago [11] - 65:23, 70:6, 72:5, 72:10, 96:3, 97:25, 110:18, 113:5, 113:6, 138:2, 143:1 agree [4] - 59:17, 129:17, 144:1, 144:3 ahead [10] - 49:1, 80:17, 96:10, 104:17, 108:14, 137:23, 143:8, 143:16, 156:3, 160:24 AIDS [1] - 94:23 Air [1] - 99:21 air [3] - 25:14, 42:14, 43:3 alcohol [1] - 94:22 **Alfarata** [1] - 70:8 alive [2] - 51:20, 138:2 all-time [1] - 28:10 alley [1] - 71:17 allow [4] - 63:22, 94:13, 116:5, 116:7 allowed [1] - 151:25 alluded [1] - 17:12 **almighty** [1] - 70:15 almost [5] - 18:23, 28:22, 68:1, 128:20, 133:21 alone [8] - 13:6, 35:4, 35:21, 71:4, 72:16, 120:17, 155:10, 162:3 alphabet [1] - 104:1 alternative [1] - 49:18 alternatives [1] - 80:20 **Altoona** [1] - 51:12 amazed [1] - 65:6 amazing [9] - 22:6, 23:4, 23:14, 52:10, 57:4, 65:17, 77:23, 91:6, 91:7 amended [1] - 5:16 America's [1] - 124:1 American [2] - 49:15, 123:24 amount [11] - 12:21, 12:24, 27:10, 39:24, 40:3, 80:8, 91:23, 95:12, 100:2, 100:8 analyzing [1] - 20:23 AND [1] - 2:9 Andrea [2] - 94:24, 94:25 **ANDREW** [1] - 2:6 angry [3] - 61:22, 81:19, 82:9 animals [1] - 77:23 annoyed [1] - 114:15 answer [6] - 9:22, 123:16, 136:14, 150:16, 152:9, 157:8 answers [4] - 9:22, 75:12,

80:20, 152:4

anti [1] - 45:16 anti-virus [1] - 45:16 anticipating [3] - 32:13, 32:22, 33:2 anytime [1] - 162:3 apart [5] - 57:25, 72:25, 107:17, 122:22, 137:6 appalled [1] - 113:23 applies [1] - 27:15 apply [1] - 116:20 appreciate [5] - 17:3, 82:14, 110:3, 110:22, 112:13 appreciated [1] - 111:2 appreciation [1] - 16:23 approach [1] - 69:7 approached [1] - 66:16 approaches [4] - 18:7, 19:9, 20:6, 20:7 appropriate [1] - 136:18 April [5] - 85:24, 97:12, 98:7, 125:25, 126:2 architect [1] - 131:8 **AREA** [2] - 1:1, 1:17 Area [13] - 5:7, 11:11, 11:17, 13:3, 24:23, 25:19, 65:14, 99:13, 102:3, 102:4, 103:5, 103:21, 110:1 area [18] - 13:12, 17:4, 20:8, 27:3, 30:2, 30:8, 30:23, 34:13, 71:14, 73:19, 102:24, 139:10, 140:21, 142:20, 142:22, 147:17, 148:6, 151:16 areas [6] - 10:10, 29:16, 31:25, 40:12, 63:2, 104:11 argue [1] - 56:12 arguments [1] - 155:10 **arms** [1] - 114:16 arrive [1] - 53:17 arrogance [1] - 114:18 article [1] - 51:13 Article [1] - 31:12 articles [1] - 159:23 **aside** [1] - 74:9 assembly [1] - 119:18 **Assembly** [1] - 7:9 **assembly-line** [1] - 119:18 assessment [8] - 20:12, 20:17, 22:11, 22:17, 22:18, 22:22, 23:9, 23:15 assessments [4] - 17:9, 17:10, 20:11, 23:20 Assistant [2] - 11:25, 14:11 assistant [2] - 73:25, 74:1 associated [1] - 43:18 asterisks [1] - 37:16 astonished [1] - 103:23 at-large [1] - 160:16

68:22 attacks [1] - 128:20 attempt [2] - 31:24, 88:1 attend [10] - 37:14, 66:17, 69:22, 71:8, 80:5, 80:6, 103:15, 108:3, 111:5, 156:13 attendance [8] - 6:25, 8:21, 9:9, 30:21, 108:20, 125:24, 126:1, 153:21 attended [12] - 24:18, 29:13, 68:18, 71:7, 114:12, 121:22, 122:3, 129:24, 145:23, 154:18, 154:21, 159:18 attending [2] - 102:15, 103:17 attends [2] - 99:22, 133:6 attention [3] - 138:19, 138:21, 139:1 Attorney [1] - 48:4 attribute [1] - 28:14 auction [1] - 156:25 **AUDIENCE** [6] - 3:2, 4:5, 96:9, 96:11, 125:20, 157:18 audience [18] - 11:9, 47:6, 47:18, 61:5, 62:12, 72:4, 72:19, 74:7, 76:18, 80:3, 80:4, 80:8, 82:13, 90:8, 113:8, 114:22, 151:4, 159:10 Audience [27] - 50:3, 52:2, 59:16, 60:15, 63:17, 69:12, 70:18, 73:2, 73:14, 74:25, 76:13, 85:2, 88:19, 100:17, 100:24, 104:19, 105:22, 111:9, 112:5, 117:2, 119:3, 120:23, 125:4, 125:9, 129:20, 149:3, 161:3 **AUDITORIUM** [1] - 1:18 Aunt [2] - 54:3 authority [2] - 6:21, 126:15 autistic [7] - 101:6, 101:9, 101:17, 102:5, 102:24, 103:16, 136:13 automatic [1] - 153:9 automatically [1] - 153:10 available [17] - 7:23, 7:24, 30:9, 32:18, 33:20, 35:6, 35:22, 37:5, 39:1, 92:16, 92:18, 93:1, 93:17, 95:3, 136:17, 140:6, 143:15 Avenue [2] - 48:22, 64:20 **AVENUE** [1] - 1:17 average [32] - 14:5, 15:16, 15:19, 16:12, 16:14, 16:15, 21:6, 21:8, 21:21, 22:2, 23:5, 27:20, 32:7, 32:13, 32:24, 33:6, 33:9, 34:12,

35:8, 36:16, 37:9, 37:18, 38:4, 38:11, 38:19, 39:14, 46:1, 103:10, 103:12, 103:13, 135:8, 135:12 averaging [1] - 86:8 award [10] - 50:14, 54:15, 68:11, 68:12, 68:14, 123:23, 124:1, 124:16, 124:20, 124:23 **award-winning** [1] - 54:15 awards [2] - 50:12, 50:23 aware [5] - 62:13, 126:9, 142:25, 146:11, 150:11 awesome [1] - 52:9 **AYP** [4] - 31:4, 50:23, 58:17, 86:12 В

baby [4] - 66:7, 104:21, 104:25, 110:11 baby-sitter's [1] - 66:7 backed [1] - 90:10 background [3] - 7:17, 7:19, 11:7 backing [1] - 105:10 backwards [2] - 88:13, 89:10 bad [6] - 74:13, 84:13, 107:11, 119:10, 132:7, 158:12 bags [1] - 140:17 bail [1] - 72:11 balance [2] - 12:18, 27:11 balanced [1] - 140:17 balancing [2] - 88:15, 88:18 ball [2] - 105:23, 105:24 balloon [1] - 89:20 balls [3] - 88:16, 88:18, 89:17 bam [1] - 160:6 band [1] - 107:15 **BANEY** [2] - 3:17, 106:5 Baney [1] - 106:5 bang [1] - 93:23 banner [1] - 124:8 barely [1] - 105:14 barrels [1] - 42:4 barrier [1] - 114:16 Bartol [3] - 85:20, 92:1 BARTOL [18] - 3:14, 85:17, 88:20, 90:9, 91:22, 92:6, 96:18, 97:1, 97:8, 97:12, 97:18, 98:6, 98:18, 98:23, 98:25, 99:3, 99:8, 99:10 **BARTON** [2] - 97:5, 98:3 **base** [2] - 134:21, 150:5 baseball [2] - 107:20, 107:22 based [16] - 20:6, 21:1, 27:19, 27:20, 28:2, 32:6,

 $atmosphere\ {\tiny [2]}-52{:}11,$

32:16, 38:15, 48:18, 78:14, 97:24, 98:12, 103:20, 152:1, 153:20, 158:6 **basic** [2] - 25:8, 104:12 basics [2] - 75:3, 119:19 basis [3] - 72:15, 79:20, 113:18 bathroom [1] - 155:3 battles [1] - 155:11 Bear [6] - 101:7, 101:8, 101:11, 101:13, 109:22, 109:23 beard [5] - 22:14, 146:10, 150:16, 151:2, 151:12 **BEARD** [20] - 1:13, 2:3, 5:1, 48:5, 96:20, 131:10, 131:17, 151:5, 153:3, 153:6, 153:9, 153:12, 153:15, 153:20, 154:6, 156:25, 159:9, 159:13, 161:11, 161:15 Beard [3] - 5:6, 48:4, 152:25 **BEATTY** [6] - 3:21, 3:22, 118:20, 119:4, 120:24, 121:7 Beatty [3] - 118:20, 121:7, 157:16 beautiful [5] - 57:18, 126:19, 140:10, 140:24, 141:14 became [2] - 57:9, 124:13 become [7] - 9:11, 49:11, 60:12, 61:22, 78:6, 78:8, 124:14 becomes [2] - 49:11, 61:23 **bed** [3] - 63:22, 142:7, 154:14 **BEFORE** [2] - 1:1, 1:8 beg [1] - 118:15 began [3] - 75:19, 76:25, 106:16 begging [1] - 105:7 begin [3] - 88:5, 90:3, 104:22 beginning [4] - 5:11, 10:1, 113:22, 131:20 begun [1] - 30:7 behalf [4] - 65:5, 82:25, 139:13, 161:20 behavioral [1] - 103:24 behaviors [1] - 77:11 behind [3] - 10:17, 71:10, 134:7 Behind [2] - 31:3, 124:14 bell [1] - 109:2 belong [1] - 53:2 **belonging** [1] - 51:16 beloved [4] - 55:21, 57:23, 57:24, 113:2 below [4] - 46:16, 103:12, 104:12

beneath [1] - 63:10

benefit [7] - 45:4, 49:23, 68:3, 101:20, 112:16, 137:1, 144:12 benefits [6] - 30:25, 45:21, 45:25, 69:11, 69:15, 111:3 Benson [1] - 101:1 BENSON [4] - 3:16, 100:25, 104:20, 105:23 berger [1] - 154:17 **BERGER** [3] - 1:12, 4:9, 126:11 Berger [3] - 79:6, 89:13, 126:11 best [31] - 18:8, 18:9, 19:17, 19:19, 47:11, 47:24, 53:7, 57:21, 58:3, 58:6, 64:3, 64:10, 78:19, 83:6, 83:10, 84:7, 84:14, 84:24, 87:17, 107:24, 117:23, 119:25, 121:9, 121:15, 133:23, 134:16, 135:14, 138:10, 138:11, 145:16 bestowed [2] - 68:12, 124:22 better [13] - 7:1, 21:10, 49:17, 52:21, 56:23, 57:1, 72:2, 85:18, 128:2, 128:12, 135:23, 136:9, 146:13 between [6] - 18:15, 29:25, 42:15, 66:3, 88:20, 130:16 beyond [3] - 105:4, 116:11, 116:21 BHMC [1] - 60:18 big [15] - 26:14, 35:2, 49:16, 64:15, 66:13, 83:4, 83:8, 83:13, 83:21, 110:12, 122:1, 123:18, 126:25, 130:25, 138:16 **Big** [6] - 69:20, 99:14, 112:21, 133:4, 135:1, 156:16 bigger [6] - 85:7, 89:1, 90:12, 101:21, 109:10, 127:25 biggest [1] - 54:16 **bill** [1] - 49:25 **billion** [1] - 24:22 birds [1] - 77:24 birthday [1] - 101:5 bit [12] - 5:5, 14:12, 16:13, 16:14, 16:17, 21:14, 27:2, 56:23, 61:20, 126:5, 128:22 blaming [1] - 59:12 blocking [1] - 15:11 blocks [1] - 19:20 **blow** [2] - 89:4, 89:5 **blue** [1] - 124:8 Blue [33] - 49:13, 49:14, 55:21, 64:4, 64:6, 68:11, 71:9, 111:17, 113:4, 114:6,

123:11, 123:13, 123:15, 123:21, 123:23, 123:24, 124:5, 124:14, 125:1, 125:5, 125:6, 132:14, 132:25, 133:6, 134:23, 135:25, 142:15, 158:19, **Board** [11] - 7:10, 9:7, 27:6, 48:11, 48:14, 51:19, 65:15, 76:6, 83:5, 87:15, 96:16 board [80] - 5:1, 6:1, 6:3, 6:9, 6:16, 6:21, 8:4, 8:13, 9:5, 9:10, 9:13, 9:18, 10:4, 11:10, 24:18, 29:12, 31:18, 47:12, 53:22, 55:12, 63:4, 65:11, 69:24, 71:22, 71:23, 73:3, 73:6, 75:6, 80:17, 90:10, 110:8, 110:9, 110:10, 110:19, 110:24, 113:16, 113:24, 114:12, 114:15, 116:19, 118:8, 123:17, 126:9, 126:14, 127:16, 129:9, 131:5, 131:17, 131:21, 137:22, 137:24, 138:20, 138:22, 138:25, 139:11, 140:7, 140:8, 140:12, 140:18, 141:13, 141:16, 141:21, 143:6, 143:18, 147:10, 151:15, 151:23, 152:18, 154:2, 154:10, 157:12, 160:1, 160:2, 160:15, 160:19, 160:23, 161:20, 162:9, 162:16 **BOARD** [2] - 1:1, 1:13 Board's [2] - 6:15, 162:11 boards [1] - 50:18 boat [1] - 154:19 boiler [6] - 41:24, 42:10, 42:11, 42:25, 43:1 boilers [1] - 42:2 book [1] - 87:9 boom [1] - 110:12 booming [1] - 72:7 **BORDER** [3] - 3:4, 48:20, 50:4 Border [3] - 48:21, 62:3, 65:24 border [3] - 52:15, 122:18, 132:10 **BORING** [2] - 1:20, 1:23 Boring [1] - 163:12 boringreporting@verizon. net [1] - 1:25 Borough [1] - 140:9 borough [1] - 128:2 borrow [1] - 119:22 bottom [9] - 13:15, 38:13, 39:16, 46:22, 65:16, 80:13, 80:16, 120:7, 127:15

bottomed [1] - 74:10 bought [1] - 93:19 **boundaries** [1] - 30:21 bowling [1] - 71:17 Box [1] - 67:17 boy [1] - 118:23 **boys** [2] - 69:22, 77:22 braces [1] - 155:7 **Brady** [210] - 5:18, 15:13, 15:20, 16:1, 16:5, 16:13, 17:25, 19:22, 31:21, 32:14, 32:23, 33:23, 33:24, 33:25, 35:14, 36:21, 36:22, 37:10, 37:16, 38:13, 38:24, 39:15, 39:19, 40:8, 40:17, 41:18, 42:10, 42:12, 42:20, 43:2, 43:24, 44:8, 44:19, 44:24, 45:15, 46:4, 46:10, 46:19, 46:23, 48:23, 49:8, 49:20, 50:1, 50:4, 51:3, 51:13, 51:20. 51:21. 52:1. 52:5. 52:6, 52:21, 54:9, 55:22, 55:24, 56:7, 56:15, 57:5, 57:15, 57:23, 58:10, 58:21, 60:11, 60:12, 60:21, 61:4, 61:9, 61:16, 62:1, 62:4, 63:14, 64:4, 64:22, 64:24, 65:5, 65:24, 65:25, 66:8, 66:14, 66:17, 67:10, 67:21, 67:23, 67:24, 68:9, 68:12, 68:21, 69:1, 69:2, 69:15, 69:21, 69:22, 71:8, 71:12, 73:5, 74:20, 76:15, 76:22, 77:8, 77:9, 78:4, 78:13, 79:1, 79:3, 80:5, 80:6, 83:5, 83:6, 83:13, 85:11, 85:22, 86:2, 86:15, 88:10, 88:22, 91:6, 91:24, 93:10, 93:18, 94:1, 97:20, 98:9, 101:3, 102:20, 102:23, 103:18, 104:3, 104:23, 105:1, 105:11, 106:10, 106:11, 106:12, 106:17, 106:19, 106:25, 109:13, 109:21, 110:1, 110:6, 110:7, 110:9, 110:17, 111:14, 111:21, 112:7, 113:1, 113:12, 113:17, 114:2, 114:8, 115:13, 116:7, 117:4, 118:2, 118:9, 118:10, 119:20, 119:24, 119:25, 121:8, 121:15, 121:21, 121:22, 122:2, 122:9, 123:4, 123:9, 124:12, 127:19, 129:24, 130:5, 130:10, 130:21, 131:3, 132:10, 132:18, 133:1, 135:3, 135:6, 135:11, 135:13, 135:20, 136:2, 136:9, 137:1, 137:3,

117:7, 118:17, 121:2,

138:10, 138:11, 139:15, 139:23, 140:8, 140:11, 142:15, 142:20, 144:6, 146:24, 148:12, 156:17, 156:20, 158:7, 158:10, 158:25, 159:18, 161:5 **BRADY** [1] - 1:6 Brady's [2] - 35:16, 37:12 **brain** [1] - 55:5 brands [1] - 140:4 break [2] - 119:7, 131:14 break-your-heart [1] - 119:7 breakdown [1] - 45:9 breaking [1] - 132:22 Bria [2] - 83:3, 83:11 bricks [1] - 132:23 bridge [7] - 18:10, 120:1, 120:4, 120:14, 120:19, 120:20, 156:22 bridges [2] - 89:15, 120:2 Brief [1] - 49:1 brief [2] - 77:18, 110:2 briefly [2] - 104:10, 160:9 bright [1] - 126:22 bring [10] - 10:4, 12:25, 28:16, 38:8, 38:9, 58:16, 77:21, 88:1, 99:16, 126:24 bringing [1] - 13:19 brings [2] - 12:13, 146:8 **broke** [3] - 57:18, 112:3, 131:25 broken [2] - 45:10, 45:16 **bronchitis** [1] - 63:20 brought [4] - 12:9, 19:10, 78:10, 157:11 Brown [3] - 109:25, 113:5, 130:6 brown [1] - 130:7 BROWN [4] - 3:18, 109:25, 111:10, 112:6 bubble [2] - 35:2, 38:23 buck [1] - 93:24 bucket [1] - 100:19 buddies [1] - 78:17 buddy [1] - 81:23 budget [11] - 24:19, 25:2, 26:6, 26:7, 27:7, 33:16, 58:22, 58:23, 59:23, 60:1, 60:5 **budgetary** [1] - 7:5 budgets [2] - 60:2, 92:12 build [9] - 8:6, 19:1, 19:10, 88:22, 95:11, 96:13, 115:9, 120:4, 120:13 building [45] - 8:24, 8:25, 14:8, 14:25, 15:1, 15:2, 15:4, 31:1, 34:10, 35:4, 36:24, 41:19, 44:9, 45:7, 47:23, 52:12, 52:23, 52:25,

137:20, 137:25, 138:9,

53:1, 53:25, 61:2, 71:25, 72:6, 76:10, 87:11, 92:3, 94:2, 97:20, 99:5, 108:13, 127:5, 133:21, 134:10, 140:11, 141:12, 144:2, 144:5, 144:7, 144:8, 144:16, 146:7, 147:25, 149:1, 156:22, 160:9 Buildings [1] - 12:1 buildings [15] - 7:1, 14:13, 15:10, 45:14, 52:19, 59:13, 87:13, 89:16, 94:3, 116:17, 134:13, 134:15, 141:15, 146:16, 147:5 built [3] - 110:10, 139:19, 140:10 **bumped** [1] - 45:1 bunch [2] - 65:25, 77:11 BURKET [2] - 4:10, 129:21 Burket [1] - 129:21 Bus [8] - 37:12, 37:13, 38:2, 38:14. 70:22. 71:1. 123:1 bus [33] - 12:5, 37:11, 37:20, 39:25, 40:4, 40:7, 40:9, 40:14, 40:16, 51:6, 58:8, 66:7, 70:22, 70:24, 91:6, 116:10, 117:17, 117:19, 118:4, 122:25, 123:1, 127:7, 127:9, 137:13, 149:13, 149:14, 149:16, 149:18, 149:22, 150:1, 150:4, 150:9, 155:4 buses [3] - 37:23, 39:23 business [3] - 24:14, 29:20, 32:2 Business [1] - 12:1 **businesses** [1] - 71:14 busing [1] - 73:20 busses [1] - 73:21 butts [1] - 64:7 **buy** [1] - 107:2 **BY** [1] - 2:2

C

C-A-T-H-Y [1] - 142:17
Caden [3] - 81:22, 133:12, 133:15
cafeteria [4] - 45:22, 67:1, 73:24, 155:4
calculate [2] - 127:12, 150:7
calculating [1] - 41:1
Cameron [1] - 121:12
CAMERON [2] - 3:23, 121:12
campaign [1] - 123:14
campus [1] - 46:5
cannot [7] - 26:24, 58:24, 90:20, 105:19, 114:3, 115:11, 137:10

capable [1] - 84:25 capacities [2] - 14:8, 14:25 capacity [11] - 15:13, 15:14, 15:16, 15:21, 31:10, 34:4, 35:19, 36:24, 38:21, 39:9, 146:19 capital [1] - 7:19 card [1] - 122:9 cards [2] - 105:10, 117:24 care [21] - 13:21, 26:3, 27:22, 50:6, 59:20, 66:23, 70:19, 70:20, 70:23, 71:5, 107:18, 108:15, 109:5, 113:17, 117:21, 118:14, 118:24, 119:2, 119:6, 128:25, 145:8 career [2] - 48:1, 89:5 caring [4] - 18:13, 111:8, 115:23, 132:24 CARL [2] - 1:13, 2:3 Carl [1] - 5:6 case [5] - 8:5, 18:3, 136:16, 156:7, 156:10 CASSADY [1] - 1:17 Cat [1] - 109:22 categories [1] - 38:9 category [2] - 158:24, 159:1 **CATHY** [1] - 4:15 Cathy [1] - 142:17 **CATRINA** [1] - 3:7 Catrina [1] - 64:20 Cats [1] - 109:23 cautioned [1] - 25:2 ceiling [1] - 125:15 celebrates [1] - 116:1 center [1] - 116:8 **CENTRE** [2] - 1:24, 163:1 century [1] - 124:16 certain [1] - 7:10 certainly [10] - 62:22, 85:23, 86:4, 109:17, 116:22, 138:17, 139:7, 141:9, 154:2, 154:8 certify [1] - 163:4 **CHAIRMAN** [1] - 1:8 challenge [5] - 23:13, 78:5, 80:17, 112:6, 156:3 challenged [3] - 17:2, 68:23, 77:16 challenges [3] - 22:21, 69:5, 81:5 challenging [1] - 77:11 **chance** [2] - 56:10, 103:2 change [11] - 14:9, 16:1, 55:7, 73:20, 88:4, 98:11, 102:12, 103:23, 154:23, 156:4 changed [4] - 14:14, 72:9,

85:24, 135:7

changes [1] - 89:3

changing [1] - 155:15 charged [1] - 31:11 **CHARIE** [1] - 4:10 **CHARLES** [1] - 1:24 chart [6] - 16:10, 20:10, 20:20, 26:9, 27:14, 45:15 charter [14] - 13:18, 26:4, 28:7, 28:17, 28:19, 137:9, 147:16, 147:18, 147:19, 147:22, 148:3, 148:8, 148:11 charts [3] - 24:9, 75:18, 88:25 check [1] - 134:18 Cherie [1] - 129:21 CHERIE [1] - 129:22 Child [2] - 31:3, 124:13 child [28] - 17:6, 20:16, 28:19, 40:16, 52:6, 52:25, 53:5, 53:8, 53:10, 54:9, 62:17, 62:19, 70:19, 71:5, 76:12, 81:10, 95:23, 105:5, 109:1, 109:5, 109:19, 115:15, 147:1, 154:19, 154:24, 156:1, 156:3, 156:4 child's [3] - 53:11, 115:16, 123:15 childhood [1] - 107:16 children [126] - 17:1, 18:20, 18:21, 18:22, 18:24, 19:4, 19:18, 20:2, 20:4, 20:7, 21:25, 32:23, 34:19, 35:2, 35:19, 37:13, 37:22, 37:24, 38:14, 38:16, 38:19, 38:21, 40:7, 40:12, 47:22, 47:25, 49:10, 49:19, 51:15, 53:2, 58:6, 58:7, 59:18, 61:13, 61:18, 62:2, 62:9, 62:15, 63:6, 64:24, 65:17, 66:4, 66:17, 66:23, 67:9, 68:3, 68:5, 68:23, 70:14, 70:16, 70:20, 70:21, 70:25, 71:11, 71:12, 74:14, 75:2, 76:22, 77:15, 78:19, 80:15, 80:22, 81:5, 81:6, 82:25, 84:24, 85:8, 101:9, 102:8, 103:11, 103:16, 106:20, 107:14, 108:2, 108:16, 109:9, 109:16, 109:21, 111:4, 113:14, 113:17, 114:19, 115:25, 116:4, 116:8, 116:10, 116:23, 118:24, 119:2, 119:6, 119:11, 119:16, 119:19, 120:19, 137:8, 139:10, 139:16, 141:1, 141:3, 141:5, 141:7, 142:11, 142:12, 144:22, 144:24, 145:5, 145:12, 148:7, 149:14, 149:22,

150:9, 154:19, 154:21, 155:9, 155:25, 156:5, 156:7, 156:12, 156:13, 156:24, 157:21, 158:5, 158:10, 159:6 children's [6] - 49:5, 62:8, 62:21, 130:22, 130:25, 137:24 chiller [1] - 42:4 chillers [3] - 42:2, 42:3, 42:13 chilling [1] - 108:1 choice [5] - 49:5, 75:5, 84:14, 89:18 choices [4] - 89:11, 90:6, 90:7, 90:10 choose [3] - 49:18, 130:23 choosing [2] - 28:17, 88:20 **chorus** [1] - 94:22 chose [1] - 46:11 chosen [2] - 45:25, 96:24 Chrissy [1] - 57:11 Christmas [1] - 140:25 **churches** [1] - 71:16 circle [2] - 77:20, 77:22 circulation [1] - 6:6 citizen [2] - 126:13, 138:15 citizens [2] - 76:19, 145:10 city [1] - 133:22 claims [1] - 105:10 claps [37] - 50:3, 52:2, 59:16, 60:15, 62:12, 63:17, 69:12, 70:18, 72:4, 72:19, 73:2, 73:14, 74:7, 74:25, 76:13, 80:3, 82:13, 85:2, 88:19, 90:8, 100:17, 100:24, 104:19, 105:22, 111:9, 112:5, 113:8, 114:22, 117:2, 119:3, 120:23, 125:4, 125:9, 129:20, 149:3, 151:4, 161:3 clarification [3] - 67:18, 82:23, 112:22 clasps [1] - 61:5 class [50] - 14:6, 16:5, 16:6, 16:7, 16:13, 16:15, 21:3, 30:19, 32:13, 32:23, 33:6, 33:9, 34:9, 34:12, 34:16, 34:20, 34:21, 35:7, 36:6, 36:7, 36:13, 37:8, 38:1, 38:4, 38:5, 38:6, 38:7, 38:8, 39:13, 53:12, 53:19, 64:17, 77:8, 86:5, 86:8, 86:16, 88:1, 88:6, 88:9, 88:25, 89:2, 90:12, 97:9, 104:9, 104:13, 104:15, 104:18, 135:10, 135:12 classes [6] - 28:7, 50:22, 104:10, 126:3, 144:13, 144:15

classification [1] - 7:2 classroom [24] - 17:25, 18:1, 34:8, 35:23, 42:14, 53:9, 53:15, 67:8, 79:17, 87:8, 93:5, 93:7, 93:8, 93:9, 94:24, 95:20, 99:1, 108:10, 108:23, 109:1, 109:8, 136:16 classrooms [22] - 33:20, 34:6, 36:2, 37:8, 38:23, 42:18, 50:19, 58:15, 58:19, 83:22, 85:24, 86:21, 87:9, 92:21, 92:22, 93:2, 93:4, 95:4, 95:22, 96:7, 97:9, 141:12 clear [3] - 14:17, 146:10, 155:17 clearly [1] - 8:17 clerical [1] - 45:21 click [1] - 22:16 close [41] - 6:22, 40:18, 57:23, 62:6, 72:23, 76:23, 77:19, 78:17, 79:7, 79:24, 83:5, 83:10, 83:13, 83:17, 88:21, 96:12, 105:3, 112:7, 114:2, 116:12, 117:5, 117:6, 117:16, 118:9, 118:10, 118:18, 121:14, 122:5, 123:5, 125:3, 132:14, 135:3, 135:9, 135:16, 135:25, 137:3, 138:10, 139:6, 156:20, 161:19 closed [7] - 5:19, 39:6, 44:9, 59:10, 87:14, 88:10, 138:12 closely [1] - 75:18 closer [1] - 127:5 closes [1] - 49:9 closing [35] - 5:25, 6:4, 6:23, 7:11, 8:8, 50:4, 52:9, 54:23, 55:20, 55:21, 55:24, 58:21, 60:11, 60:20, 61:2, 61:4, 61:7, 62:23, 63:18, 73:5, 75:20, 85:22, 91:7, 91:24, 113:18, 114:8, 122:19, 130:21, 131:3, 136:25, 146:7, 147:5, 147:11, 152:14, 155:22 closings [1] - 50:20 **clothes** [1] - 155:3 coal [1] - 140:15 coal-fired [1] - 140:15 **Code** [3] - 5:16, 5:23, 11:3 **code** [4] - 5:20, 6:15, 6:19, collaboration [1] - 66:2 collapse [2] - 72:10, 125:15 colleagues [1] - 66:3

collected [1] - 12:22 College [1] - 145:25 college [1] - 148:25 column [4] - 15:7, 15:12, 29:9, 34:6 columns [2] - 34:5, 46:10 combine [2] - 79:3, 97:21 combined [6] - 16:8, 16:9, 35:15, 46:20, 79:13, 86:3 combing [1] - 30:25 comfort [3] - 130:10, 134:3, 134:4 comfortable [4] - 30:11, 76:4, 115:3, 155:1 coming [13] - 8:11, 16:20, 16:24, 31:7, 52:4, 52:8, 86:13, 97:16, 98:13, 108:17, 118:11, 120:11, 133:19 commend [1] - 65:19 comment [5] - 9:17, 128:7, 157:19, 161:18, 162:10 commented [1] - 61:7 comments [10] - 8:3, 8:12, 9:8, 10:15, 10:25, 110:2, 110:4, 115:4, 128:10, 161:15 commission [2] - 151:16, 163:14 commissioned [1] - 31:10 commitment [1] - 124:24 committee [7] - 9:14, 9:19, 147:22, 148:11, 153:23, 160:10, 162:9 Commonwealth [1] - 31:15 COMMONWEALTH [1] -163:2 communicate [1] - 53:16 **communities** [1] - 124:3 community [70] - 12:11, 16:22, 29:12, 47:12, 51:2, 51:4, 51:16, 51:22, 54:13, 54:14, 54:16, 54:17, 54:20, 55:1, 59:4, 60:9, 61:8, 61:23, 63:4, 65:5, 65:7, 68:2, 68:3, 68:8, 69:9, 71:10, 71:13, 71:17, 72:25, 75:13, 76:11, 76:21, 93:8, 107:18, 111:13, 112:2, 112:9, 112:16, 114:19, 115:5, 115:7, 116:5, 116:24, 120:10, 124:24, 125:1, 127:10, 127:12, 130:24, 133:16, 137:5, 137:21, 138:2, 140:23, 141:2, 141:10, 141:15, 142:13, 142:20, 142:22, 143:1, 143:2, 143:23, 146:11, 150:24, 152:16, 160:12, 160:14, 160:16

comparable [2] - 56:20, 56:22 compare [1] - 21:15 compared [3] - 59:6, 86:12, comparison [1] - 103:10 compass [2] - 93:20, 95:24 compelling [2] - 22:8, 24:7 compensation [2] - 89:12, 89:19 complaint [1] - 104:16 complete [1] - 145:4 completed [1] - 142:14 completely [2] - 37:21, 113:23 compliment [1] - 158:18 **components** [1] - 30:12 comprehend [1] - 89:8 comprehension [3] - 101:23, 102:10, 116:12 computer [10] - 44:15, 45:16, 63:23, 87:6, 93:15, 93:17, 94:2, 94:5, 94:13, 94:16 computers [3] - 93:22, 94:11, 95:21 concentrate [1] - 83:24 concept [2] - 66:2, 69:8 concern [2] - 17:8, 113:15 concerned [11] - 67:22, 83:25, 102:25, 112:25, 113:1, 114:19, 118:25, 135:2, 138:15, 139:17, 144:21 concerning [1] - 157:20 concerns [2] - 52:9, 144:18 concession [2] - 160:21, 161:1 conclude [1] - 47:16 concluded [1] - 162:23 **concluding** [1] - 162:5 **conclusion** [2] - 47:9, 84:12 concrete [1] - 95:9 condition [2] - 6:25, 24:17 conditioning [2] - 42:15, 43:4 conditions [1] - 149:20 conducive [2] - 86:9, 97:14 conduct [2] - 29:20 conducted [1] - 29:15 configuration [1] - 15:10 configured [1] - 33:15 confused [1] - 114:7 confusing [1] - 17:22 Congress [1] - 7:9 connection [1] - 91:16 connections [1] - 79:18 consider [15] - 7:12, 9:18, 30:14, 48:14, 51:19, 61:15, 69:14, 72:16, 73:11, 74:23,

collect [1] - 126:23

111:22, 137:5, 146:12, 147:10, 147:12 considerate [1] - 8:21 consideration [6] - 7:12, 31:18, 59:3, 89:21, 154:9, considerations [1] - 44:8 considered [4] - 9:13, 70:7, 72:6, 123:23 considering [1] - 30:13 consistent [5] - 18:15, 19:20, 21:11, 21:13, 44:16 consistently [2] - 21:5, 24:4 **consolidate** [10] - 93:6, 93:16, 96:6, 111:19, 113:21, 128:16, 128:17, 128:18, 140:8 consolidated [1] - 110:8 consolidating [1] - 126:3 consolidation [7] - 17:5, 39:6, 41:17, 75:21, 76:24, 78:23, 110:11 **Constitution** [1] - 31:12 construct [4] - 86:21, 87:9, 97:9, 141:18 construction [3] - 92:17, 114:10, 116:14 contact [1] - 81:2 **contained** [1] - 163:5 contempt [1] - 61:21 content [3] - 18:7, 23:18, 24:1 continually [2] - 28:8, 157:11 continuation [3] - 151:21 continue [18] - 12:8, 27:22, 28:8, 30:8, 41:11, 47:10, 55:7, 69:7, 69:16, 71:24, 78:2, 78:6, 84:3, 89:19, 114:9, 116:6, 151:13, 153:22 continued [2] - 4:3, 89:20 continues [1] - 57:19 **continuum** [1] - 151:25 contract [1] - 70:9 contractor [3] - 139:20, 139:21, 140:3 contractors [3] - 12:6, 41:12, 139:19 contracts [2] - 26:3, 28:6 contradict [1] - 86:10 contribute [1] - 69:25 **contributing** [1] - 113:13 **contribution** [2] - 25:6, 26:10 **contributors** [1] - 71:20 control [7] - 36:9, 42:6, 42:19, 45:11, 90:20, 90:22, 130:22 **controlled** [1] - 59:1 convene [1] - 151:14 convened [1] - 6:18

cook [1] - 126:24 **Coordinator** [1] - 12:2 copier [2] - 45:12, 75:24 copies [2] - 7:23, 105:10 COPPES [25] - 2:5, 16:18, 22:15, 32:1, 92:8, 96:10, 96:15, 96:22, 97:4, 97:7, 97:11, 97:13, 97:23, 98:5, 98:8, 98:22, 98:24, 99:2, 99:7, 99:9, 99:11, 136:15, 136:22, 157:16, 157:19 coppes [1] - 119:12 Coppes [10] - 11:25, 16:16, 57:21, 66:19, 80:22, 82:2, 86:17, 125:23, 157:5, 157:14 **copy** [2] - 9:5, 163:7 corner [2] - 90:10, 137:22 correct [1] - 163:7 cost [37] - 27:17, 31:9, 40:18, 40:22, 41:3, 41:5, 42:1, 42:9, 42:12, 42:16, 42:24, 43:1, 43:11, 43:17, 44:2, 44:8, 45:4, 45:8, 45:14, 46:1, 59:13, 62:18, 75:21, 75:23, 75:24, 76:8, 88:9, 95:11, 112:8, 115:9, 120:5, 120:6, 127:12, 127:24, 135:21, 136:7, 147:19 costing [1] - 116:14 costly [2] - 39:25, 56:7 costs [28] - 13:6, 26:4, 26:19, 27:22, 28:4, 28:7, 28:19, 29:6, 31:1, 39:20, 40:6, 41:18, 41:19, 41:22, 43:8, 43:18, 44:5, 44:11, 90:23, 92:17, 113:20, 127:11, 134:12, 136:2, 146:9, 147:8, 147:23 Count [1] - 93:10 count [4] - 72:12, 117:22, 148:23, 153:7 counted [1] - 148:10 counter [1] - 134:8 **counting** [2] - 63:8, 150:2 countless [1] - 55:16 country [3] - 124:22, 155:17, 158:23 **COUNTY** [1] - 163:1 County [1] - 64:22 county [2] - 125:6, 141:2 **couple** [6] - 85:25, 86:13, 88:5, 97:25, 105:16, 125:10 course [4] - 7:20, 29:13, 30:14, 74:4

cover [4] - 7:20, 10:11, 41:20, 147:23 covered [2] - 11:2, 11:4 cracks [1] - 57:6 crammed [2] - 122:25, 123:1 crazy [1] - 56:15 create [4] - 18:19, 19:18, 47:11, 111:11 created [3] - 11:19, 11:22, 123:22 creative [1] - 17:18 credit [1] - 18:4 Creek [58] - 15:14, 31:21, 42:10, 49:8, 49:20, 51:3, 51:22, 55:22, 57:6, 60:21, 61:16, 62:5, 63:15, 64:23, 67:25, 68:13, 69:20, 75:10, 76:15, 76:22, 77:10, 78:4, 78:13, 79:2, 79:4, 80:5, 99:15, 101:2, 102:2, 112:21, 118:22, 119:7, 119:8, 119:9, 121:4, 121:8, 121:13, 121:20, 123:7, 124:13, 133:5, 135:4, 135:7, 135:21, 137:20, 137:25, 138:9, 138:14, 138:18, 139:15, 140:9, 140:11, 140:21, 140:22, 142:15, 142:20, 154:16, 159:17 CREEK [1] - 1:6 Creekers [1] - 142:14 creosote [1] - 140:16 Cricket [1] - 118:21 cried [1] - 115:21 cringed [1] - 129:2 crisis [1] - 137:17 critical [4] - 13:1, 13:2, 24:15, 25:4 crossed [1] - 114:16 crowded [4] - 39:23, 83:22, 83:25, 88:7 Croyle [2] - 94:24, 94:25 crucial [2] - 51:19, 119:1 crushed [1] - 90:1 crux [1] - 55:25 **cry** [1] - 64:13 cuff [1] - 86:24 culture [1] - 19:18 Cumminsville [1] - 142:18 current [9] - 25:21, 26:12, 27:24, 29:2, 44:19, 45:20, 45:24, 46:12, 147:5 curriculum [2] - 101:19, 103:19 curve [1] - 19:13 custodial [2] - 45:21, 73:24 cut [7] - 60:1, 63:3, 90:12, 90:13, 90:14, 113:20 cutbacks [1] - 58:24

cuts [3] - 74:3, 74:18 cutting [3] - 33:18, 73:22, 76:8 cyber [2] - 13:18, 29:13

D

dad [1] - 142:5 dads [1] - 158:6 **Daily** [2] - 6:10, 160:15 daily [6] - 53:25, 54:4, 72:15, 77:16, 79:20, 113:18 **DANA**[1] - 3:9 Dana [1] - 69:18 data [8] - 20:22, 24:7, 28:12, 30:3, 30:5, 32:17, 75:18, 81:9 date [5] - 6:12, 44:12, 97:11, 104:16, 152:21 dates [1] - 153:5 daughter [9] - 58:2, 63:20, 64:16, 107:15, 107:22, 115:18, 130:2, 130:9, 138:4 daughter's [1] - 107:16 daughters [4] - 99:19, 99:24, 100:10, 100:12 Dave [2] - 89:12, 126:11 **DAVID** [2] - 1:12, 4:9 days [22] - 6:7, 7:14, 9:1, 11:1, 19:8, 70:21, 101:4, 113:13, 149:21, 150:7, 150:8, 150:20, 152:20, 153:1, 153:2, 153:8, 153:11, 153:13, 162:7, 162:8 deal [6] - 66:13, 68:7, 89:25, 123:18, 140:16, 160:6 deals [1] - 33:23 dealt [2] - 154:20, 162:2 Dean's [1] - 99:23 Dear [3] - 83:4, 83:19, 122:10 death [2] - 88:21 debt [1] - 142:5 **December** [2] - 72:24, 103:3 decent [1] - 140:16 decide [4] - 105:2, 112:7, 114:2, 145:16 decided [5] - 102:5, 102:17, 106:21, 110:24, 148:20 decision [18] - 6:3, 7:13, 30:5, 66:17, 66:21, 67:14, 70:1, 70:4, 72:21, 107:24, 113:19, 134:21, 137:23, 137:25, 150:20, 152:5, 152:21, 153:12 decisions [13] - 11:14, 16:21, 36:1, 48:1, 73:10, 87:17,

COURT [1] - 1:23

112:22

courts [1] - 7:3

Court [3] - 67:18, 82:23,

89:21, 107:13, 110:22,

111:18, 115:1, 115:3, 127:2 decline [3] - 13:11, 28:14, 90:3 declined [1] - 13:9 decrease [8] - 13:3, 13:4, 13:8, 24:20, 25:4, 25:25, 40:11, 135:17 dedicated [4] - 68:14, 101:8, 111:8, 113:10 deep[1] - 113:15 **Deer** [1] - 132:5 defer [1] - 131:14 defined [1] - 50:7 definite [1] - 48:24 definitely [8] - 40:10, 58:25. 62:8, 63:6, 94:17, 95:15, 105:14, 122:14 delays [1] - 149:24 deliver [1] - 143:6 demand [1] - 59:11 democracy [1] - 139:3 **DENNY** [1] - 1:10 department [1] - 71:17 Department [3] - 13:23, 15:1, 63:12 depression [1] - 122:7 depth [2] - 98:21, 99:4 derogatory [1] - 158:18 deserve [3] - 77:17, 80:11, 80:20 deserves [2] - 18:4, 81:12 design [1] - 91:11 designate [1] - 10:19 designated [2] - 5:5, 27:11 designed [5] - 22:12, 22:19, 92:25, 95:10 desk [1] - 108:18 details [2] - 7:11, 108:6 determination [2] - 5:18, 65:20 determine [2] - 15:4, 30:10 determined [1] - 15:1 detrimental [1] - 55:1 devastated [1] - 115:19 develop [3] - 13:18, 78:6, 112:17 developed [1] - 116:4 developing [2] - 101:19, 103:19 development [1] - 19:8 diagnosed [1] - 101:5 diagnosis [1] - 101:6 diagrams [1] - 87:25 **DICK** [1] - 1:11 Dick [1] - 138:13 died [1] - 115:19 difference [2] - 29:8, 138:23 different [13] - 16:2, 16:10,

21:16, 37:11, 41:11, 70:11, 83:20, 88:16, 102:14, 121:24, 144:19, 150:12, 158:4 differently [1] - 65:15 difficult [14] - 16:21, 29:19, 31:5, 49:1, 50:19, 70:1, 91:10, 101:21, 119:1, 119:5, 128:6, 143:21, 146:4, 146:5 difficulty [2] - 101:25, 102:11 dig [1] - 120:6 dinosaurs [1] - 77:24 directly [1] - 40:13 Director [1] - 11:24 directors [4] - 6:1, 6:9, 9:10, 151:23 disappointed [3] - 86:23, 86:24, 86:25 disaster [2] - 50:5, 131:9 discount [2] - 90:18, 90:19 discrepancy [1] - 56:17 discuss [4] - 55:19, 81:4, 87:19, 87:20 discussed [3] - 24:20, 87:23, 96:16 **discussing** [1] - 87:13 discussion [2] - 63:1, 87:18 discussions [1] - 95:7 disgusted [1] - 114:14 dismissed [1] - 149:17 displacing [1] - 97:2 displayed [1] - 124:8 disrupt [1] - 115:24 distance [5] - 40:14, 40:22, 40:23, 40:24, 131:22 distinguished [1] - 124:22 district [114] - 6:7, 7:18, 10:25, 11:6, 12:18, 12:25, 13:5, 15:16, 15:23, 16:12, 17:23, 18:5, 18:22, 19:1, 19:11, 19:14, 20:22, 21:8, 21:12, 21:23, 23:5, 23:7, 24:15, 26:18, 26:21, 28:16, 28:22, 30:10, 30:17, 31:9, 36:6, 36:16, 38:11, 41:4, 41:8, 47:8, 47:21, 47:22, 47:25, 48:22, 49:23, 50:1, 50:6, 50:9, 50:10, 50:11, 50:22, 51:23, 51:24, 52:20, 56:8, 58:23, 59:5, 62:3, 62:14, 62:18, 62:20, 63:13, 67:3, 68:19, 69:25, 70:6, 70:13, 70:17, 71:21, 72:11, 72:12, 72:22, 73:1, 73:21, 74:1, 74:4, 74:12, 74:19, 74:24, 75:14, 76:6, 76:20, 79:1, 79:22, 80:23, 81:11, 88:3, 92:10, 93:4, 94:6,

124:10, 125:7, 127:21, 128:24, 130:1, 135:19, 137:2, 143:11, 143:13, 145:5, 146:1, 146:10, 147:3, 147:7, 148:13, 155:17. 162:16 **District** [23] - 5:7, 11:11, 11:17, 13:4, 15:21, 24:23, 25:20, 27:15, 65:23, 99:14, 101:2, 101:12, 102:3, 102:4, 102:7, 103:5, 103:21, 110:1, 112:24, 130:2, 135:3, 137:1, 145:25 **DISTRICT** [2] - 1:1, 1:17 district's [2] - 7:24, 75:16 districts [6] - 17:10, 27:23, 51:25, 59:7, 59:9, 94:4 divide [2] - 61:8, 78:20 divided [3] - 37:23, 61:19, 61:23 dividing [1] - 38:15 doable [4] - 23:12, 96:6, 143:22 document [8] - 11:18, 86:4, 86:7, 86:15, 87:3, 92:7, 92:14 Doe [1] - 138:16 dog [2] - 115:18, 115:22 dollar [6] - 70:16, 100:5, 114:10, 144:4, 144:8, 149:1 dollars [18] - 24:22, 24:24, 25:9, 25:20, 25:22, 26:8, 28:2, 28:9, 28:23, 41:7, 46:21, 47:3, 59:8, 72:3, 100:6, 116:13, 134:14 done [17] - 7:21, 9:16, 23:23, 27:1, 74:17, 75:15, 89:3, 89:25, 116:6, 120:3, 131:10, 139:18, 142:6, 143:7, 144:6, 157:6, 161:5 **DONNA** [1] - 1:11 door[4] - 108:11, 130:8, 133:19, 138:19 Dotsview [1] - 82:21 double [1] - 128:8 doubt [2] - 64:6, 105:2 down [35] - 28:4, 34:17, 34:20, 36:7, 37:7, 38:4, 39:13, 45:11, 46:14, 46:21, 46:24, 47:3, 55:13, 57:9, 57:13, 57:23, 59:23, 63:3, 78:20, 81:8, 81:9, 89:24, 90:5, 90:15, 90:21, 98:19, 114:4, 120:6, 126:17, 126:18, 126:24, 132:11, 133:1, 133:7, 161:17

109:19, 113:3, 114:6,

114:9, 118:22, 123:8,

Dr [3] - 5:2, 29:15, 131:18 drain [2] - 43:18, 136:8 draining [1] - 43:20 drains [1] - 43:19 dramatically [1] - 98:11 drastically [2] - 88:4 dream [1] - 69:4 dreamed [1] - 109:14 drink [1] - 71:16 drive [1] - 30:5 Drive [4] - 75:9, 126:12, 129:22, 132:5 drivers [1] - 51:6 driving [2] - 56:14, 56:17 drop [2] - 36:3, 36:13 drops [3] - 35:5, 36:7, 39:1 drowning [1] - 88:21 drug [1] - 94:22 **DS**[1] - 138:7 **due** [6] - 28:3, 45:8, 60:14, 60:16, 77:11, 77:12 duly [2] - 5:8, 6:17 during [10] - 9:17, 19:13, 70:7, 82:5, 94:11, 101:10, 103:6, 124:17, 141:6, 155:23 duty [1] - 67:1 dying [1] - 19:6

Ε

e-mail [1] - 45:17 early [4] - 51:17, 103:3, 126:22, 154:14 earn [1] - 77:15 easily [1] - 74:22 easy [7] - 80:18, 90:6, 90:10, 90:13, 146:2, 156:2, 162:2 eat [2] - 71:16, 84:1 economic [4] - 7:4, 24:17, 110:23, 116:18 economical [1] - 156:21 **economics** [1] - 93:13 economy [3] - 72:7, 72:9, 115:12 ed [7] - 25:8, 28:20, 28:24, 29:6, 90:18, 90:19 edu [1] - 25:12 educate [3] - 69:16, 75:2, 121:22 educated [3] - 71:12, 115:1, 119:18 educating [1] - 68:4 education [48] - 12:14, 25:6, 26:4, 28:21, 30:19, 31:14, 47:20, 49:4, 49:6, 49:7. 49:17, 49:19, 52:20, 57:2, 58:15, 59:1, 59:10, 59:14, 59:17, 59:20, 68:20, 76:10,

100:4, 102:6, 106:16,

76:11, 77:1, 79:13, 80:14, 80:15, 88:16, 89:5, 92:25, 104:10, 111:7, 112:2, 112:18, 113:4, 113:11, 113:14, 119:18, 121:23, 130:23, 130:25, 147:20, 147:21, 148:23, 148:25, 149:2, 149:7, 149:9 Education [4] - 11:24, 13:23, 15:2, 63:12 educational [5] - 30:16, 30:17, 54:25, 116:8, 137:7 **educations** [1] - 88:13 educator [2] - 70:5, 80:1 educators [9] - 18:13, 21:5, 23:16, 57:1, 77:16, 79:16, 103:17, 120:10, 121:3 effective [2] - 88:2, 95:14 effectiveness [1] - 31:9 efficiency [2] - 30:22, 30:23 efficient [4] - 30:15, 31:14, 40:1, 112:14 **effort** [3] - 55:13, 86:11, 112:1 efforts [1] - 19:13 ego [1] - 142:4 eight [7] - 28:22, 31:20, 70:5, 101:4, 108:21, 154:22, 155:9 Eighteen [1] - 51:3 eighth [8] - 23:24, 73:17, 121:25, 139:5, 145:17, 148:21, 148:24, 160:13 either [7] - 23:11, 39:21, 88:22, 99:25, 106:7, 109:10, 131:6 elderly [1] - 71:24 **elected** [3] - 63:3, 73:7, 119:23 electric [1] - 45:11 **elementaries** [3] - 87:12, 88:23, 135:15 **elementary** [47] - 11:15, 14:12, 15:9, 17:24, 32:3, 40:18, 41:21, 41:23, 52:16, 55:6, 58:1, 58:13, 58:17, 67:3, 71:15, 73:16, 75:17, 75:20, 78:7, 78:25, 80:23, 81:3, 86:8, 86:17, 89:11, 89:18, 107:16, 108:3, 108:4, 109:18, 111:2, 111:7, 113:4, 113:21, 122:24, 128:3, 128:15, 136:10, 139:5, 139:18, 140:23, 145:15, 145:24, 146:21, 147:12, 149:5, 149:6 ELEMENTARY [1] - 1:7 Elementary [31] - 11:24,

31:22, 48:23, 49:8, 49:21,

51:20, 52:7, 57:6, 60:21, 64:23, 76:15, 76:23, 77:8, 79:4, 80:6, 101:3, 101:16, 102:7, 102:9, 102:21, 104:4, 117:4, 124:13, 135:4, 135:7, 135:21, 137:20, 138:1, 138:9, 140:12, 140:14 eligible [2] - 158:5, 158:11 eliminate [4] - 79:1, 126:7, 135:23, 147:4 eliminated [1] - 46:8 **eliminating** [1] - 44:22 **elimination** [1] - 25:14 elite [1] - 124:15 embrace [1] - 79:10 **emergency** [1] - 85:6 Emily [2] - 138:4, 138:8 emotional [2] - 55:20, 65:11 emotionally [1] - 78:18 **Employees** [1] - 27:6 **employees** [2] - 28:7, 67:5 employer's [1] - 26:10 **employment** [2] - 26:3, 51:9 encourage [3] - 19:11, 79:15, 152:16 encouraged [1] - 78:4 end [12] - 23:19, 23:21, 23:22, 24:3, 44:13, 45:1, 60:9, 104:7, 116:21, 155:4, 155:23, 157:24 endeavor [1] - 72:18 ends [2] - 71:3, 72:14 energy [3] - 42:5, 42:19, 43:4 English [3] - 26:5, 28:24, 28:25 enhanced [1] - 99:6 enrolled [5] - 18:21, 101:7, 101:13, 102:22, 105:6 enrollment [28] - 13:3, 13:9, 13:24, 14:2, 15:7, 15:24, 32:13, 32:15, 32:23, 33:2, 33:9, 33:25, 34:1, 34:2, 35:17, 36:23, 37:1, 37:19, 73:16, 92:11, 97:25, 98:2, 98:12, 98:13, 114:4, 135:6, 135:7 ensure [2] - 43:13, 43:20 entertaining [1] - 120:16 entire [9] - 53:21, 55:1, 63:12, 124:21, 124:24, 135:19, 147:24, 148:25, 154:10 entirely [1] - 109:11 entities [1] - 79:5 entrance [1] - 95:8 entrusted [1] - 119:23

115:24, 161:25 envisioned [1] - 151:9 equality [1] - 128:1 equate [3] - 39:22, 44:20, 45:22 equation [1] - 39:5 equipment [1] - 30:20 erase [1] - 147:24 erring [1] - 32:21 errors [1] - 56:10 **especially** [7] - 20:8, 50:19, 68:21, 77:5, 110:23, 111:1, 157:21 essential [2] - 30:11, 76:3 established [1] - 138:2 esteemed [1] - 124:20 Estep's [1] - 64:17 estimate [2] - 45:25, 46:1 estimated [6] - 40:17, 43:9, 43:10, 44:3, 44:11, 46:3 estimating [2] - 27:19, 44:13 evaluate [1] - 69:13 evening [40] - 5:3, 5:6, 5:8, 7:22, 8:18, 8:22, 9:21, 10:16, 11:9, 11:12, 11:16, 12:3, 12:13, 16:18, 24:19, 31:18, 31:23, 47:14, 47:16, 48:15, 48:20, 48:24, 52:5, 55:9, 64:19, 65:2, 67:19, 69:18, 81:14, 82:20, 82:24, 83:1, 84:23, 110:3, 111:16, 131:19, 134:25, 154:17, 156:15, 158:20 evening's [1] - 16:20 event [2] - 5:24, 110:21 events [3] - 54:20, 70:11, 107:23 ever-increasing [1] - 31:4 everlasting [1] - 69:11 everyday [11] - 16:24, 18:20, 83:17, 94:11, 98:9, 122:11, 122:17, 126:22, 144:5, 144:24, 155:10 everywhere [2] - 13:7, 57:16 evidence [3] - 48:25, 135:20, 163:5 evidenced [1] - 111:15 evolving [2] - 157:10, 162:2 exact [1] - 134:2 exactly [6] - 32:3, 49:4, 65:25, 92:14, 106:17, 106:19 exaggerating [1] - 100:7 **examination** [1] - 76:2 examine [1] - 63:9 examined [1] - 59:9 examining [1] - 75:18 example [3] - 108:2, 109:9, 111:16 exams [1] - 31:7

excel [2] - 55:7, 144:13 excellent [1] - 52:20 **except** [3] - 5:2, 131:18, 144:12 exceptionally [1] - 104:14 excessive [4] - 86:9, 97:10, 135:21, 137:18 exchange [1] - 8:21 excuse [4] - 5:4, 8:7, 31:21, 141:20 **excused** [2] - 5:3, 131:19 exhibited [1] - 68:7 **EXHIBITS** [1] - 2:9 exist [2] - 93:13, 144:3 existence [1] - 38:20 existing [8] - 7:1, 38:12, 38:23, 88:22, 93:4, 116:16, 146:15, 146:20 **exorbitant** [1] - 115:10 **expanding** [1] - 96:1 expansion [1] - 95:10 expect [3] - 53:20, 102:23, 114:25 expectancy [11] - 41:24, 41:25, 42:3, 42:11, 42:15, 42:25, 43:9, 43:15, 43:21, 43:25, 44:4 expectations [1] - 159:6 **expected** [2] - 67:6, 100:3 expecting [1] - 106:7 expenditure [1] - 29:10 expenditures [3] - 29:7, 29:24, 139:18 expense [4] - 26:1, 41:6, 76:5, 98:14 expenses [2] - 90:22, 100:3 experience [6] - 54:25, 90:25, 108:1, 108:5, 119:17, 156:1 **experienced** [2] - 69:3, 110:20 expires [1] - 163:14 explain [5] - 58:2, 58:5, 149:15, 158:2, 159:25 **explained** [2] - 98:20, 103:8 explore [4] - 42:21, 96:4, 143:19, 152:2 **explored** [5] - 76:5, 116:16, 143:15, 147:3, 150:23 exponentially [1] - 127:4 expose [1] - 108:7 exposed [1] - 24:2 express [2] - 51:2, 126:16 **expressions** [1] - 114:15 extend [1] - 16:23 extensive [1] - 103:4 **extensively** [1] - 97:14 external [1] - 17:8 extra [5] - 26:23, 34:16, 35:4,

envelopes [1] - 105:9

environment [6] - 68:6,

69:15, 111:12, 111:25,

73:20, 85:4 extremely [1] - 113:1 eye [1] - 84:19

F

fabulous [1] - 52:17 face [3] - 63:10, 66:25, 73:4 faced [1] - 69:25 faces [3] - 113:12, 114:16, 129:1 facilities [5] - 6:1, 30:19, 110:13, 111:11, 115:8 facility [1] - 93:12 facing [1] - 28:5 fact [7] - 10:2, 17:13, 26:22, 60:14, 60:16, 111:15, 157:21 factor [1] - 80:2 facts [7] - 7:10, 7:12, 51:20, 70:3, 141:22, 141:23, 152:1 factual [1] - 65:9 faculty [4] - 12:10, 76:19, 98:21, 113:10 faculty/ratio [1] - 99:1 fail [1] - 156:5 failed [2] - 87:1, 136:25 fair [2] - 17:7, 128:1 fairly [2] - 48:9, 98:4 faith [1] - 145:4 fall [3] - 102:18, 102:19, 131:13 familiar [1] - 113:12 families [9] - 16:22, 67:15, 71:6, 71:20, 81:2, 121:3, 124:3, 124:25, 159:8 family [13] - 52:11, 52:14, 54:11, 72:24, 76:19, 84:2, 106:10, 115:20, 115:24, 122:6, 133:18, 146:3, 161:6 family-like [2] - 52:11, 115:24 fantastic [1] - 81:20 **far** [13] - 6:14, 8:11, 10:13, 30:4, 45:19, 74:8, 75:16, 94:1, 94:6, 103:12, 105:19, 118:25. 136:18 Faranberg [1] - 12:5 farms [1] - 71:19 fashion [1] - 48:8 fast [2] - 22:16 fastener [1] - 140:5 faster [1] - 157:4 father [4] - 84:16, 106:22, 110:7, 151:19 father's [1] - 156:8

favor [2] - 56:13, 58:25

favorable [1] - 143:10 favorite [1] - 85:14 Fax [1] - 1:25 fear [5] - 49:1, 49:8, 50:21, 89:25 **fears** [1] - 69:5 feasibility [2] - 63:11, 74:17 feasible [2] - 146:18, 149:25 featuring [1] - 51:13 February [2] - 6:11, 163:14 **FEBRUARY** [1] - 1:15 federal [6] - 13:5, 24:21, 25:12, 29:23, 100:21, 135:18 feedback [1] - 35:13 **fell** [1] - 158:25 fellow [1] - 127:16 felt [3] - 79:25, 130:11, 155:1 few [13] - 29:12, 33:13, 41:14, 79:11, 85:23, 101:4, 103:25, 108:4, 119:5, 119:22, 131:1, 132:13 field [2] - 107:21, 157:15 fifth [7] - 16:9, 23:19, 36:12, 67:20, 84:15, 130:2, 132:18 fight [6] - 63:21, 65:21, 129:14, 129:15, 129:17 fighting [1] - 65:18 figure [8] - 21:4, 21:24, 35:16, 37:18, 37:23, 48:17, 100:5, 149:25 figures [14] - 32:5, 33:25, 34:1, 37:15, 47:4, 92:11, 97:24, 97:25, 98:2, 98:12, 98:15, 100:18, 141:22, 141:23 filled [1] - 55:16 filtering [1] - 45:17 final [4] - 7:13, 26:6, 60:2, 151:8 finally [2] - 51:1, 129:5 **finances** [2] - 24:16, 93:5 financial [6] - 7:19, 41:16, 62:23, 72:8, 131:9, 137:16 financially [2] - 112:13, 113:3 fine [4] - 109:11, 120:9, 152:8 **fingers** [1] - 131:13 finish [1] - 132:19 finished [1] - 104:11 Finkle [1] - 156:15 **FINKLE** [3] - 4:17, 156:15, 156:16 fire [4] - 71:17, 88:21, 106:12, 110:21 fired [1] - 140:15 first [52] - 7:16, 14:14, 14:25,

27:5, 33:15, 33:22, 34:3, 34:23, 34:24, 35:18, 36:25, 38:20, 39:8, 40:5, 45:10, 48:13, 53:14, 56:14, 69:23, 70:13, 70:14, 78:13, 83:3, 83:11, 88:14, 88:17, 92:21, 93:19, 101:2, 102:16, 102:22, 104:14, 104:17, 107:2, 108:8, 108:23, 109:1, 129:24, 130:5, 130:6, 135:6, 139:2, 139:17, 139:24, 142:19, 143:20, 158:9 Fiscal [2] - 29:14, 29:17 fiscally [1] - 75:16 fit [2] - 99:8, 155:8 five [18] - 10:14, 10:20, 20:11, 20:17, 22:19, 31:19, 37:8, 42:16, 42:17, 42:25, 43:14, 90:21, 92:23, 94:9, 95:22, 122:17, 142:12, 143:1 fix [2] - 112:4, 120:14 fixed [1] - 90:23 **flexibility** [1] - 18:17 **flexible** [1] - 10:16 flooring [1] - 140:3 floors [1] - 140:16 flow [1] - 126:21 fluctuation [1] - 21:1 focus [1] - 29:24 focused [1] - 56:2 focusing [1] - 16:25 folks [5] - 38:18, 39:3, 82:15, 110:22, 158:3 follow [1] - 118:23 following [6] - 6:24, 31:17, 66:5, 101:6, 103:7, 103:22 follows [1] - 5:24 foot [1] - 78:13 footer [1] - 83:8 Force [1] - 99:21 force [1] - 62:9 forced [2] - 61:18, 95:24 foremost [3] - 77:1, 88:14, 88:17 forget [2] - 71:19, 107:9 **form** [2] - 10:5, 147:18 formal [1] - 5:11 format [1] - 10:13 Fort [1] - 139:10 **forth** [1] - 6:21 **forthright** [1] - 113:25 fortunate [2] - 54:24, 143:1 forward [4] - 20:7, 86:11, 104:25, 161:24 fought [1] - 78:1 **foundation** [5] - 78:7, 112:18, 116:8, 119:19,

founding [2] - 147:21, 148:11 four [38] - 14:4, 14:5, 15:19, 17:24, 21:22, 22:19, 23:18, 28:6, 31:19, 32:2, 32:7, 32:16, 32:17, 38:10, 38:11, 46:14, 55:4, 55:6, 65:23, 68:8, 71:15, 72:5, 76:22, 78:10, 81:20, 92:22, 93:2, 94:9, 95:22, 98:11, 111:4, 113:6, 117:4, 117:6, 117:10, 132:19, 135:15 four-year [4] - 14:4, 14:5, 15:19, 32:7 fourth [2] - 16:9, 132:9 frankly [1] - 77:17 frantic [1] - 108:25 FRED [1] - 3:18 Fred [1] - 109:25 free [2] - 158:5, 158:11 friend [4] - 58:4, 133:12, 133:23, 138:5 friendliness [1] - 66:2 friends [20] - 61:13, 61:14, 64:10, 66:22, 70:7, 77:18, 77:19, 77:20, 77:22, 78:10, 81:24, 82:4, 83:15, 85:13, 91:8, 117:9, 132:21, 133:18, 139:14, 155:1 friendships [1] - 132:22 FROM [2] - 3:2, 4:5 front [10] - 63:24, 79:17, 85:1, 133:7, 133:19, 138:19, 141:5, 141:7, 142:11, 143:24 fulfill [1] - 113:20 full [7] - 28:12, 29:3, 46:7, 56:5, 68:24, 83:23, 92:21 full-size [1] - 92:21 full-time [1] - 29:3 **fully** [2] - 104:5, 163:5 fun [8] - 59:20, 83:14, 83:16, 84:2, 121:11, 121:16, 123:5, 155:6 functioning [1] - 116:13 functions [2] - 84:2, 84:3 **fund** [3] - 12:18, 27:11, 28:9 funded [1] - 49:6 funding [15] - 12:14, 13:5, 24:21, 25:5, 25:8, 25:16, 25:18, 62:14, 89:20, 90:5, 93:11, 93:14, 135:18, 147:7 funds [6] - 12:18, 25:7, 25:13, 25:14, 27:10, 60:14 furnaces [1] - 140:15 future [9] - 11:13, 14:1, 27:14, 29:20, 48:2, 51:17, 62:8, 67:22

15:8, 19:17, 21:20, 22:2,

119:25

G

gain [1] - 159:4 gains [3] - 88:23, 93:25, 159:2 game [1] - 70:10 gaps [1] - 94:7 gas [1] - 45:11 gather [1] - 10:3 Gatorade [1] - 131:15 general [3] - 6:6, 28:9, 75:23 General [1] - 7:9 generation [2] - 110:13, 119:21 generations [1] - 69:17 genuinely [1] - 115:15 geography [1] - 77:24 George [1] - 154:6 giant [1] - 104:25 **GIPE** [4] - 4:13, 134:25, 136:20, 136:24 **Gipe** [2] - 135:1, 138:8 GIRL [2] - 85:16, 123:3 given [18] - 6:5, 23:7, 47:15, 56:4, 60:22, 60:23, 63:19, 75:14, 77:5, 103:20, 119:10, 139:1, 141:22, 142:1, 152:1, 156:10, 161:23 glad [4] - 99:9, 99:11, 152:6, 157:15 glasses [2] - 32:25, 155:7 **Glenburg** [1] - 129:22 glitch [1] - 57:13 goal [8] - 17:18, 18:14, 18:19, 19:17, 20:24, 23:13, 30:1, 50:18 goals [2] - 30:17, 86:13 gosh [1] - 91:6 Goss [1] - 163:12 GOSS [1] - 1:20 government [2] - 25:15, 72:10 Government [1] - 123:22 Governmental [1] - 58:24 governor [6] - 49:2, 49:3, 49:24, 50:2, 58:25, 93:12 Governor [1] - 25:1 gradation [1] - 7:2 grade [49] - 16:7, 16:9, 17:6, 17:7, 17:25, 18:1, 20:14, 21:24, 23:19, 34:9, 34:24, 34:25, 35:1, 36:10, 36:12, 37:23, 37:25, 53:10, 53:14, 64:17, 64:22, 64:24, 67:20, 68:15, 73:15, 73:17, 77:7, 83:18, 84:15, 102:16, 104:14, 104:17, 108:8, 108:23, 109:1, 115:18,

132:18, 145:5, 148:19, 148:21, 148:24, 149:8, 154:22, 160:10 grader [8] - 23:24, 83:3, 83:11, 101:3, 117:4, 121:25, 132:10, 138:8 graders [9] - 34:23, 137:10, 137:11, 137:13, 139:4, 139:6, 145:7, 145:15, 145:17 grades [7] - 16:2, 16:4, 20:10, 20:16, 22:19, 37:8, 145:18 graduate [2] - 99:20, 132:18 graduated [2] - 104:12, 156:6 grandchildren [6] - 70:21, 71:8, 111:4, 156:24, 159:21, 161:6 grandmother [1] - 72:23 grandparent [2] - 53:1, 69:22 grandparents [3] - 53:2, 54:18, 76:19 grandson [1] - 131:1 grateful [1] - 104:23 gratitude [1] - 51:2 great [41] - 20:25, 23:1, 23:8, 23:9, 36:9, 67:4, 68:7, 68:10, 69:16, 71:9, 71:15, 88:8, 117:8, 117:9, 117:11, 118:1, 119:11, 119:15, 121:2, 121:4, 123:5, 127:14, 130:12, 132:15, 132:24, 140:14, 140:22, 141:9, 141:10, 141:12, 141:16, 141:18, 142:7, 142:11, 142:15, 143:2, 143:3, 148:14, 156:3, 159:19, 161:5 greater [1] - 94:11 greatest [2] - 19:25, 138:20 greeted [2] - 54:1, 54:4 grew [2] - 61:12, 106:10 gross [1] - 41:3 ground [3] - 53:17, 89:15, 140:10 Grounds [1] - 12:2 grounds [1] - 160:9 group [19] - 7:8, 19:9, 37:4, 47:19, 54:19, 59:4, 77:15, 78:10, 79:17, 87:7, 87:18, 87:19, 92:24, 94:8, 94:20, 95:17, 124:15, 140:20, 147:17 groups [2] - 18:17, 32:19 **Grove** [2] - 52:4, 67:17 grow [2] - 68:16, 116:6 growing [3] - 68:18, 69:3, 110:12

118:2, 123:9, 130:3,

growth [4] - 21:23, 22:3, 22:4, 22:5 guarantee [1] - 98:9 guaranteeing [1] - 96:12 guarantees [1] - 140:2 guess [9] - 22:16, 32:24, 85:21, 98:18, 131:24, 148:1, 151:22, 153:20, guidance [3] - 104:24, 113:16, 145:8 guide [1] - 145:1 guided [1] - 94:12 guidelines [2] - 30:22, 107:1 guilty [1] - 160:20 guns [1] - 161:2 guys [8] - 55:16, 89:1, 134:5, 134:6, 134:20, 142:21, 142:23, 143:3

Н

H-A-M-M-O-N [1] - 99:13 H-E-T-R-I-C-K [1] - 133:4 half [5] - 10:21, 46:23, 60:1, 154:15 halfway [2] - 54:7, 133:22 **hall** [1] - 66:25 **HALL** [1] - 1:24 Halloween [1] - 140:25 halls [1] - 141:11 hallway [1] - 124:9 hallways [1] - 83:24 halt [1] - 105:4 **HAMMON** [3] - 3:15, 99:12, 100:18 Hammon [1] - 99:12 hand [3] - 55:19, 61:3 handed [1] - 68:11 handle [1] - 84:23 handled [1] - 113:24 hands [4] - 67:14, 84:25, 148:10 hang [1] - 50:12 hangs [1] - 133:13 happy [3] - 40:3, 107:16, 122:16 hard [24] - 17:20, 19:1, 37:17, 37:20, 48:25, 55:22, 58:5, 58:18, 64:8, 64:9, 65:1, 65:18, 67:13, 72:15, 72:20, 73:10, 94:10, 101:19, 122:14, 124:2, 129:13, 134:6 hardworking [2] - 52:18, 68:14 Harry [1] - 138:14 hartman [1] - 29:15

HASD [1] - 2:2

hate [2] - 81:21, 109:15 Haven [1] - 51:13 Hawn [1] - 75:9 **HAYLIE** [2] - 4:11, 132:4 Haylie [2] - 132:4, 132:9 Head [4] - 93:4, 93:7, 93:8, 93:11 headlines [1] - 124:11 health [3] - 26:2, 27:22, 45:4 Hear [1] - 75:6 hear [8] - 8:3, 48:11, 70:3, 71:23, 82:18, 127:22, 142:8, 159:14 heard [22] - 12:10, 17:11, 54:12, 65:4, 71:23, 76:9, 76:25, 78:23, 105:8, 114:2, 114:4, 118:8, 119:6, 123:11, 123:17, 128:9, 128:16, 141:6, 150:18, 150:20, 157:21, 160:11 Hearing [2] - 87:24, 162:23 hearing [28] - 5:2, 5:9, 5:12, 5:14, 5:17, 5:21, 6:2, 6:5, 6:8, 6:13, 6:17, 7:6, 7:7, 7:14, 8:6, 8:10, 48:24, 58:9, 64:4, 75:11, 82:18, 131:18, 150:19, 151:15, 152:21, 157:9, 158:3, 161:22 HEARING [1] - 1:15 hearings [8] - 6:19, 8:24, 97:16, 150:18, 151:1, 151:20, 151:25, 152:19 heart [11] - 11:12, 54:13, 54:15, 57:18, 64:13, 68:1, 115:2, 119:7, 130:13, 137:21, 162:15 hearts [2] - 107:6, 134:21 **HEATHER** [3] - 1:20, 3:4, 48:20 Heather [2] - 48:21, 163:12 heating [4] - 75:24, 114:3, 136:3. 139:23 heavy [1] - 11:12 hefty [1] - 86:12 **held** [5] - 5:15, 5:21, 7:3, 67:5, 150:18 hello [3] - 24:13, 100:25, 106:5 help [25] - 12:6, 19:10, 20:7, 22:13, 22:20, 25:13, 27:2, 27:12, 31:24, 62:23, 72:11, 74:23, 77:2, 103:1, 117:11, 120:24, 122:4, 122:8, 122:16, 122:20, 122:21, 134:18, 134:19, 155:24 helping [2] - 24:11, 102:14 hence [1] - 155:21 **HENDERSON** [1] - 1:6

Henderson [142] - 5:19,

15:14, 15:20, 16:6, 16:13, 31:21, 33:23, 37:16, 38:13, 39:19, 40:8, 40:17, 41:18, 42:10, 42:12, 43:2, 43:24, 44:8, 44:19, 45:15, 46:4, 48:23, 49:8, 49:20, 50:1, 51:3, 51:13, 51:20, 51:21, 52:6, 52:7, 54:10, 55:22, 55:24, 56:16, 57:5, 57:24, 58:22, 60:21, 62:4, 63:14, 64:4, 64:23, 64:25, 65:6, 65:24, 66:8, 66:18, 67:10, 67:21, 67:23, 67:24, 68:12, 68:22, 69:15, 69:22, 71:9, 74:20, 76:15, 76:22, 77:8, 77:10, 78:4, 78:13, 79:2, 79:4, 80:5, 83:5, 83:6, 83:14, 85:11, 88:10, 94:1, 101:3, 102:20, 102:23, 103:18, 104:3, 104:23, 105:1, 105:11, 106:11, 106:12, 106:18, 106:19, 107:1, 109:13, 109:21, 109:22, 110:7, 110:9, 110:18, 111:15, 111:21, 112:7, 113:1, 114:2, 114:8, 116:7, 117:4, 118:2, 118:9, 119:24, 121:8, 121:15, 121:21, 121:22, 122:2, 122:9, 123:4, 123:10, 124:12, 127:19, 129:24, 130:10, 131:3, 132:11, 133:1, 135:4, 135:6, 135:12, 135:13, 135:20, 136:9, 137:1, 137:4, 137:20, 137:25, 138:9, 138:12, 139:15, 139:24, 140:8, 140:11, 142:15, 142:20, 144:6, 148:12, 156:20. 158:10. 159:18 hereby [1] - 163:4 herein [1] - 50:24 heritage [1] - 110:6 hero [1] - 105:21 heroic [1] - 131:6 Hetrick [1] - 133:3 HETRICK [2] - 4:12, 133:3 Hi [1] - 99:12 **hi** [5] - 85:10, 118:20, 121:12, 122:17, 132:9 high [23] - 28:10, 29:13, 40:19, 50:15, 58:14, 58:18, 73:17, 73:19, 78:8, 80:24, 118:4, 118:12, 122:24, 124:4, 139:6, 144:11, 145:6, 145:18, 145:20, 156:7, 158:16, 158:24, 159:6 higher [14] - 16:14, 21:14, 23:6, 27:9, 28:2, 32:20,

45:24, 67:5, 72:25, 90:18, 90:19, 126:2, 144:13, 144:14 highest [4] - 49:14, 64:8, 123:24, 158:7 highlighting [1] - 25:7 highly [3] - 18:12, 56:20 hill [1] - 140:10 hired [2] - 65:22, 65:24 historic [2] - 30:11, 76:4 history [9] - 13:12, 14:2, 26:9, 27:14, 29:5, 32:20, 37:1, 44:9, 124:17 hit [3] - 53:17, 77:20, 160:14 **HODGSON** [4] - 3:8, 67:16, 67:19, 69:13 Hodgson [3] - 67:16, 67:20, 84:7 hold [7] - 6:2, 60:7, 63:8, 84:6, 94:20, 114:24, 120:8 holds [1] - 60:7 Hollow [1] - 55:10 Holly [1] - 52:3 **HOLLY** [1] - 3:5 home [25] - 51:7, 51:9, 52:15, 54:10, 58:2, 63:20, 63:23, 66:7, 71:1, 106:21, 106:24, 106:25, 108:25, 109:4, 109:22, 116:20, 117:18, 127:6, 133:19, 137:9, 142:3, 143:11, 147:14, 155:5, 159:16 homes [3] - 71:6, 72:17, 120:12 homework [1] - 134:17 honed [1] - 157:12 honest [2] - 114:1, 123:13 honestly [6] - 32:8, 66:10, 69:6, 80:25, 81:8, 107:24 honor [5] - 49:15, 123:22, 123:24, 124:20, 124:23 honored [1] - 124:19 honors [1] - 156:6 **HONSTINE** [1] - 1:8 **hope** [9] - 40:1, 41:12, 76:6, 80:18, 82:18, 117:12, 138:25, 141:16, 142:10 hopes [2] - 69:4, 72:23 hoping [6] - 25:13, 28:14, 63:7, 131:2, 143:16, 145:11 horrible [2] - 107:13, 108:5 hot [1] - 140:17 hotel [1] - 71:17 Houck [1] - 138:14 **HOUCK** [2] - 4:14, 138:13 hour [9] - 10:21, 40:7, 95:24,

109:5, 149:23, 150:3, 150:6, 160:15 house [6] - 58:10, 70:24, 71:2, 107:2, 117:16 House [1] - 55:10 hub [1] - 67:25 hug [1] - 85:4 huge [6] - 19:23, 22:4, 34:24, 58:14, 158:20, 159:2 human [1] - 80:2 humans [1] - 81:10 humbling [1] - 68:25 humor [1] - 122:12 hundred [1] - 94:20 hung [1] - 106:24 Hunter [1] - 57:14 **HUNTINGDON** [3] - 1:1, 1:17, 1:18 **Huntingdon** [43] - 5:7, 6:10, 11:11, 11:17, 13:3, 13:11, 17:14, 24:23, 25:19, 27:15, 48:22, 51:19, 52:4, 55:11, 61:12, 61:13, 61:14, 61:15, 61:16, 64:21, 65:14, 65:22, 67:4, 68:21, 82:22, 99:13, 101:2, 102:3, 102:4, 103:5, 103:21, 106:6, 110:1, 112:24, 115:11, 118:17, 126:12, 129:23, 130:1, 135:2, 142:19, 148:7 hurting [2] - 74:13, 74:24 husband [4] - 57:9, 81:17, 106:15, 133:24 husband's [1] - 106:22 HVAC [3] - 41:18, 41:21, 42:24 hyper [1] - 126:13 **hyper-informed** [1] - 126:13 ı

IDEA [1] - 31:3 idea [10] - 23:25, 33:23, 34:2, 40:6, 72:6, 72:8, 84:13, 85:17, 118:3, 140:14 ideal [3] - 36:12, 38:25, 147:1 ideas [1] - 12:9 identified [1] - 20:5 identify [1] - 22:20 **IEP** [2] - 103:6, 103:22 ignore [1] - 14:23 II [1] - 78:1 ill [2] - 57:9, 61:21 imagine [5] - 51:10, 67:24, 89:4, 129:10, 139:21 **immediately** [3] - 101:6, 103:19, 108:10 impact [2] - 19:23, 76:11

implicating [1] - 156:4 implications [1] - 41:17 important [18] - 14:22, 18:12, 18:24, 22:17, 30:1, 47:23, 51:7, 60:7, 64:2, 67:13, 87:16, 87:19, 107:9, 123:18, 128:14, 128:15, 132:20, 147:9 impossible [1] - 58:20 impressed [1] - 142:23 improve [2] - 21:5, 88:11 **improvement** [2] - 20:25, 22:5 IN [1] - 1:6 in-depth [1] - 99:4 in-service [1] - 158:15 INC [1] - 1:23 include [2] - 7:4, 45:5 included [2] - 27:7, 150:14 includes [2] - 14:2, 146:15 including [2] - 26:5, 124:25 incorporate [1] - 12:9 increase [19] - 26:2, 26:5, 26:7, 27:18, 27:22, 27:25, 28:1, 29:10, 40:22, 41:1, 41:8, 45:3, 45:4, 46:13, 59:12, 73:16, 89:13, 89:15, 115:10 increased [7] - 13:6, 28:8, 28:25, 41:5, 75:22, 75:23, 126:5 increases [3] - 26:1, 27:13, 91:18 increasing [4] - 31:4, 40:6, 60:25, 86:11 incredible [2] - 105:1, 137:17 index [1] - 12:22 indicate [1] - 48:16 indicated [1] - 124:7 indicating [1] - 107:20 individual [5] - 14:13, 16:3, 42:14, 69:4, 145:22 individuals [5] - 14:21, 53:12, 77:4, 80:11 industries [1] - 71:18 industry [1] - 134:11 **information** [29] - 7:19, 8:13, 9:9, 9:11, 9:18, 10:3, 10:15, 10:21, 11:13, 11:19, 11:20, 26:21, 29:18, 31:23, 41:15, 60:22, 65:9, 81:2, 87:6, 87:22, 140:1, 140:5, 151:8, 151:13, 152:24, 153:17, 153:19, 157:11, 161:25 informational [1] - 7:7 informed [3] - 5:14, 87:15, 126:13 infrastructure [1] - 127:2

117:17, 137:14, 149:16,

hours [7] - 55:16, 69:24,

149:24, 161:12

initial [1] - 146:13

input [1] - 162:14 inspire [1] - 78:5 instance [1] - 115:17 instead [1] - 74:24 instruction [9] - 18:7, 20:4, 23:1, 87:7, 92:24, 94:23, 95:2, 95:17, 150:6 instructional [1] - 30:20 instructions [2] - 19:17, 30:25 insurance [5] - 45:5, 45:6, 46:1, 46:2, 95:22 **insurance-type** [1] - 95:22 integrate [3] - 144:14, 145:19, 146:21 integrated [1] - 146:24 intelligence [1] - 103:9 intelligent [1] - 73:10 intended [1] - 66:5 intentions [1] - 162:18 interest [2] - 78:19, 91:19 interested [3] - 24:11, 30:4, 158:3 interesting [3] - 20:19, 21:18, 93:19 interests [1] - 115:2 intermediate [1] - 87:8 Internet [1] - 37:7 intervention [2] - 20:3, 20:4 introductory [1] - 5:10 invest [1] - 74:11 invested [1] - 74:10 investment [2] - 74:10, 74:13 involve [1] - 116:16 involved [4] - 15:2, 123:14, 124:24, 140:20 involvement [1] - 111:13 **ISENBERG** [1] - 1:11 Issett's [1] - 101:1 Issue [1] - 13:2 issue [7] - 24:15, 25:4, 55:19, 95:25, 147:17, 157:6, 162:2 issues [6] - 7:20, 10:1, 12:16, 13:2, 127:6, 146:8 itinerants [1] - 45:6 **ITINGER** [7] - 3:19, 3:20, 112:20, 112:23, 113:9, 114:23, 117:3

J

Itinger [2] - 112:20, 117:3

Jackson [34] - 8:19, 16:6, 16:8, 16:24, 18:1, 19:21, 31:21, 32:4, 32:12, 36:21, 36:23, 39:5, 39:6, 42:24, 44:3, 46:19, 47:1, 56:2, 56:24, 74:20, 79:3, 79:9,

140:13, 140:14, 142:22, 144:5, 145:23, 146:24, 147:13, 147:24, 148:6, 149:13, 160:11 Jackson-Miller [1] - 8:19 jake [1] - 77:18 **Jake** [8] - 58:4, 77:7, 77:19, 81:11, 81:22, 85:10, 133:11, 133:14 **JAKE** [2] - 3:13, 85:10 Jake's [2] - 77:8, 81:19 **James** [2] - 101:1, 102:2 Jan [1] - 9:7 **JANICE** [1] - 1:9 **January** [8] - 6:9, 6:11, 22:23, 23:5, 23:22, 97:15, 102:1, 135:13 **JEAN** [1] - 4:17 Jean [1] - 156:15 **Jeff** [6] - 16:16, 22:14, 70:9, 70:12, 88:25, 154:6 Jeffery [1] - 67:16 **JEFFREY** [2] - 2:5, 3:8 Jeffrey [1] - 67:20 JILL [2] - 1:13, 2:4 Jill [6] - 33:4, 70:8, 87:15, 88:13, 91:4, 128:23 **job** [9] - 82:16, 89:3, 91:3, 100:19, 131:11, 132:17, 143:3, 147:19, 156:8 jobs [3] - 25:12, 71:2, 120:12 **John** [1] - 138:16 ioin [1] - 124:15 joint [1] - 110:10 jotted [1] - 126:17 journey [2] - 20:21, 55:14 joys [1] - 116:2 jugs [2] - 126:23, 126:24 Julie [2] - 130:9, 130:11 jump [1] - 26:14 jumps [1] - 26:13

Κ

Juniata [2] - 101:12, 101:15

June [1] - 19:3

junior [1] - 73:18

K.G [1] - 1:11 Kalin [1] - 84:15 KARA [1] - 3:12 Kara [1] - 82:21 Karen [2] - 112:20, 159:16 KAREN [2] - 3:19, 4:18 KATHRYN [1] - 3:17 Katie [1] - 106:5 keep [20] - 27:9, 40:2, 51:20, 58:8, 63:22, 64:7, 70:14, 84:19, 111:18, 112:15, 114:5, 115:1, 118:16,

123:14, 127:23, 131:7, 137:25, 138:1, 144:11, 148:14 keeping [5] - 13:20, 32:2, 65:5, 111:21, 127:19 Kelly [1] - 100:25 **KELLY** [1] - 3:16 kept [1] - 161:6 key [3] - 30:12, 151:7 Keystone [1] - 31:7 kid [1] - 109:2 kidding [1] - 100:19 kids [47] - 14:20, 23:11, 23:20, 51:14, 52:19, 53:17, 57:5, 57:7, 57:10, 57:17, 57:24, 62:4, 77:13, 81:9, 81:25, 82:1, 82:3, 82:11, 82:12, 83:22, 84:20, 90:24, 93:24, 99:6, 106:14, 106:16, 109:12, 109:23, 112:16. 117:12. 117:19. 118:5, 121:22, 122:20, 122:24, 122:25, 123:2, 125:14, 126:4, 127:7, 127:8, 128:18, 134:1, 134:22. 159:18 kind [20] - 5:11, 10:24, 18:6, 18:10, 18:12, 18:25, 21:11, 32:19, 36:5, 36:15, 37:20, 38:24, 56:14, 57:3, 61:10, 84:19, 87:22, 97:21, 128:7, 148:17 kindergarten [29] - 15:19, 32:6, 32:8, 32:15, 33:8, 34:17, 34:19, 34:22, 36:4, 36:6, 37:15, 37:18, 37:25, 52:5, 54:8, 55:3, 77:20, 78:14, 101:14, 101:15, 102:1, 102:17, 102:20, 102:22, 104:9, 104:13, 108:24, 148:18, 154:22 kindergartners [3] - 14:4, 109:3, 137:13 kindness [1] - 122:12 kinds [6] - 20:21, 37:11, 89:7, 133:8, 134:19, 155:3 Kistler [2] - 102:6, 102:9 knowing [3] - 84:24, 97:15, 119:4 knowledge [1] - 77:12 known [7] - 5:22, 20:3, 50:25, 68:23, 138:17, 142:13, 143:14 knows [8] - 49:3, 52:25,

53:18, 53:19, 57:3, 66:11,

134:6, 143:3

L

lab [4] - 93:15, 94:13, 94:16, 95:20 labs [2] - 93:17, 94:5 lack [2] - 30:22, 89:20 lady [2] - 157:16, 159:14 Lane [6] - 82:22, 85:21, 101:1, 118:21, 123:7, 142:19 Language [1] - 26:5 language [1] - 28:25 large [14] - 27:13, 34:21, 37:2, 39:10, 40:14, 58:12, 68:18, 87:6, 88:6, 94:6, 94:17, 94:20, 116:11, 160:16 larger [5] - 67:2, 94:3, 108:3, 136:17, 146:1 largest [3] - 32:19, 94:2, 135:12 LARRY [1] - 4:14 last [45] - 8:18, 10:16, 11:21, 12:10, 14:5, 17:19, 21:21, 26:7, 27:4, 31:23, 38:9, 38:10, 39:4, 47:15, 48:9, 48:12, 55:2, 56:3, 56:24, 60:2, 62:25, 67:12, 75:11, 76:1, 78:23, 83:19, 88:24, 98:12, 98:13, 125:25, 126:2, 126:6, 129:6, 134:15, 134:17, 135:8, 139:9, 139:22, 141:8, 141:25, 143:5, 151:9, 152:25, 153:21, 157:2 late [6] - 57:12, 72:1, 72:2, 87:14, 107:8, 159:15 latitude [1] - 10:19 laughter [1] - 141:6 LAURA [1] - 3:21 Laura [1] - 118:20 **LAUREN** [2] - 3:20, 117:3 Lauren [4] - 115:18, 115:19, 115:22, 117:3 law [1] - 7:13 lead [3] - 11:13, 61:21, 119:24 leadership [3] - 19:11, 19:14, 20:9 leaps [1] - 104:25 learn [6] - 19:5, 23:2, 68:17, 77:14, 84:8, 130:20 learned [6] - 78:3, 84:9, 94:8, 100:14, 101:10, 121:23 learner [1] - 28:25 learners [1] - 78:6 Learners [1] - 26:5 learning [18] - 14:18, 18:6, 18:10, 19:13, 20:15, 20:24,

77:12, 83:16, 87:7, 87:8, 93:20, 95:17, 95:18, 95:24, 111:11, 111:25, 116:7, 130:21 least [9] - 6:7, 7:13, 9:20, 15:25, 100:7, 103:2, 107:13, 143:19, 157:5 leave [10] - 55:2, 62:17, 84:18, 84:21, 114:14, 120:17, 121:17, 128:23, 154:25, 155:1 leaving [1] - 98:14 leeway [1] - 18:16 **Left** [2] - 31:3, 124:14 left [11] - 13:20, 43:21, 75:11, 84:23, 88:3, 89:1, 106:1, 130:11, 139:21, 157:1, 157:18 leg [1] - 111:13 legendary [2] - 77:9 legislative [1] - 7:7 legislators [2] - 100:21, 100.22 **legitimate** [1] - 17:8 length [1] - 24:20 less [6] - 5:17, 6:2, 16:7, 40:9, 50:8, 50:25 lessons [2] - 94:23, 104:5 letter [1] - 83:1 letters [3] - 9:8, 83:8, 104:1 level [13] - 21:24, 25:16, 25:18, 37:25, 50:16, 53:10, 73:18, 86:9, 86:17, 104:12, 111:7, 144:13, 144:14 levels [3] - 124:4, 144:19, 158:4 Levin [1] - 151:18 **LGI** [1] - 95:25 **library** [1] - 45:17 lie [1] - 63:10 lied [1] - 100:21 lies [2] - 50:24, 67:14 life [18] - 41:24, 42:2, 42:10, 42:15, 42:25, 43:9, 43:15, 43:21, 43:25, 44:3, 47:22, 51:4, 51:7, 115:16, 122:13, 134:5, 159:20 lifelong [2] - 78:6, 110:5 light [1] - 111:18 likely [1] - 32:21 likewise [1] - 8:9 limits [3] - 12:19, 12:20, 12:21 line [8] - 54:2, 65:16, 70:15, 80:13, 80:16, 90:21, 119:18, 127:15 **Line** [2] - 59:25, 60:2 linear [1] - 89:22 lines [3] - 126:23, 126:25, 129:12

Lisa [1] - 121:7 list [4] - 71:3, 80:21, 99:23, 143:17 listed [1] - 86:6 listen [7] - 57:20, 70:3, 73:6, 73:8, 75:6, 118:15, 142:7 listening [4] - 82:17, 82:19, 118:19, 133:14 **litigation** [1] - 146:9 **LITTLE** [2] - 85:16, 123:3 live [26] - 51:5, 54:13, 61:13, 61:14, 64:20, 74:4, 75:9, 78:11, 78:16, 81:15, 82:3, 82:21, 116:21, 118:21, 121:7, 121:13, 121:20, 123:7, 128:2, 129:22, 130:23, 133:16, 149:13, 154:16, 159:16 lives [2] - 67:15, 70:2 living [1] - 72:21 local [9] - 13:4, 24:20, 29:9, 29:22, 59:7, 68:4, 100:22, 111:3, 134:19 locate [1] - 71:14 located [1] - 93:11 location [2] - 146:17, 146:19 locations [1] - 146:20 long-term [2] - 75:19, 90:11 look [46] - 14:24, 16:3, 17:4, 17:16, 21:7, 21:10, 21:19, 21:20, 24:8, 26:6, 30:3, 30:8, 30:18, 31:8, 31:19, 32:19, 36:8, 36:22, 37:6, 37:10, 39:18, 39:23, 41:11, 44:21, 46:6, 58:12, 68:3, 74:15, 74:16, 74:21, 75:14, 79:22, 87:19, 88:25, 92:10, 93:16, 100:3, 100:18, 107:4, 112:14, 127:11, 146:14, 150:11, 158:21, 160:8, 160:17 looked [10] - 16:4, 19:19, 19:20, 29:16, 44:18, 44:23, 59:24, 74:19, 79:5, 147:14 looking [30] - 8:24, 12:16, 13:1, 20:22, 21:7, 26:1, 26:2, 27:18, 29:2, 31:1, 31:2, 33:14, 33:16, 39:20, 40:21, 41:6, 41:9, 41:16, 42:1, 42:8, 42:21, 43:6, 56:19, 56:24, 63:1, 63:2, 87:25, 125:24, 136:5, 148:2 looks [6] - 16:10, 22:11, 23:14, 36:20, 50:4, 136:6 looming [1] - 131:8 looms [1] - 50:15 lose [13] - 62:14, 62:16, 64:11, 72:2, 72:17, 99:20,

LISA [2] - 3:22, 121:7

126:14, 127:10, 142:3, 143:11, 143:12, 143:23, 147:1 losing [4] - 88:23, 112:9, 120:12 loss [3] - 143:24, 146:13 lost [4] - 76:21, 84:16, 141:20 loud [1] - 138:17 love [17] - 66:1, 66:21, 67:11, 76:20, 83:11, 84:14, 109:21, 115:14, 117:10, 118:14, 121:5, 122:12, 122:13, 122:16, 122:17, 133:1 loved [2] - 49:13, 115:20 loving [3] - 115:23, 120:10, 121:3 low [1] - 158:17 lower [6] - 13:17, 23:17, 38:10, 43:19, 45:1, 50:8 lucky [1] - 113:3 lunch [5] - 54:2, 54:4, 84:1, 108:19, 158:11 lunches [1] - 158:6 lunchroom [2] - 83:25, 140:17

M

ma'am [2] - 159:10, 160:6 Madam [2] - 83:4, 83:19 mail [1] - 45:17 **Main** [1] - 159:17 main [2] - 46:5, 76:14 maintained [1] - 8:5 maintenance [12] - 31:13, 43:11, 43:12, 44:2, 44:5, 44:10, 45:10, 45:12, 45:13, 75:25, 136:2, 147:8 major [2] - 99:23, 102:10 majority [2] - 139:3, 139:7 man [1] - 108:10 manageable [2] - 34:18, 36:5 management [3] - 42:5, 42:19, 43:4 Manager [1] - 12:1 managers [1] - 70:10 mandates [1] - 31:2 manufacturer [2] - 42:7, 43:7 maples [1] - 126:20 March [1] - 25:1 marching [1] - 107:14 marked [1] - 74:12 MARKED [1] - 2:9 married [1] - 119:9 **MARSHAWN** [2] - 4:7, 121:19

Marshawn [3] - 121:19,

122:10, 122:13 master [1] - 94:8 matching [1] - 46:9 materials [2] - 47:7 math [7] - 19:20, 19:22, 22:22, 23:21, 104:18, 105:13, 135:14 math/chemistry [1] - 99:23 mathematics [10] - 19:24, 21:3, 21:10, 21:13, 21:15, 22:2, 23:12, 23:17, 24:2, 159:3 matter [4] - 114:20, 155:14, 156:1, 159:6 matters [1] - 17:2 Max [1] - 115:18 maximize [1] - 39:21 McAlevy's [1] - 139:10 meals [1] - 140:17 mean [12] - 25:24, 27:20, 39:11, 89:4, 95:6, 121:15, 128:12, 128:20, 129:4, 132:22, 158:11, 158:17 meanness [1] - 129:15 means [14] - 9:6, 17:23, 18:5, 18:6, 21:25, 32:2, 48:15, 66:15, 91:14, 116:21, 117:17, 132:2, 158:12, 160:7 meant [1] - 161:9 meantime [2] - 88:10, 90:14 measure [2] - 17:11, 17:13 measured [1] - 20:11 measures [1] - 76:8 meet [3] - 68:24, 71:3, 72:14 meeting [17] - 9:19, 16:20, 24:18, 71:7, 71:22, 103:6, 103:13, 103:18, 103:22, 114:12, 118:13, 140:6, 160:10, 160:16, 162:10 meetings [12] - 9:15, 118:11, 127:17, 136:3, 137:15, 141:25, 153:19, 153:23, 162:9, 162:10 MELISSA [1] - 2:5 member [6] - 5:1, 8:16, 51:23, 61:15, 141:14, 160:1 **MEMBER** [4] - 96:9, 96:11, 125:20, 157:18 members [28] - 29:12, 29:13, 54:1, 54:20, 63:4, 65:5, 65:7, 65:12, 68:3, 68:8,

80:9, 114:16, 114:20,

123:17, 124:3, 127:16,

138:20, 140:7, 140:8,

152:16, 160:2, 162:16

131:17, 131:21, 137:24,

140:12, 140:18, 143:23,

membrane [3] - 43:9, 43:10,

43:24 memories [1] - 109:13 men [1] - 141:17 mentally [1] - 78:18 mention [3] - 26:16, 136:12, 155:13 mentioned [4] - 87:1, 105:8, 127:9, 135:17 message [1] - 116:23 met [2] - 107:20, 130:7 metaphor [1] - 127:1 method [1] - 140:4 **METZGAR** [1] - 1:9 MICHAEL [1] - 1:8 MICHELLE [1] - 3:14 Michelle [3] - 85:20, 96:2, 97:11 mid-80s [1] - 19:25 middle [36] - 40:2, 40:19, 60:19, 61:1, 61:3, 72:1, 72:6, 72:8, 73:13, 73:23, 78:8, 78:20, 80:24, 89:11, 89:24, 91:17, 100:12, 114:10, 115:9, 122:24, 128:8, 128:9, 128:11, 128:14, 139:7, 143:20, 144:1, 144:10, 146:6, 146:7, 146:16, 146:23, 148:20, 156:20, 160:20, 160:24 might [3] - 67:9, 86:25, 100:7 Mike [1] - 133:3 MIKE [1] - 4:12 mileage [2] - 41:5, 45:6 Miles [1] - 70:12 miles [3] - 149:13, 149:15, 149:17 military [1] - 154:18 milk [2] - 126:23, 126:24 MILL [1] - 1:6 Mill [55] - 15:14, 31:21, 42:10, 49:8, 49:20, 51:3, 51:22, 55:22, 57:5, 60:21, 61:16, 62:5, 63:14, 64:23, 67:25, 68:13, 69:20, 75:10, 76:15, 76:22, 77:10, 78:4, 78:13, 79:2, 79:4, 80:5, 99:15, 112:21, 118:22, 119:7, 119:8, 119:9, 121:4, 121:8, 121:13, 121:20, 123:7, 124:13, 133:5, 135:4, 135:7, 135:20, 137:20, 137:25, 138:9, 139:15, 140:9, 140:11, 140:21, 142:13, 142:15, 142:20, 154:16, 159:17 MILLER [5] - 123:6, 125:5, 125:10, 125:18, 125:22 **Miller** [28] - 8:19, 16:6, 16:8, 18:1, 19:21, 32:4, 32:12,

39:5, 39:6, 42:24, 44:3, 47:1, 56:24, 74:20, 79:3, 79:9, 123:7, 140:13, 140:14, 142:22, 144:5, 145:23, 146:24, 147:13, 147:24, 148:6, 149:14, 160:11 Miller's [1] - 56:2 million [17] - 24:24, 25:9, 26:8, 27:21, 28:23, 46:21, 47:2, 59:8, 72:2, 72:3, 100:5, 109:15, 114:10, 134:14, 144:4, 144:8, 149:1 millions [4] - 100:6, 100:7, 116:15 MILLLER [1] - 4:8 mills [4] - 60:24, 60:25, 91:17, 91:19 Mills [1] - 67:17 mind [4] - 64:3, 70:3, 76:25, 161:7 mindful [1] - 10:17 minds [3] - 77:2, 88:14, **Mindy** [4] - 24:13, 74:2, 74:9, 128:23 mine [1] - 78:16 minimize [2] - 40:3, 41:13 minimizing [1] - 39:24 minimum [1] - 153:12 minus [1] - 13:15 minutes [7] - 10:14, 10:20, 19:21, 19:22, 40:9, 149:14, 149:17 miracles [1] - 104:4 Mirror [1] - 51:12 miscellaneous [2] - 45:5, 46:2 misled [1] - 123:19 mismanagement [1] - 60:13 miss [3] - 83:5, 83:9, 83:15 missed [1] - 68:20 mission [3] - 10:12, 11:6, 11:17 mistake [1] - 64:15 misunderstood [1] - 158:2 model [3] - 20:3, 39:4, 40:8 mom [4] - 81:19, 104:20, 106:11, 155:14 moment [3] - 51:1, 154:24, 154:25 **moms** [1] - 158:6 Monday [5] - 24:18, 26:18, 137:10, 139:13, 154:17 money [35] - 24:23, 43:13, 62:16, 72:12, 73:21, 73:22, 74:9, 74:11, 75:21, 75:22, 75:23, 77:3, 78:21, 80:1,

143:23, 148:3, 148:8, 157:1 moneys [3] - 25:9, 25:12, 25:21 month [3] - 25:11, 65:4 monthly [1] - 93:22 months [7] - 5:18, 6:3, 76:9, 103:22, 103:25, 129:6, 141:24 moreover [1] - 124:5 Morgan [1] - 70:12 morning [3] - 108:22, 109:2, 130:11 MORRIS [4] - 4:18, 159:11, 159:15, 161:4 Morris [1] - 159:16 Morter [1] - 121:13 **MORTER** [2] - 3:23, 121:12 mortgage [1] - 60:19 mortgaged [1] - 90:5 most [21] - 18:11, 20:1, 28:11, 30:1, 30:15, 31:13, 32:21, 40:1, 47:23, 54:21, 70:7, 77:6, 94:4, 98:1, 98:15, 104:8, 104:11, 114:1, 124:1, 143:10, 143:23 mostly [2] - 51:25, 112:24 mother [4] - 55:4, 72:22, 107:18, 113:5 Mount [2] - 101:7, 102:7 mouth [1] - 138:17 move [11] - 17:20, 18:22, 20:7, 27:10, 46:16, 72:23, 135:23, 143:2, 146:19, 156:8. 160:23 moved [9] - 15:21, 101:11, 102:2, 106:15, 106:23, 110:17, 129:25, 142:25, 149:8 mover [1] - 73:17 moving [5] - 39:18, 125:14, 126:4, 145:15, 160:10 **MR** [60] - 5:1, 14:10, 16:18, 22:14, 22:15, 32:1, 41:20, 48:5, 67:16, 67:19, 69:13, 81:14, 82:14, 91:21, 92:8, 96:10, 96:15, 96:20, 96:22, 97:4, 97:7, 97:11, 97:13, 97:23, 98:5, 98:8, 98:18, 98:22, 98:24, 99:2, 99:7, 99:9, 99:11, 109:25, 111:10, 112:6, 126:11, 131:10, 131:17, 133:3, 136:15, 136:22, 138:13, 151:5, 151:12, 153:3, 153:6, 153:9, 153:12,

88:9, 91:23, 95:12, 100:2,

114:5, 114:9, 120:2, 126:8,

100:3, 100:4, 100:20,

153:15, 153:20, 154:6, 156:25, 157:16, 157:19, 159:9, 159:13, 160:8, 161:11, 161:15 MRS [1] - 92:1 **MS** [93] - 11:9, 24:13, 26:16, 27:4, 29:11, 39:18, 41:14, 44:7, 47:4, 50:4, 52:3, 55:9, 59:17, 60:16, 61:6, 62:13, 63:18, 64:19, 69:18, 70:19, 72:5, 72:20, 73:3, 73:15, 74:8, 75:1, 75:8, 76:14, 80:4, 80:10, 82:20, 82:24, 85:3, 85:17, 88:20, 90:9, 91:22, 92:6, 96:18, 97:1, 97:5, 97:8, 97:12, 97:18, 98:3, 98:6, 98:23, 98:25, 99:3, 99:8, 99:10, 99:12, 100:18, 100:25, 104:20, 105:23, 106:4, 106:5, 112:20, 112:23, 113:9, 114:23, 118:20, 119:4, 120:24, 125:5, 125:10, 125:18, 125:22, 129:21, 134:25, 136:20, 136:24, 142:17, 149:4, 151:11, 151:22, 152:12, 153:4, 153:7, 153:11, 153:14, 153:17, 154:5, 154:11, 154:13, 156:15, 159:11, 159:15, 161:4, 162:13, 162:20, 162:21 multiplication [1] - 121:24 multiply [1] - 127:4 **music** [5] - 90:13, 95:1, 95:2, 95:3, 95:25 must [6] - 31:8, 74:14, 89:21, 138:23, 140:18, 156:3

N

name [46] - 5:6, 8:14, 10:23, 14:10, 24:13, 48:16, 48:20, 54:4, 55:9, 64:19, 67:16, 67:19, 69:18, 75:8, 81:14, 82:20, 83:3, 84:12, 85:10, 99:12, 100:25, 106:5, 108:15, 108:19, 108:20, 109:7, 109:25, 112:20, 115:15, 117:3, 121:7, 121:12, 121:19, 127:17, 129:21, 132:4, 132:9, 133:3, 134:25, 138:8, 138:13, 142:17, 154:15, 157:23, 159:16, 160:1 named [1] - 124:21 names [1] - 81:1 naming [1] - 104:1 National [2] - 111:17, 124:13 **nationally** [4] - 20:13, 49:20,

80:10, 80:12, 80:16, 81:25,

50:14, 123:25 nationally-acknowledged [1] - 50:14 natural [1] - 45:11 naturally [1] - 48:8 NCLB [1] - 124:14 nearly [1] - 28:20 necessary [2] - 29:19, 128:11 need [57] - 8:9, 11:14, 30:6, 30:14, 32:24, 33:4, 39:10, 46:4, 49:25, 53:21, 60:12, 70:23, 71:1, 74:3, 79:25, 80:19, 86:11, 86:21, 87:6, 87:20, 88:11, 88:22, 89:16, 93:6, 95:2, 99:3, 110:12, 110:22, 111:12, 112:12, 112:14, 115:9, 115:13, 120:1, 120:2, 120:15, 120:18, 120:19, 122:11, 122:23, 133:25, 134:18, 134:22, 134:23, 136:2, 136:18, 144:2, 144:13, 146:12, 149:1, 149:11, 150:23, 150:25, 151:14, 151:16, 152:7 needed [5] - 73:21, 78:8, 103:1, 103:15, 106:23 needs [20] - 8:7, 13:21, 20:5, 26:22, 30:23, 31:15, 53:18, 62:19, 69:13, 76:2, 76:5, 87:19, 104:24, 120:3, 131:15, 134:23, 136:6, 136:12, 150:11, 150:24 negative [2] - 61:10, 156:18 negotiating [1] - 28:6 negotiations [1] - 70:10 neighborhood [3] - 111:1, 111:3, 128:5 neighboring [2] - 62:21, 68:19 neighbors [2] - 127:22, 133:17 nervous [2] - 84:2, 130:4 net [1] - 20:2 never [19] - 23:23, 32:10, 62:4, 66:13, 66:20, 67:7, 77:13, 84:8, 85:6, 85:7, 94:7, 96:4, 96:16, 109:14, 109:15, 142:5, 151:19, 157:25, 161:1 **new** [30] - 49:2, 50:1, 60:19, 72:6, 72:8, 73:12, 75:21, 84:11, 84:13, 89:15, 98:13, 102:12, 102:24, 104:3, 108:17, 108:18, 108:20, 115:9, 130:9, 136:6, 146:16, 154:21, 155:10, 155:16, 155:18, 155:19, 156:2, 156:9, 156:20

New [2] - 29:14, 29:17 **News** [2] - 6:10, 160:15 newspaper [5] - 6:6, 153:18, 154:4, 159:23, 160:3 Newton [3] - 53:13, 83:9, 84:17 newton [1] - 106:1 **NEWTON** [1] - 106:4 next [26] - 14:1, 15:7, 15:12, 15:18, 15:21, 16:17, 21:3, 22:7, 26:13, 27:25, 33:1, 33:13, 41:6, 41:14, 44:11, 53:11, 53:13, 86:13, 90:2, 90:11, 93:13, 119:20, 132:2, 140:6, 140:19, 142:11 nice [2] - 129:4, 133:21 night [21] - 11:21, 12:11, 26:18, 47:15, 48:9, 48:13, 56:3, 56:24, 76:1, 78:23, 86:24. 115:22. 137:10. 139:9, 139:13, 141:25, 143:5, 151:10, 153:21, 157:2, 162:21 night's [2] - 63:1, 75:11 **nine** [10] - 20:19, 20:20, 21:6, 21:7, 21:12, 60:3, 60:24, 81:23, 91:17, 138:19 nine-year [4] - 20:19, 20:20, 21:6, 21:12 nine-year-old [1] - 81:23 Nintendo [1] - 138:7 ninth [1] - 145:6 nobody [1] - 105:24 non [1] - 28:19 none [2] - 57:5, 79:8 **NONE** [1] - 2:11 norm [1] - 20:13 **normally** [2] - 57:10, 70:25 note [3] - 37:15, 57:8, 93:19 notes [5] - 9:23, 96:2, 107:8, 138:7, 163:6 **nothing** [4] - 79:7, 121:10, 153:23, 157:9 notice [3] - 6:5, 6:10, 154:8 notified [1] - 139:25 Nova [2] - 20:12, 20:13 November [4] - 22:23, 84:16, 89:10, 124:12 **nowadays** [1] - 126:24 **nowhere** [1] - 87:10 Number [13] - 13:2, 13:8, 34:2, 70:22, 78:24, 78:25, 79:2, 86:2, 117:7, 117:8, 132:14, 132:17, 132:19 number [27] - 6:25, 13:14, 13:16, 14:6, 15:15, 24:16, 25:4, 32:20, 33:20, 35:5, 36:25, 38:15, 38:17, 39:7, 40:15, 40:19, 46:3, 50:21,

80:11, 85:23, 86:18, 97:19, 99:1, 117:8, 117:10, 132:15, 142:2 numbers [50] - 14:17, 14:19, 14:22, 15:6, 15:25, 17:15, 17:16, 24:10, 27:19, 30:4, 32:10, 34:24, 35:25, 37:2, 38:15, 38:18, 39:3, 39:10, 46:16, 47:5, 56:5, 56:6, 56:12, 58:13, 65:9, 69:2, 77:3, 81:8, 81:25, 82:10, 88:3, 98:3, 98:6, 105:8, 125:24, 125:25, 126:1, 126:4, 127:11, 133:8, 133:9, 134:10, 134:12, 136:5, 147:13, 148:16, 149:9, 149:12, 150:10 numerous [1] - 50:12 nurtured [1] - 68:23 nurturing [1] - 68:6 **nuts** [1] - 56:18

0

o'clock [1] - 108:21 objective [1] - 30:14 obstacle [2] - 101:23, 102:11 **obvious** [2] - 23:17, 60:6 obviously [4] - 35:22, 36:3, 55:22, 92:14 occasionally [1] - 94:21 occur [1] - 8:22 occurring [1] - 162:4 occurs [1] - 63:14 October [2] - 114:13, 115:2 odd [2] - 61:1, 134:13 **OF** [2] - 163:1, 163:2 offering [1] - 28:15 Office [1] - 67:17 office [3] - 73:7, 75:6, 108:21 officer [1] - 31:10 offs [1] - 87:16 offset [2] - 25:13, 27:13 **old** [4] - 55:4, 81:23, 101:4, 101:13 older [1] - 106:23 Olivia [3] - 57:14, 58:2, 64:16 once [7] - 7:25, 60:11, 72:22, 132:25, 157:2, 157:6, 161:12 one [104] - 6:19, 10:20, 13:15, 13:25, 16:7, 17:4, 17:11, 17:24, 18:22, 19:25, 20:11, 20:24, 21:3, 21:7, 21:13, 21:19, 22:7, 22:10, 23:18, 24:22, 31:19, 34:13, 34:15, 34:18, 34:25, 36:10,

36:11, 36:21, 37:10, 42:16,

43:5, 43:16, 46:18, 51:10,

53:4, 53:9, 54:16, 55:2, 57:21, 57:22, 60:6, 61:25, 63:16, 64:2, 64:5, 64:7, 67:12, 67:25, 70:25, 71:25, 76:14, 81:3, 81:20, 82:16, 83:12, 83:19, 84:17, 90:11, 93:4, 93:11, 99:20, 99:21, 103:15, 107:14, 108:1, 108:3, 108:4, 108:12, 109:6, 109:16, 110:14, 110:16, 110:17, 117:7, 122:8, 122:23, 122:25, 124:21, 128:6, 129:2, 130:16, 131:5, 132:14, 133:14, 133:18, 133:21, 135:14, 141:6, 142:2, 142:10, 146:1, 146:22, 153:2, 153:4, 153:16, 154:13, 157:5, 158:7, 158:22, 159:11, 159:23, 160:2 one-on-one [2] - 122:23, 130:16 one-room [2] - 110:14, 110:17 ones [6] - 13:17, 63:6, 63:7, 75:1, 82:2, 118:23 ongoing [2] - 10:5, 162:1 online [1] - 28:15 open [20] - 9:1, 35:18, 49:22, 65:6, 70:3, 109:18, 109:19, 111:19, 111:21, 112:15, 114:6, 114:17, 117:13, 118:16, 123:15, 127:19, 127:24, 131:7, 138:1, 148:14 opening [1] - 158:15 operating [1] - 30:6 operation [3] - 31:1, 75:24, 135:21 **opinion** [7] - 107:25, 126:16, 129:12, 136:24, 142:1, 151:2, 160:14 opportunities [2] - 18:6, 30:18 opportunity [14] - 9:16, 9:21, 47:6, 48:7, 52:22, 65:19, 81:4, 96:21, 110:4, 110:19, 112:17, 141:9, 141:11, 160:17 opposed [1] - 127:8 **opposite** [1] - 56:9 option [38] - 28:18, 31:19, 33:22, 34:11, 35:14, 36:19, 36:20, 37:10, 39:4, 40:24, 41:17, 46:15, 46:22, 47:1, 73:5, 75:4, 78:14, 79:8, 86:2, 86:15, 90:24, 91:1, 94:16, 94:19, 96:3, 97:21, 98:23, 98:24, 137:5, 139:8,

139:12, 142:1, 143:5, P.M [1] - 1:15 143:8, 143:20, 145:16, **PA**[7] - 1:18, 1:24, 6:11, 146:15 67:17, 82:22, 91:16, Option [12] - 32:1, 33:22, 154:16 36:18, 40:25, 46:6, 46:19, packet [1] - 9:12 71:3, 77:5, 78:24, 79:2, page [1] - 154:15 137:2 PAGE [3] - 2:2, 3:2, 4:5 options [45] - 31:17, 31:22, paid [1] - 26:11 31:24, 33:7, 33:10, 33:13, paltry [1] - 100:2 35:10, 35:12, 37:11, 41:11, panicked [1] - 108:11 44:23, 47:13, 57:23, 71:3, paper [5] - 99:16, 133:7, 76:25, 77:4, 78:22, 79:6, 140:17, 152:7, 160:3 79:14, 81:18, 85:23, 86:1, papers [1] - 129:12 87:2, 87:20, 91:5, 92:2, paperwork [1] - 147:15 92:11, 96:1, 96:22, 97:8, para [2] - 45:20, 70:5 99:4, 114:17, 116:15, para-staff [1] - 45:20 137:8, 143:9, 143:10, parameters [1] - 78:2 143:15, 143:17, 147:2, Pardon [1] - 98:5 150:15, 150:22, 152:2, parent [17] - 8:16, 18:17, 152:17, 152:24 52:6, 52:24, 64:24, 65:3, ordeal [1] - 129:6 66:22, 81:16, 103:17, order [3] - 14:5, 78:20, 112:25, 123:9, 129:25, 113:20 135:2, 144:20, 144:22, ordered [1] - 108:19 145:2, 154:20 orderly [3] - 8:20, 48:8, 48:12 parenting [2] - 145:4, 145:12 organized [1] - 8:19 parents [32] - 12:11, 17:4, original [2] - 15:3, 42:20 49:5, 49:9, 49:13, 49:18, ourselves [2] - 12:15, 27:2 51:5, 51:14, 54:18, 54:21, outcomes [2] - 29:25, 30:1 56:25, 63:5, 65:4, 65:7, outline [2] - 7:19, 9:17 68:7, 68:13, 71:2, 76:18, outlined [1] - 7:15 81:4, 82:6, 106:22, 111:13, outlying [1] - 40:11 112:2, 112:9, 114:19, outperforms [1] - 158:24 116:5, 116:20, 130:18, outside [1] - 115:17 137:7, 145:11, 155:24, outsiders [1] - 19:10 156:2 outstanding [2] - 142:20, part [16] - 7:16, 8:2, 9:12, 145:10 14:22, 51:4, 51:7, 52:12, overall [4] - 28:4, 38:19, 52:14, 54:25, 66:8, 66:13, 41:3, 143:25 87:1. 113:15. 130:25. overcoming [1] - 101:25 160:21, 160:25 overcrowd [1] - 58:19 participate [1] - 104:5 **overcrowded** [1] - 50:20 participation [1] - 10:13 overcrowding [1] - 130:15 particular [12] - 10:20, 14:6, 24:21, 41:19, 46:10, 47:21, overhang [1] - 95:9 47:24, 53:8, 85:25, 157:7, overhead [1] - 94:14 overloaded [1] - 50:22 parting [1] - 79:11 **overwhelmed** [1] - 100:13 partner [1] - 133:24 overwhelming [2] - 54:18, 139:4 partners [1] - 125:1 Party [1] - 140:22 owe [1] - 65:16 party [2] - 140:25, 141:1 own [11] - 42:14, 60:23, 66:17, 77:21, 111:3, PASA [1] - 27:8 **PASCO** [1] - 27:9 124:10, 131:8, 133:16, 144:2, 144:3, 144:24 pass [2] - 49:25, 66:25 passed [5] - 9:10, 29:8, Ρ 72:21, 105:9, 153:24 passionate [1] - 161:22

141:18 86:12, 155:21, 158:17, PATRICIA [1] - 4:16 158:23 Patricia [1] - 154:15 Patty [1] - 70:12 pause [2] - 49:1, 77:18 pay [10] - 27:17, 41:2, 60:18, 139:23 69:7, 69:8, 72:15, 74:5, 89:13, 127:3, 128:24 payers [1] - 29:9 paying [4] - 26:19, 59:10, 62:21, 147:7 payment [3] - 60:24, 61:1, 91:18 Peg [2] - 55:10, 57:12 **PEG** [1] - 3:6 154:13 Penn [1] - 29:15 **PENNSYLVANIA** [1] - 163:2 Pennsylvania [16] - 7:4, 7:9, 13:23, 17:10, 27:5, 31:11, 49:2, 75:10, 101:8, 101:12, 130:19 102:2, 121:21, 124:19, 126:7, 133:5 people [54] - 7:8, 9:9, 10:9, 150:12 10:17, 10:19, 12:4, 23:2, 26:23, 32:9, 44:25, 46:4, 48:12, 51:8, 61:9, 61:11, 61:17, 61:22, 62:1, 63:24, 64:11, 65:17, 68:10, 72:14, 72:17, 73:4, 73:7, 73:10, 83:4, 91:15, 94:21, 102:13, 107:11, 107:23, 109:11, 114:25, 118:16, 119:10, 119:23, 120:11, 120:12, 122:12, 122:13, 122:14, 132:17, 134:7, 134:22, 138:23, 141:10, 142:8, 153:22, 155:14, 161:24 people's [2] - 75:5, 75:7 per [9] - 16:7, 16:13, 16:15, 20:25, 21:24, 22:5, 28:19, 41:3, 127:24 perceive [1] - 128:7 perceived [2] - 79:7, 128:13 140:9 percent [37] - 12:23, 13:11, 15:14, 15:17, 15:21, 15:22, 18:15, 20:24, 21:22, 21:23, 22:3, 22:5, 23:6, 23:10, 26:8, 26:13, 27:7, 27:24, 156:16 28:1, 31:5, 41:4, 43:3, 60:1, 60:4, 74:21, 148:22, 148:24, 149:1, 149:6, 149:8, 150:2, 150:3, 158:10, 158:22, 159:3 percentage [2] - 15:12, 37:24 percentages [1] - 31:4 perfect [3] - 50:8, 50:25, 109:8 perfectly [2] - 118:10, 152:8 performance [5] - 57:2,

performing [2] - 135:24 perhaps [6] - 81:1, 86:21, 87:23, 89:16, 99:3, 156:12 period [3] - 9:17, 21:12, permanent [1] - 5:24 permanently [1] - 5:19 permits [1] - 6:23 permitted [1] - 126:7 **persevere** [1] - 145:9 **persistence** [1] - 65:20 person [3] - 48:10, 48:13, personal [4] - 55:17, 57:8, 66:9, 128:19 personality [1] - 69:4 personally [3] - 91:8, 107:19, personas [1] - 21:17 perspective [2] - 128:21, persuade [1] - 65:14 pertain [1] - 31:20 perusing [1] - 30:21 pest [1] - 45:11 pet [1] - 115:20 **PETER** [1] - 1:10 Petersburg [1] - 101:11 **PETERSON** [1] - 1:9 petitions [1] - 141:24 phase [1] - 95:25 philosophy [1] - 160:21 phone [2] - 45:11, 84:17 phrase [1] - 157:24 pick [4] - 40:12, 52:25, 57:13, 84:22 picked [1] - 106:1 picks [1] - 57:10 picture [2] - 47:2, 74:15 piece [3] - 132:3, 133:7, pieces [2] - 11:18, 75:15 pike [1] - 98:19 **Pike** [6] - 69:20, 99:15, 112:21, 133:4, 135:1, Pine [2] - 67:17, 106:6 pipe [1] - 42:21 Piper [2] - 75:8, 81:20 PIPER [3] - 3:10, 75:8 pipes [1] - 136:3 Pitt [1] - 99:22 PLACE [1] - 1:17 place [11] - 17:14, 51:8, 52:10, 68:4, 70:16, 101:18, 106:20, 115:25, 141:20, 144:3, 160:12

p.m [4] - 6:12, 131:16,

162:23

past [11] - 9:16, 28:21, 69:21,

105:19, 127:17, 140:19,

71:24, 76:9, 76:19, 105:16,

placed [1] - 79:9 places [1] - 71:16 plan [9] - 11:20, 27:12, 47:11, 54:20, 96:24, 97:17, 113:20, 126:17, 138:4 Plan [1] - 140:22 planned [1] - 63:24 planning [4] - 14:1, 87:13, 90:12, 99:15 plans [3] - 95:7, 97:13, 97:14 play [2] - 49:23, 54:5 playground [3] - 54:5, 57:17, 95:8 plead [1] - 51:18 pleading [2] - 65:10, 115:7 pleads [1] - 80:7 pleasure [3] - 130:5, 131:2, 141:9 plenty [1] - 120:1 plus [1] - 67:7 PNC's [1] - 60:23 pneumatic [1] - 42:20 **podium** [1] - 48:15 point [28] - 11:5, 13:14, 15:13, 16:11, 26:17, 33:5, 35:17, 37:20, 40:10, 48:6, 48:19, 49:7, 56:9, 56:10, 56:11, 59:22, 96:5, 96:17, 103:13, 126:1, 126:6, 127:1, 157:13, 157:22, 157:23, 159:10, 161:4, 162:6 points [4] - 30:13, 111:6, 125:10, 159:5 **POLLY** [1] - 4:13 **Polly** [1] - 134:25 poor [10] - 119:13, 119:14, 121:4, 135:24, 155:21, 157:24, 157:25, 158:1, 159:5 **poorly** [3] - 119:18, 156:5, 160:13 poorly-educated [1] - 119:18 **POORMAN** [4] - 3:12, 82:20, 82:24, 85:3 Poorman [3] - 82:21, 83:3, 83:11 population [4] - 13:12, 21:1, 28:25, 68:5 populations [1] - 14:8 Port [1] - 70:12 portion [2] - 11:7, 43:16 pose [1] - 35:11 position [10] - 31:8, 44:20, 55:15, 60:8, 73:25, 74:1, 111:23, 114:23, 114:24, 115:5 positions [2] - 29:3, 143:12 possess [1] - 77:13

possibility [3] - 145:14,

151:3, 151:5 possible [6] - 65:10, 66:18, 131:7, 142:2, 146:9, 147:11 possibly [3] - 65:13, 144:9, 150:16 Post [1] - 67:17 potential [3] - 8:8, 68:24, 87:16 potentially [2] - 24:24, 78:15 poverty [4] - 158:5, 158:7, 158:16, 158:24 power [1] - 62:7 powerful [2] - 22:10 PowerPoint [7] - 5:12, 7:16, 7:21, 7:25, 11:3, 37:7, 98:16 powers [2] - 11:25, 14:7 Powers [2] - 14:11, 70:13 **POWERS** [2] - 2:4, 14:10 practice [2] - 22:25, 94:22 practices [2] - 18:8, 18:9 pray [4] - 119:24, 122:17, 137:23 prayer [1] - 80:18 pre [3] - 53:20, 93:7, 93:10 pre-K [2] - 93:7, 93:10 pre-prepared [1] - 53:20 preamble [1] - 119:23 preceding [1] - 13:17 precious [1] - 62:14 predict [1] - 37:17 predicted [2] - 27:13, 27:25 predominantly [1] - 124:11 preliminary [5] - 24:19, 26:6, 59:23, 60:1, 60:4 prepared [1] - 53:20 Preschool [1] - 101:7 preschool [2] - 101:8, 105:17 present [18] - 5:1, 10:20, 10:21, 11:12, 11:22, 31:23, 34:7, 35:21, 38:16, 38:22, 48:9, 78:22, 78:24, 86:16, 112:1, 131:17, 161:25, 162:10 presentation [15] - 8:1, 8:2, 8:18, 8:20, 9:4, 11:8, 36:17, 48:4, 56:2, 56:4, 85:25, 86:19, 99:18, 135:11, 158:15 presentations [2] - 87:10, 161:23 presented [19] - 10:2, 10:4, 11:21, 31:17, 41:15, 47:13, 48:6, 50:21, 65:9, 78:14, 79:6, 85:23, 87:2, 125:11,

presenting [1] - 151:7 presently [1] - 50:23 presents [1] - 25:1 president [1] - 110:9 pressure [1] - 58:16 prestigious [1] - 124:23 pretty [7] - 14:16, 21:13, 24:7, 40:18, 44:16, 77:22, 152:22 prevented [1] - 58:24 previous [3] - 39:16, 136:3, 137:15 previously [1] - 81:16 price [3] - 59:11, 69:10, 121:5 **pride** [3] - 68:7, 71:12, 124:6 primarily [4] - 7:16, 12:15, 13:1, 31:20 primary [3] - 30:14, 87:7, 95:23 principal [2] - 70:8, 74:1 Principal [2] - 11:25, 14:11 **principles** [1] - 63:2 priority [1] - 59:18 private [6] - 49:6, 49:11, 49:17, 62:22, 109:17, 137:8 privately [1] - 102:25 privilege [1] - 140:20 **pro** [1] - 49:4 problem [3] - 23:25, 84:21, 139:25 problems [2] - 75:16, 100:9 procedure [1] - 15:18 procedures [1] - 30:7 proceed [3] - 10:6, 11:7, 73:12 proceedings [2] - 163:4, 163:6 process [18] - 10:1, 10:5, 32:7, 35:25, 39:7, 79:6, 81:13, 88:5, 89:23, 92:13, 103:24, 113:22, 115:6, 151:6, 152:20, 157:10, 160:5, 162:2 processes [1] - 87:24 produce [1] - 119:18 **PRODUCED** [1] - 2:9 product [1] - 151:8 productive [1] - 78:8 products [1] - 134:16 professional [2] - 25:3, 47:22 proficiency [2] - 21:22, 50:16 proficient [4] - 22:1, 23:11, 23:21, 104:11 program [14] - 11:15, 13:22, 15:9, 29:17, 89:11, 89:18, 92:3, 93:20, 101:17, 102:5, 102:24, 111:18, 123:21,

123:22 programs [7] - 28:15, 30:16, 59:24, 59:25, 92:22, 141:3, 141:6 progress [9] - 12:12, 30:18, 41:10, 102:9, 102:14, 103:25, 104:21, 105:3, 151:12 project [8] - 12:7, 15:3, 15:4, 15:17, 15:20, 87:11, 143:21, 146:8 projected [5] - 33:8, 41:19, 41:21, 43:8, 45:2 projection [3] - 13:24, 14:3, 14:4 projections [1] - 26:10 projector [1] - 94:15 promise [1] - 49:12 promised [2] - 143:6, 152:13 proper [2] - 101:18, 111:11 properly [1] - 6:17 property [3] - 12:19, 72:16, 74:5 proposals [1] - 92:5 proposed [3] - 60:18, 60:19, 93:12 prospectus [3] - 60:23, 79:14, 91:16 proud [13] - 50:10, 51:21, 51:22, 51:23, 52:1, 64:23, 67:6, 106:3, 112:25, 123:9, 140:18, 142:21, 159:1 **proudly** [1] - 124:8 prove [5] - 20:23, 56:6, 108:6, 121:4, 144:5 proven [4] - 49:20, 119:11, 119:14 proves [1] - 136:9 provide [8] - 7:18, 30:15, 31:12, 31:13, 48:10, 68:16, 80:14, 140:25 provided [1] - 113:17 provider [1] - 70:20 providers [1] - 71:5 provides [3] - 5:20, 5:24, 141:3 providing [1] - 111:25 provision [1] - 5:20 **provisions** [1] - 10:10 proximity [1] - 127:3 **PSBA** [1] - 27:8 **PSERS** [1] - 27:16 **PSSA** [6] - 17:11, 20:18, 50:16, 64:9, 88:11, 117:25 psychologist [2] - 103:7, 103:21 Public [2] - 5:15, 5:23 public [13] - 5:17, 5:25, 6:2, 9:17, 31:14, 49:4, 58:25, 143:14, 152:3, 160:18,

136:5, 143:5, 150:22,

presenter [1] - 132:2

160:5, 160:6

160:22, 162:10, 162:18 publicly [1] - 5:21 **published** [1] - 6:10 **pull** [4] - 57:16, 62:2, 62:4, 127:10 pulled [1] - 104:9 **pupils** [1] - 6:25 Purdy [1] - 123:7 purpose [2] - 7:6, 7:10 **purposes** [1] - 7:1 pursuant [2] - 5:15, 6:18 pursue [1] - 114:9 **push** [2] - 78:2, 80:19 pushing [1] - 72:20 put [27] - 34:6, 47:14, 60:8, 69:10, 73:15, 81:8, 81:9, 82:8, 86:11, 89:15, 115:5, 116:3, 116:10, 120:4, 121:5, 130:13, 131:19, 131:23, 134:14, 137:22, 139:12, 139:22, 144:10, 145:16, 147:22, 148:3, 151:24 puts [1] - 39:5 putting [4] - 36:20, 114:16, 139:4, 144:19

Q

qualities [1] - 77:21 quality [10] - 18:7, 49:21, 80:14, 80:15, 90:24, 111:7, 111:8, 113:11, 113:13, 127:25 quarter [2] - 59:8, 124:16 questions [15] - 9:22, 9:25, 10:2, 24:10, 75:12, 80:19, 89:8, 96:8, 150:16, 151:9, 157:7, 157:14, 159:9, 161:11, 161:13 quite [8] - 21:4, 91:10, 119:5, 124:20, 129:6, 129:8, 146:10, 153:21 quote [2] - 62:25, 63:8 **quoted** [1] - 51:12

R

R-U-X [1] - 154:15
race [1] - 76:25
raise [2] - 77:17, 137:17
raises [1] - 74:21
raising [2] - 72:17, 131:1
range [4] - 41:21, 88:2,
103:10, 103:13
ranges [1] - 86:16
ranging [1] - 86:5
rate [6] - 26:12, 27:4, 27:16,

90:18, 90:19, 91:23 rates [3] - 27:16, 27:25, 28:1 rather [1] - 127:21 ratio [2] - 98:21, 111:24 ratios [1] - 56:19 **RE**[1] - 1:6 reach [1] - 120:7 reached [1] - 28:10 reaching [2] - 75:17, 124:4 read [11] - 10:8, 12:17, 19:4, 19:5, 23:2, 63:19, 83:2, 91:13, 129:12, 138:7 readily [1] - 32:17 reading [11] - 21:9, 21:11, 21:20, 22:21, 23:21, 84:14, 94:12, 104:2, 105:13, 135:14, 154:4 ready [4] - 53:16, 83:21, 102:16, 161:16 real [2] - 49:11, 135:20 realign [1] - 78:25 realistic [1] - 36:5 realistically [2] - 36:9, 75:20 Reality [2] - 29:14, 29:17 reality [1] - 62:5 realize [2] - 55:15, 81:9 realized [1] - 46:7 really [70] - 8:19, 12:14, 16:21, 16:25, 17:1, 17:4, 17:7, 17:14, 17:18, 17:20, 17:23, 18:2, 18:4, 18:11, 18:24, 19:2, 19:3, 19:13, 19:15. 20:1. 20:21. 20:22. 21:3, 21:18, 22:7, 22:12, 23:2, 23:12, 30:3, 33:23, 34:18, 36:8, 36:20, 37:17, 40:21, 42:7, 57:4, 61:17, 63:20, 64:14, 68:25, 74:5, 76:5, 81:19, 81:21, 82:8, 82:18, 83:24, 89:8, 89:9, 96:5, 107:12, 117:24, 121:11, 123:5, 123:15, 126:15, 131:10, 149:2, 149:11, 149:25, 150:10, 151:14, 151:19, 155:15, 156:11, 160:16, 160:17 Reamer [5] - 64:20, 81:15, 83:15, 83:16, 115:21 **REAMER** [5] - 3:7, 3:11, 64:19, 81:14, 82:14 reason [9] - 15:8, 44:21, 45:3, 49:7, 94:15, 114:24, 135:9, 135:15, 135:25 reasonable [1] - 88:2 reasons [10] - 6:21, 6:24, 7:2, 7:3, 7:5, 54:16, 76:15, 117:6, 132:13, 156:21 reassuring [1] - 66:22 rebuild [1] - 110:25

receive [6] - 8:1, 8:2, 24:24, 25:20, 29:7, 113:4 received [5] - 9:8, 28:23, 68:19, 121:23, 124:20 receiving [3] - 50:24, 52:20, 113:14 recent [2] - 28:11, 98:1 recently [5] - 15:25, 20:1, 29:11, 122:7, 125:16 Recess [1] - 131:16 recognition [1] - 111:17 recognize [2] - 12:4 recognized [1] - 123:25 recommendation [6] - 27:8, 33:12, 33:18, 34:11, 36:19, recommendations [3] -33:11, 35:10, 35:11 recommended [1] - 27:9 recommending [3] - 37:3, 39:11, 96:15 reconsider [2] - 30:6, 115:6 reconvene [1] - 132:1 record [5] - 8:5, 8:9, 8:25, 131:12, 131:23 recorded [1] - 8:7 recoup [1] - 131:15 reduced [2] - 158:6, 158:11 reduction [3] - 24:25, 45:7, 86:6 reference [4] - 35:17, 93:15, 157:22, 159:4 referencing [1] - 92:7 referred [1] - 119:12 referring [1] - 92:3 reflect [6] - 17:17, 24:9, 37:6, 57:1, 79:16, 154:25 reflected [1] - 98:16 reflections [1] - 60:6 **reflective** [1] - 23:3 refuse [2] - 45:12, 116:14 regard [2] - 153:24, 154:1 regarding [2] - 76:3, 92:9 Region [1] - 127:20 region [1] - 127:21 regions [1] - 127:18 register [2] - 32:9, 127:15 registration [1] - 32:8 regression [2] - 50:7, 50:24 regret [1] - 67:8 regretted [1] - 66:20 regular [6] - 9:15, 9:19, 13:22, 147:20, 153:23, 162:10 **REIF** [3] - 1:10, 91:21, 160:8 reimbursable [1] - 36:25 reimbursements [1] - 15:5 reinforcing [1] - 116:19 relate [1] - 96:22

related [2] - 6:4, 92:13 relates [2] - 41:18, 93:25 relationship [1] - 29:25 relationships [4] - 14:20, 66:9, 116:3, 130:18 relay [1] - 108:1 relentless [1] - 69:24 relocate [1] - 95:1 relocated [1] - 93:7 remain [1] - 9:1 remained [2] - 101:13, 102:15 remaining [1] - 49:22 remains [1] - 109:18 remark [1] - 161:7 remarks [3] - 5:10, 119:7, 162:6 remember [6] - 19:2, 36:16, 65:24, 79:18, 142:2, 160:1 reminds [2] - 90:17, 90:19 remodeled [1] - 116:12 remove [1] - 33:7 renewed [1] - 124:6 renovation [1] - 15:3 renovations [2] - 75:22, 92:4 repair [2] - 43:18, 71:18 repaired [1] - 114:3 repairs [3] - 45:12, 134:12, 136:8 repeat [3] - 102:17, 120:20, 120:25 repeatedly [1] - 77:1 repetitive [1] - 5:13 replace [6] - 42:1, 42:4, 43:25, 44:4, 136:4, 136:8 replacement [6] - 42:11, 42:22, 43:1, 43:10, 43:17, 134:12 replacing [1] - 42:21 report [4] - 56:11, 105:10, 117:24, 124:5 reporter [3] - 67:18, 82:23, 112:22 **REPORTER** [1] - 1:20 **REPORTING** [1] - 1:23 represent [1] - 127:20 representative [1] - 156:19 representing [1] - 127:18 represents [1] - 34:7 repurposing [1] - 95:21 reputation [1] - 119:10 request [3] - 150:15, 150:17, 152:18 Request [1] - 59:5 requesting [2] - 151:22, 151:23 Requests [1] - 59:6 require [1] - 86:20 required [3] - 6:18, 30:10,

recap [1] - 135:5

76:3 requires [1] - 5:16 research [4] - 19:9, 20:6, 22:4, 51:15 resentment [1] - 61:21 resident [13] - 8:15, 10:24, 48:17, 48:22, 64:21, 69:20, 99:13, 110:5, 112:23, 118:21, 123:8, 141:15, 156:16 residents [2] - 139:15, 148:5 resolution [2] - 6:8, 6:16 resources [3] - 18:10, 19:19, 159:7 respect [4] - 114:21, 114:23, 138:21, 139:1 respected [1] - 19:19 respectfully [1] - 51:18 response [4] - 20:3, 125:17, 152:11, 161:14 responsibility [2] - 144:22, responsible [4] - 41:4, 41:8, 62:20, 112:13 responsive [1] - 20:4 rest [4] - 104:13, 116:5, 126:14, 129:9 restates [1] - 137:16 results [5] - 103:8, 103:11, 103:20, 135:14, 150:25 retail [1] - 134:7 retained [1] - 44:25 retired [2] - 70:5, 113:6 **Retirement** [1] - 27:6 retirement [8] - 26:2, 26:11, 26:17, 26:19, 28:3, 45:5, 74:9, 89:19 retires [1] - 72:22 revenue [1] - 25:25 revenues [2] - 12:21, 29:23 review [3] - 6:15, 7:10, 152:23 reviewed [3] - 31:22, 76:24, 86:1 reviled [1] - 131:8 Rhonda [1] - 99:12 **RHONDA**[1] - 3:15 rhyme [1] - 55:3 **Ribbon** [33] - 49:13, 49:14, 55:21, 64:5, 64:6, 68:11, 71:9, 111:17, 113:4, 114:6, 117:7, 118:17, 121:2, 123:11, 123:13, 123:15, 123:21, 123:23, 123:25, 124:5, 124:14, 124:15, 125:1, 125:5, 125:6, 132:14, 132:25, 133:6, 134:23, 135:25, 142:15, 158:19, 158:22 **RICHARD** [1] - 3:11

Richard [1] - 81:15 rid [1] - 129:18 ride [11] - 37:13, 37:22, 41:13, 70:25, 91:6, 116:11, 117:17, 117:19, 118:4, 127:7, 149:13 Ridge [2] - 138:14, 138:18 ridiculous [3] - 39:10, 120:8, 129:13 ridiculously [1] - 58:12 **rip** [2] - 57:25, 121:18 ripped [2] - 107:17, 121:17 rise [1] - 90:4 rising [2] - 29:24, 50:17 risk [3] - 20:2, 88:23, 112:8 Road [5] - 52:4, 55:11, 106:6, 138:14, 154:16 road [2] - 89:24, 149:20 roadside [1] - 124:7 Robert [1] - 81:11 Roberts [1] - 154:16 role [3] - 6:14, 49:23, 70:19 rolling [2] - 105:23, 105:25 Romona [1] - 54:3 roof [13] - 43:9, 43:10, 43:11, 43:12, 43:14, 43:16, 43:20, 43:24, 44:1, 44:2, 44:3, 44:4, 44:5 roofing [5] - 41:19, 41:22, 43:8, 134:15, 140:4 roofs [1] - 136:7 room [20] - 34:16, 36:14, 53:17, 84:4, 87:6, 87:7, 87:9, 94:14, 94:18, 94:20, 95:2, 95:3, 95:17, 95:18, 95:25, 108:9, 110:12, 110:14, 110:17 rooms [29] - 34:22, 35:3, 35:6, 35:22, 37:5, 38:7, 39:1, 39:13, 86:18, 92:9, 92:15, 92:18, 92:19, 92:24, 93:17, 94:9, 95:10, 95:13, 95:15, 96:6, 96:23, 96:25, 97:1, 97:4, 97:5, 97:7, 125:19 Rooney [1] - 82:21 **ROONEY** [4] - 3:12, 82:20, 82:24, 85:3 Rooney-Poorman [1] - 82:21 ROONEY-POORMAN [4] -3:12, 82:20, 82:24, 85:3 Roosevelt [1] - 116:25 root [2] - 23:23, 23:24 roots [1] - 79:15 **ROTHSTEIN** [1] - 1:10 rounded [1] - 39:3 Route [1] - 124:8 route [1] - 37:11

rubber [3] - 43:9, 43:10, 43:24 rules [1] - 139:3 run [5] - 25:14, 40:5, 107:1, 126:23, 129:14 Run [1] - 69:19 run-through [1] - 40:5 running [5] - 35:7, 53:18, 57:12, 126:25, 129:14 runs [1] - 40:20 Rux [1] - 154:15 **RUX** [2] - 4:16, 154:13

S

sacrifice [1] - 55:17 sad [2] - 83:11, 85:13 saddest [1] - 64:11 safe [4] - 53:25, 68:6, 84:10, 145:7 Safe [1] - 51:13 safely [2] - 70:24, 144:17 safety [2] - 20:2, 53:23 sail [1] - 156:17 sake [1] - 137:24 salaries [6] - 30:25, 45:21, 59:3, 59:8, 59:12, 137:18 **salary** [3] - 27:20, 45:23, 77:16 sap [1] - 126:20 sat [5] - 59:23, 65:3, 76:24, 79:16, 106:8 satisfaction [1] - 68:10 satisfy [1] - 142:3 Saturday [1] - 126:21 save [10] - 73:22, 78:21, 100:2, 100:4, 105:6, 113:3, 114:8, 116:13, 126:8, 147:15 saving [3] - 73:21, 148:2 savings [19] - 39:21, 44:8, 46:6, 46:7, 46:9, 46:12, 46:17, 46:20, 46:22, 46:24, 47:2, 50:5, 60:18, 75:19, 88:3, 112:8, 147:13, 147:24, 148:12 saw [8] - 45:10, 56:24, 66:8, 81:5, 107:2, 134:10, 134:12, 141:5 scale [1] - 45:1 scapegoat [2] - 60:13, 63:15 scared [3] - 83:7, 83:13, 83:22 scary [1] - 106:13 scenario [1] - 133:14 scenarios [5] - 57:21, 86:19, 86:20, 156:10 schedule [1] - 162:17 scheduling [1] - 5:17

scheme [1] - 151:6 **SCHOOL** [5] - 1:1, 1:7, 1:17, 1.18 **School** [75] - 5:7, 5:15, 5:23, 11:3, 11:11, 11:17, 13:4, 24:23, 25:20, 27:6, 27:15, 31:22, 48:23, 49:9, 49:14, 49:21, 51:19, 51:20, 55:10, 55:21, 64:5, 65:15, 65:22, 68:11, 68:13, 71:9, 77:8, 79:4, 80:6, 99:14, 101:2, 101:3, 101:12, 101:16, 102:3, 102:4, 102:7, 102:9, 102:21, 103:5, 103:21, 104:4, 110:1, 110:7, 111:17, 111:21, 112:7, 112:24, 113:5, 114:6, 117:5, 117:7, 121:2, 123:13, 123:15, 124:14, 124:15, 125:2, 125:5, 125:6, 130:2, 132:15, 132:25, 133:6, 134:24, 135:2, 135:4, 136:1, 137:1, 140:12, 142:16, 145:25, 158:22 school [380] - 5:20, 5:25, 6:1, 6:4, 6:6, 6:9, 6:15, 6:19, 6:21, 6:22, 6:23, 7:1, 7:11, 8:6, 8:9, 8:25, 9:10, 10:25, 11:10, 12:25, 13:18, 16:4, 16:24, 16:25, 17:5, 17:6, 17:17, 17:21, 17:23, 18:11, 18:18. 18:23. 18:25. 19:4. 21:14, 22:4, 22:25, 24:5, 24:14, 24:22, 26:4, 26:18, 26:21, 27:23, 28:7, 28:17, 28:19, 29:2, 29:13, 30:9, 32:9. 32:10. 32:14. 35:19. 36:21, 37:1, 40:13, 40:19, 40:20, 41:4, 41:7, 41:21, 43:3, 47:8, 47:12, 47:25, 49:11, 49:15, 49:16, 49:21, 49:22, 49:23, 50:1, 50:6, 50:9, 50:10, 50:13, 50:18,

50:20, 51:14, 51:22, 51:24,

51:25, 52:10, 52:14, 53:5,

54:15, 54:23, 55:12, 56:7,

57:25, 58:1, 58:3, 58:13,

58:14, 58:18, 59:5, 59:7,

59:13, 60:20, 61:1, 61:3,

61:7, 62:2, 62:6, 62:14,

62:24, 63:13, 64:3, 65:8,

66:11, 66:14, 66:21, 67:10,

69:7, 69:16, 69:24, 69:25,

70:22, 70:23, 71:15, 71:21,

65:19, 66:1, 66:5, 66:7,

68:1, 68:4, 68:5, 69:6,

72:1, 72:6, 72:8, 73:1,

73:3, 73:6, 73:13, 73:17,

73:23, 74:4, 76:16, 76:20,

53:22, 54:8, 54:9, 54:13,

routes [2] - 37:20, 58:8

row [3] - 38:13, 45:10, 85:1

76:21, 78:7, 78:8, 78:20, 79:10, 79:24, 80:17, 80:24, 80:25, 81:3, 81:22, 81:24, 82:5, 83:6, 83:9, 83:10, 83:13, 83:17, 83:20, 83:21, 84:1, 84:11, 84:13, 84:20, 85:7, 85:12, 85:15, 89:11, 89:25, 90:1, 91:7, 91:17, 92:10, 94:4, 94:6, 95:8, 95:13, 98:14, 100:12, 100:14, 101:16, 101:18, 101:21, 101:23, 102:2, 102:6, 102:12, 102:16, 103:4, 103:7, 103:15, 103:21, 104:7, 105:1, 105:7, 105:14, 106:13, 106:16, 106:17, 106:18, 107:13, 107:17, 107:21, 109:18, 110:7, 110:17, 110:19, 111:1, 111:3, 111:5, 111:19, 111:24, 112:10, 112:11, 112:15, 113:2, 113:24, 114:11, 114:12, 115:9, 115:14, 115:17, 116:11, 116:13, 116:14, 117:5, 117:7, 117:10, 117:13, 118:4, 118:5, 118:6, 118:8, 118:11, 118:12, 118:14, 118:16, 118:17, 118:18, 120:9, 120:13, 120:17, 120:18, 121:9, 121:15, 121:18, 121:21, 122:19, 122:24, 122:25, 123:4, 123:5, 123:8, 123:12, 123:24, 124:7, 124:10, 124:17, 125:2, 125:7, 126:9, 127:10, 127:20, 128:3, 128:8, 128:9, 128:11, 128:15, 129:16, 130:1, 130:7, 130:14, 131:3, 131:5, 132:12, 132:14, 132:23, 133:2, 134:22, 134:23, 135:19, 135:24, 137:2, 137:9, 137:13, 138:3, 138:10, 138:11, 139:5, 139:6, 139:7, 140:23, 141:1, 142:11, 143:6, 143:11, 143:18, 143:21, 144:1, 144:10, 144:11, 144:25, 145:4, 145:6, 145:18, 145:20, 145:23, 145:24, 146:1, 146:3, 146:6, 146:7, 146:17, 146:23, 147:2, 147:6, 147:10, 147:14, 147:17, 147:18, 147:20, 147:22, 147:23, 148:2, 148:4, 148:8, 148:11, 148:14, 148:20, 149:5, 149:6, 149:18, 149:22,

149:23, 150:1, 150:2, 150:3, 150:4, 150:7, 150:9, 152:18, 154:21, 155:1, 155:15, 155:16, 155:18, 155:19, 155:20, 155:21, 155:23, 156:2, 156:5, 156:7, 156:9, 156:13, 156:21, 158:8, 158:24, 160:20, 160:24 school's [3] - 17:6, 123:21, 124:9 schooling [5] - 51:18, 113:19, 148:18, 148:19, 148:22 Schools [3] - 123:25, 124:5, 158:19 schools [95] - 14:12, 14:22, 16:3, 17:7, 17:9, 17:12, 17:13, 17:20, 17:21, 17:24, 18:15, 18:17, 18:18, 19:3, 20:14, 21:16, 21:22, 22:9, 23:13, 24:6, 24:8, 32:3, 33:15, 33:20, 37:19, 38:12, 41:23, 49:25, 52:16, 54:19, 55:6, 56:22, 59:10, 61:2, 62:22, 64:5, 67:3, 68:15, 69:14, 73:16, 75:17, 75:20, 78:25, 79:5, 79:7, 80:24, 92:16, 93:16, 96:12, 100:11, 105:12, 108:3, 108:5, 109:10, 109:17, 110:8, 110:14, 110:25, 111:20, 113:21, 120:1, 120:2, 123:23, 124:1, 124:16, 124:18, 124:19, 124:21, 127:24, 127:25, 128:5, 130:15, 131:7, 136:10, 137:9, 139:6, 139:19, 141:17, 145:16, 146:21, 146:22, 147:12, 150:18, 152:1, 154:18, 154:22, 154:23, 155:10, 156:4, 158:4, 158:25 **SCIALABBA** [1] - 1:11 score [1] - 64:9 scores [10] - 19:24, 21:20, 23:3, 56:21, 58:17, 64:9, 64:10, 71:10, 88:11, 90:14 **SCOTT** [2] - 4:11, 132:4 Scott [17] - 101:5, 101:6, 101:10, 101:15, 101:21, 102:6, 102:8, 102:19, 103:1, 103:4, 103:15, 103:20, 104:4, 104:8, 104:24, 132:4, 132:9 Scott's [4] - 101:23, 103:8, 103:23, 105:3 screaming [1] - 108:11 screeching [1] - 105:4 seams [1] - 107:17

SEAN [1] - 2:4 Sean [4] - 14:10, 17:12, 18:20, 70:13 Sean's [1] - 36:17 seats [1] - 110:20 second [21] - 16:8, 20:14, 35:1, 36:10, 51:7, 52:15, 54:10, 54:11, 64:22, 83:12, 83:18, 87:11, 92:2, 99:22, 102:20, 102:21, 115:18, 138:8, 157:24, 158:23, 160:4 secondly [1] - 111:10 secretarial [1] - 73:23 Secretary [1] - 9:7 secretary [2] - 57:11, 98:1 Section [8] - 5:8, 5:15, 5:23, 6:20, 8:10, 11:2, 11:4, 31:12 section [2] - 6:23, 145:6 secure [2] - 68:16, 85:5 security [2] - 45:12, 53:23 see [78] - 8:4, 10:7, 10:9, 12:23, 13:11, 13:24, 15:13, 17:16, 20:15, 21:8, 25:10, 25:16, 26:11, 26:14, 26:20, 27:4, 27:16, 28:9, 29:9, 32:12, 32:22, 33:8, 33:12, 33:24, 34:9, 34:12, 34:16, 34:19, 34:22, 35:15, 35:24, 36:2, 36:7, 36:13, 37:2, 37:5, 37:14, 38:1, 38:19, 38:22, 38:25, 39:7, 39:9, 39:10, 44:15, 44:22, 45:14, 45:23, 46:15, 46:24, 47:10, 63:13, 65:15, 67:1, 69:9, 70:21, 70:23, 71:2, 74:18, 77:10, 82:4, 91:14, 95:9, 99:5, 100:3, 103:5, 120:11, 140:2, 143:10, 143:12, 149:25, 150:12, 150:24, 150:25, 152:4, 157:17 seeing [2] - 63:2, 98:15 seek [1] - 137:7 seem [6] - 61:3, 61:10, 86:10, 89:9, 113:16, 113:18 sees [1] - 60:9 send [8] - 26:24, 46:4, 49:10, 61:18, 66:6, 83:20, 144:24, 152:16 sending [5] - 84:13, 109:16, 116:23, 148:6, 148:7 senior [1] - 76:19 seniority [1] - 44:25 sense [5] - 51:16, 53:23, 122:12, 124:6 sensitive [1] - 113:25 sent [6] - 61:20, 102:6, 108:20, 122:8, 122:9,

145:5 sentences [1] - 105:15 separate [4] - 79:5, 144:11, 145:17, 151:14 separated [2] - 78:15, 117:10 separation [1] - 79:1 September [4] - 22:22, 55:14, 63:11, 71:8 seriously [1] - 161:13 serve [2] - 31:15, 138:22 served [1] - 54:3 servers [1] - 54:2 service [2] - 18:11, 158:15 **services** [5] - 30:9, 30:16, 30:19, 60:3, 101:18 serving [1] - 29:4 session [1] - 114:13 set [7] - 6:20, 12:20, 12:23, 27:5, 60:5, 74:9, 78:12 setting [4] - 68:16, 79:10, 89:7, 145:20 seven [9] - 43:25, 44:4, 70:21, 73:17, 76:9, 86:6, 135:23, 148:20, 149:7 seventh [7] - 23:24, 137:10, 139:5, 145:5, 145:17, 148:23, 160:13 several [9] - 54:12, 102:13, 105:12, 105:13, 105:18, 105:19, 113:12, 114:15, 150:22 sewage [1] - 75:25 sewer [1] - 45:13 shack [1] - 127:1 Shaffer [2] - 9:7, 12:5 **shall** [3] - 5:21, 6:2, 6:5 shame [1] - 121:14 shape [1] - 136:10 share [5] - 10:14, 26:19, 28:9, 77:6, 110:4 shared [3] - 76:1, 110:5, 154:17 shares [1] - 116:1 **sharp** [1] - 19:13 shed [1] - 155:9 sheet [1] - 108:20 Shellava [1] - 61:6 shift [1] - 50:8 shingles [3] - 43:15, 43:16, 139:22 **shirt** [1] - 118:12 shocked [3] - 99:17, 99:18, 152:22 **shoes** [1] - 155:3 Shope [1] - 84:15 shops [1] - 71:18 short [5] - 41:21, 65:23, 68:8, 106:15, 139:22 shorter [1] - 40:24

shouting [1] - 131:22 **show** [6] - 24:1, 32:4, 34:5, 136:25, 153:22, 154:4 showed [4] - 28:13, 44:9, 103:9, 103:12 **showing** [4] - 25:5, 33:17, 35:20, 37:3 **shown** [5] - 28:2, 51:15, 114:15, 135:20, 135:22 shows [17] - 14:25, 15:12, 15:24, 16:5, 16:8, 20:10, 20:21, 26:7, 26:9, 27:14, 27:18, 29:5, 35:5, 38:13, 45:19, 59:25, 68:15 shut [7] - 85:12, 85:14, 132:11, 133:1, 133:7, 139:14, 161:16 **shut-ins** [1] - 139:14 **sic** [2] - 26:12, 33:25 sick [2] - 63:20, 155:6 side [4] - 26:1, 26:2, 32:21, 65:11 sidebar [1] - 77:17 sign [1] - 124:7 significant [1] - 159:4 significantly [1] - 29:1 similar [10] - 39:15, 42:23, 43:2, 43:5, 43:23, 45:15, 97:22, 98:4, 98:6, 158:25 **similarly** [1] - 46:15 simply [1] - 139:21 **sincerely** [1] - 101:22 single [3] - 18:23, 132:16, 144:25 singled [1] - 127:17 sista [1] - 122:17 sisters [1] - 106:11 sit [4] - 56:3, 56:6, 57:20, 110:19 sitter's [1] - 66:7 sitting [2] - 133:13, 147:6 situation [10] - 43:23, 53:6, 53:8, 58:20, 62:23, 71:5, 113:25, 116:22, 147:1, 158:12 **situations** [1] - 71:4 six [11] - 29:1, 31:20, 31:25, 38:16, 55:4, 70:20, 95:4, 135:8, 142:14, 149:6, 150:6 six-year-old [1] - 55:4 sixth [8] - 37:23, 73:15, 118:2, 139:4, 145:15, 148:23, 149:8, 160:10 **size** [27] - 30:20, 32:13, 32:24, 33:6, 33:9, 34:10, 34:12, 34:16, 34:20, 35:7, 36:7, 36:14, 37:9, 38:4, 38:5, 38:6, 38:7, 38:8, 39:13, 57:1, 86:16, 89:2,

92:21, 95:19, 97:9, 135:12, 136:17 sizes [13] - 16:5, 16:6, 36:6, 38:1, 86:5, 86:8, 88:1, 88:6, 88:9, 89:1, 90:12, 97:20, 135:10 skilled [1] - 18:12 slam [1] - 67:2 sleeps [1] - 115:22 slide [7] - 6:20, 14:1, 14:25, 22:8, 25:5, 33:1, 39:17 **slides** [2] - 33:13, 41:14 slipped [1] - 57:6 slow [3] - 38:24, 102:10, 102:15 small [25] - 6:24, 52:11, 52:23, 56:17, 66:1, 66:14, 67:25, 68:6, 68:15, 68:22, 69:6, 69:7, 69:15, 71:13, 79:10, 83:14, 83:23, 92:24, 95:17, 100:11, 100:14, 106:16, 115:21, 130:24, 145:23 smaller [5] - 57:1, 95:19, 144:6, 161:23 smart [1] - 75:5 smiles [1] - 141:5 sneak [1] - 154:3 social [1] - 103:24 **SOCIE** [2] - 2:6, 41:20 Socie [2] - 12:2, 41:15 software [2] - 45:17 **SOLICITOR** [1] - 1:13 **Solicitor** [1] - 5:6 solid [1] - 112:17 solution [1] - 120:4 **solutions** [4] - 65:10, 143:18, 144:10, 152:2 **solve** [2] - 89:7, 100:9 someone [5] - 58:4, 67:22, 84:22, 128:17, 155:6 **sometimes** [5] - 21:17, 69:10, 82:17, 92:22, 129:13 somewhere [4] - 70:15, 97:5, 133:11, 133:17 son [11] - 77:7, 78:16, 81:11, 81:20, 83:12, 101:2, 101:5, 104:21, 134:6, 134:23, 155:13 soon [1] - 57:19 sorrows [1] - 116:1 **sorry** [16] - 15:11, 20:20, 22:12, 22:15, 63:1, 79:23, 81:23, 82:3, 85:20, 86:20, 107:25, 120:24, 122:15, 146:7, 159:25, 160:25 **sort** [5] - 56:6, 77:9, 90:17,

soul [1] - 137:21 sound [2] - 66:12, 128:25 sounding [1] - 104:2 sounds [1] - 115:1 Southside [47] - 18:2, 19:23, 33:1, 33:24, 34:1, 34:3, 34:6, 34:7, 35:3, 35:6, 37:14, 38:14, 38:20, 38:22, 39:15, 40:23, 41:23, 41:25, 42:2, 42:6, 42:23, 43:5, 43:8, 43:18, 46:11, 46:12, 46:23, 52:18, 56:20, 58:11, 61:12, 61:18, 62:9, 66:6, 78:16, 85:24, 86:2, 86:3, 86:16, 87:4, 95:15, 96:13, 97:21, 125:14, 136:6, 146:17, 146:25 southside [1] - 43:15 **space** [3] - 40:2, 84:6, 87:5 speaker [1] - 132:2 speakers [1] - 10:14 speaking [5] - 99:15, 105:14, 126:17, 154:20, 155:13 special [16] - 26:4, 28:19, 28:20, 28:21, 28:24, 29:6, 30:19, 59:25, 62:19, 92:25, 104:10, 136:12, 136:16, 147:21, 151:16 specific [1] - 92:19 specifically [1] - 103:16 speech [2] - 105:16, 156:18 speeding [1] - 107:4 spelling [1] - 104:2 spend [5] - 26:23, 39:24, 43:12, 120:2, 150:9 spending [8] - 24:25, 29:25, 39:22, 63:13, 100:7, 104:8, 127:8, 149:5 spent [5] - 28:22, 47:21, 100:20, 161:21 **split** [5] - 42:13, 43:2, 91:5, 132:20, 137:4 **splitting** [1] - 46:23 sporting [2] - 70:11, 71:18 spread [1] - 42:17 Spring [1] - 69:19 **square** [2] - 23:23, 23:24 ss [1] - 163:1 stable [1] - 120:7 staff [46] - 8:16, 12:10, 16:23, 17:18, 17:19, 18:4, 18:13, 18:16, 19:1, 19:7, 19:8, 29:3, 30:24, 33:18, 35:21, 44:19, 44:22, 44:24, 45:20, 46:8, 50:11, 51:6, 52:10, 54:1, 68:14, 70:10, 73:23, 73:24, 86:3, 86:16, 111:8, 112:1, 113:17, 115:15, 124:3, 124:25, 132:25, 142:24, 143:12, 144:25,

145:1, 158:15, 158:16 staffing [8] - 30:23, 33:12, 33:13, 33:19, 35:11, 44:18, 45:19, 92:11 stake [1] - 47:25 stakes [1] - 50:15 stand [5] - 67:21, 80:7, 80:9, 99:19, 142:10 standard [4] - 20:6, 30:6, 67:5, 128:8 standards [1] - 31:4 Standing [44] - 18:1, 19:22, 33:8, 35:14, 35:16, 35:18, 35:21, 36:11, 36:21, 36:23, 37:12, 38:2, 38:3, 39:8, 40:24, 43:23, 46:20, 46:24, 48:21, 52:17, 56:20, 58:11, 61:11, 61:19, 62:10, 64:20, 78:17, 81:15, 84:3, 92:20, 93:9, 94:19, 95:4, 96:13, 98:10, 107:21, 125:20, 136:6, 136:15, 136:20, 146:17, 146:18, 146:22, 158:8 standing [3] - 42:23, 146:16, 155:5 stands [2] - 33:14, 71:10 stares [1] - 63:9 Start [4] - 93:5, 93:7, 93:9, 93:11 **start** [16] - 5:2, 11:16, 14:15, 48:19, 55:11, 66:5, 92:20, 101:14, 130:15, 131:18, 131:23, 132:5, 151:7, 153:1, 156:9 started [11] - 19:2, 20:21, 78:7, 87:24, 101:15, 102:19, 108:17, 132:19, 151:7, 153:15, 155:18 starting [12] - 25:7, 40:10, 41:23, 44:20, 45:23, 46:1, 91:10, 102:17, 104:12, 126:20, 126:21 **starts** [3] - 32:9, 32:11, 156:1 State [9] - 15:5, 25:6, 29:7, 29:15, 31:3, 31:10, 49:2, 140:7, 145:25 state [20] - 8:14, 10:24, 13:4, 17:10, 20:17, 23:9, 23:14, 24:20, 24:21, 27:24, 29:22, 48:16, 50:8, 50:12, 94:6, 96:21, 100:21, 135:18, 146:5, 152:8 state-acknowledged [1] -50:12 statement [7] - 76:1, 76:4, 91:13, 92:9, 120:21, 157:20, 158:18 **statements** [1] - 123:16 states [2] - 147:15, 152:20

127:3, 156:25

SOS [1] - 118:12

States [1] - 123:22 **station** [1] - 94:12 stations [2] - 94:9, 95:22 stay [7] - 46:11, 56:1, 109:24, 117:13, 118:1, 121:8, 121:21 staying [1] - 46:5 stenographer [4] - 8:14, 10:23, 96:21, 131:10 Stenographer [1] - 163:13 stenographic [2] - 8:5, 8:9 stenographically [1] - 8:7 step [5] - 73:11, 88:13, 104:21, 126:12, 132:3 **STEPHANIE** [2] - 4:8, 123:6 **Stephanie** [1] - 123:6 **stepped** [1] - 130:5 steps [2] - 89:9, 104:25 stick [1] - 161:2 sticks [1] - 159:24 still [14] - 21:15, 34:20, 35:2, 36:8, 50:21, 73:19, 93:20, 102:10, 113:12, 114:7, 126:15, 139:2, 139:12, 143:22 stimulus [2] - 25:9, 25:21 Stone [47] - 18:2, 19:22, 33:8, 35:15, 35:16, 35:18, 35:21, 36:11, 36:21, 36:23, 37:12, 38:2, 38:3, 39:8, 40:25, 42:23, 43:23, 46:20, 46:24, 48:21, 52:17, 56:21, 58:11, 61:11, 61:19, 62:10, 64:20, 78:17, 81:15, 84:3, 92:20, 93:9, 94:19, 95:4, 96:14, 98:10, 107:21, 125:21, 136:6, 136:16, 136:21, 138:14, 138:18, 146:17, 146:18, 146:22, 158:8 **stone** [1] - 60:5 **stood** [3] - 139:9, 141:5, 141:7 stop [5] - 71:25, 115:6, 116:14, 139:6, 143:20 stops [1] - 40:15 stores [1] - 71:18 story [1] - 77:6 **strange** [1] - 116:11 **strangers** [1] - 83:23 strategic [1] - 11:20 **strategies** [1] - 102:14 **strategy** [1] - 105:4 street [1] - 142:7 Street [2] - 121:20, 159:17 **STREET** [1] - 1:24 strength [1] - 100:14 strengths [1] - 22:20 stress [2] - 61:8, 110:23 strive [1] - 71:11

strived [1] - 70:14 strong [8] - 21:3, 21:4, 51:15, 51:16, 86:9, 119:20, 120:18, 120:19 struggle [4] - 61:17, 72:14, 101:9, 104:21 **struggles** [1] - 53:3 struggling [4] - 75:13, 104:1, 115:11, 116:24 Stuck [1] - 24:13 stuck [2] - 12:1, 26:25 **STUCK** [5] - 2:5, 24:13, 27:4, 39:18, 44:7 student [31] - 13:3, 13:8, 14:8, 19:24, 20:10, 20:23, 28:20, 29:25, 30:1, 56:19, 66:11, 69:3, 85:11, 95:3, 98:10, 98:21, 99:1, 108:18, 117:23, 123:4, 123:9, 124:4, 127:24, 129:25, 130:9, 132:16, 133:5, 133:11, 143:11 student's [1] - 108:20 student-teacher [1] - 56:19 student/teacher [1] - 111:23 students [114] - 12:10, 13:10, 13:20, 16:13, 16:15, 16:21, 17:1, 20:14, 21:2, 21:17, 21:24, 22:18, 22:21, 23:15, 24:3, 28:17, 29:1, 29:3, 29:4, 29:21, 30:16, 33:2, 34:3, 34:14, 37:12, 39:19, 39:22, 39:24, 40:4, 40:8, 40:13, 40:20, 41:13, 50:17, 51:5, 51:11, 52:11, 53:4, 53:12, 53:24, 53:25, 54:5, 54:8, 54:21, 54:24, 56:15, 63:5, 65:16, 66:10, 67:7, 67:23, 68:14, 68:16, 69:1, 69:2, 69:9, 73:20, 76:18, 77:1, 77:3, 78:9, 79:3, 79:9, 79:17, 79:19, 79:23, 80:5, 81:10, 84:5, 85:12, 87:4, 88:14, 90:3, 91:5, 92:23, 93:23, 94:10, 96:7, 97:3, 97:19, 98:13, 110:16, 110:21, 111:2, 111:20, 112:3, 113:1, 115:14, 124:2, 124:25, 128:15, 128:16, 130:17, 130:18, 130:20, 132:24, 133:10, 135:8, 135:24, 136:12, 136:13, 137:4, 144:2, 144:10, 144:13, 145:21, 146:20, 146:23, 147:23, 148:10, 148:21 students' [1] - 115:2 study [3] - 63:12, 74:17,

121:10, 126:18, 129:11 stuffed [1] - 115:22 stupid [2] - 121:5, 157:25 stutter [2] - 155:19, 155:21 subject [1] - 122:1 submit [3] - 9:6, 162:7, 162:11 submitted [2] - 11:1, 64:16 subsidies [1] - 28:24 **subsidy** [3] - 24:22, 25:22, 29:6 substantially [1] - 5:25 **substitute** [1] - 108:14 **substituted** [1] - 108:4 subtracting [1] - 46:17 succeed [1] - 68:15 success [1] - 141:18 successes [4] - 53:3, 54:17, 69:5, 81:5 successful [7] - 20:8, 22:1, 23:16, 34:18, 53:19, 124:1 sudden [3] - 23:23, 154:4, 154:7 suffer [2] - 74:14, 119:16 **sufficient** [1] - 7:23 Sugar [1] - 52:4 sugar [2] - 126:20, 127:1 suggest [1] - 98:19 suggested [2] - 137:12, 160:18 suggestion [1] - 160:9 summer [6] - 53:16, 66:16, 66:19, 102:15, 107:20, 155:24 SUPERINTENDENT [1] -1:13 superintendent [4] - 7:17, 9:5, 62:25, 113:21 superintendent's [1] - 73:25 superior [1] - 103:10 supplant [1] - 25:15 supplanted [5] - 24:22, 25:7, 25:8, 25:11, 25:23 supplies [3] - 30:20, 45:13, 75:25 support [42] - 18:11, 18:13, 19:7, 19:12, 30:24, 31:13, 54:17, 65:8, 69:8, 70:10, 71:19, 76:21, 87:7, 87:8, 89:13, 89:14, 95:17, 95:18, 101:17, 102:5, 102:24, 104:24, 111:13, 111:20, 111:23, 112:2, 112:9, 113:16, 122:1, 124:25, 127:13, 127:18, 139:4, 140:22, 142:22, 142:23, 146:3, 156:19, 160:19, 160:22, 160:23 supported [4] - 42:7, 43:7, 78:3, 159:20

supporting [1] - 35:24 **supportive** [3] - 54:21, 68:13, 122:3 supports [1] - 60:3 supposed [2] - 109:3, 109:8 **supposedly** [1] - 160:2 surface [1] - 43:20 surprised [1] - 103:18 surprising [1] - 150:10 survived [1] - 74:2 sustain [2] - 19:15, 72:8 swamp [2] - 120:14, 156:22 system [21] - 17:21, 17:22, 18:18, 18:19, 24:5, 26:11, 31:14, 40:1, 42:6, 42:19, 42:20, 42:24, 43:4, 43:6, 110:17, 111:1, 114:3, 139:23 Systems [1] - 27:6

Т

T-A-N-N-E-R [1] - 75:9 T-R-O-U-P [1] - 142:18 table [1] - 126:12 tables [1] - 121:24 tag [2] - 69:10, 108:19 takers [1] - 48:18 talks [3] - 22:5, 35:14, 53:3 **TAMMY** [1] - 1:9 Tanglewood [1] - 126:11 tank [1] - 126:25 **TANNER** [6] - 3:10, 3:13, 76:14, 80:4, 80:10, 85:10 tanner [1] - 81:19 Tanner [4] - 75:9, 81:11, 85:10, 133:11 tapping [1] - 126:22 target [1] - 20:15 task [2] - 30:7, 75:13 tasked [1] - 80:13 taste [1] - 109:12 taught [6] - 52:17, 53:21, 69:6, 100:11, 104:6, 142:5 tax [6] - 12:21, 12:22, 29:9, 74:18, 89:13, 89:14 taxes [9] - 12:19, 72:16, 72:25, 74:5, 90:2, 115:10, 128:24, 128:25, 142:3 taxpayer [5] - 49:6, 99:17, 112:23, 114:8, 138:15 taxpayer-funded [1] - 49:6 taxpayers [3] - 74:14, 115:1, 115:10 taxpaying [1] - 71:20 teach [9] - 18:9, 53:20, 54:14, 66:4, 67:20, 106:18, 144:22, 145:3, 145:12 teacher [41] - 19:14, 19:19,

95:24

stuff [5] - 60:10, 90:13,

34:25, 46:18, 48:23, 52:1, 52:5, 52:24, 53:3, 53:11, 53:13, 53:14, 53:24, 55:4, 56:19, 58:13, 58:14, 64:22, 65:3, 66:11, 70:9, 77:14, 83:9, 83:15, 84:8, 89:12, 89:18, 90:13, 95:1, 104:17, 108:8, 108:12, 109:6, 112:1, 115:20, 122:1, 122:2, 122:23, 130:13, teachers [91] - 21:19, 22:20, 34:8, 34:10, 34:13, 35:3, 35:4, 35:7, 36:15, 37:4, 38:3, 38:4, 38:5, 38:6, 38:7, 38:22, 38:25, 39:12, 46:12, 46:13, 50:17, 52:18, 52:21, 53:4, 54:24, 59:13, 63:5, 64:10, 65:8, 66:9, 66:21, 67:4, 67:6, 71:11, 75:1, 77:15, 78:5, 79:20, 79:21, 84:7, 84:9, 84:10, 84:11, 85:1, 85:8, 85:13, 85:14, 86:6, 89:14, 93:21, 94:3, 94:8, 99:24, 100:11, 101:24, 102:8, 102:13, 103:17, 105:11, 108:13, 109:11, 110:21, 111:8, 113:10, 115:14, 115:23, 116:4, 117:8, 117:11, 117:21, 117:22, 118:1, 122:5, 122:8, 124:25, 125:8, 126:8, 128:9, 128:14, 130:16, 130:17, 132:15, 132:24, 135:23, 140:16, 140:24, 143:13, 159:19 teachers' [1] - 74:8 teaching [6] - 14:18, 30:24, 45:20, 73:19, 113:6, 142:24 team [14] - 11:11, 11:19, 11:22, 12:3, 31:16, 47:10, 47:18, 53:7, 73:19, 79:13, 103:16, 104:3, 104:23, 112:1 teams [1] - 19:14 tear [3] - 57:24, 122:22, 137:5 tearing [1] - 72:25 tears [1] - 155:8 technology [1] - 138:6 ten [11] - 10:10, 17:19, 28:1, 31:5, 43:21, 88:24, 134:15, 135:8, 142:12, 158:22, 159:18 tends [1] - 61:21 term [2] - 75:19, 90:11 terms [4] - 13:16, 26:17, 31:8, 162:18

Terra [2] - 20:12 terrible [1] - 107:6 test [6] - 20:13, 23:3, 56:21, 71:10, 103:20 testament [1] - 124:23 tested [1] - 23:19 testify [1] - 7:8 testifying [1] - 8:12 testimony [3] - 8:3, 9:12, 111:15 testing [5] - 50:15, 103:4, 103:7, 103:9, 103:11 tests [2] - 22:25, 117:25 thanking [1] - 55:12 **THE** [4] - 1:1, 2:2, 3:2, 4:5 theirs [1] - 80:2 themselves [5] - 17:3, 74:22, 78:1, 89:22, 137:17 Theodore [1] - 116:24 therapist [1] - 105:17 therapists [2] - 101:24, 103:17 Thereupon [1] - 80:8 they've [1] - 78:3 thinking [5] - 31:25, 107:10, 122:10, 123:19, 149:12 third [11] - 16:8, 17:24, 18:1, 23:18, 35:1, 64:17, 64:24, 77:7, 101:5, 111:12, 123:9 thirst [1] - 77:12 thirteen [2] - 148:17, 148:22 Thistle [1] - 106:6 thorough [2] - 30:15, 31:14 thoroughly [1] - 114:14 thoughts [1] - 160:4 thousand [4] - 25:20, 41:7, 44:16, 124:18 threat [2] - 49:9, 62:5 threatened [1] - 62:1 three [38] - 5:17, 6:3, 13:1, 17:21, 20:16, 21:20, 21:21, 22:2, 22:19, 31:19, 34:9, 34:13, 35:4, 36:10, 43:16, 70:20, 74:21, 77:18, 77:19, 78:16, 83:8, 84:24, 93:3, 98:11, 109:5, 111:4, 111:14, 117:8, 132:17, 135:2, 141:24, 145:18, 146:20, 148:24, 149:13, 149:17, 157:3, 160:15 three-year [1] - 22:2 thrilled [2] - 65:23, 66:18 thrive [2] - 115:25, 116:6 throughout [2] - 53:14, 80:23 thrown [1] - 47:1 Thursday [1] - 6:11 tired [3] - 61:25, 100:20,

Title [1] - 92:25 to-do [1] - 80:21 today [14] - 9:8, 16:2, 50:5, 57:9, 62:16, 90:18, 98:7, 100:15, 126:1, 153:2, 153:3, 153:4, 153:7, 153:16 together [11] - 11:23, 47:11, 47:14, 53:7, 54:5, 68:2, 78:11, 82:8, 126:4, 144:20, 162:19 toll [1] - 129:8 tomorrow [2] - 50:5, 153:2 tone [1] - 61:10 tonight [51] - 11:21, 13:2, 17:16, 19:12, 32:15, 50:21, 52:8, 55:11, 55:19, 56:1, 56:8, 63:18, 63:21, 63:25, 65:18, 67:21, 75:12, 82:18, 99:16, 105:9, 106:7, 112:25, 118:16, 123:12, 125:11, 133:12, 133:22, 134:10, 134:22, 135:6, 135:11, 135:22, 137:12, 138:5, 138:15, 138:18, 138:23, 138:24, 139:14, 141:13, 141:20, 142:1, 142:6, 142:10, 148:10, 150:17, 153:21, 155:13, 157:3, 157:8, 161:22 tonight's [2] - 10:7, 11:7 tons [1] - 61:12 **Tony** [2] - 83:12, 83:18 took [9] - 14:4, 24:1, 37:22, 39:18, 40:23, 46:6, 107:2, 108:15, 156:17 top [3] - 59:18, 140:10, 158:22 tossed [1] - 148:17 total [10] - 15:15, 15:16, 27:20, 32:22, 33:2, 34:2, 39:8, 45:14, 45:18, 45:22 totally [2] - 25:22, 99:16 touched [1] - 65:7 tough [6] - 60:8, 82:16, 110:22, 116:18, 137:22, 161:24 toward [1] - 50:8 towards [1] - 86:11 town [10] - 67:25, 68:10, 68:22, 84:18, 84:21, 89:25, 90:1, 121:5, 142:7, 149:16 Township [4] - 69:21, 110:1, 110:6, 140:9 township [1] - 156:17 Tracey [1] - 54:3 track [1] - 93:22 trade [2] - 87:16, 134:11 trade-offs [1] - 87:16 traditions [1] - 138:1

tragedy [1] - 159:19 train [1] - 107:5 trained [1] - 18:13 training [1] - 31:1 transcript [1] - 163:7 transition [3] - 81:6, 146:2, 146:5 transitioned [2] - 80:23, 81:2 translates [1] - 25:19 transportation [10] - 9:25, 30:22, 39:20, 39:21, 40:1, 45:8, 62:21, 75:23, 127:6, 151:10 trash [1] - 75:24 travel [1] - 45:6 traveled [1] - 40:15 treat [1] - 121:9 treated [3] - 80:12, 81:12, 140:15 trees [1] - 126:22 tremendous [2] - 50:11, 95:12 tried [1] - 101:22 trips [1] - 46:3 trouble [2] - 88:15, 88:18 **Troup** [2] - 142:18, 162:16 **TROUP** [14] - 4:15, 142:17, 149:4, 151:11, 151:22, 152:12, 153:4, 153:7, 153:11, 153:14, 153:17, 154:5, 154:11, 162:20 true [3] - 9:1, 20:1, 120:25 **truly** [7] - 22:24, 52:14, 69:1, 77:4, 77:15, 78:18, 114:23 trust [2] - 84:19, 145:1 truth [1] - 65:3 **try** [6] - 10:15, 18:14, 27:1, 110:2, 112:3, 148:14 trying [9] - 20:23, 30:5, 52:21, 91:9, 94:4, 122:16, 125:2, 133:6, 147:18 tuition [1] - 147:20 turn [8] - 11:6, 48:3, 104:25, 138:19, 148:3, 157:13, 161:19, 162:5 twelfth [5] - 137:11, 137:13, 145:7, 148:19, 154:22 twenty [1] - 34:25 twenty-one [1] - 34:25 twice [1] - 157:3 two [36] - 8:2, 20:11, 20:24, 22:5, 24:16, 25:4, 29:3, 37:11, 37:16, 38:9, 56:22, 64:24, 69:22, 71:2, 72:2, 72:10, 75:17, 75:20, 79:7, 81:18, 87:13, 91:5, 99:19, 112:25, 117:8, 132:15, 134:15, 138:19, 139:18, 141:16, 145:19, 147:11, 148:21, 158:21, 160:15

133:8

tirelessly [1] - 49:25

two-percent [1] - 20:24 type [4] - 5:12, 95:22, 139:19, 141:3 typed [1] - 63:23 types [2] - 84:6, 121:24

U

U.S [1] - 124:18 ultimately [3] - 8:1, 9:11, 145:2 unacceptable [3] - 150:5, 150:21 uncertainty [2] - 28:5, 29:22 unclear [1] - 97:23 uncontrollable [1] - 90:20 under [5] - 15:9, 37:15, 46:2, 58:16, 149:16 undermines [2] - 128:21, understood [2] - 104:6, 156:7 undetermined [1] - 80:8 uneducated [1] - 119:21 unemployed [1] - 119:21 unexpected [1] - 57:13 unexpended [1] - 27:11 unfortunately [2] - 90:2, 101:20 UNIDENTIFIABLE [1] -157:18 **UNIDENTIFIED** [5] - 85:16, 96:9, 96:11, 123:3, 125:20 Union [2] - 101:7, 102:7 unique [3] - 18:18, 77:21, 110:6 unit [2] - 42:15, 42:22 United [1] - 123:22 units [2] - 42:14, 43:3 **University** [1] - 99:22 unknowns [1] - 26:3 unless [4] - 23:25, 71:1, 151:15, 151:20 unlike [1] - 120:18 unnecessary [1] - 147:4 unworthy [1] - 56:7 up [53] - 6:20, 8:11, 8:17, 9:25, 10:14, 11:1, 15:8, 40:12, 48:8, 48:15, 52:25, 57:10, 57:13, 57:16, 58:16, 60:3, 61:12, 61:19, 62:19, 62:22, 63:23, 68:18, 69:3, 76:18, 80:7, 81:18, 82:6, 84:22, 86:13, 87:25, 89:7, 91:5, 97:16, 102:13, 105:10, 106:1, 106:10, 114:16, 116:21, 117:18, 120:4, 132:3, 132:21, 137:4, 141:16, 143:7,

143:24, 146:8, 150:24, 151:9, 152:17, 153:22, 154:4 **upcoming** [3] - 110:13, 111:18, 154:9 update [1] - 110:14 updated [1] - 98:15 updates [1] - 98:1 upgrade [1] - 42:8 upgrading [1] - 43:6 upper [1] - 73:18 upset [1] - 82:9 **usage** [5] - 93:22, 93:23, 94:2, 95:3, 96:23 usual [1] - 32:2 utilities [2] - 44:10, 45:9 utilize [1] - 115:8 utilizing [1] - 116:16

V

validates [1] - 124:2 Valley [8] - 69:20, 99:14, 101:12, 101:16, 112:21, 133:4, 135:1, 156:16 value [3] - 69:9, 113:16, 127:14 valued [2] - 19:18, 60:8 values [3] - 10:12, 11:18, 100:12 vans [1] - 40:11 variations [1] - 22:8 variety [1] - 33:13 various [1] - 86:18 vary [1] - 38:17 vent [1] - 42:22 verbally [2] - 143:8, 150:23 verbatim [1] - 124:11 versus [4] - 30:11, 40:24, 46:4, 76:3 via [1] - 70:22 viable [4] - 79:8, 143:18, 152:2, 152:24 vibrant [1] - 67:25 Vickie [2] - 113:5, 130:6 view [2] - 59:11, 68:5 virus [1] - 45:16 vision [6] - 10:12, 11:17, 18:25, 19:1, 19:10, 19:15 visit [1] - 141:11 vital [1] - 49:23 Vlasak [2] - 55:10, 64:16 VLASAK [7] - 3:6, 55:9, 59:17, 60:16, 61:6, 62:13, 63:18 voice [3] - 52:9, 73:8, 151:1 volunteer [2] - 55:15, 59:19 volunteered [2] - 82:15, 138:21

volunteering [1] - 54:19 volunteers [1] - 140:21 vote [5] - 73:8, 73:9, 75:6, 151:24 voted [6] - 74:22, 75:5, 138:24, 142:8, 160:20, 160:23 voting [1] - 60:9

W

W-A-I-T-E [1] - 69:19 **WAITE** [9] - 3:9, 69:18, 70:19, 72:5, 72:20, 73:3, 73:15, 74:8, 75:1 Waite [1] - 69:19 waited [1] - 106:24 waiting [2] - 127:23, 161:21 walk [4] - 94:5, 141:11, 141:14, 142:7 walked [1] - 138:18 walks [2] - 52:24, 53:1 Wall [1] - 121:20 **WAM** [1] - 45:16 wants [5] - 48:13, 49:4, 74:16, 137:3, 157:5 War [1] - 77:25 ward [1] - 27:1 warmth [1] - 66:9 wasted [1] - 100:20 wasteful [1] - 63:13 watch [3] - 7:9, 85:19, 104:20 water [2] - 45:13, 75:25 ways [8] - 18:8, 21:5, 56:22, 95:14, 112:14, 119:16, 137:19, 158:21 wear [1] - 155:7 weather [1] - 126:19 website [6] - 7:24, 11:4, 47:7, 98:17, 124:10, 124:12 Webster [1] - 50:7 week [1] - 71:24 weeks [1] - 97:25 welcome [3] - 16:19, 65:25, 162:9 well-being [1] - 113:2 well-organized [1] - 8:19 wham [1] - 160:6 wham-bam-thank-you-ma' am [1] - 160:6 whole [7] - 12:3, 15:23, 74:15, 74:19, 75:14, 137:2, 160:4 wide [1] - 21:23 wife [3] - 81:16, 133:24,

140:19

Williams [1] - 70:12

willing [2] - 95:1, 141:16 wing [3] - 73:18, 144:11, 145:17 winning [1] - 54:15 wired [1] - 55:5 wise [1] - 137:25 wish [4] - 51:25, 70:2, 71:23, 71:25 withdrawn [1] - 62:15 woes [2] - 58:23 woman [1] - 141:17 won [1] - 124:16 wonder [2] - 141:7, 141:21 wondered [1] - 161:9 wonderful [8] - 51:2, 52:18, 56:25, 71:11, 109:14, 142:24, 143:13, 147:19 wonderfully [1] - 79:21 word [4] - 86:23, 86:24, 157:23, 158:1 words [5] - 79:11, 104:3, 105:5, 116:24, 119:22 workable [1] - 95:16 works [3] - 19:1, 76:16, 76:17 World [1] - 77:25 world [3] - 66:15, 77:24, 155:18 worn [1] - 118:12 worried [2] - 125:18, 144:19 worries [1] - 155:2 worry [4] - 61:7, 84:5, 84:6, 153:25 worrying [1] - 144:17 worse [2] - 61:19, 116:22 worth [3] - 60:24, 91:17, 112:8 **WORTHY** [2] - 4:7, 121:19 Worthy [2] - 121:20, 122:13 worthy [1] - 154:8 wow [2] - 36:20, 55:20 write [2] - 19:5, 19:6 writing [9] - 104:2, 105:13, 121:25, 143:7, 150:15, 150:22, 152:6, 152:7, 152:14 written [2] - 10:5, 57:9 wrote [4] - 83:1, 83:4,

Υ

108:19, 126:18

year [99] - 13:10, 14:4, 14:5, 15:8, 15:9, 15:15, 15:17, 15:18, 15:19, 15:22, 15:25, 20:19, 20:20, 20:25, 21:1, 21:2, 21:3, 21:4, 21:6, 21:12, 21:24, 22:2, 22:6, 22:9, 23:20, 23:22, 24:3,

24:23, 25:15, 25:21, 26:7, 26:12, 26:13, 27:12, 27:24, 27:25, 28:11, 28:12, 29:2, 31:5, 31:6, 32:7, 32:18, 34:3, 35:18, 38:20, 39:8, 41:3, 41:6, 43:22, 44:11, 44:12, 44:13, 46:3, 50:17, 53:11, 53:14, 54:8, 54:20, 55:4, 60:19, 66:5, 72:13, 81:23, 90:4, 90:11, 92:10, 93:13, 96:3, 97:15, 99:23, 101:17, 102:2, 102:20, 102:21, 102:22, 103:4, 104:7, 104:11, 104:12, 113:5, 124:17, 125:25, 141:7, 142:12, 149:22, 149:23, 150:2, 150:4, 155:23, 158:14, 159:2 **year's** [5] - 27:4, 53:13, 60:2, 98:12, 98:13 $\pmb{\text{yearly}}\ [4]\ -\ 43:11,\ 44:1,\ 44:5,$ 72:16 years [75] - 14:5, 17:19, 21:7, 21:20, 21:21, 28:22, 32:16, 32:17, 41:25, 42:4, 42:11, 42:16, 42:17, 43:1, 43:10, 43:14, 43:17, 43:21, 43:25, 44:4, 47:19, 47:20, 51:3, 51:17, 65:23, 68:8, 69:21, 70:2, 70:5, 70:6, 72:5, 72:10, 74:2, 79:13, 86:14, 88:5, 88:24, 90:2, 90:21, 101:4, 105:14, 105:16, 105:20, 108:4, 109:15, 110:18, 113:6, 113:7, 113:11, 116:7, 119:8, 131:1, 134:8, 134:11, 134:15, 134:17, 135:9, 138:2, 139:20, 140:19, 141:19, 142:12, 142:15, 143:1, 148:17, 148:19, 148:21, 148:22, 148:24, 149:4, 149:6, 149:7, 151:17 yeoman's [1] - 131:11 yesterday [2] - 49:24, 153:16 young [5] - 66:4, 66:25, 67:15, 108:9, 116:10 youngest [1] - 68:5 yourself [4] - 79:16, 89:7, 122:16, 142:21

Ζ

ZERBE [1] - 52:3 Zerbe [2] - 52:3, 105:21 ZEWBE [1] - 3:5 zone [2] - 134:3, 134:4 zooming [1] - 14:13