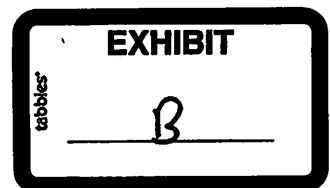


LESLIE SMITH
March 24, 2016

1 (Pages 1 to 4)

1	<p>1 IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI ABERDEEN DIVISION</p> <p>2 3 4 5 LESLIE SMITH PLAINTIFF</p> <p>6 7 V. CIVIL ACTION NO. 1:15CV147-NBB-DAS 8</p> <p>9 COLUMBUS MUNICIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICT AND PHILIP HICKMAN, INDIVIDUALLY AND 10 AS SUPERINTENDENT OF COLUMBUS MUNICIPAL SCHOOL 11 DISTRICT DEFENDANTS</p> <p>12 13 14 15 16 DEPOSITION OF LESLIE SMITH 17 18 19 20 Taken at the instance of the Defendant at the law firm of Sanford Knott & Associates, P.A., 425 South State Street, Jackson, Mississippi, on Thursday, 21 March 24, 2016, beginning at 11:05 a.m. 22 23 24 25 SHANNA CUMBERLAND, CCR #1774</p>	3
2	<p>1 INDEX</p> <p>2 Style.....1 3 Appearances.....2 4 Index.....3 5 Certificate of Deponent105 6 Certificate of Court Reporter106 7</p> <p>8 EXHIBITS</p> <p>9 Exhibit 1 Text messages47 10 Exhibit 2 Certified Application49 11 for Leslie Smith 12 Exhibit 3 Newspaper article57 13 Exhibit 4 Typed letter65 14 Exhibit 5 E-mail from Leslie Smith69 15 to Hickman 16 Exhibit 6 E-mail75 17 Exhibit 7 Newspaper article77 18 Exhibit 8 State of Mississippi81 19 certificate for Leslie Smith 20 Exhibit 9 HUD/VA Addendum to92 21 Uniform Residential Loan 22 Application 23 Exhibit 10 Copy of driver's license92 24 for Leslie Smith 25 Exhibit 11 2014 Form IL-104093</p>	4
2	<p>1 APPEARANCES:</p> <p>2 3 SANFORD E. KNOTT, ESQ. Sanford Knott & Associates, P.A. 425 South State Street 4 Jackson, Mississippi 39215 knottlaw@bellsouth.net</p> <p>5 6 FRANK C. JONES III, ESQ. Attorney at Law 7 Post Office Box 12251 Jackson, Mississippi 39236-2251 frankjones22h@comcast.net</p> <p>8 9 COUNSEL FOR PLAINTIFF</p> <p>10 11 BERKLEY N. HUSKISON, ESQ. Mitchell, McNutt & Sams, P.A. 12 215 5th Street North Columbus, Mississippi 39703 bhuskison@mitchellmcnutt.com</p> <p>13 14 COUNSEL FOR DEFENDANTS 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 ALSO PRESENT: Philip Hickman</p>	4



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5	<p>1 LESLIE SMITH, 2 having been first duly sworn, was examined and 3 testified as follows: 4 EXAMINATION BY MR. HUSKISON: 5 Q. Good morning, Mr. Smith. I'm Berk 6 Huskison, and I represent the Columbus School 7 District and Dr. Philip Hickman in the lawsuit that 8 you've filed against them. I'm here today to ask 9 you questions about your case, okay? 10 A. Okay. 11 Q. If you would, state your full name for the 12 record. 13 A. Rev. Dr. Leslie Smith. 14 Q. And Dr. Smith, are you a doctor? 15 A. Yes. 16 Q. Dr. Smith, have you ever given a 17 deposition before? Have you ever done this before? 18 A. No. 19 Q. Okay. What we'll do is, I'll ask 20 questions, and you'll have to answer verbally so she 21 can take it down. She's going to take down what -- 22 what we say, okay? 23 A. Okay. 24 Q. And I want you to -- if you don't 25 understand a question I'm asking, make sure -- tell</p>	7	<p>1 A. My niece. 2 Q. Your niece. And who is she? 3 A. Crystal Smith. 4 Q. And how old is Crystal? Close -- just 5 give me close. 6 A. Thirty-five. 7 Q. Thirty-five. And what does she do? 8 A. Mom. 9 Q. She's a mother? 10 A. Yes. 11 Q. Why is she living there with you? Any 12 particular reason? 13 A. She needed a place to stay. 14 Q. Okay. Has she lived in the -- in the home 15 with you before? 16 A. No. 17 Q. Now -- and you said earlier, when you 18 answered the question about who has lived there with 19 you, you said "now." In the ten years previous -- 20 or in the -- since 2007, when you moved there, has 21 anybody else lived in that home with you, the best 22 you can remember? 23 A. I had a friend. 24 Q. And who was that? 25 A. His name?</p>
6	<p>1 me and make sure you understand what I'm asking 2 before you answer, okay? 3 A. Okay. 4 Q. Now, you said your full name. Where are 5 you currently living? 6 A. I'm currently living East St. Louis, 7 Illinois. 8 Q. Have you got a specific address? 9 A. 10 11 Q. How long have you lived at that -- is that 12 a home -- 13 A. Yes. 14 Q. -- is that a house -- I'm sorry. 15 Yes? 16 A. Yes. 17 Q. How long have you lived at that address? 18 A. Recently? 2007. 19 Q. So you've been there since 2007 'til -- 20 A. Correct. 21 Q. -- 'til today? 22 A. Correct. 23 Q. Does anybody live in that home with you? 24 A. Today? 25 Q. Yes.</p>	8	<p>1 Q. Uh-huh (affirmative response). 2 A. Duriel Moton. 3 Q. Can you spell it? Can you get close to 4 spelling it? 5 A. D-U-R-I-E-L, M-O-T-O-N. 6 Q. And who is he? Who is Duriel? 7 A. Just a friend of mine. 8 Q. And is he an adult? 9 A. Yes. 10 Q. Okay. How old is Duriel roughly? 11 A. Same age, 35, 36. 12 Q. Okay. And he's just a friend? 13 A. Yes. 14 Q. He's not family, not related? 15 A. No. 16 Q. Anybody else other than those two live 17 there? 18 A. Jerome Smith. 19 Q. And tell me who Jerome Smith is. 20 A. Son. 21 Q. How old is Jerome? 22 A. Twenty-eight. 23 Q. And how long did he live in the home with 24 you? 25 A. Probably two years.</p>

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3 (Pages 9 to 12)

9	<p>1 Q. Any particular reason why he was -- was he</p> <p>2 there just to stay a few years and then move on?</p> <p>3 What -- why was he there?</p> <p>4 A. No place to stay.</p> <p>5 Q. Okay. And why did he leave?</p> <p>6 A. He went to jail.</p> <p>7 Q. He did. Okay. What did he go to jail</p> <p>8 for?</p> <p>9 A. Burglary.</p> <p>10 Q. Is he still in jail today?</p> <p>11 A. He's in jail today.</p> <p>12 Q. All right. Now, that home, that 637</p> <p>13 address, is that a family home?</p> <p>14 A. It's where we were born and raised, right.</p> <p>15 Q. Okay. Your mom and dad raised you there?</p> <p>16 A. Yes.</p> <p>17 Q. Are your mom and dad still alive?</p> <p>18 A. No.</p> <p>19 Q. Any brothers and sisters?</p> <p>20 A. I have one sister and three brothers.</p> <p>21 Q. Are they all living in that general area</p> <p>22 now or are they spread out?</p> <p>23 A. Spread out.</p> <p>24 Q. Tell me first -- let's talk about them</p> <p>25 just briefly; we don't have to talk about them long.</p>	11	<p>1 Illinois.</p> <p>2 Q. All right. Your sister -- goodness</p> <p>3 gracious, I'm going to have a hard time pronouncing</p> <p>4 that -- is -- her daughter is married to Dr.</p> <p>5 Hickman, correct?</p> <p>6 A. Correct.</p> <p>7 Q. And say her name again. I'm trying to get</p> <p>8 it.</p> <p>9 A. Radifah.</p> <p>10 Q. Radifah?</p> <p>11 A. Correct.</p> <p>12 Q. All right. Does Radifah have any other</p> <p>13 kids other than the daughter that's married to Dr.</p> <p>14 Hickman?</p> <p>15 A. She has four daughters total.</p> <p>16 Q. Four daughters total. And the daughter</p> <p>17 that's married to Dr. Hickman, tell me her name.</p> <p>18 A. Adilah.</p> <p>19 Q. Adidah (sic)?</p> <p>20 A. Adilah.</p> <p>21 Q. Adilah. Do you have a good relationship</p> <p>22 with your sister?</p> <p>23 A. Now?</p> <p>24 Q. Yes.</p> <p>25 A. It's okay.</p>
10	<p>1 Your sister, who is she?</p> <p>2 A. My sister, Radifah Zalzala.</p> <p>3 Q. You're going to have to spell that one</p> <p>4 too.</p> <p>5 A. R-A-D-I-F-A-H, Zalzala, Z-A-L-Z-A-L-A.</p> <p>6 Q. All right. And she lives where?</p> <p>7 A. Kansas City.</p> <p>8 Q. All right. And your brothers, tell me</p> <p>9 each -- each of their names and where they live now.</p> <p>10 A. Albert Smith; he lives in Texas. He lives</p> <p>11 in Texas.</p> <p>12 Q. Okay. What does he do in Texas?</p> <p>13 A. No. He works in -- he works out of</p> <p>14 Louisiana, and he's a teacher.</p> <p>15 Q. Okay. Albert, is that --</p> <p>16 A. Albert.</p> <p>17 Q. Okay. And who's your second one?</p> <p>18 A. Derek Smith.</p> <p>19 Q. Where is he and what does he?</p> <p>20 A. He lives in Aurora, Illinois. He's a</p> <p>21 police officer.</p> <p>22 Q. Okay.</p> <p>23 A. Derwin Cole Smith.</p> <p>24 Q. Tell me about him.</p> <p>25 A. He's a doctor, and he lives in Chicago,</p>	12	<p>1 Q. It's okay. You said "now;" was it better</p> <p>2 before?</p> <p>3 A. Yes.</p> <p>4 Q. And what's the problem with it now?</p> <p>5 A. The lawsuit.</p> <p>6 Q. The lawsuit against her neph -- her</p> <p>7 son-in-law, correct?</p> <p>8 A. Yes, the lawsuit.</p> <p>9 Q. She's not happy that you sued Dr. Hickman?</p> <p>10 A. No.</p> <p>11 Q. All right. Now, you grew up where you</p> <p>12 live now; is that correct?</p> <p>13 A. Yes.</p> <p>14 Q. All right. And what's your date of birth?</p> <p>15 A. June 21st, 1953.</p> <p>16 Q. I've got your interrogatory responses, so</p> <p>17 they gave me a good idea of your educational</p> <p>18 history. Just tell me about a little bit about your</p> <p>19 history after high school.</p> <p>20 A. St. Louis University.</p> <p>21 Q. Yeah, degrees and what you -- where --</p> <p>22 where you are as far as education at this point in</p> <p>23 your life.</p> <p>24 A. 1971 to 1975 I attended St. Louis</p> <p>25 University.</p>

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4 (Pages 13 to 16)

13	<p>1 Q. Okay.</p> <p>2 A. Bachelors degree, history. August 1975</p> <p>3 probably through August 1980, I went to SIU,</p> <p>4 Edwardsville, masters degree in elementary</p> <p>5 education.</p> <p>6 Q. That's -- is that Southern Illinois?</p> <p>7 A. Southern Illinois University at</p> <p>8 Edwardsville.</p> <p>9 Q. Okay. And that's through 1980? I'm just</p> <p>10 looking down --</p> <p>11 A. 1980, correct.</p> <p>12 Q. And then --</p> <p>13 A. I think 1990s, like '91 through 1993,</p> <p>14 Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, and I</p> <p>15 received a certification in education</p> <p>16 administration.</p> <p>17 Q. Okay.</p> <p>18 A. 2000s, I want to say 2000 -- I'm not</p> <p>19 certain of the date.</p> <p>20 Q. January 2005, maybe?</p> <p>21 A. Right. Okay. Through 2007.</p> <p>22 Q. All right.</p> <p>23 A. Andersonville Seminary, and I received in</p> <p>24 doctorate in Christian education.</p> <p>25 Q. Okay. And that's what's you've listed.</p>	15	<p>1 Q. Who is that?</p> <p>2 A. His name a Lamorn (phonetic).</p> <p>3 Q. And where is Lamorn?</p> <p>4 A. Lamorn is in Tampa, Florida.</p> <p>5 Q. What does Lamorn do?</p> <p>6 A. He works Chase Bank.</p> <p>7 Q. And he's your godson. How did that come</p> <p>8 about? What -- what was your relationship with his</p> <p>9 family? What -- what brought that on?</p> <p>10 A. I was -- I was a teacher, and his uncle</p> <p>11 was in my room. And I met him because I would tutor</p> <p>12 the uncle. And at the time I met him the gangs were</p> <p>13 pretty prevalent in the city and he was a young guy,</p> <p>14 maybe 10 or 11. And he was basically running to</p> <p>15 stay out of the gangs.</p> <p>16 And I spoke with his grandmother and said,</p> <p>17 "Hey, can I help out?" And we -- I -- I would help</p> <p>18 him with school. And then eventually he just sort</p> <p>19 of moved in and became part of the family.</p> <p>20 Q. Okay. Your godson, he was being raised by</p> <p>21 his grandmother?</p> <p>22 A. Basically, yes.</p> <p>23 Q. And at some point he moved in and lived</p> <p>24 with you at your -- at your residence?</p> <p>25 A. Correct.</p>
14	<p>1 You've gone through everything. That was -- the</p> <p>2 best you recall, that's all your education? That's</p> <p>3 a lot.</p> <p>4 A. Other than other little schools on the</p> <p>5 side, like to pick up a class here, a class there.</p> <p>6 Q. Okay. Nothing that you picked up a degree</p> <p>7 in?</p> <p>8 A. No.</p> <p>9 Q. Now, I noticed from '75 -- or excuse me --</p> <p>10 from 1980 to '91 there was a break in school. Were</p> <p>11 you working during that time?</p> <p>12 A. Yeah.</p> <p>13 Q. And then just decided to go back and get a</p> <p>14 little more?</p> <p>15 A. Yes.</p> <p>16 Q. Okay. Did you -- have you had any</p> <p>17 military experience at all?</p> <p>18 A. No military experience.</p> <p>19 Q. Have you ever been married?</p> <p>20 A. No.</p> <p>21 Q. Now you mentioned a minute ago -- and I</p> <p>22 bad with names -- Jerome. You had one son, correct?</p> <p>23 A. One son.</p> <p>24 Q. One son. Have you got any other children?</p> <p>25 A. I have got a -- my godson.</p>	16	<p>1 Q. How many years did Lamorn live with you,</p> <p>2 the best you recall?</p> <p>3 A. From 12.</p> <p>4 Q. Age 12?</p> <p>5 A. On.</p> <p>6 Q. Okay. Until he went to Tampa?</p> <p>7 A. Until he went to -- until he went to</p> <p>8 college and all that other stuff.</p> <p>9 Q. Does he consider you -- this may be a</p> <p>10 difficult way to ask it, but does he consider you</p> <p>11 like his father?</p> <p>12 A. Okay.</p> <p>13 Q. No?</p> <p>14 A. I'm not certain how to answer that.</p> <p>15 Q. Okay. I understand. Do you stay in</p> <p>16 contact with Lamorn today?</p> <p>17 A. Yes.</p> <p>18 Q. Do you have any other children, adopted or</p> <p>19 otherwise?</p> <p>20 MR. KNOTT: I object to the form of the</p> <p>21 question. Adopted and otherwise?</p> <p>22 MR. HUSKISON: Or otherwise.</p> <p>23 Q. (By Mr. Huskison) Do you have any adopted</p> <p>24 children?</p> <p>25 A. Jerome is adopted.</p>

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17	<p>1 Q. Okay. Any others other than Jerome?</p> <p>2 A. No.</p> <p>3 Q. So you've got a godson, Lamorn, and an</p> <p>4 adopted child, Jerome?</p> <p>5 A. Yes.</p> <p>6 Q. Okay. I didn't -- I thought Jerome was</p> <p>7 your blood child. He's not; he's an adopted child?</p> <p>8 A. Correct.</p> <p>9 Q. Okay. And when did you adopt Jerome?</p> <p>10 A. Exactly?</p> <p>11 Q. The best you can recall. I know these are</p> <p>12 old dates, I understand that.</p> <p>13 A. He was six or eight. Somewhere between</p> <p>14 six and eight.</p> <p>15 Q. Okay. He adopted -- you adopted him and</p> <p>16 he moved in your home, as well?</p> <p>17 A. Yes.</p> <p>18 Q. Did you have any contact with his mother</p> <p>19 or any of his other family?</p> <p>20 A. At that...</p> <p>21 Q. When you -- at the time you adopted him</p> <p>22 first?</p> <p>23 A. No.</p> <p>24 Q. After that?</p> <p>25 A. Since then I met an auntie.</p>	19	<p>1 jury pools, that type of thing, but as to</p> <p>2 godchildren, I don't see how it's reasonable</p> <p>3 calculated to leads to discoverable evidence.</p> <p>4 MR. HUSKISON: What I was saying, I'm -- I</p> <p>5 just general answers.</p> <p>6 If you've got other godchildren, I'm just</p> <p>7 wanting to know the names and who they are, nothing</p> <p>8 more.</p> <p>9 But the job that -- that he was going into</p> <p>10 was going to be overseeing children and -- or</p> <p>11 overseeing schools. And so I just want to know</p> <p>12 about his children, godchildren, any children he's</p> <p>13 been associated with. I think that's discoverable.</p> <p>14 And I'm not going deep into it other than to get</p> <p>15 names.</p> <p>16 MR. KNOTT: I don't think it's</p> <p>17 discoverable under the circumstances, given that</p> <p>18 this is a position that was approved, but yet he</p> <p>19 never began. And there is not an issue that's been</p> <p>20 raised, that I know about qualifications, given that</p> <p>21 the school board approved it.</p> <p>22 MR. HUSKISON: Okay. Well, I think you --</p> <p>23 that's fine. Are you going to instruct him not to</p> <p>24 answer? If you are, I'll move on.</p> <p>25 MR. KNOTT: Yeah, I'm going to instruct</p>
18	<p>1 Q. And Jerome, right now, is currently in</p> <p>2 prison?</p> <p>3 A. Yes.</p> <p>4 Q. When is he expected to get out?</p> <p>5 A. I don't know.</p> <p>6 Q. Okay. Any other godchildren, adopted</p> <p>7 children, any other -- any other of those?</p> <p>8 A. No adopted children. Godchildren?</p> <p>9 Q. Say again?</p> <p>10 A. I mean...</p> <p>11 Q. You had a godson. You got any other of</p> <p>12 those?</p> <p>13 A. I'm not sure how to answer that.</p> <p>14 Q. Do you have a godson other than Lamorn?</p> <p>15 A. I have a -- if -- if you take care of</p> <p>16 somebody does that count? Is that what you're</p> <p>17 asking?</p> <p>18 Q. Well, let me ask it that way then. Do you</p> <p>19 have other kids that you've taken care of, other</p> <p>20 than --</p> <p>21 A. I helped out.</p> <p>22 Q. Okay. Who are they?</p> <p>23 MR. KNOTT: Counsel, I want to object at</p> <p>24 this point in time. I recognize in depositions,</p> <p>25 discovery going into the backgrounds for purposes of</p>	20	<p>1 him not to answer. I don't see how it's reasonably</p> <p>2 calculated to -- now, of course, if at some point in</p> <p>3 time there is additional information to be shared</p> <p>4 with me that may lead me to change my mind, we will</p> <p>5 send a response in written form.</p> <p>6 MR. HUSKISON: That's fine. And if we</p> <p>7 have to, we can get back together --</p> <p>8 MR. KNOTT: Absolutely.</p> <p>9 MR. HUSKISON: -- over the phone or --</p> <p>10 MR. KNOTT: Sure, sure. Absolutely.</p> <p>11 Q. (By Mr. Huskison) All right. I want to</p> <p>12 make sure I'm asking the question correctly, I</p> <p>13 understanding the objection.</p> <p>14 The question I'm asking: You mentioned</p> <p>15 Jerome and Lamorn. Do you have any other children,</p> <p>16 godchildren or any of those at all, other than those</p> <p>17 two children or godchildren?</p> <p>18 And he's instructed you --</p> <p>19 MR. KNOTT: Yeah. I'm objecting based</p> <p>20 upon the previous grounds and instruct the witness</p> <p>21 not the answer at this point.</p> <p>22 MR. HUSKISON: Okay. That's fine.</p> <p>23 Q. (By Mr. Huskison) All right. Now,</p> <p>24 mentioned your parents are both deceased?</p> <p>25 A. Yes.</p>

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6 (Pages 21 to 24)

21	<p>1 Q. Have you ever filed for bankruptcy?</p> <p>2 A. No.</p> <p>3 Q. Any unemployment compensation?</p> <p>4 A. Nothing.</p> <p>5 Q. Any other government assistance that you</p> <p>6 might be on: Welfare, Medicare, Medicaid, any of</p> <p>7 that?</p> <p>8 A. No.</p> <p>9 Q. I always ask this; it's just something we</p> <p>10 want to know about: Do you have any criminal</p> <p>11 history? Have you ever been arrested for anything</p> <p>12 other than traffic tickets?</p> <p>13 A. No.</p> <p>14 Q. It follows that you've never been charged</p> <p>15 with a crime, correct?</p> <p>16 A. Correct.</p> <p>17 Q. Or convicted of one?</p> <p>18 A. Never convicted.</p> <p>19 Q. Okay. Now, other than this lawsuit that</p> <p>20 we're here about today, which is a breach of</p> <p>21 contract and other types of claims against Columbus</p> <p>22 Municipal District and Dr. Hickman, are you -- have</p> <p>23 you ever been involved in any other lawsuits?</p> <p>24 A. I'm in a lawsuit now, with -- against</p> <p>25 Monsanto and Copper and Brass in Illinois.</p>	23	<p>1 Q. Rock?</p> <p>2 A. Rock, R-O-C-K.</p> <p>3 Q. Okay. And was it -- in terms of when you</p> <p>4 graduated from college and got those degrees, was it</p> <p>5 right after you graduated; did you start teaching?</p> <p>6 A. After 1977.</p> <p>7 Q. That was your first job teaching?</p> <p>8 A. Yes.</p> <p>9 Q. Rock -- what did you teach there at Rock</p> <p>10 Junior High School?</p> <p>11 A. Math.</p> <p>12 Q. How long were you at Rock?</p> <p>13 A. 'Til June 1980.</p> <p>14 Q. And where do you go after that?</p> <p>15 A. East St. Louis Senior High School.</p> <p>16 Q. And you -- and it's good for the</p> <p>17 purpose -- you've got a memory of that, because</p> <p>18 you're telling me exactly where you were.</p> <p>19 Why did you leave Rock?</p> <p>20 A. Superintendent moved me to the high</p> <p>21 school.</p> <p>22 Q. Same school district?</p> <p>23 A. Same school district.</p> <p>24 Q. All right. So in 1980 you moved to East</p> <p>25 St. Louis Senior High School?</p>
22	<p>1 Q. And that's over emiss -- toxic emissions?</p> <p>2 A. Correct.</p> <p>3 Q. That's ongoing?</p> <p>4 A. Yes.</p> <p>5 Q. Any other lawsuits other than that one?</p> <p>6 You ever sued somebody over a job before?</p> <p>7 A. No.</p> <p>8 Q. Now, Mr. Smith, have you ever been sued</p> <p>9 before?</p> <p>10 A. No.</p> <p>11 Q. Okay. You've been -- been in the school</p> <p>12 systems for a long time?</p> <p>13 A. Correct.</p> <p>14 Q. Principals, teachers, different things?</p> <p>15 A. Uh-huh (affirmative response).</p> <p>16 Q. And you've never been sued in -- in that</p> <p>17 role in those jobs?</p> <p>18 A. No.</p> <p>19 Q. All right. Let's talk real briefly,</p> <p>20 hopefully briefly about your -- your work history,</p> <p>21 and it's lengthy. And that's good; that's what you</p> <p>22 want it to be.</p> <p>23 Now, do you remember when you -- what's</p> <p>24 the first school you started at?</p> <p>25 A. Rock Junior High School.</p>	24	<p>1 A. Yes.</p> <p>2 Q. That's where you grew up, hometown?</p> <p>3 A. Correct.</p> <p>4 Q. How long were you there at East St. Louis</p> <p>5 Senior High School?</p> <p>6 A. 2001.</p> <p>7 Q. It shows, on the things you provided, 21</p> <p>8 years, 1980 to 2001?</p> <p>9 A. Okay, yes.</p> <p>10 Q. What did you do -- what -- what were your</p> <p>11 jobs there?</p> <p>12 A. Math teacher.</p> <p>13 Q. Any particular grades or same grade the</p> <p>14 whole time? How -- how did that work?</p> <p>15 A. It was subject matter in high school.</p> <p>16 Q. What age groups were you teaching?</p> <p>17 A. Fourteen -- 15 through, probably, 18.</p> <p>18 Q. All right. June 2001. That's a 21-year</p> <p>19 period, if I -- from 1980 to 2001?</p> <p>20 A. Okay.</p> <p>21 Q. Any sort of employment issues during that</p> <p>22 21 years?</p> <p>23 MR. KNOTT: Object to the form of the</p> <p>24 question.</p> <p>25 Q. (By Mr. Huskison) Did you have any</p>

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25	<p>1 reprimands?</p> <p>2 MR. KNOTT: You can answer that question.</p> <p>3 A. No.</p> <p>4 Q. (By Mr. Huskison) Any time where you were</p> <p>5 asked to take a different position or a different</p> <p>6 class because of things that you may have done in</p> <p>7 the classroom?</p> <p>8 MR. KNOTT: Object to the form of the</p> <p>9 question. "Things you may have done?"</p> <p>10 MR. HUSKISON: You can answer if you</p> <p>11 understand the question; if you don't, you don't</p> <p>12 have to.</p> <p>13 MR. KNOTT: If you understand question.</p> <p>14 If you don't, you don't have to answer.</p> <p>15 A. No.</p> <p>16 Q. (By Mr. Huskison) Okay. It follows you</p> <p>17 had no reprimands during that 21-year period?</p> <p>18 A. Correct.</p> <p>19 Q. No suspensions?</p> <p>20 A. Correct.</p> <p>21 Q. Okay. Were you ever -- did you ever have</p> <p>22 any time where you were not working during that</p> <p>23 21-year period in that school district?</p> <p>24 A. No.</p> <p>25 Q. All right. After that -- where did you go</p>	27	<p>1 A. No. I was the assistant principal.</p> <p>2 Q. You may be giving me your boss, okay. You</p> <p>3 were assistant principal at the -- at Jefferson High</p> <p>4 School?</p> <p>5 A. Correct.</p> <p>6 Q. Is there any particular reason you left</p> <p>7 the middle school to go to the high school?</p> <p>8 A. The assistant superintendent and the</p> <p>9 superintendent stated they needed someone with high</p> <p>10 school experience to go to the high school, so they</p> <p>11 moved me.</p> <p>12 Q. You were agreeable to that move, or not?</p> <p>13 A. Yes.</p> <p>14 Q. That was -- it looks like you were there a</p> <p>15 year in that Jefferson High, as well?</p> <p>16 A. Correct.</p> <p>17 Q. During those times -- during those two</p> <p>18 years, did you have any reprimands?</p> <p>19 A. No.</p> <p>20 Q. Any suspensions?</p> <p>21 A. No.</p> <p>22 Q. Next, after Jefferson, it looks like you</p> <p>23 became principal at West Middle School?</p> <p>24 A. Correct.</p> <p>25 Q. Is that going back to where you were?</p>
26	<p>1 and -- after East St. Louis Senior High?</p> <p>2 A. School?</p> <p>3 Q. Uh-huh (affirmative response).</p> <p>4 A. West Middle School.</p> <p>5 Q. Say that again now.</p> <p>6 A. West Middle School.</p> <p>7 Q. Is that in the same school district?</p> <p>8 A. Rockford, Illinois.</p> <p>9 Q. Why did you leave East St. Louis in 19 --</p> <p>10 or in 2001?</p> <p>11 A. I got a chance to be the administrator.</p> <p>12 Q. So it was a promotion, correct?</p> <p>13 A. Yes.</p> <p>14 Q. What was your job going to be at West</p> <p>15 Middle School?</p> <p>16 A. Assistant principal.</p> <p>17 Q. All right. And looking -- and I'm looking</p> <p>18 at your interrogatory response, so maybe I can help</p> <p>19 you with some of these dates. West Middle, it says</p> <p>20 July 2001 to June of 2002. So you did one year</p> <p>21 there?</p> <p>22 A. Yes.</p> <p>23 Q. And where'd you go after that?</p> <p>24 A. Jefferson High School.</p> <p>25 Q. Assistant superintendent?</p>	28	<p>1 A. Went back to the school I start -- went</p> <p>2 back to the previous West, same school.</p> <p>3 Q. What was the reason you made that move?</p> <p>4 A. They moved me back to be the principal.</p> <p>5 Q. You did whatever they wanted you to do,</p> <p>6 basically? I understand.</p> <p>7 Now, it shows there that you were there</p> <p>8 for -- from July of 2003 to June of 2006. He's got</p> <p>9 it there. Is that correct?</p> <p>10 A. Correct.</p> <p>11 Q. Did you have any suspensions there?</p> <p>12 A. No.</p> <p>13 Q. Reprimands?</p> <p>14 A. No.</p> <p>15 Q. Okay. And from there you went to where?</p> <p>16 A. I think it's call Ellis Arts Academy.</p> <p>17 Q. As the -- what were you -- what was your</p> <p>18 job?</p> <p>19 A. I was a teacher.</p> <p>20 Q. Okay. Now, Mr. Smith, that seems to me to</p> <p>21 be, moving from a principal job to a teacher, a</p> <p>22 demotion?</p> <p>23 A. Correct.</p> <p>24 Q. Is that correct?</p> <p>25 A. Correct.</p>

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29	<p>1 Q. What was the reason for the demotion?</p> <p>2 Why -- why did they -- same school district, right?</p> <p>3 A. New superintendent.</p> <p>4 Q. Okay. Any other reason?</p> <p>5 A. That's all I was ever told.</p> <p>6 Q. Do you -- during that timeframe, when you</p> <p>7 moved from principal to a teacher, did you ever have</p> <p>8 any occasion where a child made a complaint or a</p> <p>9 parent of misappropriate con -- inappropriate</p> <p>10 conduct by you towards a child? Anything like that?</p> <p>11 A. From?</p> <p>12 Q. When you moved from a principal back to a</p> <p>13 teacher, was that part of the reason you may have</p> <p>14 moved?</p> <p>15 A. No.</p> <p>16 Q. Do you recall having any complaint from a</p> <p>17 parent about inappropriate conduct with you and a</p> <p>18 child?</p> <p>19 A. No.</p> <p>20 Q. So you deny that that happened, correct?</p> <p>21 A. From -- from West -- back -- from the</p> <p>22 middle school back to the elementary school?</p> <p>23 Q. Yes. Denied?</p> <p>24 A. Denied.</p> <p>25 Q. And the way you answered that, I want to</p>	31	<p>1 the contract was even formed. It's my understanding</p> <p>2 of what we've claimed.</p> <p>3 MR. HUSKISON: Right.</p> <p>4 MR. KNOTT: And --</p> <p>5 MR. HUSKISON: If was formed, and there --</p> <p>6 there's stuff called after -- after acquired, and if</p> <p>7 was formed and we learned of other -- of things that</p> <p>8 would have affected whether we would have formed it,</p> <p>9 I believe, we would have been able to end it at that</p> <p>10 point.</p> <p>11 MR. KNOTT: Right. And so far as of</p> <p>12 today, you guys have not put us on any notice in any</p> <p>13 way, shape or form through the process of discovery</p> <p>14 or pretrial disclosures of any type of allegation of</p> <p>15 that sort.</p> <p>16 MR. HUSKISON: Okay.</p> <p>17 MR. KNOTT: So because of that, we do</p> <p>18 object and instruct the witness not the answer.</p> <p>19 MR. HUSKISON: And what I want to do, just</p> <p>20 to be clear for the record is ask the question</p> <p>21 clearly and let you -- let you object --</p> <p>22 MR. KNOTT: Very good.</p> <p>23 MR. HICKMAN: If that's good.</p> <p>24 Q. (By Mr. Huskison) Now, we'll do the</p> <p>25 whole -- you were at Rockford -- in the Rockford</p>
30	<p>1 be clear.</p> <p>2 Do you -- in your time at Rockford, did</p> <p>3 you ever have a parent complain about inappropriate</p> <p>4 conduct by you with -- with their child?</p> <p>5 MR. KNOTT: I object, counsel. Again,</p> <p>6 same previous objection. It's not reasonably</p> <p>7 calculated to lead to discoverable evidence.</p> <p>8 MR. HUSKISON: Now, I disagree here. If</p> <p>9 he had inappropriate conduct, if he had some parent</p> <p>10 claiming that I think that's relevant. He's going</p> <p>11 to come work at a school district.</p> <p>12 And the reason I think it's relevant, he's</p> <p>13 not only -- as -- as to things that are in his</p> <p>14 application about when he -- when he was attempted</p> <p>15 to be hired there and things that may affect their</p> <p>16 ability to end the contract if they had known about</p> <p>17 some of this stuff -- something as serious as that.</p> <p>18 I think that is relevant.</p> <p>19 MR. KNOTT: And I understand that. The</p> <p>20 issues before the court are not -- or -- or does not</p> <p>21 include -- do not include instances that will</p> <p>22 discharge him from a contract. I can do -- I would</p> <p>23 understand if he was performing a contract and</p> <p>24 something developed that discharged him from the</p> <p>25 contract, but I think the issue is whether or not</p>	32	<p>1 School District from 2001 to 2007, correct?</p> <p>2 A. Yes.</p> <p>3 Q. And you changed different jobs. You were</p> <p>4 principal -- principal, assistant principal, what --</p> <p>5 in some form, and then you went back to being a</p> <p>6 teacher, correct?</p> <p>7 A. Yes.</p> <p>8 Q. Okay. And my question was: In terms of</p> <p>9 your time there, were you aware of any parent</p> <p>10 complaints about you and inappropriate conduct --</p> <p>11 contact or conduct with a child?</p> <p>12 MR. KNOTT: Again, I'm objecting based</p> <p>13 upon grounds that were given, and instruct the</p> <p>14 witness not to answer; however, if it later becomes</p> <p>15 relevant or would lead to relevant evidence, we may</p> <p>16 change our minds at that point.</p> <p>17 MR. HUSKISON: Thank you.</p> <p>18 Q. (By Mr. Huskison) All right. Now, you</p> <p>19 went from a principal -- excuse me -- yeah, a</p> <p>20 principal at West Middle School to a -- to a teacher</p> <p>21 at Ellis Arts?</p> <p>22 A. Yes.</p> <p>23 Q. Did I get that right? Okay. And you did</p> <p>24 that for a year?</p> <p>25 A. Yes.</p>

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33	<p>1 Q. Why did you leave at that point? Why did</p> <p>2 you leave Rockford?</p> <p>3 A. I moved back home.</p> <p>4 Q. How far is Rockford from your home?</p> <p>5 A. Four hours.</p> <p>6 Q. All right. And was the reason that you</p> <p>7 left to move back home or was it better pay? What</p> <p>8 was the reason you -- you left Rockford?</p> <p>9 A. To move back home and retire.</p> <p>10 Q. Okay. You were at retirement stage at</p> <p>11 that point. You'd had been in there a pretty long</p> <p>12 time, that's right.</p> <p>13 Now -- but you went -- you moved back to</p> <p>14 retire, but you actually went to work, correct?</p> <p>15 A. Right.</p> <p>16 Q. And where'd you go to work after that?</p> <p>17 A. Lincoln Middle School.</p> <p>18 Q. And that's in East St. Louis?</p> <p>19 A. East St. Louis School District.</p> <p>20 Q. You went -- you were a principal there or</p> <p>21 were you -- what were you there, teacher?</p> <p>22 A. I was a teacher.</p> <p>23 Q. What were you teaching at that time?</p> <p>24 A. Math and science.</p> <p>25 Q. After Lincoln Middle School -- looks like</p>	35	<p>1 What did you do after May of 2011?</p> <p>2 Retired?</p> <p>3 A. Retired.</p> <p>4 Q. Okay. There are a few more lists of</p> <p>5 things that you've done since retirement. Can you</p> <p>6 tell me about those? Should be --</p> <p>7 A. I went to -- I worked at McKinley Middle</p> <p>8 School. I think it was called McKinley Middle</p> <p>9 School or McKinley Gifted Academy, something like</p> <p>10 that. I was a permanent sub.</p> <p>11 Q. Okay. So it was just part-time deal?</p> <p>12 A. Like 2000 -- I -- I think I started in</p> <p>13 December of '11 and went to the '12 school year.</p> <p>14 Q. Okay. Now -- so at that point you were</p> <p>15 retired and just working some part-time things?</p> <p>16 A. Yes.</p> <p>17 Q. And is that what you continued to do up</p> <p>18 until August of 2014 when Dr. Hickman and you talked</p> <p>19 about this new job at -- at Columbus down here in</p> <p>20 Mississippi?</p> <p>21 A. I'm not sure I understand.</p> <p>22 Q. Did you work any full-time jobs after</p> <p>23 Rockford, before you were off -- before you had the</p> <p>24 discussions with Dr. Hickman?</p> <p>25 A. Ferguson School District was a full-time</p>
34	<p>1 there for a year -- you went to East St. Louis</p> <p>2 Senior High?</p> <p>3 A. Correct.</p> <p>4 Q. What were you teaching there?</p> <p>5 A. I was the assistant principal.</p> <p>6 Q. Okay. And you did that for another year?</p> <p>7 A. Two years.</p> <p>8 Q. Two years. Okay. And what'd you do after</p> <p>9 that? We're up to about 2010, 2011.</p> <p>10 A. Exactly. Wydetter Younge Middle School.</p> <p>11 COURT REPORTER: What middle school?</p> <p>12 A. Wydetter, W-Y-D-E-T-T-E-R, Younge,</p> <p>13 Y-O-U-N-G with an "E" on the end.</p> <p>14 Q. (By Mr. Huskison) Now, at that school</p> <p>15 what was -- what was your job?</p> <p>16 A. Assistant principal.</p> <p>17 Q. After that, East -- that's East St. Louis</p> <p>18 School District -- it looks like you went into the</p> <p>19 St. Louis Public School System?</p> <p>20 A. I retired.</p> <p>21 Q. You retired. So you weren't -- what --</p> <p>22 I'm --</p> <p>23 A. 2011.</p> <p>24 Q. May of 2011. Take a look at -- you can</p> <p>25 look at that. That's fine.</p>	36	<p>1 job.</p> <p>2 Q. Okay. And that was a year? Did you work</p> <p>3 there a year?</p> <p>4 A. It was one year.</p> <p>5 Q. And what'd you do at that school?</p> <p>6 A. I was a math -- instructional coach.</p> <p>7 MR. KNOTT: Counsel, for the record, you</p> <p>8 said "after Rockford." Did you mean after East St.</p> <p>9 Louis School District?</p> <p>10 MR. HUSKISON: I did. I'm sorry.</p> <p>11 MR. KNOTT: Okay. All right. It's -- his</p> <p>12 responses, then -- would be the same response to</p> <p>13 that as well.</p> <p>14 A. Yes.</p> <p>15 Q. (By Mr. Huskison) Okay. And then after</p> <p>16 the Ferguson School District, where'd you go then?</p> <p>17 It looks like back to East St. Louis doing</p> <p>18 something.</p> <p>19 A. East St. Louis. Basically, I was either</p> <p>20 homebound or part-time.</p> <p>21 Q. What do you mean -- what do you mean,</p> <p>22 "homebound?"</p> <p>23 A. Homebound is a teacher who goes to the</p> <p>24 students who can't go to school.</p> <p>25 Q. Okay. You did that for little over a</p>

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37	<p>1 year, it looks like, right? Am I adding that right?</p> <p>2 January of '14 to June of '15?</p> <p>3 A. No. That's the one -- that should be</p> <p>4 January '15, through June of '15.</p> <p>5 Q. Okay. That's fine. So you had about a</p> <p>6 year-and-a-half where you weren't doing anything but</p> <p>7 retirement, correct?</p> <p>8 A. I think that's right.</p> <p>9 Q. Something like that.</p> <p>10 Okay. After the homebound part-time work</p> <p>11 there at East St. Louis to June '15, it shows St.</p> <p>12 Louis Public Schools. What'd you do then?</p> <p>13 A. That's now.</p> <p>14 Q. Okay. What'd you -- what are you doing</p> <p>15 now?</p> <p>16 A. I'm a math teacher.</p> <p>17 Q. Okay. Full-time?</p> <p>18 A. Yes.</p> <p>19 Q. When you teach math full-time in the St.</p> <p>20 Louis Public School District, are you still able</p> <p>21 to -- to draw your full retirement?</p> <p>22 A. Yes.</p> <p>23 Q. It's Illinois, isn't it? It's Illinois?</p> <p>24 A. Yes.</p> <p>25 Q. Now, when you left Rockford -- excuse me.</p>	39	<p>1 Q. You had. And how did that come about?</p> <p>2 Did you go to their wedding?</p> <p>3 A. Yes, I was at the wedding.</p> <p>4 Q. Okay. When was he married to your niece;</p> <p>5 do you remember?</p> <p>6 A. What you want, the exact date?</p> <p>7 Q. Do you know a year? In relation to August</p> <p>8 of 2014, when you were talking to Dr. Hickman about</p> <p>9 a job at the Columbus School District, do you</p> <p>10 remember when they were married?</p> <p>11 A. They are married, already married.</p> <p>12 Q. Okay. They were already married at that</p> <p>13 point?</p> <p>14 A. Correct.</p> <p>15 Q. Okay. After they married -- you attended</p> <p>16 the wedding, correct?</p> <p>17 A. Yes.</p> <p>18 Q. Did you maintain any sort of relationship</p> <p>19 with Dr. Hickman, talk on the phone, see each other,</p> <p>20 anything like that?</p> <p>21 A. Yes.</p> <p>22 Q. Okay. When -- how -- how many -- for</p> <p>23 example, in a year period, how many times would you,</p> <p>24 in person, see Dr. Hickman, the best you recall?</p> <p>25 A. Probably -- event you say?</p>
38	<p>1 My understanding is -- did you say you retired after</p> <p>2 East St. Louis in 2011?</p> <p>3 A. In 2011.</p> <p>4 Q. Was that a forced retirement or did you</p> <p>5 retire on your own?</p> <p>6 A. I retired on my own.</p> <p>7 Q. Voluntary?</p> <p>8 A. Yes.</p> <p>9 Q. Were you asked to retire?</p> <p>10 A. No.</p> <p>11 Q. Now, I think we've talked about your</p> <p>12 employment history. It was pretty lengthy. And so</p> <p>13 I -- is there anything that you can think of you --</p> <p>14 about your employment history that you want to tell</p> <p>15 me, that we haven't covered? Anything at all?</p> <p>16 THE WITNESS: I'm not sure what he's</p> <p>17 asking.</p> <p>18 Q. (By Mr. Huskison) Have you got anything</p> <p>19 else you want to add that we haven't discussed about</p> <p>20 your employment history? No, I don't think you do.</p> <p>21 Okay. All right. When did you meet -- or</p> <p>22 -- Dr. Hickman? Have you ever met him face-to-face</p> <p>23 before all these discussions about a job at Columbus</p> <p>24 School District? You ever met him in person?</p> <p>25 A. Yes.</p>	40	<p>1 Q. Yes, see him in person.</p> <p>2 A. A year, probably twice.</p> <p>3 Q. Okay. So y'all saw each other twice --</p> <p>4 twice a year, roughly, correct?</p> <p>5 A. I can't be exact.</p> <p>6 Q. Okay. That's fine.</p> <p>7 Now, were you friends with him, anything</p> <p>8 like that? I mean, did -- or did you just know him</p> <p>9 because he was married to your niece? Were you</p> <p>10 friends with him at all? Did you talk to him on the</p> <p>11 phone?</p> <p>12 MR. KNOTT: Answer the best way you can.</p> <p>13 A. We weren't friends.</p> <p>14 Q. (By Mr. Huskison) Okay. Did you talk to</p> <p>15 him on the phone at all on a -- on a consistent</p> <p>16 basis? Did you talk to him once a week?</p> <p>17 A. Oh, no.</p> <p>18 Q. Okay. It wasn't something where you were</p> <p>19 talking to Philip Hickman on the phone once a week,</p> <p>20 talking about his job, what he's doing, anything</p> <p>21 like that?</p> <p>22 A. No.</p> <p>23 Q. Okay. Now, how did it come about that you</p> <p>24 all discussed a job with the Columbus School</p> <p>25 District, the reason we're here?</p>

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41	<p>1 A. He called me.</p> <p>2 Q. Okay. Do you remember when he called you?</p> <p>3 The school year starts in August.</p> <p>4 A. It would had to have been late July, early</p> <p>5 August.</p> <p>6 Q. Okay. Did you remember, he call you on</p> <p>7 your cellphone?</p> <p>8 A. Yes.</p> <p>9 Q. Okay. Tell me what you all first</p> <p>10 discussed about a job with the Columbus Municipal</p> <p>11 School District.</p> <p>12 A. He wanted me to come down and work with</p> <p>13 him in the school system. He had just gotten hired</p> <p>14 as the superintendent, and he wanted me to come down</p> <p>15 and work with him.</p> <p>16 Q. Okay. He had that discussion with you</p> <p>17 over the phone?</p> <p>18 A. Yes.</p> <p>19 Q. What were you doing professionally at that</p> <p>20 time work-wise?</p> <p>21 A. It's the summer, so probably nothing.</p> <p>22 Q. Okay. And you had already retired?</p> <p>23 A. Correct.</p> <p>24 Q. What was your response when he called?</p> <p>25 A. "What do you need me to do?"</p>	43	<p>1 calls first; was it more than five phone calls?</p> <p>2 A. Probably so.</p> <p>3 Q. Okay. And y'all texted back and forth</p> <p>4 about it as well, correct?</p> <p>5 A. Correct.</p> <p>6 Q. Were you interested in coming to Columbus?</p> <p>7 A. When he said he needed help.</p> <p>8 Q. Had you ever been to Mississippi before?</p> <p>9 A. Never to Mississippi.</p> <p>10 Q. Tell you what, let's look at some of</p> <p>11 these -- let's look at some of these text messages.</p> <p>12 MR. HUSKISON: Do you have them?</p> <p>13 MR. KNOTT: I do have them, yes.</p> <p>14 MR. HUSKISON: Were you able to review</p> <p>15 them with him? I --</p> <p>16 MR. KNOTT: Yes, we have.</p> <p>17 MR. HUSKISON: Now the ones you got,</p> <p>18 they've got Bates numbers on there, don't they?</p> <p>19 MR. KNOTT: They do. You want to switch?</p> <p>20 MR. HUSKISON: Yes. I'll give them back</p> <p>21 to you.</p> <p>22 MR. KNOTT: Sure.</p> <p>23 Q. (By Mr. Huskison) Okay. Looking at the</p> <p>24 first page of that, Mr. Smith, looks like Dr.</p> <p>25 Hickman and you discussed a job in Texas. Is that</p>
42	<p>1 Q. And what did he tell you?</p> <p>2 A. He said, "I need someone to help with this</p> <p>3 Columbus School system," basically. The exact words</p> <p>4 I can't quote, because I can't remember the exact</p> <p>5 words.</p> <p>6 Q. Did he -- did you know what he wanted you</p> <p>7 to do in particular of a particular job?</p> <p>8 A. As far as job --</p> <p>9 Q. Uh-huh (affirmative response).</p> <p>10 A. -- title?</p> <p>11 Q. Well, not necessarily title. What did he</p> <p>12 tell you that -- functions -- what did he want</p> <p>13 you -- did he tell what he was planning on you</p> <p>14 doing?</p> <p>15 A. Not right in the beginning.</p> <p>16 Q. Okay. Just "help" was the word he used?</p> <p>17 A. Basically.</p> <p>18 Q. All right. How many discussions did --</p> <p>19 did you have with him about that? Do you remember,</p> <p>20 more than one?</p> <p>21 A. More than one.</p> <p>22 Q. More than five?</p> <p>23 A. We including text messages?</p> <p>24 Q. First phone message. Let's talk about</p> <p>25 phone -- phone calls. Then I'll ask texts. Phone</p>	44	<p>1 what you -- look at that second block.</p> <p>2 A. Yes.</p> <p>3 Q. Okay. So that was Texas; that didn't</p> <p>4 really relate to the Mississippi situation?</p> <p>5 A. No.</p> <p>6 Q. Okay. It looks like the initial -- your</p> <p>7 initial one up there is -- is that a -- that's a</p> <p>8 message from you, "What was the job title you said I</p> <p>9 could do in Houston?" Is that a message from you?</p> <p>10 A. Yes.</p> <p>11 Q. Okay. So you and Dr. Hickman had talked</p> <p>12 about you coming to work in Houston, Texas as well?</p> <p>13 A. I think the prelude here was at</p> <p>14 Thanksgiving.</p> <p>15 Q. Okay.</p> <p>16 A. And he may have said something to the</p> <p>17 effect that "we have jobs and you can be working in</p> <p>18 Houston." And Thanksgiving ended, so December was</p> <p>19 coming, I was like, "Okay. What was the job I could</p> <p>20 have done in" --</p> <p>21 Q. You were checking out -- you responding or</p> <p>22 calling him, or making contact with him about a job</p> <p>23 y'all had discussed at Thanksgiving?</p> <p>24 A. Correct.</p> <p>25 Q. Now -- and I think that -- Dr. Hickman</p>

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45	<p>1 has -- has passed me a note to the effect, you all 2 got -- as a family got together over Thanksgiving? 3 A. Yeah. 4 Q. Is that a yearly event? 5 A. Yes. 6 Q. Okay. So you would see him every 7 Thanksgiving, at least? 8 A. Once he married. 9 Q. Once he married into the family. 10 Okay. All right. Now, did you ever have 11 occasion -- I think I asked you this, but I want to 12 be clear. Did you ever have occasion where you came 13 to Dr. Hickman's house in Mississippi? Did you ever 14 come to his house in Mississippi? 15 A. In Mississippi? 16 Q. Uh-huh (affirmative response). 17 A. I've never been to his house in 18 Mississippi. 19 Q. Did you ever go to his house in Texas? 20 A. I've been to his house in Texas. 21 Q. Okay. Now, looking through those text 22 messages -- and we're looking at text messages 23 now -- July 13th, see that? 24 A. Yes, sir. 25 Q. Is that from him to you, "call me when you</p>	47	<p>1 but they report to someone which would be you, if 2 you are okay with that." 3 Q. Okay. So there he's -- he's getting a 4 little specific about what he wants you to do there? 5 A. Correct. 6 MR. HUSKISON: Okay. Tell you what, for 7 purposes -- I'm going to go ahead and mark yours. 8 Let's mark these as Exhibit I. 9 (Exhibit I marked for identification.) 10 MR. HUSKISON: And just for the record, 11 what we've marked as Exhibit I is text messages 12 between Mr. Smith and Dr. Hickman over a range of 13 time, and they're Bates stamped 016 through 026. 14 Q. (By Mr. Huskison) All right. Let's see. 15 Let's look on further, Mr. Smith. What is the 16 certification that he was talking to you about, do 17 you remember? 18 A. I needed Mississippi certification. 19 Q. What was the process for you to get that? 20 A. Fill out -- fill out an application, and 21 the application, it's retrieving documents from 22 Illinois and from where I had worked previously to 23 complete the application. 24 Q. Was it an online application? 25 A. I'm sorry?</p>
46	<p>1 can?" 2 A. Yes, sir. 3 Q. And there's an 11-day drop there or 4 separation time. It says, "Give me a call." Do you 5 remember -- is that the timeframe where you -- you 6 all first started talking about a job in Columbus? 7 A. End of July, yes. 8 Q. Okay. All right. Coming on over to the 9 next page, July 28th, "Let me know," and then "I 10 thought you were going to call me." That's him 11 texting you, correct? 12 A. Yes, sir. 13 Q. And it looks like you provide an e-mail 14 address; is that right? 15 A. Correct. 16 Q. All right. On July 29th, what is he 17 requesting you to do there? 18 A. You want me to read this? 19 Q. Yeah, or just tell me from what you 20 remember, take a look at it, either way. 21 A. "Don't forget to apply for your 22 certification. It's simple. Also, you want to also 23 supervise the apartments and the persons over 24 homeless and ELL, the person over federal programs. 25 They're good people, who run their programs well,</p>	48	<p>1 Q. Was it online? Did you do it from where 2 you lived and sent it in? 3 A. Correct. 4 Q. Okay. And so you went through that -- you 5 began that process? 6 A. Yes, sir. 7 Q. It looks like you're telling him there 8 it's going to take you a little time because you've 9 got to gather information, right? Am I reading that 10 right? 11 A. Yes, sir. 12 Q. Okay. All right. And then moving to 13 July 30th, you have some questions further -- more 14 questions about what you're going to be doing. 15 Student management behavior, what the programs are, 16 that kind of thing; is that right? 17 A. Yes. 18 Q. Okay. And then you're -- you're still 19 waiting certification information on August 2nd? 20 A. Yes. 21 Q. Okay. Looks like on August the 5th, on 22 that next page, it's 019 -- you over there? You 23 with me? In addition to certification, he asked you 24 about applying, sending an application to the 25 Columbus School District, correct?</p>

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13 (Pages 49 to 52)

49	<p>1 A. Yes.</p> <p>2 Q. Okay. Did you do that?</p> <p>3 A. Yes.</p> <p>4 Q. All right. Let's take -- hold off on</p> <p>5 that. Let's get that application real quick.</p> <p>6 MR. HUSKISON: We'll mark this as two.</p> <p>7 (Exhibit 2 marked for identification.)</p> <p>8 Q. (By Mr. Huskison) I'll let you look at</p> <p>9 that one. Is this the application that you filled</p> <p>10 out, or at a least copy of it, to the -- for the</p> <p>11 Columbus School District job? Take a look at it.</p> <p>12 (Off the record.)</p> <p>13 A. Yes.</p> <p>14 Q. (By Mr. Huskison) It is? And I note in</p> <p>15 there, Mr. Smith, on the third page of it, there's</p> <p>16 some handwritten notes. That's not yours, is it?</p> <p>17 A. The handwritten notes are not.</p> <p>18 Q. Somebody else wrote those in there.</p> <p>19 Okay. Did you provide a full and accurate</p> <p>20 response and -- and information in that</p> <p>21 application -- did you file -- provide accurate</p> <p>22 information in that application?</p> <p>23 A. The only thing which I saw is that it</p> <p>24 states that I left Rockford in 2006 and that should</p> <p>25 be 2007.</p>
50	<p>1 Q. Okay. Just missed it by a year?</p> <p>2 A. Correct.</p> <p>3 Q. Okay. Now, looking down in background</p> <p>4 information, which is, what, the third page, have</p> <p>5 you ever -- the second question there -- "have you</p> <p>6 ever -- have you offered a resignation to an</p> <p>7 employer in lieu of termination." Have you ever</p> <p>8 done that?</p> <p>9 A. No, no.</p> <p>10 Q. Okay. And that was your response,</p> <p>11 correct?</p> <p>12 A. Correct.</p> <p>13 Q. All right. Have you ever been non-renewed</p> <p>14 or terminated from a certified position?</p> <p>15 A. No.</p> <p>16 Q. When you retired at East St. Louis, were</p> <p>17 you going to be non-renewed? Did you know</p> <p>18 whether -- do you know whether you were going to be</p> <p>19 non-renewed or not when you retired at East St.</p> <p>20 Louis -- from East St. Louis?</p> <p>21 A. Would I have been...</p> <p>22 Q. Were you -- were you told that you may be</p> <p>23 non-renewed?</p> <p>24 A. No.</p> <p>25 Q. Okay. Have you ever been discharged or</p>
51	<p>1 asked to resign from a prior position?</p> <p>2 A. No.</p> <p>3 MR. KNOTT: Counsel, was that a question</p> <p>4 or --</p> <p>5 MR. HUSKISON: Yeah, I'm --</p> <p>6 MR. KNOTT: -- are you reading the form?</p> <p>7 MR. HUSKISON: -- I'm reading the form and</p> <p>8 want to make sure those are accurate answers?</p> <p>9 MR. KNOTT: I understand.</p> <p>10 Q. (By Mr. Huskison) And your testimony is</p> <p>11 that they are? Those are accurate answers, correct?</p> <p>12 A. Yes.</p> <p>13 MR. HUSKISON: All right. We've marked</p> <p>14 that as Exhibit 2, correct?</p> <p>15 Q. (By Mr. Huskison) All right. Now, what's</p> <p>16 the date of that application, Mr. Smith? Looks like</p> <p>17 August 5th? Right up there on the --</p> <p>18 A. Creation date?</p> <p>19 Q. Uh-huh (affirmative response).</p> <p>20 A. August 5.</p> <p>21 Q. Yeah. And that corresponds with when you</p> <p>22 got the text message from Dr. Hickman about get that</p> <p>23 application in, doesn't it?</p> <p>24 A. Yes.</p> <p>25 Q. Same day, looks like? Okay. So you got</p>
52	<p>1 that done.</p> <p>2 Tell me what you remember -- at that</p> <p>3 point, did you have your Mississippi certification</p> <p>4 on the August 5th?</p> <p>5 A. No.</p> <p>6 Q. Didn't have that yet.</p> <p>7 Okay. What do you remember next happening</p> <p>8 with the job process in Columbus?</p> <p>9 A. I'm not certain I'm understanding that</p> <p>10 question.</p> <p>11 Q. From August 5th -- the board -- let me</p> <p>12 tell this -- I'll ask it this way. The board</p> <p>13 meeting where you were considered was August the</p> <p>14 11th.</p> <p>15 A. Okay.</p> <p>16 Q. So about a six-day time period from when</p> <p>17 that application got in to the board meeting.</p> <p>18 Do you remember anything during that time,</p> <p>19 during that six days, discussions with Dr. Hickman,</p> <p>20 contact from anybody from Columbus, anything like</p> <p>21 that?</p> <p>22 A. I had never heard from anybody from</p> <p>23 Columbus.</p> <p>24 Q. Okay. Your only contact was Dr. Hickman?</p> <p>25 A. Yes.</p>

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53	<p>1 Q. Okay. Yeah, look -- take a look at those</p> <p>2 text messages. I see in there, on 20 and 21, he</p> <p>3 requests that you provide additional information,</p> <p>4 your age and Social Security Number; is that right?</p> <p>5 Do you remember that?</p> <p>6 A. Oh, right --</p> <p>7 MR. KNOTT: What date is that? I'm sorry.</p> <p>8 MR. HUSKISON: It looks like August 5th is</p> <p>9 what I gather.</p> <p>10 Q. (By Mr. Huskison) Do you remember Dr.</p> <p>11 Hickman requesting that information from you?</p> <p>12 A. Yes.</p> <p>13 Q. And do you remember seeing that photo or</p> <p>14 whatever it is of -- of that, where you used that</p> <p>15 information? Do you remember seeing that if, you</p> <p>16 don't?</p> <p>17 A. I remember getting this.</p> <p>18 Q. Okay. All right. On August 5th, you</p> <p>19 asked him also about "do I" note that I -- looking</p> <p>20 on Page 22 there.</p> <p>21 A. Correct.</p> <p>22 Q. "Do I have a relative currently employed</p> <p>23 with CMSC," and he told you to put "yes," correct?</p> <p>24 A. Yes.</p> <p>25 Q. And then he's texting with you about the</p>	55	<p>1 certification, correct?</p> <p>2 A. Correct.</p> <p>3 Q. And he sends you a copy of newspaper</p> <p>4 article; that's what it looks like; is that right?</p> <p>5 A. Yes.</p> <p>6 Q. Did you read that newspaper article?</p> <p>7 A. I saw the article.</p> <p>8 Q. Did you see the concerns that were going</p> <p>9 on within the school district about your hire?</p> <p>10 A. Yes.</p> <p>11 Q. Potentially hiring you, correct? Tell me</p> <p>12 about any phone discussions you had with Dr. Hickman</p> <p>13 at that point, after seeing the newspaper article?</p> <p>14 A. After seeing the newspaper article?</p> <p>15 Q. Did you talk with him on the phone?</p> <p>16 A. I think the phone conversation would have</p> <p>17 been to the point of I need -- that's when the</p> <p>18 resignation part came up.</p> <p>19 Q. Okay. Tell me what you remember about</p> <p>20 that.</p> <p>21 A. He was asking me to resign; I was not</p> <p>22 certain as to why.</p> <p>23 Q. Did he ask you to resign or decline the</p> <p>24 position? Do you remember which words -- what words</p> <p>25 did he use?</p>
54	<p>1 board meeting, voting to hire you, correct?</p> <p>2 That's on Page 23. I'm sorry. I'm going</p> <p>3 a little fast.</p> <p>4 A. Yes.</p> <p>5 Q. As he was texting and doing all the</p> <p>6 texting back and forth, were y'all talking on the</p> <p>7 phone as well during this timeframe or was it all</p> <p>8 text -- text messages?</p> <p>9 A. As best as I can recall.</p> <p>10 Q. It was just text messages?</p> <p>11 A. Text messages.</p> <p>12 Q. Do you remember any other text messages</p> <p>13 during this timeframe, other than what you're</p> <p>14 looking at over there, best you remember? Do you</p> <p>15 remember any others, other than the ones you're</p> <p>16 looking at?</p> <p>17 A. From him?</p> <p>18 Q. Yes.</p> <p>19 A. No.</p> <p>20 Q. Okay. All right. Then we come down on</p> <p>21 August 12th, 23. I saw my -- I think this is from</p> <p>22 you: "Saw my name in the board report. Thank you</p> <p>23 for considering me. I believe I have everything in,</p> <p>24 the last piece yesterday." And then you referenced</p> <p>25 the lady in the state -- that's talking about</p>	56	<p>1 A. I can't be exactly sure which word.</p> <p>2 Q. Okay. Now, at that point you knew the</p> <p>3 board had considered you and --</p> <p>4 A. Yes.</p> <p>5 Q. -- and voted, as you -- as you talked</p> <p>6 about. And had anything else been done, other than</p> <p>7 that by the board that you know of?</p> <p>8 MR. KNOTT: Object to the form of the</p> <p>9 question. Anything else by the board?</p> <p>10 Q. (By Mr. Huskison) Yeah. Did you know of</p> <p>11 any other actions taken by the board, other than</p> <p>12 what was in -- in those newspaper articles about</p> <p>13 voting to hire you? Do you know anything else that</p> <p>14 the board did? He can't answer. This is -- this</p> <p>15 is -- if you know.</p> <p>16 THE WITNESS: Oh, am I allowed to answer</p> <p>17 that? Yes.</p> <p>18 Q (By Mr. Huskison) Yeah, do you know of --</p> <p>19 A. No, I know of anything -- no.</p> <p>20 Q. Okay. But you'd read the newspaper</p> <p>21 article where there were some concerns?</p> <p>22 A. Yes.</p> <p>23 Q. What do you recall the newspaper</p> <p>24 article -- about what was said in the newspaper</p> <p>25 article?</p>

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1 A. The concerns that I recall were from --
2 probably from the comment section.
3 Q. Okay. That's where you saw most of the
4 concerns?
5 A. I think it is a comment where the people
6 make comments.
7 Q. About hiring a relative?
8 A. Yes.
9 MR. HUSKISON: Let's do this. Go ahead
10 and mark that as the next...
11 (Exhibit 3 marked for identification.)
12 Q. (By Mr. Huskison) All right. Let me show
13 you that one. This is from your -- you provided
14 this one. The date on there looks like -- is it --
15 we've just marked, as Exhibit 3, a newspaper article
16 from the local Columbus newspaper. It looks like
17 it's an article from Sarah Fowler dated August 12th.
18 Can you read that? It's hard to see. Do
19 you see the date on there? Am I reading that right?
20 MR. KNOTT: August 12th, right there.
21 A. Oh, okay.
22 Q. (By Mr. Huskison) Correct?
23 A. Yes.
24 Q. Is this the article that you saw, Mr.
25 Smith?

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1 A. Yes.
2 Q. Okay. And you -- and throughout that
3 article, it talks about board members not knowing
4 that you were kin or a relative of Dr. Hickman and
5 being concerned about that. Do you see that?
6 A. Okay. Yes.
7 Q. Okay. So you knew at that point there
8 were concerns from the board?
9 A. Yes.
10 Q. Okay. Now, when you talk -- the next time
11 you discussed it with Dr. Hickman was over the phone
12 or was it during these text messages?
13 These look pretty -- the text messages
14 look pretty limited. It says, "Yes, sir, I already
15 read the entire article." So you acknowledged
16 reading the article, correct?
17 A. Correct.
18 Q. All right. And then, you told -- I think
19 you testified just a minute ago -- I want to be
20 clear about it -- that you had a phone call with Dr.
21 Hickman?
22 A. Yes.
23 Q. And he asked you to either resign or
24 decline the position; you don't remember which?
25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. Okay. And what was your response to him?
2 A. I wanted to come to Columbus, and I told
3 him I would come to Columbus to address their
4 concerns.
5 Q. Okay. What did he tell you about that?
6 Did he respond in any way?
7 A. The exact words I can't recall, but it was
8 like -- the impression was "that's not a good idea."
9 Q. You understood from his discussions with
10 him and from that -- and from the -- let's take it
11 first. You understood from discussions with him
12 that he was taking a lot of flack for what he had
13 done? Did you understand that, from pushing that
14 recommendation through the board to hire you? Did
15 you understand that from him, that he was taking a
16 lot of flack for that?
17 A. I didn't hear that.
18 Q. You didn't? Did you understand that at
19 all from the newspaper article?
20 A. That he was taking flack?
21 Q. Yeah, he was under a little bit of
22 pressure about that? You didn't understand that to
23 be the case?
24 A. I -- I think that I was probably just --
25 they were just disappointed that he hired a

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1 relative. Pressure-wise, I didn't --
2 Q. Didn't --
3 A. -- know how much pressure he may have been
4 under, no.
5 Q. But he asked you to decline or resign?
6 A. Yes.
7 Q. Did he tell you why?
8 A. Exact words?
9 Q. Yeah, best you remember.
10 A. I can't recall exactly why he wanted me to
11 resign, and I think that's why --
12 Q. Did you ever tell him that you were
13 agreeable to decline a then offer?
14 A. No.
15 Q. Did you ever -- so you deny that you told
16 him that, never declined the offer? You never
17 declined the offer?
18 A. I never declined the offer.
19 Q. Do you ever -- do you re -- did you ever
20 tell him, "I understand you're under a lot of
21 pressure. I don't want you to have to deal with
22 this in your first job. I'll back off?" Do you
23 recall saying anything like that to Dr. Hickman?
24 A. No.
25 Q. Okay. All right. Let's look through the

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16 (Pages 61 to 64)

61	<p>1 rest of these text messages and we'll move on.</p> <p>2 Now, on August 13th, looks like a message</p> <p>3 from you to him, "I couldn't get a ticket at a rate</p> <p>4 I wanted to pay." This is your efforts to come to</p> <p>5 Columbus; is that right?</p> <p>6 A. Correct.</p> <p>7 Q. "Got caught trying get some things done</p> <p>8 here. I will, however, be in Kansas City this</p> <p>9 weekend."</p> <p>10 A. Uh-huh (affirmative response).</p> <p>11 Q. What was the point of you going -- being</p> <p>12 in Kansas City?</p> <p>13 A. I was going to visit.</p> <p>14 Q. Visit who?</p> <p>15 A. My sister.</p> <p>16 Q. Okay. And we've already -- she lives</p> <p>17 there in Kansas City. Was -- was Dr. Hickman going</p> <p>18 to be up there as well?</p> <p>19 A. I didn't know that at that time, but he --</p> <p>20 he said he was going to -- he told me he -- he was</p> <p>21 going to be in Kansas City, that he would be -- he</p> <p>22 said he would be in Kansas City.</p> <p>23 Q. And then you tell him, "I couldn't get a</p> <p>24 ticket at a rate" -- we just talked about that.</p> <p>25 "Should talk then if you can work me in." At that</p>	63	<p>1 16th, "Not at -- not at a festival. Moving around</p> <p>2 the city. What time do your activities start?"</p> <p>3 Did you, in fact, come to Kansas City?</p> <p>4 A. I was in Kansas City.</p> <p>5 Q. Who were there -- who did you drive over</p> <p>6 there with?</p> <p>7 A. I rode the train.</p> <p>8 Q. Did anybody come with you?</p> <p>9 A. I rode my myself.</p> <p>10 Q. Okay. So you didn't have a brother or</p> <p>11 anybody to -- a brother or anybody with you?</p> <p>12 A. No.</p> <p>13 Q. Okay. Came to visit your sister?</p> <p>14 A. Relatives.</p> <p>15 Q. Did you stay with any of them while you</p> <p>16 were there?</p> <p>17 A. Stayed with my niece and her husband.</p> <p>18 Q. Who are they?</p> <p>19 A. Names?</p> <p>20 Q. Yes.</p> <p>21 A. Derek, D-E-R-E-K, Villareal,</p> <p>22 V-I-L-L-A-R-E-A-L, and his wife Rasheedah,</p> <p>23 R-A-S-H-E-E-D-A-H.</p> <p>24 (Off the record.)</p> <p>25 Q. (By Mr. Huskison) What's the last name?</p>
62	<p>1 point you knew he was going to be around?</p> <p>2 A. Right, he would be in Kansas City.</p> <p>3 Q. Okay. And that's August 13th, looks like?</p> <p>4 A. Uh-huh (affirmative response).</p> <p>5 Q. That's two days -- that's the Wednesday</p> <p>6 after the Monday board meeting, if I've got my days</p> <p>7 right.</p> <p>8 A. Okay.</p> <p>9 Q. August the 11th was a Monday.</p> <p>10 All right. Now -- and then he says, "Are</p> <p>11 you able to write the letter?" What letter is he</p> <p>12 asking you to write?</p> <p>13 A. Right. He said he wanted me to write a</p> <p>14 letter saying I would decline/resign from the</p> <p>15 position.</p> <p>16 Q. Okay. Whichever words --</p> <p>17 A. Correct.</p> <p>18 Q. Okay. So y'all were talking about that at</p> <p>19 that point?</p> <p>20 A. Yeah, we had talked about that beforehand.</p> <p>21 Q. And you deny that you told him that you</p> <p>22 would write that letter?</p> <p>23 A. Correct.</p> <p>24 Q. All right. Now, "I'm in Kansas City;"</p> <p>25 that's from him. And you say, responding on the</p>	64	<p>1 A. Villareal.</p> <p>2 Q. Oh, that's last name. I gotcha.</p> <p>3 All right. So you stayed with Derek and</p> <p>4 Rasheedah?</p> <p>5 A. Yes.</p> <p>6 Q. Was anybody else there, or just those two?</p> <p>7 A. They have two kids.</p> <p>8 Q. Okay. All right. How -- do -- do they</p> <p>9 live close by to your sister? I'm not even going to</p> <p>10 attempt to say that name. Do they live close by to</p> <p>11 your sister?</p> <p>12 A. I don't know close by.</p> <p>13 Q. You don't know --</p> <p>14 A. I don't -- I don't know distance.</p> <p>15 Q. Have you -- did you go to your sister's</p> <p>16 house that evening as well?</p> <p>17 A. Yes.</p> <p>18 Q. Okay. When you were at your sister's</p> <p>19 house, did you visit with her a little bit?</p> <p>20 A. Yeah, we were -- we -- we talked.</p> <p>21 Q. Okay. Now, did you attempt -- were you --</p> <p>22 was your -- one of your purposes to go to meet with</p> <p>23 Dr. Hickman?</p> <p>24 A. He was going to be there, so I --</p> <p>25 Q. Y'all were attempting to get together?</p>

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1 **A. We were going to meet at my sister's**
2 **house.**
3 **Q. You went by there to do that?**
4 **A. We went by with that – that was one of**
5 **the reasons we went by.**
6 **Q. Okay. Did you – but you never met with**
7 **Dr. Hickman while in Kansas City?**
8 **A. No.**
9 **Q. Did you leave anything at your sister's**
10 **house for Dr. Hickman?**
11 **A. No.**
12 **(Exhibit 4 marked for identification.)**
13 **Q. (By Mr. Huskison) Take a look at that,**
14 **Mr. Smith. We've marked as Exhibit 4 – it's an**
15 **August 15 letter, and it's -- it shows from Leslie**
16 **Smith. And I'm going to ask a few questions about**
17 **that.**
18 **MR. KNOTT: Counsel, just a second. Can**
19 **we go off the record for just a second?**
20 **MR. HUSKISON: We can.**
21 **(Off the record.)**
22 **Q. (By Mr. Huskison) We've marked -- Exhibit**
23 **4 is an August 15th letter. You've got that in**
24 **front of you? Take a look at that right there.**
25 **A. Yes.**

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1 **Q. And it says: "To whom it may concern: At**
2 **this time, I would like to decline your offer of**
3 **employment. I appreciate your time and interest in**
4 **me." And then it says, "Sincerely," and it's got**
5 **typed out "Leslie Smith" and then a signature.**
6 **And is that your signature on that letter,**
7 **Mr. Smith?**
8 **A. No.**
9 **Q. So you deny that you ever signed a letter**
10 **declining --**
11 **A. Correct.**
12 **Q. And this is -- what -- what I've marked as**
13 **Exhibit 4 is not your letter?**
14 **A. Not my letter.**
15 **Q. Okay. Did you leave anything at all with**
16 **your sister that night?**
17 **A. No.**
18 **Q. No writings, no documents or anything?**
19 **A. Nothing.**
20 **Q. Okay. And going back to the text**
21 **messages, Page 25 of them -- let's try to keep those**
22 **together -- looking at Page 25 of the text messages,**
23 **"Where and what time do you want to meet? Since I**
24 **can't teach" -- I think that's supposed to be**
25 **"reach" -- "please leave the signed letter with**

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1 **Mama" -- I can't say that. And then he tells you**
2 **what to say?**
3 **A. Correct.**
4 **Q. He used the word "decline" right there,**
5 **doesn't he?**
6 **A. Correct.**
7 **Q. Okay. But y'all never got together that**
8 **weekend?**
9 **A. No, sir.**
10 **Q. What do you mean, "'Til the fridge gets**
11 **fixed. I don't know?"**
12 **A. He asked how long would I be at her house,**
13 **and we were fixing her refrigerator.**
14 **Q. Okay. Now, as you -- going back just a**
15 **second. As you drove or went by train to Kansas**
16 **City, did you talk with Dr. Hickman on the**
17 **telephone?**
18 **A. Other than the text messages.**
19 **Q. You don't believe you talked with him**
20 **verbally over the phone?**
21 **A. I don't remember verbally talking with**
22 **him.**
23 **Q. And so you deny that you talked to him**
24 **about the letter declining and --**
25 **MR. KNOTT: Objection. I think he said he**

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1 **doesn't believe; he didn't say he denied.**
2 **Q. (By Mr. Huskison) That's what I want to**
3 **know. Do you deny ever talking to him on the phone**
4 **on your trip from East St. Louis, to Kansas City?**
5 **MR. KNOTT: You can answer if you know; if**
6 **you don't know, you don't know.**
7 **A. I don't know that answer.**
8 **Q. (By Mr. Huskison) You don't remember**
9 **whether you talked to him on the phone?**
10 **A. If we had a verbal conversation, I just**
11 **don't remember that.**
12 **Q. At any time when you were in Kansas City,**
13 **did you -- do you remember talking with Dr. Hickman**
14 **on the telephone?**
15 **A. Yes.**
16 **Q. You did talk to him some on the telephone?**
17 **A. Yes.**
18 **Q. And what were you talking about?**
19 **A. Meeting there.**
20 **Q. Was he in -- was he telling you, as in the**
21 **text message, "I need you to sign this letter?"**
22 **A. He needed the letter.**
23 **Q. Okay. And what was your response to him?**
24 **A. I'm -- I have a letter, but I never -- I**
25 **just have a letter.**

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69	<p>1 Q. Did you have the letter with -- to those</p> <p>2 words?</p> <p>3 A. No.</p> <p>4 Q. What did your letter say?</p> <p>5 THE WITNESS: Can I pull it up?</p> <p>6 MR. KNOTT: This is a letter they already</p> <p>7 have?</p> <p>8 THE WITNESS: I don't know.</p> <p>9 MR. KNOTT: Okay.</p> <p>10 THE WITNESS: I don't --</p> <p>11 MR. KNOTT: Let's go off the record for a</p> <p>12 second.</p> <p>13 (Off the record.)</p> <p>14 Q. (By Mr. Huskison) When you -- we were</p> <p>15 just talking about any messages with Dr. Hickman and</p> <p>16 you said you had a letter. And then you've brought</p> <p>17 to our attention a letter that I think we already</p> <p>18 have, but it's dated August 17th, which is Sunday.</p> <p>19 MR. HUSKISON: And let's go ahead and mark</p> <p>20 that.</p> <p>21 (Exhibit 5 marked for identification.)</p> <p>22 Q. (By Mr. Huskison) Look -- I'm going to</p> <p>23 stand up and look at it with you. And this looks</p> <p>24 like an e-mail from you to -- who is that to? Who's</p> <p>25 that address?</p>	71	<p>1 been hired to the above position. Once I receive</p> <p>2 this notification, a response will be forthcoming."</p> <p>3 Q. Okay. And this -- this was your letter in</p> <p>4 response to him asking you to -- to decline the</p> <p>5 position?</p> <p>6 A. That -- that was the letter I was</p> <p>7 carrying, correct.</p> <p>8 Q. He was informing you to decline it; this</p> <p>9 is what you ended up sending him?</p> <p>10 A. I sent him that, yes.</p> <p>11 Q. Okay. On -- at some point, which I --</p> <p>12 now, what you note in there, in looking at it, "I</p> <p>13 make no decision regarding my recent hiring as</p> <p>14 director before I receive official notification of</p> <p>15 HR stating I've been hired," right?</p> <p>16 A. Yes.</p> <p>17 Q. Did you ever receive any official</p> <p>18 notification from HR?</p> <p>19 A. Written notification?</p> <p>20 Q. Yes.</p> <p>21 A. No.</p> <p>22 Q. Official. You're saying -- I'm using your</p> <p>23 words. Did you ever receive that?</p> <p>24 A. No.</p> <p>25 Q. Did you ever get anything in writing from</p>
70	<p>1 A. That's a friend of mine.</p> <p>2 Q. Okay.</p> <p>3 A. But...</p> <p>4 Q. But you, eventually, sent that to Dr.</p> <p>5 Hickman?</p> <p>6 A. Yes.</p> <p>7 Q. And I think we have that, but it says --</p> <p>8 it starts out -- let's read it. Why don't you read</p> <p>9 that. It starts out --</p> <p>10 A. "Dr. Hickman, it appears our meeting face</p> <p>11 to face to discuss what's happening in Columbus will</p> <p>12 not take place. I have decided to e-mail you the</p> <p>13 letter requested" --</p> <p>14 Q. Okay.</p> <p>15 A. -- "to Dr. Hickman" --</p> <p>16 Q. And then you -- for some reason, you stop</p> <p>17 in the middle and go -- and then say "To Dr.</p> <p>18 Hickman?"</p> <p>19 A. I just separated it, so he will know this</p> <p>20 is the -- this is the -- this was the letter.</p> <p>21 Q. Okay.</p> <p>22 A. "To Dr. Hickman, please note that I have</p> <p>23 been advised that I can make no decision regarding</p> <p>24 my recent hiring as a director of schools before I</p> <p>25 receive official notification from HR stating I have</p>	72	<p>1 the school district about going to work for them?</p> <p>2 A. No.</p> <p>3 Q. In your jobs in Illinois -- in your school</p> <p>4 district jobs when you worked for a school district,</p> <p>5 in each of those jobs, did you sign a contract each</p> <p>6 year, contract for employment?</p> <p>7 A. Sign?</p> <p>8 Q. Yeah.</p> <p>9 A. Every year --</p> <p>10 Q. Do you sign a contract --</p> <p>11 A. -- sign a contract?</p> <p>12 Q. Yeah, I mean, is it -- when you go to work</p> <p>13 for a school district, they provide you a contract</p> <p>14 to sign saying you're working for the school</p> <p>15 district, correct?</p> <p>16 A. Correct.</p> <p>17 Q. Yeah. And you didn't do that here, did</p> <p>18 you?</p> <p>19 A. No.</p> <p>20 Q. Okay. Have you ever had any year in your</p> <p>21 years as a school administrator or a school teacher</p> <p>22 where you worked for a school district without</p> <p>23 signing a yearly contract, any year ever?</p> <p>24 A. I'm not sure I understand.</p> <p>25 Q. Have you ever had any --</p>

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1 **A. You mean year to year? Like if I work**
 2 **this year then next year and the next year I signed**
 3 **a contract every year?**
 4 **Q. Where you sign -- did you -- every year**
 5 **you work in a school district, you had a signed**
 6 **contract of employment, didn't you?**
 7 **A. I didn't sign a contract every year.**
 8 **Q. You didn't? You worked different than any**
 9 **other school teacher, administrator in the history**
 10 **of the United States of --**
 11 **A. I'm not understanding.**
 12 **Q. I mean, seriously, do you not -- are you**
 13 **saying you didn't -- are you saying you didn't sign**
 14 **a contract of -- to be employed with every school**
 15 **district you worked at?**
 16 MR. KNOTT: I object to the form of the
 17 question. I think --
 18 MR. HUSKISON: Let me try to ask it a
 19 little more clearly.
 20 MR. KNOTT: Sure.
 21 **Q (By Mr. Huskison) Did you sign a contract**
 22 **of employment to work in the school district that**
 23 **you worked for throughout your years as working as a**
 24 **school teacher?**
 25 **A. Yes.**

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1 **Q. Did you do it to working as a principal?**
 2 **A. Yes.**
 3 **Q. Signed contracts working as an assistant**
 4 **principal?**
 5 **A. Yes.**
 6 **Q. As a -- and I think you had a time where**
 7 **you worked as an assistant superintendent, didn't**
 8 **you?**
 9 **A. No.**
 10 **Q. Didn't work as that. I misread that.**
 11 In each of those times, you had signed
 12 contracts with the school districts you worked for,
 13 correct?
 14 THE WITNESS: He's --
 15 **Q (By Mr. Huskison) It's pretty obvious. I**
 16 **think you can answer --**
 17 MR. KNOTT: Just answer to the best of
 18 your knowledge.
 19 **A. Yes.**
 20 **Q. (By Mr. Huskison) Okay. Now, you**
 21 **followed up -- I'm going to show you the e-mail.**
 22 MR. HUSKISON: We're going -- I'll going
 23 to mark ours, too, just because I think it's a --
 24 I've got that e-mail, and it's to Dr. Hickman.
 25 MR. HICKMAN: Okay.

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1 MR. KNOTT: We'll mark -- let's mark this
 2 one as the next one.
 3 MR. KNOTT: Exhibit 6 is the same as
 4 Exhibit 5, counsel?
 5 MR. HUSKISON: Let's see. We can go off
 6 the record?
 7 (Exhibit 6 marked for identification.)
 8 (A short break was taken.)
 9 **Q. (By Mr. Huskison) Mr. Smith, we've**
 10 **marked -- five was the one that you just printed off**
 11 **your phone. I think that's the same letter as six.**
 12 **It's just that six is the one that was sent to Dr.**
 13 **Hickman.**
 14 And what I wanted to ask you about -- I
 15 think I asked you this. This -- this e-mail
 16 addressed, "O-L-A-L-E-E," that's just to a friend?
 17 **A. Uh-huh (affirmative response).**
 18 **Q. You sent it to him first, before sending**
 19 **it to Dr. Hickman? Did you want him to review it**
 20 **for you or anything?**
 21 **A. Yes.**
 22 **Q. Who is that?**
 23 **A. She was my principal.**
 24 **Q. She was your principal? Do you remember a**
 25 **name?**

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1 **A. Leola.**
 2 **Q. Leola?**
 3 **A. Leola Johnson.**
 4 **Q. Okay. Is she still in -- is she in East**
 5 **St. Louis?**
 6 **A. Yes.**
 7 **Q. Okay. So then, the second, where it was**
 8 **forwarded -- it looked like you forwarded it on to**
 9 **Dr. Hickman August 17th, which is that Sunday. I**
 10 **think we're right?**
 11 MR. KNOTT: I'll check.
 12 **Q. (By Mr. Huskison) You can check. I think**
 13 **it's that Sunday at 9:30 that morning, 9:39 -- no --**
 14 **p.m. That's 9:39 p.m. that night. And that's after**
 15 **y'all tried to get together in Kansas City?**
 16 **A. Uh-huh (affirmative response).**
 17 **Q. Okay. Is that correct? You have to say**
 18 **"yes" or "no."**
 19 **A. Oh, I'm sorry. Yes.**
 20 **Q. That's fine.**
 21 And you copied a few more people. Who are
 22 these folks? CF Smith?
 23 **A. That's my brother, Carlos.**
 24 **Q. Okay. All right. Did you talk to them at**
 25 **all about this as you were trying to decide what to**

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20 (Pages 77 to 80)

77	<p>1 do?</p> <p>2 A. Yes.</p> <p>3 Q. Okay. Is that why you copied them on the</p> <p>4 letter?</p> <p>5 A. Yes.</p> <p>6 Q. All right. Now, let's go ahead and</p> <p>7 mark -- this is the newspaper article y'all sent us.</p> <p>8 (Exhibit 7 marked for identification.)</p> <p>9 Q. (By Mr. Huskison) I'm getting a -- I'm</p> <p>10 getting a little out of order here, because this</p> <p>11 looks like it's dated August -- is that the 15th or</p> <p>12 16th, Mr. Smith? Can you read that? It's hard to</p> <p>13 read, isn't it?</p> <p>14 I think it's the 15th, but I -- we'll --</p> <p>15 we'll make sure it's clear on that.</p> <p>16 MR. KNOTT: There are two dates, counsel,</p> <p>17 one is -- at the top is -- which is August 18th, the</p> <p>18 other one is August --</p> <p>19 MR. HUSKISON: Yeah, that's the date --</p> <p>20 that's when we got it off there, I think. I don't</p> <p>21 know. But anyway, it looks like the filing dates --</p> <p>22 and it may be --</p> <p>23 MR. HICKMAN: Is this the internet date.</p> <p>24 This is the letter -- this is the official date.</p> <p>25 MR. HUSKISON: Okay.</p>	79	<p>1 Q. Or at least at some point?</p> <p>2 A. I saw -- I have seen this, yes.</p> <p>3 Q. Okay. All right. But as best you recall,</p> <p>4 you -- when you learned that Dr. Hickman had</p> <p>5 reported that you had declined the offer was the</p> <p>6 Monday, August the 18th; is that right?</p> <p>7 A. That Monday -- Sunday night, Monday.</p> <p>8 Q. Okay. After you sent that e-mail?</p> <p>9 A. After the e-mail was -- yes.</p> <p>10 Q. Okay. Now, after the e-mail -- let's take</p> <p>11 it one step at a time. When did you leave Kansas</p> <p>12 City?</p> <p>13 A. On August -- on that Monday, August the</p> <p>14 18th.</p> <p>15 Q. On that Monday. Now, we've seen the text</p> <p>16 messages -- let's make sure we get them all -- it</p> <p>17 looks like August 16, 10:43 p.m. he's asking, "Are</p> <p>18 you still there;" is that right, the last page, 26.</p> <p>19 That's the last one before the weekend ends,</p> <p>20 August 16th. "Are you still there?"</p> <p>21 A. Right.</p> <p>22 Q. That's from Dr. Hickman to you, correct?</p> <p>23 A. Correct.</p> <p>24 Q. At that point, you weren't responding to</p> <p>25 text messages, were you?</p>
78	<p>1 Q. (By Mr. Huskison) Whatever. We can -- we</p> <p>2 can figure out that date. I think it's the 15th,</p> <p>3 16th, right in that range.</p> <p>4 And this is an article where it indicates</p> <p>5 that you declined the position. Did you ever see</p> <p>6 that article?</p> <p>7 A. Yes.</p> <p>8 Q. Okay. Do you remember when that you may</p> <p>9 have seen it? Did you see it at the time it was</p> <p>10 written, or do you remember when?</p> <p>11 A. No, I didn't see it at the time it was</p> <p>12 written.</p> <p>13 Q. Okay. When did you become aware that Dr.</p> <p>14 Hickman had reported that you declined the offer?</p> <p>15 A. August -- I'm thinking that Monday -- that</p> <p>16 Sunday night or Monday.</p> <p>17 Q. Okay. The following week? Not the day --</p> <p>18 the Monday, August the 11th is when -- when the</p> <p>19 board meeting --</p> <p>20 A. The following Monday.</p> <p>21 Q. You didn't know anything about it until</p> <p>22 that date?</p> <p>23 A. Right.</p> <p>24 Q. But you did see that then?</p> <p>25 A. This is --</p>	80	<p>1 A. No. At that point I was asleep.</p> <p>2 Q. Okay. Did you -- do you remember at all</p> <p>3 responding anymore to any of the text messages --</p> <p>4 let's take text messages first -- anymore text</p> <p>5 messages about that job with Dr. Hickman after that</p> <p>6 weekend in Kansas City?</p> <p>7 A. Do I recall?</p> <p>8 Q. Yeah.</p> <p>9 A. I don't remember responding --</p> <p>10 Q. I don't have anymore; I just --</p> <p>11 A. I don't remember --</p> <p>12 Q. -- do you --</p> <p>13 A. -- responding to anymore text messages.</p> <p>14 Q. Okay. Did you talk with Dr. Hickman at</p> <p>15 all after that weekend in Kansas City over the</p> <p>16 phone?</p> <p>17 A. I don't recall talking to him since then</p> <p>18 either.</p> <p>19 Q. So you had no -- as best you recall, you</p> <p>20 had no more communication with him --</p> <p>21 A. Let me think.</p> <p>22 Q. Yeah take your time. I understand that to</p> <p>23 be true, but I just want to make sure what you</p> <p>24 recall.</p> <p>25 A. I don't recall responding to any.</p>

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81	<p>1 Q. Okay. So I'm clear, making sure I'm --</p> <p>2 I've asked it as best I can. The best you recall,</p> <p>3 you had no more communication, text message or</p> <p>4 phone, with Dr. Hickman after the weekend in Kansas</p> <p>5 City that Sunday night?</p> <p>6 A. To the best of my knowledge.</p> <p>7 Q. Okay. Now, did you -- and it follows, you</p> <p>8 never called and said, "Dr. Hickman, I've got a</p> <p>9 contract. I'm coming to work?" You never called</p> <p>10 and told him that, did you?</p> <p>11 A. I never told him that.</p> <p>12 Q. Okay. Did you ever call anybody at the</p> <p>13 school district and tell them that?</p> <p>14 A. No.</p> <p>15 Q. Now, I want to clarify one quick thing.</p> <p>16 MR. HUSKISON: We'll mark that as the next</p> <p>17 one.</p> <p>18 (Exhibit 8 marked for identification.)</p> <p>19 Q. (By Mr. Huskison) State of Mississippi</p> <p>20 certification, is that what that is?</p> <p>21 A. Yes.</p> <p>22 Q. Okay. And this was provided in some stuff</p> <p>23 you provided us. It looks like the date of -- the</p> <p>24 issue date is August 26th, 2014.</p> <p>25 A. Correct.</p>	83
82	<p>1 Q. Okay. So that would be roughly two weeks</p> <p>2 after that board meeting, correct?</p> <p>3 A. Correct.</p> <p>4 Q. Have you got any other certification other</p> <p>5 than this from the State of Mississippi?</p> <p>6 A. No.</p> <p>7 Q. Okay. We've marked that. That's good.</p> <p>8 That's all.</p> <p>9 Now, let me ask you a little bit about</p> <p>10 your damages, Mr. Smith. You got a lot of claims in</p> <p>11 the suit, but -- or in the lawsuit, primarily the</p> <p>12 claim is a breach of contract claim. You believe</p> <p>13 that you have a contract -- or had a contract with</p> <p>14 the Columbus School District, correct?</p> <p>15 A. Yes.</p> <p>16 Q. Okay. And you believe that based on</p> <p>17 everything we've discussed?</p> <p>18 A. Yes.</p> <p>19 Q. Okay. Well, let me just ask you: In</p> <p>20 your -- and not from a legal perspective, from your</p> <p>21 perspective, why do you think a contract was</p> <p>22 created? Just from your own view, what do you think</p> <p>23 created a contract? Not from a legal perspective,</p> <p>24 just from your perspective.</p> <p>25 A. A job being offered to someone, board</p>	84

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85	<p>1 you'll have income tax returns that will show that,</p> <p>2 correct?</p> <p>3 A. Correct.</p> <p>4 Q. All right. Do you have any other sources</p> <p>5 of income?</p> <p>6 A. Now?</p> <p>7 Q. Yes, sir.</p> <p>8 A. Retirement check.</p> <p>9 Q. Okay. And you put that information in the</p> <p>10 -- in your interrogatory responses. It's a pretty</p> <p>11 substantial retirement, correct? You don't --</p> <p>12 you're not going to make -- "substantial" to me may</p> <p>13 be different than you. It's \$4500 a month?</p> <p>14 A. \$4500 a month.</p> <p>15 Q. Okay. And that's from your Illinois State</p> <p>16 retirement?</p> <p>17 A. Correct.</p> <p>18 Q. Are you able to keep drawing that as long</p> <p>19 as you don't work in Illinois? How -- how does that</p> <p>20 work?</p> <p>21 A. You can draw as long as you don't work 500</p> <p>22 hours in Illinois.</p> <p>23 Q. Okay.</p> <p>24 A. In a -- in an educational setting.</p> <p>25 Q. And the job you're doing you in --</p>	87	<p>1 Q. Okay. Now, it's a breach of contract</p> <p>2 claim, but there are other claims in there and I</p> <p>3 just want to be sure that I've asked you everything</p> <p>4 I need to ask you.</p> <p>5 A. Uh-huh (affirmative response).</p> <p>6 Q. From an emotional standpoint, how has not</p> <p>7 getting the job in Columbus affected you</p> <p>8 emotionally? Just tell me in your own words.</p> <p>9 A. It's been rough. I haven't -- do I have</p> <p>10 to -- do I need to go into detail?</p> <p>11 Q. Yeah.</p> <p>12 A. Okay. The little Thanksgiving -- for</p> <p>13 example, the Thanksgiving things that we used to</p> <p>14 have once a month -- once a year. My sister and</p> <p>15 them used to come all the time, and they haven't</p> <p>16 been there since this happened. She and I used to</p> <p>17 speak on the phone at least twice a month on</p> <p>18 Saturdays or something like that, and we haven't</p> <p>19 exchanged a conversation since then, a pleas -- a</p> <p>20 good conversation since then.</p> <p>21 Dealing with trying to get -- keep</p> <p>22 everybody else in the family in tact, because</p> <p>23 they've all -- they're all hearing different little</p> <p>24 things and different little comments. So it's like,</p> <p>25 "Okay. How do you keep everybody on the calm?" You</p>
86	<p>1 A. Missouri.</p> <p>2 Q. -- Missouri?</p> <p>3 Okay. Other than the homebound and the</p> <p>4 job you're -- you're doing now, the math teaching</p> <p>5 job --</p> <p>6 A. Yes.</p> <p>7 Q. -- did you apply for any other positions</p> <p>8 anyplace else, since -- since not coming to work for</p> <p>9 Columbus?</p> <p>10 A. I applied for math positions, yes.</p> <p>11 Q. Different math positions?</p> <p>12 A. Right.</p> <p>13 Q. Didn't get those?</p> <p>14 A. No.</p> <p>15 Q. Medical insurance, how does -- what's</p> <p>16 your -- what do you -- what's your current medical</p> <p>17 insurance? How is your medical -- how are your</p> <p>18 bills paid?</p> <p>19 A. How is it paid?</p> <p>20 Q. Yes.</p> <p>21 A. Through -- I pay through the teacher</p> <p>22 retirement system.</p> <p>23 Q. And you still -- you've still got health</p> <p>24 insurance through that system?</p> <p>25 A. Yes, however it works for retired people.</p>	88	<p>1 know, "Don't worry about it; it'll be all right"</p> <p>2 type attitude. It's not easy, so it bothers you, it</p> <p>3 gets next to you. It gets rough.</p> <p>4 Q. You -- would you agree -- I mean, would</p> <p>5 you agree with me that part of that, though, is</p> <p>6 because not necessarily that you lost a job or</p> <p>7 didn't go to work in Columbus, but that you filed a</p> <p>8 lawsuit against your -- your sister's son-in-law?</p> <p>9 That created a lot of the angst; you would have to</p> <p>10 -- you would agree with that?</p> <p>11 A. Yes.</p> <p>12 (Off the record.)</p> <p>13 Q. (By Mr. Huskison) Anything else about</p> <p>14 emotional problems that this has created for you in</p> <p>15 your -- in your world, in your view?</p> <p>16 A. The stress of dealing with it, the -- just</p> <p>17 the family concerns and that you -- you -- you --</p> <p>18 all of a sudden, now you're stressed out. You know,</p> <p>19 you're not necessarily to the point of going crazy,</p> <p>20 but you got to talk to somebody, you got to be able</p> <p>21 to release and so you end up talking to people.</p> <p>22 Q. You -- I think the way I understood it,</p> <p>23 you -- you all, as a family, would get together</p> <p>24 every Thanksgiving?</p> <p>25 A. Yes.</p>

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89	<p>1 Q. Do you get to together any more times</p> <p>2 during the year as a family?</p> <p>3 A. As a group? Not unless something --</p> <p>4 unless there's an event.</p> <p>5 Q. And do you still get together for</p> <p>6 Thanksgiving now?</p> <p>7 A. Yes.</p> <p>8 Q. But it's just tension?</p> <p>9 A. Tension and absence.</p> <p>10 Q. Absence.</p> <p>11 A. Noticeable absences.</p> <p>12 Q. Okay. All right. Your sister hasn't been</p> <p>13 attended the Thanksgiving gatherings?</p> <p>14 A. Or any of her children.</p> <p>15 Q. Okay. Now, have you seen -- had any sort</p> <p>16 of medical treatment for emotional, seen a doctor</p> <p>17 for anything?</p> <p>18 A. No, other than my regular doctor, that's</p> <p>19 it.</p> <p>20 Q. And your regular doctor, you're not seeing</p> <p>21 him for any emotional distress caused by this, are</p> <p>22 you?</p> <p>23 A. He increased lisinopril for me.</p> <p>24 Q. Tell me what that is.</p> <p>25 A. Lisinopril is high blood pressure.</p>	91	<p>1 A. The strain on the peop -- the other</p> <p>2 members of the family, and they're -- they're</p> <p>3 torn -- some of them are torn between -- you know,</p> <p>4 it's like people are drawing lines in the sand.</p> <p>5 Q. Sure.</p> <p>6 A. You're on that side, that side. So we</p> <p>7 don't talk to each other. We're -- we're enemies;</p> <p>8 we're not -- we're not hanging out with you we can't</p> <p>9 do this.</p> <p>10 Q. And I think you answered this, but I just</p> <p>11 want to be -- you haven't been treated for any sort</p> <p>12 of depression or anything like that. You're seeing</p> <p>13 a regular medical doctor?</p> <p>14 A. Yes.</p> <p>15 MR. HUSKISON: I think that's all I have.</p> <p>16 Give me just a few seconds and let me talk with Dr.</p> <p>17 Hickman.</p> <p>18 (Off the record.)</p> <p>19 MR. HUSKISON: I got no further questions.</p> <p>20 Thank you, Mr. Smith.</p> <p>21 THE WITNESS: Thank you.</p> <p>22 MR. KNOTT: Mr. Smith, I do have a few</p> <p>23 questions. Before I do so, let me have three things</p> <p>24 marked as an exhibit, please.</p> <p>25 And the exhibits that are attached to the</p>
90	<p>1 Q. Okay. And were you taking that before</p> <p>2 this occurred?</p> <p>3 A. I was taking a smaller dosage, yes.</p> <p>4 Q. Now you're on a higher dosage?</p> <p>5 A. Yes.</p> <p>6 Q. Okay. If you -- if you can provide more</p> <p>7 information to your attorney about that, that would</p> <p>8 be helpful.</p> <p>9 Any other medication that you're on now,</p> <p>10 other than high blood pressure, that you believe</p> <p>11 resulted from this -- from your not getting --</p> <p>12 coming to work?</p> <p>13 A. Well, I -- I -- I was not good about</p> <p>14 taking a lot more pills, so some people -- some</p> <p>15 friends recommended, "Why don't you do Yoga? It</p> <p>16 helps release stress; it helps calms down." So I</p> <p>17 started doing that type of thing in end of the year,</p> <p>18 just because...</p> <p>19 Q. You owe us for that, Yoga's good. You're</p> <p>20 doing Yoga now?</p> <p>21 A. Yeah, it calm me. Yeah, help out.</p> <p>22 Q. As a calming type thing?</p> <p>23 A. Yes.</p> <p>24 Q. I understand. Anything else you want to</p> <p>25 tell me about emotional issues?</p>	92	<p>1 deposition -- do you have them, counsel, or do</p> <p>2 you --</p> <p>3 (Exhibit 9 marked for identification.)</p> <p>4 EXAMINATION BY MR. KNOTT:</p> <p>5 Q. All right. Mr. Smith, you've asked --</p> <p>6 been asked a series of questions by counsel</p> <p>7 opposite. I will ask you just a few questions.</p> <p>8 First of all, let me show what has been</p> <p>9 marked Exhibit Number 9. Can you tell me what that</p> <p>10 is?</p> <p>11 A. This is part of the -- part of a refinance</p> <p>12 housing agreement.</p> <p>13 Q. Okay. All right. Now, is that a two-page</p> <p>14 document? Is it a two-page document?</p> <p>15 A. Two-page, yes.</p> <p>16 Q. Okay. All right. And on the last page,</p> <p>17 there is a signature which appears to bear your name</p> <p>18 and -- with the date beside it. Do you see that?</p> <p>19 A. Yes, sir.</p> <p>20 Q. It says Leslie Smith. My question to you</p> <p>21 is: Did you sign that?</p> <p>22 A. Yes, sir.</p> <p>23 Q. And did you date it for July 13, 2015?</p> <p>24 A. Yes, sir.</p> <p>25 (Exhibit 10 marked for identification.)</p>

LESLIE SMITH
March 24, 2016

24 (Pages 93 to 96)

93	<p>1 Q (By Mr. Knott) All right. Let me have 2 that. 3 And then let me show you what's been 4 marked Exhibit 10. Do you see that as well? 5 A. Yes, sir. 6 Q. What does that purport to be? 7 A. This is my Illinois state driver's 8 license. 9 Q. Is that a current driver's license or a 10 previous driver's license? 11 A. Current. 12 Q. Okay. There is what appears to be a 13 signature on the bottom left-hand corner, which says 14 "Leslie Smith." My question to you, sir is: Did 15 you sign that? 16 A. Yes, sir. 17 Q. Is that your signature? 18 A. Yes, sir. 19 (Exhibit 11 marked for identification.) 20 Q. All right. Thank you. 21 And then I'm handing you what's also been 22 marked Exhibit Number 11. Do you see that, sir? 23 A. Yes, sir. 24 Q. Identify that document, please. 25 A. This is a copy of my 2014 Illinois tax</p>	95	<p>1 and that is your Mississippi certification; is that 2 correct? 3 A. Yes, sir. 4 Q. There is an issue date at the bottom 5 left-hand corner. Can you tell us what that date 6 is? 7 A. August 15, 2014. 8 Q. All right. Let me ask you this question: 9 When were you supposed to start working for the 10 school district? 11 A. September 1st. 12 Q. Okay. All right. So -- and that 13 understanding as to when you were supposed to work 14 came where? 15 A. The con -- the application I filled out. 16 Q. Okay. All right. And so you could not 17 work at the school district before September 1st, 18 2014; is that correct? 19 A. Correct. 20 Q. And was your -- strike that. 21 Now, the certification has two 22 endorsements; do you see that? 23 A. Yes, sir. 24 Q. Those endorsements were for mathematics 25 and as a career level administrator; is that right?</p>
94	<p>1 return. 2 Q. Okay. Is that a true and accurate copy of 3 a two-page document? 4 A. Two page -- yes, sir. 5 Q. On the last page does it appear to bear 6 your signature? 7 A. Yes, sir. 8 Q. Did you sign that? 9 A. Yes, sir. 10 Q. What date did you sign it? 11 A. April 14th, 2015. 12 Q. All right. Now, neither Exhibit 9, 10 or 13 11 is original documents, correct? 14 A. Correct. 15 Q. However, are they true and accurate of the 16 original? 17 A. Yes. 18 Q. Copies of the original I mean; is that 19 correct? 20 A. Yes, sir. 21 MR. KNOTT: All right. I would like to 22 have this to be, of course, attached to our 23 deposition. 24 Q (By Mr. Knott) Now, let me direct your 25 attention to what's been marked Exhibit Number 8,</p>	96	<p>1 A. Yes, sir. 2 Q. At any point in time did the school 3 district, through any of its representatives, ever 4 state to you that your certification was not 5 appropriate for the position that you were hired? 6 A. No, sir. 7 Q. But certification was a condition 8 precedent -- 9 A. Pending certification. 10 Q. -- for the position; is that correct? 11 A. Yes, sir. 12 Q. Did anyone tell you, Mr. Smith, "Stop the 13 process of getting your certification?" Did anyone 14 from the school district, Dr. Hickman or any other 15 representative instruct you, at any point in time 16 before the certification was obtained, for you to 17 stop, to stay, to not obtain your certification? 18 A. No, sir. 19 Q. And you did provide a copy of the 20 certification to the school district? 21 A. Yes, sir. 22 Q. Now, going back to what's been marked as 23 Exhibit Number 4, when was the first time you saw 24 Exhibit Number 4? 25 And Exhibit 4, for the record, is a letter</p>

LESLIE SMITH
March 24, 2016

25 (Pages 97 to 100)

97	<p>1 date August 15, 2014, which says that you declined 2 the offer of employment. Think about it for a 3 second. When did you first, approximately, when did 4 you first see this letter? 5 And as you think about that, let me ask 6 you, did you see it in 2014? 7 A. No. 8 Q. Did you see it in 2015? 9 A. No, sir. 10 Q. Are you saying, then and therefore, the 11 first time you saw this letter was in 2016? 12 A. Yes, sir. 13 Q. Okay. Well, the exact date, then, is not 14 as important. 15 I notice on Exhibit Number 4 that in the 16 word "Smith," which is your last name, do you see 17 how the "S" -- 18 A. Yes, sir. 19 Q. -- is written there? 20 A. Yes, sir. 21 Q. Is that how you currently or -- and were 22 you, at that point in time, signing your name with 23 that type of "S"? 24 A. No, sir. 25 Q. Counsel opposite asked you about emotional</p>	99	<p>1 did you reach out to anyone? Did you talk with 2 anyone about your concerns outside the school 3 district, with respect to family? 4 A. Yes. 5 Q. Okay. All right. Did you communicate to 6 them about your -- how you were feeling at that 7 time? 8 A. Yes. 9 Q. Do you recall some of the things that you 10 said and to whom you talked? 11 A. Conversations with -- with my -- my 12 brother in Chicago, the doctor and usually with my 13 godson down in Tampa, and mostly feeling frustration 14 as to why -- what are they doing, what are they 15 trying to -- what are they trying to prove. I mean, 16 if you hire somebody, you hire somebody. You bring 17 them in and let them work. If they don't perform, 18 then you get rid of them. It's not like -- how do 19 you get rid of somebody before you get them down 20 there? 21 Q. So these individuals could attest to those 22 conversations, and perhaps your state of mind at the 23 time? 24 A. Yes, sir. 25 Q. Exhibit Number 4 is a forgery?</p>
98	<p>1 distress? 2 A. Yes, sir. 3 Q. You talked about the stress of the family 4 situation; is that correct? 5 A. Yes, sir. 6 Q. Can you share with us, if at all, about 7 how being notified that your employment has -- was 8 canceled affected you in any way? Not -- not about 9 the family, but how the employment, itself, 10 situation affected you. 11 A. When I first got the job, it was like, 12 "Okay. Good. I'm ready. Let's go; let's get this 13 done." Then I get the message, "I need you to 14 decline or resign." It's like hold -- like hold -- 15 it's like a shock. You know, "What's going on? 16 You've got me -- I'm over here on this high and now 17 you want me to undo this." It's just like a 18 rollercoaster. One day you want me to do something 19 and the next day you don't. It just threw me for a 20 loop. 21 Q. When you first -- 22 A. Set me back. 23 Q. When you first found out that the school 24 district was removing you or had removed you as the 25 school officer, director, whatever the position was,</p>	100	<p>1 A. Yes, sir. 2 Q. Do you know who signed your name? I'm not 3 asking you to speculate. 4 A. No. 5 Q. Do you know who signed your name? 6 A. No, I don't. 7 Q. Have you been told who may have signed 8 your name? 9 A. I'm not sure I understand the question. 10 Q. That's fine. 11 What term of employment did y'all discuss, 12 one year, two years, three years; do you recall? 13 A. No. 14 Q. Okay. Do you believe it was at least 15 three years, or however long the superintendent 16 was -- 17 A. I figured I was there as long as the 18 superintendent was there. 19 Q. I understand. And do you recall what the 20 term of his contract was? Was it at least four 21 years? 22 A. I think it was four years. 23 Q. I understand. 24 MR. KNOTT: All right. That's all I have. 25 MR. HUSKISON: I got a couple of</p>

LESLIE SMITH
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26 (Pages 101 to 104)

101	<p>1 follow-ups on some of the things he asked.</p> <p>2 FURTHER EXAMINATION BY MR. HUSKISON:</p> <p>3 Q. He -- we were looking -- he -- Exhibit 4.</p> <p>4 I want to follow-up on what he said. He -- he</p> <p>5 backed off of it. But have you been told who may</p> <p>6 have signed that? Has somebody told you who may</p> <p>7 have signed for you?</p> <p>8 A. No, nobody.</p> <p>9 Q. Okay. Nobody's told who they think may</p> <p>10 have signed that?</p> <p>11 A. Okay. That's a -- that's a different</p> <p>12 question.</p> <p>13 Q. Okay. Well, let me -- has anybody told</p> <p>14 you who they think may have signed that? I do</p> <p>15 want you to speculate. I want to know what you</p> <p>16 think about that.</p> <p>17 THE WITNESS: Answer that?</p> <p>18 MR. KNOTT: You can answer that.</p> <p>19 A. Yeah. Yes.</p> <p>20 Q. (By Mr. Huskison) Who -- who did they</p> <p>21 tell you may have signed it?</p> <p>22 A. My sister.</p> <p>23 Q. Okay. Have you seen her signature before?</p> <p>24 A. Yes.</p> <p>25 Q. And her writing before?</p>
102	<p>1 A. Yes.</p> <p>2 Q. Does it look like that -- that signature</p> <p>3 on that paper?</p> <p>4 A. I've never seen her sign my name.</p> <p>5 Q. Okay. So you can't -- you don't know?</p> <p>6 A. Correct.</p> <p>7 Q. All right. The other -- one of the other</p> <p>8 questions -- he asked you about that certification.</p> <p>9 And he -- it's exhibit -- what's the last -- what</p> <p>10 number is that?</p> <p>11 A. Eight.</p> <p>12 Q. Exhibit 8. That certification was</p> <p>13 provided to us in discovery. In other words, your</p> <p>14 attorney provided that to us. The way I understood</p> <p>15 you to testify a minute ago is that you sent that to</p> <p>16 the Columbus School District. Did you send that</p> <p>17 certification to the Columbus School District?</p> <p>18 A. Yes.</p> <p>19 Q. Do you know when you sent it?</p> <p>20 A. The exact date?</p> <p>21 Q. Yeah. You don't?</p> <p>22 A. I can't recall the exact date.</p> <p>23 Q. Who did you send it to?</p> <p>24 A. I'm thinking I sent it to human resources,</p> <p>25 probably.</p>
103	<p>1 Q. Anybody in -- did you -- did you -- do you</p> <p>2 remember an address you sent it to?</p> <p>3 A. The street address and all of that, no, I</p> <p>4 don't remember.</p> <p>5 Q. Do you remember where you got an address</p> <p>6 that you sent it to?</p> <p>7 A. Probably off the internet.</p> <p>8 Q. You think you looked it up?</p> <p>9 A. Yes, probably.</p> <p>10 Q. Okay. But you -- you think you sent it to</p> <p>11 human resources, as best you can remember?</p> <p>12 A. The best I can remember.</p> <p>13 Q. And you don't remember when?</p> <p>14 A. I would have -- that's speculation. It</p> <p>15 would have been after I got it.</p> <p>16 MR. KNOTT: If you don't recall, you don't</p> <p>17 recall.</p> <p>18 A. Don't recall.</p> <p>19 Q. (By Mr. Huskison) Did you have a name of a</p> <p>20 human resource -- human resource person that you</p> <p>21 sent it to?</p> <p>22 A. No.</p> <p>23 (Off the record.)</p> <p>24 MR. HUSKISON: Nothing further. Thank</p> <p>25 you.</p>
104	<p>1 (Off the record.)</p> <p>2 (Time Noted: 1:11 P.m.)</p> <p>3 SIGNATURE/NOT WAIVED</p> <p>4</p> <p>5 ORIGINAL: BERKLEY N. HUSKISON, ESQ.</p> <p>6 COPY: SANFORD E. KNOTT, ESQ.</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25</p>

LESLIE SMITH
March 24, 2016

<p style="text-align: right;">105</p> <p>1 CERTIFICATE OF DEPONENT 2 DEPONENT: LESLIE SMITH 3 DATE: THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 2016 4 CASE STYLE: LESLIE SMITH VS. COLUMBUS MUNICIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICT, ET AL. 5 ORIGINAL TO: BERKLEY N. HUSKJON, ESQ. 6 I, the above-named deponent in the deposition taken in the herein styled and numbered 7 cause, certify that I have examined the deposition taken on the date above as to the correctness 8 thereof, and that after reading said pages, I find them to contain a full and true transcript of the testimony as given by me. 9 Subject to those corrections listed below, if any, I find the transcript to be the correct testimony I gave at the aforesaid time and place. 10 Page Line Comments 11 _____ 12 _____ 13 _____ 14 _____ 15 _____ 16 _____ 17 _____ 18 This the _____ day of _____, 2016. 19 _____ LESLIE SMITH 20 State of Mississippi County of _____ 21 Subscribed and sworn to before me, this the _____ day of _____, 2016. 22 _____ 23 My Commission Expires: 24 _____ Notary Public 25</p>	
<p style="text-align: right;">106</p> <p>1 CERTIFICATE OF COURT REPORTER 2 I, Shanna Cumberland, Court Reporter and 3 Notary Public, in and for the State of Mississippi, 4 hereby certify that the foregoing contains a true 5 and correct transcript of the testimony of LESLIE 6 SMITH, as taken by me in the aforementioned matter 7 at the time and place heretofore stated, as taken by 8 stenotype and later reduced to typewritten form 9 under my supervision by means of computer-aided 10 transcription. 11 I further certify that under the authority 12 vested in me by the State of Mississippi that the 13 witness was placed under oath by me to truthfully 14 answer all questions in the matter. 15 I further certify that, to the best of my 16 knowledge, I am not in the employ of or related to 17 any party in this matter and have no interest, 18 monetary or otherwise, in the final outcome of this 19 matter. 20 Witness my signature and seal this the 21 12th day of April, 2016. 22 _____ 23 SHANNA CUMBERLAND, CCR #1774 24 My Commission Expires: April 25, 2018 25</p>	

< Messages (5)

Leslie

Details

Dec 18, 2013, 2:24 PM

What was that job title you said i could do in Houston

SSO... School Support Officer.. The pay would be \$124,000

Thank you

Other districts in Texas call it Area Superintendent . Because they are so large the are in place to help handle the needs of a school like a Superintendent would. But in our district because we are decentralized you guide and support the principals as oppose to tell them what to do

Thank you

Jul 13, 2014, 1:24 PM

Call me when u can Uncle

Jul 24, 2014, 11:09 AM

Give me a call

Exhibit 1
Smith 3/24/16
Rptr: S. Cumberland
Brooks Court Reporting

Jul 28, 2014, 6:22 AM



Text Message

Send 000016

< Messages (5)

Leslie

Details

Jul 28, 2014, 6:22 AM

Let me know

Jul 28, 2014, 9:51 PM

I thought you were going to call me on Sunday?

Lrev621@gmail.com

Jul 29, 2014, 5:12 AM

Don't forget to apply for your certification, it's simple. Also do u want to also supervise departments, meaning the person over homeless and ELL, the person over Federal Programs. They are good people who run their programs well but they report to someone which would be u if u are ok with that

Jul 30, 2014, 10:58 AM

Dr. Certification process is in motion. Rockford verification is a five day turn around process. Need test scores from 20 years ago, that will be a task.

Jul 30, 2014, 12:31 PM



Text Message

Send

000017

Messages (5)

Leslie

Details

Jul 30, 2014, 12:31 PM

In a meeting

Hey what program are they using for student management. Do you have a curriculum or book being used.

Student management? Behavior?

I got it

Aug 2, 2014, 5:58 PM

U still coming?

Lol principals can legally paddle kids in Mississippi. It's on the enrollment form. OMG. But I have a choice not to allow it

Waiting for certification information

Ok

Aug 5, 2014, 9:19 AM

Give me a call when u can

Soon as this meeting end



Text Message

Send

000018

Messages (5)

Leslie

Details

Aug 5, 2014, 9:19 AM

Give me a call when u can

Soon as this meeting end

Ok

Thanks

Fill out application on my web site ASAP. I just need to know u coming so I can put u on Monday board meeting to hire u pending state certification. Then u can still start when u able to come

If not mistaken, i did the application already. Will check soon as i can

Ok if u did then all is well. Do are u definitely coming?

Dr. Smith. Are you still coming for sure? Are u certain, before I put u on the board agenda to hire.

Really

Aug 5, 2014, 11:51 AM



Text Message

Send

000019

Messages (5)

Leslie

Details

Aug 5, 2014, 11:51 AM

Can u please respond

Is it possible to get job title, description, and duties: so i can prepare and be ready for the new boss.

Nope

You are Director of Schools. Stop with the anxiety

The one on line is fake. Once u get here we can discuss it

In a meeting, call you right back.

Have u applied. That is the requirement

Where do i go for that?

U said u did. Online on our website

I need u to do it today

I know u old folks are uneasy abut this question but I need ur address, date of birth, social security number



Text Message

Send

000020

Messages (5)

Leslie

Details

I know u old folks are uneasy about this question but I need ur address, date of birth, social security number

COLUMBUS MUNICIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
RECOMMENDATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

ATTENTION PERSONNEL

NAME OF EMPLOYEE Leslie Smith

SOCIAL SECURITY # _____

EMPLOYED AS Director of Schools
Provide title - include grade/step for teachers

FUNDING SOURCE General Fund

LOCATION Central Office
(School Department)

REQUIRING DATE 7-20 Public Confession
For the month - must be the last business day

CHECK ONE For the month - must be the last business day

APPROVED _____

637 North 37th Street
East St Louis. 62205

06-21-53

321483395



Text Message

Send

000021

Messages (5)

Leslie

Details

637 North 37th Street
East St Louis. 62205

06-21-53

321483395

I applied for state certification. On website now do not see human resources

Thanks

Aug 5, 2014, 2:44 PM

I'm in a meeting please look it's on there under personnel

Aug 5, 2014, 5:28 PM

Background ask "Do i have a relative currently employed in CMSD

Put yes

Aug 11, 2014, 4:00 PM

Give me 20 mins

Aug 11, 2014, 6:22 PM



Text Message

Send

000022

< Messages (5)

Leslie

Details

Aug 11, 2014, 6:22 PM

In a board meeting voting for u to hire

Aug 12, 2014, 9:43 AM

(1/2) Saw my name in the board report. Thank you very much for even considering me. I believe i have everything in. Last piece came yesterday. The lady in state

(2/2) ed dept had me confused but i now await an answer from them. Thanks again

Aug 12, 2014, 1:25 PM

<http://www.cdispatch.com/news/article.asp?aid=35473>

Yes sir. I already read the entire article. 😊

Lol

Aug 13, 2014, 8:34 PM

(1/2) Hey Dr. I couldn't get a ticket at a rate I wanted to pay. I got caught trying to get some things done here. I will however be in K C this weekend,



Text Message

Send

000023

Messages (5)

Leslie

Details

Aug 13, 2014, 8:34 PM

(1/2) Hey Dr. I couldn't get a ticket at a rate I wanted to pay. I got caught trying to get some things done here. I will however be in K C this weekend, we.

(2/2) should talk then if you can work me in.

Ok

Aug 15, 2014, 7:47 PM

Are u able to write the letter?

Aug 16, 2014, 1:33 PM

I'm in Kansas City where are you still at the festival

Aug 16, 2014, 2:36 PM

No not at festival. Moving around city. What time does your activities start tonight?

7:00pm

Aug 16, 2014, 3:47 PM

Where and what time do u want to



Text Message

Send

000024

Messages (5)

Leslie

Details

Aug 16, 2014, 3:47 PM

Where and what time do u want to meet

Aug 16, 2014, 5:08 PM

Since I can't teach you can you please leave the signed letter with Mom-Zalzala

I just need it to say, I Leslie Smith decline the position of Director of Schools. Thank Columbus Municipal School District for the wonderful opportunity. ...

Aug 16, 2014, 7:02 PM

I didn't know what time it was. The dinner starts 7:30. How long will y'all be there

Til the fridge gets fixed, i don't know.

Ok

Aug 16, 2014, 10:43 PM

Are y'all still there

Aug 19, 2014, 7:18 AM



Text Message

Send

000025

Messages (5)

Leslie

Details

please leave the signed letter with Mom-Zalzala

I just need it to say, I Leslie Smith decline the position of Director of Schools. Thank Columbus Municipal School District for the wonderful opportunity. ...

Aug 16, 2014, 7:02 PM

I didn't know what time it was. The dinner starts 7:30. How long will y'all be there

Til the fridge gets fixed, i don't know.

Ok

Aug 16, 2014, 10:43 PM

Are y'all still there

Aug 19, 2014, 7:18 AM

Your causing more harm than good by ignoring. Your niece said she can't read ur scriptures anymore and wish u stop sending them and your sister said that's why she will never be a Christian because of Christians like u.



Text Message

Send

000026

SearchSoft - Columbus Municipal School District - {{applicant_type... https://ats4.searchsoft.net/ats/application/preview/standard_preview_...

Certified Application for Leslie SmithClick here to [Print](#) this page.**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Applicant Type	Certified
Username	irev621
Account Status	Active
Account Creation Date	08/05/2014
Activation Date (Do not attempt to insert a date)	08/07/2014
Last Modified By Anyone	08/08/2014
Courtesy Title (optional)	
* First Name	Leslie
Middle Initial	
* Last Name	Smith
Other Name(s)	
* Social Security Number (no dashes)	321483395
* Email Address ALL COMMUNICATION REGARDING POSITIONS YOU APPLY FOR WILL BE SENT VIA EMAIL. MAKE SURE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS IS VALID.	irev621@gmail.com
2nd Email Address	
* When are you available to start work?	09/01/2014
Evaluated/Screened	No
* Applicant Status	Active - Application Complete
* Are you currently under contract with any Mississippi district?	No
If yes, please name district.	
* Have you previously worked for the District?	No
If Yes, when?	
What position?	
How did you hear about employment opportunities with the District?	• Web Site
If "Other", please list.	
* Are you currently an employee of the District?	No
If yes, what position	
Priority to the recruiter?	
Recruiter's Message	

ADDRESS

Current Address	
* Street Address	637 North 37th Street
* City	East St Louis
* State	Illinois
* Zip Code	62205
* Phone Number (000-000-0000)	618-593-7651
Alternate Phone Number (000-000-0000)	
Cell Phone Number (000-000-0000)	
This Address is valid until	

Exhibit 2
 Smith 3/24/16
 Rptr: S. Cumberland
 Brooks Court Reporting

000001

SearchSoft - Columbus Municipal School District - {{applicant_type... https://ats4.searchsoft.nct/ats/application/preview/standard_preview_...

Permanent address (if different)	
Street Address	
City	
State	
Zip Code	
Permanent Phone Number (000-000-0000)	
In Case of Emergency, Notify	
* Name	Peggy Orr
Street Address	1760 North Park Drive
City	East St Louis
State	Illinois
Zip Code	62205
* Phone Number (000-000-0000)	818-593-7651

HIGH SCHOOL

* High School Name	East St Louis Sr High School
High School Street	4901 State Street
* High School City	East St Louis
* High School State	Illinois
High School Zip	62205
* Check Highest Grade Completed	12
* Diploma or equivalent?	Yes
* Select your highest SAT or ACT score.	ACT: Score 18-24

COLLEGES ATTENDED

College	Degree	Major	Minor	GPA Overall	GPA Major	Total Semester Hours
SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY			English	2.60		
SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY AT EDWARDSVILLE	Master of Art			3.30		
SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY AT CARBONDALE	Certification			3.00		

CERTIFICATION INFORMATION

Type	Status	Endorsement	State	Expires
AA Certificate - Master's Degree	Active	120 Elementary Education (K-6)	Illinois	07/01/2017
AA Certificate - Master's Degree	Active	901Math (4-8)	Illinois	07/01/2017
AAA Certificate - Specialist Degree	Active	488 Administrator	Missouri	06/01/2015
AAA Certificate - Specialist Degree	Active	488 Administrator	Illinois	07/01/2017

PRAXIS EXAMS TAKEN AND PASSED

Specialty Area	Specialty Area Score
No results	

STUDENT TEACHING

Subject or Grade Level	College or University	Mentor Teacher	School where student teaching occurred	Phone Number	From Date	To Date
No results						

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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Subject or Grade Level	Principal	School District	Phone Number	From Date	To Date
Junior High	LeRoy Howell	East St Louis	6186463000	01/1977	08/1980
Mathematics	Samuel Morgan	East St Louis	618-646-3000	09/1980	08/2001

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Position	Supervisor	Employer	From Date	To Date
Teacher	Samuel Morgan	East St Louis Dist 189	01/1997	08/2001
Asst Principal/Principal/Teacher	Linda Hernandez	Rockford	07/2001	06/2008
Teacher/Assistant Principal	Teresa Saunders	East St Louis Dist 189	09/2008	03/2011
Instructional Coach	Alice Aldridge	Ferguson/ Florissant School District	07/2011	06/2012

EMPLOYMENT PREFERENCES

Indicate all grade levels for which you wish to be considered.	
Choose ALL the positions for which you are applying.	• Administrative
If you are applying for an elementary position, please check the areas you prefer to teach.	
If you are applying for a secondary (grades 7-12) position, please check the areas you prefer to teach.	
Indicate all Special Education positions for which you wish to be considered.	
Indicate all Administrative positions for which you wish to be considered. 2001 Asst Principal 2003 Principal 2006 Teacher 2007 Teacher	• Director of Schools
If Other position selected, please specify.	

MULTILINGUAL ABILITIES

Language	Abilities
No results	

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

* Are you presently being investigated or under a procedure to consider your discharge for misconduct by any employer?	No
DETAILS >	
* Have you offered a resignation to any employer in lieu of termination?	No
DETAILS >	
* Have you ever been "non-renewed" or "terminated" for a certified position?	No
DETAILS >	
* Have you ever been discharged or asked to resign from a prior position?	No
DETAILS >	
* Have you ever been arrested for any misdemeanor other than traffic offenses?	No
DETAILS >	
* Have you ever been convicted of, found guilty of or pled guilty to any misdemeanor other than traffic offenses?	No
DETAILS >	
* Have you ever been arrested for any felony?	No
DETAILS >	
* Have you ever been convicted of, found guilty of or pled guilty to any felony?	No

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DETAILS >	
* Have you ever had a criminal conviction sealed or expunged?	No
DETAILS >	
* Have you ever had a teaching certificate limited, suspended or revoked?	No
DETAILS >	
* Have you ever surrendered a certificate, license or permit?	No
DETAILS >	
* Do you have relatives working in the Columbus Municipal School District?	Yes
If yes, enter the name and relationship.	Dr. Phillip Hickman Nephew

VOLUNTARY INFORMATION

Race/Ethnic Group (Please see descriptions below.)	• African American or Black
If you choose Other, please enter your race.	
Sex	Male

REFERENCES

Reference ID	Reference Status	Name	Position/Title	Alternate Phone	Email address
4601665023	Returned	Lee Ola Johnson	Retired Director of Spe Serv	618-383-4333	olalee5@yahoo.com
4601665027	Pending	Alice Aldridge	Director of Fed Programs	314-641-4653	Aald1150@yahoo.com
4601665028	Returned	Theodore Daniels	Teacher	618-560-0563	ted2hof@yahoo.com

EMPLOYER ATTACHMENTS

Type	Add Date	Last Modified	Body
No results			

NOTES

Message	User
No results	

SCORES

User	Question Score	Interview Score
No results		

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School board bewildered by supe's relation to new hire



Superintendent Philip Hickman

Sarah Fowler August 12, 2014 11:14:38 AM

A new hire within the Columbus Municipal School District left some school board members in the dark and wondering why they were unaware that the hire is related to the newly appointed superintendent.

On Superintendent Philip Hickman's recommendation, the board unanimously voted Monday to hire Leslie Smith as the district's director of schools, a position new to CMSD. Smith, a Chicago-based educator, will earn \$70,000 a year, according to the agenda given to board members.

Smith is the uncle of Hickman's wife, something three school board members were unaware of when they voted to hire him.

During the meeting, board member Glenn Lautzenhiser asked Hickman about the position's responsibilities and Smith's professional background. Hickman explained that a director of schools would work with the district's nine principals.

The board voted 4-0 to hire Smith, as well as approving 26 other positions. Board member Jason Spears was absent from the meeting.

On Monday afternoon, Hickman confirmed to The Dispatch that Smith was his wife's uncle. After the board adjourned, The Dispatch asked board members Angela Verdell, Greg Lewis, Currie Fisher, Spears and Lautzenhiser if they were aware of Smith and Hickman's relationship.

Verdell was the only one aware of the family connection.

Fisher said that if she had been aware of the relationship "it would have caused me to hesitate." When asked if knowledge of the relationship would have changed his vote, Lautzenhiser said he would have first sought legal counsel from board attorney David Dunn. Lewis agreed, saying he would have to "look into it." Spears also said he was not aware of any relationship between Smith and Hickman.

However, Verdell said she and Dunn were both aware of the situation.

Verdell said she learned of the situation "a few hours" before the board meeting and did not see a problem with the hire.

"I knew that Mr. Dunn was working with Dr. Hickman on the personnel agenda and so any legal issues would be handled by Mr. Dunn," Verdell, the board president, said. "I do know what the state law says about that."

"There are only four things that preclude hiring: spouse, child, and anybody that is blood-related to somebody in the district. The state makes provisions for that."

After the meeting, Hickman explained that he did not tell the entire board about he and Smith's relationship because he views it as a personnel issue.

"I don't really discuss personnel issues," he said, citing possible legal repercussions.

Dunn told The Dispatch that in his opinion, the board had done nothing illegal in hiring Smith.

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Exhibit 3
Smith 3/24/16
Rptr: S. Cumberland
Brooks Court Reporting

School board bewildered by Smith's relation to new hire - The Dispatch

When asked if he thought it was appropriate to hire a family member, Hickman said, "I knew him before I knew her and what I'm all about is having someone that's competent that really can make a change for our kids."

Hickman declined to provide The Dispatch with a copy of Smith's resume, again citing personnel issues.

Late last week, Hickman's wife, Adilah Zalzala, was also listed on the consent agenda to be potentially hired as the district's special education coordinator. Her salary was listed as \$42,000, according to the consent agenda.

However, Zalzala's name was removed from the list of possible hires prior to Monday night's meeting. After an executive session, Dunn said because she is Hickman's wife, the board would need to appoint a temporary personnel director who could recommend Zalzala for hire.

The board voted to appoint Deputy Superintendent Craig Shannon as the personnel director.

The recommendation regarding Zalzala's potential hire is expected to be made at the next board meeting on Sept. 8.

Sarah Fowler covers crime, education and community related events for The Dispatch. Follow her on Twitter @FowlerSarah

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|--|--|

26 Comments

loveoforidsa - Well here we go again. If this wasn't so sad it would be funny. Here's an idea. Let's don't bother to do anymore job hunting. Let's just go around the room and have the board members recommend what family members and friends need a job, hire them and be done with it. This is pitiful.

Eliaz - This is more than pitiful, it is obscene!

KJ705 - Really? I'm gonna have to quote "Sweetie" Armstrong on this one: "Man, this is some bulls---." And then, you're gonna work around the spouse issue by creating a temporary personnel director.

A lot of times, ineptitude and malice look similar. Wonder how many people are still sitting on that fence when it comes to this board?

Derrick - I was behind this guy until this. This is just as bad as others in positions of leadership around here bogging Yokohama and other companies to give their relatives jobs.

Willie -

LS007

August 15, 2014

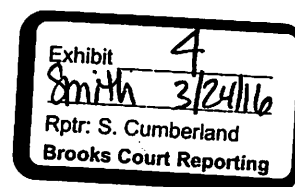
To Whom It May Concern:

At this time, I would like to decline your offer of employment.

I appreciate your time and your interest in me.

Sincerely,

Leslie Smith

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Leslie Smith".

000014

Subject: Fwd: Letter request
From: Leslie Smith (lrev621@gmail.com)
To: knottlaw@bellsouth.net;
Date: Thursday, March 24, 2016 12:20 PM

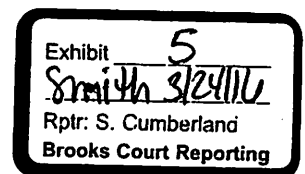
----- Forwarded message -----

From: "Leslie Smith" <lrev621@gmail.com>
Date: Aug 17, 2014 7:11 AM
Subject: Letter request
To: <olalee5@yahoo.com>
Cc:

Dr. Hickman, it appears our meeting face to face to discuss what's happening in Columbus will not take place. I have decided to email you the letter requested.

To Dr. Hickman,
Please note that I have been advised that I can make no decision regarding my recent hiring as Director of Schools before I receive official notification from HR stating I have been hired to the above position. Once I receive this notification a response will be forthcoming.

Leslie Smith



(10029 unread) - phickman96 - Yahoo Mail

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- Folders
 - Deleted Items
 - Deleted Messages
 - Drafts
 - Notes
 - Sent Items
 - Sent Messages
 - Synced Messages

Letter request(2)

Hickman, Phillip Aug 17
To Me

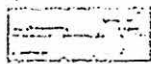
Dr. Philip W. V. Hickman
Superintendent
Columbus Municipal School District
HickmanP@Columbus.k12.ms.us

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From: Leslie Smith <lr621@gmail.com>
Date: August 17, 2014 at 9:39:42 PM CDT
To: Phillip Hickman <HickmanP@Columbus.k12.ms.us>, J C E Carlos Smith <jcsmith112@aol.com>, LAMARN WILLIAMS <lamarn403@gmail.com>
Subject: Fwd: Letter request

----- Forwarded message -----
From: "Leslie Smith" <lr621@gmail.com>
Date: Aug 17, 2014 7:11 AM
Subject: Letter request
To: <olaleg5@yahoo.com>
Cc

Dr. Hickman, it appears our meeting face to face to discuss what's happening in Columbus will not take place. I have decided to email you the letter requested.
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Leslie Smith

Reply, Reply All or Forward | More

Me Today at 7:50 PM
To Me

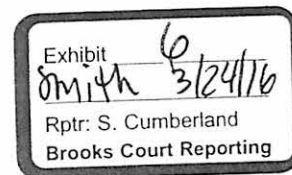
Dr. Philip W. V. Hickman
Superintendent

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Relative of CMSD's Hickman declines position



Superintendent Philip Hickman

Sarah Fowler August 18, 2014 10:38:12 PM

A Chicago-based educator tapped to be director of schools within the Columbus Municipal School District has declined to accept the position, according to a letter the district's superintendent sent The Dispatch late last week.

Leadic Smith was hired in a 4-0 vote by the CMSD board during Monday night's board meeting. The newly created position was to come with a \$70,000 a year salary.

Smith, as director of schools, would work with the district's nine principals, according to Superintendent Philip Hickman.

Now, he won't.

"After consultation with the board of trustees and my desire to remain focused on our common goal of improving the quality of education for children, the position of director of schools will not be filled, as Mr. Smith has declined the offer," Hickman wrote in his letter.

Hickman, tapped to lead the district earlier this summer, recommended that the board hire Smith. Smith is the uncle of Hickman's wife -- a fact three school board members were unaware of when they voted to hire Smith on Monday.

After the board voted to approve hiring his family member Monday night, Hickman defended the move.

The following related files and links are available.

File: Dr. Hickman's letter to The Dispatch regarding the director of schools position.

"What I'm all about is having someone that's competent that really can make a change for our kids," he said, adding that he did not tell the entire school board about his and Smith's relationship because he views it as a personnel issue.

Smith could not be reached for comment Saturday. Neither could Hickman.

Despite Smith declining to accept the position, Hickman, in his letter to The Dispatch, said the hire "would have benefited CMSD by assisting in our efforts to revitalize the district's educational promise."

"However, community support is vital and valued in transforming an educational system," Hickman wrote. "As I've stated since arriving to CMSD, trust and perception by our community is very important to me as we work together to create One Vision, One Team and One Columbus."

It is unclear if the director of schools position will be filled at a later date.

During last Monday's meeting, CMSD board members also appointed a temporary personnel director who will decide whether to recommend hiring Hickman's wife, Adilah Zahana, as the district's special education coordinator. The salary for the position was listed at \$42,000, according to the consent agenda.

The potential hire is expected to be brought up at the next CMSD board meeting on Sept. 8.

Sarah Fowler covers crime, education and community related events for The Dispatch. Follow her on Twitter @FowlerSarah

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Exhibit 7 Smith 3/24/16 Rptr: S. Cumberland Brooks Court Reporting

LS008

8/18/2014

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Leslie Smith

This is to certify that the person named herein is licensed under the laws of Mississippi to teach as shown in the public schools in the capacity indicated.

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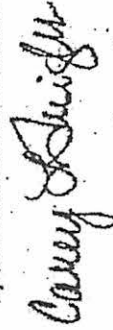
Issue Date
08/26/2014
08/26/2014

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08/25/2014 - 06/30/2019

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Smith 3/24/16
Rptr: S. Cumberland
Brooks Court Reporting

Crystal Smith

Sep 08 14 09:16p