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WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE ON
EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS
COMMISSION MEETING

The Liaison Hotel

415 New Jersey Avenue, NW

Washington, D.C. 20001

9:00 a.m.

Monday, April 18, 2016

1 COMMISSIONERS:
2 FREEMAN HRABOWSKI, III, CHAIR
Presidents Advisory Commission on
3 Educational Excellence for African Americans
BARBARA BOWMAN, Irving B. Harris Professor of
4 Child Development, Erikson Institute
PEGGY BROOKINS, Co-Founder, Director, and
5 Mathematics Instructor, Engineering and
Manufacturing Institute of Technology, Forest
6 High School
JAMES P. COMER, Falk Professor of Child Psychology
7 Yale University Child Study Center
S. DALLAS DANCE, Superintendent, Baltimore County
8 Public Schools
JAMES O. FREEMAN, Adjunct Professor of Law,
9 Georgetown University Law Center
SHARON LETTMAN-HICKS, Executive Director and Chief
10 Executive Officer, National Black Justice
Coalition
11 TIFFANY DENA LOFTIN, Communications Specialist
American Federation of Teachers
12 BRYANT MARKS, Associate Professor of Psychology
Morehouse College, Director of Morehouse
13 Research Institute and Director of the
Morehouse Male Initiative
14 C. KENT MCGUIRE, President of the Southern
Education Foundation (SEF)
15 MICHAEL T. NETTLES, Senior Vice President and the
Edmund W. Gordon Chair of the Policy
16 Evaluation and Research Center, Educational
Testing Service
17 SPENCER A. OVERTON, President, Joint Center for
Political and Economic Studies
18 REBECCA S. PRINGLE, Vice President,
National Education Association
19 DORIS A. SMITH-RIBNER, former State Appeals Court
Judge, Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court
20 RONALD A. WILLIAMS, former Vice President of The
College Board
21 TYKIAH R. WRIGHT, President of WrightChoice, Inc.
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LEGISLATIVE STAFF:

DAVID JOHNS, Executive Director

LAUREN C. MIMS, Assistant Director

SPEAKERS:

MARK MATSUI, Deputy Assistant Secretary for
Community Colleges, Office of Career,
Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE)

TED MITCHELL, Under Secretary of Education

KRISTEN HARPER, Senior Policy Advisor, Office of
Special Education and Rehabilitative
Services, U.S. Department of Education

TANYA CLAY HOUSE, Deputy Assistant Secretary for
P-12 Education, Office of Planning,
Evaluation, and Policy Development (OPEPD)

	A G E N D A	
		PAGE
1		
2		
3	Testimony, Policy Update from Senior Leaders in the Administration	12
4		
5	Testimony, Policy Updates from Under Secretary Ted Mitchell	142
6	Commission Member Deliberation and Discussion	
7		
8	Commission-Led Work Through the End of The Term	183
9	Public Comment	--
10	Adjournment	287
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: I'm calling the
3 meeting to order now. Welcome to all of you. We
4 begin with a roll call.

5 All right. Sharon Lettman-Hicks, please
6 tell me if you're here or not. Sharon Lettman-
7 Hicks.

8 COMMISSIONER LETTMAN-HICKS: Present.

9 DR. HRABOWSKI: Angela Glover Blackwell
10 not. Robert Ross not. Barbara Bowman.

11 COMMISSIONER BOWMAN: Here.

12 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Great. Gwen Boyd.
13 James Comer.

14 COMMISSIONER COMER: Here.

15 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Akosua Barthwell
16 Evans. James Freeman.

17 COMMISSIONER FREEMAN: Here.

18 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Doris Smith-Ribner.

19 COMMISSIONER SMITH-RIBNER: Here.

20 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Tykiah Wright.

21 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Here.

22 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Ronald Williams.

1 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Here.

2 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Michael Lomax.

3 Walter Bumphus. Bryant Marks.

4 COMMISSIONER MARKS: Here.

5 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Peggy Brookins.

6 COMMISSIONER BROOKINS: Here.

7 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Cecil Kent McGuire.

8 COMMISSIONER MCGUIRE: I am here.

9 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Thank you. Thank
10 you very much. Evelyn Hammonds. Michael Nettles.

11 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: Here.

12 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Spencer Overton.

13 He's coming later. Rebecca Pringle.

14 COMMISSIONER PRINGLE: Here.

15 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Emmett John Rice.

16 Tiffany Loftin.

17 COMMISSIONER LOFTIN: Here.

18 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Dallas Dance.

19 COMMISSIONER DANCE: Present.

20 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Thank you. Did I
21 hear that? David Johns?

22 MR. JOHNS: Here.

1 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Okay. And Lauren
2 Mims, and I'm Freeman Hrabowski.

3 Okay. Very good. We now have a quorum
4 and we are beginning. Thank you very much.

5 We will be having a vote to codify the
6 recommendations to this Administration in
7 accordance with the charge and both the
8 Commission's charter and the initial -- and the
9 initiative's Executive Order and let me -- allow
10 me to read officially.

11 To date, the Commission has organized
12 its work according to priority policy areas that
13 we believe provide significant and timely
14 opportunities to accelerate the learning and
15 development of African American students of all
16 ages. The Commission has explored the importance
17 of increasing access to high-quality early
18 childhood education programs and support services,
19 including through fact-finding expedition at the
20 Erskins Institute in Chicago.

21 We have also learned from the resident
22 experts on our Commission, Barbara Bowman and

1 James Comer, the Commission has discussed
2 opportunities to accelerate high school
3 completion, including by ensuring that African
4 American students have access to meaningful pre-
5 kindergarten through 12th grade curriculum and
6 instruction, including through increased access to
7 and success in STEM, Science, Technology,
8 Engineering, Arts and Agriculture and Mathematics
9 Programs, courses of study in careers.

10 Commissioners Barthwell Evans, Hammons,
11 Marks, and I have supported a working group on
12 this topic. We continue to explore the importance
13 of supporting African American students throughout
14 the continuum during our most recent commission
15 meeting on Capitol Hill where we discussed
16 opportunities to support President Obama's 2020
17 College Completion Goals.

18 On the topic of accelerating African
19 American graduation rates from two- and four-year
20 institutions, we heard public testimony from Uri
21 Dreisman and the Director of the Childs Dana
22 Center and Professor of Mathematics at the

1 University of Texas at Austin, who spoke about the
2 promising improvement strategies to accelerate the
3 rate at which African American students move
4 through developmental work to graduation.

5 Each of these policy areas is linked by
6 our attempts to understand trends in achievement
7 of African American students over time, to inform
8 the recommendations that the Commission makes,
9 consistent with the directive provided in both its
10 governing charter and the initiative's Executive
11 Order, and so at this time, I move for the
12 Commission to continue to focus on these major
13 policy priorities.

14 Is there a second?

15 (Second.)

16 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: All those in favor?

17 (Chorus of ayes.)

18 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Peggy. Very good.

19 Thank you very much.

20 Any negatives, nays, abstentions?

21 (No response.)

22 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Great. Thank you

1 very much.

2 We will be hearing later on from
3 Commissioner Overton on goals for the Commission's
4 work with the transition and we'll have a vote --
5 should we go ahead and vote in terms of the use of
6 NOW -- right. We have been saying for some time
7 that Commission Overton has expertise in looking
8 at transition periods and so while he will be
9 talking with us about our transition work later
10 on, at this time, I'd like to call upon this group
11 and ask for a motion that we -- I move that
12 Commission Overton be voted as the chair of the
13 Commission who will lead our working group that
14 focuses on the upcoming transition. Is there a
15 motion?

16 (So moved.)

17 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Second?

18 (Second.)

19 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: All those in favor?

20 (Chorus of ayes.)

21 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Anybody against it?

22 (No response.)

1 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Abstentions?

2 (No response.)

3 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Very good. So he
4 will do that. Very good.

5 Now at this time, we will hear from a
6 number of invited guests who are senior leaders in
7 the Administration and we will be beginning with
8 Mark Matsui, right, who is going to be focusing on
9 accelerating African American postsecondary
10 success in adult education and remedial education.
11 Mark just told me he's been here in Washington
12 three years, right, so almost like a lifetime,
13 right?

14 MR. MATSUI: That's right.

15 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Right. Very good.

16 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: So I'm turning it
17 over now to Mark. Welcome.

18 MR. JOHNS: A quick reminder to all of
19 the commissioners before Mark speaks. In the
20 folder in front of you, the silver folders on the
21 left, you'll find an Agenda. Behind the Agenda
22 are the bios of each of our speakers today and

1 behind that is some scratch paper. On the right
2 will be the documents we'll use when we get to the
3 afternoon portion of our Agenda.

4 Testimony, Policy Updates from
5 Senior Leaders in the Administration

6 MR. MATSUI: Thank you, Dr. Hrabowski,
7 David, and Commission Members, it's a pleasure to
8 be able to be here again and to report out to you
9 on the work that we're doing in developmental
10 education.

11 As you know, we are always striving to
12 utilize evidence-based practices in this space.
13 So I'd like to talk a little bit about gathering
14 evidence and developing evidence.

15 Institute for Educational Sciences
16 established the Center for the Analysis of
17 Postsecondary Readiness or CAPR, love that
18 acronym, and it is basically the Center for
19 Research on Developmental Education. So I'd like
20 to report that now on some of the progress they've
21 made.

22 The first is that they're currently

1 studying the New Math Ways at four community
2 colleges in Texas and New Math Ways is an
3 accelerated developmental education curriculum
4 aligned to the needs of students in occupational
5 degree programs as well as those seeking transfer.

6 CAPR has also launched an initiative at
7 six SUNY institutions that will evaluate the
8 impact of using additional measures beyond
9 placement test scores to improve the accuracy of
10 placing students in dev ed coursework.

11 In addition to that, CAPR's undertaking
12 the National Descriptive Study and surveying
13 college administrators in the Summer of 2016 on
14 what they're doing in developmental educational
15 and then that report, of course, will be
16 distributed.

17 IES or Institute for Educational
18 Sciences will also publish what's called the What
19 Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide on
20 Developmental Education. So they'll be
21 establishing a guidebook on Levels of Evidence for
22 different developmental education strategies.

1 As you know, there are a lot of dev ed
2 strategies being promoted and put forward and it's
3 hard to know which ones have evidence and which
4 ones don't. So this guide is intended to provide
5 you with a level of evidence so you can be a
6 better consumer of dev ed innovation.

7 And finally, they put out an RFP, IES
8 did, on the creation of a postsecondary scaling,
9 postsecondary completion network, and this will be
10 a network of researchers that will be looking at
11 initiatives to scale postsecondary completion
12 innovation.

13 As you know, we have a lot of pilot
14 programs. We have a lot of what are called
15 boutique initiatives that are not yet at scale.
16 Scaling is sort of the next level, the next
17 quantum leap in this space to improve
18 postsecondary completion, and so this will be a
19 network of researchers to take a look at scaling
20 strategies and what works and what doesn't.

21 In addition to that, the unit I'm in,
22 OCTAE, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult

1 Education, has also launched a Developmental
2 Education National Activity. This is a national
3 activity to look at both basic skills or adult
4 basic education and developmental education.

5 As you know, sometimes there's
6 misalignment there, a little disjointedness in the
7 two systems. So we're very interested in looking
8 for models where those two systems align well and
9 where the progression of students from one to the
10 other is successful.

11 We'll then publish those findings, hold
12 a convening, and certainly we'll keep David
13 apprised so that he can keep you apprised of the
14 progress.

15 In the 2016 budget -- I'm sorry. One
16 more thing. In adult education, there also, of
17 course, is a need to help those without high
18 school credentials and the ESSA students and the
19 department has launched the College and Career
20 Readiness for Adults and I'm pleased to say that
21 now almost -- I believe all 50 states, adult
22 education programs, have adopted these standards

1 and are working to implement them and so this will
2 help more students reach the skills needed in this
3 job market to be able to enter into the middle
4 class.

5 In the 2016 budget, there was a
6 restoration of what's called the Ability to
7 Benefit, which was lost in 2012. In the United
8 States, we have about 4.4 million African
9 Americans without a high school credential that
10 are outside of K-12 and postsecondary.

11 Ability to Benefit is very helpful in
12 that it now would provide Title IV access, access
13 to Title IV funds for these individuals, if
14 they're otherwise Title IV-eligible.

15 The new wrinkle to this provision is
16 that the Ability to Benefit Program must link to
17 what's called a WIOA Career Pathway Definition.
18 WIOA is the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity
19 Act. In statute, there are seven components of a
20 WIOA Career Pathway.

21 If that is met and linked to a Title IV-
22 eligible program, then students would be able to

1 access those funds without having a high school
2 credential.

3 Guidance will be coming out probably in
4 mid -- don't quote me on this -- mid to late
5 summer and so again we'll keep David apprised of
6 that so that your institutions and your networks
7 can be aware of when they can receive reliable
8 information and begin implementing this new
9 program.

10 I wanted to give you an update, too, and
11 sort of a summary of grant work to promote
12 acceleration.

13 As you know, the TACT Program for
14 Community Colleges is in its last round of
15 funding. However, this is a gift that keeps on
16 giving because every grant was required to
17 incorporate a remedial reform in every career
18 pathway in every program funded by the program and
19 the program reaches over 75 percent of all the
20 community colleges in the country.

21 Approximately \$100 million each year
22 went to minority-serving institutions in each of

1 the four years and the learning points from this
2 remediation reform will be coming out through a
3 variety of national evaluations of the program.

4 The materials were all required to
5 become open educational resource materials. Those
6 are available at what's called skillscommons.org,
7 skillscommons.org. That's a repository where all
8 of the lesson plans and source code and curriculum
9 is deposited by the grantees and then is available
10 at no cost to any institution that wants to use
11 them.

12 In the earlier rounds, there were state
13 consortia that were formed and some of those state
14 consortia went on to scale their dev ed reforms
15 across the state. So the learning points from
16 that will be very valuable in terms of being able
17 to multiply that reform.

18 In the First-in-the-World Program,
19 unfortunately, which was defunded last year by
20 Congress, there was a set-aside for minority-
21 serving institutions but also a competitive
22 priority on developmental education and so we have

1 now funded some dev ed reform and, of course,
2 we're anxiously awaiting the results of these
3 projects to be able then to promote those.

4 Throughout our grant programs, as you
5 know, we have hundreds of millions of dollars of
6 postsecondary grants. We were able to establish
7 what's called a Secretary Supplemental Priority on
8 Postsecondary Completion. This then embeds
9 postsecondary completion as a key focus in all --
10 in most of our postsecondary grants now. So if
11 you see the Trio Grants and you see the TAL-3
12 Grants, you'll notice that Supplemental Priority.

13 We also, at OCTAE, held a National
14 Convening of the growing number of minority-
15 serving community colleges. Any college or
16 university, though, could attend. We had HBCU
17 CCs. We had PD CC and ANAPC HSIs and Tribal
18 Colleges and Native American Non-Tribal-serving
19 institutions.

20 We were able to connect about a 130
21 institutions to about 15 federal agencies through
22 something we called initially Federal Speed Dating

1 but had to change to Federal Speed Networking and
2 so they were able to put a name to a face, to meet
3 a representative at HUD, at NASA, at NSF, to learn
4 about the many programs there are.

5 For just a quick example of one of many,
6 I didn't know that the Smithsonian had 1,300
7 internships and that there are 1,300 internships
8 every year they're trying to fill and they're
9 trying to get more students to apply.

10 NASA has faculty fellowships. There was
11 a tribal community college that students developed
12 a cube set, a small satellite that was selected by
13 NASA to be launched into space. You know, that
14 kind of stuff, there are all these kinds of
15 opportunities in Federal Government.

16 When I got here, I thought the work
17 would be either an inch deep and a mile wide or an
18 inch wide and a mile deep but I found it was like
19 a mile wide and a mile deep, which was a good
20 thing.

21 So we've been trying to collect all
22 those, distribute those. So we're putting a new

1 website together. I will send it to Dave when
2 it's done and he can blast it out to you all but
3 it lists federal resources that are available to
4 students and to institutions.

5 We're also working on collecting public
6 benefits information. Students have tremendous --
7 you know, students have tremendous unmet needs.
8 In the community colleges, 60 percent of all
9 students are part-time, mainly because they can't
10 meet the cost of attendance, and we know that that
11 enrollment intensity, if it rises, they're more
12 likely to graduate but they can't increase it
13 because they don't have the funding.

14 So we're working on helping students
15 become more aware of SNAP. If a student is food
16 stamp eligible, they generally are eligible for
17 food stamp education and tuition assistance and
18 then you can leverage it because if they're food
19 stamp eligible, they're usually Pell eligible. So
20 there's some intersections there where they could
21 start on SNAP and then slide on to Pell if they
22 complete their FASFA on time.

1 Those kinds of intersections have public
2 benefits, housing, Section 8 housing, childcare,
3 federal childcare block grants. States also have
4 some leeway in their policies so that it either
5 encourage or discourage postsecondary attendance.
6 If you're interested, we're working with some
7 federal agencies to work with the states to
8 convince them because they do have a lot of
9 statutory economy in this area to create policies
10 that are going to be more favorable for low-income
11 students to attend postsecondary education.

12 Now we also have at the department what
13 are call Experimental Sites. This is statutory
14 authority that the Secretary has to be able to
15 waive certain requirements.

16 One, of course, is the ban that's on
17 students in federal and state prisons to receive
18 Title IV funds. The experimental site in this
19 case waives that ban and allows those institutions
20 that are selected for the Experimental Site
21 Program to award Pell and other Title IV aid to
22 students that are in federal and state prisons.

1 Unfortunately, the due date for those
2 experiments has already gone by. However,
3 hopefully we'll be able to announce the
4 institutions that are selected. In the 2017
5 budget, we are proposing that that ban be lifted
6 and so there's budgetary proposal language
7 proposing that we eliminate the ban on Title IV
8 funding for students that are incarcerated, be it
9 in federal or state prison.

10 We also have a dual enrollment
11 experimental site. Right now, students are not
12 eligible to receive Title IV funds if they have --
13 if they're in high school. If college is
14 selected, they would be able to do that, others on
15 competency- based education, priority learning
16 assessment, limited direct assessment, and short-
17 term training.

18 Again, if you're interested in any of
19 those experimental sites and the last set that I
20 mentioned, they're still accepting applications
21 for, we can get that to you through David.

22 Finally, in the 2017 budget, I just want

1 to cover some of the President's proposals. First
2 is the America's College Promise 2.0. \$1.3
3 billion request for 2017, this, of course, is the
4 universal access to community college. There's a
5 set-aside in it for MSIs and HBCUs, as well, and
6 we're hoping for bipartisan support.

7 The other is the new -- it's a proposed
8 new innovation fund for HBCU and MSIs, \$30
9 million, as sort of a research and development
10 investment in these institutions to help support
11 innovation.

12 We would -- we're going back at it with
13 the First In The World and we want to get it
14 funded. We'd love to have it funded and again this
15 -- it would also be a set-aside for MSIs and
16 HBCUs.

17 We are proposing to lift the ban again
18 on Pell for prisoners. We want to tie the Pell to
19 the Consumer Price Index. That tie is set to
20 expire in 2017. We want to see it renewed and
21 we're also interested in restoration of year-round
22 Pell and also a Pell bonus, a \$300 bonus, to

1 incent students to go from 12 to 15 credits
2 because we know students are more likely to
3 complete.

4 I would say those are the highlights and
5 I just want to say thank you for the opportunity
6 to present. This Administration has been so
7 supportive of community colleges, of students of
8 color, the My Brother's Keeper Initiative, and
9 other initiatives, I think, have been
10 groundbreaking, Universal Community College, for
11 example.

12 So you probably have heard there's some
13 political event happening in the fall and so we
14 are right now focused on transition, thinking
15 about what comes next for our programs. We're
16 very busy trying to make sure these things live on
17 beyond the change in Administration. So that's
18 sort of the tenor of what's going on in our world.

19 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Very good. So
20 let's -- thank you, Mark, very much.

21 Let's take questions, please. You're
22 going to need to push the -- if you put up your

1 post, I'll know, so we can start with you, Doris.

2 COMMISSIONER SMITH-RIBNER: How are the
3 institutions selected for participating in the
4 Pell Grants?

5 MR. MATSUL: Yeah. The experimental
6 sites?

7 COMMISSIONER SMITH-RIBNER: Yeah.

8 MR. MATSUL: So the Federal Register
9 Notice was published. We got the word out through
10 various sources and then they submitted an
11 application and it went to a committee internal to
12 Ed and they compared the institutions against the
13 criteria.

14 So it is an experiment. So the
15 institutions need to be able to establish an
16 experimental structure and provide data back to
17 the department.

18 COMMISSIONER SMITH-RIBNER: How many
19 institutions do you have thus far?

20 MR. MATSUL: For which one? For the
21 Second Chance Pell, for the Dual?

22 COMMISSIONER SMITH-RIBNER: Pell.

1 MR. MATSUL: Well, it depends on the
2 experiment. So for Second Chance Pell, we had a
3 couple hundred institutions apply. We are not
4 able yet to say how many will be selected but we
5 had a pretty high interest.

6 COMMISSIONER SMITH-RIBNER: Thank you.

7 COMMISSIONER BROOKINS: So I had one
8 question about the College Promise and the New
9 Innovation Fund for HBCUs. Can you tell me more
10 about or give me an example of what you would say
11 is an innovation and what direction it should be
12 taking?

13 MR. MATSUL: Yeah. Well, usually the
14 process for establishing priorities for grant
15 programs comes after they're funded but I think
16 the idea is to assist the MSIs and HBCUs in
17 filling some of the gaps, strategic gaps.

18 For example, we often heard of an
19 interest in expanding capacity and in developing
20 systems for data collection and data synthesis and
21 using data for strategic purposes. Band width, as
22 you know, is tough in under-resourced institutions

1 and a grant would help with that and could
2 technology be applied?

3 Other, of course, ideas around
4 postsecondary completion innovation and funding
5 for that within the context of HBCUs and MSIs,
6 those are areas I could see evolving out of the
7 program. The main thing is we want to be able to
8 get more resources to these institutions in order
9 to support the capacity-building.

10 For America's College Promise, it is
11 unique in that the institution actually receives
12 the funding and so the way that it's currently
13 conceptualized, the average tuition for community
14 colleges would be calculated and then the Feds
15 would -- we would pay 75 percent, there'd be a
16 state match of 25 percent. The goal would be for
17 students to have access to community college first
18 two years but, of course, then that would be
19 transferrable and there is an element there,
20 though, for HBCUs and MSIs -- I'm going to have to
21 double-check but I -- let me double-check but I
22 think it's possible for students to be able to use

1 those first two years at HBCU and MSI.

2 I don't want to misspeak, so I will
3 check on that and confirm it with David but I
4 think that's in the proposal.

5 COMMISSIONER SMITH-RIBNER: All right.
6 Thank you.

7 MR. MATSUL: Yeah.

8 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Hi, Mark.
9 Always good seeing you.

10 MR. MATSUL: Thanks.

11 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Clarification on
12 the Ability to Benefit.

13 MR. MATSUL: Yes.

14 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: There used to be
15 a thing in the tail of the hat which in that it
16 was linked to satisfactory progress and
17 developmental level was led into that and many
18 students got kicked out. So in the new
19 legislation, have they struggled with that issue,
20 worked with it in any way?

21 MR. MATSUL: I haven't seen any link to
22 satisfactory academic progress language. So as

1 far as I know, that's the same in terms of, you
2 know, maintaining a 2.0 and progression toward
3 your credential.

4 That I haven't seen any notification
5 that that has changed but what is different is
6 that we have a definition of a career pathway.
7 It opens up to individuals that are in adult
8 education, as long as it's linked to a Title IV-
9 eligible program. So that is very different for
10 Pell, yes.

11 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Bryant, then
12 Michael.

13 COMMISSIONER MARKS: During your
14 convening of MSIs, it seems like the emphasis was
15 on community colleges, is that correct?

16 MR. MATSUL: Yes.

17 COMMISSIONER MARKS: Has there been a
18 similar gathering for four-year MSIs, by any
19 chance, and also related to My Brother's Keeper,
20 whether you hosted a gathering or not, are you
21 aware of a gathering of researchers or
22 practitioners discussing best practices of college

1 completion in higher ed for males of color?

2 MR. MATSUL: Yes, right. Thank you.

3 For your first question, the last program
4 directors' meeting of all MSIs was in 2012. The
5 Office of Postsecondary Education puts those
6 together and we've been in contact with them about
7 whether or not they're planning on doing that
8 again next year, I assume, and if so, that would
9 be an opportunity for the four and two years to
10 get together because community colleges in our
11 department title, that's our focal area and sort
12 of why we focus there, but we've had a few
13 discussions with OPE about, you know, how can we
14 work together and possibly have sort of a joint
15 convening. No final decisions yet on that.

16 And then to your second question about
17 researchers convening and talking about
18 postsecondary education for students of color, I
19 don't know that we've had that yet within the
20 context of My Brother's Keeper but I think that's
21 a great idea.

22 We had researchers come to the convening

1 for MSI community colleges and talked about the
2 research agenda. I know it was very helpful. So
3 that's a great suggestion. I'll take it back to
4 MBK.

5 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: I have two
6 questions. You mentioned in your presentation
7 that there were four million African Americans who
8 were, I think you said, not credentialed by
9 education, right?

10 MR. MATSUL: Yeah.

11 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: So they didn't
12 have a high school diploma. That's 10 percent of
13 the African American population.

14 Do you have an age range on --

15 MR. MATSUL: Yeah.

16 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: -- that?

17 MR. MATSUL: Yeah. I believe this is
18 all internal data, so we haven't published it, but
19 it's 21 to 65 is the age range.

20 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: 29 to 61.

21 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: 21.

22 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: 21 to 65.

1 MR. MATSUL: 21 to 65.

2 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: So it would be
3 useful there to know sort of how that is
4 distributed. I think Jim may have a related
5 point.

6 Okay. All right. So the other question
7 I have is, well, related to that question. What
8 is your inference? What were you suggesting about
9 that?

10 MR. MATSUL: Oh, just the value of
11 Ability to Benefit. So this is an opportunity --
12 Ability to Benefit -- the restoration of Ability
13 to Benefit is an opportunity to hit -- not hit but
14 to help populations -- because I was also looking
15 at the Asian American and Native Hawaiian
16 population without a high school credential is
17 about the same, 4.4 million. We were looking at
18 disaggregated data and so forth.

19 Anyway, the Ability to Benefit is an
20 opportunity for individuals without high school
21 credentials to not only get a secondary credential
22 but also to get a postsecondary credential.

1 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: Right. But the
2 Ability to Benefit is decided by what criteria?

3 MR. MATSUL: It is --

4 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: When a person
5 who's in that four million, for example, what does
6 he or she need to do in order to qualify for the
7 educational opportunities that you're describing?

8 MR. MATSUL: There are two additional
9 steps that have always been there. One is to take
10 six credits and that is not paid by Title IV and
11 they have to count toward a credential and then
12 the other is a state-approved test and different
13 states have different tests to demonstrate ability
14 to benefit.

15 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: Yes.

16 MR. MATSUL: And then if they enter into
17 this career pathway and they have a Title IV-
18 eligible program, then they'd be able to continue.

19 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: Now is the test
20 that you're talking about a high school
21 equivalency test?

22 MR. MATSUL: It varies by state. There

1 are a handful of tests that the Secretary has
2 approved and there -- actually, we can get a link
3 for you, so you can get a list of them, and so,
4 yes, those states have -- those tests have to be
5 approved.

6 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: Yes. Okay.
7 Great. So my other question had to do with ES,
8 Every Student -- ESS

9 MR. JOHNS: ESSA.

10 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: ESSA, right.
11 Every Student Succeeds At, great, which is the
12 successor to No Child Left Behind, right.

13 So in your comments, in your formal
14 remarks, I'm playing back in my mind, I don't
15 think you talked about that very much. I'm
16 especially interested in the new requirements for
17 a student achievement and this is an area where
18 IES and NCES get directly involved, right?

19 Could you speak to that issue of the
20 changes in the requirements, the new requirements
21 for student achievement?

22 MR. MATSUL: I wish I could.

1 MR. JOHNS: I'll state for the record,
2 to offer a bit of a reprieve, we have invited
3 later today Tanya Clay House, who manages ESSA for
4 the Department of Education. She might be better
5 to pose that question to.

6 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: Fabulous. Okay.
7 Let me reframe the question.

8 Was IES instrumental in making
9 suggestions, based upon research, to the Congress
10 on the direction?

11 MR. JOHNS: Let me propose that we
12 arranged to have Peggy Carr join us on our next
13 call to answer questions specific to IES.

14 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: Fabulous. Thank
15 you.

16 COMMISSIONER BROOKINS: I just have a
17 quick question about the College and Career
18 Readiness for Adults and who created that.

19 MR. MATSUL: Yes. So OCTAE did a lot of
20 work on that. That's the Office of Career,
21 Technical, and Adult Education. There's a report.
22 It's called College and Career Readiness Standards

1 for Adult Education, and we can get you a link to
2 that report.

3 MR. JOHNS: We'll include it in our
4 follow-up correspondence.

5 COMMISSIONER BROOKINS: Okay. I think
6 what I'm asking is, is it only for career and
7 technical or is it something beyond that?

8 MR. MATSUL: It's beyond -- it's really
9 English and math in terms of -- and also English
10 language learners but it's hitting those sort of
11 academic skills to prepare students to go in
12 either direction.

13 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Just as a
14 follow- up to Mike's question, which had to do
15 with how you qualify for Ability to Benefit, where
16 does the developmental education stand in that?
17 To what extent does it qualify as part of the
18 Ability to Benefit or?

19 MR. MATSUL: Hmm. That's a good
20 question. The courses that -- the six credits, for
21 example, would need to count toward a degree or
22 credential, right? So it wouldn't there.

1 The link has to be with a postsecondary
2 credentialed program. So I -- let me -- this is
3 another question for our FSA folks to see how the
4 -- what's the linkage between dev ed --

5 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Because that was
6 the real googly last time, you know, that you had
7 lots of students without qualifications who then
8 had a need to prepare for Ability to Benefit but
9 there was no structure for getting them ready.

10 MR. MATSUL: For getting them ready. Is
11 that what you're asking?

12 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yeah.

13 MR. MATSUL: Right. So the Career
14 Pathway definition includes advising and
15 counseling. It includes other elements around
16 student success. So that's sort of a new wrinkle
17 to ATV and so probably the best -- we can ask the
18 dev ed question before the guidance comes out but
19 the real timing of this, the best timing would be
20 probably to talk a little bit more after the
21 guidance is out, but we'll look into it, Ron.

22 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Ron, who is a

1 former president of a community college, has a
2 strong sense of challenges that adults face, as
3 does Walter Bumphus, who's providing considerable
4 leadership, Walter who's a commissioner, and who's
5 providing leadership in the community college
6 world.

7 The broad question from my perspective,
8 when we look at the millions of adults, African
9 Americans and others, who don't have a high school
10 diploma, there's no reason to believe that they
11 have in many cases anyway strong reading skills.
12 Okay? Some may but we know from what we know about
13 those who go on to four-year institutions that
14 there are reading problems. So it's reasonable to
15 believe that large numbers have serious reading
16 problems.

17 If we're talking about getting them into
18 a path that will lead to credentialing, high
19 school and beyond, and a job, and we say they must
20 first take six credits that are of a certain
21 level, it seems to me there's a disconnect for
22 anybody who's been involved with students with

1 academic challenges.

2 Many of them need help building their
3 reading, let alone math, but reading skills.
4 Let's start with reading skills. Where's the
5 help? How do they -- you know, there are all
6 kinds of other factors, financial and everything
7 else, but where's the help to get them to that
8 point so they're not so discouraged? What would
9 you say?

10 MR. MATSUL: Well, I mean, that's a
11 really important point and in taking a look at the
12 link with adult education, I think it's going to
13 be about how adult ed is linked to the Title IV-
14 eligible program so that students are getting help
15 but they're getting at concurrently and while it's
16 not sequential and that could cause problems and
17 that will cause issues, --

18 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Because if you
19 can't read, it's hard to do anything else.

20 MR. MATSUL: Right, right. Now it does
21 not preclude somebody participating in adult
22 education before entering into Ability to Benefit.

1 So, of course, the challenge for our system is we
2 have 36 million low-skilled adults in this
3 country. We have enough federal and state funding
4 to serve 1.1 and so, you know, we've always had
5 this disconnect between adult education
6 preparation for college and the demand for it and
7 then, you know, some of the policies like this.
8 So students can still enter into adult education,
9 they can still prepare for those courses, but we
10 just don't have enough resources yet.

11 Now so, I mean, we've reached out to
12 different groups to talk about technology while
13 trying to get more funding, also talking about
14 technology. There are some approaches out there.
15 National Repository of Online Courses has
16 something called Ed Ready, which is free. It's
17 available online. But you still need a person in
18 the loop and they will tell you that. The
19 technology folks will say you need a person in the
20 loop and NROC says that.

21 So it comes back down to funding and,
22 you know, how can we really help all of our

1 students that need this to get the adult
2 education, the remediation they need in order to
3 access these opportunities?

4 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: So where is the
5 hope that you see, given all of what you talked
6 about? You talked about a lot of opportunities, a
7 lot of money in some ways. Where is the hope,
8 though, when you think about African Americans in
9 this space, who have these serious academic
10 challenges? What are you seeing that's really
11 working that's reducing the number of African
12 Americans who are without credentials and
13 therefore without a job?

14 MR. MATSUL: So that's what our national
15 activity on basic skills and developmental
16 education comes in because we know that's a huge
17 need and how those two systems either align or
18 don't align plays a huge role in whether or not
19 African American students, Latino students, low-
20 income API students, Native American students
21 progress or not, and that articulation has to be
22 tight and there has to be a very close association

1 and linkage between the faculty that teach in both
2 sectors, that when they do, we think what we'll
3 see is when they do that, that the transfer -- the
4 progression upward is pretty solid.

5 But we don't know that for sure. I
6 mean, we still need to study and take a look at
7 what the best models are. Our best, for example,
8 is an acceleration strategy but right now it's
9 primarily career and technical education but we
10 know that it works. We know that it's more
11 expensive and so there's something called the
12 Integrated Digital English Acceleration Pilot.
13 We're not doing that, Washington State is doing
14 that. It's more for the academic transfer side,
15 from basic skills to college. They're still
16 working on it but we think there'll be some
17 interesting data coming out of that.

18 So we think there are models there where
19 students would be able to accelerate. There are
20 also -- there's the CUNY ASAP Program. MBRC did a
21 high-quality random assignment evaluation. They
22 doubled the graduation rate of developmental

1 education students through this approach. Now
2 it's more expensive and they actually documented
3 how much more it costs per student to double
4 graduation rates.

5 However, it works and so we do think
6 that there are models that will come out of this.
7 The need is huge and so how do we -- I think we
8 have to start where we can. We have to identify
9 first what works, identify where the investments
10 need to go, try to get more funding, so that we
11 can reach more people.

12 COMMISSIONER MCGUIRE: Mr. Chair, let us
13 know when those of us on the phone can --

14 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: I'm hearing the
15 light in your voice right now, so please go right
16 ahead, Kent.

17 COMMISSIONER MCGUIRE: Thank you. I'm
18 just curious, you know, on this question of the
19 lack of support. It just so happens that I think
20 a meaningful percentage of young people who don't
21 ultimately earn a high school credential don't
22 earn it because they're short of credit. You

1 know, that is, a measurable component of the drop-
2 out rate and so back to Dr. Nettles' question
3 about linkages between adult ed and K-12 or ESSA.

4 I think it's a topic worth looking
5 further into. ESSA has some accountability
6 provisions in it that try to get at questions of
7 climate and exclusionary policies and things that
8 also contribute to, you know, kids dropping out
9 and, you know, some exploration of how we could
10 get better connections between systems, both
11 postsecondary and adult ed and K-12, I think,
12 warrants, you know, some exploration on our part.

13 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Thank you very
14 much, Kent. Mark is going to have to go. As you
15 get ready to leave, just one question.

16 As you think about the next
17 Administration and people who will be continuing
18 on, is one of your priorities, meaning the
19 department, to look at ways of much stronger
20 coordination between these areas? Is that
21 something that's been said expressly or not or as
22 a recommendation? Will you be -- will the offices

1 be making that kind of recommendation to whoever
2 becomes the next Secretary?

3 MR. MATSUL: I'm not sure. We don't --
4 as far as I know, I've not seen a policy but we've
5 had discussions about the linkages between ESSA
6 and, for example, Perkins. That's another area we
7 could look at and ESSA and HEA, of course.

8 So it's a good suggestion for us to take
9 back and there are groups out there, non-
10 governmental groups taking a look at that
11 intersection, as well. So there's been some good
12 thinking that we can borrow and bring to the
13 table.

14 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: I think we would
15 all agree that we're trying to figure out policy
16 that can lead to more successful programs and
17 outcomes to reduce the number of four million that
18 don't have basic credentials.

19 MR. MATSUL: Yes, right.

20 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: That would be the
21 goal.

22 MR. MATSUL: Yes.

1 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Thank you very
2 much, Mark.

3 MR. MATSUL: Thank you. Absolutely,
4 yes.

5 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Thank you. I know
6 that he has another presentation to go to.

7 We're delighted that Kristen is here.
8 Kristen is the Senior Policy Advisor in Special
9 Education. Thank you very much, Mark. And
10 Rehabilitative Services here, working on reducing
11 racial and ethnic disparities and identifying
12 places for students with disabilities and to
13 improve quality of correctional educational
14 services.

15 So with that, let me turn it over to
16 Kristen.

17 MS. HARPER: Good morning. I think I'd
18 want to start off by returning to a comment that
19 you actually made earlier, that if you can't read,
20 it's hard to do anything else.

21 I want to talk a little bit about what
22 we learned in the 2015 NAPE Scores. Amongst black

1 students without disabilities, only 21 percent has
2 a fourth grader proficient in reading. If you
3 look at that number more closely and just go
4 fourth grade black students with disabilities,
5 that number falls to four percent and that issue
6 continues on into the later grades. At eighth
7 grade, black students without disabilities, 18
8 percent are proficient in reading, but again if
9 the black -- when black students have
10 disabilities, you're talking about a two-percent
11 proficiency rate. If you can't read, it's hard to
12 do anything else.

13 I want to offer a snapshot of, you know,
14 what is going on in special education that we
15 think are producing these kinds of disparities and
16 such low rates of proficiency, starting with a
17 child's earliest years.

18 When students are struggling when they
19 have developmental delays, it's absolutely
20 imperative that you identify those needs early and
21 address those needs early but we find that in many
22 cases young children of color are less likely than

1 their peers to be in early childhood special
2 education programs.

3 As they go into grade school, we find
4 that they are more likely to be identified with a
5 disability, particularly for high-incidence
6 disabilities, emotional disturbance, specific
7 learning disabilities, intellectual disability.
8 We know that black students in particular are
9 twice as likely to be identified with emotional
10 disturbance than their peers.

11 Once in special education, they are more
12 likely than -- students of color are more likely
13 than their peers to be placed in separate settings
14 outside of the regular classroom and while, you
15 know, that, you know, a student really needs a
16 placement that's most appropriate to their needs,
17 for many students we also know that placement in
18 separate settings in many times means less access
19 to the general curriculum, less access to rigorous
20 course content, and once in special education, we
21 also know that students of color are more likely
22 than their peers to face exclusionary discipline,

1 greater likelihood of expulsion, greater
2 likelihood of out-of-school suspension, greater
3 likelihood of in-school suspension.

4 We know that, you know, from the civil
5 rights data collection, that, in general, black
6 students are three times as likely than their
7 white peers to face an out-of-school suspension in
8 any one year but amongst black students with
9 students of color with disabilities.

10 If you look at the civil rights data
11 collection and you set to the side Asian students
12 and Hispanic students for a moment, excluding
13 those two groups, we find that one in four boys of
14 color with disabilities are getting an out-of-
15 school suspension, one in five girls of color are
16 getting an out-of-school suspension in any one
17 year, and we know from the research that any
18 suspension at all dramatically increases the
19 likelihood of drop-out, dramatically increases the
20 likelihood of engagement with the juvenile justice
21 system, dramatically increases the likelihood that
22 a student simply won't graduate or will be

1 retained at least a year.

2 So how do we -- you know, I've tried to
3 sort of lay out from the time a child's very young
4 to the time they should be graduating from high
5 school these disparities across the entire special
6 education system, all of which are cracks in the
7 system that need repair. So it needs to be done
8 starting in the earliest years under the My
9 Brother's Keeper initiative.

10 ED has partnered with HHS to launch a
11 Birth-to-Five Watch Me Thrive initiative, trying
12 to make certain that in a child's earliest years,
13 they are getting screened, that young young
14 children are getting screened for developmental
15 delays and when developmental delays are found,
16 that those are addressed as soon as possible.

17 As far as exclusionary discipline goes,
18 we have been partnering with the Department of
19 Justice, you know, as far back as 2011 under the
20 support of School Discipline Initiative and the
21 work continues under the My Brother's Keeper
22 Initiative. Even as recently as this past summer,

1 we brought 40 district superintendents to D.C. for
2 a summit to rethink discipline and asked, you
3 know, that every one of those superintendents and
4 their teams put forward an action plan for how
5 they're going to address these issues.

6 At the same time we had that summit, we
7 launched a public facing rethink discipline public
8 awareness campaign really trying to share the
9 facts, share the data, share the research with the
10 general public, with parents, with teachers about
11 here is the prevalence of school suspension, and
12 what does it mean for students, what are the
13 likely detrimental impacts of that on students,
14 and we're seeing some indications of progress on
15 the discipline front.

16 Back in February, I believe, we heard
17 that Houston Independent School District has
18 banned suspensions for children before they reach
19 third grade and has put in place a number of
20 restrictions for students third grade through
21 fifth grade. So progress there.

22 We've heard that Illinois has passed a

1 new state statute limiting the use of zero
2 tolerance and both of these are following in the
3 footsteps of other districts. LA no longer
4 allows to suspend for willful defiance. Places
5 such as Denver, Colorado, that have put in place
6 memoranda of understanding with its local police
7 departments to clarify what is the appropriate
8 role of law enforcement in our schools.

9 So all across the country, we're seeing
10 one more memorandum of understanding, one more
11 revised code of student conduct at the state
12 level, you know, one more state statute that
13 shows that folks are generally beginning to move
14 in the right direction but we still have a long
15 way to go.

16 But what I really want to talk to you
17 about this morning is probably one of our, you
18 know, most comprehensive attempts to address these
19 issues.

20 In March 2nd, the Department of
21 Education proposed a new regulation to improve
22 equity in the administration of the Individuals

1 with Disabilities Education Act. We call it the
2 Equity in IDEA Rule.

3 IDEA statute requires states to identify
4 what's called significant disproportionality based
5 on race in the identification, placement, and
6 discipline of students with disabilities. So
7 there's already in place a federal statute that
8 requires states to go looking for the exact type
9 of racial-ethnic disparities that I've laid out at
10 the start.

11 When a state identifies a district and
12 says, yes, you have significant
13 disproportionality, that district is required by
14 statute to undergo a review of practices,
15 policies, and procedures, and they're required to
16 set aside 15 percent of their IDEA Part B dollars
17 to implement comprehensive coordinated early
18 intervening services to address the disparity.

19 So we already have in place a federal
20 statute to address a number of these disparities
21 where, you know, if they're present, communities
22 actually have to take action and there's funds

1 available to actually address those disparities.

2 However, in 2013, a study was published
3 by the Government Accountability Office that made
4 clear that states' definitions of significant
5 disproportionality were highly variable, highly
6 highly variable, and as a result, only two percent
7 of districts across the nation were identified
8 with significant disproportionality.

9 GAO's conclusion was that there's no way
10 to have any degree of certainty that the issue of
11 significant disproportionality based on race is
12 being addressed in special education. You have
13 states that will say -- will identify a district
14 if students are placed at a rate three times that
15 of their peers and other places they say four
16 times and other places they say five times. One
17 state says seven times. Some states will use, you
18 know, multiple years of data, some states exclude
19 certain districts from the analysis entirely.
20 Just incredible variation in how states go about
21 defining this issue and as a result, only two
22 percent of districts in the nation are actually

1 identified.

2 I'll be clear that there is no magic
3 number. There's no number I have or that the
4 department has off the top of its head to tell you
5 what -- you know, how many districts across the
6 nation should be identified but we are pretty
7 clear that two percent is probably not a -- that
8 that's probably not descriptive of what's actually
9 happening out there.

10 So in our proposed rule, we are
11 proposing that states be required to follow a
12 standard approach, that they all have to use the
13 same method of comparing racial and ethnic groups.
14 They all have to use a simple risk ratio, that
15 states have to set a reasonable risk ratio
16 threshold. We propose limits on the sizes that
17 states can use to, you know, set aside districts
18 and not analyze them for purposes of significant
19 disproportionality.

20 We are limiting the number of years that
21 they can take into account before identifying a
22 district to three years and we are also proposing,

1 you know, new flexibility in how they can use
2 comprehensive coordinated early intervening
3 services, that 15-percent set-aside.

4 Under current regulation, districts can
5 only use those dollars for students without
6 disabilities and only starting in kindergarten
7 going up through Grade 12 and we said, well, that
8 doesn't seem to make incredible sense if a
9 district can be identified for disparities in
10 discipline among students with disabilities, can
11 be identified for disparities in placement among
12 students with disabilities.

13 So we said we proposed to allow
14 districts greater flexibility to use those dollars
15 for students with disabilities and we've also
16 proposed to allow districts to use those dollars
17 to provide services to students in preschool.

18 So right now, we're also -- one of the
19 things that makes this issue -- you know, that has
20 made this issue really difficult up until now is
21 that people didn't really know how states were
22 going about setting their definitions. Nobody

1 really knew, you know, who was getting identified.

2 One, you know, thing I really want to
3 bring to this group is that in our proposed rule,
4 we really have reconceptualized the role of the
5 public and the role of stakeholders in helping
6 states to set their risk ratio thresholds.

7 If a state, you know, now wants to say
8 we only want to identify districts where one
9 subgroup is being placed for discipline at a rate
10 three times that of others, we say, okay, but you
11 need to consult with stakeholders before that.
12 That's not a requirement in the rule, that
13 stakeholders be consulted, their state advisory
14 panels be consulted before risk ratio thresholds
15 are set.

16 I think that makes a difference when you
17 talk about states right now that don't identify
18 districts unless student subgroups are being
19 treated differently by a factor of seven and that
20 is actually the reality in one of the states out
21 there.

22 We've also put out with our proposed

1 rule a dataset just to give folks a snapshot of
2 the degree of disparities out there. I said
3 earlier that only two percent right now of
4 districts nationwide are being identified with
5 significant disproportionality and again there's
6 no magic number here but there are indications
7 being released with that dataset that show that
8 two percent is probably not it.

9 Right now, two to three percent of
10 districts across the nation, that's about 400-500
11 districts, except we know 876 districts right now
12 suspend black students with disabilities at a rate
13 twice that of their peers, of their other peers
14 with disabilities, 876. So I've already blown,
15 you know, 400 and 500 out of the water.

16 Let's look at another statistic for
17 black students. 786 districts identify black
18 students with emotional disturbance at a rate
19 three times that of their peers. So again there's
20 no magic number here.

21 We are not telling states whether or not
22 they need to identify, you know, a district at

1 three times, at four times, at two times, but we
2 are asking states to set reasonable risk ratio
3 thresholds, to create a reasonable definition with
4 input from stakeholders, and we've tried to
5 provide data on this issue, such that stakeholders
6 are informed enough about the extent of the
7 disparities out there so that they can provide an
8 informed opinion as they're working with states.

9 I'll close by saying that this is the
10 beginning of the conversation. This is our
11 proposed regulation. It published March 2nd,
12 which means the public comment period closes May
13 16th. We can receive comments on regulations.gov
14 up until May 16th.

15 As far as our next steps, once we
16 receive all public comments, we'll be working to
17 make certain that the final rule is done and
18 completed before the close of the Administration,
19 likely sometime in the fall.

20 So I'll stop there and happy to take any
21 questions.

22 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Thank you. Thank

1 you very much.

2 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: I was curious
3 and I don't expect you to have this off the top of
4 your head but do you have any idea what the
5 overlap would be between your numbers of African
6 Americans with disabilities and Mark's number of
7 the four million who are uncredentialed? Is there
8 any -- there must be some overlap. So I'm
9 questioning do you have that off the top of your
10 head or is that something you could find out?

11 MS. HARPER: Well, the difficulty there
12 would be I imagine you're talking about different
13 populations because they're probably very
14 different age groups.

15 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Right. I think
16 Mark said his was 21 to 65.

17 MS. HARPER: What was it?

18 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: 21 to 65.

19 MS. HARPER: Yeah. So the numbers I'm
20 referring to are entirely K through 12 or P-12.

21 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: So that's prior
22 even to his.

1 MS. HARPER: Yes.

2 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: So yeah.

3 MS. HARPER: It'd be before -- my
4 numbers are before a child's graduated from high
5 school.

6 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Right. The
7 reason I was asking the question, even if you
8 didn't have the number, it seems to me it's
9 reasonable to assume using Freeman's formulation
10 about reading, it's reasonable to assume that the
11 people within that four million must have
12 functioned in the K-12 region before and probably
13 ended up in the situations they're in because of
14 some of the things that you're describing and I
15 was wondering again the issue of linkages.

16 If you give them, those four million,
17 opportunities in a system that hasn't changed,
18 they're likely to experience exactly the same
19 things, even though they're older, that they
20 experienced before. So it's kind of an implied
21 circularity and I was curious about what you saw
22 as the changes that would come as a result of the

1 legislation.

2 What I heard a lot was identifying the
3 people and the districts and so on but I was
4 wondering about actual change in behavior, whether
5 it's curriculum or effective behavior among
6 teachers, counselors, whatever. Any of that
7 contained in what you're doing?

8 MS. HARPER: So in the proposed rule,
9 again once a district is -- I mean, the key part
10 is getting a district identified if they're
11 actually having problems, being honest and
12 forthright about, you know, the issues that a
13 district is having.

14 Once a district is identified, the
15 statutory remedies that are supposed to be in
16 place are actually quite powerful. I mean, that
17 review of policies, practices, and procedures,
18 that's really focused on just simple compliance
19 with IDEA, but you also have, you know, that 15
20 percent of IDEA Part B dollars that has to go
21 toward what we call comprehensive CEIS. I'm not
22 going to try to say the long version over and over

1 again. 15 percent of those dollars for
2 comprehensive CEIS.

3 Those dollars, there's a lot of
4 flexibility in how districts can use those
5 dollars. You can provide them. You can use them
6 to provide services directly to students. You can
7 use them to train teachers. You can use it to
8 implement, you know, multi-tiered behavioral
9 frameworks, multi-tiered systems of support.
10 We're using, you know, data to understand
11 students' needs in coming up with very tailored
12 programming based upon what you're seeing.

13 So, I mean, to the extent that, you
14 know, districts really need help to address these
15 disparities, getting them identified is, you know,
16 the first critical step and, I mean, it means
17 that, you know, there's a small pot of dollars,
18 you know, available. Admittedly, it comes from,
19 you know, their current special education pot but,
20 you know, once they're identified, they have to
21 figure out how are they going to use the 15
22 percent to do things differently.

1 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: I am going to ask
2 that we take a moment before continuing on with
3 questions because Tanya House has a stop time of
4 11 and we want to give her a chance to present and
5 then we'll have time for questions for both of
6 them.

7 Before I do, though, I'm going to --
8 first of all, I want to thank Kristen for what
9 she's doing to support the office in general and
10 we hear that you've really been helping them and
11 appreciate that and to Tanya, the same thing, and,
12 secondly, I want to thank Tykiah for what you've
13 been doing in leading us in our efforts with our
14 students with disabilities and I move that we
15 continue to ask Tykiah to lead our efforts with
16 regard to students with disabilities.

17 Is there a second?

18 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Second.

19 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: All those in favor?

20 (Chorus of ayes.)

21 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Great. So she'll
22 be saying some things later on today.

1 Okay. With that, I'm delighted to turn
2 it over to Tanya Clay House, who recently accepted
3 an appointment as Deputy Assistant Secretary of P
4 through 12 Education in the Office of Planning,
5 Evaluation, and Policy Development.

6 MS. HOUSE: Good morning.

7 ALL: Good morning.

8 MS. HOUSE: Okay. So it's good to see
9 some friendly faces here and I appreciate the
10 opportunity to speak with you today.

11 Thank you to David and thank you to
12 Chair Hrabowski for the invitation, for allowing
13 me to be here.

14 So I'm here, I'm just going to give a
15 few opening remarks because I recognize that you
16 all are fully versed in what's happening these
17 days, but I wanted to give you an idea of what
18 we're doing, particularly internally within the
19 department and how I could be of assistance as we
20 move this agenda forward.

21 So as you know, we are dealing right now
22 with kind of the major implementation phase of

1 ESSA and literally right now, we are engaged in
2 the process of a negotiated rulemaking on
3 assessments and standards as well as on supplement
4 not supplant.

5 This is the third section that is going
6 on right now and that will be going on through
7 Wednesday and if there is consensus, then we'll be
8 able to move forward with consensus rule. If not,
9 then we'll have some further oversight and
10 deliberation as to what we'll be rulemaking on.

11 Recently, the department also announced
12 that we were going to be rulemaking on Title I.
13 Particularly within Title I, we're rulemaking on
14 the accountability provisions as well as state
15 plans, consolidated state plans and report cards.
16 So that is all that we are rulemaking on.

17 Now that means that we are still open
18 for comments and recommendation as to how we can
19 further clarify what is currently within ESSA,
20 either through guidance or through other means of
21 TA. So that is one way in which we would welcome
22 the Commission's engagement and assistance in

1 identifying those areas that you think would be
2 most helpful for states and local districts.

3 Additionally, we are engaged kind of in
4 an education process, which is happening
5 throughout the country. The Secretary has been
6 making a lot of -- he has been engaged in trying
7 to educate about not only the implementation but
8 ensure that everyone know that the department is
9 listening with eyes wide open in terms of what it
10 is that we need to be doing within these last --
11 what's the countdown? What is it?

12 MR. JOHNS: 280 days.

13 MS. HOUSE: Okay. Thank you. And so we
14 take it seriously because we know that we have
15 exactly that much time to get as much done as
16 possible and so we are, in addition to the
17 Secretary being out in front, we are also, many of
18 us, particularly myself, have been out on ESSA, we
19 call it ESSA Listening Sessions, and so I was at
20 one in Columbia, South Carolina, in which I met
21 with a group. We had a listening session with
22 over a hundred plus teachers, kind of getting

1 their input as to what it is they felt was
2 necessary and could be of assistance and try to
3 understand the new implementation and transition
4 from NCLB to ESSA.

5 Also was able to visit schools and then
6 also met separately with leadership, with selected
7 leaders, teachers and principals as well as
8 representatives from the various unions and
9 association affiliates within Columbia, South
10 Carolina, including, I see Becky here, the local
11 affiliate from NEA, as well as representatives
12 from the association there, as well.

13 And so we'll be engaged in additional
14 listening sessions. I'll be going out to New
15 Orleans, Louisiana, engaged in listening session
16 there, and I know many of us across the department
17 are doing the same.

18 So that feedback we're taking seriously
19 because we're trying to understand exactly how we
20 can engage again in clarification within ESSA. A
21 lot of this information we're getting back from
22 teachers and educators kind of replies a lot

1 particularly to the Title II Use of Funds, how it
2 is they can particularly around resource
3 allocation, especially for those schools that are
4 maybe non- Title I schools, and how it is the
5 department can be of further assistance.

6 So there are a number of other things
7 that we're engaged in and trying to make sure that
8 we are getting information out, trying to educate
9 people about how to engage in meaningful
10 consultation, as things are being prepared by the
11 state and the local districts, and we are
12 continuing to work with states in what we call
13 equity labs.

14 A recent one was done within Mississippi
15 in which we brought together the administrators
16 from the local school districts from the region,
17 across the region, not just in Mississippi, to
18 talk about how to provide equity, better equity,
19 but also engage in the creation of their state
20 plans and ensure that they were working across
21 many lines in order to correct some of the gaps,
22 achievement gaps, as well as to identify how it is

1 they could be of better assistance and work more
2 closely across the districts and also with the
3 department.

4 So those are just a few things I wanted
5 to kind of give you information about. Again, I
6 am going to stop now and so I can make sure that I
7 can just take your questions and provide answers.
8 I do have limited information I can share with
9 regard to the negotiated rulemaking process since
10 we're engaged in that right now but I can speak to
11 -- I can try to speak to around the edges as much
12 as possible.

13 So thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: We are interested
15 in knowing more about how we can best have some
16 impact on the recommendations as we think about
17 ways of advocating for African American students.

18 MS. HOUSE: Absolutely.

19 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: So I'm going to ask
20 my colleagues, if people would like to ask
21 questions now of her about ESSA, and secondly,
22 we've got opportunities for questions to both of

1 our panelists right now. We'll start with David.

2 MR. JOHNS: Tykiah.

3 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Tykiah, okay. I'm
4 sorry. Tykiah, then Barbara, then Becky, then
5 Mike, then Peggy. Okay. In that order. Tykiah
6 first.

7 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Hi, good morning,
8 Kristen.

9 MS. HARPER: Good morning.

10 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: It's great to put
11 a face to a name now. So you mentioned the two
12 percent that did respond. What was their ratio?

13 MS. HARPER: The two percent? I
14 apologize. What was the question?

15 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: The two percent
16 that did respond, what was the ratio that they
17 used?

18 MS. HARPER: So you have -- so two
19 percent of districts in the nation that were
20 identified by their states as having significant
21 disproportionality. What's troubling about that
22 number is it's not like it's spread like thinly

1 throughout the nation. Right now, we have about
2 22 states that don't identify any districts. We
3 have about, you know, only -- keep in mind that
4 states are supposed to be identifying across three
5 different areas, identification of a child as one
6 with a disability, placement, and discipline.

7 We only have five states that are
8 actually identifying districts across all three
9 areas and of the districts that are identified,
10 only, I think, 75 percent of those districts are
11 only in seven states.

12 So, in general, I think states right now
13 are using -- and many of them are using some kind
14 of risk ratio threshold which means, you know, if
15 they say -- if they have a risk ratio threshold of
16 three, that means they're only identifying a
17 district where at least one, you know, subgroup is
18 being placed, identified, you know, disciplined at
19 a rate three times that of others.

20 See if I can remember my numbers here.
21 I think we have -- the most districts out there
22 are at three or four. I mean, most states are at

1 three or four. We have a few at two. Louisiana,
2 for example, has a risk ratio threshold of two and
3 they identified based of off one year of data. So
4 we have a lot of districts just behind and
5 Louisiana, they contribute a lot.

6 And then we have a couple of districts -
7 - we have a few districts -- I'm sorry -- a few
8 states at five and then there's nobody at six and
9 we have one state that's currently at seven and,
10 you know, of the two percent, you know, that are
11 identified, I'm not entirely certain sort of which
12 -- you know, because you have to look at both, you
13 know, how rigorous the risk ratio threshold is in
14 combination with how many years of data that you
15 look at in combination with how many districts
16 that they did not even include in the analysis,
17 it's hard to simply say that their choice of
18 threshold alone is what's meaning that they're not
19 identifying any districts.

20 But, in general, we are seeing that the
21 big problems that most -- many -- we have a good
22 number of states that just aren't identifying

1 anybody and that even when they are identifying,
2 they're only identifying just for identification
3 or just for discipline or just for placement.

4 MR. JOHNS: Two quick statements for the
5 record. One, our office will share the dates and
6 locations of listening sessions that Tanya Clay
7 House mentioned and we'll continue to share that
8 information to ensure that you not only have it
9 but can share it with your networks and
10 Commissioner Wright has been working with Kristen
11 Harper on a set of resources, including op-eds, to
12 amplify these areas of intersection and ways for
13 us to advance opportunities for African Americans
14 with disabilities and so there will be some
15 additional information that will architecturalize
16 not only the resources that have already been
17 provided but that will leverage the expertise
18 around the table to amplify what has already been
19 said.

20 Commissioner Comer.

21 COMMISSIONER COMER: Okay. The over-
22 identification of African American children for

1 suspension begins well before school age.
2 Certainly they're being suspended in preschool at
3 huge rates and one wonders then what is the
4 transition period between the children who are in
5 preschool and have been identified as having some
6 kind of difficulty and the school-age kindergarten
7 level.

8 Are we working on the transition between
9 those two entities and then we have Head Start
10 that is serving 10 percent of children with
11 disabilities and yet very rarely has a teacher
12 that knows anything about disabilities and,
13 thirdly, we've got the identification of large
14 numbers of children in preschool and kindergarten
15 but we -- and they're put into least restrictive
16 environments which mean that a teacher that has no
17 idea what to do with the child with a discipline
18 problem or a learning disability.

19 So how are we addressing all three of
20 those issues as we move on to the new ESSA?

21 MS. HARPER: So in the proposed rule,
22 we're not requiring any new data collection from

1 the states. They don't have -- the states are
2 using the exact same data that they've always been
3 using but that includes looking at in-school, out-
4 of-school suspension, total disciplinary removals
5 for students starting at the age of three.

6 So they already collect that data. We
7 are now saying with this proposed rule that that
8 has to be part of the body of data that you look
9 at when identifying districts.

10 COMMISSIONER COMER: But the three rules
11 are not in the public schools.

12 MS. HARPER: Right. But they are in
13 early childhood special ed. They're still
14 serviced under Part B.

15 COMMISSIONER COMER: All right. In
16 other words, they have to be being served?

17 MS. HARPER: Yes, correct, right. They
18 have to be being served. They have to be in some
19 sort of program that they can be assisted under,
20 out of, yes.

21 So a district can absolutely be
22 identified because, you know, they are treating

1 disproportionately, you know, any student subgroup
2 in, you know, the early grades, same as the later
3 grades. We did not require in the rule that it be
4 - - that three-year-olds, four-year-olds be
5 separated out from the rest. They're sort of
6 lumped in with the older students as part of the
7 analysis. We didn't require a state to separate
8 them out anymore but we again also required that
9 once a district has identified, they can use that
10 15 percent of dollars not simply for kindergarten,
11 which is the case under the current regulation.
12 Under the proposed, they can start providing
13 services and help, you know, starting in
14 preschool.

15 I also, you know, mentioned earlier that
16 we do have -- while we have an issue of over-
17 representation for students of color in special
18 ed, we have underrepresentation in early childhood
19 special ed, that we, you know, need to do more to
20 make certain that students are screened for
21 developmental delays earlier, that they have, you
22 know, greater access to early childhood special

1 education.

2 I mean, with, you know, the expansion of
3 comprehensive CIES down to preschool, hopefully,
4 you know, that's one of those issues that we can
5 address there.

6 I think I'll stop there.

7 COMMISSIONER COMER: Is there any way to
8 know that the dollar spent are being effective?

9 MS. HARPER: That's an awesome question.
10 So one of the things we heard -- before we
11 actually went out with the proposed rule, we did
12 a request for information. After we saw the GAO
13 report that told us about the two percent, that
14 told us about the incredible variability and how
15 significant disproportionality was being
16 identified in districts, we actually went out with
17 a request for information to ask the public about
18 what should we do on this issue and we actually
19 received a fair number of comments, saying that at
20 present, comprehensive CIES wasn't very helpful
21 because for identification, once a district is
22 identified, they can only start at kindergarten.

1 They couldn't go earlier. So we've tried to
2 address that. And they said, you know, for
3 purposes of discipline and placement, you know,
4 those are disparities amongst kids that already
5 have disabilities. You're comparing students, you
6 know, Hispanic students with disabilities to all
7 other students with disabilities.

8 So if you get identified for disparities
9 in placement amongst students with disabilities
10 and you can't use the money under current
11 regulation to provide services to students with
12 disabilities, how can you address the problem?

13 So, I mean, we don't have a lot of
14 information about the impact of comprehensive CIES
15 but we have gotten some concern that to the extent
16 it's not effective. You have the same districts
17 identified every year continuing to set aside the
18 15 percent and it's not having an impact is
19 because you have this sort of mismatch between,
20 you know, potential issues that you can identify
21 and the ways you can use the dollars.

22 COMMISSIONER BOWMAN: Could I ask just

1 one more questions?

2 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Yes.

3 COMMISSIONER BOWMAN: And that's on the
4 Title I issue and I gather now preschool is
5 explicitly listed as being one of the things you
6 can spend your Title I money for. It was always
7 there but it's now being -- is there any effort
8 being made to engage the childcare centers and the
9 Head Start Programs in those expenditures of
10 funds?

11 In other words, can they spend the money
12 on programs that are not in public schools?

13 MS. HOUSE: Sure. So I think that what
14 we are looking at identifying is, yes, how can we
15 provide the best guidance either through a
16 rulemaking authority or through other types of
17 guidance that we're looking into, particularly
18 around maybe early learning or particularly around
19 in Title IV, there's a number of variety of ways
20 in which districts can utilize those funds, as
21 well.

22 So the answer to your question is, yes,

1 the department is considering that as an issue as
2 a way that we can provide greater clarity as well
3 as looking at how it is to incorporate the
4 accountability provisions -- as to how ensure that
5 within the state planning process, that states are
6 considering all the parameters by which they're
7 identifying and taking into account the
8 accountability for students, preschool through
9 12.

10 COMMISSIONER BOWMAN: The child-parent
11 centers were explicitly available for funding in
12 the previous Title I. Is that still going to be
13 the same? It's a comprehensive program as
14 opposed to having a very narrowly-defined program.

15 MS. HOUSE: So yes. I mean, I'm not the
16 expert within early learning, so I'm going to
17 defer to my staffer who's actually the one who
18 could be able to give you greater clarity, so I
19 can actually connect through David to make sure I
20 can follow up about that specific question.

21 I will say that again we -- there is a
22 lot of interest in your question and about how it

1 is we can identify the use of funds for early
2 learning and so that is being taken into account
3 as we're trying to figure out what types of
4 guidance we're going to provide.

5 I wasn't able to -- I didn't say this
6 earlier but I do want to, now that you've, you
7 know, brought up this particular question on other
8 types of guidance.

9 We have identified that we're going to -
10 - I know the Secretary, when he was testifying
11 last week in his sixth hearing in front of
12 Congress, he was giving some -- he provided some
13 information, shared some information about other
14 types of guidance we're going to be providing.

15 So, in addition to the rulemaking that I
16 mentioned in Title I, we're also providing
17 guidance thus far on for the changes within -- for
18 foster care students within ESSA. There are
19 additional provisions that connect both with --
20 for foster care students as well as homeless
21 students in McKinney- Vento. So those two areas,
22 we're providing guidance on the earlier end

1 because there's a need for states to incorporate
2 within to their planning process how they're going
3 to ensure that the needs are met for foster
4 students as well as connecting between the
5 homeless centers and those foster students that
6 are overlapping and, additionally, we're looking
7 at guidance within Title III for English learners.

8 So those are the three areas that we're
9 additionally looking at guidance and I think again
10 we've got a host of other things that we're
11 looking into.

12 COMMISSIONER BOWMAN: Well, I think Dr.
13 Comer and I would both be very much in favor of
14 suggesting that we put our emphasis on a
15 comprehensive program or at least an attention to
16 the parents, to the social and emotional
17 development of children, as well as their academic
18 performance.

19 MR. JOHNS: So, Tanya, we'll follow up
20 with how you can help the Commission think about
21 the best way to advance that priority or that
22 recommendation.

1 MS. HOUSE: Sure. Okay.

2 MR. JOHNS: We also talk about any
3 implications that exist in terms of the Title III
4 guidance for African American students and
5 thinking about them and their language learning
6 needs and then can you also reflect upon what you
7 might ask of this Commission with regard to state
8 equity plans --

9 MS. HOUSE: Okay.

10 MR. JOHNS: -- in ESSA?

11 MS. HOUSE: Okay.

12 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: That's quite a bit.

13 MS. HOUSE: It is. Well, it's okay.
14 I'm used to that with David. So let me start with
15 the last first, the state equity plans, and then
16 I'll work backwards on Title III.

17 So I think the best way to engage on the
18 state equity plan process is to, you know, right
19 now, we are really trying to educate stakeholders
20 beyond the Beltway about the need to engage early
21 with the local school districts and with the state
22 education agencies and the reason being is because

1 there's a requirement for meaningful consultation
2 in this development of the state plans and,
3 however, there's often a dearth of information
4 beyond the Beltway about that need and what that
5 actually means.

6 And so for us, we think that it's
7 important at least to educate, make sure that you
8 know and understand the timeline because, for
9 example, many -- you know, we're transitioning
10 between NCLB to ESSA.

11 Now many of these provisions are really
12 not scheduled to take effect officially or
13 effectively until the '18 school year. All right.
14 So that means that, however, they need to start
15 planning now in order to provide to the department
16 their state plan or their consolidated state plan,
17 whichever it is they so choose to pursue, and so
18 it would be most helpful for this Commission to
19 engage your stakeholders and those that you are in
20 touch with to identify for them how it is that
21 they can at least let them know that this is a
22 requirement and let them know that they need to

1 engage early, to engage with us, the Department of
2 Education, to provide any types of comments or
3 recommendations that they think is necessary that
4 could help them on the ground.

5 I think that right now, we are bringing
6 in people as much as possible. We are collecting
7 comments and recommendations as to what we can be
8 pursuing and so we really need that type of
9 commentary coming from this Commission,
10 particularly as it pertains to students of color,
11 to African American students.

12 So moving on to Title III, I think that
13 this really goes to the definition that you're
14 talking about within, you know, ensuring that
15 there is a robust definition and understanding and
16 appreciation for when we're talking about English
17 learners and how it is that we are -- the
18 percentages that are being considered within the
19 states as to what it is that they have to provide
20 these types of services and so I think that is,
21 from our perspective, I think a value for all of
22 this Commission to engage, to again identify these

1 types of issues of our particular concern for you,
2 so that we can take note of that as we're
3 developing this guidance right now.

4 We have an initial plan and, as I said,
5 we've identified that we're going to provide
6 guidance on Title III. The expectation is that
7 that guidance would probably not come out until
8 the late summer or fall. So that means you have
9 until then to give us as much information as
10 possible or comments or recommendations as to what
11 you think we should be doing.

12 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Very good. I'm
13 going to ask we go Becky, then Mike, then Peggy,
14 and then Kent, we got your message from before.
15 We'll start with Becky.

16 COMMISSIONER PRINGLE: Kristen, towards
17 the end of your comments and you answered my
18 question but I do want to put out -- point out
19 that Robin asked you to comment on it.

20 For states to set aside 15 percent of
21 their IDEA funding, which is significantly
22 underfunded, I don't know if it's at 16 or 17

1 percent of the 40 percent right now, but here's
2 the rub.

3 We're asking them to take these steps to
4 not only develop, to conduct a review of the
5 significant disproportionally but then to begin to
6 do something about it, and we're asking them to
7 set aside 15 percent of money they don't have to
8 service -- already to service students with
9 disabilities.

10 So when we think about carrots and
11 sticks and which we have to use, of course, I'm
12 sure you share my concern of them perhaps not
13 taking the steps they need to take because they
14 already are underfunded in terms of providing
15 resources.

16 So I would just ask that you comment on
17 -- I don't know -- plans, what you're thinking
18 about in terms of engaging with them to maybe
19 perhaps see -- help them see the benefit of
20 setting aside this amount of money when they have
21 so much they have to do with so little and what
22 the department has been thinking about in terms of

1 trying to get them to move beyond, you know, the
2 seven times, which is ridiculous, of course, to
3 those smaller numbers when, in doing that, it
4 would necessarily mean they'd have to take that
5 money from a pot that's not enough.

6 MS. HARPER: So I'll start by saying
7 that the proposed rule is the beginning of the
8 conversation, it's not the end. So, I mean, at
9 this point, we're in a public comment period where
10 we definitely want exactly, you know, that kind of
11 feedback about those specific kind of concerns.

12 I'll also note that the 15 percent was
13 always there, right. The IDEA statute requires a
14 15-percent set-aside when a district is
15 identified. That is not something that we've
16 touched in any way but, yes, with our proposed
17 rule, we're thinking that we're going to end up
18 with a percentage of districts somewhat upwards of
19 two percent.

20 We really want districts with this rule
21 to begin to reconceptualize how they're supporting
22 struggling learners and I would go so far as to

1 say that when you're in a situation where you are
2 suspending and expelling incredibly high numbers
3 of students at the same time that you're using,
4 you know, even scarce resources to provide them
5 with supports, there are aspects of your system
6 that are working at cross purposes and there's a
7 need to step back and rethink how you're providing
8 supports.

9 We know that -- I mean, just to offer,
10 you know, another statistic. There was a
11 longitudinal study in Texas that was released in
12 2011. It was a million Texas school children. 15
13 percent of the students in that study, 15 percent
14 of one million Texas schoolchildren had been
15 suspended out of school 11 or more times between
16 seventh grade and 12th grade.

17 We know that one suspension increases
18 the likelihood of dropout, increases the
19 likelihood of retention, increases the likelihood
20 of contact with JJ, and when you've gotten to a
21 point where such high numbers of students are
22 being removed and we know -- and that's just --

1 that was all of the kids -- it was 15 percent of
2 all the kids.

3 I don't know what the number was for
4 students with disabilities but I'm quite certain
5 it was higher. Nationally, we have one in four
6 boys of color with disabilities, one in five girls
7 of color with disabilities, but those numbers are
8 even higher when you're talking about -- when
9 you're looking at very specific communities.
10 Those are just the national figures.

11 When you've gotten to the point where
12 you're suspending upwards of 50 percent of your
13 children with disabilities, upwards of 75 percent
14 of students of color with disabilities, and that
15 is actually the case in a few places, I would say
16 that even with scarce resources, we've really got
17 to rethink how we're responding when students are
18 presenting with reading challenges, with
19 behavioral challenges because something in the way
20 we're going about doing it now is not working.

21 At the same time, I will say it's the
22 beginning of the conversation and this is by no

1 means the first time I've heard that particular
2 concern and definitely looking, you know, for
3 things and suggestions as to, you know, ways that
4 we can, you know, address that particular concern.

5 COMMISSIONER PRINGLE: Thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER COMER: To put it in the
7 prevention context.

8 MS. HARPER: To put it in the prevention
9 context, so district gets identified, right now
10 we'll say -- let's do pre/post.

11 Right now, a district gets, you know,
12 identified with significant disproportionately, the
13 current statute and regulations say that they
14 really should be directing those funds to K to 3,
15 right. With our proposed change in the regulation,
16 they can now start in preschool. They can now
17 start earlier. They can use the funds for
18 screening. You know, with any luck, maybe some of
19 the students that are provided with, you know,
20 really early supports, maybe they don't need
21 special education services later to support them
22 in school. They've already gotten what they need

1 early.

2 You know, right now, a district that's
3 suspended, you know, expelling, you know, any
4 number of students, say they get identified and
5 now they use the dollars to implement social,
6 emotional, and they use the dollars to implement
7 multi-tiered behavioral frameworks or restorative
8 practices or simply to train teachers about how to
9 set up their classroom to reduce the likelihood of
10 behavioral disruption in the classroom, so that
11 you don't even have, you know, the same kinds of
12 behaviors that, you know, appearing that are now
13 leading to suspension and expulsion.

14 So that 15 percent, yeah, I'm not going
15 to pretend like that's going to be easy for some
16 districts to absorb. For some, that's a pretty
17 good chunk of their money that right now they're
18 using to support students with disabilities, but I
19 also posit that in those districts, there are --
20 there's at least subgroup of students for whom
21 that system isn't working and it needs to work for
22 them, too.

1 COMMISSIONER PRINGLE: Thank you,
2 Freeman. I have a question for Tanya, too, but in
3 the interests of the other commissioners, if she
4 could just jot it down and get to it when she gets
5 a chance to talk.

6 First of all, thank you for doing the
7 listening tours. That was a really important
8 piece of ESSA to codify that actually within the
9 law that we're reaching out to stakeholders and
10 hearing them. So thank you.

11 When you talked about the equity plans,
12 you mentioned the creation of state plans to
13 correct achievement gaps. What I'd like for you
14 to talk about more is the equity plans being
15 inclusive of opportunity to learn gaps and
16 resources and access and things like that.

17 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Let's go ahead and
18 we'll come back.

19 Let the record reflect that Commissioner
20 Spencer Overton has joined us.

21 Go ahead, Michael.

22 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: Thank you, Mr.

1 Chairman.

2 I have -- I appreciate your thorough
3 knowledge about special education and what you've
4 presented to us. It suggests that there's a
5 massive amount of reform that's needed and some
6 attention given to the system for special ed
7 students.

8 So I want to step back for a second and
9 it may be that what I'm going to suggest to you
10 requires more time than we should take here but I
11 want to do it on the record so that we could try
12 to get it in the hopper.

13 In all of what you mentioned, I was
14 having some difficulty trying to discern the
15 African American element in the problem. Okay.
16 So I have some basic questions that might help us
17 to frame what we need to do as a commission on
18 African American excellence in education.

19 One is how many people are we talking
20 about who are African American in the country who
21 are classified as special education students and
22 then on top of that, do we have a systematic or

1 common way of selecting those people across the
2 country?

3 In other words, is there a process that
4 a district or a school must go through to identify
5 and tag somebody as a special education student?
6 Are we overrepresented?

7 MS. HARPER: So the simple answer to
8 your question is, yes, we are overrepresented. If
9 you look at the national figures, I don't know the
10 exact ones off the top of my head, I think in
11 general -- I don't -- it's somewhere between eight
12 to 11 percent of students generally are placed
13 into special ed. I know that black students are
14 somewhat higher. If you were to just look at
15 those two numbers, you're not going to be shocked.
16 The gap doesn't seem incredibly large.

17 However, it's really when you begin to
18 look into specific disability categories that you
19 start to see a very different picture. So you
20 don't see, you know, a lot of gaps when it comes
21 to, you know, identification for blindness, for,
22 you know, identification -- you know, there's gaps

1 for autism, gaps for deaf. You're not seeing gaps
2 -- where you're seeing the gaps are emotional
3 disturbance, intellectual disabilities, specific
4 learning disabilities, and those are areas where
5 we call them high-incidence disabilities.

6 We have a lot of students that are
7 getting identified with those. They're also
8 commonly thought of as the more subjective
9 disabilities, where, you know, it really does take
10 a team sitting around the table looking through,
11 you know, this child's history and using various
12 tools and information about this child to figure
13 out, okay, how do we best support this student and
14 do they have an education disability where
15 supports are going to be needed to, you know,
16 support their progress in the general curriculum?

17 So, I mean, the simple answer to your
18 question is at the national level, just special
19 education overall, yes, we are slightly
20 overrepresented. Specific disability categories,
21 we are very overrepresented. For black students
22 specifically, it's twice as likely to be

1 identified for emotional disturbance as our peers.

2 But I'll also note that that's not the
3 end of the story because overrepresentation
4 doesn't tell you anything about the
5 appropriateness of the identification. It is
6 possible to be overrepresented and under-
7 identified at the same time.

8 We don't have a lot of information about
9 that but what we do know is when we see over-
10 representation, it's an indication that we need to
11 start thinking about things differently and
12 especially putting a heavier focus on those early
13 years to get students, you know, before either
14 they've entered grade school to provide them with
15 the timely services.

16 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: So thank you for
17 that response and I just, Mr. Chairman, I would
18 just like to suggest I don't know if you are aware
19 but our executive director's leading us in putting
20 together a comprehensive report and I wonder if
21 you've seen that, these data.

22 I mean, I'm especially interested in

1 those categories where you said we are
2 overrepresented. If you could help us, I mean, by
3 making sure that those data get into that report
4 and, if possible, you know, could you let us know
5 like these areas where we're really way
6 overrepresented. I'm especially interested in the
7 emotional social issues that you raised and I'm
8 assuming that states and school districts are
9 requiring some kind of assessment for students to
10 be classified in those areas.

11 MS. HARPER: Every district looks a
12 little differently. I am not intimately familiar
13 with the specific practices that are put in place
14 for emotional disturbance and how that differs
15 from community to community or what the specific
16 approach is to identify specific learning
17 disabilities and how that may differ from
18 community to community.

19 There's -- I mean, these are not new
20 categories. So these have been around for years
21 and years, you know, under, you know, IDEA. So
22 there's a lot of know-how out there about how we

1 identify. I think probably one of the most -- what
2 makes this issue so complicated is that of
3 disparities and opportunity gaps for our students
4 and when a student, you know, is having trouble in
5 a classroom and they're in third grade, say it's
6 reading challenges, do they have a specific
7 learning disability or have they never been in a
8 classroom where they were able to receive
9 effective instruction and if placed now in a
10 strong classroom with a strong teacher, they'll be
11 just fine. They don't need special ed. That's
12 part of what makes this so complicated but those
13 are exactly the type of issues that we want people
14 to begin thinking about.

15 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: And, Mr.
16 Chairman, just real quickly, if -- Tanya, thank
17 you for your presentation, too.

18 On the ESSA, are there any assessment
19 issues that are contentious?

20 MS. HOUSE: You haven't been watching
21 the negotiated rulemaking. That's not an
22 exciting, you know, high point of your life right

1 now.

2 So there are a number of things that are
3 being negotiated right now. That's probably all I
4 can say, that I think it's a value to, you know,
5 their public, as I said. So this, the current
6 session, is open to the public. So I do
7 encourage, to the extent that you can, even if you
8 have assistants or interns that could, you know,
9 monitor and kind of give you a summary of what's
10 happening, I think that would be useful for this
11 Commission.

12 I also think that, as I said, we're
13 going to be wrapping this up on Wednesday, so
14 you'll have a good idea as to, in your words, how
15 contentious or non-contentious some of those
16 issues are.

17 I think it's important to understand
18 that, I mean, we're talking -- this is incredibly
19 important, what we're negotiating on, and there's
20 a reason to ensure that all the stakeholders and
21 all parties are engaged in this process and that
22 means that, you know, within, you know, some of

1 this rulemaking, we're talking -- I mean, some of
2 these negotiations, we're talking about all
3 subgroups and all categories and that's really
4 been identified and highlighted within ESSA.

5 It's been carried over from NCLB and I
6 think that was an important carryover from NCLB
7 and I think that it's up to, I think, all of us to
8 ensure that there's an effectiveness of
9 implementation of ESSA to ensure that it's not
10 simply a matter of words on the paper as it was
11 carried over.

12 So that was a roundabout way of saying
13 that I'd encourage you to look into it because I'm
14 just not able to legally talk about much of that
15 yet but I think after, you know, we kind of finish
16 with the negotiations, we have a better idea where
17 things are headed and I think that it will be --
18 you'll have a better understanding as to I think
19 where things stand.

20 Can I at least in terms of identifying a
21 few things that would be of value for this
22 Commission, as well? I think it would be

1 particularly helpful to, as you're considering
2 areas to provide input, we've already spoken
3 somewhat about early learning. I mentioned that
4 we're already going to be rulemaking on foster
5 care students as well as homeless students within
6 McKinney-Vento as well as Title III and English
7 learners.

8 There are a variety of other titles that
9 exist. Within Title IV, you recognize that there
10 is -- that title has kind of combined a lot of the
11 place-based programs, particularly in the mental
12 health counseling as well as kind of school safety
13 and harassment, bullying prevention. A lot of the
14 programs that I think have been particularly
15 utilized for our communities. So I think it is
16 useful to look into Title IV and identify if there
17 are -- you know, for this Commission to kind of
18 provide any recommendations that you think could
19 be particularly useful for African American
20 students as to how the department can provide
21 greater guidance to the states and local
22 districts.

1 Similarly, within some of our other
2 titles, I mentioned Title II. I think it's of
3 value to identify, you know, what -- you know, how
4 it is that potentially we're looking at the use of
5 funds within Title II, you know, whether or not
6 that is something that could be provided better
7 clarity, especially as we're looking at some of
8 the provisions that are the statutory requirements
9 within ESSA, which is there's a specific provision
10 which I do want to highlight for you all that says
11 that there needs to be -- states have to identify
12 whether or not there exists a disproportionately
13 for the effective -- for the disproportionately for
14 low- income and minority students when it comes to
15 effective and experienced and out-of-field
16 teachers and so that is a very important provision
17 that we're also -- we pulled out when we're
18 looking at regulating on within Title I with the
19 planning process and I think that again these are
20 -- we know that from experience, from history,
21 that -- and from the data that exists right now,
22 that oftentimes children of color, particularly

1 African American students, have a high proportion
2 of the least experienced teachers and I think that
3 that is something in which could be of value that
4 this Commission could bring to the table, if
5 you're looking for other ways, I think, to kind of
6 support the efforts that we're engaged in.

7 Two more quick things before I shut up.
8 I know that I have to leave but there's a couple
9 other things that we're doing and that I think
10 would -- that are outside of ESSA but I do think
11 could be of interest.

12 I didn't speak much about the
13 President's budget but there within the budget,
14 the Department of Education's budget, there is a
15 proposal that we are really prioritizing within
16 the department called Stronger Together and that
17 proposal is incentivizing the development of
18 comprehensive programs to ensure diversity within
19 our schools and classrooms.

20 We are focused on the assurance of
21 socio- economic diversity within this initiative
22 which is supplemental to the other forms of

1 diversity, racial diversity, that we'll also
2 continue to encourage within the department.

3 This proposal is something that is a
4 high priority for the Secretary and because we
5 know that there is -- there does continue to be a
6 -- there is a correlation between the
7 socioeconomic status and the achievement levels,
8 particularly for students of color, when we're
9 looking at our schoolrooms and classrooms, that we
10 think this is a very important proposal that we
11 want to ensure gets funded within the budget and
12 so I encourage this Commission to look into this
13 proposal more.

14 I am happy to say that we'll be speaking
15 about this more, the Secretary will be speaking
16 about this more at the Century Foundation event
17 tomorrow, and he'll be giving a keynote address.
18 I will be on a panel along with a colleague from
19 the NEA, Donna Harris Akins, also speaking about
20 this initiative.

21 So I wanted to highlight that and then,
22 secondly, we're also working towards -- and I

1 think David may have mentioned this already -- a
2 teacher diversity summit, again looking at the
3 diversity within our education -- within our
4 teacher and workforce and so that will be
5 happening in early May.

6 So we're working on multiple fronts and
7 I think that it's important for -- I think it'd be
8 helpful and important for this Commission to weigh
9 in on these issues because, from our perspective,
10 the reason that we're -- the primary reason that
11 we are pushing the need for diversity within our
12 schools and classrooms is not for diversity's
13 sake, it is because we believe that is the way to
14 ensure equity within our classrooms and that is
15 the best way to make sure that we're closing that
16 achievement gap for all our students.

17 So this is extremely important on our
18 end and I encourage you to, you know, ask
19 questions. If there are things that can be of
20 value to you, we're happy to provide that.

21 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: We're going to go
22 with Peggy and then Kent and then Bryant, yes.

1 COMMISSIONER BROOKINS: Thank you,
2 Tanya, for those comments. I have a couple of
3 questions around the supplement versus supplant.

4 I just got a text from the Commissioner
5 of Education of Kentucky, whose equity plans have
6 been accepted, and one of the things we wanted to
7 talk about was the issues you just spoke about,
8 about the number of inexperienced teachers in
9 classrooms that are full of kids of color.

10 The other thing that is -- we know is
11 part of the equity plans, you're required to get
12 information from all stakeholders and input from
13 all stakeholders. He's put together a commission
14 of stakeholders that includes accomplished
15 teachers and what those accomplished teachers want
16 to do with Title II funds having embedded
17 professional development, so that within schools
18 that we have young teachers that they get support
19 and especially those teachers who are teaching a
20 high percentage of students of color.

21 The question is we have teachers who are
22 at the table and Dr. Pruitt is one of those who

1 will listen to teachers who are at the table. He
2 has a large national board-certified network, all
3 full disclosure. I am the president of the
4 national board.

5 So what they want to do is to use Title
6 II funds for embedded professional development
7 within schools to change culture and climate, so
8 that we have a support system all the way through
9 for those teachers who are very young, new to the
10 profession, and even teachers who are experienced
11 who, the things that my distinguished colleagues
12 on the other side of the table have spoken about
13 as far as how do we educate teachers in a better
14 way, so that they understand within a classroom
15 how to plan around students with certain
16 disabilities, and as well as plan around every
17 student that they have within the classroom and
18 the types of professional development needed for
19 that.

20 So I'm assuming and hoping that we will
21 push for embedded professional development that
22 will allow them to do that very thing.

1 MS. HOUSE: And I would encourage you to
2 submit those to the department. I am writing that
3 down and so I have that information, as well. You
4 are not alone for recommending that type of
5 availability for Title II funds for professional
6 development and so with regard to your initial
7 question about supplement, not supplant, again
8 that's an area that I'm not at liberty to talk
9 much about that at this point and so as we
10 continue through the negotiated rulemaking process
11 but there again are those areas in which we're
12 trying to identify what those resources look like
13 and how we can utilize both those funds within the
14 state planning process to ensure that these are
15 indeed effective equity plans.

16 So what I would -- just for your
17 information, if you're as a Commission putting
18 together your recommendations, it would be very
19 helpful to receive these recommendations sooner
20 than later as we're trying to figure out more so
21 what we're going to be doing on guidance.

22 You can send that information to me.

1 I'm hoping to manage that process and so it'd be
2 particularly helpful as we're trying to engage
3 with stakeholders right now. If there are
4 additional stakeholders that we need to be engaged
5 with on the ground within Kentucky or outlying in
6 other areas, please also let us know and we'll
7 definitely take that into consideration.

8 COMMISSIONER BROOKINS: Thank you.
9 We've put together a draft document for states and
10 districts --

11 MS. HOUSE: Okay.

12 COMMISSIONER BROOKINS: -- to follow,
13 coordinated with the SF regulations itself.

14 MS. HOUSE: Okay.

15 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Very good. We're
16 going with Kent, then Bryant, then James, then
17 Doris.

18 COMMISSIONER McGUIRE: Thank you. Well,
19 first of all, I wanted to applaud Kristen's
20 consistent efforts over more than one assignment
21 inside the department to list these issues of
22 suspensions and exclusions.

1 I think that so profoundly effects
2 performance and completion rates in K-12 for the
3 population that we're focused on and I worry about
4 whether or not that the submission will say enough
5 about that dynamic.

6 I was going to ask both of them and
7 Tanya especially if there were particular things
8 she would love to hear from the Commission on but
9 I thought she addressed that question in response
10 to Michael really well.

11 So I just have one question for Tanya at
12 this point. I'm curious how the session in
13 Mississippi went. My organization has been
14 collaborating with Partners For on this question
15 of stakeholder engagement across the South and we
16 have planned to work more diligently on that. I'm
17 happy and I'll probably talk to David about how we
18 connect to the Commission in that regard but if
19 you could comment quickly on how it's going, what
20 you wish was happening that wasn't or particular
21 advice you have for us about how to stage and
22 support stakeholders, we would really appreciate

1 it.

2 In the red states, the likelihood that
3 this newfound flexibility will be used in ways
4 that have an adverse impact on African American
5 students, seems to me, is high. So the question
6 is raised with that concern in mind.

7 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: And this is Tanya's
8 last response because she was supposed to be out
9 of here a few minutes ago and she's been very kind
10 to stay.

11 MS. HOUSE: Sure. So just so I'm clear
12 about your question, it's how it is that
13 particularly Southern states can be engaged kind
14 of in a stakeholder outreach, is that correct?

15 COMMISSIONER McGUIRE: Yeah. I mean,
16 you mentioned the event in Mississippi. I'm
17 curious if there'll be more of those. We're
18 partnering with the organization that's partnering
19 with the department. So I'm just really curious
20 what we ought to be thinking about as we try to
21 get stakeholders ostensibly involved.

22 MS. HOUSE: Okay. Sure. So to answer

1 your question about other equity labs, yes, we
2 will be doing more. I know that we're actually
3 doing a follow-up to the Mississippi Equity Lab, I
4 believe in June, and so we can -- I can work
5 through David to make sure that -- and as you said
6 that you're already partnering with the
7 organizations that are assisting the department.

8 COMMISSIONER McGUIRE: Southern
9 Education Foundation working with Partners For,
10 yes.

11 MS. HOUSE: Okay. So but we -- so we
12 can make sure that -- yes. So we are continuing
13 to move on these equity labs, not just in
14 Mississippi but other areas. I don't have the
15 full list in front of me but I can get that. It's
16 actually -- we have a lot of our teaching --
17 teacher ambassador fellows and our principal
18 ambassador fellows are spearheading those efforts
19 and I have one that's working with me who did the
20 Mississippi Equity Lab. So actually I can get
21 probably a more fuller- detailed response to you
22 if you'd like, but I did -- my understanding that

1 the benefit of that equity lab -- and in
2 attendance was also Deputy Secretary James Cole
3 and the benefit of that was really bringing
4 together the stakeholders and the community
5 because what was found is that nobody was really
6 talking to each other and that's one of the
7 benefits the department can bring to the table and
8 so we are going to continue to do that and move
9 that forward.

10 So, yes, that question in terms of how
11 you can assist in engaging more -- ensuring that
12 the stakeholders are brought to the table, I
13 think, during this process.

14 I think a lot of it is really connecting
15 the dots about the requirements, the statutory
16 requirements to provide that type of meaningful
17 consultation and I think, again, I don't know what
18 else to say, other than to ensure that that
19 process -- there is an education process that is
20 going on because I don't think that most people
21 really recognize that that is something within
22 ESSA or actually the timeline and so that they

1 should not be waiting until later to engage in
2 that process and ensure that they're proactive and
3 so if there is -- I know -- I believe that one of
4 the things that might be of value and I think
5 David and I've spoken about a little bit is what
6 steps might that really look like and so maybe a
7 one-pager or something to that extent as to what
8 might be most useful to kind of give out, a
9 handout as to what that meaningful consultation,
10 based upon just -- not -- we're not talking about
11 formal guidance or anything like that obviously
12 but I'm talking about just what the statute says
13 and ensuring that people know what's out there.

14 So that might be -- you know, there
15 might be some -- I can talk with David about a
16 conversation about maybe providing some types of -
17 - one-pager that could be of value to the
18 Commission as you're trying to work with your
19 stakeholders.

20 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Tanya, thank you
21 very much for being here.

22 MS. HOUSE: Sure.

1 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: We look forward to
2 continuing to work with you.

3 MS. HOUSE: Yes, thank you, thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: We are going to
5 continue on now with Bryant, then Jim, then Doris,
6 and then we'll take a break.

7 COMMISSIONER MARKS: All right. So
8 while Tanya's packing up, rather than asking a
9 question, a quick recommendation. You can still
10 pack up.

11 MS. HOUSE: Well, and, you know, I
12 realize I didn't fully answer Becky's question,
13 and so go ahead, and then I'll try to throw a
14 little bit in there.

15 COMMISSIONER MARKS: Well, just real
16 quick, as a recommendation, if this discussion
17 hasn't happened already.

18 As a parent of a third-year child, my
19 daughter is in a charter school in Atlanta, there
20 is absolutely no transparency around how students
21 are assigned to teachers from year-to-year. So I
22 asked the principal, how do you assign which

1 students as you go to the next grade are assigned
2 to which teachers. Oh, no, it's a random -- they
3 don't say it's random. Say, well, a lot of
4 factors are taken into account but basically we
5 know there's a variety in teacher quality from
6 year to year and so it stands to be the case and
7 especially in the public schools that one student
8 can go through P through 8 of having poor or low -
9 - or teachers who are not very effective and other
10 teachers may have a string of high-quality
11 teachers.

12 You'll never know as the parent but the
13 thing is when I talk to principals and teachers,
14 they'll say, well, actually parents with the
15 loudest mouths, their students are usually taken
16 care of. It may be a matter of temperament between
17 the student and the teacher, what type of students
18 can a teacher handle, but it's the lack of
19 transparency, and so from a policy perspective,
20 requiring a principal to say -- to provide almost
21 ratings, right, of teachers almost per child, so
22 your child from first through eighth on a scale of

1 1 to 5, the average score of my teacher was a 3.2
2 because you might have a student whose average
3 score is a 1.8 in terms of evaluation of that
4 teacher from 1 to 5.

5 So some transparency around principals
6 saying how students are assigned from year to year
7 and if they are taking into account the quality of
8 teacher when making that assignment, such that no
9 student can go through multiple years of poor-
10 performing teachers.

11 MS. HOUSE: So what I will say is that I
12 think it's important to provide that type of
13 recommendation or comment about the transparency
14 that would be of value for parents. It is
15 something that we are considering within -- as
16 we're -- as I mentioned, we're regulating on --
17 within Title I, within the state plans, but also
18 within report cards, and that is a way in which
19 we're ensuring that we're having that kind of
20 really putting meat on the bones as to what that
21 transparency looks like for parents and the public
22 about what is happening in the schools.

1 So I encourage -- without -- I hear what
2 you're saying and so what I would just encourage
3 you to, as the Commission is identifying, you
4 know, your joint recommendations, to, you know,
5 take this into account.

6 The question is really for, I think, our
7 purposes is to what extent, you know, how -- I
8 guess how is it -- there's a lot of measurement
9 that goes -- that takes place that you were just
10 talking about. So I think understanding what the
11 measurements are that you're trying to utilize and
12 identifying what an ineffective, inexperienced, or
13 out-of-field teacher is. That's an extremely and
14 important conversation to have and I think, to the
15 extent that there is comments or recommendations
16 about what that looks like, would be of value to
17 the department.

18 I know again we're trying to figure --
19 we'll listen to all sides as to what might be most
20 useful not only from the state planning process as
21 we're incorporating that but also within to the
22 transparency process as to what -- if we're trying

1 to identify what an effective teacher is,
2 ineffective teacher is, well, what does that mean
3 because there's a lot that is built into that and
4 so we -- it sounds easy but it's extremely
5 complicated in trying to understand what those --
6 what the baseline is for identifying those types -
7 - you know, even -- because it's not just about
8 certification. It's really about figuring out, you
9 know, what -- you know, how you're evaluating
10 whether or not that teacher is ineffective or
11 whether or not again they're qualified or even, to
12 some extent, out of field. It's not just about
13 certification.

14 So again I encourage you to provide that
15 type of commentary and I think to Becky's question
16 about the opportunity to learn and whether or not
17 we can speak to that within the state plans or I
18 don't know if you were asking us to do that but
19 just kind of the question about probably the
20 resources that are available and how it is that
21 we're kind of closing that gap, I think it's --
22 that is being taken into consideration by the

1 department.

2 That's why I keep bringing up the use of
3 funds and how it is that states and local
4 districts can figure out how they can best utilize
5 funds as they're trying to close these achievement
6 gaps and it's not just about -- it's very
7 important to figure out how it is that these funds
8 are moving within the states and the resources
9 that are provided in order to provide students
10 with that opportunity to learn and so I do -- I
11 hear what you're saying, Becky. I don't -- I'm
12 not certain whether -- I can't get into -- again
13 because we're regulating on some of that within --
14 you know, we're not regulating but we're kind of
15 negotiating on some of that within supplement, not
16 supplant. However, within I think our state plan,
17 I think if you look at the notice that we have
18 provided within Title I for state plans, I think
19 it's -- I think you will find that we are
20 definitely considering taking into consideration
21 exactly how states can best utilize those funds in
22 order to close achievement gaps and to the extent

1 how -- to what extent it could be of value.

2 So I don't know that that really got to
3 the meat of your question because I think it was a
4 long-winded response but we can definitely follow
5 up, Becky, afterwards, kind of maybe to provide
6 you a bit more specifics about it.

7 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Jim.

8 COMMISSIONER FREEMAN: Thank you all so
9 much and I want to, first, just echo the comments
10 of Commissioner McGuire on Kristen's phenomenal
11 work over the years on issues of school discipline
12 and school-to-prison pipeline.

13 It really has had a profound impact in
14 communities across the country and I think it can
15 really be a national model that we can look to as
16 a Commission in terms of how the Federal
17 Government's work can support work that's being
18 led by parents and students and communities on the
19 ground.

20 The combination of those two things has
21 really been transformative in a lot of places and
22 Kristen has led a lot of that work over the years

1 and it's been wonderful to have such a great ally
2 in the various positions you've held.

3 I did want to speak or my question
4 really is about -- is related to that, actually
5 related to both your comments and Tanya's, related
6 to special ed disproportionately, related to school
7 discipline disproportionately, and Tanya's leaving
8 now, but it was also going to be about the state
9 equity plans.

10 We have so much more capacity now to
11 identify disproportionately than we did just five
12 years ago, 10 years ago, and that's a tremendous
13 step forward in that districts and states are
14 required to or encouraged to look at this data.

15 Where we have, in my -- from my
16 perspective, very little capacity is in the
17 ability to act on that data. So what I've seen is
18 that there are very few places that are able to
19 sort of take that data that we're asking them or
20 requiring them to look at and have the reflective
21 and critical conversations that they need to have
22 about it to identify the causes of it, to come to

1 some shared understanding of the consequences of
2 it, and then, of course, most importantly, come to
3 decisions about how they can be addressed.

4 And so I was hoping you could speak to
5 that and what resources the department might have
6 to offer on that front and how this Commission
7 could be helpful in addressing any gaps that there
8 might be.

9 MS. HARPER: So thanks, Jim, and to Kent
10 for your very kind words. The work on school
11 discipline has been very much a team effort and by
12 team, I don't simply mean federal team, I mean,
13 you know, federal agencies, philanthropic groups,
14 advocates, both at national and local levels. It
15 has been very much a bottom-up and top-down effort
16 to look to push for reform in this area.

17 So even as we're getting more and more
18 data through the civil rights data collection and
19 what we released when we put the rule out was
20 actually Section 618 data, which we don't -- the
21 department doesn't highlight, you know, a lot when
22 it comes to school discipline.

1 Even with all of this data around, yes,
2 there's more that needs to be done to -- you know,
3 at the ground level to help schools to better
4 examine what data are we collecting, is it the
5 right data, how do we use it, how do we organize
6 it, how do we talk about it, how do we act on it,
7 two things I'll mention, because, you know, as
8 we've been thinking about discipline, we've
9 definitely been thinking about policy change.

10 We've been trying to think about, you
11 know, promoting leadership at all levels but we've
12 also been thinking about tools and technical
13 assistance. So I want to say it was not quite a
14 year ago, last July, we released a root cause
15 analysis toolkit and the origins of that project
16 started with the Race to the Top District Grant
17 Program where we said if -- you know, to be -- any
18 recipient of the Race to the Top District dollars
19 has to analyze their discipline data for
20 disparities based on race and based on disability
21 and if they find disparities, they have to conduct
22 a root cause analysis and develop a plan to

1 address it.

2 But once we had that requirement in
3 there, it wasn't a barrier to funding, it was
4 simply if you get these dollars, this was just
5 something you have to do. We didn't have a lot of
6 suggestions to those communities about how they
7 actually do that.

8 So we put together this very
9 comprehensive toolkit. The toolkit includes --
10 it's comprised of three parts. One is, you know,
11 how do you look at the data that you have.
12 Literally do you have like the data you need, you
13 know, where are the gaps you may need to fill in,
14 how do you analyze that data, and it's not, you
15 know, simply, you know, a couple of pages, you
16 read it, you're done. It actually includes an
17 Excel tool where you can literally put your data,
18 what data you have in and it'll run analyses for
19 you.

20 It is accompanied by a guide to give you
21 suggestions about, you know, what kinds of data
22 you need and not just incident data but also

1 school climate survey data which we're learning
2 more and more about, you know, how that can really
3 tell us how students and parents and staff are
4 experiencing school environments. So that's all
5 Part 1.

6 Part 2 is the community conversation and
7 it includes templates and forms that you can use
8 as you're bringing communities together to figure
9 out, okay, how do you begin to talk to communities
10 about what's happening in the data and begin to,
11 you know, develop areas of new consensus about
12 what needs to happen going forward.

13 And then Part 3 is the action plan. So,
14 you know, we've tried to, you know, at least put
15 that tool out there. There's probably a lot more
16 that we need to do to make certain that more
17 communities are aware of the tool, to actually,
18 you know, help folks to use the tool, but it is
19 there.

20 Another tool that we've tried to use --
21 you know, the root cause analysis toolkit was
22 really specific to the issue of suspension and

1 expulsion and disparities based on race and based
2 on disability.

3 Another tool that we did is called the
4 Six Success Gaps Rubric and that one is really
5 meant for special education generally. It was
6 really racial and ethnic disparities, you know, in
7 special education, identification, placement, and
8 discipline, and that one, it has fewer like data
9 analysis tools and it's more systems-level review.
10 It's, you know, here's what good practice that can
11 address gaps looks like and help it provide
12 literally a rubric to help you figure out, okay,
13 to what extent are those practices in place and to
14 what extent do we need to begin to make
15 improvements?

16 So, I mean, Jim, I think the issues that
17 you're raising are really good ones. What's tough
18 about them is it really goes down to community-
19 level, school-level practices that's always tough
20 to get at but to the extent we provided tools, we
21 probably have a lot more work to do to actually
22 make certain that folks are aware of those tools

1 and do more to help people to use them.

2 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Very good. Last
3 comment from Doris.

4 COMMISSIONER SMITH-RIBNER: I've talked
5 to educators about the bullying that children with
6 disabilities suffer in their schools all over this
7 country and I wondered, when you're looking at the
8 climate that they face in schools, do you consider
9 the impact of bullying on these children and do
10 you take this into account in your rulemaking
11 processes?

12 MS. HARPER: So bullying doesn't have
13 any role in our proposed rulemaking. There's no -
14 - the word "bullying," you won't find it in our
15 proposed rule at all.

16 However, there is absolutely more that
17 we need to be doing to address the bullying of
18 students with disabilities. Back in 2013, we
19 clarified to the extent that students are -- to
20 the extent that students are getting bullying --
21 are getting bullied and, you know, they are --
22 that bullying is resulting in the loss of a

1 meaningful educational benefit and the school does
2 nothing, that that could be a denial of a free and
3 appropriate public education under the Individuals
4 With Disabilities Education Act.

5 So we tried to be very clear in 2013
6 when we released that as a Dear Colleague letter,
7 it was guidance that we put out to the schools, to
8 clarify that, to the extent you're seeing students
9 with disabilities getting bullied in their
10 classrooms, that that's something you need to
11 address, that that's something you can't ignore
12 that, and there are potential consequences, you
13 know, under IDEA if you don't. It's something
14 that IEP teams need to be thinking about. It's
15 something that, you know, may require amendments
16 to a child's IEP to address, you know, either the
17 impacts of that bullying or to address, you know,
18 whatever, you know, changes may be necessary with
19 regard to the child's placement.

20 The other intersection, you know, with
21 bullying, especially when it comes to discipline,
22 is always continuing to think about how we're

1 responding to bullying, how are we, you know,
2 preventing it in the first place, perhaps the
3 social emotional learning, and making certain
4 that, you know, we're addressing bullying in ways
5 that's not resulting in more and more students
6 being removed from the classroom.

7 And I guess the last point I'll make on
8 that is, you know, the importance of talking about
9 these issues to parents and to teachers because,
10 you know, a school can be making great strides in
11 improving school climate using preventive
12 approaches, you know, reducing use of discipline,
13 and I think that one child who gets bullied, and
14 say it's, you know, a really terrible incident of
15 bullying, and what we have to continue to guard
16 against then, and I'll put this to the Commission
17 to consider, is ways that we continue to talk
18 about the importance of using positive approaches
19 and guarding against, you know, that possibility
20 that you have that one parent, that one teacher
21 that says, you know, that child, you know,
22 bullied that student, they need to just get out of

1 here, they don't have a place here, we don't need
2 them here, and that's not a narrative that serves
3 us. It doesn't serve that child. It doesn't
4 serve our communities.

5 So we have to do both to address
6 bullying, you know, end it, while at the same time
7 providing all students with the support that they
8 need to continue.

9 COMMISSIONER COMER: The last point that
10 I'm interested in, very interested in, to what
11 extent are you looking at whether schools are
12 being operated, managed in ways that we are trying
13 to produce a culture that will support the
14 development of kids and in that culture, there is
15 no bullying and there are not the behavioral
16 problems that we call bad behavior and that it
17 seems to me, my experience tells me that many,
18 many people think of kids as good or bad, smart or
19 dumb, and that it is that perception that is
20 carried by so many adults in their environment
21 that it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy and we
22 create certain kids who are bad kids.

1 So what are we doing to remove that not
2 only in the practice on the ground but in the
3 preparation of educators, both the administrators
4 and the teachers, because administrators who think
5 that way just create systems that behave that way?

6 MS. HARPER: So I'll start with your
7 last question and that's I've actually personally
8 not seen a lot of movement in institutions of
9 higher ed to talk about these issues when it comes
10 to preparation, when it comes to talking about,
11 you know, alternatives to suspensions,
12 alternatives to removal, thinking about positive
13 school climate, thinking about students. I'm not
14 seeing a lot of that focus or I've definitely not
15 heard of any new reforms just try to provide
16 teachers -- trying to prepare teachers before they
17 enter the classroom. I've not seen it.

18 I think, to the -- to your other
19 question about, you know, to what extent are
20 schools sort of starting to adopt this, you know,
21 idea that, you know, we need to develop students,
22 we need to, you know, support not just their

1 academic but their social emotional development,
2 there are some aspects of this work that are
3 difficult to address in policy.

4 There are some aspects of this work that
5 are -- that go to attitudes and behaviors and
6 narratives that we use to talk about kids. The
7 example I like to use is a student who comes in on
8 a Monday morning, sits down at a desk and puts
9 their head down on the desk and will not respond.
10 They're not participating in the classroom.

11 What narrative does the teacher use to
12 talk about to understand what that child is doing?
13 Is it, you know, they're being disrespectful? Is
14 it they don't care about their learning
15 opportunity? They are creating barriers to the
16 other students in this class. You know, just the
17 sense that, you know, that child by not responding
18 is actually attacking me. That's a statement on
19 me or is it, you know, what happened this weekend?
20 Is it, you know, what's going on? What happened
21 this morning? Has there been a change in the
22 student's home life that means the child is coming

1 in? Is there, you know, -- asking why, right?

2 But this is an aspect of the work that's
3 hard to get at through policy and it's part of it
4 is training but some of it is literally just
5 narratives and attitudes and behaviors about
6 students that we're trying to serve and it's a lot
7 more difficult to -- it's a difficult area of this
8 reform effort but I think the strongest tool we
9 have is to talk about it.

10 I mean, we have to keep talking about it
11 and I would say I don't think you -- I think it's
12 not school by school, it's teacher by teacher,
13 classroom by classroom hopefully that we learn to
14 do this differently and to talk about it
15 differently.

16 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: We really want to
17 thank Kristen for all of her help. It's
18 interesting that she talked -- just two comments.
19 I really do wish that every -- just as I say, I
20 wish that every university faculty member could
21 get out into the schools to see for themselves not
22 just for a day but to be in the schools. I wish

1 that everybody in D.C.

2 could have the sensitivity about getting
3 into the schools and seeing what children and
4 teachers go through every day.

5 The second one is something that we just
6 go over. You started by saying something that is
7 just so devastating. I think you said 20 percent
8 of fourth grade black children read at the
9 proficiency level, not the advanced, at the basic.
10 I mean, I just want to acknowledge that point
11 again. I want to say it again because it is so
12 devastatingly tragic and I want that for the
13 record, that only 20 percent of African American
14 children in the fourth grade, according to that
15 data, are proficient in reading, not advanced,
16 just proficient, you know, and if you think about
17 that in relationship to people saying, well, you
18 know, the higher-income level, the better you read
19 and everything else, you think about the fact that
20 even large numbers of working- and middle-class
21 black children are not reading at basic
22 proficiency level is a challenge that we face, not

1 that they won't but that this is the challenge we
2 face. But I appreciate you bringing it up on that
3 level and other levels.

4 Let's give her round of applause. I
5 think she did just -- I really mean that.

6 (Applause.)

7 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: And she stayed here
8 with us through it all and we appreciate that. We
9 look forward to continuing to work with you.
10 Okay?

11 Finally, I want to acknowledge that
12 Commissioner Tiffany Loftin came in. I saw her
13 somewhere. There she is. Hey, welcome, Tiffany.

14 COMMISSIONER LOFTIN: Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Delighted to have
16 you here.

17 We're going to take a break now for the
18 next strong 15 minutes. We got that?

19 MR. JOHNS: Yes, there's coffee and tea
20 across the hall. The restrooms are in the front.

21 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: And when we come
22 back, Commissioner Overton, we'll start with you.

1 Okay?

2 (Recess.)

3 MR. JOHNS: Okay. We're going to come
4 back to order.

5 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: All right. If we
6 can go ahead and start, we've got these serious
7 conversations over there. It's hard to break up
8 those two serious people. I know they'll stop so
9 we can get started. Good, good, very good.

10 David made the one comment about the
11 preview for what they have in front of them, which
12 I understand what we'll have at the next meeting.

13 MR. JOHNS: Yes, consistent with this
14 Commission expressed interest and exploration of
15 ways to increase access to and support in science,
16 technology, engineering, the arts and agriculture
17 and mathematics, we extended an invitation to
18 Knatokie Ford, our colleague who works in the
19 White House on Scientific Technology Policy. She
20 was unable to join us today but has provided a
21 document which each of us have in front of you
22 that is a preview of what we will ensure that we

1 provide space to continue either in our next
2 virtual meeting or our next in-person meeting. So
3 that's one document.

4 The other thing that you have in front
5 of you is a Proclamation that was drafted for
6 African American History Month, signed by
7 President Obama, so just something for you to take
8 home. If you'd like additional copies, please let
9 us know.

10 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Okay. All right.
11 And now we will -- after these next presentations,
12 we'll come back to Commissioner Overton. Okay.

13 In the meantime, I'm delighted to
14 introduce Ted Mitchell, who's Under Secretary of
15 Education. He's been in that position since May
16 of 2014. Some of you know he has been a college
17 president at Occidental and served as former CEO
18 of the NewSchools Venture Fund and a number of
19 other things, including President of the
20 California State Board of Education, so he's got
21 incredible experience, K through 12, in our area,
22 has been very supportive of David, the initiative

1 of me and all of us in this work, knows what we
2 do, quite a bit about what we do, and so we're
3 delighted to have him here.

4 He will also be introducing his new
5 colleague, Kim Hunter Reed, who is an LSU alumni.

6 Testimony, Policy Updates

7 from Under Secretary Ted Mitchell

8 MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, President
9 Hrabowski, and delight to be back with you all,
10 and I'm not going to take a lot of time. The most
11 important thing I'm going to do, I'm going to do
12 right now, which is to introduce you to my new
13 colleague, Kim Hunter Reed, who joins the
14 department as Deputy Under Secretary and has a
15 distinguished career serving as both a consultant
16 to institutions of higher education and systems
17 around the country and very deep engagement at
18 virtually every level with the state higher
19 education system in Louisiana.

20 Her most recent work in Louisiana was to
21 develop the Transition Plan, the Master Plan for
22 the new Governor in Louisiana, and it is a

1 remarkable document in and of itself, and it is
2 even more remarkable for the fact that it needed
3 to be negotiated through about a hundred levels of
4 both government and advocacy and despite that, it
5 is clear in purpose and will be great.

6 Kim, I'll let Kim say a word or two in
7 just a second but Kim and I will focus for the
8 rest of our time together on issues of equity and
9 excellence and clearly right down the pipe with
10 the work that draws you together and as I turn it
11 over to Kim, I also want to thank you for your
12 service and for the work that you do, making sure
13 that this Commission is as focused and highly-
14 charged as the Administration is trying to be as a
15 whole.

16 But Kim?

17 DR. REED: Good afternoon.

18 ALL: Good afternoon.

19 DR. REED: Thank you so much. Thank
20 you, Ted, for that introduction, and it's a
21 wonderful opportunity and an honor for me to be
22 here today and certainly to have this wonderful

1 opportunity to be a part of a team that is
2 relentlessly focused on excellence and equity and
3 attainment for this country and so I salute the
4 great work that you're doing.

5 I'm looking forward to digging in and
6 learning more about the good work. As Ted has
7 reminded me with his famous app, we have 200+ days
8 to make a difference and so we intend to make a
9 difference every one of those days, and so there
10 are lots of young people and people who are young
11 at heart who are counting on our good work and so
12 we are going to give them our very best as we move
13 forward with the number.

14 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: He's got his app.

15 DR. REED: 277, 277. So again thank you
16 for all that you do. I look forward to meeting
17 each of you individually and working with you
18 individually and collectively. So thank you.

19 MR. MITCHELL: So a couple of things I
20 wanted to review with you, most important of which
21 is the President's 2017 budget.

22 There's good news in the President's

1 budget for the work that you do and the work that
2 we support and, in particular, there are new
3 investments in K through 12 education in keeping
4 with the new Every Student Succeeds Act. There
5 are opportunities to utilize those funds not only
6 in the ways that were supported under No Child
7 Left Behind but to improve and increase the well-
8 roundedness of the educational opportunities for
9 all students in our K through 12 system.

10 In the higher ed work that we do, we
11 have proposed a suite of Pell Grant reforms that
12 we believe will further anchor Pell Grants as the
13 key lever of support for low-income students.

14 Item Number 1 in the Pell Grant suite is
15 continuing to index Pell Grants to inflation so
16 that it doesn't lose purchasing power there. We
17 continue to be, as a side note, we continue to be
18 very concerned about the disinvestment of states
19 in their higher education systems and while
20 indexing Pell is a good thing, it in no way is
21 keeping up with the decreases in state higher
22 education budgets. So we will do everything we

1 can to reverse those trends and look forward to
2 any opportunities you might have for us to raise
3 that issue in the states and your home states.

4 In addition to indexing Pell, we have
5 reintroduced Summer Pell or Year-Round Pell and as
6 we talked with colleagues, including President
7 Hrabowski, around the country, one of the things
8 that is clear is that maintaining momentum is
9 absolutely essential for low-income students and
10 for many minority students, as well.

11 And so keeping on track and keeping
12 moving forward by using Pell during the summer, we
13 think, will have a marked effect on completion
14 rates and also, as you know, on affordability
15 because the sooner you get out, the sooner you're
16 earning money and the less tuition and educational
17 expenses one pays. So we're very excited about
18 that.

19 We're also interested in building
20 momentum in a second way, which is by providing an
21 incentive to students to take 15 units per
22 semester instead of the 12 that counts as full-

1 time.

2 I think we all know that one of the
3 confounding features for students, many of them
4 first generation, is that they hear the words
5 "full time" and they're taking 12 units but the
6 math doesn't work and so at the end of four years,
7 they've still got credits that they need to earn.

8 So we're creating -- the budget seeks to
9 create an incentive that will provide a nudge to
10 students to take 15 units as they move through
11 their program.

12 Interesting, it's not aligned to the
13 per- unit cost. This really comes from our
14 conversations with the Behavioral Economics Team
15 in the White House who would like us to try just a
16 dollar number and so our dollar number is 300.
17 We'll play with that. We'll see if that provides
18 the bump that we want. We'll raise it if it
19 doesn't.

20 And then the third thing is that we know
21 that institutions need some incentive, as well.
22 There's been some conversation over the last year

1 and you'll hear it as people talk about the Higher
2 Ed Act about risk-sharing which would penalize
3 institutions that don't do the right thing.

4 We're more interested in promoting doing
5 the right thing by providing positive incentives
6 to institutions and so we proposed in the budget a
7 bonus for colleges and universities that both
8 enroll large numbers of Pell students and graduate
9 large numbers of Pell students.

10 We put out a report several weeks ago
11 highlighting institutions that meet both of those
12 criteria, high access and then good positive
13 completion rates. We want to continue to do that
14 but we think we could do more by providing
15 institutions financial resources.

16 In the case of institutions that are
17 already doing well in this regard, it will be a
18 reward for work undertaken. For institutions that
19 could do better, we hope that it'll be an
20 incentive for them not only to muster the will to
21 do better but that it will also provide resources
22 so that they can do work on the much-needed

1 programs that we know are key to supporting
2 students on their way through college.

3 And here, I want to talk about one other
4 piece, which is the terrific work that you all
5 have done in the area of identifying best
6 practices in developmental education because we
7 know that that is one of the places where
8 institutions need to invest further and smarter
9 and so the work that has come out of this
10 Commission is helping to inform the proposals that
11 we are taking forward, both in the budget season
12 and we hope in our conversations with colleagues
13 in K-12.

14 For example, one of the pieces of our
15 innovation agenda is to increase dual enrollment
16 between colleges and high schools and so dual
17 enrollment can sometimes just be seen as a
18 cafeteria approach to taking a few credits here
19 and a few credits there. We think that that's
20 wrong-headed and so institutions that want to do
21 work will need to propose programs of study that
22 will truly make students college-eligible and

1 eligible for college credit in the course of study
2 that is transferrable into four-year institutions
3 or directly applicable to certificate and
4 associate programs.

5 So a couple of other things while I'm in
6 that vein. We do have quite a robust innovation
7 agenda that we're looking forward to implementing
8 over the next several months. I mentioned dual
9 enrollment as one of the experiments that we're
10 hoping to run.

11 A couple of others. You know that in
12 1995, Congress eliminated opportunities for
13 incarcerated adults to have access to Pell Grants
14 and so we are going to run an experiment starting
15 this fall that will allow selected higher
16 education institutions to work with selected
17 correctional facilities to provide Pell Grants and
18 higher education opportunities to incarcerated
19 adults. That's also reflected in the President's
20 budget for next year and so while we think that
21 we're going to -- we know that we're going to run
22 an experiment, we're fairly confident of the

1 results of that experiment.

2 RAND Corporation and several bits and
3 pieces of academic research have demonstrated the
4 efficacy of higher education and training in
5 helping incarcerated adults re-enter their
6 communities. So we're excited about that.

7 Two others. You know that competency-
8 based education is one of the ways in which
9 institutions are seeking to provide a closer
10 connection between what students are doing in
11 their course work and very specific measurable
12 competencies that are at a more granular level
13 than a degree and even a course title.

14 So all of the things that we now think
15 about and know that society values, creativity,
16 the ability to collaborate, problem-solving, those
17 competencies are -- institutions are narrowing in
18 on how best to define and measure those
19 competencies and so we're providing opportunities
20 for institutions to experiment with competency-
21 based models and significantly to tie the flow of
22 federal funds and financial aid to students

1 mastering competencies rather than enrolling in
2 courses.

3 And then one last one that I'd like to
4 spend a moment on. Institutions, traditional
5 institutions of higher education are by no means
6 the only providers of education and training in
7 our world and there's a burgeoning marketplace of
8 new providers, think mooks and boot camps, and at
9 the present moment, no federal financial aid is
10 available to students, for example, who want to do
11 a computer coding boot camp.

12 We'd like to make it possible for
13 students to be able to access federal funds for
14 the highest quality new provider programs and so
15 we're creating an experiment that we're calling
16 EQUIP that creates a three-way partnership between
17 new providers, traditional institutions of higher
18 education, and accrediters, to be able to make
19 federal financial aid available.

20 A key fourth component is the
21 development of -- and some accrediters may do this
22 -- but we're really interested in creating a tier

1 of quality assurance providers, groups that would
2 ask several simple vexing questions.

3 What are the claims that you, the
4 provider, are making for what students will know
5 and be able to do? What evidence will you, the
6 provider, demonstrate that students are learning
7 these things? And then how will you make sure --
8 bless you. How will you make sure that you're
9 providing access, equitable access to resources
10 that will make success possible?

11 We've got a lot of moving parts.
12 Applications are due next week. We'll see how it
13 goes. We had 75 initial letters of interest and
14 we'll see how many of those come through with
15 applications but we're very interested in
16 providing better access to these innovative
17 programs for low-income students.

18 That is -- those are the things I want
19 to talk about, the budget. I wanted to talk about
20 our innovation agenda.

21 Let me wind up by talking -- stepping
22 back and talking more broadly about the

1 Administration's philosophical position on many of
2 these things. You know, and I've said this to you
3 before, that the President, when the President
4 came into office, he said quite clearly and
5 directly that we needed to regain our position as
6 the leader in providing postsecondary success to
7 our younger Americans.

8 We believe in the department that that
9 means that we need to make sure that there is
10 equitable opportunity for excellent education for
11 all and we continue to be deeply, deeply troubled
12 by the achievement gaps, whether those are
13 achievement in access gaps in the early years,
14 whether those are the persistent and nagging
15 achievement gaps in elementary and middle schools,
16 and critically whether those are the gaps in high
17 school achievement and college attendance and
18 completion that we continue to face.

19 We're encouraged by the increase in the
20 number of African American and Latino youngsters,
21 graduating high school students, who are moving on
22 to college but that really just takes us to the

1 next part of the problem, which is how difficult
2 it is for those -- for too many of those young
3 people to succeed.

4 It's still the case that African
5 American college completion rates are roughly 20
6 percentage points below those of white Americans
7 and Latinos worse even than that.

8 We know that on the income scale, low-
9 income families are seven times less likely to
10 succeed -- for their kids to succeed in college
11 than folks at the upper range of the income
12 distribution and so the work of this Commission to
13 make sure that we're challenging ourselves at the
14 important moments of transition is absolutely
15 essential for us as a department, for us as an
16 Administration, and critically for us as a nation.

17 So again, I want to thank you for the
18 work that you do and offer our partnership in any
19 ways that we can be helpful in carrying the work
20 forward.

21 I'm happy, Freeman, to answer any
22 questions.

1 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Great. I'll open
2 it up to the questions.

3 Let me just highlight that our
4 Commissioner Mike Nettles is leading an effort
5 right now, will be leading an effort very shortly
6 to host a convening to better understand how
7 assessment drives teaching and learning in high-
8 poverty areas and for African Americans and other
9 underserved groups. He's a thought leader in this
10 field and we're delighted he will be doing that.

11 Let's take questions. Let's just go
12 down the line and put up your cards and that'll
13 make it easy, so we'll just go right down the
14 line. If you have any interest, put it down.
15 We'll go this way and come back this way. Okay?
16 Mike?

17 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: Thank you. Thank
18 you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Ted, for your
19 service, too, and for coming here before now and
20 today. I think having you come to these meetings
21 is very helpful to us.

22 I have three points and they won't take

1 long but one has to do with the point that Freeman
2 just raised. Earlier, just so the Commission
3 understands it, earlier, a few weeks ago, I think
4 it was in March, David set up a meeting that
5 involved Ted Mitchell and Roberto Rodriguez and
6 his staff in the Domestic --

7 MR. JOHNS: For the record, it was not a
8 meeting, it was a telephone call.

9 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: It was not a
10 meeting, it was a telephone call.

11 It served a very useful purpose, which
12 was it allowed us to think about how we might as a
13 Commission get involved in the addressing this
14 issue of achievement gap, especially how it is
15 measured, which may be the root of the achievement
16 gap, trying to understand it, how it's measured,
17 and how we fair on the measurement.

18 I won't belabor the point at this point
19 but because we're going to come back to it later
20 in our Agenda and you have a document, a one-
21 pager, in the materials that talks about this
22 point, but, Ted, David and I had an opportunity to

1 have -- did we have a meeting this morning, David?

2 MR. JOHNS: A conversation.

3 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: we had a
4 conversation this morning.

5 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: So everyone knows,
6 meetings in this space mean that there's more than
7 a quorum, that the public has been notified and
8 invited, so we only have meetings when essential.

9 MR. MITCHELL: That changes the
10 character of my calendar markedly.

11 (Laughter.)

12 MR. JOHNS: This is for the Commission,
13 this is for the Commission, not for you.

14 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: So far, I've
15 recruited Commissioner Peggy Brookins, who is also
16 in the assessment world at the National Board of
17 Professional Teaching Standards, to help me and
18 David think about what an agenda might look like
19 as a one-day get started to address one of these
20 pervasive problems in the country.

21 We're always at the bottom and we're not
22 even close to the top, and the question for us

1 would be what is it the Commission and the nation
2 can do to help make sure that we're measuring
3 properly and in fact that when we measure, that
4 we're making a contribution to changing that
5 picture?

6 So we're thinking about a forum here in
7 Washington and we're talking about a very high-
8 value/low-cost. Those are our sort of parameters.
9 So we're thinking about how we might be able to
10 get the White House to join the department in
11 hosting it or, you know, a one-day high-level
12 meeting that gets at some of the basic issues and
13 helps us to set an agenda forward.

14 We think that this could fit, Ted, under
15 the guise of the new -- and I know you're in the
16 midst of rulemaking -- the language in the ESSA is
17 underserved. Okay? So this is -- you know,
18 historically, we've talked about it in various
19 ways, disadvantaged, economically disadvantaged,
20 racial minorities, and so on.

21 Well, the concept du jour is underserved
22 populations. So we think that this could possibly

1 fit and help both the Administration and the
2 Congress come together around what might be one of
3 the biggest challenges in the country regarding
4 achievement.

5 My question has to do with -- there are
6 two points. One is, could you comment, first of
7 all, on the underserved provision in the new
8 legislation and how you're thinking about it, and
9 the second thing has to do with the America's
10 Promise, the College Promise?

11 There's a multi-billion dollar proposal
12 that's been submitted and the question is, what is
13 your prognosis, you know, for that?

14 MR. MITCHELL: Okay. On the first,
15 fortunately or unfortunately, in the complicated
16 minuet of regulating, we're right in the middle of
17 that process and so the answer to the question of
18 how we're thinking about it is really about how
19 the negotiators will come out and so I'll have to
20 pause, take a pass on that one, and it will be
21 obviously something that we're keenly interested
22 in and working hard on that and we'll be public

1 about it as soon as we can, as soon as we know
2 more from that rulemaking.

3 On the second, on America's College
4 Promise, it is -- we're proposing a \$60 billion
5 investment over 10 years. The 60 billion is aimed
6 at both community colleges and then there's been a
7 recent important add-on for MSIs and historically
8 black colleges and universities.

9 I'm, you know, as good as the next cab
10 driver at predicting what Congress is going to do
11 or be able to do. You know, we would put it out
12 there because we're serious about it. We'll work
13 with all comers to make it work but even aside
14 from that, we're very excited by the progress that
15 the President's idea of universal public-supported
16 education through the first two years of college,
17 how much traction that's gotten in states and
18 localities around the country, and so we're pretty
19 confident that, as we work our way through
20 Congress, states and communities aren't going to
21 wait. They're going to take this on themselves and
22 we think that's a good thing.

1 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: Just finally on
2 the forum idea, on the assessment forum idea, we
3 may -- in fact, I say may just so that I'm trying
4 not to back you into something that might be
5 inappropriate, as David has reminded me what a
6 conversation and a meeting are.

7 But we probably will need your help in
8 bringing NCES and IES and the National Assessment
9 Governing Board into the activity with us, if that
10 might be appropriate, so that this is, you know,
11 sort of -- those are the major areas of the
12 department that deal with assessment and they
13 would have members and experts who could help a
14 lot with planning and thinking through and
15 convening this conference.

16 MR. MITCHELL: That's a good idea.

17 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Okay. Ron.

18 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Just to make
19 sure I didn't either mishear or misunderstand, did
20 I hear you say that you're tying grants to
21 competencies rather than enrollment? Did I hear
22 rather than? Rather than? Could you explain how

1 you see that not have an impact on access?

2 MR. MITCHELL: Sure. So first to put it
3 in context, this is -- it's a very small
4 experiment and it's an experiment at 35
5 institutions that are currently in it.

6 All of those are institutions that
7 already engage in some form of competency-based
8 education and so the energy there will be about
9 putting the financial aid into smaller chunks. So
10 it would be aid directed to an individual as they
11 move through their program and so we believe that
12 because there will be smaller and more frequent
13 disbursements, it won't have the negative impact
14 on access that one might have if, for example, one
15 back-loaded all federal financial aid. So it's
16 going to be smaller chunks distributed more on a
17 shorter-term basis.

18 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: It sounds a
19 little bit like -- and just to make sure I'm
20 clear. It sounds a little bit like the academic
21 progress model that was used eight years ago, 10
22 years ago. Is it similar to that?

1 MR. MITCHELL: I can see the connection
2 but it's again more -- it's a much more -- the
3 pulse of the engagements is much more frequent
4 than the academic progress indicators that come
5 typically at the end of a semester, at the end of
6 a year.

7 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Because at some
8 point, it's going to go to the conference call,
9 I'm going to ask that the next three people give
10 their questions first and then he can integrate
11 answers. So that's Peggy, Bryant, and Tiffany. Go
12 ahead and ask your questions and then before he
13 answers, you'll get all three questions.

14 COMMISSIONER BROOKINS: Okay. It's
15 really quick anyway. I wanted to come back to the
16 incentive piece of taking 15 credits versus taking
17 12 credits.

18 Is it possible to have that incentive be
19 payment for a licensure exam instead of, you know,
20 giving it to the student itself, have it banked at
21 that institution so that they're like a TPA
22 licensure, so that it's there, because that's an

1 extra cost on students that would be excellent?

2 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Bryant?

3 COMMISSIONER MARKS: So I'm a professor
4 at Morehouse. I'm on leave and on loan to the
5 White House Commission on HBCUs, in addition to
6 being a commissioner. I'm working with Ivory
7 Tolson and his team, and I'm also doing some work
8 with My Brother's Keeper with Michael Smith and
9 his team and so what I'm finding quite clearly is
10 that in terms of My Brother's Keeper, there's a
11 huge gap around college completion, right?

12 So the two-year report is about to come
13 out. I've seen a draft, nothing on really college
14 completion. So Mark had his MSI gathering and
15 that's one piece. That's on community colleges.
16 But getting students to college is one thing,
17 getting them through is another.

18 So there really needs to be some energy
19 and I'm asking and maybe this is in the docket in
20 some form, bringing together folks who are
21 researchers and practitioners around what's
22 working in higher education for males of color.

1 Being at an HBCU and doing this sort of
2 work, there are some good practices out there.
3 There are institutes out there designed to educate
4 or research males of color and it seems like we're
5 just not central to the conversation or included
6 in the conversation.

7 I've talked to folks at ED, I've talked
8 to folks at the White House, talked to folks at
9 Justice and different pieces where the MBK people
10 are, and would you support potentially a gathering
11 of said scholars, researchers, practitioners
12 coming to D.C., kind of like what Michael talked
13 about, where we can have a discussion in a
14 coordinated way that can move the needle around
15 college completion under the umbrella of MBK?

16 COMMISSIONER LOFTIN: I'm also going to
17 put a face to my name. Tiffany Loftin. We had
18 our phone call not too long ago about campus
19 climate and so I have two quick questions.

20 One is, I'm very interested in this
21 piece that you mentioned that the Administration
22 is planning on tackling with incarcerated adults

1 and them receiving Pell Grants in this experiment.
2 So I wanted to know what the size of that
3 experiment is and maybe what opportunities this
4 Commission has to engage in something like that.

5 And then Part 2 or my second question,
6 rather, is, on our phone call, we had conversation
7 around some of the tours that you've been taking
8 to talk about campus climate, specifically for
9 black students, and so I just wanted to know what
10 has happened since then and our phone call because
11 I know you were planning on taking some more of
12 those tours.

13 After you leave today, we're going to
14 have a conversation about what we spoke about on
15 the phone, so I wanted to get an update.

16 MR. MITCHELL: Great. Thanks. All
17 right. Let me roll through.

18 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: One more. Sorry.

19 MR. MITCHELL: Oh, sure.

20 COMMISSIONER PRINGLE: So my question,
21 Ted, is to kind of tied to Ronald's question and
22 that is, you know, adverse impact. So he raised

1 it around the competencies piece and I would raise
2 it around the loops and other alternative
3 providers.

4 What we've seen in the past is
5 innovations that have been designed or at least
6 said to be designed for at-risk populations,
7 underserved populations, tend to result in having
8 adverse effects on them, and so I did hear you say
9 you were going to -- you had a quality piece that
10 you were going to -- that's included in that, but
11 I want to know if you're specifically focused at
12 the front end in either mitigating that or
13 identifying that, you know, learning from the past
14 when you put things in place, where they become
15 predatory and impact students of color and low-
16 income students in ways that folks either didn't
17 anticipate or maybe they did, I'm not sure, but
18 I'd like you to talk more about that.

19 MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Great questions
20 all the way through.

21 So on the -- sorry. On the question of
22 whether we could just bank the incentive dollars

1 for some future purpose, we thought hard about
2 that and we could all come up with five or six
3 different purposes that we would attach to it and
4 I think in the end, we decided that we were
5 probably better off putting it in the hands of
6 students than us defining five and having the
7 seventh be that we didn't put on be one that was
8 going to be really useful.

9 So if the budget is funded and if this
10 goes through, there are likely to be subsequent
11 iterations of it in which we could refine it more
12 but I think that would -- those are examples of
13 the ways in which we would love students to use
14 those dollars, is to supplement their own
15 education and pay themselves a grant to be able to
16 do it.

17 Thank you, the males of color question.
18 Thank you for volunteering to help us organize an
19 event like that. It's very generous of you and
20 Kim and I will be with you right quick on that.

21 We have -- we're talking about a
22 convening, a researchers convening on these issues

1 and so we'll want your help in making sure that
2 we've got the right people coming and that the
3 topics are the right topics, as well.

4 And that's a good segue into what's
5 happened in terms of racial climate issues. I
6 have visited four or five institutions, continuing
7 to come up as we discussed in our phone chat. You
8 know, some not surprising features that need to be
9 dealt with and I think one of the features that
10 Kim and I are keenly focused on is the issue of
11 training, recruiting, and retaining faculty of
12 color across the board in institutions because we
13 do believe that that's kind of an anchor point for
14 a lot, whether you're talking about sort of
15 stereotype threat at the beginning or issues of
16 trusted mentors and advisors in the middle and
17 networks for success at the end, that unless
18 you've got a strong and healthy tier of black male
19 faculty and black female faculty, those pieces
20 then kind of get bolted on rather than really
21 behaving in an organic way.

22 So that's not the answer. We're not

1 going to ignore all of the rest but we do know
2 that that's one of the things that we want to
3 start a conversation on.

4 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Just a comment
5 about that. It fits with this. It's the training
6 and developing of the African American faculty but
7 it's also identifying people who can be not just
8 mentors but sponsors --

9 MR. MITCHELL: That's right.

10 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: -- because the
11 power in the professoriate is primarily in the
12 hands of white men. You know that, right?

13 MR. MITCHELL: Right.

14 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: And unless we have
15 -- there are some women but for the most part,
16 particularly in certain kinds of institutions, the
17 power is there and there are -- we have the
18 opportunity to identify those who are willing to
19 get some of that support and training so they can
20 be sponsors because without sponsors or people who
21 are very powerful, it's really hard, particularly
22 in the predominantly white setting, for people to

1 succeed, you know.

2 MR. MITCHELL: Quick one on the Second
3 Chance Pell.

4 COMMISSIONER LOFTIN: (Off microphone
5 comment.)

6 MR. MITCHELL: Yeah. Which we're
7 calling Second Chance Pell.

8 So we're going through the applications
9 now. There are over a hundred institutions that
10 have raised their hand to say they would like to
11 do this and we think that's a very healthy sign.

12 We don't know how many will make it
13 through the selection process. As you can
14 imagine, it's complicated. You need to have both
15 the right strengths in the higher education
16 institution and the right willingness in
17 correctional system.

18 Example, several of the correctional
19 institutions with whom we may work have to come up
20 with new policies for transferring inmates. So it
21 doesn't really help me if I'm doing -- if I'm a
22 third of the way through my Pell-sponsored program

1 at penitentiary X and all of a sudden I'm on a bus
2 headed to penitentiary Y that's not a part of the
3 program.

4 So we're having to work that out in real
5 time with these folks but as I said, that's our
6 experiment. The good news is that the President
7 has put it squarely in the budget as a part of
8 what we want to do moving forward.

9 Predatory -- the problem of unintended
10 predatory outcomes is one that we're quite
11 concerned about, which is why in the case of the
12 non- traditional providers, we've sort of got
13 belts, suspenders, and I don't know, what's next,
14 thumb tacks, with the institution of higher
15 education needing to verify the partnership, the
16 accrediting body needing to verify the
17 partnership, and this new quality assurance
18 provider providing ongoing real- time outcome
19 information, and, yes, historical efforts by all
20 of those partners will be taken into
21 consideration.

22 But more clearly to your point, the

1 reason that we looked at this as an experiment is
2 that we know that we're talking about introducing
3 into the sector providers who currently aren't and
4 whose motives may be mixed. So we want to make
5 sure that we are identifying those potential
6 partners whose motives aren't mixed but we also
7 want to run this experiment to see if there are
8 things that we can't see from our current vantage
9 point.

10 We think the best way to do that is to
11 have a few of these partnerships underway in the
12 coming years but eyes wide open is certainly the
13 motto of that project.

14 COMMISSIONER SMITH-RIBNER: I wanted to
15 ask about the effort within the department to
16 increase the number of black male educators in our
17 public schools around the country.

18 Right now, I think there's about 1.8
19 percent of our public school teachers who are
20 black male and the department had said that it
21 would increase that number to like 80,000 more
22 over a certain period of time and last fall, maybe

1 beginning of this year, I asked how many more
2 black male educators have been produced through
3 this effort and I was told there's no answer. The
4 department didn't know what it had done, if
5 anything at all.

6 So what is happening in that regard?

7 MR. MITCHELL: So I don't know the
8 program, the specific program that you're talking
9 about, so I can go do my homework and get back to
10 all of you through David.

11 MR. JOHNS: Sharif El-Mekki?

12 COMMISSIONER SMITH-RIBNER: Yeah. The
13 fellowship.

14 MR. JOHNS: Sharif El-Mekki, who is a
15 teaching ambassador, hosted a Black Male Educator
16 Convening in Philadelphia for the first time last
17 year.

18 MR. MITCHELL: Yeah.

19 MR. JOHNS: I'll get back to you on
20 that.

21 MR. MITCHELL: Okay. I didn't know the
22 target. She established a target of 80,000.

1 MR. JOHNS: He, yes.

2 MR. MITCHELL: Or he did, sorry.

3 MR. JOHNS: We'll follow up.

4 MR. MITCHELL: Okay.

5 MR. JOHNS: That convening was led by
6 Sharif El-Mekki.

7 COMMISSIONER SMITH-RIBNER: That's
8 correct.

9 MR. MITCHELL: Oh, okay.

10 MR. JOHNS: We'll follow up and get the
11 data from him.

12 MR. MITCHELL: Great.

13 COMMISSIONER SMITH-RIBNER: Okay.

14 MR. MITCHELL: Great. If he has more
15 data, that would be great.

16 So teacher diversity is very important
17 to the department. We're having -- holding a
18 Teacher Diversity Summit, a Teaching Diversity
19 Summit next April 29th, and the purpose is to
20 bring together researchers, district level
21 administrators, state administrators, and folks
22 from teaching colleges, to talk about what kinds

1 of commitments all parties can play in increasing
2 diversity overall but specifically focused on --
3 some specific focus on black male educators.

4 Kim and I and our colleague Cynthia Cole
5 are particularly mindful of the disproportionate
6 role that historically black colleges and
7 universities have traditionally played in training
8 African American teachers and, in fact, we were at
9 the President's Advisory Board first thing this
10 morning talking some about that and it came up at
11 a subsequent meeting that we attended with the
12 Association of Governing Boards.

13 UNCF's current estimate is that HBCUs
14 train 30 percent of the African American teachers
15 in our schools today and we want to make sure that
16 that pipeline is as healthy and robust as
17 possible. So on April 24th, we're bringing
18 together the deans of about half of the Schools of
19 Education in HBCUs, both public and private, and
20 our goal there is to both shine a spotlight on the
21 good work and to share best practices and identify
22 challenges and it is certainly the case that

1 recruiting young men to enter the teaching force
2 is a challenge and when we talk to any of those
3 deans, they know it's a challenge.

4 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Are you expecting
5 there's going to be money or incentives that can
6 help institutions with that?

7 MR. MITCHELL: And while we don't have -
8 - we have money -- hopefully we will have money to
9 encourage, to do some plain out marketing and
10 build a movement around getting more people to
11 talk about school teaching, we believe that the
12 money that is in the President's budget for
13 innovations in historically black colleges and
14 universities and in minority-serving institutions
15 would be well used in this regard but institutions
16 would need to make that choice.

17 More directly, there is an informal
18 group of philanthropists who have come together
19 and are consulting with us about putting together
20 a major grant to schools of ed in HBCUs to help
21 them be more effective at recruiting black men
22 into teaching and improving their own teacher ed

1 programs, so that when they do get out into
2 classrooms, they're providing the highest-quality
3 services.

4 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: and I think we
5 should support the HBCUs but I really worry when
6 the Department of --

7 MR. MITCHELL: I understand.

8 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: -- Education does
9 not take the responsibility of saying to
10 predominantly white universities, like mine and
11 others, --

12 MR. MITCHELL: Yes.

13 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: -- that they, too,
14 have a responsibility in this area, --

15 MR. MITCHELL: Yes.

16 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: -- since 70
17 percent, and we're not doing what we should be
18 doing right now. We're not helping young black
19 males on our campuses to think about teaching. So
20 I want us to support the HBCUs -- finish my point
21 -- but I think we make a big mistake when we try
22 to relegate it only to that group.

1 MR. MITCHELL: Fair, fair.

2 MR. JOHNS: So I want to honor that
3 before --

4 MR. MITCHELL: Can I do one more thing?

5 MR. JOHNS: Yes, please.

6 MR. MITCHELL: So the other thing --

7 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: And I want the
8 record to show that from this Commission since I
9 think that's what our President put us here to
10 support the HBCUs but to say predominant white
11 institutions and school systems of all types have
12 a responsibility to help young African Americans -
13 -

14 MR. MITCHELL: Yep.

15 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: -- to succeed in
16 these areas and to go into careers in all these
17 areas.

18 MR. MITCHELL: Yep. And so I would
19 appreciate that being in the record.

20 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Okay. I know
21 you're our friend and want to help us with this.

22 MR. MITCHELL: And I think Kim will back

1 me up because I think that I just told a room full
2 of trustees of predominantly white institutions --

3 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Very good.

4 MR. MITCHELL: -- to do just that. For
5 the number at this diversity summit in a couple
6 weeks, --

7 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: I appreciate that.
8 Good.

9 MR. MITCHELL: -- we're going to put out
10 a report that talks about diversity and talks
11 about diversity in the pipeline.

12 One of the things in that that stunned
13 me is that in traditionally white institutions,
14 the diversity of their campus is greater than the
15 diversity of their teacher training program by a
16 significant amount.

17 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Oh, yes.

18 MR. MITCHELL: So the challenge I gave
19 to these trustees was let's just agree on a floor
20 that says that the diversity of your teacher
21 training programs ought to be at a minimum as
22 diverse as your campus population.

1 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: There's no
2 emphasis. There's no priority to get more blacks
3 to go into teaching --

4 MR. MITCHELL: Right, right.

5 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: -- on these
6 campuses.

7 MR. JOHNS: So I want to honor on the
8 record that Under Secretary continues to be not
9 only engaging with us and receptive to our
10 invitations but so that he can continue to do
11 that, at the request of my colleague, I would want
12 to make sure he can make the call, what I'd like
13 to do is (1) we will flag the call next April, our
14 call, invite the Under Secretary and if that
15 doesn't work, we'll find another time.

16 I would like to ask Commissioners
17 Pringle, Loftin, and Kent to make their statements
18 for the record. I can then assume personal
19 responsibility for making sure that we share that
20 with Ted and get responses where appropriate but
21 we will continue this but I just want to say thank
22 you on the record for the support that Ted and his

1 office has continued to offer.

2 We will also make space for Kim to be
3 able to engage in direct discussion with you, as
4 well, about the things that she's going to be
5 leaving but I do want to allow them to transition
6 to their next engagement.

7 MR. MITCHELL: Great. Thank you.

8 Thanks for your continued leadership.

9 (Applause.)

10 Commission-Led Work Through
11 the End of the Term

12 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: And so we are going
13 to transition to the work of our Commission and so
14 we will start with Commissioner Overton, who will
15 continue to talk about the Legacy work, by
16 preserving our work, concretizing the legacy, and
17 so go for it. We'll just supplement as you go.

18 COMMISSIONER OVERTON: So we are working
19 on a transition report that we hope to finish over
20 the course of the summer.

21 Here's the structure that we would
22 envision from a document standpoint, right. So

1 executive summary and overview of the Commission
2 and the initiatives, so mission history,
3 organization, context, strategic priorities,
4 opportunities for the Commission, kind of major
5 looming issues, first-term legislative issues of
6 the next Administration, first-term regulatory
7 issues, time-sensitive issues, key challenges
8 affecting the Commission and its effectiveness,
9 organizational issues.

10 We'd have a summary of the budget,
11 personnel, and management issues, and then we'd
12 have some appendices that would have bios of the
13 commissioners and staff, an org chart, executive
14 orders, and Commission accomplishments to date.

15 So I think from a timeline standpoint,
16 what we're looking at is in May and June,
17 collecting data. So what we'd do is send out
18 Google forms to you all to collect some
19 information and then if you wanted to have a phone
20 conversation, we could just set that up. If any
21 commissioner would like to have a phone
22 conversation, in addition to the Google form, we

1 can do that.

2 By the -- in June, June 9th, we'll have
3 our telephone call in terms of our Commission.
4 This will be one of the topics we'll cover and
5 we'll kind of have an in-person hashing out.
6 We'll have some feedback from you all by then. We
7 look to have feedback from the Executive Director
8 and the Chair by mid-June. Toward the end of
9 June, we'd send a draft to the Commission for your
10 feedback and we'd hope to have feedback in mid-
11 July and then at some point between August and
12 September, we would look for final approval of the
13 Commission for the document.

14 So that's kind of the basic structure
15 and kind of guidelines pretty much as standard
16 transition template is what we'd use.

17 Lauren is helping us there in terms of
18 the initiatives. So when we talk about issues,
19 like budget and, you know, other kind of basic
20 information, she's helping us in terms of pulling
21 it together and I think that you all, as well as
22 the Chair and the Executive Director, are going to

1 be key in terms of identifying kind of the
2 organizational priorities, the opportunities that
3 we have and us kind of shaping that.

4 So I think that's a quick overview on
5 where we are and if you want to chime in, David,
6 in terms of where we are in staffing.

7 MR. JOHNS: Yes, I can step back and
8 provide a little bit more context. Are you sure
9 you don't want to state it for the record?

10 COMMISSIONER LOFTIN: I was trying to
11 remember what I was going to ask him.

12 MR. JOHNS: Peggy, you had your card up,
13 as well. Do you have a statement for the record?
14 Kent, you're on the phone. I want to make sure
15 you're able to say what you said.

16 COMMISSIONER LOFTIN: Yes, I was going
17 to ask in the practical way, not wanting to talk
18 about Congress, what sort of attacks will we see
19 on the President's budget that is being proposed
20 and what can we expect to sort of help support and
21 fight for it in this agenda that he's pushing this
22 year?

1 MR. JOHNS: Got it.

2 COMMISSIONER BROOKINS: So my statement
3 for the record was to answer her question, it is
4 two percent, the number of African American males,
5 and also we keep getting this fluctuation because
6 once they enter the field, they tend to leave the
7 field very quickly. So we're not growing the
8 number.

9 MR. JOHNS: Brother McGuire, you still
10 on the phone?

11 (No response.)

12 MR. JOHNS: If not, he sent a text
13 message saying that he previously engaged Ted,
14 asking him to do something with our Commission.
15 It was encouraging to hear Ted say that teacher
16 education reform is potentially a form of
17 innovation that might fit within the department's
18 proposal and some of you around the table, Becky
19 in particular, and I believe Peggy, have been
20 invited to engage in and have already contributed
21 to shaping the agenda for that convening. If
22 there are others of you have not already been

1 engaged but you're interested, please let us know
2 before we leave here today, so we can help to
3 facilitate those connections.

4 So that we're all clear, the document
5 and the work that Spencer's leading is designed to
6 be a Legacy document. It will contain and
7 identify policy and process priorities and so it
8 will do the work of explaining to the incoming
9 Administration the history of our initiative as
10 well as the Commission. It will be Commission-
11 heavy but it will talk about the initiative as it
12 relates to the operational structure of this body
13 and it will be used to inform the process of
14 coming into and starting a new Administration.

15 And so we will assume responsibility for
16 making sure that there is a draft document that
17 you all can provide feedback to and that work will
18 happen before we then bring the full document for
19 a vote before this Commission. So just want to
20 say thank you to Spencer and to Judge Smith-
21 Ribner, who are going to be leaving that working
22 group.

1 If there's anyone at this point who has
2 a particular interest in that area, again thinking
3 about governance, Legacy, and policy priorities,
4 please let the two of them know.

5 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: And since we voted
6 on it.

7 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Quick question.
8 The document that came out in the winter, this is
9 a version of that document?

10 MR. JOHNS: Which document are you
11 referring to, sir?

12 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: You sent a
13 document out sometime during the winter and asked
14 us to comment on it.

15 MR. JOHNS: You know how many documents
16 I send out?

17 So we have talked about this before.
18 However, there is no version of this document that
19 has been shared. There's an outline --

20 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Some of the work
21 on different priorities you're thinking about.

22 MR. JOHNS: Yeah. So it's very much

1 connected in that all of the work has been related
2 but this is a document that is specific to
3 thinking about the transition and our desire to
4 ensure that we get ahead of conversations.

5 Any other questions about this work in
6 particular or preserving our Legacy? Anything
7 that was not mentioned or accounted for that you
8 think is important to include in the report? Use
9 your mike, please.

10 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: Schedule
11 question, Spencer. What is your sense about
12 timing of release of the report?

13 COMMISSIONER OVERTON: I think that's,
14 you know, a question that David and folks who are
15 at the department need to make a call on. I think
16 we want to have a draft that could be released in
17 August in terms of final approval by the
18 Commission. So, in other words, as opposed to us
19 waiting until our October meeting for final
20 approval, I think our hope is that we can have
21 something that we can approve, you know, circulate
22 it, have a meeting on the phone possibly, and

1 approve it in August or September, so that we go
2 into our October meeting and we're all completely,
3 you know, on the same page and we know what the
4 consensus is here and, you know, we're not
5 fiddling with words.

6 MR. JOHNS: So, yeah, I just want to
7 state for the record how appreciative we are for
8 the support of Karen Akins an, who's with us here
9 today, as well as Karen -- Tom Mail, her colleague
10 in the Office of General Counsel. They are
11 integral in helping us move through the processes,
12 both within the Department of Education as well as
13 the White House, to ensure that everything we do
14 is consistent with not only the spirit but the
15 letter of the law and understanding the timeline
16 that Spencer Overton has just described today.
17 We're going to be working on them to try and
18 exceed it.

19 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Okay. We're now
20 moving into several of the Commission-led
21 engagements and the process will be I will ask for
22 a second of a motion to have different commission

1 members who will be leading our efforts and I
2 think it fits well with something I said last
3 night about the complexity of all the issues
4 involving the education of African American youth.
5 We have different groups.

6 And so the first group --

7 MR. JOHNS: Something he said to himself
8 thinking about preparing for this meeting last
9 night.

10 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: No, that's exactly
11 right. I was dreaming last night about all these
12 things, exactly, and so there's several groups
13 we've been all talking about over the last couple
14 years and we've got to the point now that we have
15 different people who will be leading these
16 efforts.

17 One involves LGBTQ youth, one involves
18 students with disabilities, another involves data
19 gathering, another involves student agency, and
20 finally the African American Women League group,
21 and so what I will do is ask you to -- I'm going
22 to have a motion. I'm going to move that the

1 following people, Commissioner Sharon Lettman-
2 Hicks and Commissioner Becky Pringle be the
3 leaders on the African American Education Summit
4 supporting African American LGBTQ youth. They are
5 going to focus on that.

6 Is there a second to the motion?

7 (Second.)

8 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: All those in favor?

9 (Chorus of ayes.)

10 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Peggy, is there a
11 question?

12 MR. JOHNS: No. She just needed to know
13 for the record who seconded. That was Peggy
14 Brookins.

15 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Great. And so now
16 we're going to ask them to talk about the
17 initiative.

18 MR. JOHNS: And we're going to highlight
19 again that in your folders on the right, there are
20 documents supplementing each of these areas, with
21 the exception of one. We don't have a document
22 for the toolkit but we will provide it after the

1 meeting. So there's a one-pager that you can
2 refer to as Commissioners Lettman-Hicks and
3 Pringle move us through this vision.

4 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Thank you.

5 COMMISSIONER LETTMAN-HICKS: Thank you,
6 Mr. Chair. First, I have to really commend David
7 and the staff for the due diligence and
8 intentionality behind making sure that
9 marginalized constituents within black spaces are
10 properly recognized, especially on initiatives
11 like summits, like he's been pursuing.

12 I have to honestly say he's been on me
13 since December really focused on hijacking, I have
14 to use that term, my black LGBTQ Summit that we
15 have annually, we've had for the last five years,
16 at the White House.

17 So this year, especially with the
18 Administration coming to an end, we have convened
19 for the last five years with the Office of Public
20 Engagement, up to 200 black LGBT emerging leaders
21 every single year that -- during Black History
22 Month with an intentionality to bring a

1 relationship between racial justice and LGBT
2 equality, seeing that LGBT equality has been a
3 mainstream issue but mostly considered a white
4 issue and the reality of communities that live in
5 intersectional spaces are often overlooked.

6 So what we did as a person who sits in a
7 lot of the LGBT tables around within the Office of
8 Public Engagement at the White House, I make a
9 rule, I don't go to the LGBT meetings unless I'm
10 invited to the black meetings.

11 So over the years, the White House has
12 been very intentional about making sure that that
13 happens but oftentimes I'm the only representative
14 in the LGBT spaces or the only representative of
15 African Americans in the LGBT spaces.

16 So I cut a deal with them a few years
17 ago and they've been very intentional about
18 bringing visibility to the next generation, our
19 emerging leaders, but it's never really been in
20 the K through 12 space.

21 So Mr. Teach the Babies got ahold of
22 that information and said how am I going to make a

1 difference and he said, you know, -- that is his
2 official name. I so move.

3 So Mr. Teach the Babies was like, well,
4 Sharon, why don't we take it to the youth and I
5 was like, well, you know, we had K through 12
6 issues and he was like that's my specialty and so
7 we have -- I had to give a little bit of that
8 background because it has really emerged and to
9 me, it's a culmination as I sat down with Office
10 of Public Engagement and said, look, I really
11 think that this is the cherry on top that if the
12 White House Initiative on Educational Excellence
13 for African Americans say they want this this
14 year, let's give it to them, let's allow the
15 Commission and both of my hats to lead this effort
16 and just to have a partner, like the NEA, who has
17 been at the forefront of LGBT equality across the
18 board for years, to step up and be such a strong
19 critical partner to this endeavor.

20 In my hat as the Executive Director of
21 the National Black Justice Coalition and being
22 able to sit here as a commissioner, I have to

1 really thank all of you for embracing the
2 conversation, embracing the issue. This summit is
3 going to make a difference.

4 Our children are hurting. The health
5 and wellness of LGBT youth that look like us are
6 hurting. We are back at epidemic levels for HIV,
7 specifically with adolescents. So we're talking
8 about 10-year-olds are walking around with HIV.
9 That's a generation being born that were not a
10 part of the epidemic, know nothing about the
11 quilt. It is a direct correlation to what we do
12 in education because these are babies who are now
13 going to have a lifetime of trauma because of the
14 lack of sexual education appropriate to my
15 constituents, bottom line.

16 In addition to it, the health and
17 wellness of suicide rate is up amongst LGBT youth,
18 especially those in transition who are transgender
19 youth. So the criticalness of schools supposed to
20 being safe schools, us taking this up as African
21 Americans and a Commission that is charged with
22 that and recognizing our youth, our babies who are

1 LGBTQ, is going to make a difference and the type
2 of tenacity that David himself has done and just
3 making sure that it is not just a ceremonial
4 event, to making sure that we not only are going
5 to have day one at the White House in the South
6 Auditorium but day two at the NEA that can double
7 the numbers of attendance as well as put in its
8 proper place, so that all of the educators and all
9 of the different associations can be invited and
10 all of the stakeholders but we're also making sure
11 that the panels represent the constituents that
12 we're talking about, LGBTQ youth.

13 So it's going to be a mixture from the
14 babies all the way up to those who are in charge
15 of direct service to our babies as well as the
16 greater community and stakeholders to recognize
17 that as black people, we must learn how to say the
18 word "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer,
19 gender non-conforming," and everything else, as I
20 call it, the elemental P, but the reality is we've
21 got to bring visibility, we've got to bring in
22 education because these are our children. These

1 are our children and we've got to show the
2 leadership and that is why I'm so excited about it
3 from the point that we have to show the leadership
4 and one more shout-out to Commissioner Doris
5 Smith-Ribner, who is like, look, I really want you
6 to call my people in my city. They are really
7 doing some good things and I really would like to
8 see them a part of it and I'm making a public
9 commitment to you, Commissioner, to make sure that
10 we have that proper follow-up because there are
11 some flagship cities across the country and we're
12 going to be bringing the data as to the top 10
13 urban cities in the country, not even just urban,
14 top 10 cities in the country that where black LGBT
15 populations are the most populous, and guess what,
16 they're in major black cities.

17 So these are not people that are living
18 in gayborhoods. These are not people that's
19 disconnected to black America. This is our
20 community where we have been disconnected. You
21 know firsthand because Baltimore's Number 1.
22 Baltimore is the Number 1 city in the country

1 where the black LGBT population is the most.
2 Marriage Equality didn't pass in Maryland all of a
3 sudden because black people just decided they were
4 understanding of marriage equality. They passed
5 because the majority of black LGBTQ people in the
6 country live in the state of Maryland.

7 So there's a direct correlation to us
8 even understanding our population identity as a
9 community at the intersection and that's what I do
10 all day every day but nothing matters more than us
11 looking at our youth and the impact, the health
12 and wellness impact that will cross over into all
13 parts of our community if we don't pay attention
14 to it.

15 So we should take close attention to the
16 Ebola scare and to the Zika scare that we're going
17 through now. You don't know what you don't know
18 and when 10-year-olds start getting infected or
19 experimenting with trying to figure out who they
20 are or trying to fit into some binaries, then it
21 becomes an entire black community issue.

22 HIV is no longer a gay issue and people

1 stereotype. It is a black issue. We must own it
2 and it's part of our health and wellness
3 narrative, just like teenage pregnancy. It is an
4 absolute correlation. So it's not a gay issue.
5 It's a black issue.

6 Thank you.

7 (Applause.)

8 MR. JOHNS: So go ahead for the record.
9 I want to make sure that we provide space for
10 Commissioner Pringle to talk not only about this
11 but, as well, about the work that we have done
12 with NEA around institutional racism but want to
13 highlight, and this is also included on the
14 Calendar in your folder, this Commission, that
15 summit will actually take place on June 9th and
16 10th. If you're interested in attending, please
17 let us know today.

18 The second thing is that this work is
19 supported by a media partnership with Black
20 Enterprise Magazine, so you'll note on Page 7 of
21 your Accomplishments Doc, there are 10 Moments in
22 Media. One of them is an article talking about

1 the goal of the summit, which is just ensure that
2 we're having thoughtful conversations about the
3 environments in which African American LGBTQ
4 students thrive and so we will continue to push
5 out articles related to the summit. The desire
6 was to highlight many aspects of opportunities for
7 us to contribute to that goal in advance of the
8 summit as possible, including a recent article
9 that came out two weeks ago in Black Entertainment
10 Television's website about youth HIV and AIDS in
11 particular.

12 So we will share that consistent with
13 some conversations we have had in the past
14 regarding media talking points, the messaging
15 things, to help you, as well. So just note that
16 that stuff will be coming and continue.

17 Commissioner Pringle, do you have
18 anything you want to add?

19 COMMISSIONER PRINGLE: Certainly.
20 Commissioner Sharon, I feel your pain or
21 privilege, as I'm sure Mr. Teach the Babies would
22 call it. I'm hijacking not just your White House

1 space but the entire, you know, building at 1201
2 NEA Headquarters.

3 And as I'm sure other commissioners
4 know, he's a force of nature and so it's not even
5 about asking anymore. He just tells you, oh,
6 okay, that's what I'm doing now? Okay. It's
7 quite effective, I must say.

8 But Sharon is absolutely correct. I
9 mean, the NEA has been committed to LGBTQ issues
10 for a really long time. We are, I'm going to say,
11 shocked, probably not shocked, but certainly
12 dismayed at the growing number of legislatures
13 that most recently are taking action to cut back
14 on rights of our LGBT communities, discriminating,
15 you know, making it legal to discriminate against
16 them and most recent in North Carolina. We just
17 pulled out of a major conference, as a matter of
18 fact.

19 H.B. 2 not only is legislation that is
20 denying rights to this community but specifically
21 targets programs for youth and opportunity to
22 access for youth and so we're seeing the scope of

1 these things grow and so this summit could not be
2 more important.

3 As you know, David's heart is always
4 focused on the kids and the students and so we
5 feel really strongly that this summit, the focus
6 of this summit on students is absolutely essential
7 and for us at the NEA, we're looking at and we'll
8 find, as we plan, the intersection of this work
9 with the other work, broader work that we're doing
10 on institutional racism and so we'll be talking
11 about how that plays a role in, you know, how we
12 might want to use this opportunity for students,
13 for LGBTQ students to talk about that and how
14 there's an intersection between the discrimination
15 that's coming from all of those different places.

16 So to speak about the institutional
17 racism, I think I share with the commissioners
18 that the representative assembly in the annual
19 convention, our highest governing body, voted
20 unanimously to pass a new business item to take on
21 institutional racism and it's a very comprehensive
22 charge that we have been given by our members, by

1 our leaders, to acknowledge the existence today of
2 institutional racism, which we're looking at as
3 the societal patterns and practices that have the
4 net effect of imposing oppressive conditions and
5 denying rights, opportunity, and equality, based
6 on race.

7 This is -- and, you know, we could take
8 the conversation that we've had today and use it
9 as an example of the challenge.

10 From the comment that Bryant made
11 earlier and I'd like to talk a little more about,
12 to all of the challenges we have in our schools
13 today, but the work that we're doing, as I said,
14 is quite comprehensive because we know it's the
15 interaction of systems, from education to housing
16 to healthcare. I mean, it's that interaction that
17 brings about the net effect, but we're looking
18 specifically and focusing on work on racial
19 justice in education.

20 And we know that a huge part of that
21 work is awareness of our members, of the teachers
22 and support professionals, who have made the

1 commitment to educating this nation's children and
2 then broadening out to education and, of course,
3 ultimately action. So things like changing
4 policies and practices, Jim, around school
5 discipline and the school-to-prison pipeline. So
6 we're looking specifically at that.

7 In fact, we have a task force that's
8 completing its work and will go to our
9 representative assembly this year in changing our
10 policy around school discipline and the school-to-
11 prison pipeline. So I'll talk to you a little bit
12 more about that after July and we'll see where we
13 are with that.

14 As part of that work on awareness, this
15 year we have been in every convening, every
16 convening of our leaders, from the smallest to
17 largest, our staff, as well. We have addressed
18 the issue of institutional racism.

19 No easy feat when you start opening that
20 conversation up. Our largest gathering so far
21 this year was a group of almost 2,000 teachers and
22 support professionals who come together for our

1 Professional Leadership Development Summit. We
2 asked David if he would come and be a part of that
3 and David facilitated a session of all of those
4 leaders to begin that conversation about awareness
5 and acknowledging that institutional racism is
6 alive and well in our schools throughout this
7 country.

8 David was masterful. I don't think I
9 need to tell you that. So much so, I'm sure much
10 to his regret, he continues to get invitations
11 from leaders across the country within the NEA,
12 please, can you please bring David so that he can
13 talk with us in our states and our locals? We
14 need to have him come and speak with us and even
15 in that setting, front and center with students,
16 and so we brought together a group of students in
17 the Dallas area to talk about the impact of
18 institutional racism on them and it was heart-
19 wrenching to listen to our students talk about the
20 systems that were in place that they saw that were
21 denying them opportunity. The things that they
22 suffered at the hands of their fellow students and

1 teachers was something that, you know, while we
2 know happens, to hear our babies talk about it
3 created certainly a new level of urgency for us to
4 do something about it.

5 And so I want to publicly thank David
6 for coming and working with us and I know I'm
7 going to be a force of nature with you, too,
8 David, and insist that that work continue with us.

9 We have such a huge opportunity when we
10 think about, you know, 90 percent of the students
11 in this country, their lives and success are in
12 our hands and so we have no choice but to step up
13 to this responsibility, but it's certainly
14 challenging and daunting.

15 David, I didn't tell you this but when I
16 came down off of the stage after the session, I
17 was confronted and I'll say it that way by a
18 teacher who felt that we were calling her racist
19 in the session. An hour later, she was in a better
20 space as I talked with her one-on-one.

21 David and I talked about the statistics
22 that we've been talking about, you know, in terms

1 of incarceration and the number of kids that have
2 been disproportionately disciplined and all those
3 and what she said was, you know, I'm not
4 responsible for that. I'm not doing that in my
5 classroom. That's not happening in my classroom.
6 I'm not unfairly targeting black students to be
7 disciplined and I said to her -- I didn't say to
8 her. I said to her it doesn't matter, it doesn't
9 matter if you're not doing that but as an
10 educator, it is your responsibility that if you
11 know that that's a reality that exists, that's
12 your responsibility to help to do something about
13 it and I share that with you, David, because it
14 was an example -- and I found out a couple weeks
15 later that this very teacher who accused us of
16 calling her racist actually convened a group of
17 her own when she went back home because our
18 session was so powerful that she felt that others
19 needed to learn and so she had moved from where
20 she was to a place of owning her own
21 responsibility.

22 So I thank you for the role that you

1 play and will continue to play in our work and I
2 would invite all of you and I'll -- David, what I
3 think I'm going to do is send something to you to
4 send out to the commissioners so you are aware of
5 our work and wherever you see intersections of the
6 work that you're doing and the work that we're
7 doing, we certainly need and want partners and we
8 certainly hope we can be helpful in the work that
9 you're doing but we are taking this extremely
10 seriously, including it in our next strategic plan
11 and budget and allocating significant resources to
12 doing this work, but as all of you sitting around
13 this table know, it's treacherous, difficult,
14 painful work that has got to be ongoing and
15 systemic, and the leaders of the NEA have made it
16 very clear that this is work that is a priority
17 for us.

18 MR. JOHNS: Really quickly I want to say
19 before we take any questions that the Commissioner
20 is being incredibly humble. She kicked off that
21 session by offering an invocation and literally
22 the doors of the church opened after she spoke and

1 so I hope that you will include in that the video
2 so that we can share with the Commission and then
3 we should all think credibly about ways that you
4 can amplify that work in your respective areas and
5 through your networks but thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Thank you very
7 much. Before we hear from Commissioner Tykiah, I
8 want to get the approval of a motion that Michael
9 Nettles will be leaving today to convene a group
10 that Tiffany Loftin is leading, this interagency
11 group, and Tykiah Wright and Tiffany Loftin are
12 leading the African American Group.

13 MR. JOHNS: We're also going to add to
14 that one, Gwen Boyd in absentia.

15 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Right. Okay. So
16 that's the motion. Is there a second?

17 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Second.

18 MR. JOHNS: That was Ronald Williams
19 seconded the motion.

20 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: All those in favor?

21 (Chorus of ayes.)

22 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: We're going to hear

1 from Tykiah first and from Michael Nettles and
2 from Tiffany and then from Tykiah and Tiffany.

3 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: All right. Well,
4 good afternoon, everyone. Thank you again to
5 Chair Hrabowski and David for giving me the
6 opportunity to share with you the information that
7 Lauren and I have been working on over the last
8 few months and this summit is very near and dear
9 to my heart personally and professionally.

10 I know that Kristen laid a good
11 foundation this morning in talking about the
12 disparities of students with disabilities,
13 particularly African American students with
14 disabilities, and where there are disproportionate
15 numbers that they are represented in special
16 education.

17 So this summit is coming very timely and
18 we want to make sure that we are highlighting, you
19 know, best practices around that area. When I
20 think about students with disabilities in the
21 African American space, you know, I just look at
22 it as just another -- taking a deeper dive into

1 another layer of diversity already within a large
2 diverse community and I look at these young people
3 as being brilliant in their own right. They just
4 lack the supports, the resources, and just overall
5 just they have low -- there's low expectations for
6 them to succeed.

7 So when I think about the work of the
8 Commission and, you know, how we work to increase
9 educational excellence for African Americans, you
10 know, whether it's equality pre-K, high school
11 graduation, college access and graduation, and
12 then even STEM careers and education, students
13 with disabilities can be successful in all of
14 those areas, and it's so important that we begin
15 to shift and focus on how can we provide resources
16 to make students with disabilities successful in
17 even accessing all of those areas of the education
18 continuum.

19 When I look at this summit that's coming
20 up in July, I get excited because July is a
21 significant month within the disability community
22 because July 26th is the anniversary of the

1 Americans With Disabilities Act and this year is
2 the 26th Anniversary and when we look at the ADA,
3 there are so many ways that we've made progress
4 and there are also so many ways that we still lag
5 behind.

6 So I think it's very significant that
7 the White House Summit on African American
8 Students with Disabilities is being held on July
9 26th.

10 So when we think about -- Lauren and I
11 had a conference about what we're going to talk
12 about in this summit and what was going to be the
13 framework around the conversation. We were
14 looking at the population that we were going to
15 identify and I think we even stressed the
16 population at the middle school because even in
17 the middle school population, students still need
18 to begin to set their priorities and set their
19 goals and know that there are caring and
20 supportive adults that are around them and
21 supporting them.

22 And then when I look back to the African

1 American Women Lead Event in December, I remember
2 how powerful the voices even of the middle school
3 students were at that particular event.

4 So the audience for this particular
5 summit will go as early as middle school age and
6 then up through high school. What we want to
7 focus in on kind of four areas or four goals as we
8 shape this summit and the first goal, we talked a
9 lot about story-telling and story-telling is very
10 powerful, especially in the disability community,
11 because we oftentimes don't get a chance or a
12 platform to tell our story and I'll just kind of
13 reflect back to a project that I did in 2012.

14 When I worked with students with
15 disabilities, particularly college students with
16 disabilities, and what I understood was that they
17 do not have examples or role models to look to in
18 the disability community to say, well, if you did
19 it, then I can do it, too.

20 So in 2012, I kind of set out on a
21 mission to go across the state of Ohio and
22 identify professionals with disabilities across

1 the state that were in various careers and I told
2 their stories, not the stories based on their
3 disabilities but stories based on their journey to
4 success.

5 So that was very, very powerful and well
6 received by the community. So when we talk about
7 story-telling, it's very important, even as a
8 child, that you get a platform to tell your story.

9 So we want to create that environment at
10 the summit to allow students to tell their stories
11 and hear from other stories so they can begin to
12 shape their future and they can reframe the
13 narrative of who African American youth with
14 disabilities really are.

15 So the second goal for this summit is to
16 amplify promising and improving practices to
17 accelerate learning and development for students
18 with disabilities.

19 There are resources out there but we
20 just have to connect the dots to those resources
21 and make sure that those resources get in the
22 hands of educators, also in the hands of parents,

1 as well as in the hands of youth, so they can know
2 -- they can define their journey and know what
3 their journey looks like.

4 Before I came here, I was in
5 conversation with a mom who actually lives in the
6 D.C. area and her daughter is a senior this year
7 and her daughter has a disability. We were
8 supposed to connect yesterday but we didn't get a
9 chance to but the daughter is very charismatic.
10 She's very outspoken and very set in what she
11 wants to do and she wants to go to college but mom
12 is really kind of, you know, coddly and, you know,
13 not really ready to let her go yet but just in
14 having conversation with this young lady, she's
15 got it, you know. So, you know, it's hard -- it's
16 my duty to then just kind of convince her mom.
17 I've been sending her mom different resources and
18 different examples of if you just let your
19 daughter, you know, open up and flourish, she will
20 be very, very successful.

21 So that's just an example of another
22 young lady who, given the right resources and

1 support, can be very successful and even
2 graduating from high school and going on to
3 college.

4 So the third goal for this summit is to
5 -- we were talking about this morning -- to
6 highlight the disproportionate rate --

7 OPERATOR: Pardon the interruption. Your
8 conference contains less than three participants
9 at this time. If you would like to continue,
10 press Star 1 now.

11 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: So the third goal
12 is to highlight the disproportionate rate at which
13 African American students with disabilities
14 experience disciplinary action and we heard that
15 in- depth scenario this morning through Kristen.
16 So we're going to take a deeper dive into that
17 space, as well, and then, lastly, support students
18 that do not -- support students so they don't feel
19 alone.

20 This is really key because oftentimes --
21 I have a student with a disability. You don't
22 really make friends at the same rate that other

1 people do, unless you have that outgoing attitude,
2 that tenacious spirit.

3 I'm a part of a summit, an annual summit
4 in Columbus called the Youth Leadership Forum.
5 It's actually a national summit where we take a
6 group of high school students, pull them away from
7 home and make -- they stay at a hotel for about
8 five days. Oftentimes this is the first time that
9 they've been away from home. It's the first time
10 that they've had meaningful conversations and
11 meaningful interaction with other students with
12 disabilities that may be like-minded because you
13 have to be on track to be a leader to be invited
14 to this summit.

15 So knowing that dynamic exists, there
16 are so many -- there's such a need for students to
17 understand that they're not alone and they're not
18 alone in this world and they can have meaningful
19 conversations with anybody but they need to
20 understand and be supported and engaged whether at
21 home, whether it's, you know, at school. It's
22 just in life in general, right?

1 So that's kind of the framework that
2 we're looking at as we're developing the summit
3 for July. I am very excited and David has been a
4 true champion in this space in making sure that we
5 stay on target and we stay committed to making
6 sure that this summit happens.

7 We're really focused on the quality of
8 the conversation, not the quantity of students
9 that are in the room, so I think that's going to
10 make for a more meaningful and impactful
11 conversation that day, and this is the first
12 summit that exists. As long as I've been in this
13 space, I've never seen a summit focused on African
14 American youth with disabilities. So I think this
15 will be a first of many and I'm excited about
16 championing this initiative and seeing it continue
17 on for many years to come.

18 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Thank you. Any
19 questions for Tykiah?

20 (No response.)

21 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Keep us posted.
22 Congratulations.

1 COMMISSIONER BOWMAN: Thinking and
2 talking about prevention, prevention of the
3 exacerbation of symptoms in children with
4 disabilities as well as the prevention of similar
5 disabilities that are caused by environmental
6 conditions that we have some control over, and I
7 guess I'd like to see us also focusing on that
8 prevention piece of it, as well, as what you do
9 about the rest of it.

10 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Thank you. I'll
11 take note of that.

12 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Just a comment.
13 We're looking at a number of issues involving the
14 intersection of disabilities and people of color
15 and one of the areas that we don't think enough
16 about is training or educating students in human-
17 centered technology and computing areas.

18 I have more and more African Americans
19 who are going for grad degrees involving access
20 who have physical disabilities and I'd like to
21 have that on the record because I think we need to
22 be thinking about ways. This is one of those

1 areas where there's so many opportunities for
2 students of all types and because there's so few
3 African Americans in the technology space in
4 general and then when you take an African American
5 woman who's also learning human-centered computing
6 and working with students who are, in addition to
7 herself, in a wheelchair and the ways in which
8 mobility can be enhanced as they work to develop
9 technologies that can help children and others.

10 It's opening up my eyes to the
11 possibilities and having us as a part of those
12 conversations.

13 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Right. I went to
14 Wright State University, which is one of the top
15 five schools across the nation that educates
16 students with disabilities, and that's why I said
17 even in all those spaces, you know, which we as a
18 Commission work in, STEM is a key area where I
19 know we, our university, had several million
20 dollars of grants to increase the number of
21 students with disabilities that were accessing
22 STEM education.

1 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: This lecture is
2 another example of the black children who are
3 never diagnosed with reading issues and yet there
4 are technologies that can be very helpful as
5 they're looking at the ways in which we are not
6 part of the innovation conversations that can help
7 us with the education of our children. We need to
8 make sure we push for it.

9 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: One final comment.
10 I just want to make sure that I get some
11 information to Commissioner Lettman-Hicks because
12 I know a few students with disabilities, African
13 American, that are a member of the LGBTQ
14 community. So I'd love to have them involved in
15 that conversation in June, as well.

16 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: That's excellent.
17 Very good. We're going on now to Commissioner
18 Nettles, date of convening, who's been doing this
19 data analysis statistics for now for at least
20 three to four decades that I know about really.

21 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: You're right.
22 And some things change and some things -- or at

1 least if they change, they seem to remain the
2 same, right?

3 So what we're going to be doing in the
4 fall, if the Commission agrees, is to convene a
5 forum that addresses one area of data that sort of
6 - - that the nation uses to define how we're doing
7 in education and how very often African Americans
8 are defined relative to other population groups in
9 a not-so-positive way in the aggregate and that's
10 large-scale testing and assessment and if you
11 think we're underrepresented in STEM or you might
12 consider it one area of STEM, we are severely
13 underrepresented in the assessment community in
14 the country.

15 Now when we look at the SAT and I'll use
16 that as an example, we get a sense of the size of
17 the gap. If you look at the two conventional
18 parts of the SAT, the difference between African
19 Americans and whites, for example, is over a
20 hundred points on each part.

21 Now very often other assessments, like
22 teacher licensure assessments, we look closer but

1 that's only because we have a constricted scale.
2 The scale on the SAT, for example, on the
3 conventional part is 800 per part. If you look at
4 the teacher licensure test or the GRE these days,
5 it's only a 200-point scale and while it looks
6 like we're closer on a smaller scale, it's
7 actually no closer than on the larger scale,
8 which, if we don't acknowledge that and we think
9 we're closer than we are. Okay. It's sort of
10 deceptive in that way.

11 If you look at the rhetoric around the
12 explanations for this gap, very often the kind of
13 responses you get are that we need to attend
14 better schools, we need to work harder in studying
15 and learning than we do, we need to have better
16 teachers, and all of those things may be true, but
17 when you account for those things, we only get rid
18 of about half of the difference, not even half.
19 So there's a substantial part of it that is
20 unexplained and one might say there are two
21 possible explanations for the unexplained and one
22 could be that we simply don't have the

1 environmental and educational measures that we
2 need to account for all of the rest of the
3 difference.

4 On the other hand, you could argue that
5 maybe there's something about how we're collecting
6 the information, the assessment itself, that may
7 contribute to the difference. I mean, how the
8 test is assembled, how it's administered, whether
9 we have the technologies that we need in the
10 assessment itself to be able to contribute to the
11 growth in African American achievement. Gains,
12 for example, are much more part of the assessment
13 as it's evolving. Conversational assessment is
14 becoming much more a part of the assessment world
15 than it has been in the past.

16 These technologies may represent an
17 opportunity for us to elicit more of the talent
18 than we've been able to capture in the past, just
19 doing it differently. People who construct the
20 assessments, whether we actually norm the
21 assessments on the whole population or is the
22 norming processing done on a bias sample? Those

1 are questions that we rarely answer or address in
2 our consideration of these gaps.

3 So what we're going to do, and we've
4 been talking, David and I, and this draft actually
5 could have David's name on it, as well, because
6 we've been sort of working on this together. We
7 just don't want to implicate him too early before
8 we make a full commitment to this.

9 But what we want to do is we recognize
10 that these gaps are pervasive. They've been with
11 us as long as Freeman says, I've been examining
12 data and longer, more than four decades. We
13 thought we saw some closing of the gaps between
14 1988 and 1992 but then they expanded again. So
15 we're right where we were really if you look at
16 simply the data.

17 So what we want to do is we want to
18 acknowledge that this is an important difference
19 that we'd like not to see four decades from now.
20 That is, when we look at this gap and, I mean,
21 gaps are all over the place. I'm completing a
22 paper now that takes a look at the national goals

1 on college degree attainment and I can tell you
2 when we're likely to be projected to get to the
3 goal and it'll be astounding to you.

4 We'd like to be able to think that in
5 the next four decades, when we look at this
6 picture, we're looking at something very different
7 than we're looking at today and one way to think
8 about that is that it's a long process and what we
9 plan to do is to spend a day together with leading
10 experts and thinkers around student and teacher
11 assessment to see if we can point out the issues
12 that the Commission and the nation need to work on
13 next in this road toward closing these gaps.

14 So that's what this draft is about.
15 While we may not want to get into the specifics in
16 this meeting, I can tell you this is a working
17 document and if you support the proposal to go
18 forward with this forum, we will be open to
19 commission members and others to make a
20 contribution to defining what a day might look
21 like for this forum.

22 I can tell you that if you're talking

1 about a day-long forum, you're really talking
2 about addressing three to four issues and possibly
3 having a couple of keynote addresses. So we'll
4 be, you know, judicious in how we decide and try
5 to prioritize those things that we think are most
6 important and that can send the right kind of
7 message to test developers, you know, purveyors of
8 standardized test policymakers who are adopting
9 policies on how many tests we'll have and at what
10 grade levels and when and how, you know, what to
11 do with the results and those kind of things.

12 So with that, Mr. Chairman, I'll leave
13 that as my formal remarks and be happy to address
14 any kind of questions.

15 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: I want to put my
16 own bias on the table because I'm working to
17 produce African American medicine to science
18 Ph.D.s and that is, several of you who've taught
19 in those areas, I applaud what you're doing. I
20 think we should be doing it to learn more.

21 I am always concerned as I go to African
22 American communities that a lot of times kids are

1 told, well, the tests don't matter anyway, which
2 doesn't help us at all, Number 1.

3 Number 2, we heard only 20 percent of
4 fourth graders are reading at a proficiency level
5 and that the real challenge, whether it's math or
6 reading, is everything is based on layers. So if
7 you're not at a certain level, this doesn't get
8 better, is the issue, right, and the real question
9 is how we help, fundamentally help these children,
10 for me, to read more critically because if they
11 can read well, I can teach them to do word
12 problems and standardized test math SAT, besides a
13 little geometry, really is word problems and
14 that's where our children fall down so
15 dramatically.

16 So when I work with high school kids,
17 when we are working with high school kids, helping
18 them with those reading skills and thinking in
19 word problems makes all the difference, and I say
20 that on the record because I just want to make
21 sure that people who don't like standardized tests
22 don't just say, well, let's just get rid of

1 standardized tests because you cannot become a
2 doctor, you cannot -- not only do the board exam
3 but have the MCAT to get into med school and we've
4 had this big drop in kids going on to med school.

5 So I put that on the table just as a
6 point of view to be taken into account.

7 Questions?

8 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Mike, you've
9 been dealing with this, I know for sure, 30 years
10 and Freeman's suggesting 40, but you've designed
11 tests, you've analyzed tests and so on.

12 If you had to speculate about what you
13 would find in the new analysis, what is it that
14 you would say with respect to the disparity
15 because you've dismissed a number of things in
16 your introduction? So if you had to speculate,
17 where do you think the issue is?

18 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: Well, you know, I
19 think, you know, there are several hypotheses. So
20 one is one that Freeman suggested, which is that
21 we're not engaged enough in assessment. The way
22 he characterized it is that he doesn't want us to

1 bash tests so that students don't take it
2 seriously. It's a requirement.

3 The point -- if you take a look at
4 people who are taking examinations and they take
5 them seriously and they prepare for them, they
6 tend to do better.

7 I think some of the other things that we
8 talked about, though, are critically important.
9 That is, one of the biggest predictors of
10 performance is socioeconomic status and the
11 question is do we compensate sufficiently to
12 accommodate those differences and the answer to
13 that question is no.

14 So, you know, it's a combination and,
15 you know, to look in the mirror and to point the
16 finger at ourselves. My colleagues at ETS know
17 that we're doing this and are not afraid of
18 addressing the question about whether we could do
19 something differently to confront this issue.

20 I mean, you know, if you go around the
21 country to look at who's establishing policies in
22 state departments of education around assessment,

1 we're, you know, an extreme minority. If you look
2 at places that are actually developing the
3 assessments, we are in the extreme minority.

4 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: You said something
5 very important, too. The problem, and I say this
6 around the country, is we use the test to punish
7 children rather than to use it as a way of
8 determining how to help them to understand what
9 they're not understanding, and then this gets --
10 this is why I like what you're doing in the
11 teaching and learning.

12 Those of us who've been doing it for 40
13 years, I mean, when I'm working with first-time
14 little children, when we can understand what they
15 don't -- how they cannot read the word problem and
16 we can give them that skill, that child begins --
17 and you learn to do by doing, when they do it and
18 they get some success, success breeds success, and
19 then they begin to do more and more and they can
20 become -- it's amazing what can happen, but it's
21 the teaching them not to use the test to punish or
22 just to put people in categories. You hear what

1 I'm saying?

2 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: One of the
3 projects we're working on is with Bob Moses in the
4 Entrepreneur Project and Bob points to us and
5 we're collaborating with him. We're developing
6 assessments around the bottom quartile and the
7 Algebra Project Curriculum. So Bob makes the
8 point that the language very often that we're
9 using may be discriminating and, you know, so the
10 question there again is, you know, is language a
11 part of the issue and, you know, we need to
12 address that.

13 COMMISSIONER MARKS: I'm sorry. Two
14 quick questions. Just one is a point of
15 clarification.

16 So you said when you controlled for what
17 variables? You said 50 percent or more
18 unexplained?

19 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: So social class,
20 race, and race in fact is a predictor of
21 performance, which gives us an indication when
22 everything else is equal, you know, you have two

1 parents who are the same profession, have the same
2 income and social class, being African American
3 projects you to get a lower score. That's the
4 predictor that gives us an indication that there
5 may be some kind of bias that we're not picking
6 up.

7 Okay. Another is curriculum. So if you
8 look at high school students who are taking the
9 SAT and you look at people who are taking advanced
10 placement courses and so on, you know, that
11 accounts for some more of the difference. So the
12 quality of the curriculum, those are measures that
13 we have good data on and if you account for those,
14 then you can pick up about 40 to 50 percent of the
15 difference.

16 COMMISSIONER MARKS: And what about
17 teacher characteristics, number of years teaching,
18 teaching the subject?

19 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: You know, this is
20 an interesting question because we don't have good
21 ways of showing -- if you look at the state
22 databases, they're not very good data on how, you

1 know, teacher quality in relationship to student
2 achievement, you know, and you start looking at
3 teacher experience and then you can make some
4 false assumptions, you know. The more experienced
5 teachers or the longer they've been teaching, the
6 better -- you know, so we don't have good
7 discriminatory data on teacher effectiveness as it
8 relates to student achievement on tests.

9 COMMISSIONER MARKS: And just real
10 quick, in addition to the point, Chairman, you
11 raised about assessment is diagnostic, I fully
12 agree with that, but, in addition to that, we can
13 see testing as a tool for teacher development,
14 right?

15 So the notion is if I'm testing or
16 assessing and I notice that a group of my students
17 didn't pick up on fractions, it may not have so
18 much to do with them as it does with me and I may
19 need to go back and cover that or teach it in a
20 different way.

21 So the assessment as a tool for
22 professional development for the teachers

1 themselves, in addition to the diagnostic piece
2 and in addition to the high-stakes way we
3 typically talk about it, I think is something that
4 we can consider, in addition to a pool or battery
5 or complement of other types of assessment outside
6 of testing and we can be creative, and I think
7 that you are thinking along those lines, as well.

8 COMMISSIONER COMER: My thought is what
9 we've discussed and that is, the quality of the
10 developmental experience that kids have and that
11 it's something you can't control for very readily,
12 that it's not only their own parents and their
13 ability to interact in ways that will promote
14 their capacities but then you also have the impact
15 of the environment starting from, you know, their
16 neighbors, friends, and school, and television,
17 and lots of other things, what kind of messages
18 they're transmitting about the capacity -- about
19 the kids, and so how do we think about those
20 impacts and what to do about them?

21 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: So this is a very
22 important point you're making. So standardized

1 large-scale assessments are being administered at
2 lower ages now than they were a decade ago. We
3 have a national data system called ECLS, Early
4 Childhood Longitudinal Study, that is conducted by
5 the U.S. Department of Education, that begins
6 measuring students in a birth cohort when these
7 students -- when these children, you know, are
8 one-year-old, and the Administration has suggested
9 and has a pilot study underway to do kindergarten
10 readiness assessments.

11 So what happens to children in these
12 very early years is really critically important.
13 Now I can tell you that this is an example of
14 where, Jim, your point is so critical, if I
15 understand it correctly.

16 We were working with the Children's
17 Defense Fund, Marian Wright Edelman's staff, on a
18 symposium series on African American boys and we
19 started with a cohort from birth to age nine and
20 there are 3.5 million African American boys at
21 that age. A quarter of them live in three states,
22 half of them live in eight states, and 75 percent

1 live in 13 states.

2 We know where they are, we know the
3 congressional districts. So Marian's staff said
4 to us, well, what kind of recommendations are we
5 going to come out with for this group and we said,
6 well, okay, let's just take America's -- a report
7 that we released called The Family, America's
8 Smallest School.

9 One of the recommendations in that
10 report was that if parents read to their children,
11 the children will enter kindergarten and do better
12 in school if they're reading consistently to them.
13 So Marian's staff said to us, okay, so that's a
14 fine recommendation, everybody can agree with
15 that, but I want to take you to Indianola,
16 Mississippi, where we have a project with a
17 hundred teen mothers and another one in New
18 Orleans, and I can tell you that we're trying to
19 work with the parents to learn how to read and to
20 live through the poverty conditions that they have
21 to live with every day and you're asking us to
22 talk to them about reading to their children.

1 So let's talk about -- let's go figure
2 out how to get them in the position to be able to
3 do that. So what we've been talking to you about
4 is having learning conversations and teaching
5 learning conversations. How do you help a
6 community to learn to talk to children in a way
7 that makes -- that feeds their natural curiosities
8 and their thirst to learn at an early age rather
9 than to, you know, abate that in an early age?

10 Now that's just a very surface way of
11 addressing what you're talking about. It's a
12 long- winded way to say I agree with you. We've
13 got to take that into account and the earlier we
14 can do that, the better off I think we'll be.

15 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: When the notion was
16 the role of the parents and being involved with
17 the teachers in both the academic and the
18 developmental world. Where are we with that
19 because there's no doubt that the more we can
20 support people in the house where there's a
21 gramma, a mama, and helping that child with some
22 of this, the teaching and learning, the questions,

1 the reading, the better. Where are we in this?

2 COMMISSIONER BOWMAN: Well, I think,
3 unfortunately, putting mothers to work has made a
4 big inroad into that in Head Start because there
5 aren't as many mothers available to work in the
6 classroom and begin to learn some of the things
7 that Head Start was trying to teach.

8 So we haven't -- we aren't moving on
9 that as well as we would like to and I think
10 there's also the fact that we've recognized that
11 the quality of the teacher does make a difference
12 and while we used a great many parents as
13 teachers, their ability to put the children in
14 competitive position vis a vis all the other
15 children in the cohort was less robust.

16 So we indeed have moved toward teachers
17 who are better educated in Head Start and they're
18 now hoping for B.A. level teachers in the future
19 just as they would have in kindergarten, but it
20 seems to me that one of the issues that we need to
21 think about is that the kids do know a lot. They
22 know a lot in context.

1 Are we examining the context in which
2 they know things and you mentioned the Algebra
3 Study and the work they're doing and language and
4 how kids use language. It does make a difference
5 in how they see relationships, algebraic
6 relationships, indeed, as well as other
7 relationships.

8 Are we looking at some of those ways in
9 which African American kids tend to use language,
10 tend to use their environment as support systems,
11 tend to use cultural patterns as a way of thinking
12 about what they're thinking about and how that
13 translates into what we're testing?

14 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: And thank you for
15 that, Barbara. As you know, we've been relying on
16 Aisha Ray at your inst4itution to help us to think
17 through some of this.

18 Now from a policy standpoint and from
19 the perspective of the forum that we're planning,
20 the question would be should this early learning
21 assessment be a part of our consideration? So
22 Freeman suggested and Ron that I have been doing

1 this for four decades.

2 I can tell you for at least three and a
3 half of those decades, testing little children, I
4 mean, it's been all right to kiss the babies,
5 David, and teach the babies but test the babies?
6 It's been taboo for much of the history and so the
7 question is what if we did that with optical? You
8 know, what if we decided that we weren't going to
9 test infants for sight or for other physical
10 aspects of their existence?

11 So I'm suggesting to you that if we want
12 to, if we think it's important, that we might want
13 to make this, you know, an issue in the forum.
14 The question has been the wrong type of testing,
15 the IQ, you know, conventional types of
16 assessment, and the question would be what kind of
17 assessment would we administer to the 3.5 million
18 African American boys and the same number of
19 African American girls in the country that would
20 be beneficial to learning and development in
21 future assessment?

22 I think that holds some promise and, you

1 know, I'd welcome your advice about it.

2 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: If you say how do
3 you support these children by doing something, if
4 the emphasis is on how you support these children,
5 you may get a little more positive because the
6 question is one always of trust.

7 COMMISSIONER BOWMAN: No. I would be
8 more interested in how you transfer what they do
9 know to what they have learned in their own
10 environments into what it is that teachers say is
11 important and how they learn in school and, you
12 know, it's not enough to know it. If you can't
13 demonstrate it to other people satisfactorily,
14 everybody says you're dumb. If you can't do what
15 other people say you should do when you're five
16 years old, then you're dumb, and we're not giving
17 kids the tools.

18 I think they have them. I just think we
19 don't give them the right tools to work with it
20 but that's my personal opinion.

21 COMMISSIONER COMER: I think the problem
22 you'll have, we'll have is trying to help parents,

1 community, and everybody else understand that
2 we're doing this based on a new knowledge in a
3 way, and this new knowledge is about how important
4 that critical early period is and why we need to
5 get there to understand how it would be helpful to
6 the children and the families rather than to be
7 punitive, to ridicule, to criticize, and that's
8 the problem.

9 We don't trust -- as a society, I don't
10 trust, nobody trusts.

11 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: No, and exactly,
12 and, you know, the rest of education for young
13 children, it has a long way to go, as you all
14 pointed out. We've got a long, long way to go,
15 but the environment today is a much better even
16 for that than it was in the past.

17 So, for example, Freeman talks about
18 Head Start. For much of the history of Head
19 Start, the focus has been on the basic sort of
20 needs that children have, the health, nutrition,
21 nurturance, and family connection.

22 Now we're moving into an era where

1 people are asking questions about the credentials
2 of the preschool teachers, suggesting that a
3 baccalaureate degree is the minimum qualification
4 and now even a baccalaureate degree with a
5 specialization in the -- is next.

6 So we're evolving and the question here
7 would be what is the role, what is the
8 complementary role that assessment might play and
9 how might it look, and I think it would be great
10 to have some aspect of this forum be here to
11 address that issue.

12 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Okay. We've got
13 two other areas. I want to plant a seed for the
14 years to come.

15 What's wonderful about this Commission
16 is it's multigenerational. We've got people from
17 different generations. Some of us may not be
18 around or maybe looking at you all, some of the
19 younger ones, but I want to plant this seed. I
20 thought about it because I think it was Doris who
21 was asking David about the African American
22 Excellence Tool for First Generation College

1 people.

2 If you think about it, we could have in
3 each of these areas starting with Sharon, we could
4 have -- I don't mean now. I'm not trying to scare
5 the staff. I mean, in the years to come, though,
6 Sharon, starting with yours, LGBT, and Becky, the
7 idea of these -- a toolkit of some kind that
8 different kinds of organizations that could use in
9 helping to support people from different groups,
10 whether it's students with disabilities, students
11 with LGBTQ. You may have some things already but
12 I'm just saying, I mean, the more people can have
13 they can use in the training process and
14 understanding sensitivity, just think about the
15 notion long-term, long-term, even as we think
16 about what we do with parents and as we think
17 about how we work with school systems or with
18 universities, not that we have to develop it but
19 the idea that clearly there's more that needs to
20 be done in the training area.

21 If you think about the notion that we
22 need to be using a strengths-based approach with

1 children, so that children don't feel like they're
2 coming in dumb and deficient or something, the
3 stupid words that people use, the fact that we
4 want to build the strengths from that and that
5 sense of self, and translate that into something
6 else. There are toolkits in training that needs.

7 And the last two areas where we could do
8 this eventually, I know in universities they need
9 it, and so when Tiffany has her own company,
10 would be on student agency. Universities are
11 looking for people who can help. Bryant knows
12 this, whether it's predominantly white or
13 predominantly black campuses with older faculty
14 who don't understand the voices of young students.

15 So let's hear from first Tiffany and
16 then we'll hear from Tykiah and Tiffany talking
17 about African American Women.

18 COMMISSIONER LOFTIN: Thank you, Mr.
19 Chairman.

20 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: I'm sorry, I'm
21 sorry. Yes, please. I'm sorry. Please. I'm
22 sorry. I didn't see your card up. I'm sorry.

1 And then we'll start.

2 COMMISSIONER BROOKINS: So I just wanted
3 to comment on the last piece and I want to go on
4 the record and say everything that we've talked
5 about as far as the preparation of teachers at
6 every level, that National Board, my process of
7 going through National Board took care of all of
8 that.

9 The other piece as far as what we've
10 done at National Board is we've changed our
11 process of going through and becoming certified
12 and we have certification areas at all three
13 levels and we have recognized the assessment piece
14 of that by having our newest and fourth component
15 focus on data and assessment literacy.

16 This is something that teachers are not
17 getting in higher ed and absolutely need in order
18 to make those kinds of decisions and from my own
19 personal experience as far as test prep is
20 concerned and the change and major shifts in
21 scores, a lot of students are never taught how to
22 take an assessment and I think -- I don't know if

1 you've looked at this but there's a vast
2 difference in scoring of those teachers -- I mean,
3 those students whose parents can afford test prep
4 and those students whose parents can't and it goes
5 back to that same socioeconomic status.

6 So I did a lot of test prep with kids
7 and, you know, they would go a 100-150-200 points
8 higher than previously by doing a test prep with
9 somebody who understands how the assessment is set
10 up and what assessment is like and in context of
11 how you take an assessment and read that
12 assessment.

13 So that might be one of the variables
14 that your company might want to take a look at.

15 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: I would just like
16 to make one amendment, a friendly amendment.

17 You said your. I would say -- I would
18 like to say our, if it's okay with you. You know,
19 one of the things that we're learning, Mr.
20 Chairman, is that we've got a lot of talent around
21 this table and a lot of passion on this issue and
22 I think a lot of points you made a really

1 important and valuable. I really appreciate that.

2 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: And when you talk
3 about intersectionality, both of our preparers are
4 teachers. I mean, the biggest issue that you
5 find, besides blacks not going into teaching, is
6 that even when they have gone through the
7 programs, they're not passing the practice exam.
8 They're not passing. We don't want to say it.
9 They're not passing the standardized test. But
10 when I've got a kid who does fairly well on the
11 SAT, the practice exam is nothing.

12 COMMISSIONER BOWMAN: Because they can't
13 pass the test.

14 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: So the standardized
15 test issue is the biggest issue nobody wants to
16 talk about in terms of people becoming teachers.
17 It's a major issue and everybody's scared to even
18 talk about it but it's directly related all the
19 way back to the fourth grade and reading skills.

20 Please, go ahead. Thank you.

21 COMMISSIONER PRINGLE: I actually was
22 going to weigh into this discussion about

1 assessments because I really appreciate the
2 approach that Michael is taking to that, the very
3 thoughtful approach and the questions that you're
4 asking, which I really, really appreciate,
5 Michael.

6 But it was when Dr. Comer and Dr. Bowman
7 put their voices in the room that I felt compelled
8 to on the record highlight the work they have been
9 doing for more than four decades and it's a
10 reminder of, you know, if we had listened to them
11 four decades ago, we might be in a very different
12 place right now and I say that now because I think
13 it has to be at the core of what this Commission
14 does and it's got to be instructive in terms of
15 why we have assessments, what we use them for, how
16 we look at different ways to measure what we think
17 is important, how we determine how we improve
18 professional practice or, you know, what we need
19 to change so the kids can be successful.

20 But at the core of all that is the work
21 that Dr. Bowman and Dr. Comer have done and so as
22 we move forward, I'm going to keep lifting that up

1 and asking that we attend to the things that
2 they've told us are good for kids and would lead
3 to them being successful, feeling good about
4 themselves and their possibilities.

5 So beyond using, as we've been, on this
6 test and punish, blame and shame era of No Child
7 Left Behind, beyond that, you know, we have an
8 opportunity. I feel like we're, you know, at the
9 precipice of -- we have an opportunity to change
10 the narrative in this country in a way that most
11 especially helps our students of color, our black
12 students, and so I think it's instructive, so
13 ironic, I'm not sure, Dr. Bowman and Dr. Comer, as
14 you listen to these conversations, you know, you
15 don't say if you just would have listened to me,
16 we would be in a better place right now.

17 So I just wanted to call that out and I
18 continue to do that as we finalize our work and
19 particularly as we make any recommendations around
20 assessment and what we think is going to be best
21 for our African American students.

22 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Thank you very

1 much, Becky.

2 Now we go to -- am I right? Now
3 Tiffany.

4 COMMISSIONER LOFTIN: Mr. Chairman, I
5 just want to get a time check. How much time do I
6 have?

7 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: How much time?

8 COMMISSIONER LOFTIN: I think we had
9 three.

10 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: 10 minutes.

11 COMMISSIONER LOFTIN: 10 minutes,
12 perfect. I want to start out by also, like the
13 rest of my colleagues, thanking Brother David
14 because this toolkit I'm about to talk about, as
15 you all know, and probably remember your first
16 interaction with me when I sat down at this table
17 at our first meeting, is sort of pushing and
18 talking about the different players when we talk
19 about education and the importance of investing in
20 the students at specifically the
21 university/college campuses and allowing them to
22 have student agency when they address some of the

1 campus climate issues, some of the retention
2 issues, and a lot of times recruitment issues from
3 students from high school.

4 And so with one of the passions that I
5 have, of course, and the opportunities that I've
6 had in convening students from across the country
7 and specifically in California, pulling together a
8 toolkit to talk about campus climate, student
9 agency, and the impacts that student organizations
10 on campus have had and how other campuses can do a
11 better job of that, I think that's an important
12 role that this Commission and, honestly, an easy
13 role that this Commission can continue to push
14 forward.

15 But in thinking, David, and him and I
16 were both actually on travel overseas while he was
17 in Brussels and, thank God for your safety, you
18 continue to ask me questions about this toolkit
19 and pushing the process for this and so I look
20 forward to seeing and talking about it moving
21 forward but I have some ideas in how we can do
22 that.

1 I also want to say that we have a mutual
2 friend at Humboldt State University and I may have
3 fallen short of letting you know that I actually
4 went to Humboldt State University to do a workshop
5 for the African American students there which is a
6 very, very, very small population within their
7 student body. It's also not a very popular place
8 to go to school but talking with John Johnson
9 there, who's a long-time friend of mine, I heard
10 that you went to that university as well as spoke
11 to the students there and so I look forward to
12 sharing more of those opportunities that I have to
13 go talk to students in the role as a commissioner.

14 But let me say this. I've talked to you
15 all several times about the student agency toolkit
16 and what it means not only for the audiences of
17 our university students but also for
18 administrators on campus and how they interact
19 with those student organizations.

20 You all have student agencies, student-
21 run/student-led departments. The student
22 department on your campus helps support those

1 student organizations and, as Mr. Chairman said,
2 when we talk about young folks who are going to
3 continue the legacy, our campuses recycle and
4 reuse these platforms and these vehicles every
5 single year, whether it's new leadership that
6 comes on campus or students who are currently
7 leaders on campus who are mentoring other
8 students, and it is not the responsibility of
9 students to continue to lead the retention work
10 but they do have an important role when we talk
11 about retaining students, specifically African
12 American students, me being the result of some of
13 those evidence-based programs, and so I will stick
14 to my talking points because I know I can get
15 passionate about this.

16 One is focusing on the actual problem
17 and so when we talk about the -- which the Under
18 Secretary was here earlier -- investing resources
19 in student retention and student growth and
20 recruiting students of color.

21 A lot of times on your campus, whether
22 you like it or not, your students are doing a lot

1 of that work and we find that through those
2 student programs, they have very high retention
3 rates with very little resources and so we have
4 found and surveyed students from across the
5 country who are doing that work and asked them
6 what best practices they have and included that in
7 this toolkit.

8 There are activities in this toolkit.
9 There are trainings in this toolkit. There are
10 case studies in this toolkit and so as we continue
11 to do the editing for this, which David has been
12 super awesome I helping us think through the
13 audience for who this can be better equipped to
14 help, I hope and ask that there's some volunteers
15 on this Commission that would also lend their eyes
16 to look at this toolkit, to go over some of the
17 edits, so that we can have the best product moving
18 forward, and I think specifically one of the
19 special requests that I have is for folks who are
20 in the South because a lot of this is very
21 liberal, very west.

22 A lot of folks from Northeast but the

1 South, I think, should be considered when we talk
2 about the best practices for your student
3 organizations and there's some commissioners who
4 are not in the room that I know have volunteered
5 to help out but wanted to extend that offer again
6 because my hope with the calendar of this is that
7 when back to school comes around in September,
8 we're able to sort of help share this toolkit,
9 whether it's in a draft form because it has to get
10 vetted, but share some more concrete version of
11 this toolkit during back to school in September so
12 that these students and our faculty on campus are
13 able to have something tangible to go back and
14 give to the new students who are approaching their
15 four-year college, four-and- five-year college
16 experience.

17 I also wanted to talk a little bit with
18 -- so I mentioned our phone call that we had with
19 the Under Secretary and I'm looking forward to --
20 he was actually really invested in helping us
21 think through some of the practices and interested
22 in seeing what some of those recommendations were

1 but also possibly writing a prelude or intro to
2 the toolkit, which I'm looking forward to
3 continuing that conversation, so we can find out
4 what other opportunities there are for the
5 Department of Education to get engaged before we
6 get it vetted and passed, so that there are
7 openings that the Department of Education can
8 continue to do.

9 Another opportunity that I found out
10 recently is, and Brother David Johns knows this, I
11 frequently not under the commission title have
12 gone as a commentator on the Roland Martin Show
13 for TV One and he's actually asked if I can sort
14 of moderate some of his radio talk shows while
15 he's on vacation and so I hope that we can talk a
16 little bit about opportunities not only for my
17 student agency toolkit but honestly some of the
18 discussions that we've had here at the table with
19 some of the work that the Commission has done, to
20 maybe have some sort of discussion on one of his
21 radio shows while I'm moderating and have you all
22 come on as guest hosts to talk a little bit about

1 the initiatives and the awesome work that we've
2 done as a Commission and what we look forward to
3 doing in the next 277 days.

4 MR. JOHNS: We would love the
5 opportunity to discuss all of those on the record,
6 if anybody's going to do that, and use their
7 commission title formally or informally,
8 consistent with --

9 COMMISSIONER LOFTIN: I sent you an e-
10 mail.

11 MR. JOHNS: Yes, consistent with the --

12 COMMISSIONER LOFTIN: That was me.

13 MR. JOHNS: -- Commission. That was
14 submitted late, late last night. Whenever you do
15 something, if the title is mentioned, we know that
16 because it's in your bio, people will mention it
17 without you asking, but if it's included in a
18 byline singularly or in relation to your other
19 titles, please let us know (1) so that we can
20 amplify it but (2) so that we can troubleshoot.
21 Often what happens is that someone not connected
22 to our work will see it and have questions about

1 it and so our ability to proactively engage will
2 reduce any anxieties that people might have, based
3 on the lack of knowledge. So please, please,
4 please let us know, even if you suspect that
5 somebody's going to reference you in your capacity
6 as a commissioner.

7 COMMISSIONER LOFTIN: Absolutely. Thank
8 you, and so on the record, I'd like to explore the
9 opportunity for this Commission to have a segment
10 on that radio show and for me to use my title as
11 commissioner.

12 And so, yes, so I'm really interested in
13 hearing maybe questions that folks might have had.
14 Again, there are other folks who are not in this
15 room who have been awesome in sharing feedback
16 specifically again from the South on student
17 agency and how they practice that on campus but if
18 there are other angles or questions or ideas that
19 you all might have as we continue to edit this
20 document, which at this point I think is about 38
21 pages, that would be really awesome.

22 The next step, so that you all know, is

1 there's a round conference call, which I've spoken
2 to Lauren about hopefully scheduling, so that we
3 can double back on some of the edits that were
4 suggested by our fellow commissioners and get
5 clarification on them.

6 After we get those edits clarified and
7 correct them in the toolkit, I'm hoping to pass it
8 again to some of the commissioners here in this
9 room or that are absent and then get some of their
10 feedback so that we can see what sort of holes or
11 things we need to fill and then moving forward to
12 the Department of Education and Under Secretary
13 Ted Mitchell to see if he's still interested, he
14 better be, in being a part of the beginning of
15 that toolkit and giving his sort of critique on
16 campus climate and the importance again of
17 uplifting our students and then moving forward
18 from there, planning some sort of either -- I'm
19 happy to do a panel or sort of lunch event to
20 share the toolkit more broadly as a resource for
21 other universities across this country and to
22 colleges.

1 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Very good. We want
2 to commend you on the work.

3 Is the toolkit --

4 COMMISSIONER LOFTIN: Yes.

5 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Is the toolkit for
6 both two- and four-year institutions?

7 COMMISSIONER LOFTIN: Yes, sir.

8 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: And is it for all
9 types of institutions, HBCUs and --

10 COMMISSIONER LOFTIN: HBCUs, minority-
11 serving, absolutely, all predominantly-white
12 institutions, absolutely.

13 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: It'd be good to
14 have some of the people in the room --

15 COMMISSIONER LOFTIN: Not so much
16 private schools but everybody else.

17 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: I mean, it would be
18 very good to have people like Bryant and Ron and
19 Sharon, people who've worked at different types of
20 institutions to look at it and give you their
21 feedback from the HBCU perspective, predominantly-
22 white perspective and two-year institutions, just

1 if we could do that, I think it'd just be --

2 COMMISSIONER LOFTIN: I would love that.

3 MR. JOHNS: Consistent with our
4 practice, we will send out an e-mail. I want to
5 be really clear that if that is not the most
6 effective way to provide something for you, let us
7 know. Just to be quite frank, we don't often get
8 feedback when we solicit it in that regard. So
9 for those of you who are especially interested,
10 Tiffany needs support in this regard, so please
11 let her know. Sharon Lettman-Hicks has raised her
12 hand. If there are others, let's get them
13 reflected on the record, as has Ron Williams.

14 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Bryant.

15 MR. JOHNS: Bryant Marks. So let's make
16 sure that we engage you in a working group
17 conversation that doesn't have to take place at
18 this table to provide direct feedback but we will
19 again share that document, the next draft of it,
20 consistent with our standard practice.

21 Why don't we start with Bryant? Becky,
22 do you still have -- is that a new -- so then

1 Bryant, Sharon, and Tykiah.

2 COMMISSIONER MARKS: This will be real
3 quick in terms of a strategic partner. So I'm
4 serving on the Brain Trust with the Smithsonian
5 Museum for African American History and Culture
6 that's opening in the fall and they have a big
7 push on looking at race and we had a discussion
8 about they're looking at African American history
9 and culture and the roles that HBCUs have played
10 and college students in general in the civil
11 rights movements and other movements.

12 So it's around student agency and
13 they're going to take -- we advised them to take a
14 historical perspective. So if you were
15 interested, there may be an opportunity to do
16 again -- it may be a program or something like
17 that but they are open to these sorts of
18 conversations where you can amplify your work to
19 an audience that may not usually have access to.

20 COMMISSIONER LOFTIN: I'd love that,
21 absolutely. Thank you.

22 MR. JOHNS: Sharon?

1 COMMISSIONER LETTMAN-HICKS: Seeing that
2 the toolkit can definitely be a great resource to
3 amplify the purpose of the Commission, I suggest,
4 David, that instead of the e-mail, that those of
5 us that want to lend feedback, the potential of
6 setting up like a 90-minute conference call, so
7 that you could facilitate going through it and get
8 real-time feedback, it might be the best use of --
9 instead of trying to herd the cats -- to just
10 actually have a deliberate conversation feedback
11 moment where you actually facilitate like a
12 webinar or something to walk through the
13 components for just constructive input.

14 COMMISSIONER LOFTIN: Absolutely. Thank
15 you.

16 COMMISSIONER MARKS: And for the record,
17 Lauren Mims is also a member of that Smithsonian
18 Brain Trust, as well.

19 MR. JOHNS: Tykiah?

20 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Just a real
21 question. So student agency, are you looking at
22 student organizations across campus or mainly just

1 like student governments, student councils?

2 COMMISSIONER LOFTIN: No, not at all.

3 And student governments, student councils probably
4 are some of the least students, I'd say, involved
5 in when it comes to the larger population of the
6 campus. We found that students and the practices
7 that we found that are helping students to be more
8 - - to help them retain themselves are students
9 who join organizations in which they identify with
10 a certain community and so that's either by race,
11 by sexual orientation, that's by special needs,
12 that's by the simple things like special
13 interests, and so those are the spaces that we're
14 sort of looking at and helping students think
15 about how they promote, build, and sustain those
16 spaces.

17 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: And that's for
18 the record, I'll be on that committee, as well.

19 COMMISSIONER LOFTIN: Thanks again.

20 MR. JOHNS: So consistent with some
21 conversations we had, we will make sure that once
22 that document is final and approved, we circulate

1 it, we will accompany that with a messaging
2 document that will include talking points as well
3 as ways that you can provide leveraging social
4 media and at a minimum for those who are not on
5 the working group, we'll ask that you think about
6 ways to share with your networks.

7 The initiative is committed to
8 partnering with Commissioner Loftin to launch the
9 toolkit at an event likely at an institution in
10 California. So we will naturally engage the
11 commissioner on that side of the country but again
12 be thinking creatively about how this connects to
13 not only the shared priorities but those that are
14 more central to other hats that you might wear not
15 at this table.

16 Anything else on student agency or the
17 work that this working group that has now grown is
18 leading?

19 COMMISSIONER LOFTIN: Thank you,
20 everyone.

21 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Thank you very
22 much. Congratulations. That's excellent.

1 All right. And then we have a final,
2 African American League with the Commissioners
3 Tykiah and Tiffany.

4 MR. JOHNS: Before they go, I want to
5 state for the record that included in the motion
6 that was made before we engaged in these
7 discussions was an acknowledgement of the work
8 that Judge Smith- Ribner has been leading in
9 Philadelphia. So just want the record to reflect
10 that we as a body have affirmed the desire to see
11 her to continue to engage with the faith-based
12 community to talk about educational excellence for
13 African Americans and specifically your role as
14 advocates for black kids.

15 Tykiah, Tiffany.

16 COMMISSIONER LOFTIN: Go ahead.

17 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: All right. So as
18 we wind down today, again this has been an area
19 that David has been a world champion in, making
20 sure that as we're promoting initiatives and
21 supporting My Brother's Keeper, but also making
22 sure that we are My Sister's Supporter and last

1 December, Commissioner Loftin and I were invited
2 to the first- ever convening of an African
3 American Women League, African American Women's
4 Civic Leaders Educational Policy Briefing and that
5 was an event that took place at the U.S.
6 Department of Education and we convened about,
7 what, 250, 250 women and girls and it was a
8 powerful day.

9 I know Commissioner Loftin spoke in the
10 morning at the kickoff but I was able to stay
11 there for the entire day. The actual event was
12 broken up into two sections. The first section
13 was a youth summit and we heard from phenomenal
14 youth across the area again from college age all
15 the way to middle school-aged students. I know
16 Lauren participated on the panel, as well.

17 So that event brought to us a lot of
18 information about the issues that women and girls
19 face and we were able to kind of come together and
20 think about more efficiently how can we help to
21 amplify again resources in this space and connect
22 women and girls to each other and make sure that

1 we are celebrating them in different areas.

2 So I'll let Commissioner Loftin talk
3 about her experiences kicking off the session and
4 then kind of as time has gone on.

5 COMMISSIONER LOFTIN: Yes, absolutely.
6 One of my favorite things about this Commission,
7 my favorite thing about this Commission, hands
8 down, is the opportunity that we get to interact
9 with young people on the ground and hash tag Teach
10 the Babies, I think, is the spirit of that and
11 watching David especially on social media but
12 watching David interact with those young people
13 and so when we had the event December 15th or 14th
14 of last year, being in the room with those
15 students, I think, was probably one of the most
16 insightful but serving pieces of my role as a
17 commissioner.

18 I will say on average about five of
19 those girls from that event actually I still talk
20 to to this day and they've asked for support and
21 resources, whether it be personal or
22 professionally, whether it comes to asking for

1 help with finding scholarships or whether it's how
2 do I negotiate, you know, where to get my hair
3 done on campus, and I think that it was historic
4 and transformational for us to have that event at
5 the Department of Education because that space and
6 that building doesn't intentionally create room
7 for young black women to come and meet in their
8 auditorium to talk about real issues and policy
9 but also about higher education and so I just
10 applaud this Commission for even having that
11 initiative and Brain Trust to do that moving
12 forward and it has been an honor to be able to
13 serve and talk to those students.

14 But I think since, some of the most
15 powerful things is (1) the hash tag FM Women Lead
16 and having that Women Lead part in the hash tag is
17 setting a standard and a tone for how this
18 initiative balances, like Commission Wright said,
19 what My Brother's Keeper is doing but how we cater
20 to young women in this country, especially young
21 black women.

22 And moving forward, having the First

1 Lady be a part of some of our initiatives with
2 Museum Day Live and talking about the Smithsonian
3 and we've worked with them on a couple of events
4 and projects. I'm looking forward to -- I know
5 I've missed the last two calls because of other
6 work priorities but I'm really looking forward to
7 what we continue to do project practice-wise and
8 this December, thinking about what projects and
9 programs really work and we want to continue to
10 implement, and maybe even as a thought, throwing
11 it out there, is thinking about how we work with
12 Black Girls Rock because I know that they just had
13 their event recently and it was really, really
14 awesome for them to uplift the young women who are
15 entrepreneurs and doing their own events.

16 How do we partner with them when
17 students are going to school but also what they do
18 in their communities? I think that's something
19 that we should continue to uplift.

20 MR. JOHNS: So we already got you. We
21 helped to co-produce Black Girls Rock tag which
22 was launched the day after Black Girls Rock.

1 Lauren was on that panel, wanted her to talk about
2 that, but before we do that, I want the record to
3 reflect that at that Women League was the Brain
4 Child of our former Deputy Director Khaliah
5 Harris, who is in transition, and a lot of the
6 work was done by Benicia Gray, our CBCF Fellow,
7 and so we just had an op-ed that Benicia drafted
8 go live on Home Room, the Department of
9 Education's website. We just suited it out, again
10 using the hash tag that we all discussed in the
11 past, which is atfmexcellence, and it talks about
12 a lot of the work that happened around Museum Day,
13 includes a picture of Tykiah and the convening.

14 So we'll share that after this meeting
15 as well as it'll be in the summit report but just
16 want everybody to know that the ideas that are
17 offered up that are phenomenal and anchored by all
18 of the things that the Executive Board and the
19 Charter, things that we're committed to
20 continuing.

21 So with that, let's integrate Lauren
22 into this and keep it moving.

1 MS. MIMS: Yeah. I want to echo that
2 and just really applaud Commissioner Loftin and
3 her mentoring youth and making sure that youth are
4 at the center as well as Commissioner Wright, who
5 developed and Women Lead event during Museum Day
6 Live and brought over 250 women and girls for a
7 historic day to kind of talk about how we support
8 African American girls and, like you said, we will
9 share the blog post for more information on that
10 but this is an incredible opportunity for students
11 as well as for other commissioners to have an
12 opportunity for intergenerational mentoring and so
13 to be able to lift as we climb and work with young
14 girls as well as thinking about policy narratives
15 and how we make sure that women and girls are at
16 the center of conversations.

17 MR. JOHNS: Any questions about AFM
18 Women Lead or the activities therein?

19 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: I'm just curious
20 about at the meeting itself, when you talk about
21 issues that the young ladies brought up, can you
22 sort of highlight what some of those issues they

1 brought up?

2 COMMISSIONER LOFTIN: At the event or
3 you mean would I -- so there's some students after
4 the event -- I had to leave early but there were
5 some students who after the event got my
6 information -- I passed out business cards -- who
7 spoke to me a little bit about their transitioning
8 into college. So they wanted -- since I'm a
9 college graduate, some insight to what the
10 experience is like, what sort of resources they
11 can have because they did not know what to expect
12 when they got to higher education learning and
13 even some of them who wanted help on deciding
14 which universities to choose to go to and what
15 elements in making that decision were important to
16 them and their families.

17 A lot of them were first-generation
18 students, like myself, and so they didn't really
19 know what to ask and look for. Their primary
20 concern was do I go to school in state or out of
21 state. Do I stay close to my family or no and I
22 said actually there's a lot of other questions you

1 should ask outside of that and so it's been
2 awesome to still build a relationship with those
3 students and David's pointing to you.

4 MR. JOHNS: Yes. So many of you know
5 after our summits, we produce memos that
6 synthesize the discussion that was had or took
7 place and it includes some significant themes.
8 This is included in your folder and two of the
9 themes that were discussed, one I remember very
10 vividly, was the importance of mental health for
11 African American women and girls in particular,
12 lots of discussion about the trauma that young
13 women and girls experience with street harassment,
14 which has continued to be advanced as a topic
15 that's really important.

16 We produced -- by we, Benicia produced
17 an event this week, last week, days run together,
18 where Chavez Public High School students presented
19 a thesis project and one of the thesis projects
20 was on street harassment. The young lady made the
21 point that for many, in particular men, who might
22 not be victims of street harassment, it's not

1 simply name- calling but it has a slow gradual
2 effect of eroding your sense of security and self-
3 esteem over time. So that's something they spent a
4 lot of time talking about.

5 Violence and rape, physical harassment
6 was something else that they spoke quite a bit
7 about, and then that was also architecturalized by
8 the need to reframe narratives.

9 So really, really pointed discussion
10 about black girls being aware of the stereotypes
11 that exist in the world as well as the nuance that
12 has been taught around a little bit today, which
13 is that the national narrative suggests that women
14 and girls are doing better than boys and men and
15 there's a specific conversation about the need of
16 boys and men of color but we know that black and
17 brown girls are being rendered invisible in some
18 regards and so these young women are talking about
19 what that looks like to be in those spaces where
20 they're often missed but those are the sort of
21 two, maybe three, if we think about the reframing
22 as a third, threads that were really powerful but

1 again that is reflected in the document that you
2 guys all have access to.

3 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: I wanted to add
4 that afternoon portion, we convened about 20
5 organizations for the Policy Briefing and that was
6 the first time I believe that all those
7 organizations that were focused on women, whether
8 it was the YWCA or there was different sororities
9 there, and I believe it was 100 black women.

10 MR. JOHNS: Yes. So this is the core of
11 FM Women Lead. So in addition to providing
12 platforms for students to be able to make
13 recommendations for the types of experiences that
14 adults should help to co-facilitate, we brought
15 together black women-led civic organizations with
16 the explicit goal of saying to them, we know that
17 this is work you're doing, you care about it,
18 right, there's a legacy of individuals connected
19 to Delta Sigma Beta, by acknowledging the
20 leadership around the table, and other
21 organizations.

22 So what would it look like for us to

1 work more effectively together, right? Michael
2 Nettles made a similar comment even just us
3 thinking about dates and convenings that we should
4 all be mindful of and so the goal was to (1) bring
5 them together to listen to young girls and then
6 (2) equip them in a way in which we attempt to do
7 in these spaces, information about policy
8 priorities and federal resources that could help
9 to accelerate the work and so now the activities
10 around FM Women Lead are about ensuring that those
11 organizations who were invited to the table in
12 exchange for committing to collectively
13 contributing to a million service hours are able
14 to do that in ways that we think accelerate
15 cognitive social and emotional development for
16 girls in ways that are connected to our shared
17 priorities.

18 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: You know, I think
19 it would be helpful at some point, this is
20 excellent what we're doing, to somehow look at
21 what has been done historically, think about
22 people like Mary McCloud Bethune who 60-70 years

1 ago was bringing women together of color and
2 different organizations and what they were able to
3 accomplish in policies and others, that you're
4 standing on the shoulders of some wonderful giants
5 that most people really know very little about and
6 this is in the spirit of what I think was --
7 Michael Nettles was saying about needing to uplift
8 excellence.

9 So when I think of people like Mary
10 McCloud Bethune or Dorothy Height and the work
11 that they did for women to elevate and to bring to
12 bear what's possible for organizations and women
13 from different groups to come together and even
14 the homes that are built here, the headquarters of
15 those women's organizations, they are different
16 generations, they are doing different things now,
17 but I do think it could be helpful if we are
18 helping to set context as we go into this work, to
19 put things in perspective, something to think
20 about.

21 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: And by
22 endorsement, do you mean take on a responsibility

1 of pulling together the list?

2 MR. JOHNS: The list of?

3 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: The list of
4 firsts, Mr. Historian.

5 MR. JOHNS: We can take a crack at that.

6 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: Awesome.

7 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: He has a Ph.D. in
8 Humanities. He does. He is one of those British
9 Lit types of people.

10 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: I'm a type. I
11 never make fun of his mathematics.

12 I want -- and this in a way would be
13 very personal. I came to the U.S. in 1973 and my
14 cousin, for older people in the room that
15 remember, the Bethune Monument was being created
16 exactly when I was coming here. My cousin was
17 involved in the NCNW with Dorothy Height and
18 putting together the New York branch. So my first
19 involvement with African American issues was in
20 fact that.

21 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: That's interesting.

22 COMMISSIONER NETTLES: The fact that you

1 hit those two names is quite interesting.

2 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Yes, she's such a
3 powerful force when I think about women coming
4 together and what she did for this country and
5 others know some of the work of that from years
6 back but I do think before it's lost, that to lift
7 it up in sort of ways as a context for what we're
8 doing now is very important and it highlights
9 African American excellence from an earlier period
10 of time, going back to the '30 and '40s.

11 MR. JOHNS: Some of you know that
12 there's a natural connection to the partnership
13 that we have with the Because of Them We Can
14 Campaign. In February, we worked with them to
15 highlight He Rose and She Rose who were sometimes
16 seldom acknowledged only in February and we'll
17 continue to do some of that work. So we will
18 offline work with Commissioner Williams on a list
19 and think credibly about how to work with partners
20 to leverage technology to advance some of this but
21 the note about using our platform to celebrate FM
22 Excellence is not lost on us. So we'll think

1 about ways to make those critical connections.

2 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: And I think it's
3 fair to David and his team to understand, to say
4 that we are not saying everything will be done
5 tomorrow. These are long-term goals that we
6 multiyear as we think about transition. Some
7 things are most important, other things are for
8 the long-term things we might want to think about.

9 Are there other questions? We've come
10 to the end of our journey for today anyway. We
11 are without the need for any public comments from
12 anyone. No one signed up for that. So we're
13 going to give you the gift of getting out of here
14 early, the gift, the great gift. All right.

15 But I want to thank all of you for your
16 commitment and your passion, your good thinking,
17 and, most important, your caring about our
18 children. Of all the things I can say, everybody's
19 here because we care about our families, about our
20 country, but about our children.

21 Thank you all very much.

22 MR. JOHNS: Before we adjourn, for the

1 record, our next meeting is on June 9th. That
2 will be a call at 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time and
3 a reminder that the number will be sent in short
4 order and that our next commission meeting in
5 public will be hosted I Washington, D.C., here
6 again October 9th and 10th.

7 Quick question. How do you guys feel
8 about this hotel? Is this a place you'd like to
9 return to? Okay. Helpful, just helpful to want
10 to take the temperature. Okay. So appreciate
11 that. We will follow-up, as we have in the past,
12 as always, if there are ways that we can be better
13 at supporting your ability as a commissioner to
14 advocate for black kids of all ages, please let us
15 know, but if you hear me say nothing else
16 especially to my staff to help make this possible,
17 thank you for all that you do.

18 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Let's give David
19 and his staff members a round of applause.

20 (Applause.)

21 CHAIRMAN HRABOWSKI: Thanks to all of
22 you very much. Thank you very much. All right.

1 Let the record show we are very pleased
2 with all staff members and all you're doing to
3 help us out. Thank you. All right.

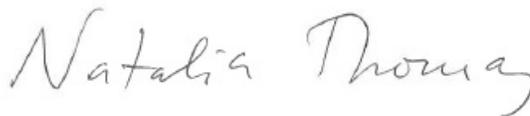
4 I have to adjourn for the record. Yes,
5 we're now adjourned. All right.

6 (Whereupon, at 3:12 p.m., the meeting
7 was adjourned.)

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1 CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

2 I, NATALIA THOMAS, the officer before whom the
3 foregoing proceeding was taken, do hereby certify
4 that the proceedings were recorded by me and
5 thereafter reduced to typewriting under my
6 direction; that said proceedings are a true and
7 accurate record to the best of my knowledge,
8 skills, and ability; that I am neither counsel
9 for, related to, nor employed by any of the
10 parties to the action in which this was taken;
11 and, further, that I am not a relative or employee
12 of any counsel or attorney employed by the parties
13 hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in
14 the outcome of this action.

15
16 A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Natalia Thomas".

17
18 NATALIA THOMAS

19 Notary Public in and for

20 the DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIBER

I, PATRICIA DUCK, do hereby certify that this transcript was prepared from audio to the best of my ability.

I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this action, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.



April 28, 2016

PATRICIA DUCK

1	1973 283:13 1988 227:14 1992 227:14 1995 150:12	3.5 238:20 243:17 30 24:8 177:14 231:9 284:10 300 24:22 147:16 35 163:4 36 41:2 38 262:20 3:12 287:6	9th 185:2 201:15 286:1,6
1 120:1,4 129:5 145:14 182:13 199:21,22 218:10 230:2 261:19 273:15 281:4 1,300 20:6,7 1.1 41:4 1.3 24:2 1.8 120:3 174:18 10 32:12 76:10 125:12 161:5 163:21 197:8 199:12,14 200:18 201:21 254:10,11 100 17:21 280:9 100-150-200 250:7 10th 201:16 286:6 11 65:4 91:15 97:12 12 3:9 4:3 16:10 25:1 45:3,11 57:7 61:20,20 62:12 66:4 82:9 113:2 141:21 145:3,9 146:22 147:5 149:13 164:17 195:20 196:5 1201 203:1 12th 8:5 91:16 13 239:1 130 19:20 142 4:4 14th 272:13 15 19:21 25:1 54:16 57:3 63:19 64:1,21 78:10 80:18 88:20 89:7 90:12,14 91:12 91:13 92:1 94:14 139:18 146:21 147:10 164:16 15th 272:13 16 88:22 16th 60:13,14 17 88:22 18 1:15 48:7 86:13 183 4:7	2 2 129:6 167:5 203:19 230:3 261:20 281:6 2,000 206:21 2.0 30:2 2.0. 24:2 20 138:7,13 155:5 230:3 280:4 200 144:7 194:20 225:5 20001 1:11 2011 51:19 91:12 2012 16:7 31:4 215:13,20 2013 55:2 131:18 132:5 2014 141:16 2015 47:22 2016 1:15 13:13 15:15 16:5 289:16 2017 23:4,22 24:3 24:20 144:21 2020 8:16 21 32:19,21,22 33:1 48:1 61:16,18 22 73:2 24th 177:17 25 28:16 250 271:7,7 276:6 26th 213:22 214:2,9 277 144:15,15 261:3 28 289:16 280 68:12 287 4:10 29 32:20 29th 176:19 2nd 53:20 60:11	4 4.4 16:8 33:17 40 52:1 89:1 231:10 233:12 235:14 400 59:15 400-500 59:10 40s 284:10 415 1:10	a a.m. 1:14 abate 240:9 ability 16:6,11,16 29:12 33:11,12,12 33:19 34:2,13 37:15 37:18 38:8 40:22 125:17 151:16 237:13 241:13 262:1 286:13 288:8 289:5 able 12:8 16:3,22 18:16 19:3,6,20 20:2 22:14 23:3,14 26:15 27:4 28:7,22 34:18 43:19 67:8 69:5 82:18 83:5 101:8 103:14 125:18 152:13,18 153:5 159:9 161:11 169:15 183:3 186:15 196:22 226:10,18 228:4 240:2 259:8,13 271:10,19 273:12 276:13 280:12 281:13 282:2
		5 5 120:1,4 286:2 50 15:21 92:12 234:17 235:14 500 59:15	101:8 103:14 125:18 152:13,18 153:5 159:9 161:11 169:15 183:3 186:15 196:22 226:10,18 228:4 240:2 259:8,13 271:10,19 273:12 276:13 280:12 281:13 282:2
		6 60 21:8 161:4,5 60-70 281:22 61 32:20 618 126:20 65 32:19,22 33:1 61:16,18	276:13 280:12 281:13 282:2
		7 7 201:20 70 179:16 75 17:19 28:15 73:10 92:13 153:13 238:22 786 59:17	absent 263:9 absentia 211:14 absolute 201:4 absolutely 47:3 48:19 71:18 77:21 118:20 131:16 146:9 155:14 203:8 204:6 249:17 262:7 264:11,12 266:21 267:14 272:5
		8 8 22:2 119:8 80,000 174:21 175:22 800 225:3 876 59:11,14	267:14 272:5 absorb 94:16 abstentions 9:20 11:1
	3 3 19:11 93:14 129:13 3.2 120:1	9 90 208:10 267:6 9:00 1:14	academic 29:22 37:11 40:1 42:9 43:14 84:17 136:1 151:3 163:20 164:4 240:17

<p>accelerate 7:14 8:2 9:2 43:19 216:17 281:9,14 accelerated 13:3 accelerating 8:18 11:9 acceleration 17:12 43:8,12 accepted 66:2 109:6 accepting 23:20 access 7:17 8:4,6 16:12,12 17:1 24:4 28:17 42:3 49:18,19 78:22 95:16 140:15 148:12 150:13 152:13 153:9,9,16 154:13 163:1,14 203:22 213:11 221:19 266:19 280:2 accessing 213:17 222:21 accommodate 232:12 accompanied 128:20 accompany 269:1 accomplish 282:3 accomplished 109:14,15 accomplishments 184:14 201:21 account 56:21 82:7 83:2 119:4 120:7 121:5 131:10 225:17 226:2 231:6 235:13 240:13 accountability 45:5 55:3 67:14 82:4,8 accounted 190:7 accounts 235:11 accreditors 152:18 152:21 accrediting 173:16 accuracy 13:9 accurate 288:7 accused 209:15</p>	<p>achievement 9:6 35:17,21 70:22 95:13 107:7 108:16 123:5,22 154:12,13 154:15,17 157:14 157:15 160:4 226:11 236:2,8 acknowledge 138:10 139:11 205:1 225:8 227:18 acknowledged 284:16 acknowledgement 270:7 acknowledging 207:5 280:19 acronym 12:18 act 16:19 54:1 125:17 127:6 132:4 145:4 148:2 214:1 action 52:4 54:22 129:13 203:13 206:3 218:14 288:10,14 289:7,9 activities 258:8 276:18 281:9 activity 15:2,3 42:15 162:9 actual 63:4 257:16 271:11 ada 214:2 add 161:7 202:18 211:13 280:3 addition 13:11 14:21 68:16 83:15 146:4 165:5 184:22 197:16 222:6 236:10,12 237:1,2,4 280:11 additional 13:8 34:8 69:13 75:15 83:19 112:4 141:8 additionally 68:3 84:6,9 address 48:21 52:5 53:18 54:18,20 55:1 64:14 79:5 80:2,12 93:4 107:17 128:1</p>	<p>130:11 131:17 132:11,16,17 134:5 136:3 158:19 227:1 229:13 234:12 246:11 254:22 addressed 51:16 55:12 113:9 126:3 206:17 addresses 224:5 229:3 addressing 76:19 126:7 133:4 157:13 229:2 232:18 240:11 adjourn 285:22 287:4 adjourned 287:5,7 adjournment 4:10 adjunct 2:8 administer 243:17 administered 226:8 238:1 administration 4:3 7:6 11:7 12:5 25:6 25:17 45:17 53:22 60:18 143:14 155:16 160:1 166:21 184:6 188:9 188:14 194:18 238:8 administration's 154:1 administrators 13:13 70:15 135:3,4 176:21,21 256:18 admittedly 64:18 adolescents 197:7 adopt 135:20 adopted 15:22 adopting 229:8 adult 3:6 11:10 14:22 15:3,16,21 30:7 36:21 37:1 40:12,13,21 41:5,8 42:1 45:3,11 adults 15:20 36:18 39:2,8 41:2 134:20 150:13,19 151:5</p>	<p>166:22 214:20 280:14 advance 75:13 84:21 202:7 284:20 advanced 138:9,15 235:9 278:14 adverse 114:4 167:22 168:8 advice 113:21 244:1 advised 266:13 advising 38:14 advisor 3:7 47:8 advisors 170:16 advisory 2:2 58:13 177:9 advocacy 143:4 advocate 286:14 advocates 126:14 270:14 advocating 71:17 affiliate 69:11 affiliates 69:9 affirmed 270:10 afford 250:3 affordability 146:14 afm 276:17 afraid 232:17 african 1:6 2:3 7:15 8:3,13,18 9:3,7 11:9 16:8 32:7,13 39:8 42:8,11,19 61:5 71:17 75:13,22 85:4 87:11 96:15,18,20 104:19 106:1 114:4 138:13 141:6 154:20 155:4 156:8 171:6 177:8,14 180:12 187:4 192:4 192:20 193:3,4 195:15 196:13 197:20 202:3 211:12 212:13,21 213:9 214:7,22 216:13 218:13 220:13 221:18 222:3,4 223:12 224:7,18 226:11 229:17,21 235:2</p>
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<p>238:18,20 242:9 243:18,19 246:21 248:17 253:21 256:5 257:11 266:5 266:8 270:2,13 271:2,3 276:8 278:11 283:19 284:9 afternoon 12:3 143:17,18 212:4 280:4 age 32:14,19 61:14 76:1,6 77:5 215:5 238:19,21 240:8,9 271:14 aged 271:15 agencies 19:21 22:7 85:22 126:13 256:20 agency 192:19 248:10 254:22 255:9 256:15 260:17 262:17 266:12 267:21 269:16 agenda 11:21,21 12:3 32:2 66:20 149:15 150:7 153:20 157:20 158:18 159:13 186:21 187:21 ages 7:16 238:2 286:14 aggregate 224:9 ago 114:9 125:12,12 127:14 148:10 157:3 163:21,22 166:18 195:17 202:9 238:2 252:11 282:1 agree 46:15 181:19 236:12 239:14 240:12 agrees 224:4 agriculture 8:8 140:16 ahead 10:5 44:16 95:17,21 118:13</p>	<p>140:6 164:12 190:4 201:8 251:20 270:16 ahold 195:21 aid 22:21 151:22 152:9,19 163:9,10 163:15 aids 202:10 aimed 161:5 aisha 242:16 akins 107:19 191:8 akosua 5:15 algebra 234:7 242:2 algebraic 242:5 align 15:8 42:17,18 aligned 13:4 147:12 alive 207:6 allocating 210:11 allocation 70:3 allow 7:9 57:13,16 110:22 150:15 183:5 196:14 216:10 allowed 157:12 allowing 66:12 254:21 allows 22:19 53:4 ally 125:1 alternative 168:2 alternatives 135:11 135:12 alumni 142:5 amazing 233:20 ambassador 115:17 115:18 175:15 amendment 250:16 250:16 amendments 132:15 america 199:19 america's 24:2 28:10 160:9 161:3 239:6,7 american 2:11 7:15 8:4,13,19 9:3,7 11:9 19:18 32:13 33:15 42:19,20 71:17 75:22 85:4 87:11 96:15,18,20 104:19</p>	<p>106:1 114:4 138:13 141:6 154:20 155:5 171:6 177:8,14 187:4 192:4,20 193:3,4 202:3 211:12 212:13,21 214:7 215:1 216:13 218:13 220:14 222:4 223:13 226:11 229:17,22 235:2 238:18,20 242:9 243:18,19 246:21 248:17 253:21 256:5 257:12 266:5,8 270:2 271:3,3 276:8 278:11 283:19 284:9 americans 1:6 2:3 16:9 32:7 39:9 42:8 42:12 61:6 75:13 154:7 155:6 156:8 180:12 195:15 196:13 197:21 213:9 214:1 221:18 222:3 224:7,19 270:13 amount 89:20 96:5 181:16 amplify 75:12,18 211:4 216:16 261:20 266:18 267:3 271:21 analyses 128:18 analysis 12:16 55:19 74:16 78:7 127:15 127:22 129:21 130:9 223:19 231:13 analyze 56:18 127:19 128:14 analyzed 231:11 anapc 19:17 anchor 145:12 170:13 anchored 275:17 angela 5:9</p>	<p>angles 262:18 anniversary 213:22 214:2 announce 23:3 announced 67:11 annual 204:18 219:3 annually 194:15 answer 36:13 81:22 97:7 98:17 114:22 118:12 155:21 160:17 170:22 175:3 187:3 227:1 232:12 answered 88:17 answers 71:7 164:11,13 anticipate 168:17 anxieties 262:2 anxiously 19:2 anybody 10:21 39:22 75:1 219:19 anybody's 261:6 anymore 78:8 203:5 anyway 33:19 39:11 164:15 230:1 285:10 api 42:20 apologize 72:14 app 144:7,14 appeals 2:19 appearing 94:12 appendices 184:12 applaud 112:19 229:19 273:10 276:2 applause 139:4,6 183:9 201:7 286:19 286:20 applicable 150:3 application 26:11 applications 23:20 153:12,15 172:8 applied 28:2 apply 20:9 27:3 appointment 66:3 appreciate 65:11 66:9 96:2 113:22</p>
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<p>139:2,8 180:19 181:7 251:1 252:1,4 286:10 appreciation 87:16 appreciative 191:7 apprised 15:13,13 17:5 approach 44:1 56:12 100:16 149:18 247:22 252:2,3 approaches 41:14 133:12,18 approaching 259:14 appropriate 49:16 53:7 132:3 162:10 182:20 197:14 appropriateness 99:5 approval 185:12 190:17,20 211:8 approve 190:21 191:1 approved 34:12 35:2,5 268:22 approximately 17:21 april 1:15 176:19 177:17 182:13 289:16 architecturalize 75:15 architecturalized 279:7 area 22:9 31:11 35:17 46:6 111:8 126:16 137:7 141:21 149:5 179:14 189:2 207:17 212:19 217:6 222:18 224:5 224:12 247:20 270:18 271:14 areas 7:12 9:5 28:6 45:20 68:1 73:5,9 75:12 83:21 84:8 98:4 100:5,10 104:2 111:11 112:6</p>	<p>115:14 129:11 156:8 162:11 180:16,17 193:20 211:4 213:14,17 215:7 221:15,17 222:1 229:19 246:13 247:3 248:7 249:12 272:1 argue 226:4 arranged 36:12 article 201:22 202:8 articles 202:5 articulation 42:21 arts 8:8 140:16 asap 43:20 asian 33:15 50:11 aside 18:20 24:5,15 54:16 56:17 57:3 80:17 88:20 89:7,20 90:14 161:13 asked 52:2 88:19 118:22 175:1 189:13 207:2 258:5 260:13 272:20 asking 37:6 38:11 60:2 62:7 89:3,6 118:8 122:18 125:19 137:1 165:19 187:14 203:5 239:21 246:1 246:21 252:4 253:1 261:17 272:22 aspect 137:2 246:10 aspects 91:5 136:2,4 202:6 243:10 assembled 226:8 assembly 204:18 206:9 assessing 236:16 assessment 23:16,16 100:9 101:18 156:7 158:16 162:2,8,12 224:10,13 226:6,10 226:12,13,14 228:11 231:21 232:22 236:11,21 237:5 242:21 243:16,17,21 246:8</p>	<p>249:13,15,22 250:9 250:10,11,12 253:20 assessments 67:3 224:21,22 226:20 226:21 233:3 234:6 238:1,10 252:1,15 assign 118:22 assigned 118:21 119:1 120:6 assignment 43:21 112:20 120:8 assist 27:16 116:11 assistance 21:17 66:19 67:22 69:2 70:5 71:1 127:13 assistant 3:3,5,8 66:3 assistants 102:8 assisted 77:19 assisting 115:7 associate 2:12 150:4 association 2:18 42:22 69:9,12 177:12 associations 198:9 assume 31:8 62:9,10 182:18 188:15 assuming 100:8 110:20 assumptions 236:4 assurance 106:20 153:1 173:17 astounding 228:3 atfmexcellence 275:11 atlanta 118:19 attach 169:3 attacking 136:18 attacks 186:18 attainment 144:3 228:1 attempt 281:6 attempts 9:6 53:18 attend 19:16 22:11 225:13 253:1 attendance 21:10 22:5 116:2 154:17</p>	<p>198:7 attended 177:11 attending 201:16 attention 84:15 96:6 200:13,15 attitude 219:1 attitudes 136:5 137:5 attorney 288:12 atv 38:17 audience 215:4 258:13 266:19 audiences 256:16 audio 289:4 auditorium 198:6 273:8 august 185:11 190:17 191:1 austin 9:1 authority 22:14 81:16 autism 98:1 availability 111:5 available 18:6,9 21:3 41:17 55:1 64:18 82:11 122:20 152:10,19 241:5 avenue 1:10 average 28:13 120:1 120:2 272:18 awaiting 19:2 award 22:21 aware 17:7 21:15 30:21 99:18 129:17 130:22 210:4 279:10 awareness 52:8 205:21 206:14 207:4 awesome 79:9 258:12 261:1 262:15,21 274:14 278:2 283:6 eyes 9:17 10:20 65:20 193:9 211:21</p>
---	--	--	--

<p>b</p> <p>b 2:3 54:16 63:20 77:14</p> <p>b.a. 241:18</p> <p>babies 195:21 196:3 197:12,22 198:14 198:15 202:21 208:2 243:4,5,5 272:10</p> <p>baccalaureate 246:3 246:4</p> <p>back 24:12 26:16 32:3 35:14 41:21 45:2 46:9 51:19 52:16 69:21 91:7 95:18 96:8 131:18 139:22 140:4 141:12 142:9 153:22 156:15 157:19 162:4 163:15 164:15 175:9,19 180:22 186:7 197:6 203:13 209:17 214:22 215:13 236:19 250:5 251:19 259:7 259:11,13 263:3 284:6,10</p> <p>background 196:8</p> <p>backwards 85:16</p> <p>bad 134:16,18,22</p> <p>balances 273:18</p> <p>baltimore 2:7 199:22</p> <p>baltimore's 199:21</p> <p>ban 22:16,19 23:5,7 24:17</p> <p>band 27:21</p> <p>bank 168:22</p> <p>banked 164:20</p> <p>banned 52:18</p> <p>barbara 2:3 5:10 7:22 72:4 242:15</p> <p>barrier 128:3</p> <p>barriers 136:15</p> <p>barthwell 5:15 8:10</p>	<p>based 12:12 23:15 36:9 54:4 55:11 64:12 74:3 104:11 117:10 127:20,20 130:1,1 151:8,21 163:7 205:5 216:2,3 230:6 245:2 247:22 257:13 262:2 270:11</p> <p>baseline 122:6</p> <p>bash 232:1</p> <p>basic 15:3,4 42:15 43:15 46:18 96:16 138:9,21 159:12 185:14,19 245:19</p> <p>basically 12:18 119:4</p> <p>basis 163:17</p> <p>battery 237:4</p> <p>bear 282:12</p> <p>becky 69:10 72:4 88:13,15 123:11 124:5 187:18 193:2 247:6 254:1 265:21</p> <p>becky's 118:12 122:15</p> <p>becoming 226:14 249:11 251:16</p> <p>beginning 7:4 11:7 53:13 60:10 90:7 92:22 170:15 175:1 263:14</p> <p>begins 76:1 233:16 238:5</p> <p>behave 135:5</p> <p>behaving 170:21</p> <p>behavior 63:4,5 134:16</p> <p>behavioral 64:8 92:19 94:7,10 134:15 147:14</p> <p>behaviors 94:12 136:5 137:5</p> <p>belabor 157:18</p> <p>believe 7:13 15:21 32:17 39:10,15 52:16 108:13 115:4 117:3 145:12 154:8</p>	<p>163:11 170:13 178:11 187:19 280:6,9</p> <p>belts 173:13</p> <p>beltway 85:20 86:4</p> <p>beneficial 243:20</p> <p>benefit 16:7,11,16 29:12 33:11,12,13 33:19 34:2,14 37:15 37:18 38:8 40:22 89:19 116:1,3 132:1</p> <p>benefits 21:6 22:2 116:7</p> <p>benicia 275:6,7 278:16</p> <p>best 30:22 38:17,19 43:7,7 71:15 81:15 84:21 85:17 98:13 108:15 123:4,21 144:12 149:5 151:18 174:10 177:21 212:19 253:20 258:6,17 259:2 267:8 288:7 289:4</p> <p>beta 280:19</p> <p>bethune 281:22 282:10 283:15</p> <p>better 14:6 36:4 45:10 70:18 71:1 103:16,18 105:6 110:13 127:3 138:18 148:19,21 153:16 156:6 169:5 208:19 225:14,15 230:8 232:6 236:6 239:11 240:14 241:1,17 245:15 253:16 255:11 258:13 263:14 279:14 286:12</p> <p>beyond 13:8 25:17 37:7,8 39:19 85:20 86:4 90:1 253:5,7</p> <p>bias 226:22 229:16 235:5</p> <p>big 74:21 179:21 231:4 241:4 266:6</p>	<p>biggest 160:3 232:9 251:4,15</p> <p>billion 24:3 160:11 161:4,5</p> <p>binaries 200:20</p> <p>bio 261:16</p> <p>bios 11:22 184:12</p> <p>bipartisan 24:6</p> <p>birth 51:11 238:6 238:19</p> <p>bisexual 198:18</p> <p>bit 12:13 36:2 38:20 47:21 85:12 117:5 118:14 124:6 142:2 163:19,20 186:8 196:7 206:11 259:17 260:16,22 277:7 279:6,12</p> <p>bits 151:2</p> <p>black 2:10 47:22 48:4,7,9,9 49:8 50:5 50:8 59:12,17,17 97:13 98:21 138:8 138:21 161:8 167:9 170:18,19 174:16 174:20 175:2,15 177:3,6 178:13,21 179:18 194:9,14,20 194:21 195:10 196:21 198:17 199:14,16,19 200:1 200:3,5,21 201:1,5 201:19 202:9 209:6 223:2 248:13 253:11 270:14 273:7,21 274:12,21 274:22 279:10,16 280:9,15 286:14</p> <p>blacks 182:2 251:5</p> <p>blackwell 5:9</p> <p>blame 253:6</p> <p>blast 21:2</p> <p>bless 153:8</p> <p>blindness 97:21</p> <p>block 22:3</p> <p>blog 276:9</p> <p>blown 59:14</p>
--	--	--	--

<p>board 2:20 110:2,4 141:20 158:16 162:9 170:12 177:9 196:18 231:2 249:6 249:7,10 275:18 boards 177:12 bob 234:3,4,7 body 77:8 173:16 188:12 204:19 256:7 270:10 bolted 170:20 bones 120:20 bonus 24:22,22 148:7 boot 152:8,11 born 197:9 borrow 46:12 bottom 126:15 158:21 197:15 234:6 boutique 14:15 bowman 2:3 5:10 5:11 7:22 80:22 81:3 82:10 84:12 221:1 241:2 244:7 251:12 252:6,21 253:13 boyd 5:12 211:14 boys 50:13 92:6 238:18,20 243:18 279:14,16 brain 266:4 267:18 273:11 275:3 branch 283:18 break 118:6 139:17 140:7 breeds 233:18 briefing 271:4 280:5 brilliant 213:3 bring 46:12 58:3 106:4 116:7 176:20 188:18 194:22 198:21,21 207:12 281:4 282:11 bringing 87:5 116:3 123:2 129:8 139:2 162:8 165:20 177:17 195:18</p>	<p>199:12 282:1 brings 205:17 british 283:8 broad 39:7 broadening 206:2 broader 204:9 broadly 153:22 263:20 broken 271:12 brookins 2:4 6:5,6 27:7 36:16 37:5 109:1 112:8,12 158:15 164:14 187:2 193:14 249:2 brother 187:9 254:13 260:10 brother's 25:8 30:19 31:20 51:9,21 165:8,10 270:21 273:19 brought 52:1 70:15 83:7 116:12 207:16 271:17 276:6,21 277:1 280:14 brown 279:17 brussels 255:17 bryant 2:12 6:3 30:11 108:22 112:16 118:5 164:11 165:2 205:10 248:11 264:18 265:14,15 265:21 266:1 budget 15:15 16:5 23:5,22 106:13,13 106:14 107:11 144:21 145:1 147:8 148:6 149:11 150:20 153:19 169:9 173:7 178:12 184:10 185:19 186:19 210:11 budgetary 23:6 budgets 145:22 build 178:10 248:4 268:15 278:2 building 28:9 40:2 146:19 203:1 273:6</p>	<p>built 122:3 282:14 bullied 131:21 132:9 133:13,22 bullying 104:13 131:5,9,12,14,17,20 131:22 132:17,21 133:1,4,15 134:6,15 bump 147:18 bumphus 6:3 39:3 burgeoning 152:7 bus 173:1 business 204:20 277:6 busy 25:16 byline 261:18</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">c</p> <hr/> <p>c 2:14 3:3 5:1 cab 161:9 cafeteria 149:18 calculated 28:14 calendar 158:10 201:14 259:6 california 141:20 255:7 269:10 call 5:4 10:10 22:13 36:13 54:1 63:21 68:19 70:12 98:5 134:16 157:8,10 164:8 166:18 167:6 167:10 182:12,13 182:14 185:3 190:15 198:20 199:6 202:22 253:17 259:18 263:1 267:6 286:2 called 13:18 14:14 16:6,17 18:6 19:7 19:22 36:22 41:16 43:11 54:4 106:16 130:3 219:4 238:3 239:7 calling 5:2 152:15 172:7 208:18 209:16 279:1 calls 274:5 camp 152:11</p>	<p>campaign 52:8 284:14 camp 152:8 campus 166:18 167:8 181:14,22 255:1,8,10 256:18 256:22 257:6,7,21 259:12 262:17 263:16 267:22 268:6 273:3 campuses 179:19 182:6 248:13 254:21 255:10 257:3 capacities 237:14 capacity 27:19 28:9 125:10,16 237:18 262:5 capitol 8:15 capr 12:17 13:6 capr's 13:11 capture 226:18 card 186:12 248:22 cards 67:15 120:18 156:12 277:6 care 83:18,20 104:5 119:16 136:14 249:7 280:17 285:19 career 3:5 14:22 15:19 16:17,20 17:17 30:6 34:17 36:17,20,22 37:6 38:13 43:9 142:15 careers 8:9 180:16 213:12 216:1 caring 214:19 285:17 carolina 68:20 69:10 203:16 carr 36:12 carried 103:5,11 134:20 carrots 89:10 carrying 155:19 carryover 103:6 case 22:19 78:11 92:15 119:6 148:16</p>
--	---	--	---

155:4 173:11 177:22 258:10 cases 39:11 48:22 categories 97:18 98:20 100:1,20 103:3 233:22 cater 273:19 cats 267:9 cause 40:16,17 127:14,22 129:21 caused 221:5 causes 125:22 cbcf 275:6 cc 19:17 ccs 19:17 cecil 6:7 ceis 63:21 64:2 celebrate 284:21 celebrating 272:1 center 2:7,9,16,17 8:22 12:16,18 207:15 276:4,16 centered 221:17 222:5 centers 81:8 82:11 84:5 central 166:5 269:14 century 107:16 ceo 141:17 ceremonial 198:3 certain 22:15 39:20 51:12 55:19 60:17 74:11 78:20 92:4 110:15 123:12 129:16 130:22 133:3 134:22 171:16 174:22 230:7 268:10 certainly 15:12 76:2 143:22 174:12 177:22 202:19 203:11 208:3,13 210:7,8 certainty 55:10 certificate 150:3 288:1 289:1	certification 122:8 122:13 249:12 certified 110:2 249:11 certify 288:3 289:3 chair 2:2,15 10:12 44:12 66:12 185:8 185:22 194:6 212:5 chairman 5:2,12,15 5:18,20,22 6:2,5,7,9 6:12,15,18,20 7:1 9:16,18,22 10:17,19 10:21 11:1,3,15,16 25:19 30:11 32:21 38:22 40:18 42:4 44:14 45:13 46:14 46:20 47:1,5 60:22 65:1,19,21 71:14,19 72:3 81:2 85:12 88:12 95:17 96:1 99:17 101:16 108:21 112:15 114:7 117:20 118:1 118:4 124:7 131:2 137:16 139:7,15,21 140:5 141:10 144:14 156:1,18 158:5 162:17 164:7 165:2 167:18 171:4 171:10,14 178:4 179:4,8,13,16 180:7 180:15,20 181:3,7 181:17 182:1,5 183:12 189:5 191:19 192:10 193:8,10,15 194:4 211:6,15,20,22 220:18,21 221:12 223:1,16 229:12,15 233:4 236:10 240:15 244:2 246:12 248:19,20 250:20 251:2,14 253:22 254:4,7,10 257:1 264:1,5,8,13 264:17 265:14 269:21 281:18 283:7,21 284:2	285:2 286:18,21 challenge 41:1 138:22 139:1 178:2 178:3 181:18 205:9 230:5 challenges 39:2 40:1 42:10 92:18,19 101:6 160:3 177:22 184:7 205:12 challenging 155:13 208:14 champion 220:4 270:19 championing 220:16 chance 26:21 27:2 30:19 65:4 95:5 172:3,7 215:11 217:9 change 20:1 25:17 63:4 93:15 110:7 127:9 136:21 223:22 224:1 249:20 252:19 253:9 changed 30:5 62:17 249:10 changes 35:20 62:22 83:17 132:18 158:9 changing 159:4 206:3,9 character 158:10 characteristics 235:17 characterized 231:22 charge 7:7 198:14 204:22 charged 143:14 197:21 charismatic 217:9 chart 184:13 charter 7:8 9:10 118:19 275:19 chat 170:7 chavez 278:18 check 28:21,21 29:3 254:5	cherry 196:11 chicago 7:20 chief 2:9 child 2:4,6,7 35:12 73:5 76:17 82:10 98:12 118:18 119:21,22 133:13 133:21 134:3 136:12,17,22 145:6 216:8 233:16 240:21 253:6 275:4 child's 48:17 51:3 51:12 62:4 98:11 132:16,19 childcare 22:2,3 81:8 childhood 7:18 49:1 77:13 78:18,22 238:4 children 48:22 51:14 52:18 75:22 76:4,10,14 84:17 91:12 92:13 105:22 131:5,9 138:3,8,14 138:21 197:4 198:22 199:1 206:1 221:3 222:9 223:2,7 230:9,14 233:7,14 238:7,11 239:10,11 239:22 240:6 241:13,15 243:3 244:3,4 245:6,13,20 248:1,1 285:18,20 children's 238:16 childs 8:21 chime 186:5 choice 74:17 178:16 208:12 choose 86:17 277:14 chorus 9:17 10:20 65:20 193:9 211:21 chunk 94:17 chunks 163:9,16 church 210:22 cies 79:3,20 80:14 circularity 62:21 circulate 190:21 268:22
---	--	--	--

<p>cities 199:11,13,14 199:16</p> <p>city 199:6,22</p> <p>civic 271:4 280:15</p> <p>civil 50:4,10 126:18 266:10</p> <p>claims 153:3</p> <p>clarification 29:11 69:20 234:15 263:5</p> <p>clarified 131:19 263:6</p> <p>clarify 53:7 67:19 132:8</p> <p>clarity 82:2,18 105:7</p> <p>class 16:4 136:16 138:20 234:19 235:2</p> <p>classified 96:21 100:10</p> <p>classroom 49:14 94:9,10 101:5,8,10 110:14,17 133:6 135:17 136:10 137:13,13 209:5,5 241:6</p> <p>classrooms 106:19 107:9 108:12,14 109:9 132:10 179:2</p> <p>clay 3:8 36:3 66:2 75:6</p> <p>clear 55:4 56:2,7 114:11 132:5 143:5 146:8 163:20 188:4 210:16 265:5</p> <p>clearinghouse 13:19</p> <p>clearly 143:9 154:4 165:9 173:22 247:19</p> <p>climate 45:7 110:7 129:1 131:8 133:11 135:13 166:19 167:8 170:5 255:1,8 263:16</p> <p>climb 276:13</p> <p>close 42:22 60:9,18 123:5,22 158:22 200:15 277:21</p>	<p>closely 48:3 71:2</p> <p>closer 151:9 224:22 225:6,7,9</p> <p>closes 60:12</p> <p>closing 108:15 122:21 227:13 228:13</p> <p>coalition 2:10 196:21</p> <p>coddly 217:12</p> <p>code 18:8 53:11</p> <p>codify 7:5 95:8</p> <p>coding 152:11</p> <p>coffee 139:19</p> <p>cognitive 281:15</p> <p>cohort 238:6,19 241:15</p> <p>cole 116:2 177:4</p> <p>collaborate 151:16</p> <p>collaborating 113:14 234:5</p> <p>colleague 107:18 132:6 140:18 142:5 142:13 177:4 182:11 191:9</p> <p>colleagues 71:20 110:11 146:6 149:12 232:16 254:13</p> <p>collect 20:21 77:6 184:18</p> <p>collecting 21:5 87:6 127:4 184:17 226:5</p> <p>collection 27:20 50:5,11 76:22 126:18</p> <p>collectively 144:18 281:12</p> <p>college 2:12,20 8:17 13:13 15:19 19:15 20:11 23:13 24:2,4 25:10 27:8 28:10,17 30:22 36:17,22 39:1 39:5 41:6 43:15 141:16 149:2,22 150:1 154:17,22 155:5,10 160:10 161:3,16 165:11,13</p>	<p>165:16 166:15 213:11 215:15 217:11 218:3 228:1 246:22 254:21 259:15,15 266:10 271:14 277:8,9</p> <p>colleges 3:5 13:2 17:14,20 19:15,18 21:8 25:7 28:14 30:15 31:10 32:1 148:7 149:16 161:6 161:8 165:15 176:22 177:6 178:13 263:22</p> <p>color 25:8 31:1,18 48:22 49:12,21 50:9 50:14,15 78:17 87:10 92:6,7,14 105:22 107:8 109:9 109:20 165:22 166:4 168:15 169:17 170:12 221:14 253:11 257:20 279:16 282:1</p> <p>colorado 53:5</p> <p>columbia 68:20 69:9 288:20</p> <p>columbus 219:4</p> <p>combination 74:14 74:15 124:20 232:14</p> <p>combined 104:10</p> <p>come 31:22 44:6 62:22 88:7 95:18 125:22 126:2 139:21 140:3 141:12 149:9 153:14 156:15,20 157:19 160:2,19 164:4,15 165:12 169:2 170:7 172:19 178:18 206:22 207:2,14 220:17 239:5 246:14 247:5 260:22 271:19 273:7 282:13 285:9</p>	<p>comer 2:6 5:13,14 8:1 75:20,21 77:10 77:15 79:7 84:13 93:6 134:9 237:8 244:21 252:6,21 253:13</p> <p>comers 161:13</p> <p>comes 25:15 27:15 38:18 41:21 42:16 64:18 97:20 105:14 126:22 132:21 135:9,10 136:7 147:13 257:6 259:7 268:5 272:22</p> <p>coming 6:13 17:3 18:2 43:17 64:11 87:9 136:22 156:19 166:12 170:2 174:12 188:14 194:18 202:16 204:15 208:6 212:17 213:19 248:2 283:16 284:3</p> <p>commend 194:6 264:2</p> <p>comment 4:9 47:18 60:12 88:19 89:16 90:9 113:19 120:13 131:3 140:10 160:6 171:4 172:5 189:14 205:10 221:12 223:9 249:3 281:2</p> <p>commentary 87:9 122:15</p> <p>commentator 260:12</p> <p>comments 35:13 60:13,16 67:18 79:19 87:2,7 88:10 88:17 109:2 121:15 124:9 125:5 137:18 285:11</p> <p>commission 1:7 2:2 4:6,7 7:11,16,22 8:1 8:14 9:8,12 10:7,12 10:13 12:7 84:20 85:7 86:18 87:9,22 96:17 102:11</p>
--	--	---	---

<p>103:22 104:17 106:4 107:12 108:8 109:13 111:17 113:8,18 117:18 121:3 124:16 126:6 133:16 140:14 143:13 149:10 155:12 157:2,13 158:12,13 159:1 165:5 167:4 180:8 183:10,13 184:1,4,8 184:14 185:3,9,13 187:14 188:10,10 188:19 190:18 191:20,22 196:15 197:21 201:14 211:2 213:8 222:18 224:4 228:12,19 246:15 252:13 255:12,13 258:15 260:11,19 261:2,7 261:13 262:9 267:3 272:6,7 273:10,18 286:4 commission's 7:8 10:3 67:22 commissioner 5:8 5:11,14,17,19,21 6:1,4,6,8,11,14,17 6:19 10:3 26:2,7,18 26:22 27:6,7 29:5,8 29:11,14 30:13,17 32:5,11,16,20,22 33:2 34:1,4,15,19 35:6,10 36:6,14,16 37:5,13 38:5,12 39:4 44:12,17 61:2 61:15,18,21 62:2,6 65:18 72:7,10,15 75:10,20,21 77:10 77:15 79:7 80:22 81:3 82:10 84:12 88:16 93:5,6 95:1 95:19,22 99:16 101:15 109:1,4 112:8,12,18 114:15 115:8 118:7,15 124:8,10 131:4</p>	<p>134:9 139:12,14,22 141:12 156:4,17 157:9 158:3,14,15 162:1,18 163:18 164:14 165:3,6 166:16 167:20 172:4 174:14 175:12 176:7,13 183:14,18 184:21 186:10,16 187:2 189:7,12,20 190:10 190:13 193:1,2 194:5 196:22 199:4 199:9 201:10 202:17,19,20 210:19 211:7,17 212:3 218:11 221:1 221:10 222:13 223:9,11,17,21 231:8,18 234:2,13 234:19 235:16,19 236:9 237:8,21 241:2 242:14 244:7 244:21 245:11 248:18 249:2 250:15 251:12,21 254:4,8,11 256:13 261:9,12 262:6,7,11 264:4,7,10,15 265:2 266:2,20 267:1,14 267:16,20 268:2,17 268:19 269:8,11,19 270:16,17 271:1,9 272:2,5,17 276:2,4 276:19 277:2 280:3 282:21 283:3,6,10 283:22 284:18 286:13 commissioners 2:1 8:10 11:19 95:3 182:16 184:13 194:2 203:3 204:17 210:4 259:3 263:4,8 270:2 276:11 commitment 199:9 206:1 227:8 285:16 commitments 177:1</p>	<p>committed 203:9 220:5 269:7 275:19 committee 26:11 268:18 committing 281:12 common 97:1 commonly 98:8 commonwealth 2:19 communications 2:11 communities 54:21 92:9 104:15 124:14 124:18 128:6 129:8 129:9,17 134:4 151:6 161:20 195:4 203:14 229:22 274:18 community 3:5 13:1 17:14,20 19:15 20:11 21:8 24:4 25:7,10 28:13,17 30:15 31:10 32:1 39:1,5 100:15,15,18 100:18 116:4 129:6 130:18 161:6 165:15 198:16 199:20 200:9,13,21 203:20 213:2,21 215:10,18 216:6 223:14 224:13 240:6 245:1 268:10 270:12 company 248:9 250:14 compared 26:12 comparing 56:13 80:5 compelled 252:7 compensate 232:11 competencies 151:12,17,19 152:1 162:21 168:1 competency 23:15 151:7,20 163:7 competitive 18:21 241:14</p>	<p>complement 237:5 complementary 246:8 complete 21:22 25:3 completed 60:18 completely 191:2 completing 206:8 227:21 completion 8:3,17 14:9,11,18 19:8,9 28:4 31:1 113:2 146:13 148:13 154:18 155:5 165:11,14 166:15 complexity 192:3 compliance 63:18 complicated 101:2 101:12 122:5 160:15 172:14 component 45:1 152:20 249:14 components 16:19 267:13 comprehensive 53:18 54:17 57:2 63:21 64:2 79:3,20 80:14 82:13 84:15 99:20 106:18 128:9 204:21 205:14 comprised 128:10 computer 152:11 computing 221:17 222:5 concept 159:21 conceptualized 28:13 concern 80:15 88:1 89:12 93:2,4 114:6 277:20 concerned 145:18 173:11 229:21 249:20 concerns 90:11 conclusion 55:9 concrete 259:10 concretizing 183:16 concurrently 40:15</p>
---	--	--	---

<p>conditions 205:4 221:6 239:20 conduct 53:11 89:4 127:21 conducted 238:4 conference 162:15 164:8 203:17 214:11 218:8 263:1 267:6 confident 150:22 161:19 confirm 29:3 conforming 198:19 confounding 147:3 confront 232:19 confronted 208:17 congratulations 220:22 269:22 congress 18:20 36:9 83:12 150:12 160:2 161:10,20 186:18 congressional 239:3 connect 19:20 82:19 83:19 113:18 216:20 217:8 271:21 connected 190:1 261:21 280:18 281:16 connecting 84:4 116:14 connection 151:10 164:1 245:21 284:12 connections 45:10 188:3 285:1 connects 269:12 consensus 67:7,8 129:11 191:4 consequences 126:1 132:12 consider 131:8 133:17 224:12 237:4 considerable 39:3 consideration 112:7 122:22 123:20 173:21 227:2</p>	<p>242:21 considered 87:18 195:3 259:1 considering 82:1,6 104:1 120:15 123:20 consistent 9:9 112:20 140:13 191:14 202:12 261:8,11 265:3,20 268:20 consistently 239:12 consolidated 67:15 86:16 consortia 18:13,14 constituents 194:9 197:15 198:11 constricted 225:1 construct 226:19 constructive 267:13 consult 58:11 consultant 142:15 consultation 70:10 86:1 116:17 117:9 consulted 58:13,14 consulting 178:19 consumer 14:6 24:19 contact 31:6 91:20 contain 188:6 contained 63:7 contains 218:8 content 49:20 contentious 101:19 102:15,15 context 28:5 31:20 93:7,9 163:3 184:3 186:8 241:22 242:1 250:10 282:18 284:7 continue 8:12 9:12 34:18 65:15 75:7 107:2,5 111:10 116:8 118:5 133:15 133:17 134:8 141:1 145:17,17 148:13 154:11,18 182:10 182:21 183:15</p>	<p>202:4,16 208:8 210:1 218:9 220:16 253:18 255:13,18 257:3,9 258:10 260:8 262:19 270:11 274:7,9,19 284:17 continued 183:1,8 278:14 continues 48:6 51:21 182:8 207:10 continuing 45:17 65:2 70:12 80:17 115:12 118:2 132:22 139:9 145:15 170:6 260:3 275:20 continuum 8:14 213:18 contribute 45:8 74:5 202:7 226:7,10 contributed 187:20 contributing 281:13 contribution 159:4 228:20 control 221:6 237:11 controlled 234:16 convene 211:9 224:4 convened 194:18 209:16 271:6 280:4 convening 15:12 19:14 30:14 31:15 31:17,22 156:6 162:15 169:22,22 175:16 176:5 187:21 206:15,16 223:18 255:6 271:2 275:13 convenings 281:3 convention 204:19 conventional 224:17 225:3 243:15 conversation 60:10 90:8 92:22 117:16 121:14 129:6</p>	<p>147:22 158:2,4 162:6 166:5,6 167:6 167:14 171:3 184:20,22 197:2 205:8 206:20 207:4 214:13 217:5,14 220:8,11 223:15 260:3 265:17 267:10 279:15 conversational 226:13 conversations 125:21 140:7 147:14 149:12 190:4 202:2,13 219:10,19 222:12 223:6 240:4,5 253:14 266:18 268:21 276:16 convince 22:8 217:16 coordinated 54:17 57:2 112:13 166:14 coordination 45:20 copies 141:8 core 252:13,20 280:10 corporation 151:2 correct 30:15 70:21 77:17 95:13 114:14 176:8 203:8 263:7 correctional 47:13 150:17 172:17,18 correctly 238:15 correlation 107:6 197:11 200:7 201:4 correspondence 37:4 cost 18:10 21:10 147:13 159:8 165:1 costs 44:3 councils 268:1,3 counsel 191:10 288:8,12 289:6 counseling 38:15 104:12 counselors 63:6</p>
--	---	---	---

<p>count 34:11 37:21 countdown 68:11 counting 144:11 country 17:20 41:3 53:9 68:5 96:20 97:2 124:14 131:7 142:17 144:3 146:7 158:20 160:3 161:18 174:17 199:11,13,14,22 200:6 207:7,11 208:11 224:14 232:21 233:6 243:19 253:10 255:6 258:5 263:21 269:11 273:20 284:4 285:20 counts 146:22 county 2:7 couple 27:3 74:6 106:8 109:2 128:15 144:19 150:5,11 181:5 192:13 209:14 229:3 274:3 course 13:15 15:17 19:1 22:16 24:3 28:3,18 41:1 46:7 49:20 89:11 90:2 126:2 150:1 151:11 151:13 183:20 206:2 255:5 courses 8:9 37:20 41:9,15 152:2 235:10 coursework 13:10 court 2:19,19 cousin 283:14,16 cover 24:1 185:4 236:19 crack 283:5 cracks 51:6 create 22:9 60:3 134:22 135:5 147:9 216:9 273:6 created 36:18 208:3 283:15 creates 152:16</p>	<p>creating 136:15 147:8 152:15,22 creation 14:8 70:19 95:12 creative 237:6 creatively 269:12 creativity 151:15 credential 16:9 17:2 30:3 33:16,21,22 34:11 37:22 44:21 credentialed 32:8 38:2 credentialing 39:18 credentials 15:18 33:21 42:12 46:18 246:1 credibly 211:3 284:19 credit 44:22 150:1 credits 25:1 34:10 37:20 39:20 147:7 149:18,19 164:16 164:17 criteria 26:13 34:2 148:12 critical 64:16 125:21 196:19 238:14 245:4 285:1 critically 154:16 155:16 230:10 232:8 238:12 criticalness 197:19 criticize 245:7 critique 263:15 cross 91:6 200:12 cube 20:12 culmination 196:9 cultural 242:11 culture 110:7 134:13,14 266:5,9 cuny 43:20 curiosities 240:7 curious 44:18 61:2 62:21 113:12 114:17,19 276:19 current 57:4 64:19 78:11 80:10 93:13 102:5 174:8 177:13</p>	<p>currently 12:22 28:12 67:19 74:9 163:5 174:3 257:6 curriculum 8:5 13:3 18:8 49:19 63:5 98:16 234:7 235:7 235:12 cut 195:16 203:13 cynthia 177:4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">d</p> <p>d 4:1 5:1 d.c. 1:11 52:1 138:1 166:12 217:6 286:5 dallas 2:7 6:18 207:17 dana 8:21 dance 2:7 6:18,19 data 26:16 27:20,20 27:21 32:18 33:18 43:17 50:5,10 52:9 55:18 60:5 64:10 74:3,14 76:22 77:2 77:6,8 99:21 100:3 105:21 125:14,17 125:19 126:18,18 126:20 127:1,4,5,19 128:11,12,14,17,18 128:21,22 129:1,10 130:8 138:15 176:11,15 184:17 192:18 199:12 223:19 224:5 227:12,16 235:13 235:22 236:7 238:3 249:15 databases 235:22 dataset 59:1,7 date 7:11 23:1 184:14 223:18 dates 75:5 281:3 dating 19:22 daughter 118:19 217:6,7,9,19 daunting 208:14 dave 21:1 david 3:2 6:21 12:7 15:12 17:5 23:21</p>	<p>29:3 66:11 72:1 82:19 85:14 108:1 113:17 115:5 117:5 117:15 140:10 141:22 157:4,22 158:1,18 162:5 175:10 186:5 190:14 194:6 198:2 207:2,3,8,12 208:5 208:8,15,21 209:13 210:2 212:5 220:3 227:4 243:5 246:21 254:13 255:15 258:11 260:10 267:4 270:19 272:11,12 285:3 286:18 david's 204:3 227:5 278:3 day 137:22 138:4 158:19 159:11 198:5,6 200:10,10 220:11 228:9,20 229:1 239:21 271:8 271:11 272:20 274:2,22 275:12 276:5,7 days 66:17 68:12 144:7,9 219:8 225:4 261:3 278:17 deaf 98:1 deal 162:12 195:16 dealing 66:21 231:9 dealt 170:9 deans 177:18 178:3 dear 132:6 212:8 dearth 86:3 decade 238:2 decades 223:20 227:12,19 228:5 243:1,3 252:9,11 december 194:13 215:1 271:1 272:13 274:8 deceptive 225:10 decide 229:4 decided 34:2 169:4 200:3 243:8</p>
--	---	--	--

<p>deciding 277:13 decision 277:15 decisions 31:15 126:3 249:18 decreases 145:21 deep 20:17,18,19 142:17 deeper 212:22 218:16 deeply 154:11,11 defense 238:17 defer 82:17 defiance 53:4 deficient 248:2 define 151:18 217:2 224:6 defined 82:14 224:8 defining 55:21 169:6 228:20 definitely 90:10 93:2 112:7 123:20 124:4 127:9 135:14 267:2 definition 16:17 30:6 38:14 60:3 87:13,15 definitions 55:4 57:22 defunded 18:19 degree 13:5 37:21 55:10 59:2 151:13 228:1 246:3,4 degrees 221:19 delays 48:19 51:15 51:15 78:21 deliberate 267:10 deliberation 4:6 67:10 delight 142:9 delighted 47:7 66:1 139:15 141:13 142:3 156:10 delta 280:19 demand 41:6 demonstrate 34:13 153:6 244:13 demonstrated 151:3</p>	<p>dena 2:11 denial 132:2 denver 53:5 denying 203:20 205:5 207:21 department 3:8 15:19 22:12 26:17 31:11 36:4 45:19 51:18 53:20 56:4 66:19 67:11 68:8 69:16 70:5 71:3 82:1 86:15 87:1 89:22 104:20 106:14,16 107:2 111:2 112:21 114:19 115:7 116:7 121:17 123:1 126:5 126:21 142:14 154:8 155:15 159:10 162:12 174:15,20 175:4 176:17 179:6 190:15 191:12 238:5 256:22 260:5 260:7 263:12 271:6 273:5 275:8 department's 187:17 departments 53:7 232:22 256:21 depends 27:1 deposited 18:9 depth 218:15 deputy 3:5,8 66:3 116:2 142:14 275:4 described 191:16 describing 34:7 62:14 descriptive 13:12 56:8 designed 166:3 168:5,6 188:5 231:10 desire 190:3 202:5 270:10 desk 136:8,9 despite 143:4</p>	<p>detailed 115:21 determine 252:17 determining 233:8 detrimental 52:13 dev 13:10 14:1,6 18:14 19:1 38:4,18 devastating 138:7 devastatingly 138:12 develop 89:4 127:22 129:11 135:21 142:21 222:8 247:18 developed 20:11 276:5 developers 229:7 developing 12:14 27:19 88:3 171:6 220:2 233:2 234:5 development 2:4 3:9 7:15 24:9 66:5 84:17 86:2 106:17 109:17 110:6,18,21 111:6 134:14 136:1 152:21 207:1 216:17 236:13,22 243:20 281:15 developmental 9:4 12:9,19 13:3,14,20 13:22 15:1,4 18:22 29:17 37:16 42:15 43:22 48:19 51:14 51:15 78:21 149:6 237:10 240:18 diagnosed 223:3 diagnostic 236:11 237:1 differ 100:17 difference 58:16 144:8,9 196:1 197:3 198:1 224:18 225:18 226:3,7 227:18 230:19 235:11,15 241:11 242:4 250:2 differences 232:12 different 13:22 30:5 30:9 34:12,13 41:12</p>	<p>61:12,14 73:5 97:19 166:9 169:3 189:21 191:22 192:5,15 198:9 204:15 217:17,18 228:6 236:20 246:17 247:8,9 252:11,16 254:18 264:19 272:1 280:8 282:2 282:13,15,16 differently 58:19 64:22 99:11 100:12 137:14,15 226:19 232:19 differs 100:14 difficult 57:20 136:3 137:7,7 155:1 210:13 difficulty 61:11 76:6 96:14 digging 144:5 digital 43:12 diligence 194:7 diligently 113:16 diploma 32:12 39:10 direct 23:16 183:3 197:11 198:15 200:7 265:18 directed 163:10 directing 93:14 direction 27:11 36:10 37:12 53:14 288:6 directive 9:9 directly 35:18 64:6 150:3 154:5 178:17 251:18 director 2:4,9,12,13 3:2,3 8:21 185:7,22 196:20 275:4 director's 99:19 directors 31:4 disabilities 47:12 48:1,4,7,10 49:6,7 50:9,14 54:1,6 57:6 57:10,12,15 59:12 59:14 61:6 65:14,16</p>
---	---	--	--

75:14 76:11,12 80:5 80:6,7,9,12 89:9 92:4,6,7,13,14 94:18 98:3,4,5,9 100:17 110:16 131:6,18 132:4,9 192:18 212:12,14 212:20 213:13,16 214:1,8 215:15,16 215:22 216:3,14,18 218:13 219:12 220:14 221:4,5,14 221:20 222:16,21 223:12 247:10 disability 49:5,7 73:6 76:18 97:18 98:14,20 101:7 127:20 130:2 213:21 215:10,18 217:7 218:21 disadvantaged 159:19,19 disaggregated 33:18 disbursements 163:13 discern 96:14 disciplinary 77:4 218:14 discipline 49:22 51:17,20 52:2,7,15 54:6 57:10 58:9 73:6 75:3 76:17 80:3 124:11 125:7 126:11,22 127:8,19 130:8 132:21 133:12 206:5,10 disciplined 73:18 209:2,7 disclosure 110:3 disconnect 39:21 41:5 disconnected 199:19,20 discourage 22:5 discouraged 40:8 discriminate 203:15	discriminating 203:14 234:9 discrimination 204:14 discriminatory 236:7 discuss 261:5 discussed 8:1,15 170:7 237:9 275:10 278:9 discussing 30:22 discussion 4:6 118:16 166:13 183:3 251:22 260:20 266:7 278:6 278:12 279:9 discussions 31:13 46:5 260:18 270:7 disinvestment 145:18 disjointedness 15:6 dismayed 203:12 dismissed 231:15 disparities 47:11 48:15 51:5 54:9,20 55:1 57:9,11 59:2 60:7 64:15 80:4,8 101:3 127:20,21 130:1,6 212:12 disparity 54:18 231:14 disproportionality 54:4,13 55:5,8,11 56:19 59:5 72:21 79:15 disproportionally 89:5 93:12 105:12 105:13 125:6,7,11 disproportionate 177:5 212:14 218:6 218:12 disproportionately 78:1 209:2 disrespectful 136:13 disruption 94:10 distinguished 110:11 142:15	distribute 20:22 distributed 13:16 33:4 163:16 distribution 155:12 district 52:1,17 54:11,13 55:13 56:22 57:9 59:22 63:9,10,13,14 73:17 77:21 78:9 79:21 90:14 93:9,11 94:2 97:4 100:11 127:16 127:18 176:20 288:20 districts 53:3 55:7 55:19,22 56:5,17 57:4,14,16 58:8,18 59:4,10,11,11,17 63:3 64:4,14 68:2 70:11,16 71:2 72:19 73:2,8,9,10,21 74:4 74:6,7,15,19 77:9 79:16 80:16 81:20 85:21 90:18,20 94:16,19 100:8 104:22 112:10 123:4 125:13 239:3 disturbance 49:6,10 59:18 98:3 99:1 100:14 dive 212:22 218:16 diverse 181:22 213:2 diversity 106:18,21 107:1,1 108:2,3,11 176:16,18,18 177:2 181:5,10,11,14,15 181:20 213:1 diversity's 108:12 doc 201:21 docket 165:19 doctor 231:2 document 112:9 140:21 141:3 143:1 157:20 183:22 185:13 188:4,6,16 188:18 189:8,9,10 189:13,18 190:2 193:21 228:17	262:20 265:19 268:22 269:2 280:1 documented 44:2 documents 12:2 189:15 193:20 doing 12:9 13:14 31:7 43:13,13 63:7 65:9,13 66:18 68:10 69:17 88:11 90:3 92:20 95:6 106:9 111:21 115:2,3 131:17 135:1 136:12 144:4 148:4 148:17 151:10 156:10 165:7 166:1 172:21 179:17,18 199:7 203:6 204:9 205:13 209:4,9 210:6,7,9,12 223:18 224:3,6 226:19 229:19,20 232:17 233:10,12,17 242:3 242:22 244:3 245:2 250:8 252:9 257:22 258:5 261:3 273:19 274:15 279:14 280:17 281:20 282:16 284:8 287:2 dollar 79:8 147:16 147:16 160:11 dollars 19:5 54:16 57:5,14,16 63:20 64:1,3,5,17 78:10 80:21 94:5,6 127:18 128:4 168:22 169:14 222:20 domestic 157:6 donna 107:19 doors 210:22 doris 2:19 5:18 26:1 112:17 118:5 131:3 199:4 246:20 dorothy 282:10 283:17 dots 116:15 216:20 double 28:21,21 44:3 198:6 263:3
---	---	---	--

<p>doubled 43:22 doubt 240:19 dr 5:9 12:6 45:2 84:12 109:22 143:17,19 144:15 252:6,6,21,21 253:13,13 draft 112:9 165:13 185:9 188:16 190:16 227:4 228:14 259:9 265:19 drafted 141:5 275:7 dramatically 50:18 50:19,21 230:15 draws 143:10 dreaming 192:11 dreisman 8:21 driver 161:10 drives 156:7 drop 45:1 50:19 231:4 dropout 91:18 dropping 45:8 du 159:21 dual 23:10 26:21 149:15,16 150:8 duck 289:3,16 due 23:1 153:12 194:7 dumb 134:19 244:14,16 248:2 duty 217:16 dynamic 113:5 219:15</p>	<p>early 7:17 48:20,21 49:1 54:17 57:2 77:13 78:2,18,22 81:18 82:16 83:1 85:20 87:1 93:20 94:1 99:12 104:3 108:5 154:13 215:5 227:7 238:3,12 240:8,9 242:20 245:4 277:4 285:14 earn 44:21,22 147:7 earning 146:16 eastern 286:2 easy 94:15 122:4 156:13 206:19 255:12 ebola 200:16 echo 124:9 276:1 ecls 238:3 economic 2:17 106:21 economically 159:19 economics 147:14 economy 22:9 ed 13:10 14:1,6 18:14 19:1 26:12 31:1 38:4,18 40:13 41:16 45:3,11 51:10 77:13 78:18,19 96:6 97:13 101:11 125:6 135:9 145:10 148:2 166:7 178:20,22 249:17 275:7 edelman's 238:17 edges 71:11 edit 262:19 editing 258:11 edits 258:17 263:3,6 edmund 2:15 eds 75:11 educate 68:7 70:8 85:19 86:7 110:13 166:3 educated 241:17 educates 222:15 educating 206:1 221:16</p>	<p>education 2:14,18 3:6,6,7,8,9 7:18 11:10,10 12:10,19 13:3,20,22 15:1,2,4 15:4,16,22 18:22 21:17 22:11 23:15 30:8 31:5,18 32:9 36:4,21 37:1,16 40:12,22 41:5,8 42:2,16 43:9 44:1 47:9 48:14 49:2,11 49:20 51:6 53:21 54:1 55:12 64:19 66:4 68:4 79:1 85:22 87:2 93:21 96:3,18,21 97:5 98:14,19 108:3 109:5 115:9 116:19 130:5,7 132:3,4 141:15,20 142:16 142:19 145:3,19,22 149:6 150:16,18 151:4,8 152:5,6,18 154:10 161:16 163:8 165:22 169:15 172:15 173:15 177:19 179:8 187:16 191:12 192:4 193:3 197:12,14 198:22 205:15,19 206:2 212:16 213:12,17 222:22 223:7 224:7 232:22 238:5 245:12 254:19 260:5,7 263:12 271:6 273:5,9 277:12 education's 106:14 275:9 educational 1:6 2:3 2:16 12:15 13:14,17 18:5 34:7 47:13 132:1 145:8 146:16 196:12 213:9 226:1 270:12 271:4 educator 175:15 209:10</p>	<p>educators 69:22 131:5 135:3 174:16 175:2 177:3 198:8 216:22 effect 86:12 146:13 205:4,17 279:2 effective 63:5 79:8 80:16 101:9 105:13 105:15 111:15 119:9 122:1 178:21 203:7 265:6 effectively 86:13 281:1 effectiveness 103:8 184:8 236:7 effects 113:1 168:8 efficacy 151:4 efficiently 271:20 effort 81:7 126:11 126:15 137:8 156:4 156:5 174:15 175:3 196:15 efforts 65:13,15 106:6 112:20 115:18 173:19 192:1,16 eight 97:11 163:21 238:22 eighth 48:6 119:22 either 20:17 22:4 37:12 42:17 67:20 81:15 99:13 132:16 141:1 162:19 168:12,16 263:18 268:10 el 175:11,14 176:6 element 28:19 96:15 elemental 198:20 elementary 154:15 elements 38:15 277:15 elevate 282:11 elicit 226:17 eligible 16:14,22 21:16,16,19,19 23:12 30:9 34:18 40:14 149:22 150:1</p>
<p>e</p>			
<p>e 4:1 5:1,1 261:9 265:4 267:4 earlier 18:12 47:19 59:3 78:15,21 80:1 83:6,22 93:17 157:2 157:3 205:11 240:13 257:18 284:9 earliest 48:17 51:8 51:12</p>			

eliminate 23:7	142:17 183:6	environmental	establish 19:6 26:15
eliminated 150:12	194:20 195:8	221:5 226:1	established 12:16
embedded 109:16	196:10	environmets 76:16	175:22
110:6,21	engagements 164:3	129:4 202:3 244:10	establishing 13:21
embeds 19:8	191:21	envision 183:22	27:14 232:21
embracing 197:1,2	engaging 89:18	epidemic 197:6,10	esteem 279:3
emerged 196:8	116:11 182:9	equal 234:22	estimate 177:13
emerging 194:20	engineering 2:5 8:8	equality 195:2,2	ethnic 47:11 54:9
195:19	140:16	196:17 200:2,4	56:13 130:6
emmett 6:15	english 37:9,9 43:12	205:5 213:10	ets 232:16
emotional 49:6,9	84:7 87:16 104:6	equip 152:16 281:6	evaluate 13:7
59:18 84:16 94:6	enhanced 222:8	equipped 258:13	evaluating 122:9
98:2 99:1 100:7,14	enroll 148:8	equitable 153:9	evaluation 2:16 3:9
133:3 136:1 281:15	enrolling 152:1	154:10	43:21 66:5 120:3
emphasis 30:14	enrollment 21:11	equity 53:22 54:2	evaluations 18:3
84:14 182:2 244:4	23:10 149:15,17	70:13,18,18 85:8,15	evans 5:16 8:10
employed 288:9,12	150:9 162:21	85:18 95:11,14	evelyn 6:10
289:7	ensure 68:8 70:20	108:14 109:5,11	event 25:13 107:16
employee 288:11	75:8 82:4 84:3	111:15 115:1,3,13	114:16 169:19
encourage 22:5	102:20 103:8,9	115:20 116:1 125:9	198:4 215:1,3
102:7 103:13 107:2	106:18 107:11	143:8 144:2	263:19 269:9 271:5
107:12 108:18	108:14 111:14	equivalency 34:21	271:11,17 272:13
111:1 121:1,2	116:18 117:2	era 245:22 253:6	272:19 273:4
122:14 178:9	140:22 190:4	erikson 2:4	274:13 276:5 277:2
encouraged 125:14	191:13 202:1	eroding 279:2	277:4,5 278:17
154:19	ensuring 8:3 87:14	erskins 7:20	events 274:3,15
encouraging 187:15	116:11 117:13	es 35:7	eventually 248:8
endeavor 196:19	120:19 281:10	especially 35:16	everybody 138:1
ended 62:13	enter 16:3 34:16	70:3 99:12,22 100:6	239:14 244:14
endorsement	41:8 135:17 151:5	105:7 109:19 113:7	245:1 264:16
282:22	178:1 187:6 239:11	119:7 132:21	275:16
energy 163:8 165:18	entered 99:14	157:14 194:10,17	everybody's 251:17
enforcement 53:8	entering 40:22	197:18 215:10	285:18
engage 69:20 70:9	enterprise 201:20	253:11 265:9	evidence 12:12,14
70:19 81:8 85:17,20	entertainment	272:11 273:20	12:14 13:21 14:3,5
86:19 87:1,1,22	202:9	286:16	153:5 257:13
112:2 117:1 163:7	entire 51:5 200:21	ess 35:8	evolving 28:6
167:4 183:3 187:20	203:1 271:11	essa 15:18 35:9,10	226:13 246:6
262:1 265:16	entirely 55:19 61:20	36:3 45:3,5 46:5,7	exacerbation 221:3
269:10 270:11	74:11	67:1,19 68:18,19	exact 54:8 77:2
engaged 67:1 68:3,6	entities 76:9	69:4,20 71:21 76:20	97:10
69:13,15 70:7 71:10	entrepreneur 234:4	83:18 85:10 86:10	exactly 62:18 68:15
102:21 106:6 112:4	entrepreneurs	95:8 101:18 103:4,9	69:19 90:10 101:13
114:13 187:13	274:15	105:9 106:10	123:21 192:10,12
188:1 219:20	environment 134:20	116:22 159:16	245:11 283:16
231:21 260:5 270:6	216:9 237:15	essential 146:9	exam 164:19 231:2
engagement 50:20	242:10 245:15	155:15 158:8 204:6	251:7,11
67:22 113:15			

<p>examinations 232:4 examine 127:4 examining 227:11 242:1 example 20:5 25:11 27:10,18 34:5 37:21 43:7 46:6 74:2 86:9 136:7 149:14 152:10 163:14 172:18 205:9 209:14 217:21 223:2 224:16,19 225:2 226:12 238:13 245:17 examples 169:12 215:17 217:18 exceed 191:18 excel 128:17 excellence 1:6 2:3 96:18 143:9 144:2 196:12 213:9 246:22 270:12 282:8 284:9,22 excellent 154:10 165:1 223:16 269:22 281:20 exception 193:21 exchange 281:12 excited 146:17 151:6 161:14 199:2 213:20 220:3,15 exciting 101:22 exclude 55:18 excluding 50:12 exclusionary 45:7 49:22 51:17 exclusions 112:22 executive 2:9,10 3:2 7:9 9:10 99:19 184:1,13 185:7,22 196:20 275:18 exist 85:3 104:9 279:11 existence 205:1 243:10 exists 105:12,21 209:11 219:15 220:12</p>	<p>expanded 227:14 expanding 27:19 expansion 79:2 expect 61:3 186:20 277:11 expectation 88:6 expectations 213:5 expecting 178:4 expedition 7:19 expelling 91:2 94:3 expenditures 81:9 expenses 146:17 expensive 43:11 44:2 experience 62:18 105:20 134:17 141:21 218:14 236:3 237:10 249:19 259:16 277:10 278:13 experienced 62:20 105:15 106:2 110:10 236:4 experiences 272:3 280:13 experiencing 129:4 experiment 26:14 27:2 150:14,22 151:1,20 152:15 163:4,4 167:1,3 173:6 174:1,7 experimental 22:13 22:18,20 23:11,19 26:5,16 experimenting 200:19 experiments 23:2 150:9 expert 82:16 expertise 10:7 75:17 experts 7:22 162:13 228:10 expire 24:20 explain 162:22 explaining 188:8 explanations 225:12 225:21</p>	<p>explicit 280:16 explicitly 81:5 82:11 exploration 45:9,12 140:14 explore 8:12 262:8 explored 7:16 expressed 140:14 expressly 45:21 expulsion 50:1 94:13 130:1 extend 259:5 extended 140:17 extent 37:17 60:6 64:13 80:15 102:7 117:7 121:7,15 122:12 123:22 124:1 130:13,14,20 131:19,20 132:8 134:11 135:19 extra 165:1 extreme 233:1,3 extremely 108:17 121:13 122:4 210:9 eyes 68:9 174:12 222:10 258:15</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">f</p> <hr/> <p>fabulous 36:6,14 face 20:2 39:2 49:22 50:7 72:11 131:8 138:22 139:2 154:18 166:17 271:19 faces 66:9 facilitate 188:3 267:7,11 280:14 facilitated 207:3 facilities 150:17 facing 52:7 fact 7:19 138:19 143:2 159:3 162:3 177:8 203:18 206:7 234:20 241:10 248:3 283:20,22 factor 58:19 factors 40:6 119:4 facts 52:9</p>	<p>faculty 20:10 43:1 137:20 170:11,19 170:19 171:6 248:13 259:12 fair 79:19 157:17 180:1,1 285:3 fairly 150:22 251:10 faith 270:11 falk 2:6 fall 25:13 60:19 88:8 150:15 174:22 224:4 230:14 266:6 fallen 256:3 falls 48:5 false 236:4 familiar 100:12 families 155:9 245:6 277:16 285:19 family 239:7 245:21 277:21 famous 144:7 far 26:19 30:1 46:4 51:17,19 60:15 83:17 90:22 110:13 158:14 206:20 249:5,9,19 fasfa 21:22 favor 9:16 10:19 65:19 84:13 193:8 211:20 favorable 22:10 favorite 272:6,7 feat 206:19 features 147:3 170:8,9 february 52:16 284:14,16 federal 19:21,22 20:1,15 21:3 22:3,7 22:17,22 23:9 26:8 41:3 54:7,19 124:16 126:12,13 151:22 152:9,13,19 163:15 281:8 federation 2:11 feds 28:14 feedback 69:18 90:11 185:6,7,10,10</p>
--	---	--	--

188:17 262:15 263:10 264:21 265:8,18 267:5,8,10 feeds 240:7 feel 202:20 204:5 218:18 248:1 253:8 286:7 feeling 253:3 fellow 207:22 263:4 275:6 fellows 115:17,18 fellowship 175:13 fellowships 20:10 felt 69:1 208:18 209:18 252:7 female 170:19 fewer 130:8 fiddling 191:5 field 105:15 121:13 122:12 156:10 187:6,7 fifth 52:21 fight 186:21 figure 46:15 64:21 83:3 98:12 111:20 121:18 123:4,7 129:8 130:12 200:19 240:1 figures 92:10 97:9 figuring 122:8 fill 20:8 128:13 263:11 filling 27:17 final 31:15 60:17 185:12 190:17,19 223:9 268:22 270:1 finalize 253:18 finally 14:7 23:22 139:11 162:1 192:20 financial 40:6 148:15 151:22 152:9,19 163:9,15 financially 288:13 289:8 find 11:21 48:21 49:3 50:13 61:10 123:19 127:21	131:14 182:15 204:8 231:13 251:5 258:1 260:3 finding 7:19 165:9 273:1 findings 15:11 fine 101:11 239:14 finger 232:16 finish 103:15 179:20 183:19 first 12:22 18:18 24:1,13 28:17 29:1 31:3 39:20 44:9 64:16 65:8 72:6 85:15 93:1 95:6 112:19 119:22 124:9 133:2 147:4 160:6,14 161:16 163:2 164:10 175:16 177:9 184:5 184:6 192:6 194:6 212:1 215:8 219:8,9 220:11,15 233:13 246:22 248:15 254:15,17 271:2,12 273:22 277:17 280:6 283:18 firsthand 199:21 firsts 283:4 fit 159:14 160:1 187:17 200:20 fits 171:5 192:2 five 50:15 51:11 55:16 73:7 74:8 92:6 125:11 169:2,6 170:6 194:15,19 219:8 222:15 244:15 259:15 272:18 flag 182:13 flagship 199:11 flexibility 57:1,14 64:4 114:3 floor 181:19 flourish 217:19 flow 151:21 fluctuation 187:5	fm 273:15 280:11 281:10 284:21 focal 31:11 focus 9:12 19:9 31:12 99:12 135:14 143:7 177:3 193:5 204:5 213:15 215:7 245:19 249:15 focused 25:14 63:18 106:20 113:3 143:13 144:2 168:11 170:10 177:2 194:13 204:4 220:7,13 280:7 focuses 10:14 focusing 11:8 205:18 221:7 257:16 folder 11:20 201:14 278:8 folders 11:20 193:19 folks 38:3 41:19 53:13 59:1 129:18 130:22 155:11 165:20 166:7,8,8 168:16 173:5 176:21 190:14 257:2 258:19,22 262:13,14 follow 37:4,14 56:11 82:20 84:19 112:12 115:3 124:4 176:3 176:10 199:10 286:11 following 53:2 193:1 food 21:15,17,18 footsteps 53:3 force 178:1 203:4 206:7 208:7 284:3 ford 140:18 forefront 196:17 foregoing 288:3 forest 2:5 form 163:7 165:20 184:22 187:16 259:9	formal 35:13 117:11 229:13 formally 261:7 formed 18:13 former 2:19,20 39:1 141:17 275:4 forms 106:22 129:7 184:18 formulation 62:9 forth 33:18 forthright 63:12 fortunately 160:15 forum 159:6 162:2 162:2 219:4 224:5 228:18,21 229:1 242:19 243:13 246:10 forward 14:2 52:4 66:20 67:8 116:9 118:1 125:13 129:12 139:9 144:5 144:13,16 146:1,12 149:11 150:7 155:20 159:13 173:8 228:18 252:22 255:14,20 255:21 256:11 258:18 259:19 260:2 261:2 263:11 263:17 273:12,22 274:4,6 foster 83:18,20 84:3 84:5 104:4 found 20:18 51:15 116:5 209:14 258:4 260:9 268:6,7 foundation 2:14 107:16 115:9 212:11 founder 2:4 four 8:19 13:1 18:1 30:18 31:9 32:7 34:5 39:13 46:17 48:5 50:13 55:15 60:1 61:7 62:11,16 73:22 74:1 78:4 92:5 147:6 150:2 170:6 215:7,7
---	--	--	--

<p>223:20 227:12,19 228:5 229:2 243:1 252:9,11 259:15,15 264:6 fourth 48:2,4 138:8 138:14 152:20 230:4 249:14 251:19 fractions 236:17 frame 96:17 framework 214:13 220:1 frameworks 64:9 94:7 frank 265:7 free 41:16 132:2 freeman 2:2,8 5:16 5:17 7:2 95:2 124:8 155:21 157:1 227:11 231:20 242:22 245:17 freeman's 62:9 231:10 frequent 163:12 164:3 frequently 260:11 friend 180:21 256:2 256:9 friendly 66:9 250:16 friends 218:22 237:16 front 11:20 52:15 68:17 83:11 115:15 126:6 139:20 140:11,21 141:4 168:12 207:15 fronts 108:6 fsa 38:3 fulfilling 134:21 full 109:9 110:3 115:15 146:22 147:5 181:1 188:18 227:8 fuller 115:21 fully 66:16 118:12 236:11 fun 283:11</p>	<p>functioned 62:12 fund 24:8 27:9 141:18 238:17 fundamentally 230:9 funded 17:18 19:1 24:14,14 27:15 107:11 169:9 funding 17:15 21:13 23:8 28:4,12 41:3 41:13,21 44:10 82:11 88:21 128:3 funds 16:13 17:1 22:18 23:12 54:22 70:1 81:10,20 83:1 93:14,17 105:5 109:16 110:6 111:5 111:13 123:3,5,7,21 145:5 151:22 152:13 further 45:5 67:9,19 70:5 145:12 149:8 288:11 future 169:1 216:12 241:18 243:21</p>	<p>gay 198:18 200:22 201:4 gayborhoods 199:18 gender 198:19 general 49:19 50:5 52:10 65:9 73:12 74:20 97:11 98:16 191:10 219:22 222:4 266:10 generally 21:16 53:13 97:12 130:5 generation 147:4 195:18 197:9 246:22 277:17 generations 246:17 282:16 generous 169:19 geometry 230:13 georgetown 2:9 getting 38:9,10 39:17 40:14,15 50:14,16 51:13,14 58:1 63:10 64:15 68:22 69:21 70:8 98:7 126:17 131:20 131:21 132:9 138:2 165:16,17 178:10 187:5 200:18 249:17 285:13 giants 282:4 gift 17:15 285:13,14 285:14 girls 50:15 92:6 243:19 271:7,18,22 272:19 274:12,21 274:22 276:6,8,14 276:15 278:11,13 279:10,14,17 281:5 281:16 give 17:10 27:10 59:1 62:16 65:4 66:14,17 71:5 82:18 88:9 102:9 117:8 128:20 139:4 144:12 164:9 196:7 196:14 233:16 244:19 259:14</p>	<p>264:20 285:13 286:18 given 42:5 96:6 204:22 217:22 gives 234:21 235:4 giving 17:16 83:12 107:17 164:20 212:5 244:16 263:15 glover 5:9 go 10:5 25:1 37:11 39:13 44:10,15 45:14 47:6 48:3 49:3 53:15 54:8 55:20 63:20 80:1 88:13 90:22 95:17 95:21 97:4 108:21 118:13 119:1,8 120:9 136:5 138:4,6 140:6 156:11,13,15 164:8,11 175:9 180:16 182:3 183:17,17 191:1 195:9 201:8 206:8 215:5,21 217:11,13 228:17 229:21 232:20 236:19 240:1 245:13,14 249:3 250:7 251:20 254:2 256:8,13 258:16 259:13 270:4,16 275:8 277:14,20 282:18 goal 28:16 46:21 177:20 202:1,7 215:8 216:15 218:4 218:11 228:3 280:16 281:4 goals 8:17 10:3 214:19 215:7 227:22 285:5 god 255:17 goes 51:17 87:13 121:9 130:18 153:13 169:10 250:4 going 11:8 22:10 24:12 25:18,22</p>
	<p>g</p>		
	<p>g 4:1 5:1 gains 226:11 gao 79:12 gao's 55:9 gap 97:16 108:16 122:21 157:14,16 165:11 224:17 225:12 227:20 gaps 27:17,17 70:21 70:22 95:13,15 97:20,22 98:1,1,2 101:3 123:6,22 126:7 128:13 130:4 130:11 154:12,13 154:15,16 227:2,10 227:13,21 228:13 gather 81:4 gathering 12:13 30:18,20,21 165:14 166:10 192:19 206:20</p>		

<p>28:20 40:12 45:14 48:14 52:5 57:7,22 63:22 64:21 65:1,7 66:14 67:5,6,12 69:14 71:6,19 82:12 82:16 83:4,9,14 84:2 88:5,13 90:17 92:20 94:14,15 96:9 97:15 98:15 102:13 104:4 108:21 111:21 112:16 113:6,19 116:8,20 118:4 125:8 129:12 136:20 139:17 140:3 142:10,11,11 144:12 150:14,21 150:21 157:19 161:10,20,21 163:16 164:8,9 166:16 167:13 168:9,10 169:8 171:1 172:8 178:5 181:9 183:4,12 185:22 186:11,16 188:21 191:17 192:21,22 193:5,16 193:18 195:22 197:3,13 198:1,4,13 199:12 200:16 203:10 208:7 210:3 211:13,22 214:11 214:12,14 218:2,16 220:9 221:19 223:17 224:3 227:3 231:4 239:5 243:8 249:7,11 251:5,22 252:22 253:20 257:2 261:6 262:5 266:13 267:7 274:17 284:10 285:13 good 7:3 9:18 11:3,4 11:15 20:19 25:19 29:9 37:19 46:8,11 47:17 66:6,7,8 72:7 72:9 74:21 88:12 94:17 102:14 112:15 130:10,17</p>	<p>131:2 134:18 140:9 140:9,9 143:17,18 144:6,11,22 145:20 148:12 161:9,22 162:16 166:2 170:4 173:6 177:21 181:3 181:8 199:7 212:4 212:10 223:17 235:13,20,22 236:6 253:2,3 264:1,13,18 285:16 google 184:18,22 googly 38:6 gordon 2:15 gotten 80:15 91:20 92:11 93:22 161:17 governance 189:3 governing 9:10 162:9 177:12 204:19 government 20:15 55:3 143:4 government's 124:17 governmental 46:10 governments 268:1 268:3 governor 142:22 grad 221:19 grade 8:5 48:4,7 49:3 52:19,20,21 57:7 91:16,16 99:14 101:5 119:1 138:8 138:14 229:10 251:19 grader 48:2 graders 230:4 grades 48:6 78:2,3 gradual 279:1 graduate 21:12 50:22 148:8 277:9 graduated 62:4 graduating 51:4 154:21 218:2 graduation 8:19 9:4 43:22 44:4 213:11 213:11</p>	<p>gramma 240:21 grant 17:11,16 19:4 27:14 28:1 127:16 145:11,14 169:15 178:20 grantees 18:9 grants 19:6,10,11 19:12 22:3 26:4 145:12,15 150:13 150:17 162:20 167:1 222:20 granular 151:12 gray 275:6 gre 225:4 great 5:12 9:22 31:21 32:3 35:7,11 65:21 72:10 125:1 133:10 143:5 144:4 156:1 167:16 168:19 176:12,14 176:15 183:7 193:15 241:12 246:9 267:2 285:14 greater 50:1,1,2 57:14 78:22 82:2,18 104:21 181:14 198:16 ground 87:4 112:5 124:19 127:3 135:2 272:9 groundbreaking 25:10 group 8:11 10:10,13 58:3 68:21 178:18 179:22 188:22 192:6,20 206:21 207:16 209:16 211:9,11,12 219:6 236:16 239:5 265:16 269:5,17 groups 41:12 46:9 46:10 50:13 56:13 61:14 126:13 153:1 156:9 192:5,12 224:8 247:9 282:13 grow 204:1 growing 19:14 187:7 203:12</p>	<p>grown 269:17 growth 226:11 257:19 guard 133:15 guarding 133:19 guess 121:8 133:7 199:15 221:7 guest 260:22 guests 11:6 guidance 17:3 38:18 38:21 67:20 81:15 81:17 83:4,8,14,17 83:22 84:7,9 85:4 88:3,6,7 104:21 111:21 117:11 132:7 guide 13:19 14:4 128:20 guidebook 13:21 guidelines 185:15 guise 159:15 guys 280:2 286:7 gwen 5:12 211:14</p>
h			
<p>h.b. 203:19 hair 273:2 half 177:18 225:18 225:18 238:22 243:3 hall 139:20 hammonds 6:10 hammons 8:10 hand 172:10 226:4 265:12 handful 35:1 handle 119:18 handout 117:9 hands 169:5 171:12 207:22 208:12 216:22,22 217:1 272:7 happen 129:12 188:18 233:20 happened 118:17 136:19,20 167:10 170:5 275:12</p>			

<p>happening 25:13 56:9 66:16 68:4 102:10 108:5 113:20 120:22 129:10 175:6 209:5 happens 44:19 195:13 208:2 220:6 238:11 261:21 happy 60:20 107:14 108:20 113:17 155:21 229:13 263:19 harassment 104:13 278:13,20,22 279:5 hard 14:3 40:19 47:20 48:11 74:17 137:3 140:7 160:22 169:1 171:21 217:15 harder 225:14 harper 3:7 47:17 61:11,17,19 62:1,3 63:8 72:9,13,18 75:11 76:21 77:12 77:17 79:9 90:6 93:8 97:7 100:11 126:9 131:12 135:6 harris 2:3 107:19 275:5 hash 272:9 273:15 273:16 275:10 hashing 185:5 hat 29:15 196:20 hats 196:15 269:14 hawaiian 33:15 hbcu 19:16 24:8 29:1 166:1 264:21 hbcus 24:5,16 27:9 27:16 28:5,20 165:5 177:13,19 178:20 179:5,20 180:10 264:9,10 266:9 he'll 107:17 hea 46:7 head 56:4 61:4,10 76:9 81:9 97:10 136:9 241:4,7,17 245:18,18</p>	<p>headed 103:17 149:20 173:2 headquarters 203:2 282:14 health 104:12 197:4 197:16 200:11 201:2 245:20 278:10 healthcare 205:16 healthy 170:18 172:11 177:16 hear 6:21 11:5 65:10 113:8 121:1 123:11 147:4 148:1 162:20,21 168:8 187:15 208:2 211:7 211:22 216:11 233:22 248:15,16 286:15 heard 8:20 25:12 27:18 52:16,22 63:2 79:10 93:1 135:15 218:14 230:3 256:9 271:13 hearing 10:2 44:14 83:11 95:10 262:13 heart 144:11 204:3 207:18 212:9 heavier 99:12 heavy 188:11 height 282:10 283:17 held 19:13 125:2 214:8 help 15:17 16:2 24:10 28:1 33:14 40:2,5,7,14 41:22 64:14 78:13 84:20 87:4 89:19 96:16 100:2 127:3 129:18 130:11,12 131:1 137:17 158:17 159:2 160:1 162:7 162:13 169:18 170:1 172:21 178:6 178:20 180:12,21 186:20 188:2 202:15 209:12</p>	<p>222:9 223:6 230:2,9 230:9 233:8 240:5 242:16 244:22 248:11 258:14 259:5,8 268:8 271:20 273:1 277:13 280:14 281:8 286:16 287:3 helped 274:21 helpful 16:11 32:2 68:2 79:20 86:18 104:1 108:8 111:19 112:2 126:7 155:19 156:21 210:8 223:4 245:5 281:19 282:17 286:9,9 helping 21:14 58:5 65:10 149:10 151:5 179:18 185:17,20 191:11 230:17 240:21 247:9 258:12 259:20 268:7,14 282:18 helps 159:13 253:11 256:22 herd 267:9 hereto 288:13 hey 139:13 hhs 51:10 hi 29:8 72:7 hicks 2:9 5:5,7,8 193:2 194:2,5 223:11 265:11 267:1 high 2:6 7:17 8:2 15:17 16:9 17:1 23:13 27:5 32:12 33:16,20 34:20 39:9 39:18 43:21 44:21 49:5 51:4 62:4 91:2 91:21 98:5 101:22 106:1 107:4 109:20 114:5 119:10 148:12 149:16 154:16,21 156:7 159:7,11 213:10 215:6 218:2 219:6 230:16,17 235:8</p>	<p>237:2 255:3 258:2 278:18 higher 31:1 92:5,8 97:14 135:9 138:18 142:16,18 145:10 145:19,21 148:1 150:15,18 151:4 152:5,17 165:22 172:15 173:14 249:17 250:8 273:9 277:12 highest 152:14 179:2 204:19 highlight 105:10 107:21 126:21 156:3 193:18 201:13 202:6 218:6 218:12 252:8 276:22 284:15 highlighted 103:4 highlighting 148:11 212:18 highlights 25:4 284:8 highly 55:5,5,6 143:13 hijacking 194:13 202:22 hill 8:15 hispanic 50:12 80:6 historian 283:4 historic 273:3 276:7 historical 173:19 266:14 historically 159:18 161:7 177:6 178:13 281:21 history 98:11 105:20 141:6 184:2 188:9 194:21 243:6 245:18 266:5,8 hit 33:13,13 284:1 hitting 37:10 hiv 197:6,8 200:22 202:10 hmm 37:19 hold 15:11</p>
--	---	---	---

<p>holding 176:17 holds 243:22 holes 263:10 home 136:22 141:8 146:3 209:17 219:7 219:9,21 275:8 homeless 83:20 84:5 104:5 homes 282:14 homework 175:9 honest 63:11 honestly 194:12 255:12 260:17 honor 143:21 180:2 182:7 273:12 hope 42:5,7 148:19 149:12 183:19 185:10 190:20 210:8 211:1 258:14 259:6 260:15 hopefully 23:3 79:3 137:13 178:8 263:2 hoping 24:6 110:20 112:1 126:4 150:10 241:18 263:7 hopper 96:12 host 84:10 156:6 hosted 30:20 175:15 286:5 hosting 159:11 hosts 260:22 hotel 1:9 219:7 286:8 hour 208:19 hours 281:13 house 1:5 3:8 36:3 65:3 66:2,6,8 68:13 71:18 75:7 81:13 82:15 85:1,9,11,13 101:20 111:1 112:11,14 114:11 114:22 115:11 117:22 118:3,11 120:11 140:19 147:15 159:10 165:5 166:8 191:13 194:16 195:8,11 196:12 198:5</p>	<p>202:22 214:7 240:20 housing 22:2,2 205:15 houston 52:17 hrabowski 2:2 5:2,9 5:12,15,18,20,22 6:2,5,7,9,12,15,18 6:20 7:1,2 9:16,18 9:22 10:17,19,21 11:1,3,15,16 12:6 25:19 30:11 32:21 38:22 40:18 42:4 44:14 45:13 46:14 46:20 47:1,5 60:22 65:1,19,21 66:12 71:14,19 72:3 81:2 85:12 88:12 95:17 108:21 112:15 114:7 117:20 118:1 118:4 124:7 131:2 137:16 139:7,15,21 140:5 141:10 142:9 144:14 146:7 156:1 158:5 162:17 164:7 165:2 167:18 171:4 171:10,14 178:4 179:4,8,13,16 180:7 180:15,20 181:3,7 181:17 182:1,5 183:12 189:5 191:19 192:10 193:8,10,15 194:4 211:6,15,20,22 212:5 220:18,21 221:12 223:1,16 229:15 233:4 240:15 244:2 246:12 248:20 251:2,14 253:22 254:7,10 264:1,5,8 264:13,17 265:14 269:21 281:18 283:7,21 284:2 285:2 286:18,21 hsis 19:17 hud 20:3</p>	<p>huge 42:16,18 44:7 76:3 165:11 205:20 208:9 human 221:16 222:5 humanities 283:8 humble 210:20 humboldt 256:2,4 hundred 27:3 68:22 143:3 172:9 224:20 239:17 hundreds 19:5 hunter 142:5,13 hurting 197:4,6 hypotheses 231:19</p> <p style="text-align: center;">i</p> <p>idea 27:16 31:21 54:2,3,16 61:4 63:19,20 66:17 76:17 88:21 90:13 100:21 102:14 103:16 132:13 135:21 161:15 162:2,2,16 247:7,19 ideas 28:3 255:21 262:18 275:16 identification 54:5 73:5 75:2,22 76:13 79:21 97:21,22 99:5 130:7 identified 49:4,9 55:7 56:1,6 57:9,11 58:1 59:4 63:10,14 64:15,20 72:20 73:9 73:18 74:3,11 76:5 77:22 78:9 79:16,22 80:8,17 83:9 88:5 90:15 93:9,12 94:4 98:7 99:1,7 103:4 identifies 54:11 identify 44:8,9 48:20 54:3 55:13 58:8,17 59:17,22 70:22 73:2 80:20 83:1 86:20 87:22 97:4 100:16 101:1 104:16 105:3,11</p>	<p>111:12 122:1 125:11,22 171:18 177:21 188:7 214:15 215:22 268:9 identifying 47:11 56:21 63:2 68:1 73:4,8,16 74:19,22 75:1,2 77:9 81:14 82:7 103:20 121:3 121:12 122:6 149:5 168:13 171:7 174:5 186:1 identity 200:8 iep 132:14,16 ies 13:17 14:7 35:18 36:8,13 162:8 ignore 132:11 171:1 ii 70:1 105:2,5 109:16 110:6 111:5 iii 2:2 84:7 85:3,16 87:12 88:6 104:6 illinois 52:22 imagine 61:12 172:14 impact 13:8 71:16 80:14,18 114:4 124:13 131:9 163:1 163:13 167:22 168:15 200:11,12 207:17 237:14 impactful 220:10 impacts 52:13 132:17 237:20 255:9 imperative 48:20 implement 16:1 54:17 64:8 94:5,6 274:10 implementation 66:22 68:7 69:3 103:9 implementing 17:8 150:7 implicate 227:7 implications 85:3 implied 62:20</p>
--	---	---	--

<p>importance 7:16 8:12 133:8,18 254:19 263:16 278:10</p> <p>important 40:11 86:7 95:7 102:17,19 103:6 105:16 107:10 108:7,8,17 120:12 121:14 123:7 142:11 144:20 155:14 161:7 176:16 190:8 204:2 213:14 216:7 227:18 229:6 232:8 233:5 237:22 238:12 243:12 244:11 245:3 251:1 252:17 255:11 257:10 277:15 278:15 284:8 285:7 285:17</p> <p>importantly 126:2</p> <p>imposing 205:4</p> <p>improve 13:9 14:17 47:13 53:21 145:7 252:17</p> <p>improvement 9:2</p> <p>improvements 130:15</p> <p>improving 133:11 178:22 216:16</p> <p>inappropriate 162:5</p> <p>incarcerated 23:8 150:13,18 151:5 166:22</p> <p>incarceration 209:1</p> <p>incent 25:1</p> <p>incentive 146:21 147:9,21 148:20 164:16,18 168:22</p> <p>incentives 148:5 178:5</p> <p>incentivizing 106:17</p> <p>inch 20:17,18</p> <p>incidence 49:5 98:5</p>	<p>incident 128:22 133:14</p> <p>include 37:3 74:16 190:8 211:1 269:2</p> <p>included 166:5 168:10 201:13 258:6 261:17 270:5 278:8</p> <p>includes 38:14,15 77:3 109:14 128:9 128:16 129:7 275:13 278:7</p> <p>including 7:19 8:3,6 69:10 75:11 141:19 146:6 202:8 210:10</p> <p>inclusive 95:15</p> <p>income 22:10 42:20 105:14 138:18 145:13 146:9 153:17 155:8,9,11 168:16 235:2</p> <p>incoming 188:8</p> <p>incorporate 17:17 82:3 84:1</p> <p>incorporating 121:21</p> <p>increase 21:12 140:15 145:7 149:15 154:19 174:16,21 213:8 222:20</p> <p>increased 8:6</p> <p>increases 50:18,19 50:21 91:17,18,19</p> <p>increasing 7:17 177:1</p> <p>incredible 55:20 57:8 79:14 141:21 276:10</p> <p>incredibly 91:2 97:16 102:18 210:20</p> <p>independent 52:17</p> <p>index 24:19 145:15</p> <p>indexing 145:20 146:4</p> <p>indianola 239:15</p>	<p>indication 99:10 234:21 235:4</p> <p>indications 52:14 59:6</p> <p>indicators 164:4</p> <p>individual 163:10</p> <p>individually 144:17 144:18</p> <p>individuals 16:13 30:7 33:20 53:22 132:3 280:18</p> <p>ineffective 121:12 122:2,10</p> <p>inexperienced 109:8 121:12</p> <p>infants 243:9</p> <p>infected 200:18</p> <p>inference 33:8</p> <p>inflation 145:15</p> <p>inform 9:7 149:10 188:13</p> <p>informal 178:17</p> <p>informally 261:7</p> <p>information 17:8 21:6 69:21 70:8 71:5,8 75:8,15 79:12,17 80:14 83:13,13 86:3 88:9 98:12 99:8 109:12 111:3,17,22 173:19 184:19 185:20 195:22 212:6 223:11 226:6 271:18 276:9 277:6 281:7</p> <p>informed 60:6,8</p> <p>initative 1:5</p> <p>initial 7:8 88:4 111:6 153:13</p> <p>initially 19:22</p> <p>initiative 2:13 13:6 25:8 51:9,11,20,22 106:21 107:20 141:22 188:9,11 193:17 196:12 220:16 269:7 273:11,18</p>	<p>initiative's 7:9 9:10</p> <p>initiatives 14:11,15 25:9 184:2 185:18 194:10 261:1 270:20 274:1</p> <p>inmates 172:20</p> <p>innovation 14:6,12 16:18 24:8,11 27:9 27:11 28:4 149:15 150:6 153:20 187:17 223:6</p> <p>innovations 168:5 178:13</p> <p>innovative 153:16</p> <p>input 60:4 69:1 104:2 109:12 267:13</p> <p>inroad 241:4</p> <p>inside 112:21</p> <p>insight 277:9</p> <p>insightful 272:16</p> <p>insist 208:8</p> <p>inst4itution 242:16</p> <p>institute 2:4,5,13 7:20 12:15 13:17</p> <p>institutes 166:3</p> <p>institution 18:10 28:11 164:21 172:16 173:14 269:9</p> <p>institutional 201:12 204:10,16,21 205:2 206:18 207:5,18</p> <p>institutions 8:20 13:7 17:6,22 18:21 19:19,21 21:4 22:19 23:4 24:10 26:3,12 26:15,19 27:3,22 28:8 39:13 135:8 142:16 147:21 148:3,6,11,15,16,18 149:8,20 150:2,16 151:9,17,20 152:4,5 152:17 163:5,6 170:6,12 171:16 172:9,19 178:6,14 178:15 180:11 181:2,13 264:6,9,12</p>
--	---	--	---

<p>264:20,22 instruction 8:6 101:9 instructive 252:14 253:12 instructor 2:5 instrumental 36:8 integral 191:11 integrate 164:10 275:21 integrated 43:12 intellectual 49:7 98:3 intend 144:8 intended 14:4 intensity 21:11 intentional 195:12 195:17 intentionality 194:8 194:22 intentionally 273:6 interact 237:13 256:18 272:8,12 interaction 205:15 205:16 219:11 254:16 interagency 211:10 interest 27:5,19 82:22 106:11 140:14 153:13 156:14 189:2 interested 15:7 22:6 23:18 24:21 35:16 71:14 99:22 100:6 134:10,10 146:19 148:4 152:22 153:15 160:21 166:20 188:1 201:16 244:8 259:21 262:12 263:13 265:9 266:15 288:13 289:8 interesting 43:17 137:18 147:12 235:20 283:21 284:1</p>	<p>interests 95:3 268:13 intergenerational 276:12 internal 26:11 32:18 internally 66:18 interns 102:8 internships 20:7,7 interruption 218:7 intersection 46:11 75:12 132:20 200:9 204:8,14 221:14 intersectional 195:5 intersectionality 251:3 intersections 21:20 22:1 210:5 intervening 54:18 57:2 intimately 100:12 intro 260:1 introduce 141:14 142:12 introducing 142:4 174:2 introduction 143:20 231:16 invest 149:8 invested 259:20 investing 254:19 257:18 investment 24:10 161:5 investments 44:9 145:3 invisible 279:17 invitation 66:12 140:17 invitations 182:10 207:10 invite 182:14 210:2 invited 11:6 36:2 158:8 187:20 195:10 198:9 219:13 271:1 281:11 invocation 210:21</p>	<p>involved 35:18 39:22 114:21 157:5 157:13 223:14 240:16 268:4 283:17 involvement 283:19 involves 192:17,17 192:18,19 involving 192:4 221:13,19 iq 243:15 ironic 253:13 irving 2:3 issue 29:19 35:19 48:5 55:10,21 57:19 57:20 60:5 62:15 78:16 79:18 81:4 82:1 101:2 129:22 146:3 157:14 170:10 195:3,4 197:2 200:21,22 201:1,4,5 206:18 230:8 231:17 232:19 234:11 243:13 246:11 250:21 251:4,15,15 251:17 issues 40:17 52:5 53:19 63:12 76:20 79:4 80:20 88:1 100:7 101:13,19 102:16 108:9 109:7 112:21 124:11 130:16 133:9 135:9 143:8 159:12 169:22 170:5,15 184:5,5,7,7,9,11 185:18 192:3 196:6 203:9 221:13 223:3 228:11 229:2 241:20 255:1,2,2 271:18 273:8 276:21,22 283:19 it'd 62:3 108:7 112:1 264:13 265:1 it'll 128:18 148:19 228:3 275:15</p>	<p>item 145:14 204:20 iterations 169:11 iv 16:12,13,14,21 22:18,21 23:7,12 30:8 34:10,17 40:13 81:19 104:9,16 ivory 165:6</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">j</p> <p>james 2:6,8 5:13,16 8:1 112:16 116:2 jersey 1:10 jim 33:4 118:5 124:7 126:9 130:16 206:4 238:14 jj 91:20 job 16:3 39:19 42:13 255:11 john 6:15 256:8 johns 3:2 6:21,22 11:18 35:9 36:1,11 37:3 68:12 72:2 75:4 84:19 85:2,10 139:19 140:3,13 157:7 158:2,12 175:11,14,19 176:1 176:3,5,10 180:2,5 182:7 186:7,12 187:1,9,12 189:10 189:15,22 191:6 192:7 193:12,18 201:8 210:18 211:13,18 260:10 261:4,11,13 265:3 265:15 266:22 267:19 268:20 270:4 274:20 276:17 278:4 280:10 283:2,5 284:11 285:22 johnson 256:8 join 36:12 140:20 159:10 268:9 joined 95:20 joins 142:13 joint 2:17 31:14 121:4</p>
--	---	--	---

<p>jot 95:4 jour 159:21 journey 216:3 217:2 217:3 285:10 judge 2:19 188:20 270:8 judicious 229:4 july 127:14 185:11 206:12 213:20,20 213:22 214:8 220:3 june 115:4 184:16 185:2,2,8,9 201:15 223:15 286:1 justice 2:10 50:20 51:19 166:9 195:1 196:21 205:19 juvenile 50:20</p>	<p>218:20 222:18 keynote 107:17 229:3 khaliah 275:4 kicked 29:18 210:20 kicking 272:3 kickoff 271:10 kid 251:10 kids 45:8 80:4 92:1 92:2 109:9 134:14 134:18,22,22 136:6 155:10 204:4 209:1 229:22 230:16,17 231:4 237:10,19 241:21 242:4,9 244:17 250:6 252:19 253:2 270:14 286:14</p>	<p>176:22 247:8 249:18 kiss 243:4 knatokie 140:18 knew 58:1 know 12:11 14:1,3 14:13 15:5 17:13 19:5 20:6,13 21:7 21:10 25:2 26:1 27:22 30:1,2 31:13 31:19 32:2 33:3 38:6 39:12,12 40:5 41:4,7,22 42:16 43:5,10,10 44:13,18 45:1,8,9,12 46:4 47:5 48:13 49:8,15 49:15,17,21 50:4,4 50:17 51:2,19 52:3 53:12,18 54:21 55:18 56:5,17 57:1 57:19,21 58:1,2,7 59:11,15,22 63:12 63:19 64:8,10,14,15 64:17,18,19,20 66:21 68:8,14 69:16 73:3,14,17,18 74:10 74:10,12,13 77:22 78:1,2,13,15,19,22 79:2,4,8 80:2,3,6,20 83:7,10 85:18 86:8 86:9,21,22 87:14 88:22 89:17 90:1,10 91:4,9,10,17,22 92:3 93:2,3,4,11,18 93:19 94:2,3,3,11 94:12 97:9,13,20,21 97:22,22 98:9,11,15 99:9,13,18 100:4,4 100:21,21,22 101:4 101:22 102:4,8,22 102:22 103:15 104:17 105:3,3,5,20 106:8 107:5 108:18 109:10 112:6 115:2 116:17 117:3,13,14 118:11 119:5,12 121:4,4,7,18 122:7 122:9,9,18 123:14</p>	<p>124:2 126:13,21 127:2,7,11,17 128:10,13,15,15,21 129:2,11,14,14,18 129:21 130:6,10 131:21 132:13,15 132:16,17,18,20 133:1,4,8,10,12,14 133:19,21,21 134:6 135:11,19,20,21,22 136:13,16,17,19,20 137:1 138:16,18 140:8 141:9,16 146:14 147:2,20 149:1,7 150:11,21 151:7,15 153:4 154:2 155:8 159:11 159:15,17 160:13 161:1,9,11 162:10 164:19 167:2,9,11 167:22 168:11,13 170:8 171:1,12 172:1,12 173:13 174:2 175:4,7,21 178:3 180:20 185:19 188:1 189:4 189:15 190:14,21 191:3,3,4 193:12 196:1,5 197:10 199:21 200:17,17 201:17 203:1,4,15 204:3,11 205:7,14 205:20 208:1,2,6,10 208:22 209:3,11 210:13 212:10,19 212:21 213:8,10 214:19 217:1,2,12 217:12,15,15,19 219:21 222:17,19 223:12,20 229:4,7 229:10 231:9,18,19 232:14,15,16,20 233:1 234:9,10,11 234:22 235:10,19 236:1,2,4,6 237:15 238:7 239:2,2 240:9 241:21,22 242:2,15 243:8,13,15 244:1,9</p>
k			
<p>k 16:10 45:3,11 61:20 62:12 93:14 113:2 141:21 145:3 145:9 149:13 195:20 196:5 213:10 karen 191:8,9 keenly 160:21 170:10 keep 15:12,13 17:5 73:3 123:2 137:10 187:5 220:21 252:22 275:22 keeper 25:8 30:19 31:20 51:9,21 165:8 165:10 270:21 273:19 keeping 145:3,21 146:11,11 keeps 17:15 kent 2:14 6:7 44:16 45:14 88:14 108:22 112:16 126:9 182:17 186:14 kentucky 109:5 112:5 key 19:9 63:9 145:13 149:1 152:20 184:7 186:1</p>	<p>kim 142:5,13 143:6 143:6,7,11,16 169:20 170:10 177:4 180:22 183:2 kind 20:14 46:1 62:20 66:22 68:3,22 69:22 71:5 73:13 76:6 90:10,11 100:9 102:9 103:15 104:10,12,17 106:5 114:9,13 117:8 120:19 122:19,21 123:14 124:5 126:10 166:12 167:21 170:13,20 184:4 185:5,14,15 185:19 186:1,3 215:7,12,20 217:12 217:16 220:1 225:12 229:6,11,14 235:5 237:17 239:4 243:16 247:7 271:19 272:4 276:7 kindergarten 8:5 57:6 76:6,14 78:10 79:22 238:9 239:11 241:19 kinds 20:14 22:1 40:6 48:15 94:11 128:21 171:16</p>	<p>176:22 247:8 249:18 kiss 243:4 knatokie 140:18 knew 58:1 know 12:11 14:1,3 14:13 15:5 17:13 19:5 20:6,13 21:7 21:10 25:2 26:1 27:22 30:1,2 31:13 31:19 32:2 33:3 38:6 39:12,12 40:5 41:4,7,22 42:16 43:5,10,10 44:13,18 45:1,8,9,12 46:4 47:5 48:13 49:8,15 49:15,17,21 50:4,4 50:17 51:2,19 52:3 53:12,18 54:21 55:18 56:5,17 57:1 57:19,21 58:1,2,7 59:11,15,22 63:12 63:19 64:8,10,14,15 64:17,18,19,20 66:21 68:8,14 69:16 73:3,14,17,18 74:10 74:10,12,13 77:22 78:1,2,13,15,19,22 79:2,4,8 80:2,3,6,20 83:7,10 85:18 86:8 86:9,21,22 87:14 88:22 89:17 90:1,10 91:4,9,10,17,22 92:3 93:2,3,4,11,18 93:19 94:2,3,3,11 94:12 97:9,13,20,21 97:22,22 98:9,11,15 99:9,13,18 100:4,4 100:21,21,22 101:4 101:22 102:4,8,22 102:22 103:15 104:17 105:3,3,5,20 106:8 107:5 108:18 109:10 112:6 115:2 116:17 117:3,13,14 118:11 119:5,12 121:4,4,7,18 122:7 122:9,9,18 123:14</p>	<p>124:2 126:13,21 127:2,7,11,17 128:10,13,15,15,21 129:2,11,14,14,18 129:21 130:6,10 131:21 132:13,15 132:16,17,18,20 133:1,4,8,10,12,14 133:19,21,21 134:6 135:11,19,20,21,22 136:13,16,17,19,20 137:1 138:16,18 140:8 141:9,16 146:14 147:2,20 149:1,7 150:11,21 151:7,15 153:4 154:2 155:8 159:11 159:15,17 160:13 161:1,9,11 162:10 164:19 167:2,9,11 167:22 168:11,13 170:8 171:1,12 172:1,12 173:13 174:2 175:4,7,21 178:3 180:20 185:19 188:1 189:4 189:15 190:14,21 191:3,3,4 193:12 196:1,5 197:10 199:21 200:17,17 201:17 203:1,4,15 204:3,11 205:7,14 205:20 208:1,2,6,10 208:22 209:3,11 210:13 212:10,19 212:21 213:8,10 214:19 217:1,2,12 217:12,15,15,19 219:21 222:17,19 223:12,20 229:4,7 229:10 231:9,18,19 232:14,15,16,20 233:1 234:9,10,11 234:22 235:10,19 236:1,2,4,6 237:15 238:7 239:2,2 240:9 241:21,22 242:2,15 243:8,13,15 244:1,9</p>

<p>244:12,12 245:12 248:8 249:22 250:7 250:18 252:10,18 253:7,8,14 254:15 256:3 257:14 259:4 261:15,19 262:4,22 265:7,11 271:9,15 273:2 274:4,12 275:16 277:11,19 278:4 279:16 280:16 281:18 282:5 284:5,11 286:15 knowing 71:15 219:15 knowledge 96:3 245:2,3 262:3 288:7 knows 76:12 142:1 158:5 248:11 260:10 kristen 3:7 47:7,8 47:16 65:8 72:8 75:10 88:16 124:22 137:17 212:10 218:15 kristen's 112:19 124:10</p>	<p>largest 206:17,20 lastly 218:17 late 17:4 88:8 261:14,14 latino 42:19 154:20 latinos 155:7 laughter 158:11 launch 51:10 269:8 launched 13:6 15:1 15:19 20:13 52:7 274:22 lauren 3:3 7:1 185:17 212:7 214:10 263:2 267:17 271:16 275:1,21 law 2:8,9 53:8 95:9 191:15 lay 51:3 layer 213:1 layers 230:6 lead 10:13 39:18 46:16 65:15 196:15 215:1 253:2 257:9 273:15,16 276:5,18 280:11 281:10 leader 154:6 156:9 219:13 leaders 4:3 11:6 12:5 69:7 193:3 194:20 195:19 205:1 206:16 207:4 207:11 210:15 257:7 271:4 leadership 39:4,5 69:6 127:11 183:8 199:2,3 207:1 219:4 257:5 280:20 leading 65:13 94:13 99:19 156:4,5 188:5 192:1,15 211:10,12 228:9 269:18 270:8 league 192:20 270:2 271:3 275:3 leap 14:17 learn 20:3 95:15 122:16 123:10 137:13 198:17</p>	<p>209:19 229:20 233:17 239:19 240:6,8 241:6 244:11 learned 7:21 47:22 244:9 learners 37:10 84:7 87:17 90:22 104:7 learning 7:14 18:1 18:15 23:15 49:7 76:18 81:18 82:16 83:2 85:5 98:4 100:16 101:7 104:3 129:1 133:3 136:14 144:6 153:6 156:7 168:13 216:17 222:5 225:15 233:11 240:4,5,22 242:20 243:20 250:19 277:12 leave 45:15 106:8 165:4 167:13 187:6 188:2 229:12 277:4 leaving 125:7 183:5 188:21 211:9 lecture 223:1 led 4:7 29:17 124:18 124:22 176:5 183:10 191:20 256:21 280:15 leeway 22:4 left 11:21 35:12 145:7 253:7 legacy 183:15,16 188:6 189:3 190:6 257:3 280:18 legal 203:15 legally 103:14 legislation 29:19 63:1 160:8 203:19 legislative 3:1 184:5 legislatures 203:12 lend 258:15 267:5 lesbian 198:18 lesson 18:8 letter 132:6 191:15 letters 153:13</p>	<p>letting 256:3 lettman 2:9 5:5,6,8 193:1 194:2,5 223:11 265:11 267:1 level 14:5,16 29:17 39:21 53:12 76:7 98:18 127:3 130:9 130:19,19 138:9,18 138:22 139:3 142:18 151:12 159:11 176:20 208:3 230:4,7 241:18 249:6 levels 13:21 107:7 126:14 127:11 139:3 143:3 197:6 229:10 249:13 lever 145:13 leverage 21:18 75:17 284:20 leveraging 269:3 lgbt 194:20 195:1,2 195:7,9,14,15 196:17 197:5,17 199:14 200:1 203:14 247:6 lgbtq 192:17 193:4 194:14 198:1,12 200:5 202:3 203:9 204:13 223:13 247:11 liaison 1:9 liberal 258:21 liberty 111:8 licensure 164:19,22 224:22 225:4 life 101:22 136:22 219:22 lifetime 11:12 197:13 lift 24:17 276:13 284:6 lifted 23:5 lifting 252:22 light 44:15 likelihood 50:1,2,3 50:19,20,21 91:18</p>
I			
<p>la 53:3 lab 115:3,20 116:1 labs 70:13 115:1,13 lack 44:19 119:18 197:14 213:4 262:3 ladies 276:21 lady 217:14,22 274:1 278:20 lag 214:4 laid 54:9 212:10 language 23:6 29:22 37:10 85:5 159:16 234:8,10 242:3,4,9 large 39:15 76:13 97:16 110:2 138:20 148:8,9 213:1 224:10 238:1 larger 225:7 268:5</p>	<p>largest 206:17,20 lastly 218:17 late 17:4 88:8 261:14,14 latino 42:19 154:20 latinos 155:7 laughter 158:11 launch 51:10 269:8 launched 13:6 15:1 15:19 20:13 52:7 274:22 lauren 3:3 7:1 185:17 212:7 214:10 263:2 267:17 271:16 275:1,21 law 2:8,9 53:8 95:9 191:15 lay 51:3 layer 213:1 layers 230:6 lead 10:13 39:18 46:16 65:15 196:15 215:1 253:2 257:9 273:15,16 276:5,18 280:11 281:10 leader 154:6 156:9 219:13 leaders 4:3 11:6 12:5 69:7 193:3 194:20 195:19 205:1 206:16 207:4 207:11 210:15 257:7 271:4 leadership 39:4,5 69:6 127:11 183:8 199:2,3 207:1 219:4 257:5 280:20 leading 65:13 94:13 99:19 156:4,5 188:5 192:1,15 211:10,12 228:9 269:18 270:8 league 192:20 270:2 271:3 275:3 leap 14:17 learn 20:3 95:15 122:16 123:10 137:13 198:17</p>	<p>209:19 229:20 233:17 239:19 240:6,8 241:6 244:11 learned 7:21 47:22 244:9 learners 37:10 84:7 87:17 90:22 104:7 learning 7:14 18:1 18:15 23:15 49:7 76:18 81:18 82:16 83:2 85:5 98:4 100:16 101:7 104:3 129:1 133:3 136:14 144:6 153:6 156:7 168:13 216:17 222:5 225:15 233:11 240:4,5,22 242:20 243:20 250:19 277:12 leave 45:15 106:8 165:4 167:13 187:6 188:2 229:12 277:4 leaving 125:7 183:5 188:21 211:9 lecture 223:1 led 4:7 29:17 124:18 124:22 176:5 183:10 191:20 256:21 280:15 leeway 22:4 left 11:21 35:12 145:7 253:7 legacy 183:15,16 188:6 189:3 190:6 257:3 280:18 legal 203:15 legally 103:14 legislation 29:19 63:1 160:8 203:19 legislative 3:1 184:5 legislatures 203:12 lend 258:15 267:5 lesbian 198:18 lesson 18:8 letter 132:6 191:15 letters 153:13</p>	<p>letting 256:3 lettman 2:9 5:5,6,8 193:1 194:2,5 223:11 265:11 267:1 level 14:5,16 29:17 39:21 53:12 76:7 98:18 127:3 130:9 130:19,19 138:9,18 138:22 139:3 142:18 151:12 159:11 176:20 208:3 230:4,7 241:18 249:6 levels 13:21 107:7 126:14 127:11 139:3 143:3 197:6 229:10 249:13 lever 145:13 leverage 21:18 75:17 284:20 leveraging 269:3 lgbt 194:20 195:1,2 195:7,9,14,15 196:17 197:5,17 199:14 200:1 203:14 247:6 lgbtq 192:17 193:4 194:14 198:1,12 200:5 202:3 203:9 204:13 223:13 247:11 liaison 1:9 liberal 258:21 liberty 111:8 licensure 164:19,22 224:22 225:4 life 101:22 136:22 219:22 lifetime 11:12 197:13 lift 24:17 276:13 284:6 lifted 23:5 lifting 252:22 light 44:15 likelihood 50:1,2,3 50:19,20,21 91:18</p>

<p>91:19,19 94:9 114:2 limited 23:16 71:8 limiting 53:1 56:20 limits 56:16 line 156:12,14 197:15 lines 70:21 237:7 link 16:16 29:21 35:2 37:1 38:1 40:12 linkage 38:4 43:1 linkages 45:3 46:5 62:15 linked 9:5 16:21 29:16 30:8 40:13 list 35:3 112:21 115:15 283:1,2,3 284:18 listed 81:5 listen 110:1 121:19 207:19 253:14 281:5 listened 252:10 253:15 listening 68:9,19,21 69:14,15 75:6 95:7 lists 21:3 lit 283:9 literacy 249:15 literally 67:1 128:12 128:17 130:12 137:4 210:21 little 12:13 15:6 38:20 47:21 89:21 100:12 117:5 118:14 125:16 163:19,20 186:8 196:7 205:11 206:11 230:13 233:14 243:3 244:5 258:3 259:17 260:16,22 277:7 279:12 282:5 live 25:16 195:4 200:6 238:21,22 239:1,20,21 274:2 275:8 276:6</p>	<p>lives 208:11 217:5 living 199:17 loaded 163:15 loan 165:4 local 53:6 68:2 69:10 70:11,16 85:21 104:21 123:3 126:14 localities 161:18 locals 207:13 locations 75:6 loftin 2:11 6:16,17 139:12,14 166:16 166:17 172:4 182:17 186:10,16 211:10,11 248:18 254:4,8,11 261:9,12 262:7 264:4,7,10,15 265:2 266:20 267:14 268:2,19 269:8,19 270:16 271:1,9 272:2,5 276:2 277:2 lomax 6:2 long 30:8 53:14 63:22 124:4 157:1 166:18 203:10 220:12 227:11 228:8 229:1 240:12 245:13,14,14 247:15,15 256:9 285:5,8 longer 53:3 200:22 227:12 236:5 longitudinal 91:11 238:4 look 14:19 15:3 38:21 39:8 40:11 43:6 45:19 46:7,10 48:3 50:10 59:16 74:12,15 77:8 97:9 97:14,18 103:13 104:16 107:12 111:12 117:6 118:1 123:17 124:15 125:14,20 126:16 128:11 139:9 144:16 146:1</p>	<p>158:18 185:7,12 196:10 197:5 199:5 212:21 213:2,19 214:2,22 215:17 224:15,17,22 225:3 225:11 227:15,20 227:22 228:5,20 232:3,15,21 233:1 235:8,9,21 246:9 250:14 252:16 255:19 256:11 258:16 261:2 264:20 277:19 280:22 281:20 looked 174:1 250:1 looking 10:7 14:10 15:7 33:14,17 45:4 54:8 77:3 81:14,17 82:3 84:6,9,11 92:9 93:2 98:10 105:4,7 105:18 106:5 107:9 108:2 131:7 134:11 144:5 150:7 184:16 200:11 204:7 205:2 205:17 206:6 214:14 220:2 221:13 223:5 228:6 228:7 236:2 242:8 246:18 248:11 259:19 260:2 266:7 266:8 267:21 268:14 274:4,6 looks 100:11 120:21 121:16 130:11 217:3 225:5 279:19 looming 184:5 loop 41:18,20 loops 168:2 lose 145:16 loss 131:22 lost 16:7 284:6,22 lot 14:1,13,14 22:8 36:19 42:6,7 63:2 64:3 68:6 69:21,22 74:4,5 80:13 82:22 97:20 98:6 99:8 100:22 104:10,13 115:16 116:14</p>	<p>119:3 121:8 122:3 124:21,22 126:21 128:5 129:15 130:21 135:8,14 137:6 142:10 153:11 162:14 170:14 195:7 215:9 229:22 241:21,22 249:21 250:6,20,21 250:22 255:2 257:21,22 258:20 258:22 271:17 275:5,12 277:17,22 279:4 lots 38:7 144:10 237:17 278:12 loudest 119:15 louisiana 69:15 74:1 74:5 142:19,20,22 love 12:17 24:14 113:8 169:13 223:14 261:4 265:2 266:20 low 22:10 41:2 42:19 48:16 105:14 119:8 145:13 146:9 153:17 155:8 159:8 168:15 213:5,5 lower 235:3 238:2 lsu 142:5 luck 93:18 lumped 78:6 lunch 263:19</p>
m			
<p>magazine 201:20 magic 56:2 59:6,20 mail 191:9 261:10 265:4 267:4 main 28:7 mainstream 195:3 maintaining 30:2 146:8 major 9:12 66:22 162:11 178:20 184:4 199:16 203:17 249:20 251:17</p>			

<p>majority 200:5 making 36:8 46:1 68:6 100:3 120:8 133:3,10 143:12 153:4 159:4 170:1 182:19 188:16 194:8 195:12 198:3 198:4,10 199:8 203:15 220:4,5 237:22 270:19,21 276:3 277:15 male 2:13 170:18 174:16,20 175:2,15 177:3 males 31:1 165:22 166:4 169:17 179:19 187:4 mama 240:21 manage 112:1 managed 134:12 management 184:11 manages 36:3 manufacturing 2:5 march 53:20 60:11 157:4 marginalized 194:9 marian 238:17 marian's 239:3,13 mark 3:5 11:8,11,17 11:19 25:20 29:8 45:14 47:2,9 61:16 165:14 mark's 61:6 marked 146:13 markedly 158:10 market 16:3 marketing 178:9 marketplace 152:7 marks 2:12 6:3,4 8:11 30:13,17 118:7 118:15 165:3 234:13 235:16 236:9 265:15 266:2 267:16 marriage 200:2,4 martin 260:12</p>	<p>mary 281:22 282:9 maryland 200:2,6 massive 96:5 master 142:21 masterful 207:8 mastering 152:1 match 28:16 materials 18:4,5 157:21 math 13:1,2 37:9 40:3 147:6 230:5,12 mathematics 2:5 8:8,22 140:17 283:11 matsui 3:5 11:8,14 12:6 matsul 26:5,8,20 27:1,13 29:7,10,13 29:21 30:16 31:2 32:10,15,17 33:1,10 34:3,8,16,22 35:22 36:19 37:8,19 38:10 38:13 40:10,20 42:14 46:3,19,22 47:3 matter 103:10 119:16 203:17 209:8,9 230:1 matters 200:10 mbk 32:4 166:9,15 mbrc 43:20 mcats 231:3 mccloud 281:22 282:10 mcguire 2:14 6:7,8 44:12,17 112:18 114:15 115:8 124:10 187:9 mckinney 83:21 104:6 mean 40:10 41:11 43:6 52:12 63:9,16 64:13,16 73:22 76:16 79:2 80:13 82:15 90:4,8 91:9 98:17 99:22 100:2 100:19 102:18 103:1 114:15 122:2</p>	<p>126:12,12 130:16 137:10 138:10 139:5 158:6 203:9 205:16 226:7 227:20 232:20 233:13 243:4 247:4 247:5,12 250:2 251:4 264:17 277:3 282:22 meaning 45:18 74:18 meaningful 8:4 44:20 70:9 86:1 116:16 117:9 132:1 219:10,11,18 220:10 means 49:18 60:12 64:16 67:17,20 73:14,16 86:5,14 88:8 93:1 102:22 136:22 152:5 154:9 256:16 meant 130:5 measurable 45:1 151:11 measure 151:18 159:3 252:16 measured 157:15,16 measurement 121:8 157:17 measurements 121:11 measures 13:8 226:1 235:12 measuring 159:2 238:6 meat 120:20 124:3 med 231:3,4 media 201:19,22 202:14 269:4 272:11 medicine 229:17 meet 20:2 21:10 148:11 273:7 meeting 1:7 5:3 8:15 31:4 140:12 141:2,2 144:16 157:4,8,10 158:1 159:12 162:6</p>	<p>177:11 190:19,22 191:2 192:8 194:1 228:16 254:17 275:14 276:20 286:1,4 287:6 meetings 156:20 158:6,8 195:9,10 mekki 175:11,14 176:6 member 4:6 137:20 223:13 267:17 members 12:7 162:13 192:1 204:22 205:21 228:19 286:19 287:2 memoranda 53:6 memorandum 53:10 memos 278:5 men 171:12 178:1 178:21 278:21 279:14,16 mental 104:11 278:10 mention 127:7 261:16 mentioned 23:20 32:6 72:11 75:7 78:15 83:16 95:12 96:13 104:3 105:2 108:1 114:16 120:16 150:8 166:21 190:7 242:2 259:18 261:15 mentoring 257:7 276:3,12 mentors 170:16 171:8 message 88:14 187:13 229:7 messages 237:17 messaging 202:14 269:1 met 16:21 68:20 69:6 84:3 method 56:13</p>
--	--	--	---

<p>michael 2:15 6:2,10 30:12 95:21 113:10 165:8 166:12 211:8 212:1 252:2,5 281:1 282:7</p> <p>microphone 172:4</p> <p>mid 17:4,4 185:8,10</p> <p>middle 16:3 138:20 154:15 160:16 170:16 214:16,17 215:2,5 271:15</p> <p>midst 159:16</p> <p>mike 72:5 88:13 156:4,16 190:9 231:8</p> <p>mike's 37:14</p> <p>mile 20:17,18,19,19</p> <p>million 16:8 17:21 24:9 32:7 33:17 34:5 41:2 46:17 61:7 62:11,16 91:12 91:14 222:19 238:20 243:17 281:13</p> <p>millions 19:5 39:8</p> <p>mims 3:3 7:2 267:17 276:1</p> <p>mind 35:14 73:3 114:6</p> <p>minded 219:12</p> <p>mindful 177:5 281:4</p> <p>mine 179:10 256:9</p> <p>minimum 181:21 246:3 269:4</p> <p>minorities 159:20</p> <p>minority 17:22 18:20 19:14 105:14 146:10 178:14 233:1,3 264:10</p> <p>minuet 160:16</p> <p>minute 267:6</p> <p>minutes 114:9 139:18 254:10,11</p> <p>mirror 232:15</p> <p>misalignment 15:6</p> <p>mishear 162:19</p> <p>mismatch 80:19</p>	<p>missed 274:5 279:20</p> <p>mission 184:2 215:21</p> <p>mississippi 70:14,17 113:13 114:16 115:3,14,20 239:16</p> <p>misspeak 29:2</p> <p>mistake 179:21</p> <p>misunderstand 162:19</p> <p>mittell 3:6 4:5 141:14 142:7,8 144:19 157:5 158:9 160:14 162:16 163:2 164:1 167:16 167:19 168:19 171:9,13 172:2,6 175:7,18,21 176:2,4 176:9,12,14 178:7 179:7,12,15 180:1,4 180:6,14,18,22 181:4,9,18 182:4 183:7 263:13</p> <p>mitigating 168:12</p> <p>mixed 174:4,6</p> <p>mixture 198:13</p> <p>mobility 222:8</p> <p>model 124:15 163:21</p> <p>models 15:8 43:7,18 44:6 151:21 215:17</p> <p>moderate 260:14</p> <p>moderating 260:21</p> <p>mom 217:5,11,16,17</p> <p>moment 50:12 65:2 152:4,9 267:11</p> <p>moments 155:14 201:21</p> <p>momentum 146:8 146:20</p> <p>monday 1:15 136:8</p> <p>money 42:7 80:10 81:6,11 89:7,20 90:5 94:17 146:16 178:5,8,8,12</p> <p>monitor 102:9</p> <p>month 141:6 194:22 213:21</p>	<p>months 150:8 212:8</p> <p>monument 283:15</p> <p>mooks 152:8</p> <p>morehouse 2:12,12 2:13 165:4</p> <p>morning 47:17 53:17 66:6,7 72:7,9 136:8,21 158:1,4 177:10 212:11 218:5,15 271:10</p> <p>moses 234:3</p> <p>mothers 239:17 241:3,5</p> <p>motion 10:11,15 191:22 192:22 193:6 211:8,16,19 270:5</p> <p>motives 174:4,6</p> <p>motto 174:13</p> <p>mouths 119:15</p> <p>move 9:3,11 10:11 53:13 65:14 66:20 67:8 76:20 90:1 115:13 116:8 144:12 147:10 163:11 166:14 191:11 192:22 194:3 196:2 252:22</p> <p>moved 10:16 209:19 241:16</p> <p>movement 135:8 178:10</p> <p>movements 266:11 266:11</p> <p>moving 87:12 123:8 146:12 153:11 154:21 173:8 191:20 241:8 245:22 255:20 258:17 263:11,17 273:11,22 275:22</p> <p>msi 29:1 32:1 165:14</p> <p>msis 24:5,8,15 27:16 28:5,20 30:14,18 31:4 161:7</p> <p>multi 64:8,9 94:7 160:11</p>	<p>multigenerational 246:16</p> <p>multiple 55:18 108:6 120:9</p> <p>multiply 18:17</p> <p>multiyear 285:6</p> <p>museum 266:5 274:2 275:12 276:5</p> <p>muster 148:20</p> <p>mutual 256:1</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">n</p> <hr/> <p>n 4:1 5:1</p> <p>nagging 154:14</p> <p>name 20:2 72:11 166:17 196:2 227:5 279:1</p> <p>names 284:1</p> <p>nape 47:22</p> <p>narrative 134:2 136:11 201:3 216:13 253:10 279:13</p> <p>narratives 136:6 137:5 276:14 279:8</p> <p>narrowing 151:17</p> <p>narrowly 82:14</p> <p>nasa 20:3,10,13</p> <p>natalia 288:2,18</p> <p>nation 55:7,22 56:6 59:10 72:19 73:1 155:16 159:1 222:15 224:6 228:12</p> <p>nation's 206:1</p> <p>national 2:10,18 13:12 15:2,2 18:3 19:13 41:15 42:14 92:10 97:9 98:18 110:2,4 124:15 126:14 158:16 162:8 196:21 219:5 227:22 238:3 249:6 249:7,10 279:13</p> <p>nationally 92:5</p> <p>nationwide 59:4</p> <p>native 19:18 33:15 42:20</p>
--	--	--	--

<p>natural 240:7 284:12 naturally 269:10 nature 203:4 208:7 nays 9:20 nces 35:18 162:8 nclb 69:4 86:10 103:5,6 ncnw 283:17 nea 69:11 107:19 196:16 198:6 201:12 203:2,9 204:7 207:11 210:15 near 212:8 necessarily 90:4 necessary 69:2 87:3 132:18 need 15:17 25:22 26:15 34:6 37:21 38:8 40:2 41:17,19 42:1,2,17 43:6 44:7 44:10 51:7 58:11 59:22 64:14 68:10 78:19 84:1 85:20 86:4,14,22 87:8 89:13 91:7 93:20,22 96:17 99:10 101:11 108:11 112:4 125:21 128:12,13 128:22 129:16 130:14 131:17 132:10,14 133:22 134:1,8 135:21,22 147:7,21 149:8,21 154:9 162:7 170:8 172:14 178:16 190:15 207:9,14 210:7 214:17 219:16,19 221:21 223:7 225:13,14,15 226:2,9 228:12 234:11 236:19 241:20 245:4 247:22 248:8 249:17 252:18 263:11 279:8,15 285:11</p>	<p>needed 16:2 96:5 98:15 110:18 143:2 148:22 154:5 193:12 209:19 needing 173:15,16 282:7 needle 166:14 needs 13:4 21:7 48:20,21 49:15,16 51:7 64:11 84:3 85:6 94:21 105:11 127:2 129:12 165:18 245:20 247:19 248:6 265:10 268:11 negative 163:13 negatives 9:20 negotiate 273:2 negotiated 67:2 71:9 101:21 102:3 111:10 143:3 negotiating 102:19 123:15 negotiations 103:2 103:16 negotiators 160:19 neighbors 237:16 neither 288:8 289:6 net 205:4,17 nettles 2:15 6:10,11 32:5,11,16,20,22 33:2 34:1,4,15,19 35:6,10 36:6,14 45:2 95:22 99:16 101:15 156:4,17 157:9 158:3,14 162:1 190:10 211:9 212:1 223:18,21 231:18 234:2,19 235:19 237:21 242:14 245:11 250:15 276:19 281:2 282:7,21 283:3,6,10,22 network 14:9,10,19 110:2 networking 20:1</p>	<p>networks 17:6 75:9 170:17 211:5 269:6 never 101:7 119:12 195:19 220:13 223:3 249:21 283:11 new 1:10 13:1,2 16:15 17:8 20:22 24:7,8 27:8 29:18 35:16,20 38:16 53:1 53:21 57:1 69:3,14 76:20,22 100:19 110:9 129:11 135:15 142:4,12,22 145:2,4 152:8,14,17 159:15 160:7 172:20 173:17 188:14 204:20 208:3 231:13 239:17 245:2,3 257:5 259:14 265:22 283:18 newest 249:14 newfound 114:3 news 144:22 173:6 newschools 141:18 night 192:3,9,11 261:14 nine 238:19 non 19:18 46:9 70:4 102:15 173:12 198:19 norm 226:20 norming 226:22 north 203:16 northeast 258:22 notary 288:1,19 note 88:2 90:12 99:2 145:17 201:20 202:15 221:11 284:21 notice 19:12 26:9 123:17 236:16 notification 30:4 notified 158:7 notion 236:15 240:15 247:15,21</p>	<p>nroc 41:20 nsf 20:3 nuance 279:11 nudge 147:9 number 11:6 19:14 42:11 46:17 48:3,5 52:19 54:20 56:3,3 56:20 59:6,20 61:6 62:8 70:6 72:22 74:22 79:19 81:19 92:3 94:4 102:2 109:8 141:18 144:13 145:14 147:16,16 154:20 174:16,21 181:5 187:4,8 199:21,22 203:12 209:1 221:13 222:20 230:2,3 231:15 235:17 243:18 286:3 numbers 39:15 61:5 61:19 62:4 73:20 76:14 90:3 91:2,21 92:7 97:15 138:20 148:8,9 198:7 212:15 nurturance 245:21 nutrition 245:20 nw 1:10</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">o</p> <hr/> <p>o 2:8 5:1 obama 141:7 obama's 8:16 obviously 117:11 160:21 occidental 141:17 occupational 13:4 octae 3:6 14:22 19:13 36:19 october 190:19 191:2 286:6 offer 36:2 48:13 91:9 126:6 155:18 183:1 259:5 offered 275:17</p>
--	--	--	--

<p>offering 210:21 office 3:5,7,9 14:22 31:5 36:20 55:3 65:9 66:4 75:5 154:4 183:1 191:10 194:19 195:7 196:9 officer 2:10 288:2 offices 45:22 official 196:2 officially 7:10 86:12 offline 284:18 oftentimes 105:22 195:13 215:11 218:20 219:8 oh 33:10 119:2 167:19 176:9 181:17 203:5 ohio 215:21 okay 7:1,3 33:6 35:6 36:6 37:5 39:12 58:10 66:1,8 68:13 72:3,5 75:21 85:1,9 85:11,13 96:15 98:13 112:11,14 114:22 115:11 129:9 130:12 139:10 140:1,3 141:10,12 156:15 159:17 160:14 162:17 164:14 168:19 175:21 176:4,9,13 180:20 191:19 203:6,6 211:15 225:9 235:7 239:6,13 246:12 250:18 286:9,10 old 238:8 244:16 older 62:19 78:6 248:13 283:14 olds 78:4,4 197:8 200:18 once 49:11,20 60:15 63:9,14 64:20 78:9 79:21 128:2 187:6 268:21 ones 14:3,4 97:10 130:17 246:19</p>	<p>ongoing 173:18 210:14 online 41:15,17 op 75:11 275:7 ope 31:13 open 18:5 67:17 68:9 102:6 156:1 174:12 217:19 228:18 266:17 opened 210:22 opening 66:15 206:19 222:10 266:6 openings 260:7 opens 30:7 opepd 3:9 operated 134:12 operational 188:12 operator 218:7 opinion 60:8 244:20 opportunities 7:14 8:2,16 20:15 34:7 42:3,6 62:17 71:22 75:13 145:5,8 146:2 150:12,18 151:19 167:3 184:4 186:2 202:6 222:1 255:5 256:12 260:4,16 opportunity 16:18 25:5 31:9 33:11,13 33:20 66:10 95:15 101:3 122:16 123:10 136:15 143:21 144:1 154:10 157:22 171:18 203:21 204:12 205:5 207:21 208:9 212:6 226:17 253:8,9 260:9 261:5 262:9 266:15 272:8 276:10,12 opposed 82:14 190:18 oppressive 205:4 optical 243:7 order 5:3 7:9 9:11 28:8 34:6 42:2</p>	<p>70:21 72:5 86:15 123:9,22 140:4 249:17 286:4 orders 184:14 org 184:13 organic 170:21 organization 113:13 114:18 184:3 organizational 184:9 186:2 organizations 115:7 247:8 255:9 256:19 257:1 259:3 267:22 268:9 280:5,7,15,21 281:11 282:2,12,15 organize 127:5 169:18 organized 7:11 orientation 268:11 origins 127:15 orleans 69:15 239:18 ostensibly 114:21 ought 114:20 181:21 outcome 173:18 288:14 289:8 outcomes 46:17 173:10 outgoing 219:1 outline 189:19 outlying 112:5 outreach 114:14 outside 16:10 49:14 106:10 237:5 278:1 outspoken 217:10 overall 98:19 177:2 213:4 overlap 61:5,8 overlapping 84:6 overlooked 195:5 overrepresentation 99:3 overrepresented 97:6,8 98:20,21 99:6 100:2,6 overseas 255:16</p>	<p>oversight 67:9 overtone 2:17 6:12 10:3,7,12 95:20 139:22 141:12 183:14,18 190:13 191:16 overview 184:1 186:4 owning 209:20</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">p</p> <p>p 2:6 3:9 5:1 61:20 66:3 119:8 198:20 p.m. 286:2 287:6 pack 118:10 packing 118:8 page 4:2 191:3 201:20 pager 117:7,17 157:21 194:1 pages 128:15 262:21 paid 34:10 pain 202:20 painful 210:14 panel 107:18 263:19 271:16 275:1 panelists 72:1 panels 58:14 198:11 paper 12:1 103:10 227:22 parameters 82:6 159:8 pardon 218:7 parent 82:10 118:18 119:12 133:20 parents 52:10 84:16 119:14 120:14,21 124:18 129:3 133:9 216:22 235:1 237:12 239:10,19 240:16 241:12 244:22 247:16 250:3,4 part 21:9 37:17 45:12 54:16 63:9,20 77:8,14 78:6 101:12 109:11 129:5,6,13 137:3 144:1 155:1</p>
--	---	---	--

167:5 171:15 173:2 173:7 197:10 199:8 201:2 205:20 206:14 207:2 219:3 222:11 223:6 224:20 225:3,3,19 226:12,14 234:11 242:21 263:14 273:16 274:1 participants 218:8 participated 271:16 participating 26:3 40:21 136:10 particular 49:8 83:7 88:1 93:1,4 113:7 113:20 145:2 187:19 189:2 190:6 202:11 215:3,4 278:11,21 particularly 49:5 66:18 67:13 68:18 70:1,2 81:17,18 87:10 104:1,11,14 104:19 105:22 107:8 112:2 114:13 171:16,21 177:5 212:13 215:15 253:19 parties 102:21 177:1 288:10,12 289:7 partner 196:16,19 266:3 274:16 partnered 51:10 partnering 51:18 114:18,18 115:6 269:8 partners 113:14 115:9 173:20 174:6 210:7 284:19 partnership 152:16 155:18 173:15,17 201:19 284:12 partnerships 174:11 parts 128:10 153:11 200:13 224:18	pass 160:20 200:2 204:20 251:13 263:7 passed 52:22 200:4 260:6 277:6 passing 251:7,8,9 passion 250:21 285:16 passionate 257:15 passions 255:4 path 39:18 pathway 16:17,20 17:18 30:6 34:17 38:14 patricia 289:3,16 patterns 205:3 242:11 pause 160:20 pay 28:15 169:15 200:13 payment 164:19 pays 146:17 pd 19:17 peers 49:1,10,13,22 50:7 55:15 59:13,13 59:19 99:1 peggy 2:4 6:5 9:18 36:12 72:5 88:13 108:22 158:15 164:11 186:12 187:19 193:10,13 pell 21:19,21 22:21 24:18,18,22,22 26:4 26:21,22 27:2 30:10 145:11,12,14,15,20 146:4,5,5,12 148:8 148:9 150:13,17 167:1 172:3,7,22 penalize 148:2 penitentiary 173:1 173:2 pennsylvania 2:19 people 44:11,20 45:17 57:21 62:11 63:3 70:9 71:20 87:6 96:19 97:1 101:13 116:20 117:13 131:1	134:18 138:17 140:8 144:10,10 148:1 155:3 164:9 166:9 170:2 171:7 171:20,22 178:10 192:15 193:1 198:17 199:6,17,18 200:3,5,22 213:2 219:1 221:14 226:19 230:21 232:4 233:22 235:9 240:20 244:13,15 246:1,16 247:1,9,12 248:3,11 251:16 261:16 262:2 264:14,18,19 272:9 272:12 281:22 282:5,9 283:9,14 percent 17:19 21:8 28:15,16 32:12 48:1 48:5,8,10 54:16 55:6,22 56:7 57:3 59:3,8,9 63:20 64:1 64:22 72:12,13,15 72:19 73:10 74:10 76:10 78:10 79:13 80:18 88:20 89:1,1 89:7 90:12,14,19 91:13,13 92:1,12,13 94:14 97:12 138:7 138:13 174:19 177:14 179:17 187:4 208:10 230:3 234:17 235:14 238:22 percentage 44:20 90:18 109:20 155:6 percentages 87:18 perception 134:19 perfect 254:12 performance 84:18 113:2 232:10 234:21 performing 120:10 period 60:12 76:4 90:9 174:22 245:4 284:9	periods 10:8 perkins 46:6 persistent 154:14 person 34:4 41:17 41:19 141:2 185:5 195:6 personal 182:18 244:20 249:19 272:21 283:13 personally 135:7 212:9 personnel 184:11 perspective 39:7 87:21 108:9 119:19 125:16 242:19 264:21,22 266:14 282:19 pertains 87:10 pervasive 158:20 227:10 ph.d. 283:7 ph.d.s 229:18 phase 66:22 phenomenal 124:10 271:13 275:17 philadelphia 175:16 270:9 philanthropic 126:13 philanthropists 178:18 philosophical 154:1 phone 44:13 166:18 167:6,10,15 170:7 184:19,21 186:14 187:10 190:22 259:18 physical 221:20 243:9 279:5 pick 235:14 236:17 picking 235:5 picture 97:19 159:5 228:6 275:13 piece 95:8 149:4 164:16 165:15 166:21 168:1,9 221:8 237:1 249:3,9 249:13
---	--	---	---

<p>pieces 149:14 151:3 166:9 170:19 272:16</p> <p>pilot 14:13 43:12 238:9</p> <p>pipe 143:9</p> <p>pipeline 124:12 177:16 181:11 206:5,11</p> <p>place 52:19 53:5 54:7,19 63:16 100:13 104:11 121:9 130:13 133:2 134:1 168:14 198:8 201:15 207:20 209:20 227:21 252:12 253:16 256:7 265:17 271:5 278:7 286:8</p> <p>placed 49:13 55:14 58:9 73:18 97:12 101:9</p> <p>placement 13:9 49:16,17 54:5 57:11 73:6 75:3 80:3,9 130:7 132:19 235:10</p> <p>places 47:12 53:4 55:15,16 92:15 124:21 125:18 149:7 204:15 233:2</p> <p>placing 13:10</p> <p>plain 178:9</p> <p>plan 52:4 85:18 86:16,16 88:4 110:15,16 123:16 127:22 129:13 142:21,21 204:8 210:10 228:9</p> <p>planned 113:16</p> <p>planning 3:9 31:7 66:4 82:5 84:2 86:15 105:19 111:14 121:20 162:14 166:22 167:11 242:19 263:18</p>	<p>plans 18:8 67:15,15 70:20 85:8,15 86:2 89:17 95:11,12,14 109:5,11 111:15 120:17 122:17 123:18 125:9</p> <p>plant 246:13,19</p> <p>platform 215:12 216:8 284:21</p> <p>platforms 257:4 280:12</p> <p>play 147:17 177:1 210:1,1 246:8</p> <p>played 177:7 266:9</p> <p>players 254:18</p> <p>playing 35:14</p> <p>plays 42:18 204:11</p> <p>please 5:5 25:21 44:15 112:6 141:8 180:5 188:1 189:4 190:9 201:16 207:12,12 248:21 248:21 251:20 261:19 262:3,3,4 265:10 286:14</p> <p>pleased 15:20 287:1</p> <p>pleasure 12:7</p> <p>plus 68:22</p> <p>point 33:5 40:8,11 88:18 90:9 91:21 92:11 101:22 111:9 113:12 133:7 134:9 138:10 157:1,18,18 157:22 164:8 170:13 173:22 174:9 179:20 185:11 189:1 192:14 199:3 225:5 228:11 231:6 232:3 232:15 234:8,14 236:10 237:22 238:14 262:20 278:21 281:19</p> <p>pointed 245:14 279:9</p> <p>pointing 278:3</p> <p>points 18:1,15 155:6 156:22 160:6</p>	<p>202:14 224:20 234:4 250:7,22 257:14 269:2</p> <p>police 53:6</p> <p>policies 22:4,9 41:7 45:7 54:15 63:17 172:20 206:4 229:9 232:21 282:3</p> <p>policy 2:15 3:7,9 4:3 4:4 7:12 9:5,13 12:4 46:4,15 47:8 66:5 119:19 127:9 136:3 137:3 140:19 142:6 188:7 189:3 206:10 242:18 271:4 273:8 276:14 280:5 281:7</p> <p>policymakers 229:8</p> <p>political 2:17 25:13</p> <p>pool 237:4</p> <p>poor 119:8 120:9</p> <p>popular 256:7</p> <p>population 32:13 33:16 113:3 181:22 200:1,8 214:14,16 214:17 224:8 226:21 256:6 268:5</p> <p>populations 33:14 61:13 159:22 168:6 168:7 199:15</p> <p>populous 199:15</p> <p>portion 12:3 280:4</p> <p>pose 36:5</p> <p>posit 94:19</p> <p>position 141:15 154:1,5 240:2 241:14</p> <p>positions 125:2</p> <p>positive 133:18 135:12 148:5,12 224:9 244:5</p> <p>possibilities 222:11 253:4</p> <p>possibility 133:19</p> <p>possible 28:22 51:16 68:16 71:12 87:6 88:10 99:6 100:4 152:12 153:10 164:18 177:17</p>	<p>202:8 225:21 282:12 286:16</p> <p>possibly 31:14 159:22 190:22 229:2 260:1</p> <p>post 26:1 93:10 276:9</p> <p>posted 220:21</p> <p>postsecondary 11:9 12:17 14:8,9,11,18 16:10 19:6,8,9,10 22:5,11 28:4 31:5 31:18 33:22 38:1 45:11 154:6</p> <p>pot 64:17,19 90:5</p> <p>potential 80:20 132:12 174:5 267:5</p> <p>potentially 105:4 166:10 187:16</p> <p>poverty 156:8 239:20</p> <p>power 145:16 171:11,17</p> <p>powerful 63:16 171:21 209:18 215:2,10 216:5 271:8 273:15 279:22 284:3</p> <p>practical 186:17</p> <p>practice 13:19 130:10 135:2 251:7 251:11 252:18 262:17 265:4,20 274:7</p> <p>practices 12:12 30:22 54:14 63:17 94:8 100:13 130:13 130:19 149:6 166:2 177:21 205:3 206:4 212:19 216:16 258:6 259:2,21 268:6</p> <p>practitioners 30:22 165:21 166:11</p> <p>pre 8:4 93:10 213:10</p> <p>precipice 253:9</p>
---	---	---	--

<p>preclude 40:21 predatory 168:15 173:9,10 predicting 161:10 predictor 234:20 235:4 predictors 232:9 predominant 180:10 predominantly 171:22 179:10 181:2 248:12,13 264:11,21 pregnancy 201:3 prelude 260:1 prep 249:19 250:3,6 250:8 preparation 41:6 135:3,10 249:5 prepare 37:11 38:8 41:9 135:16 232:5 prepared 70:10 289:4 preparers 251:3 preparing 192:8 preschool 57:17 76:2,5,14 78:14 79:3 81:4 82:8 93:16 246:2 present 5:8 6:19 25:6 54:21 65:4 79:20 152:9 presentation 32:6 47:6 101:17 presentations 141:11 presented 96:4 278:18 presenting 92:18 preserving 183:16 190:6 president 2:14,15 2:17,18,20,21 8:16 39:1 110:3 141:7,17 141:19 142:8 146:6 154:3,3 173:6 180:9 president's 24:1 106:13 144:21,22</p>	<p>150:19 161:15 177:9 178:12 186:19 presidents 2:2 press 218:10 pretend 94:15 pretty 27:5 43:4 56:6 94:16 161:18 185:15 prevalence 52:11 preventing 133:2 prevention 93:7,8 104:13 221:2,2,4,8 preventive 133:11 preview 140:11,22 previous 82:12 previously 187:13 250:8 price 24:19 primarily 43:9 171:11 primary 108:10 277:19 principal 115:17 118:22 119:20 principals 69:7 119:13 120:5 pringle 2:18 6:13,14 88:16 93:5 95:1 167:20 182:17 193:2 194:3 201:10 202:17,19 251:21 prior 61:21 priorities 9:13 27:14 45:18 184:3 186:2 188:7 189:3 189:21 214:18 269:13 274:6 281:8 281:17 prioritize 229:5 prioritizing 106:15 priority 7:12 18:22 19:7,12 23:15 84:21 107:4 182:2 210:16 prison 23:9 124:12 206:5,11 prisoners 24:18</p>	<p>prisons 22:17,22 private 177:19 264:16 privilege 202:21 proactive 117:2 proactively 262:1 probably 17:3 25:12 38:17,20 53:17 56:7 56:8 59:8 61:13 62:12 88:7 101:1 102:3 113:17 115:21 122:19 129:15 130:21 162:7 169:5 203:11 254:15 268:3 272:15 problem 76:18 80:12 96:15 151:16 155:1 173:9 233:5 233:15 244:21 245:8 257:16 problems 39:14,16 40:16 63:11 74:21 134:16 158:20 230:12,13,19 procedures 54:15 63:17 proceeding 288:3 proceedings 288:4,6 process 27:14 67:2 68:4 71:9 82:5 84:2 85:18 97:3 102:21 105:19 111:10,14 112:1 116:13,19,19 117:2 121:20,22 160:17 172:13 188:7,13 191:21 228:8 247:13 249:6 249:11 255:19 processes 131:11 191:11 processing 226:22 proclamation 141:5 produce 134:13 229:17 274:21 278:5 produced 175:2 278:16,16</p>	<p>producing 48:15 product 258:17 profession 110:10 235:1 professional 109:17 110:6,18,21 111:5 158:17 207:1 236:22 252:18 professionally 212:9 272:22 professionals 205:22 206:22 215:22 professor 2:3,6,8,12 8:22 165:3 professoriate 171:11 proficiency 48:11 48:16 138:9,22 230:4 proficient 48:2,8 138:15,16 profound 124:13 profoundly 113:1 prognosis 160:13 program 16:16,22 17:9,13,18,18,19 18:3,18 22:21 28:7 30:9 31:3 34:18 38:2 40:14 43:20 77:19 82:13,14 84:15 127:17 147:11 163:11 172:22 173:3 175:8 175:8 181:15 266:16 programming 64:12 programs 7:18 8:9 13:5 14:14 15:22 19:4 20:4 25:15 27:15 46:16 49:2 81:9,12 104:11,14 106:18 149:1,21 150:4 152:14 153:17 179:1 181:21 203:21 251:7 257:13 258:2 274:9</p>
---	---	---	--

<p>progress 12:20 15:14 29:16,22 42:21 52:14,21 98:16 161:14 163:21 164:4 214:3</p> <p>progression 15:9 30:2 43:4</p> <p>project 127:15 174:13 215:13 234:4,7 239:16 274:7 278:19</p> <p>projected 228:2</p> <p>projects 19:3 234:3 235:3 274:4,8 278:19</p> <p>promise 24:2 27:8 28:10 160:10,10 161:4 243:22</p> <p>promising 9:2 216:16</p> <p>promote 17:11 19:3 237:13 268:15</p> <p>promoted 14:2</p> <p>promoting 127:11 148:4 270:20</p> <p>proper 198:8 199:10</p> <p>properly 159:3 194:10</p> <p>prophecy 134:21</p> <p>proportion 106:1</p> <p>proposal 23:6 29:4 106:15,17 107:3,10 107:13 160:11 187:18 228:17</p> <p>proposals 24:1 149:10</p> <p>propose 36:11 56:16 149:21</p> <p>proposed 24:7 53:21 56:10 57:13 57:16 58:3,22 60:11 63:8 76:21 77:7 78:12 79:11 90:7,16 93:15 131:13,15 145:11 148:6 186:19</p>	<p>proposing 23:5,7 24:17 56:11,22 161:4</p> <p>provide 7:13 14:4 16:12 26:16 57:17 60:5,7 64:5,6 70:18 71:7 80:11 81:15 82:2 83:4 86:15 87:2,19 88:5 91:4 99:14 104:2,18,20 108:20 116:16 119:20 120:12 122:14 123:9 124:5 130:11 135:15 141:1 147:9 148:21 150:17 151:9 186:8 188:17 193:22 201:9 213:15 265:6 265:18 269:3</p> <p>provided 9:9 75:17 83:12 93:19 105:6 123:9,18 130:20 140:20</p> <p>provider 152:14 153:4,6 173:18</p> <p>providers 152:6,8 152:17 153:1 168:3 173:12 174:3</p> <p>provides 147:17</p> <p>providing 39:3,5 78:12 83:14,16,22 89:14 91:7 117:16 134:7 146:20 148:5 148:14 151:19 153:9,16 154:6 173:18 179:2 280:11</p> <p>provision 16:15 105:9,16 160:7</p> <p>provisions 45:6 67:14 82:4 83:19 86:11 105:8</p> <p>pruitt 109:22</p> <p>psychology 2:6,12</p> <p>public 2:8 4:9 8:20 21:5 22:1 52:7,7,10 58:5 60:12,16 77:11 79:17 81:12 90:9</p>	<p>102:5,6 119:7 120:21 132:3 158:7 160:22 161:15 174:17,19 177:19 194:19 195:8 196:10 199:8 278:18 285:11 286:5 288:1,19</p> <p>publicly 208:5</p> <p>publish 13:18 15:11</p> <p>published 26:9 32:18 55:2 60:11</p> <p>pull 219:6</p> <p>pulled 105:17 203:17</p> <p>pulling 185:20 255:7 283:1</p> <p>pulse 164:3</p> <p>punish 233:6,21 253:6</p> <p>punitive 245:7</p> <p>purchasing 145:16</p> <p>purpose 143:5 157:11 169:1 176:19 267:3</p> <p>purposes 27:21 56:18 80:3 91:6 121:7 169:3</p> <p>pursue 86:17</p> <p>pursuing 87:8 194:11</p> <p>purveyors 229:7</p> <p>push 25:22 110:21 126:16 202:4 223:8 255:13 266:7</p> <p>pushing 108:11 186:21 254:17 255:19</p> <p>put 14:2,7 20:2 25:22 52:4,19 53:5 58:22 72:10 76:15 84:14 88:18 93:6,8 100:13 109:13 112:9 126:19 128:8 128:17 129:14 132:7 133:16 148:10 156:12,14 161:11 163:2</p>	<p>166:17 168:14 169:7 173:7 180:9 181:9 198:7 229:15 231:5 233:22 241:13 252:7 282:19</p> <p>puts 31:5 136:8</p> <p>putting 20:22 99:12 99:19 111:17 120:20 163:9 169:5 178:19 241:3 283:18</p>
q			
<p>qualification 246:3</p> <p>qualifications 38:7</p> <p>qualified 122:11</p> <p>qualify 34:6 37:15 37:17</p> <p>quality 7:17 43:21 47:13 119:5,10 120:7 152:14 153:1 168:9 173:17 179:2 220:7 235:12 236:1 237:9 241:11</p> <p>quantity 220:8</p> <p>quantum 14:17</p> <p>quarter 238:21</p> <p>quartile 234:6</p> <p>queer 198:18</p> <p>question 27:8 31:3 31:16 33:6,7 35:7 36:5,7,17 37:14,20 38:3,18 39:7 44:18 45:2,15 62:7 72:14 79:9 81:22 82:20,22 83:7 88:18 95:2 97:8 98:18 109:21 111:7 113:9,11,14 114:5,12 115:1 116:10 118:9,12 121:6 122:15,19 124:3 125:3 135:7 135:19 158:22 160:5,12,17 167:5 167:20,21 168:21 169:17 187:3 189:7 190:11,14 193:11</p>			

<p>230:8 232:11,13,18 234:10 235:20 242:20 243:7,14,16 244:6 246:6 267:21 286:7</p> <p>questioning 61:9 questions 25:21 32:6 36:13 45:6 60:21 65:3,5 71:7 71:21,22 81:1 96:16 108:19 109:3 153:2 155:22 156:2,11 164:10,12,13 166:19 168:19 190:5 210:19 220:19 227:1 229:14 231:7 234:14 240:22 246:1 252:3 255:18 261:22 262:13,18 276:17 277:22 285:9</p> <p>quick 11:18 20:5 36:17 75:4 106:7 118:9,16 164:15 166:19 169:20 172:2 186:4 189:7 234:14 236:10 266:3 286:7</p> <p>quickly 101:16 113:19 187:7 210:18</p> <p>quilt 197:11 quite 63:16 85:12 92:4 127:13 142:2 150:6 154:4 165:9 173:10 203:7 205:14 265:7 279:6 284:1</p> <p>quorum 7:3 158:7 quote 17:4</p>	<p>racial 47:11 54:9 56:13 107:1 130:6 159:20 170:5 195:1 205:18</p> <p>racism 201:12 204:10,17,21 205:2 206:18 207:5,18</p> <p>racist 208:18 209:16 radio 260:14,21 262:10</p> <p>raise 146:2 147:18 168:1</p> <p>raised 100:7 114:6 157:2 167:22 172:10 236:11 265:11</p> <p>raising 130:17 rand 151:2 random 43:21 119:2 119:3</p> <p>range 32:14,19 155:11</p> <p>rape 279:5 rarely 76:11 227:1 rate 9:3 43:22 45:2 48:11 55:14 58:9 59:12,18 73:19 197:17 218:6,12,22</p> <p>rates 8:19 44:4 48:16 76:3 113:2 146:14 148:13 155:5 258:3</p> <p>ratings 119:21 ratio 56:14,15 58:6 58:14 60:2 72:12,16 73:14,15 74:2,13</p> <p>ray 242:16 reach 16:2 44:11 52:18</p> <p>reached 41:11 reaches 17:19 reaching 95:9</p> <p>read 7:10 40:19 47:19 48:11 128:16 138:8,18 230:10,11 233:15 239:10,19 250:11</p>	<p>readily 237:11 readiness 12:17 15:20 36:18,22 238:10</p> <p>reading 39:11,14,15 40:3,3,4 48:2,8 62:10 92:18 101:6 138:15,21 223:3 230:4,6,18 239:12 239:22 241:1 251:19</p> <p>ready 38:9,10 41:16 45:15 217:13 real 38:6,19 101:16 118:15 173:4,18 230:5,8 236:9 266:2 267:8,20 273:8</p> <p>reality 58:20 195:4 198:20 209:11 realize 118:12 really 37:8 40:11 41:22 42:10 49:15 52:8 53:16 57:20,21 58:1,2,4 63:18 64:14 65:10 85:19 86:11 87:8,13 90:20 92:16 93:14,20 95:7 97:17 98:9 100:5 103:3 106:15 113:10,22 114:19 116:3,5,14,21 117:6 120:20 121:6 122:8 124:2,13,15,21 125:4 129:2,22 130:4,6,17,18 133:14 137:16,19 139:5 147:13 152:22 154:22 160:18 164:15 165:13,18 169:8 170:20 171:21 172:21 179:5 194:6 194:13 195:19 196:8,10 197:1 199:5,6,7 203:10 204:5 210:18 216:14 217:12,13 218:20,22 220:7</p>	<p>223:20 227:15 229:1 230:13 238:12 250:22 251:1 252:1,4,4 259:20 262:12,21 265:5 274:6,9,13,13 276:2 277:18 278:15 279:9,9,22 282:5</p> <p>reason 39:10 62:7 85:22 102:20 108:10,10 174:1</p> <p>reasonable 39:14 56:15 60:2,3 62:9 62:10</p> <p>rebecca 2:18 6:13 receive 17:7 22:17 23:12 60:13,16 101:8 111:19</p> <p>received 79:19 216:6</p> <p>receives 28:11 receiving 167:1 receptive 182:9 recess 140:2 recipient 127:18 recognize 66:15 104:9 116:21 198:16 227:9</p> <p>recognized 194:10 241:10 249:13 recognizing 197:22 recommendation 45:22 46:1 67:18 84:22 118:9,16 120:13 239:14</p> <p>recommendations 7:6 9:8 71:16 87:3,7 88:10 104:18 111:18,19 121:4,15 239:4,9 253:19 259:22 280:13</p> <p>recommending 111:4 reconceptualize 90:21 reconceptualized 58:4</p>
<p>r</p>			
<p>r 2:21 5:1 race 54:5 55:11 127:16,18,20 130:1 205:6 234:20,20 266:7 268:10</p>			

<p>record 36:1 75:5 95:19 96:11 138:13 157:7 180:8,19 182:8,18,22 186:9 186:13 187:3 191:7 193:13 201:8 221:21 230:20 249:4 252:8 261:5 262:8 265:13 267:16 268:18 270:5,9 275:2 286:1 287:1,4 288:7</p> <p>recorded 288:4</p> <p>recruited 158:15</p> <p>recruiting 170:11 178:1,21 257:20</p> <p>recruitment 255:2</p> <p>recycle 257:3</p> <p>red 114:2</p> <p>reduce 46:17 94:9 262:2</p> <p>reduced 288:5</p> <p>reducing 42:11 47:10 133:12</p> <p>reed 142:5,13 143:17,19 144:15</p> <p>refer 194:2</p> <p>reference 262:5</p> <p>referring 61:20 189:11</p> <p>refine 169:11</p> <p>reflect 85:6 95:19 215:13 270:9 275:3</p> <p>reflected 150:19 265:13 280:1</p> <p>reflective 125:20</p> <p>reform 17:17 18:2 18:17 19:1 96:5 126:16 137:8 187:16</p> <p>reforms 18:14 135:15 145:11</p> <p>reframe 36:7 216:12 279:8</p> <p>reframing 279:21</p> <p>regain 154:5</p> <p>regard 65:16 71:9 85:7 111:6 113:18</p>	<p>132:19 148:17 175:6 178:15 265:8 265:10</p> <p>regarding 160:3 202:14</p> <p>regards 279:18</p> <p>region 62:12 70:16 70:17</p> <p>register 26:8</p> <p>regret 207:10</p> <p>regular 49:14</p> <p>regulating 105:18 120:16 123:13,14 160:16</p> <p>regulation 53:21 57:4 60:11 78:11 80:11 93:15</p> <p>regulations 93:13 112:13</p> <p>regulations.gov 60:13</p> <p>regulatory 184:6</p> <p>rehabilitative 3:7 47:10</p> <p>reintroduced 146:5</p> <p>related 30:19 33:4,7 125:4,5,5,6 190:1 202:5 251:18 288:9 289:6</p> <p>relates 188:12 236:8</p> <p>relation 261:18</p> <p>relationship 138:17 195:1 236:1 278:2</p> <p>relationships 242:5 242:6,7</p> <p>relative 224:8 288:11</p> <p>release 190:12</p> <p>released 59:7 91:11 126:19 127:14 132:6 190:16 239:7</p> <p>relegate 179:22</p> <p>relentlessly 144:2</p> <p>reliable 17:7</p> <p>relying 242:15</p> <p>remain 224:1</p> <p>remarkable 143:1,2</p>	<p>remarks 35:14 66:15 229:13</p> <p>remedial 11:10 17:17</p> <p>remediation 18:2 42:2</p> <p>remedies 63:15</p> <p>remember 73:20 186:11 215:1 254:15 278:9 283:15</p> <p>reminded 144:7 162:5</p> <p>reminder 11:18 252:10 286:3</p> <p>removal 135:12</p> <p>removals 77:4</p> <p>remove 135:1</p> <p>removed 91:22 133:6</p> <p>rendered 279:17</p> <p>renewed 24:20</p> <p>repair 51:7</p> <p>replies 69:22</p> <p>report 12:8,20 13:15 36:21 37:2 67:15 79:13 99:20 100:3 120:18 148:10 165:12 181:10 183:19 190:8,12 239:6,10 275:15</p> <p>repository 18:7 41:15</p> <p>represent 198:11 226:16</p> <p>representation 78:17 99:10</p> <p>representative 20:3 195:13,14 204:18 206:9</p> <p>representatives 69:8,11</p> <p>represented 212:15</p> <p>reprieve 36:2</p> <p>request 24:3 79:12 79:17 182:11</p>	<p>requests 258:19</p> <p>require 78:3,7 132:15</p> <p>required 17:16 18:4 54:13,15 56:11 78:8 109:11 125:14</p> <p>requirement 58:12 86:1,22 128:2 232:2</p> <p>requirements 22:15 35:16,20,20 105:8 116:15,16</p> <p>requires 54:3,8 90:13 96:10</p> <p>requiring 76:22 100:9 119:20 125:20</p> <p>research 2:13,16 12:19 24:9 32:2 36:9 50:17 52:9 151:3 166:4</p> <p>researchers 14:10 14:19 30:21 31:17 31:22 165:21 166:11 169:22 176:20</p> <p>resident 7:21</p> <p>resource 18:5 70:2 263:20 267:2</p> <p>resourced 27:22</p> <p>resources 21:3 28:8 41:10 75:11,16 89:15 91:4 92:16 95:16 111:12 122:20 123:8 126:5 148:15,21 153:9 210:11 213:4,15 216:19,20,21 217:17,22 257:18 258:3 271:21 272:21 277:10 281:8</p> <p>respect 231:14</p> <p>respective 211:4</p> <p>respond 72:12,16 136:9</p> <p>responding 92:17 133:1 136:17</p>
---	--	--	---

<p>response 9:21 10:22 11:2 99:17 113:9 114:8 115:21 124:4 187:11 220:20 responses 182:20 225:13 responsibility 179:9 179:14 180:12 182:19 188:15 208:13 209:10,12 209:21 257:8 282:22 responsible 209:4 rest 78:5 143:8 171:1 221:9 226:2 245:12 254:13 restoration 16:6 24:21 33:12 restorative 94:7 restrictions 52:20 restrictive 76:15 restrooms 139:20 result 55:6,21 62:22 168:7 257:12 resulting 131:22 133:5 results 19:2 151:1 229:11 retain 268:8 retained 51:1 retaining 170:11 257:11 retention 91:19 255:1 257:9,19 258:2 rethink 52:2,7 91:7 92:17 return 286:9 returning 47:18 reuse 257:4 reverse 146:1 review 54:14 63:17 89:4 130:9 144:20 revised 53:11 reward 148:18 rfp 14:7 rhetoric 225:11</p>	<p>ribner 2:19 5:18,19 26:2,7,18,22 27:6 29:5 131:4 174:14 175:12 176:7,13 188:21 199:5 270:8 rice 6:15 rid 225:17 230:22 ridicule 245:7 ridiculous 90:2 right 5:5 10:6 11:8 11:12,13,14,15 12:1 23:11 25:14 29:5 31:2 32:9 33:6 34:1 35:10,12,18 37:22 38:13 40:20,20 43:8 44:15,15 46:19 53:14 57:18 58:17 59:3,9,11 61:15 62:6 66:21 67:1,6 71:10 72:1 73:1,12 77:12,15,17 85:18 86:13 87:5 88:3 89:1 90:13 93:9,11 93:15 94:2,17 101:22 102:3 105:21 112:3 118:7 119:21 127:5 137:1 140:5 141:10 142:12 143:9 148:3 148:5 156:5,13 160:16 165:11 167:17 169:20 170:2,3 171:9,12,13 172:15,16 174:18 179:18 182:4,4 183:22 192:11 193:19 211:15 212:3 213:3 217:22 219:22 222:13 223:21 224:2 227:15 229:6 230:8 236:14 243:4 244:19 252:12 253:16 254:2 270:1 270:17 280:18 281:1 285:14 286:22 287:3,5</p>	<p>rights 50:5,10 126:18 203:14,20 205:5 266:11 rigorous 49:19 74:13 rises 21:11 risk 56:14,15 58:6 58:14 60:2 73:14,15 74:2,13 148:2 168:6 road 228:13 robert 5:10 roberto 157:5 robin 88:19 robust 87:15 150:6 177:16 241:15 rock 274:12,21,22 rodriguez 157:5 roland 260:12 role 42:18 53:8 58:4 58:5 131:13 177:6 204:11 209:22 215:17 240:16 246:7,8 255:12,13 256:13 257:10 270:13 272:16 roles 266:9 roll 5:4 167:17 ron 38:21,22 162:17 242:22 264:18 265:13 ronald 2:20 5:22 211:18 ronald's 167:21 room 181:1 220:9 252:7 259:4 262:15 263:9 264:14 272:14 273:6 275:8 283:14 root 127:14,22 129:21 157:15 rose 284:15,15 ross 5:10 roughly 155:5 round 17:14 24:21 139:4 146:5 263:1 286:19 roundabout 103:12</p>	<p>roundedness 145:8 rounds 18:12 rub 89:2 rubric 130:4,12 rule 54:2 56:10 58:3 58:12 59:1 60:17 63:8 67:8 76:21 77:7 78:3 79:11 90:7,17,20 126:19 131:15 195:9 rulemaking 67:2,10 67:12,13,16 71:9 81:16 83:15 101:21 103:1 104:4 111:10 131:10,13 159:16 161:2 rules 77:10 run 128:18 150:10 150:14,21 174:7 256:21 278:17</p>
s			
<p>s 2:7,18 5:1 safe 197:20 safety 104:12 255:17 sake 108:13 salute 144:3 sample 226:22 sat 196:9 224:15,18 225:2 230:12 235:9 251:11 254:16 satellite 20:12 satisfactorily 244:13 satisfactory 29:16 29:22 saw 62:21 79:12 139:12 207:20 227:13 saying 10:6 60:9 65:22 77:7 79:19 90:6 103:12 120:6 121:2 123:11 138:6 138:17 179:9 187:13 234:1 247:12 280:16 282:7 285:4</p>			

<p>says 41:20 54:12 55:17 105:10 117:12 133:21 181:20 227:11 244:14 scale 14:11,15 18:14 119:22 155:8 224:10 225:1,2,5,6 225:7 238:1 scaling 14:8,16,19 scarce 91:4 92:16 scare 200:16,16 247:4 scared 251:17 scenario 218:15 schedule 190:10 scheduled 86:12 scheduling 263:2 scholars 166:11 scholarships 273:1 school 2:6 8:2 15:18 16:9 17:1 23:13 32:12 33:16,20 34:20 39:9,19 44:21 49:3 50:2,3,7,15,16 51:5,20 52:11,17 62:5 70:16 76:1,6 77:3,4 85:21 86:13 91:12,15 93:22 97:4 99:14 100:8 104:12 118:19 124:11,12 125:6 126:10,22 129:1,4 130:19 132:1 133:10,11 135:13 137:12,12 154:17,21 174:19 178:11 180:11 206:4,5,10,10 213:10 214:16,17 215:2,5,6 218:2 219:6,21 230:16,17 231:3,4 235:8 237:16 239:8,12 244:11 247:17 255:3 256:8 259:7 259:11 271:15 274:17 277:20 278:18</p>	<p>schoolchildren 91:14 schoolrooms 107:9 schools 2:8 53:8 69:5 70:3,4 77:11 81:12 106:19 108:12 109:17 110:7 119:7 120:22 127:3 131:6,8 132:7 134:11 135:20 137:21,22 138:3 149:16 154:15 174:17 177:15,18 178:20 197:19,20 205:12 207:6 222:15 225:14 264:16 science 8:7 140:15 229:17 sciences 12:15 13:18 scientific 140:19 scope 203:22 score 120:1,3 235:3 scores 13:9 47:22 249:21 scoring 250:2 scratch 12:1 screened 51:13,14 78:20 screening 93:18 season 149:11 second 9:14,15 10:17,18 26:21 27:2 31:16 65:17,18 96:8 138:5 143:7 146:20 160:9 161:3 167:5 172:2,7 191:22 193:6,7 201:18 211:16,17 216:15 secondary 33:21 seconded 193:13 211:19 secondly 65:12 71:21 107:22 secretary 3:5,6,8 4:5 19:7 22:14 35:1 46:2 66:3 68:5,17 83:10 107:4,15</p>	<p>116:2 141:14 142:7 142:14 182:8,14 257:18 259:19 263:12 section 22:2 67:5 126:20 271:12 sections 271:12 sector 174:3 sectors 43:2 security 279:2 see 19:11,11 24:20 28:6 38:3 42:5 43:3 66:8 69:10 73:20 89:19,19 97:19,20 99:9 137:21 147:17 153:12,14 163:1 164:1 174:7,8 186:18 199:8 206:12 210:5 221:7 227:19 228:11 236:13 242:5 248:22 261:22 263:10,13 270:10 seed 246:13,19 seeing 29:9 42:10 52:14 53:9 64:12 74:20 98:1,2 132:8 135:14 138:3 195:2 203:22 220:16 255:20 259:22 267:1 seeking 13:5 151:9 seeks 147:8 seen 29:21 30:4 46:4 99:21 125:17 135:8 135:17 149:17 165:13 168:4 220:13 sef 2:14 segment 262:9 segue 170:4 seldom 284:16 selected 20:12 22:20 23:4,14 26:3 27:4 69:6 150:15,16 selecting 97:1 selection 172:13</p>	<p>self 134:21 248:5 279:2 semester 146:22 164:5 send 21:1 111:22 184:17 185:9 189:16 210:3,4 229:6 265:4 sending 217:17 senior 2:15 3:7 4:3 11:6 12:5 47:8 217:6 sense 39:2 57:8 136:17 190:11 224:16 248:5 279:2 sensitive 184:7 sensitivity 138:2 247:14 sent 187:12 189:12 261:9 286:3 separate 49:13,18 78:7 separated 78:5 separately 69:6 september 185:12 191:1 259:7,11 sequential 40:16 series 238:18 serious 39:15 42:9 140:6,8 161:12 seriously 68:14 69:18 210:10 232:2 232:5 serve 41:4 134:3,4 137:6 273:13 served 77:16,18 141:17 157:11 serves 134:2 service 2:16 89:8,8 143:12 156:19 198:15 281:13 serviced 77:14 services 3:8 7:18 47:10,14 54:18 57:3 57:17 64:6 78:13 80:11 87:20 93:21 99:15 179:3</p>
--	--	--	--

serving 17:22 18:21 19:15,18 76:10 142:15 178:14 264:11 266:4 272:16	sharif 175:11,14 176:6	similarly 105:1	smarter 149:8
session 68:21 69:15 102:6 113:12 207:3 208:16,19 209:18 210:21 272:3	sharing 148:2 256:12 262:15	simple 56:14 63:18 97:7 98:17 153:2 268:12	smith 2:19 5:18,19 26:2,7,18,22 27:6 29:5 131:4 165:8 174:14 175:12 176:7,13 188:20 199:5 270:8
sessions 68:19 69:14 75:6	sharon 2:9 5:5,6 193:1 196:4 202:20 203:8 247:3,6 264:19 265:11 266:1,22	simply 50:22 74:17 78:10 94:8 103:10 126:12 128:4,15 225:22 227:16 279:1	smithsonian 20:6 266:4 267:17 274:2
set 18:20 20:12 23:19 24:5,15,19 50:11 54:16 56:15 56:17 57:3 58:6,15 60:2 75:11 80:17 88:20 89:7 90:14 94:9 157:4 159:13 184:20 214:18,18 215:20 217:10 250:9 282:18	she'll 65:21	single 194:21 257:5	snap 21:15,21
setting 57:22 89:20 171:22 207:15 267:6 273:17	shift 213:15	singularly 261:18	snapshot 48:13 59:1
settings 49:13,18	shifts 249:20	sir 189:11 264:7	social 84:16 94:5 100:7 133:3 136:1 234:19 235:2 269:3 272:11 281:15
seven 16:19 55:17 58:19 73:11 74:9 90:2 155:9	shine 177:20	sister's 270:22	societal 205:3
seventh 91:16 169:7	shocked 97:15 203:11,11	sit 196:22	society 151:15 245:9
severely 224:12	short 23:16 44:22 256:3 286:3	site 22:18,20 23:11	socio 106:21
sexual 197:14 268:11	shorter 163:17	sites 22:13 23:19 26:6	socioeconomic 107:7 232:10 250:5
sf 112:13	shortly 156:5	sits 136:8 195:6	solicit 265:8
shame 253:6	shoulders 282:4	sitting 98:10 210:12	solid 43:4
shape 215:8 216:12	shout 199:4	situation 91:1	solving 151:16
shaping 186:3 187:21	show 59:7 180:8 199:1,3 260:12 262:10 287:1	situations 62:13	somebody 40:21 97:5 250:9
share 52:8,9,9 71:8 75:5,7,9 89:12 177:21 182:19 202:12 204:17 209:13 211:2 212:6 259:8,10 263:20 265:19 269:6 275:14 276:9	showing 235:21	six 13:7 34:10 37:20 39:20 74:8 130:4 169:2	somebody's 262:5
shared 83:13 126:1 189:19 269:13 281:16	shows 53:13 260:14 260:21	sixth 83:11	somewhat 90:18 97:14 104:3
	shut 106:7	size 167:2 224:16	soon 51:16 161:1,1 146:15,15
	side 43:14 50:11 110:12 145:17 269:11	sizes 56:16	sooner 111:19
	sides 121:19	skill 233:16	sort 14:16 17:11 24:9 25:18 31:11,14 33:3 37:10 38:16 51:3 74:11 77:19 78:5 80:19 125:19 135:20 159:8 162:11 166:1 170:14 173:12 186:18,20 224:5 225:9 227:6 245:19 254:17 259:8 260:13,20 263:10
	sight 243:9	skilled 41:2	
	sigma 280:19	skills 15:3 16:2 37:11 39:11 40:3,4 42:15 43:15 230:18 251:19 288:8	
	sign 172:11	skillscommons.org 18:6	
	signature 288:17	skillscommons.org. 18:7	
	signed 141:6 285:12	slide 21:21	
	significant 7:13 54:4,12 55:4,8,11 56:18 59:5 72:20 79:15 89:5 93:12 181:16 210:11 213:21 214:6 278:7	slightly 98:19	
	significantly 88:21 151:21	slow 279:1	
	silver 11:20	small 20:12 64:17 163:3 256:6	
	similar 30:18 163:22 221:4 281:2	smaller 90:3 163:9 163:12,16 225:6	
		smallest 206:16 239:8	
		smart 134:18	

<p>263:15,18,19 268:14 276:22 277:10 279:20 284:7 sorts 266:17 sounds 122:4 163:18,20 source 18:8 sources 26:10 south 68:20 69:9 113:15 198:5 258:20 259:1 262:16 southern 2:14 114:13 115:8 space 12:12 14:17 20:13 42:9 141:1 158:6 183:2 195:20 201:9 203:1 208:20 212:21 218:17 220:4,13 222:3 271:21 273:5 spaces 194:9 195:5 195:14,15 222:17 268:13,16 279:19 281:7 speak 35:19 66:10 71:10,11 106:12 122:17 125:3 126:4 204:16 207:14 speakers 3:4 11:22 speaking 107:14,15 107:19 speaks 11:19 spearheading 115:18 special 3:7 47:8 48:14 49:1,11,20 51:5 55:12 64:19 77:13 78:17,19,22 93:21 96:3,6,21 97:5,13 98:18 101:11 125:6 130:5 130:7 212:15 258:19 268:11,12 specialist 2:11 specialization 246:5</p>	<p>specialty 196:6 specific 36:13 49:6 82:20 90:11 92:9 97:18 98:3,20 100:13,15,16 101:6 105:9 129:22 151:11 175:8 177:3 190:2 279:15 specifically 98:22 167:8 168:11 177:2 197:7 203:20 205:18 206:6 254:20 255:7 257:11 258:18 262:16 270:13 specifics 124:6 228:15 speculate 231:12,16 speed 19:22 20:1 spencer 2:17 6:12 95:20 188:20 190:11 191:16 spencer's 188:5 spend 81:6,11 152:4 228:9 spent 79:8 279:3 spirit 191:14 219:2 272:10 282:6 spoke 9:1 109:7 167:14 210:22 256:10 271:9 277:7 279:6 spoken 104:2 110:12 117:5 263:1 sponsored 172:22 sponsors 171:8,20 171:20 spotlight 177:20 spread 72:22 squarely 173:7 staff 3:1 129:3 157:6 184:13 194:7 206:17 238:17 239:3,13 247:5 286:16,19 287:2 staffer 82:17 staffing 186:6</p>	<p>stage 113:21 208:16 stakeholder 113:15 114:14 stakeholders 58:5 58:11,13 60:4,5 85:19 86:19 95:9 102:20 109:12,13 109:14 112:3,4 113:22 114:21 116:4,12 117:19 198:10,16 stakes 237:2 stamp 21:16,17,19 stand 37:16 103:19 standard 56:12 185:15 265:20 273:17 286:2 standardized 229:8 230:12,21 231:1 237:22 251:9,14 standards 15:22 36:22 67:3 158:17 standing 282:4 standpoint 183:22 184:15 242:18 stands 119:6 star 218:10 start 21:21 26:1 40:4 44:8 47:18 54:10 72:1 76:9 78:12 79:22 81:9 85:14 86:14 88:15 90:6 93:16,17 97:19 99:11 135:6 139:22 140:6 171:3 183:14 200:18 206:19 236:2 241:4,7,17 245:18,19 249:1 254:12 265:21 started 127:16 138:6 140:9 158:19 238:19 starting 48:16 51:8 57:6 77:5 78:13 135:20 150:14 188:14 237:15 247:3,6</p>	<p>state 2:19 18:12,13 18:15 22:17,22 23:9 28:16 34:12,22 36:1 41:3 43:13 53:1,11 53:12 54:11 55:17 58:7,13 67:14,15 70:11,19 74:9 78:7 82:5 85:7,15,18,21 86:2,16,16 95:12 111:14 120:17 121:20 122:17 123:16,18 125:8 141:20 142:18 145:21 176:21 186:9 191:7 200:6 215:21 216:1 222:14 232:22 235:21 256:2,4 270:5 277:20,21 statement 136:18 186:13 187:2 statements 75:4 182:17 states 15:21 16:8 22:3,7 34:13 35:4 54:3,8 55:4,13,17 55:18,20 56:11,15 56:17 57:21 58:6,17 58:20 59:21 60:2,8 68:2 70:12 72:20 73:2,4,7,11,12,22 74:8,22 77:1,1 82:5 84:1 87:19 88:20 100:8 104:21 105:11 112:9 114:2 114:13 123:3,8,21 125:13 145:18 146:3,3 161:17,20 207:13 238:21,22 239:1 statistic 59:16 91:10 statistics 208:21 223:19 status 107:7 232:10 250:5 statute 16:19 53:1 53:12 54:3,7,14,20 90:13 93:13 117:12</p>
--	---	--	--

<p>statutory 22:9,13 63:15 105:8 116:15 stay 114:10 219:7 220:5,5 271:10 277:21 stayed 139:7 stem 8:7 213:12 222:18,22 224:11 224:12 step 64:16 91:7 96:8 125:13 186:7 196:18 208:12 262:22 stepping 153:21 steps 34:9 60:15 89:3,13 117:6 stereotype 170:15 201:1 stereotypes 279:10 stick 257:13 sticks 89:11 stop 60:20 65:3 71:6 79:6 140:8 stories 216:2,2,3,10 216:11 story 99:3 215:9,9 215:12 216:7,8 strategic 27:17,21 184:3 210:10 266:3 strategies 9:2 13:22 14:2,20 strategy 43:8 street 278:13,20,22 strengths 172:15 247:22 248:4 stressed 214:15 strides 133:10 string 119:10 striving 12:11 strong 39:2,11 101:10,10 139:18 170:18 196:18 stronger 45:19 106:16 strongest 137:8 strongly 204:5 structure 26:16 38:9 183:21 185:14</p>	<p>188:12 struggled 29:19 struggling 48:18 90:22 student 21:15 35:8 35:11,17,21 38:16 44:3 49:15 50:22 53:11 58:18 78:1 97:5 98:13 101:4 110:17 119:7,17 120:2,9 133:22 136:7 145:4 164:20 192:19 218:21 228:10 236:1,8 248:10 254:22 255:8,9 256:7,15,19 256:20,20,21,21 257:1,19,19 258:2 259:2 260:17 262:16 266:12 267:21,22 268:1,1,3 268:3 269:16 student's 136:22 students 7:15 8:4,13 9:3,7 13:4,10 15:9 15:18 16:2,22 20:9 20:11 21:4,6,7,9,14 22:11,17,22 23:8,11 25:1,2,7 28:17,22 29:18 31:18 37:11 38:7 39:22 40:14 41:8 42:1,19,19,20 42:20 43:19 44:1 47:12 48:1,4,7,9,18 49:8,12,17,21 50:6 50:8,9,11,12 52:12 52:13,20 54:6 55:14 57:5,10,12,15,17 59:12,17,18 64:6,11 65:14,16 71:17 77:5 78:6,17,20 80:5,6,7 80:9,11 82:8 83:18 83:20,21 84:4,5 85:4 87:10,11 89:8 91:3,13,21 92:4,14 92:17 93:19 94:4,18 94:20 96:7,21 97:12 97:13 98:6,21 99:13</p>	<p>100:9 101:3 104:5,5 104:20 105:14 106:1 107:8 108:16 109:20 110:15 114:5 118:20 119:1 119:15,17 120:6 123:9 124:18 129:3 131:18,19,20 132:8 133:5 134:7 135:13 135:21 136:16 137:6 145:9,13 146:9,10,21 147:3 147:10 148:8,9 149:2,22 151:10,22 152:10,13 153:4,6 153:17 154:21 165:1,16 167:9 168:15,16 169:6,13 192:18 202:4 204:4 204:6,12,13 207:15 207:16,19,22 208:10 209:6 212:12,13,20 213:12,16 214:8,17 215:3,14,15 216:10 216:17 218:13,17 218:18 219:6,11,16 220:8 221:16 222:2 222:6,16,21 223:12 232:1 235:8 236:16 238:6,7 247:10,10 248:14 249:21 250:3,4 253:11,12 253:21 254:20 255:3,6 256:5,11,13 256:17 257:6,8,9,11 257:12,20,22 258:4 259:12,14 263:17 266:10 268:4,6,7,8 268:14 271:15 272:15 273:13 274:17 276:10 277:3,5,18 278:3,18 280:12 studies 2:17 258:10 study 2:7 8:9 13:12 43:6 55:2 91:11,13 149:21 150:1 238:4</p>	<p>238:9 242:3 studying 13:1 225:14 stuff 20:14 202:16 stunned 181:12 stupid 248:3 subgroup 58:9 73:17 78:1 94:20 subgroups 58:18 103:3 subject 235:18 subjective 98:8 submission 113:4 submit 111:2 submitted 26:10 160:12 261:14 subsequent 169:10 177:11 substantial 225:19 succeed 155:3,10,10 172:1 180:15 213:6 succeeds 35:11 145:4 success 8:7 11:10 38:16 130:4 153:10 154:6 170:17 208:11 216:4 233:18,18,18 successful 15:10 46:16 213:13,16 217:20 218:1 252:19 253:3 successor 35:12 sudden 173:1 200:3 suffer 131:6 suffered 207:22 sufficiently 232:11 suggest 96:9 99:18 267:3 suggested 231:20 238:8 242:22 263:4 suggesting 33:8 84:14 231:10 243:11 246:2 suggestion 32:3 46:8 suggestions 36:9 93:3 128:6,21</p>
--	---	--	---

<p>suggests 96:4 279:13 suicide 197:17 suite 145:11,14 suited 275:9 summary 17:11 102:9 184:1,10 summer 13:13 17:5 51:22 88:8 146:5,12 183:20 summit 52:2,6 108:2 176:18,19 181:5 193:3 194:14 197:2 201:15 202:1 202:5,8 204:1,5,6 207:1 212:8,17 213:19 214:7,12 215:5,8 216:10,15 218:4 219:3,3,5,14 220:2,6,12,13 271:13 275:15 summits 194:11 278:5 suny 13:7 super 258:12 superintendent 2:7 superintendents 52:1,3 supplant 67:4 109:3 111:7 123:16 supplement 67:3 109:3 111:7 123:15 169:14 183:17 supplemental 19:7 19:12 106:22 supplementing 193:20 support 7:18 8:16 24:6,10 28:9 44:19 51:20 64:9 65:9 93:21 94:18 98:13 98:16 106:6 109:18 110:8 113:22 124:17 134:7,13 135:22 140:15 145:2,13 166:10 171:19 179:5,20 180:10 182:22</p>	<p>186:20 191:8 205:22 206:22 218:1,17,18 228:17 240:20 242:10 244:3,4 247:9 256:22 265:10 272:20 276:7 supported 8:11 145:6 161:15 201:19 219:20 supporter 270:22 supporting 8:13 90:21 149:1 193:4 214:21 270:21 286:13 supportive 25:7 141:22 214:20 supports 91:5,8 93:20 98:15 213:4 supposed 63:15 73:4 114:8 197:19 217:8 sure 25:16 43:5 46:3 70:7 71:6 81:13 82:19 85:1 86:7 89:12 100:3 108:15 114:11,22 115:5,12 117:22 143:12 153:7,8 154:9 155:13 159:2 162:19 163:2,19 167:19 168:17 170:1 174:5 177:15 182:12,19 186:8,14 188:16 194:8 195:12 198:3,4,10 199:9 201:9 202:21 203:3 207:9 212:18 216:21 220:4,6 223:8,10 230:21 231:9 253:13 265:16 268:21 270:20,22 271:22 276:3,15 surface 240:10 surprising 170:8 survey 129:1</p>	<p>surveyed 258:4 surveying 13:12 suspect 262:4 suspend 53:4 59:12 suspended 76:2 91:15 94:3 suspenders 173:13 suspending 91:2 92:12 suspension 50:2,3,7 50:15,16,18 52:11 76:1 77:4 91:17 94:13 129:22 suspensions 52:18 112:22 135:11 sustain 268:15 symposium 238:18 symptoms 221:3 synthesis 27:20 synthesize 278:6 system 41:1 50:21 51:6,7 62:17 91:5 94:21 96:6 110:8 142:19 145:9 172:17 238:3 systematic 96:22 systemic 210:15 systems 15:7,8 27:20 42:17 45:10 64:9 130:9 135:5 142:16 145:19 180:11 205:15 207:20 242:10 247:17</p>	<p>tables 195:7 taboo 243:6 tackling 166:22 tacks 173:14 tact 17:13 tag 97:5 272:9 273:15,16 274:21 275:10 tail 29:15 tailored 64:11 take 14:19 25:21 32:3 34:9 39:20 43:6 46:8 54:22 56:21 60:20 65:2 68:14 71:7 86:12 88:2 89:3,13 90:4 96:10 98:9 112:7 118:6 121:5 125:19 131:10 139:17 141:7 142:10 146:21 147:10 156:11,22 160:20 161:21 179:9 196:4 200:15 201:15 204:20 205:7 210:19 218:16 219:5 221:11 222:4 232:1,3,4 239:6,15 240:13 249:22 250:11,14 265:17 266:13,13 282:22 283:5 286:10 taken 83:2 119:4,15 122:22 173:20 231:6 288:3,10 takes 121:9 154:22 227:22 tal 19:11 talent 226:17 250:20 talk 12:13 38:20 41:12 47:21 53:16 58:17 70:18 85:2 95:5,14 103:14 109:7 111:8 113:17 117:15 119:13 127:6 129:9 133:17 135:9 136:6,12</p>
		t	
		<p>t 2:15 ta 67:21 table 46:13 75:18 98:10 106:4 109:22 110:1,12 116:7,12 187:18 210:13 229:16 231:5 250:21 254:16 260:18 265:18 269:15 280:20 281:11</p>	

<p>137:9,14 148:1 149:3 153:19,19 167:8 168:18 176:22 178:2,11 183:15 185:18 186:17 188:11 193:16 201:10 204:13 205:11 206:11 207:13,17 207:19 208:2 214:11 216:6 237:3 239:22 240:1,6 251:2,16,18 254:14 254:18 255:8 256:13 257:2,10,17 259:1,17 260:14,15 260:22 270:12 272:2,19 273:8,13 275:1 276:7,20 talked 32:1 35:15 42:5,6 95:11 131:4 137:18 146:6 159:18 166:7,7,8,12 189:17 208:20,21 215:8 232:8 249:4 256:14 talking 10:9 31:17 34:20 39:17 41:13 48:10 61:12 87:14 87:16 92:8 96:19 102:18 103:1,2 116:6 117:10,12 121:10 133:8 135:10 137:10 153:21,22 159:7 169:21 170:14 174:2 175:8 177:10 192:13 197:7 198:12 201:22 202:14 204:10 208:22 212:11 218:5 221:2 227:4 228:22 229:1 240:3 240:11 248:16 254:18 255:20 256:8 257:14 269:2 274:2 279:4,18</p>	<p>talks 157:21 181:10 181:10 245:17 275:11 tangible 259:13 tanya 3:8 36:3 65:3 65:11 66:2 75:6 84:19 95:2 101:16 109:2 113:7,11 117:20 tanya's 114:7 118:8 125:5,7 target 175:22,22 220:5 targeting 209:6 targets 203:21 task 206:7 taught 229:18 249:21 279:12 tea 139:19 teach 43:1 195:21 196:3 202:21 230:11 236:19 241:7 243:5 272:9 teacher 76:11,16 101:10 108:2,4 115:17 119:5,17,18 120:1,4,8 121:13 122:1,2,10 133:20 136:11 137:12,12 176:16,18 178:22 181:15,20 187:15 208:18 209:15 224:22 225:4 228:10 235:17 236:1,3,7,13 241:11 teachers 2:11 52:10 63:6 64:7 68:22 69:7,22 94:8 105:16 106:2 109:8,15,15 109:18,19,21 110:1 110:9,10,13 118:21 119:2,9,10,11,13,21 120:10 133:9 135:4 135:16,16 138:4 174:19 177:8,14 205:21 206:21 208:1 225:16 236:5 236:22 240:17</p>	<p>241:13,16,18 244:10 246:2 249:5 249:16 250:2 251:4 251:16 teaching 109:19 115:16 156:7 158:17 175:15 176:18,22 178:1,11 178:22 179:19 182:3 233:11,21 235:17,18 236:5 240:4,22 251:5 team 98:10 126:11 126:12,12 144:1 147:14 165:7,9 285:3 teams 52:4 132:14 technical 3:6 14:22 36:21 37:7 43:9 127:12 technologies 222:9 223:4 226:9,16 technology 2:5 8:7 28:2 41:12,14,19 140:16,19 221:17 222:3 284:20 ted 3:6 4:5 141:14 142:7 143:20 144:6 156:18 157:5,22 159:14 167:21 182:20,22 187:13 187:15 263:13 teen 239:17 teenage 201:3 telephone 157:8,10 185:3 television 237:16 television's 202:10 tell 5:6 27:9 41:18 56:4 99:4 129:3 207:9 208:15 215:12 216:8,10 228:1,16,22 238:13 239:18 243:2 telling 59:21 215:9 215:9 216:7 tells 134:17 203:5</p>	<p>temperament 119:16 temperature 286:10 template 185:16 templates 129:7 tenacious 219:2 tenacity 198:2 tend 168:7 187:6 232:6 242:9,10,11 tenor 25:18 term 4:8 23:17 163:17 183:11 184:5,6 194:14 247:15,15 285:5,8 terms 10:5 18:16 30:1 37:9 68:9 85:3 89:14,18,22 103:20 116:10 120:3 124:16 165:10 170:5 185:3,17,20 186:1,6 190:17 208:22 251:16 252:14 266:3 terrible 133:14 terrific 149:4 test 13:9 34:12,19 34:21 225:4 226:8 229:7,8 230:12 233:6,21 243:5,9 249:19 250:3,6,8 251:9,13,15 253:6 testifying 83:10 testimony 4:3,4 8:20 12:4 142:6 testing 2:16 224:10 236:13,15 237:6 242:13 243:3,14 tests 34:13 35:1,4 229:9 230:1,21 231:1,11,11 232:1 236:8 texas 9:1 13:2 91:11 91:12,14 text 109:4 187:12 thank 6:9,9,20 7:4 9:19,22 12:6 25:5 25:20 27:6 29:6 31:2 36:14 44:17</p>
--	--	--	--

<p>45:13 47:1,3,5,9 60:22,22 65:8,12 66:11,11 68:13 71:13 93:5 95:1,6 95:10,22 99:16 101:16 109:1 112:8 112:18 117:20 118:3,3 124:8 137:17 139:14 142:8 143:11,19,19 144:15,18 155:17 156:17,17,18 169:17,18 182:21 183:7 188:20 194:4 194:5 197:1 201:6 208:5 209:22 211:5 211:6 212:4 220:18 221:10 242:14 248:18 251:20 253:22 255:17 262:7 266:21 267:14 269:19,21 285:15,21 286:17 286:22 287:3 thanking 254:13 thanks 29:10 126:9 167:16 183:8 268:19 286:21 themes 278:7,9 thesis 278:19,19 thing 15:16 20:20 28:7 29:15 58:2 65:11 109:10 110:22 119:13 141:4 142:11 145:20 147:20 148:3,5 160:9 161:22 165:16 177:9 180:4,6 201:18 272:7 things 25:16 45:7 57:19 62:14,19 64:22 65:22 70:6,10 71:4 79:10 81:5 84:10 93:3 95:16 99:11 102:2 103:17 103:19,21 106:7,9 108:19 109:6</p>	<p>110:11 113:7 117:4 124:20 127:7 141:19 144:19 146:7 150:5 151:14 153:7,18 154:2 168:14 171:2 174:8 181:12 183:4 192:12 199:7 202:15 204:1 206:3 207:21 223:22,22 225:16,17 229:5,11 231:15 232:7 237:17 241:6 242:2 247:11 250:19 253:1 263:11 268:12 272:6 273:15 275:18,19 282:16,19 285:7,7,8 285:18 think 25:9 27:15 28:22 29:4 31:20 32:8 33:4 35:15 37:5 40:12 42:8 43:2,16,18 44:5,7 44:19 45:4,11,16 46:14 47:17 48:15 58:16 61:15 68:1 71:16 73:10,12,21 79:6 81:13 84:9,12 84:20 85:17 86:6 87:3,5,12,20,21 88:11 89:10 97:10 101:1 102:4,10,12 102:17 103:6,7,7,15 103:17,18,22 104:14,15,18 105:2 105:19 106:2,5,9,10 107:10 108:1,7,7 113:1 116:13,14,17 116:20 117:4 120:12 121:6,10,14 122:15,21 123:16 123:17,18,19 124:3 124:14 127:10 130:16 132:22 133:13 134:18 135:4,18 137:8,11 137:11 138:7,16,19</p>	<p>139:5 146:13 147:2 148:14 149:19 150:20 151:14 152:8 156:20 157:3 157:12 158:18 159:14,22 161:22 169:4,12 170:9 172:11 174:10,18 179:4,19,21 180:9 180:22 181:1 184:15 185:21 186:4 190:8,13,15 190:20 192:2 196:11 204:17 207:8 208:10 210:3 211:3 212:20 213:7 214:6,10,15 220:9 220:14 221:15,21 224:11 225:8 228:4 228:7 229:5,20 231:17,19 232:7 237:3,6,19 240:14 241:2,9,21 242:16 243:12,22 244:18 244:18,21 246:9,20 247:2,14,15,16,21 249:22 250:22 252:12,16 253:12 253:20 254:8 255:11 258:12,18 259:1,21 262:20 265:1 268:14 269:5 271:20 272:10,15 273:3,14 274:18 279:21 281:14,18 281:21 282:6,9,17 282:19 284:3,6,19 284:22 285:2,6,8 thinkers 228:10 thinking 25:14 46:12 85:5 89:17,22 90:17 99:11 101:14 114:20 127:8,9,12 132:14 135:12,13 159:6,9 160:8,18 162:14 189:2,21 190:3 192:8 221:1 221:22 230:18</p>	<p>237:7 242:11,12 255:15 269:12 274:8,11 276:14 281:3 285:16 thinly 72:22 third 52:19,20 67:5 101:5 118:18 147:20 172:22 218:4,11 279:22 thirdly 76:13 thirst 240:8 thomas 288:2,18 thorough 96:2 thought 20:16 98:8 113:9 156:9 169:1 227:13 237:8 246:20 274:10 thoughtful 202:2 252:3 thread 170:15 threads 279:22 three 11:12 50:6 55:14 56:22 58:10 59:9,19 60:1 73:4,8 73:16,19,22 74:1 76:19 77:5,10 78:4 84:8 128:10 152:16 156:22 164:9,13 218:8 223:20 229:2 238:21 243:2 249:12 254:9 279:21 threshold 56:16 73:14,15 74:2,13,18 thresholds 58:6,14 60:3 thrive 51:11 202:4 throw 118:13 throwing 274:10 thumb 173:14 tie 24:18,19 151:21 tied 167:21 tier 152:22 170:18 tiered 64:8,9 94:7 tiffany 2:11 6:16 139:12,13 164:11 166:17 211:10,11 212:2,2 248:9,15,16</p>
---	--	---	---

254:3 265:10 270:3 270:15 tight 42:22 time 9:7,11 10:6,10 11:5 21:9,22 38:6 51:3,4 52:6 65:3,5 68:15 91:3 92:21 93:1 96:10 99:7 134:6 142:10 143:8 147:1,5 173:5,18 174:22 175:16 182:15 184:7 203:10 218:9 219:8 219:9 233:13 254:5 254:5,7 256:9 267:8 272:4 279:3,4 280:6 284:10 286:2 timeline 86:8 116:22 184:15 191:15 timely 7:13 99:15 212:17 times 49:18 50:6 55:14,16,16,17 58:10 59:19 60:1,1 60:1 73:19 90:2 91:15 155:9 229:22 255:2 256:15 257:21 timing 38:19,19 190:12 title 16:12,13,14,21 22:18,21 23:7,12 30:8 31:11 34:10,17 40:13 67:12,13 70:1 70:4 81:4,6,19 82:12 83:16 84:7 85:3,16 87:12 88:6 104:6,9,10,16 105:2 105:5,18 109:16 110:5 111:5 120:17 123:18 151:13 260:11 261:7,15 262:10 titles 104:8 105:2 261:19 today 11:22 36:3 65:22 66:10 140:20	143:22 156:20 167:13 177:15 188:2 191:9,16 201:17 205:1,8,13 211:9 228:7 245:15 270:18 279:12 285:10 told 11:11 79:13,14 175:3 181:1 216:1 230:1 253:2 tolerance 53:2 tolson 165:7 tom 191:9 tomorrow 107:17 285:5 tone 273:17 tool 128:17 129:15 129:17,18,20 130:3 137:8 236:13,21 246:22 toolkit 127:15 128:9 128:9 129:21 193:22 247:7 254:14 255:8,18 256:15 258:7,8,9,10 258:16 259:8,11 260:2,17 263:7,15 263:20 264:3,5 267:2 269:9 toolkits 248:6 tools 98:12 127:12 130:9,20,22 244:17 244:19 top 56:4 61:3,9 96:22 97:10 126:15 127:16,18 158:22 196:11 199:12,14 222:14 topic 8:12,18 45:4 278:14 topics 170:3,3 185:4 total 77:4 touch 86:20 touched 90:16 tough 27:22 130:17 130:19 tours 95:7 167:7,12	tpa 164:21 track 146:11 219:13 traction 161:17 traditional 152:4,17 173:12 traditionally 177:7 181:13 tragic 138:12 train 64:7 94:8 177:14 training 23:17 137:4 151:4 152:6 170:11 171:5,19 177:7 181:15,21 221:16 247:13,20 248:6 trainings 258:9 transcriber 289:1 transcript 289:4 transfer 13:5 43:3 43:14 244:8 transferrable 28:19 150:2 transferring 172:20 transformational 273:4 transformative 124:21 transgender 197:18 198:18 transition 10:4,8,9 10:14 25:14 69:3 76:4,8 142:21 155:14 183:5,13,19 185:16 190:3 197:18 275:5 285:6 transitioning 86:9 277:7 translate 248:5 translates 242:13 transmitting 237:18 transparency 118:20 119:19 120:5,13,21 121:22 trauma 197:13 278:12 travel 255:16	treacherous 210:13 treated 58:19 treating 77:22 tremendous 21:6,7 125:12 trends 9:6 146:1 tribal 19:17,18 20:11 tried 51:2 60:4 80:1 129:14,20 132:5 trio 19:11 trouble 101:4 troubled 154:11 troubleshoot 261:20 troubling 72:21 true 220:4 225:16 288:6 truly 149:22 trust 244:6 245:9,10 266:4 267:18 273:11 trusted 170:16 trustees 181:2,19 trusts 245:10 try 44:10 45:6 63:22 69:2 71:11 96:11 114:20 118:13 135:15 147:15 179:21 191:17 229:4 trying 20:8,9,21 25:16 41:13 46:15 51:11 52:8 68:6 69:19 70:7,8 83:3 85:19 90:1 96:14 111:12,20 112:2 117:18 121:11,18 121:22 122:5 123:5 127:10 134:12 135:16 137:6 143:14 157:16 162:3 186:10 200:19,20 239:18 241:7 244:22 247:4 267:9 tuition 21:17 28:13 146:16
---	---	--	--

<p>turn 47:15 66:1 143:10 turning 11:16 tv 260:13 twice 49:9 59:13 98:22 two 8:19 15:7,8 28:18 29:1 31:9 32:5 34:8 42:17 48:10 50:13 55:6,21 56:7 59:3,8,9 60:1 72:11,13,15,18 74:1 74:2,10 75:4 76:9 79:13 83:21 90:19 97:15 106:7 124:20 127:7 137:18 140:8 143:6 151:7 160:6 161:16 165:12 166:19 187:4 189:4 198:6 202:9 224:17 225:20 234:13,22 246:13 248:7 264:6 264:22 271:12 274:5 278:8 279:21 284:1 tying 162:20 tykiah 2:21 5:20 65:12,15 72:2,3,4,5 211:7,11 212:1,2 220:19 248:16 266:1 267:19 270:3 270:15 275:13 type 54:8 87:8 101:13 111:4 116:16 119:17 120:12 122:15 198:1 243:14 283:10 types 81:16 83:3,8 83:14 87:2,20 88:1 110:18 117:16 122:6 180:11 222:2 237:5 243:15 264:9 264:19 280:13 283:9 typewriting 288:5 typically 164:5 237:3</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">u</p> <p>u.s. 3:8 238:5 271:5 283:13 ultimately 44:21 206:3 umbrella 166:15 unable 140:20 unanimously 204:20 unconf's 177:13 uncredentialed 61:7 underfunded 88:22 89:14 undergo 54:14 underrepresentation 78:18 underrepresented 224:11,13 underserved 156:9 159:17,21 160:7 168:7 understand 9:6 64:10 69:3,19 86:8 102:17 110:14 122:5 136:12 140:12 156:6 157:16 179:7 219:17,20 233:8,14 238:15 245:1,5 248:14 285:3 understanding 53:6 53:10 87:15 103:18 115:22 121:10 126:1 191:15 200:4 200:8 233:9 247:14 understands 157:3 250:9 understood 215:16 undertaken 148:18 undertaking 13:11 underway 174:11 238:9 unexplained 225:20 225:21 234:18 unfairly 209:6 unfortunately 18:19 23:1 160:15 241:3</p>	<p>unintended 173:9 unions 69:8 unique 28:11 unit 14:21 147:13 united 16:7 units 146:21 147:5 147:10 universal 24:4 25:10 161:15 universities 148:7 161:8 177:7 178:14 179:10 247:18 248:8,10 263:21 277:14 university 2:7,9 9:1 19:16 137:20 222:14,19 254:21 256:2,4,10,17 unmet 21:7 upcoming 10:14 update 4:3 17:10 167:15 updates 4:4 12:4 142:6 uplift 274:14,19 282:7 uplifting 263:17 upper 155:11 upward 43:4 upwards 90:18 92:12,13 urban 199:13,13 urgency 208:3 uri 8:20 use 10:5 12:2 18:10 28:22 53:1 55:17 56:12,14,17 57:1,5 57:14,16 64:4,5,7,7 64:21 70:1 78:9 80:10,21 83:1 89:11 93:17 94:5,6 105:4 110:5 123:2 127:5 129:7,18,20 131:1 133:12 136:6,7,11 169:13 185:16 190:8 194:14 204:12 205:8 224:15 233:6,7,21</p>	<p>242:4,9,10,11 247:8 247:13 248:3 252:15 261:6 262:10 267:8 useful 33:3 102:10 104:16,19 117:8 121:20 157:11 169:8 uses 224:6 usually 21:19 27:13 119:15 266:19 utilize 12:12 81:20 111:13 121:11 123:4,21 145:5 utilized 104:15</p> <p style="text-align: center;">v</p> <p>vacation 260:15 valuable 18:16 251:1 value 33:10 87:21 102:4 103:21 105:3 106:3 108:20 117:4 117:17 120:14 121:16 124:1 159:8 values 151:15 vantage 174:8 variability 79:14 variable 55:5,6 variables 234:17 250:13 variation 55:20 varies 34:22 variety 18:3 81:19 104:8 119:5 various 26:10 69:8 98:11 125:2 159:18 216:1 vast 250:1 vehicles 257:4 vein 150:6 vento 83:21 104:6 venture 141:18 verify 173:15,16 versed 66:16 version 63:22 189:9 189:18 259:10</p>
---	---	---	--

<p>versus 109:3 164:16 vetted 259:10 260:6 vexing 153:2 vice 2:15,18,20 victims 278:22 video 211:1 view 231:6 violence 279:5 virtual 141:2 virtually 142:18 vis 241:14,14 visibility 195:18 198:21 vision 194:3 visit 69:5 visited 170:6 ividly 278:10 voice 44:15 voices 215:2 248:14 252:7 volunteered 259:4 volunteering 169:18 volunteers 258:14 vote 7:5 10:4,5 188:19 voted 10:12 189:5 204:19</p>	<p>138:10,11,12 139:11 143:11 147:18 148:13 149:3,20 152:10 153:18 155:17 168:11 170:1 171:2 173:8 174:4,7 177:15 179:20 180:2,7,21 182:7,11 182:21 183:5 186:5 186:9,14 188:19 190:16 191:6 196:13 199:5 201:9 201:12 202:18 204:12 208:5 210:7 210:18 211:8 212:18 215:6 216:9 223:10 227:7,9,17 227:17 228:15 229:15 230:20 231:22 239:15 243:11,12 246:13 246:19 248:4 249:3 250:14 251:8 254:5 254:12 256:1 264:1 265:4 267:5 270:4,9 274:9 275:2,16 276:1 283:12 285:8 285:15 286:9 wanted 17:10 66:17 71:4 107:21 109:6 112:19 144:20 153:19 164:15 167:2,9,15 174:14 184:19 249:2 253:17 259:5,17 275:1 277:8,13 280:3 wanting 186:17 wants 18:10 58:7 217:11,11 251:15 warrants 45:12 washington 1:11 11:11 43:13 159:7 286:5 watch 51:11 watching 101:20 272:11,12</p>	<p>water 59:15 way 28:12 29:20 53:15 55:9 67:21 79:7 82:2 84:21 85:17 90:16 92:19 97:1 100:5 103:12 108:13,15 110:8,14 120:18 135:5,5 145:20 146:20 149:2 152:16 156:15,15 161:19 166:14 168:20 170:21 172:22 174:10 186:17 198:14 208:17 224:9 225:10 228:7 231:21 233:7 236:20 237:2 240:6 240:10,12 242:11 245:3,13,14 251:19 253:10 265:6 271:15 281:6 283:12 ways 13:1,2 42:7 45:19 71:17 75:12 80:21 81:19 93:3 106:5 114:3 133:4 133:17 134:12 140:15 145:6 151:8 155:19 159:19 168:16 169:13 211:3 214:3,4 221:22 222:7 223:5 235:21 237:13 242:8 252:16 269:3 269:6 281:14,16 284:7 285:1 286:12 we've 20:21 31:6,12 31:19 41:4,11 46:4 52:22 57:15 58:22 60:4 71:22 76:13 80:1 84:10 88:5 90:15 92:16 104:2 112:9 127:8,8,10,11 129:14,20 140:6 153:11 159:18 168:4 170:2 173:12 192:13,14 194:15</p>	<p>198:20,21 199:1 205:8 208:22 214:3 226:18 227:3,6 231:3 237:9 240:3 240:12 241:10 242:15 245:14 246:12,16 249:4,9 249:10 250:20 253:5 260:18 261:1 274:3 285:9 wear 269:14 webinar 267:12 website 21:1 202:10 275:9 wednesday 67:7 102:13 week 83:11 153:12 278:17,17 weekend 136:19 weeks 148:10 157:3 181:6 202:9 209:14 weigh 108:8 251:22 welcome 5:3 11:17 67:21 139:13 244:1 wellness 197:5,17 200:12 201:2 went 17:22 18:14 26:11 79:11,16 113:13 209:17 222:13 256:4,10 west 258:21 wheelchair 222:7 whichever 86:17 white 1:5 50:7 140:19 147:15 155:6 159:10 165:5 166:8 171:12,22 179:10 180:10 181:2,13 191:13 194:16 195:3,8,11 196:12 198:5 202:22 214:7 248:12 264:11,22 whites 224:19 who've 229:18 233:12 264:19 wide 20:17,18,19 68:9 174:12</p>
w			
<p>w 2:15 wait 161:21 waiting 117:1 190:19 waive 22:15 waives 22:19 walk 267:12 walking 197:8 walter 6:3 39:3,4 want 23:22 24:13,18 24:20 25:5 28:7 29:2 47:18,21 48:13 53:16 58:2,8 65:4,8 65:12 83:6 88:18 90:10,20 96:8,11 101:13 105:10 107:11 109:15 110:5 124:9 125:3 127:13 137:16</p>			

<p>width 27:21 willful 53:4 williams 2:20 5:22 6:1 29:8,11,14 37:13 38:5,12 61:2 61:15,18,21 62:2,6 65:18 162:18 163:18 189:7,12,20 211:17,18 231:8 265:13 268:17 284:18 willing 171:18 willingness 172:16 wind 153:21 270:18 winded 124:4 240:12 winter 189:8,13 wioa 16:17,18,20 wise 274:7 wish 35:22 113:20 137:19,20,22 woman 222:5 women 171:15 192:20 215:1 248:17 271:3,7,18 271:22 273:7,15,16 273:20,21 274:14 275:3 276:5,6,15,18 278:11,13 279:13 279:18 280:7,9,11 280:15 281:10 282:1,11,12 284:3 women's 271:3 282:15 wonder 99:20 wondered 131:7 wonderful 125:1 143:21,22 246:15 282:4 wondering 62:15 63:4 wonders 76:3 word 26:9 131:14 143:6 198:18 230:11,13,19 233:15 words 77:16 81:11 97:3 102:14 103:10</p>	<p>126:10 147:4 190:18 191:5 248:3 work 4:7 7:12 9:4 10:4,9 12:9 17:11 20:16 22:7 31:14 36:20 51:21 70:12 71:1 85:16 94:21 113:16 115:4 117:18 118:2 124:11,17,17,22 126:10 130:21 136:2,4 137:2 139:9 142:1,20 143:10,12 144:4,6,11 145:1,1 145:10 147:6 148:18,22 149:4,9 149:21 150:16 151:11 155:12,18 155:19 161:12,13 161:19 165:7 166:2 172:19 173:4 177:21 182:15 183:10,13,15,16 188:5,8,17 189:20 190:1,5 201:11,18 204:8,9,9 205:13,18 205:21 206:8,14 208:8 210:1,5,6,6,8 210:12,14,16 211:4 213:7,8 222:8,18 225:14 228:12 230:16 239:19 241:3,5 242:3 244:19 247:17 252:8,20 253:18 257:9 258:1,5 260:19 261:1,22 264:2 266:18 269:17 270:7 274:6 274:9,11 275:6,12 276:13 280:17 281:1,9 282:10,18 284:5,17,18,19 worked 29:20 215:14 264:19 274:3 284:14 workforce 16:18 108:4</p>	<p>working 8:11 10:13 16:1 21:5,14 22:6 42:11 43:16 47:10 60:8,16 70:20 75:10 76:8 91:6 92:20 94:21 107:22 108:6 115:9,19 138:20 144:17 160:22 165:6,22 183:18 188:21 191:17 208:6 212:7 222:6 227:6 228:16 229:16 230:17 233:13 234:3 238:16 265:16 269:5,17 works 13:19 14:20 43:10 44:5,9 140:18 workshop 256:4 world 18:18 24:13 25:18 39:6 152:7 158:16 219:18 226:14 240:18 270:19 279:11 worry 113:3 179:5 worse 155:7 worth 45:4 wrapping 102:13 wrenching 207:19 wright 2:21 5:20,21 72:7,10,15 75:10 211:11 212:3 218:11 221:10 222:13,14 223:9 238:17 267:20 270:17 273:18 276:4 280:3 wrightchoice 2:21 wrinkle 16:15 38:16 writing 111:2 260:1 wrong 149:20 243:14</p>	<p>y y 173:2 yale 2:7 yeah 26:5,7 27:13 29:7 32:10,15,17 38:12 61:19 62:2 94:14 114:15 172:6 175:12,18 189:22 191:6 276:1 year 8:19 17:21 18:19 20:8 24:21 30:18 31:8 39:13 50:8,17 51:1 74:3 78:4,4 80:17 86:13 118:18,21,21 119:6 119:6 120:6,6 127:14 146:5 147:22 150:2,20 164:6 165:12 175:1 175:17 186:22 194:17,21 196:14 197:8 200:18 206:9 206:15,21 214:1 217:6 238:8 257:5 259:15,15 264:6,22 272:14 years 11:12 18:1 28:18 29:1 31:9 48:17 51:8,12 55:18 56:20,22 74:14 99:13 100:20,21 120:9 124:11,22 125:12,12 147:6 154:13 161:5,16 163:21,22 174:12 192:14 194:15,19 195:11,16 196:18 220:17 231:9 233:13 235:17 238:12 244:16 246:14 247:5 281:22 284:5 yep 180:14,18 yesterday 217:8 york 283:18 young 44:20 48:22 51:3,13,13 109:18</p>
		<p>x</p>	
		<p>x 173:1</p>	

[young - zika]

110:9 144:10,10
 155:2 178:1 179:18
 180:12 213:2
 217:14,22 245:12
 248:14 257:2 272:9
 272:12 273:7,20,20
 274:14 276:13,21
 278:12,20 279:18
 281:5

younger 154:7
 246:19

youngsters 154:20

youth 192:4,17
 193:4 196:4 197:5
 197:17,19,22
 198:12 200:11
 202:10 203:21,22
 216:13 217:1 219:4
 220:14 271:13,14
 276:3,3

ywca 280:8

z

zero 53:1
zika 200:16