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**kiotee-mee**, Coweta (2/26/2009 6:56:03 AM)

the school board voted against an investigation into ba school employees activities...of course they did...seems if there was nothing to hide they would welcome an investigation to show taxpayers how foolish they were for even thinking they were doing something shady...

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**born okay the 1st time**, tulsa (2/26/2009 7:11:47 AM)

& makes themselves look guilty as sin!

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**righton**, (2/26/2009 7:35:12 AM)

what does the Broken Arrow school board have to hide? apparently a lot when they won't allow an investigation. If I were innocent I would want an investigation to prove I was innocent. maybe they should get a grand jury to investigate. maybe they could get the state auditor to investigate.

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**nagnagnag**, Broken Arrow (2/26/2009 8:00:55 AM)

Is this the story that's connected to the HVAC contractor who had the mysterious fire in the storage unit where their business records were kept? There's been a lot of stuff going on with the BA school board lately. It would seem like they would welcome any opportunity to clear up concerns about their operational policies.

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**Webmeister**, (2/26/2009 8:02:37 AM)

The Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation has already started their own criminal investigation.....

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**Graychin**, Eucha (2/26/2009 8:09:13 AM)

If I were a board member, I would want an investigation just to clear the air.

Too many questions have been raised to brush them aside this way.

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**Eric**, Tulsa (2/26/2009 10:06:02 AM)

One word:

Transparency.

...

Another word:

Integrity.

...

Both seem to be lacking in the Broken Arrow school leadership.

...

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**Irishraider**, B.A. (2/26/2009 10:57:26 AM)

If you aren't guilty BA School Board, why would you excuse a chance to prove it? It's the peoples tax money that pays for these contractors and your salaries. What are you hiding?

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**Getnoldr**, (2/26/2009 11:06:44 AM)

Integrity -- good word. If, in fact, this document was submitted to the board in a fraudulent manner, it demonstrates a complete lack of integrity on the part of the filing attorney. How can a document be properly signed by individuals who state unequivocally that they never saw the document.

As a BA taxpayer, if some of my tax money is wasted on a probe based upon fraudulent and libelous claims, I would like to initiate a taxpayer lawsuit against Mr. Richardson.

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**OK Sooner Lawyer**, (2/26/2009 11:19:13 AM)

I think the focus here should be on the fact that the Kitchens say they did not see the demand nor did they sign their name to it. If that is true that means someone forged their names to the document. What steps did the attorney take to ensure that the names weren't forged? Why was something presented to the school board containing a forgery? And, most importantly, why haven't the tax payers who did make the demand been able to produce any evidence which supports their claims? The BA school district should not have to incur the costs associated with an investigation that is apparently based on forged signatures and unfounded accusations.

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**Playing Fair**, Broken Arrow (2/26/2009 11:33:15 AM)

Read it again. The taxpayers here provided no evidence whatsoever. This is a dead end. Since OSBI is conducting an investigation, the truth will at last come out. Let's wait to see what it is. btw....School Board members volunteer their time. There is no salary for them. Sisney made accusations on things that happened under his watch. He was in the supt's chair for five years, and it took him that long to figure it out? Then he was incompetent...or he's lying. It's my opinion that he's mad and wants to make trouble. Richardson just wants the fat fee at the expense of the school district. OSBI will determine who gets the last laugh.

Playing Fair

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**Getnoldr**, (2/26/2009 11:46:26 AM)

Please remember that Richardson is representing a disgruntled ex-employee. Additionally, this fired employee was witnessed trespassing on school property after his dismissal, removing papers -- some of which could be the exclusive property of the BA school system.

If you (or I) was fired from our place of work, then trespassed and removed documents, then hired an attorney who provided fake names in order to demand that the company spend its' own money to investigate itself...

Something really stinks here. The odor seems to be emanating from Mr. Richardson and his disgruntled ex-employee client. One way to clear up his motives would be for the ex-employee to agree to a release of his personnel records. Then, we can have a better understanding of why he is an ex-

employee.

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**Getnoldr**, (2/26/2009 11:54:43 AM)

Well, my grammar really stinks. Of course, the sentence should have been "If you or I were fired". I guess I was unduly influenced by reading the actual document submitted to the board by Mr. Richardson -- the document that had the complainants names misspelled and duplicated and the dates wrong. Oopsie.

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**HGRIDER**, BA (2/26/2009 12:01:21 PM)

If Mr ambulance chaser is pursuing it, you can believe something smells. Couldn't even confirm 10 signatures were legit???

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**OI City Boy**, (2/26/2009 12:11:01 PM)

Hey BA school board, you only need to worry if you need to worry....

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**Getnoldr**, (2/26/2009 12:25:04 PM)

Hey Mr. Sisney, about your personnel records, you only need to worry if you need to worry....

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**612**, Broken Arrow (2/26/2009 12:33:27 PM)

There are still so many questions and inconsistencies - hard to draw conclusions.

I am wondering whatever happened to the defamation case Dr. Sisney filed. Back on January 12, an entry was made on OSCN that said a ruling was to be given within 7 days. Since then, nothing has been updated. I checked with the courthouse, and the file is still checked out to the judge.

Was there a ruling, and the results are being held for some reason, or has the ruling been delayed? Anybody have any insight on what could be happening here?

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**Getnoldr**, (2/26/2009 12:41:03 PM)

I do know that Sisney had to withdraw his attack (i.e. lawsuit) against attorney Doug Mann. He did it just before a court proceeding that could have forced Sisney to go forward. Seems the last thing one side wants is for all of the facts to come out.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (2/26/2009 12:59:03 PM)

I don't have a lot of confidence in Richardson, after he acted surprised at the revelation that the invoice for Sequoyah Middle School work was actually done at the school, it could be proved by GPS, and the invoice location error was a matter of clicking the wrong entry in a dropdown.

This explanation had been provided to Richardson months earlier.

Some people argue that the school district should use Richardson because he is a lot less expensive. Maybe this is why.

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**USC BRYAN**, TULSA (2/26/2009 4:00:35 PM)

Getnoldr-

Whether Dr Sisney went back in and got papers from his office doesn't matter, and it doesn't matter that he's got a less than "nice" lawyer defending him nor does it matter that those 10 that brought this to the board has the same lawyer. WHAT MATTERS IS THAT UNTIL A FULL INVESTIGATION OF BOTH THE SCHOOL SYSTEM, AIR ASSURANCE, AND THE FORMER SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS AND DR. SISNEY IS DONE BY AN IMPARTIAL INVESTIGATOR AND LET THE COURTS IN ANOTHER COUNTY OTHER THAN TULSA HEARS THIS, NOTHING WILL BE SOLVED AND NO ONE'S NAME WILL BE CLEAR. CITIZENS OF BA, YOU SHOULD WANT AND DEMAND THIS, BUT YOU WILL GET ON YOUR HOLY HIGH HORSE AND SAY NOTHING IS WRONG AND WE WILL HANDLE THIS IN OUR OWN WAY.

GOOD LUCK WITH THAT!!!!

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**cowgrl**, (2/26/2009 4:31:44 PM)

I can understand why on the surface it appears that the board members are refusing to investigate themselves. I've tried to remain neutral until I've heard all the evidence, however, let's keep in mind that

- 1) there was already an audit conducted that cleared everyone of intentional wrongs (only human errors)
- 2) the board attempted to comply with the taxpayer demand by requesting the evidence (of which the other party REFUSES to provide) to determine whether to proceed with an investigation. It's not that they are wiping their hands clean of the issues because they have agreed to reconsider their stand upon the submission of factual evidence. Why should they spend additional TAXPAYER MONEY investigating something of which there appears to be nothing but unsubstantiated allegations.
- 3) Furthermore, the OSBI is already conducting its own investigation. If there's nothing there, then what is the point of "beating a dead horse"? Doesn't the buck stop after this investigation? I think that's as far as they can go if even the OSBI can't prove anything. Honestly, what is the motive of Sisney/Richardson... money? publicity? revenge? If the OSBI does find something in their investigation then I'll admit I'm wrong, but it's unfair to suggest that anyone has committed any illegal acts when to date, NOTHING has been proven only alleged. I'll start believing when I start seeing. Where's the PROOF?

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**Ken's Around Here**, BA (2/26/2009 6:35:59 PM)

Go ahead, keep defending all that is wrong in BA. Bye Bye Air Assurance! Looks like jail time is coming!

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**Jolie2**, (2/26/2009 9:04:28 PM)

to USC BRYAN

You do know that using all caps is like shouting at us, don't you?

"Raising your voice--it's the next best thing to being right." Demetri Martin

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**Jolie2**, (2/26/2009 9:21:31 PM)

OSBI will do a thorough investigation and when it is completed, we will know much more than we do now. This will be the best thing for the Broken Arrow community, no matter where the chips fall.

I do think it is very suspicious that 40% of the signatures (four out of ten persons) on the taxpayer demand are not valid, according to the persons whose names are represented. Is anyone investigating if those signatures are forgeries and who is responsible?

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**Jolie2**, (2/26/2009 9:47:37 PM)

I do hope that in the event that no criminal wrongdoing by the school district/BOE is uncovered, that there will be some way to penalize Dr. Sisney and perhaps Mr. Lare to recoup the legal expenses incurred defending against their accusations.

BTW, please read the information available on the BAPS official website, through a link on the main page, under ANNOUNCEMENTS, entitled 'supt. comments on recent media reports' (from Feb. 19 and 20) Here is an excerpt that I would like to highlight (that relates to the affidavit filed related to the search warrant stating an employee was asked to give documents to Dr. Gerber and made a copy of them first)

#### QUOTE

In December, 2008, CFO Ann Wade was called by representative of the police dept and asked if she had any documents she wanted to share with the police department. She replied "no" and she was asked if Dr. Gerber had attempted to obtain any documents. Mrs. Wade replied truthfully that "yes Dr. Gerber had asked for copies of all of the Air Assurance documents provided to anyone outside the school district."

It is a necessary part of the superintendent's job to become familiar with what has been going on in the District prior to being named Superintendent. The document copies were requested for review and study as required by the superintendent's job. At no time did Dr. Gerber ask for or receive any original documents. In fact Dr. Gerber told Mrs. Wade that he did not want original documents, only copies—and that is all he received. The original invoice records and supporting documents have always been kept in the Finance and Purchasing Office. The records are still there and the records are secure.

The only records that the District is aware of that were missing are the original bid documents from 2007-2008 dealing with the HVAC contract. These records apparently went missing before Dr. Gerber became the superintendent. In order to have these records, Dr. Gerber requested a copy of those documents from the bidders during the weeks subsequent to Oct 6. Those documents have since been obtained from the vendors involved in that HVAC bid process.

The District regrets the ongoing false allegations and innuendo spread throughout our community by misinformed individuals and the media. As Mark Twain said, 'A lie can travel halfway around the world while the truth is still putting on its shoes.'

In addition, it should be noted that the allegations of anyone, especially a disgruntled ex-employee are not fact. Simply because someone makes allegations does not make them true and it is irresponsible for anyone else to issue stories to make them appear to be true.

#### END QUOTE

There is much more on the page, but this has not been reported here or on the Broken Arrow Ledger.

I've tried on three separate times to post this information on the comments section at the BA Ledger but the editor refuses to print it. I cannot understand why, as this is posted on an official website by the current superintendent of schools, unless the Ledger is exercising a bias in favor of Dr. Sisney's claims and prefers only part of the story to be reported.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (2/26/2009 9:58:16 PM)

If your post on the Ledger included a link (or something that looked like one), that could be why it wasn't printed. The one time my post didn't show up was when I included a link. It didn't give an error message like the TW does.

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**Jolie2**, (2/27/2009 7:33:38 AM)

No, I didn't post a link, just told in regular words where to find it, just like here in the TW.

There have been more than several occasions where the Ledger has picked and chosen which of my comments on this topic to print and which to leave out. None involved links, just dates and titles of articles and the sites they are found on (in general terms, not actual website addresses).

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**Jolie2**, (2/27/2009 7:59:11 AM)  
to 612

One example is when I tried to post at the end of the Ledger article that tried to connect similarities between Bossier City and BA, summary information about other school superintendent firings in the nation, many with divided board votes. None of those posts made it through.

It seems to me, the Ledger wants to somewhat 'control' the story.

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**Jolie2**, (2/27/2009 8:19:42 AM)  
to 612, again :)

This makes two times that Sisney's lawyer, Gary Richardson, has been found connected to alleged lies in this issue. The first was his stated ignorance of the typo that caused the Dr. Hudkins/Sequoyah school billing error and now the two forged signatures on the taxpayer petition that he prepared for presentation to the BA Board.

It damages their argument and credibility, doesn't it? Sisney and Lare repeated make accusations and demands but are unwilling to back up their words with any proof.

If Dr. Sisney has nothing to hide, he should have signed a written release for his personnel records to be opened to the public and allow the public to know the details of the real reasons his employment was terminated.

If there was evidence and/or proof of wrongdoing, it should have been presented to the authorities even BEFORE filing the defamation lawsuit on September 3 (a month before his employment was terminated).

Remember on the Ledger when you asked recently about motivation for Sisney to keep going on with this in the media, if he is not telling the truth? I responded to you, but the editor chose not to print it. Here is a bit of what I wrote. A close friend of mine has been following this story, too, and I asked him what he thought. He said when someone uses the media this way, pointing 'Look here! Look here!' very often they are trying to distract from the real story that they don't want known or discussed. I won't speculate what that might be, except to say, perhaps it has something to do with his activities while superintendent. Another thing my friend said was it may be some time before his motivation becomes clear; it could be for reasons completely unknown to us but might be apparent some day in the future.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (2/27/2009 8:59:47 AM)

If it's not a link, it must be all those swear words you put in there! :)

It does seem very clear that Sisney uses the media for his purposes, and in the case of the Ledger, they really seem to lap up anything he has to broadcast, even though a lot of times what he has to say doesn't really add up. Yet we have to go find the current administration's explanations (which

usually make a lot more sense) on their website ourselves. I wonder how many more posts aren't being allowed on the website.

I wonder what Richardson's explanation is for failing to fulfill the request for information to back up the taxpayer demand. Why do we not see a quote from him in the article addressing that? What is he going to do in his new taxpayer lawsuit when the judge asks for evidence?

Curiouser and curiouser. I am looking forward to the results of the OSBI investigation. Whatever the outcome, at least that part of the story will be understood by all.

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**Getnoldr**, (2/27/2009 9:03:47 AM)

To uscbryan --

Actually, it does matter that an ex-employee trespassed onto school property and removed documents. It is called ... wait for it ... trespassing; it is a criminal offense.

Are you comfortable with someone coming on to your property without your permission, taking your stuff, and then calling for you to be investigated?

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**Jolie2**, (2/27/2009 11:12:04 AM)

to 612

This will be a test. I responded to a post to me from Chris T today on the "Taxpayer Issue Not Dead" article and I'm guessing the editor will not print it. It will be interesting to see if it makes it into print at the Ledger. I have written similar things before there (re. alleged blackmail) that I don't believe have been published.

QUOTE

to Chris T

I think we should wait for the results from the OSBI investigation before requesting further information on the legal bills. Once it is determined who was at fault in this situation, then we can better understand information related to the legal bills charged by Doug Mann and his firm. At that point, once wrongdoing is confirmed or ruled out, I would be very happy to add my voice to demands that the detailed billing be provided to the public, to justify paying these high fees.

Lawyers charge high prices. A low-cost lawyer is not always the best choice for quality representation. We will be better able to judge this matter once the investigation is complete and the defamation suit ruling is (eventually, finally) released.

Why are supporters of Dr. Sisney and Mr. Lare not pressing for Dr. Sisney to give written permission for the Board to release detailed information about the termination of his employment and his personnel record? Why do you not want to find out more about that side of the story? If there were valid, documented reasons for his dismissal, wouldn't that change your perspective on this issue, or at least make you more open to considering the possibility that these accusations might be a form of retaliation?

Why is there not more discussion and outrage over Maryanne Flippo's allegation that Dr. Sisney used his position to try to get some sort of personal/professional accommodation in exchange for not making a big PR stink about the AA vendor work with BAPS? If true, Dr. Sisney would have

been willing to keep quiet about alleged wrongdoing, or willing to misrepresent the truth to make it look like there was wrongdoing, for his own personal gain. Doesn't that upset any of you supporters? If you really want the truth, you'd want to see the documentation that the Board has on file for Dr. Sisney's personnel records. You'd want to know what Dr. Sisney's true motivations are for making the accusations against the BOE and AA. I only hope that Mrs. Flippo provided details of this alleged attempt at blackmail/extortion to the BAPD and now the OSBI, as it is criminal wrongdoing.

Remember, Dr. Sisney filed a defamation lawsuit to gain financial compensation for himself LONG BEFORE making any attempt at providing any documentation to authorities to request an official investigation. If he was interested in truth, honor, and the BAPS district, why would his actions be in that order?

Something doesn't add up.

END QUOTE

Did you notice how the BA Ledger frequently changes the dates on their articles about this controversy so that they come up at the top of search lists online, appearing as just-released news?

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**Jolie2**, (2/27/2009 12:12:06 PM)

From this Tulsa World Story:

QUOTE

The Robertses and Kitchens withdrew from the demand, Mann said. In a letter dated Jan. 14, the Kitchens wrote: "I did not agree to anything that was in this letter or even seen it. I do not want to be part of this action."

END QUOTE

\*\*\*

Today, the Ledger has a new article out entitled "Forgery Rumors Debunked" which states at the beginning of the article:

QUOTE

Rumors that two signatures on a citizens' demand initiated by local businessman John Lare were forged have been called absolutely untrue by Lare and the two people involved.

Jack Kitchen said he and his wife were approached by Lare and agreed to join a group of 10 citizens in demanding that the school board investigate possible wrongdoing by district personnel and Air Assurance Co.

The Kitchens, along with Richard and Freida Roberts, later asked that their names be removed from the letter.

END QUOTE

I'd like to see a copy of the letter from January 14 that allegedly states what is directly quoted in the TW's article.

Who can we believe in this matter?

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**612**, Broken Arrow (2/27/2009 12:18:48 PM)

The discrepancy in the stories is striking. How can they have signed something without seeing it?

I like the headline "Rumors debunked". Where was that headline for all of the Sisney-generated rumors that have been debunked?

Right now I really want to use a lot of capital letters and exclamation points.

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**Jolie2**, (2/27/2009 12:46:36 PM)

If Doug Mann has a written letter from Mr. and Mrs. Kitchens stating what is quoted in this Tulsa World article, it would do everyone good to have a copy of it published here in the Tulsa World and at least presented to the BA Ledger, where it just might possibly be published (or not).

Has the Ledger ever had a story before like this one that they ran with? On a "good" day, they manage to crank out two or three articles on the subject. I suspect they have to mop the drool off the floor of their offices on those days.

I hope the Tulsa World will continue to report the facts as they become available and not just present one side of the story. I've noticed they've shown more restraint than the Ledger.

Perhaps someone at The Tulsa World could call to find out what the holdup is on releasing a ruling on Dr. Sisney's defamation lawsuit, which the case summary states was to be issued no later than seven days after the January 12 hearing.

Tulsa Co. District Court File No. CJ-2008-6173

Filed 09/03/08

Judge: Daman H. Cantrell

Assistant to Judge Cantrell is Charlotte and her direct number is 596-5393.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (2/27/2009 12:51:46 PM)

LOL, mopping the drool...

The Ledger articles and comments should be archived as a study in leading a gullible public.

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**Jolie2**, (2/27/2009 1:30:45 PM)

Of course, you'll have to pay a fee to see any Ledger article over three weeks old.

We shouldn't take too much pleasure in making fun of the Sisney side of the argument. It's too early to know what the outcome of the investigation will be. It could turn out that, Sisney's claims (at least some of them) are accurate. Won't that burn? I hate to see badly behaved people be rewarded for their actions.

Even so, if Maryanne Flippo was telling the truth in her press conference about Dr. Sisney's alleged threats and attempt at blackmail on three occasions last summer, he still is guilty of criminal conduct, as well.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (2/27/2009 2:32:52 PM)

Right, it's not like Sisney dreamed up the whole vendor contract issue out of the blue. Clearly there are some things that could have been done better. Just where they fall in the spectrum between criminal wrongdoing and "dropping the ball" remains to be seen.

But I cringe when I see headlines like "Flippo rips news coverage of school activities", which give a negative impression to readers before they get to the first word of the story. Then we get this triumphant "Rumors Debunked" headline announcing a story that really raises even more questions about the people it's trying to show in a good light.

Maybe I'm just being gullible, but right now I don't have any good reason to believe Maryanne Flippo wasn't telling the truth about the threats. If she is lying and manipulating things behind the scenes, she's a heck of a lot better at it than Sisney.

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**Jolie2**, (2/27/2009 4:06:35 PM)

My instincts tell me that Maryanne Flippo is telling the truth, too. I really hate how she has been treated because of this controversy. After serving on the BAPS board for two terms (a total of 10 years) as an unpaid public servant, it must be so hurtful to receive the abuse and disrespect heaped upon her by some of the public and allegedly by Dr. Sisney, as well. If she is telling the truth and not involved in any wrongdoing, how can any of that be made up to her?

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**Jolie2**, (2/27/2009 10:29:01 PM)

to 612

Just an update on my response to Chris T in an article in the BA Ledger:

The Ledger chose to publish it in full. I'm surprised as it is highly critical of Dr. Sisney but am pleased that it is now available for other Broken Arrow residents to read.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (2/27/2009 11:47:43 PM)

I am glad they posted it. People need to have these questions brought to their attention. I'm glad you have continued to post in spite of the dissenting opinions. You have a lot of insight, and you are really doing our community a service.

I notice that my comment on the "Forgery rumors debunked" story was not published. I included the quote from TW about the Kitchens' letter...maybe the Ledger didn't like that. I'll try again.

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**Jolie2**, (2/28/2009 9:11:34 AM)

Thanks 612, I appreciate your comments. It was lonely in the beginning, but when reasonable voices, such as your own started joining in, it became much easier. Now, it seems that more and more people are starting to recognize that something's not right with the way Dr. Sisney and his supporters are conducting their business. I think the turning point was when Rep. Reynolds issued his press release regarding the unused sick pay on the same day the results of the BAPS special audit were published.

I submitted a very similar comment to yours on the "Forgery Rumors Debunked" Ledger article early yesterday, with the Kitchen's quote from the TW article. It wasn't accepted for publication either. Funny, isn't it, how the editors would rather publish a list of insults to themselves rather than factual information that might look damaging to "their" side of the issue.

How about if we have anything to communicate on this subject to each other or the public that can't/won't be accepted on the Ledger, we post it on the most recent TW article on the subject? I think that will make this rejection of information on the Ledger easier to deal with.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (2/28/2009 9:17:09 AM)

Another test. My 2nd try didn't make it either.

-----

The Kitchens' letter from January 14 said they did not agree with what was in the letter and had never seen it.

Mr. Richardson, how did they sign something they had never seen?

Mr. Richardson, why did you not provide the documentation requested within the 30 days?

Ledger, why aren't you asking?

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**612**, Broken Arrow (2/28/2009 9:48:15 AM)

Good idea. It's so much easier to communicate without the several hours' delay, and the TW articles don't get archived away.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (2/28/2009 9:51:29 AM)

Interesting the way the Ledger prints some diparaging comments about themselves - just enough to make it look like they aren't censoring?

I remember when my brother would admit just enough to my parents to lull them into thinking he was being honest about everything.

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**Jolie2**, (2/28/2009 10:01:04 AM)

I think a big part of why I distrust the Sisney side of the argument is because of the tactics employed by him and his attorney, John Lare, and his other supporters, the posters' behavior online who are in support of Sisney and are rude to members in the community and other posters online (and sometimes barely coherent), and the obvious bias of the Ledger and its unwillingness to make all information available.

If their argument was so strong and they were being honest in their assertions, why would these manipulative tactics be necessary? Why would the Ledger be afraid to have the public examine all aspects of the controversy.

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**Jolie2**, (2/28/2009 12:39:44 PM)

This is a post I submitted to the Ledger just after noon on Sat. 2/28, under the article "Taxpayer demand not a dead issue, signer claims"

This is in response to statements by posters that the reason the John Lare/Gary Richardson never responded to Doug Mann's request on behalf of the

board for specific proof of wrongdoing to justify their taxpayer demand was to hold this information/proof until a lawsuit trial would go to court, to make their case more effective.

#### QUOTE

to the person who doesn't use a regular username but signed him/herself as "To thenight 1"

Let me get this straight, the more important goal in this controversy is for litigants to win potential lawsuits? I can believe that is the possible motivation for the way things are being handled by the Sisney/Lare side of things, but it is hardly an honest person's way of handling matters. It looks like those who supposedly want problems looked into don't care the amount of damage it causes individuals or the community and are very willing to allow this to drag on and on, while ensuring the subject stays in the media in the meantime, just as long as they "win." Shouldn't the number 1 priority be to get to the bottom of this as quickly as possible, determine what, if anything, falls under criminal conduct, and prosecute individuals as necessary, removing them from their positions if found guilty? Or is this an exercise to line the pockets of certain individuals and lawyers and a showing of power and self-importance, manipulating the media and public to go along with it? Unbelievable.

Is the state auditor's office involved? OSBI is not the same office; did you know that? I have been unable to find anything in the Board minutes approving an agreement for a state audit, even though it was supposed to be brought up for consideration at the early Feb. board meeting. I have not seen any media reports stating any confirmation that the state audit has been secured or is under way. Does anyone have a source that says the OK state auditor/investigator is confirmed to conduct an investigation, separately from the OSBI investigation?

BTW, I would make an excellent juror, as I am willing to consider all the facts, as presented, not just the ones that fit into any theory or opinion I have. I am also willing to set aside prejudices and following the letter of the law. From reading 612's and JaredA's posts, I would say they would behave similarly.

#### END QUOTE

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**612**, Broken Arrow (2/28/2009 2:41:54 PM)

Just a juror? I kinda liked the sound of JUDGE Jolie :)

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**Jolie2**, (2/28/2009 3:32:29 PM)

lol, 612, you do have a good memory :D

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**612**, Broken Arrow (2/28/2009 5:50:18 PM)

Looks like "Jolie" and "612" are now considered inappropriate language. Neither of our posts was printed in the latest update.

The timestamp on the latest post for the "Taxpayer demand not a dead issue, signer claims" article is 2/28 11:14 AM, so I guess technically your post could still be coming. But other stories have timestamps from later this afternoon. Typically all of the updates seem to happen in a batch.

Mine definitely didn't make it. There is a post from 1:51 this afternoon on the same article - hours after I posted mine.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (2/28/2009 5:55:36 PM)

Here's my latest attempt, also on the "Forgery rumors debunked" article, in response to Casey questioning why the four people wanted their names

removed.

----

Good question, Casey. I have several other questions I have posted 3 times on this article. They don't get published. Wonder how many other comments are being suppressed.

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**Jolie2**, (2/28/2009 6:34:31 PM)

Because of our experience with the Ledger being selective in what they are including in their articles and which comments get published, I would not trust any of their reporting in the future as being honest, right down to what time of the day it is.

I hope whatever reason(s) is causing them to defend Sisney's cause at the expense of integrity is worth it to them. I'm sure we're are two among many who have noticed their biased, unfair reporting.

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**Jolie2**, (2/28/2009 7:10:22 PM)

Another post I'm submitting on the Ledger article entitled "Taxpayer demand not a dead issue, signer claims" dated Feb. 27

QUOTE

to bhonest (how about, bserious! )

Do you think Dr. Sisney's PERSONNEL records from his employment contain his medical information? I highly doubt it. It will contain his work history and any reports of misconduct (if there are any) and actions taken in response, yearly employment reviews, and the reasons for his employment termination.

Dr. Sisney has publicly claimed that his termination was wrongful, that there was no merit to it. The Board says there was good reason, but legally is not able to reveal the details without Dr. Sisney's permission.

You, I, and all the other posters here did not start the ball rolling on the accusations against BOE members for unjust termination of employment. Dr. Sisney did. Maryanne Flippo has presented a way for the Board to release the information which would supposedly prove the justification for his termination. Why is that of no interest to anyone that supports Dr. Sisney's argument? To me, it seems essential to understanding both sides of the issue here, at least until official investigation results are received.

Dr. Sisney and Mr. Lare have not presented any confirmed proof of wrongdoing to the public and yet so many are willing to believe their allegations but do not want any questions to be asked of Dr. Sisney. Why not? What makes his part in this story off limits from scrutiny?

Dr. Sisney was a paid employee of our school district, who, before his termination, filed a defamation lawsuit against individuals that included three unpaid, BA school board members, two who have served our community ten or more years on the BOE. Why is it automatically assumed that he is in the right and they are in the wrong? Why don't you want to know more?

What do you think is in his personnel (employment) files that he wouldn't want known? I'm sure Dr. Sisney knows, otherwise he wouldn't have had a problem with appealing his termination, making excuses it was just a waste of time. Otherwise, he would accept Maryanne Flippo's challenge and sign a

written release to legally reveal the reasons for his dismissal. I believe he absolutely doesn't want that information revealed.

Why aren't people more interested in the threats that Dr. Sisney allegedly made to Mrs. Flippo last summer in an effort to receive (something) related to his employment contract? If Mrs. Flippo is telling the truth, Dr. Sisney is guilty of ethical misconduct and criminal behavior. Why is there not a cry of outrage and insistence on knowing more from the public after Mrs. Flippo's revelations at her recent press conference? At the very least, if true, it shows that Dr. Sisney puts his own interests before that of the school district and the community, if he was willing to bargain for personal gain to keep quiet about real (or made up) corruption concerning the district/AA business dealings. Doesn't that bother anybody?

END QUOTE

I also a question on the 'Forgery Rumors Debunked' article that asks why the Ledger doesn't publish ALL comments submitted to their articles. (I suspect it won't be published.)

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**612**, Broken Arrow (2/28/2009 7:21:43 PM)

You're not going to believe this - the question about publishing ALL comments is there already. But none of the four I submitted are there.

I don't see the one on "Taxpayer demand not a dead issue, signer claims" yet.

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**Jolie2**, (2/28/2009 8:13:36 PM)

No, I couldn't believe it--had to read it for myself. If another poster questions what I mean, should I invite readers to the Tulsa World to read what we've posted here, to let them know that there is another way of communicating about and outside of the Ledger by going to the most recent TW article on this subject and posting copies of comments submitted to the Ledger?

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**612**, Broken Arrow (2/28/2009 8:25:19 PM)

It wouldn't hurt to try. Of course, they might decline to print that.

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**Jolie2**, (3/1/2009 8:44:39 AM)

This is a post I submitted to the Ledger on Sun., 3/1, at 8:45 am, under the article titled "Taxpayer demand not a dead issue, signer claims"  
QUOTE

To "TO To in Response to wrote on Feb 28, 2009 9:37 AM:" (do you think posters could just pick a made-up human psuedonym and stick with it; these names are getting out of hand, making it difficult to be clear which poster we're responding to)

I'd like to point out a factual error in your post.

Tulsa Co. DA Tim Harris's remarks quoted in the Tulsa World article of December 12, entitled "Petition Falls Short in BA School Case," stated:

QUOTE

The Broken Arrow Police Department looked into the allegations outlined in the petition, Lare said.

Broken Arrow Deputy Police Chief Norman Stephens confirmed the department did investigate.

"Based on what we had, it didn't fall under criminal conduct," Stephens said, adding that the file was sent to the Tulsa County District Attorney's office.

Tim Harris, Tulsa County district attorney, said he read the file and has sent it back to the police department for further clarification.

"Make sure we know what we're looking at," Harris said.

Lare wants the members removed from office.

"You have to have sufficient evidence. I know Mr. Lare believes there is, but that's his personal opinion," Harris said.

END QUOTE

The affidavit for the search warrant issued for AA documents dated February 19 states that a police report was filed December 17, a week later than that TW article was published. You can read that on page 2 of the pdf file of the affidavit on the Ledger's article entitled "Affidavit alleges link between storage unit fire and Air Assurance; BA superintendent responds to media reports" at the top of the page in item 1.

I do believe the fire at the storage unit facility did peak the authorities' interest in the case and gave more weight to the charges, as you suggested. With the tenacity shown by Dr. Sisney and John Lare in having this matter investigated, I hope neither of them or none of their supporters stooped to the level of having this fire set to give their allegations more credibility.

As of this date, no confirmation from official sources definitively states which unit the fire started in at the facility. If it was not the AA unit (as Mike Rampey has said it wasn't), it would be important to determine who rented and had access to the unit where the fire started to see if there are any potential reasons those persons would have for starting a fire. If the fire was not in the AA unit itself, I have a hard time believing that anyone connected to AA had anything to do with it.

Jolie

END QUOTE

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/1/2009 11:26:28 PM)

Looks like your 7:11 post from 2/28 made it. On the "Forgery rumors debunked" article, it looks like they'll print comments about not printing comments...but for some reason, anything that mentions the Kitchens' letter as quoted in TW hasn't gotten printed. I wonder if there is something too revealing about it. I keep trying to ask how they could have signed something they have never seen. I think it's a good question, but I guess someone doesn't like it.

There is a fresh batch of hate mail for you...same posters, different screen names. I wonder why it's so hard for them to cope with someone suggesting looking at all sides. They seem to lose their cool awfully easily.

It's especially twisted the way some are trying to make the rally out to be a show of support for the board, and then condemning anyone who participated as supporting criminal behavior. Circular logic, but I guess we've seen a lot of that lately.

Here's another (probably futile) attempt on the "Forgery rumors debunked" article.

----

How did they manage to sign something they had never seen? The Tulsa World article has the text of the letter from the Kitchens dated January 14, where they stated that they did not agree to anything in the letter and had never seen it. Take a look, and compare with what is reported in this article.

Maybe there is a good explanation for these apparently conflicting stories. Mr. Richardson?

Ledger - this is my 5th try asking the same question. Is there some technical problem or other issue with what I have written?

How did they manage to sign something they had never seen? The Tulsa World article has the text of the letter from the Kitchens dated January 14, where they stated that they did not agree to anything in the letter and had never seen it. Take a look, and compare with what is reported in this article.

Maybe there is a good explanation for these apparently conflicting stories. Mr. Richardson?

Ledger - this is my 5th try asking the same question. Is there some technical problem or other issue with what I have written? I'm getting the impression someone doesn't want this question brought up.

-----

Your comment has been submitted and will be viewable once it is approved. \*\* sigh \*\*

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/1/2009 11:30:02 PM)

Well, apparently I pasted twice...but hey, it's still gratifying (instantly!) to see it posted.

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**Jolie2**, (3/2/2009 12:21:21 AM)

Thanks for the warning about the negativity. None of it was as bad as I expected. It doesn't bother me much, particularly since so many others are now speaking out clearly and asking questions about the Sisney side of the equation.

I have no idea why the Ledger won't print your comments about the Kitchen couple's letter. Their own article is so vague, without even mentioning the two people whose names were rumored to be forged in that first paragraph. Did the Ledger even talk to Mr. and/or Mrs. Kitchen to confirm the authenticity of their signatures on the letter or did they just take Mr. Lare's word for it that they said they signed the letter?

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/2/2009 12:33:56 AM)

There's definitely a disconnect. Their letter saying that they had never seen it is at odds with Lare's statement that they signed it and then changed their minds.

Usually when there is an apparent contradiction, there is an explanation that makes sense of it. I think it's reasonable to ask what it is. Why is no one asking Richardson or Lare? Why do the accusations and calls for investigation go one way and not the other?

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**Jolie2**, (3/2/2009 10:23:12 AM)

If there wasn't a January 14 letter with those quotes by the Kitchens, you'd think the Kitchens, Gary Richardson, and/or the Ledger would be eager to put that on record. Wouldn't the Kitchens have kept a copy for themselves which could then be made available for the media and the public to correct the TW article, if it wasn't accurate?

Until we see such an official correction, I'm not willing to accept the Ledger's debunking of the forgery rumor, particularly since they are taking such pains to keep the issue of the January 14 letter from being raised in the comments section.

To me, this is evidence that the Ledger is willing to compromise truth to control the story and protect certain persons' agenda.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/2/2009 10:51:49 AM)

I notice that the Ledger doesn't seem to mind posting inflammatory comments, even if they have nothing of value to say. Why would "blah blah blah" get printed (if you remember that from a while back), but then an inoffensive post asking a pertinent question doesn't - four times?

I posted a reply to bhonest, and it got printed immediately. Maybe because it's critical of someone else's post, which helps generate exchanges that are more interesting to readers, and doesn't really touch on any sensitive issues the Ledger doesn't want brought up.

-----  
Posted on "Taxpayer demand not a dead issue, signer claims":

I'm sorry, bhonest, you posted a nonsensical comment and then blamed readers for being "confused".

That's about as honest as making a rally out to be about "supporting the board" when it wasn't, and then attacking it as divisive. You created the confusion, and you created the divisiveness regarding the rally. Everyone else but the anti-board people had a nice rally celebrating our teachers.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/2/2009 11:27:13 AM)

I notice there is a gap in the "Taxpayer demand not a dead issue..." article comments, where your 3/1 8:45 am comment should be.

612 wrote on Feb 28, 2009 7:33 PM:

Red Flags wrote on Mar 1, 2009 9:11 AM:

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/2/2009 11:30:30 AM)

I was also surprised to see a Ledger article get wrong the timeline of two very significant milestones in this story.

The "OSBI gets school investigation" story states:

QUOTE

After being fired in a 3-2 vote by the board of education, Sisney filed a defamation of character lawsuit against Mike Rampey, a local eye doctor and "three unnamed co-conspirators" ...

UNQUOTE

The article was written by Bob Lewis, who has been involved from the very beginning; and in fact, wrote an editorial on the fact that parents seemed apathetic about the superintendent filing a defamation lawsuit against Air Assurance. At the time it was clear that Bob Lewis knew that Sisney was the current superintendent.

The events weren't even close. The lawsuit was filed on September 3, 2008; the board voted to suspend on Monday, October 6, then terminated on Thursday, October 23.

How could he make a mistake like that? The way it's worded doesn't leave room for the possibility that it's just a typo, for example, mixing up the names of the months or something along those lines.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/2/2009 11:44:19 AM)

6th attempt on Ledger "Forgery rumors debunked" article. I think I've gone beyond tenacity to just plain stubborn.

-----

This rumor is not debunked yet. Until Mr. Richardson or Mr. Lare explains how the Kitchens managed to sign something they claim they have never seen, we do not have an answer.

See the Tulsa World article dated 2/26 entitled "BA school board rejects probe" for the text of the Kitchens' letter saying they did not agree with what was in the taxpayer demand and had never seen it. Which story is accurate?

Also posted on the same Tulsa World article are these comments and my first five attempts to bring up this discrepancy on this article.

Why will the Ledger not print these questions?

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**Jolie2**, (3/2/2009 2:49:53 PM)

I hadn't caught that "error" in reporting the timeline of Sisney filing his defamation suit and then his employment being terminated backwards. That's terrible. He filed his defamation suit, according to the documents, because his contract was not going to be renewed. The next time the AA/Board controversy hits the headlines in other media, I think we should have a list of the Ledger's erroneous reporting and censorship on this topic ready to copy and paste onto each news outlet's comments pages to inform readers that the Ledger's reporting on this subject is biased and not to be trusted. Maybe that will get Bob Lewis's attention, but more importantly, it may wake up a few more people to the story behind the story.

I remember when Chris Tharp set up his BA Parents vs. the Board website, he mentioned in his notes about one board meeting that he had had a conversation with Lewis and Lewis was planning to do an article on so and so, and it was obvious to me that at that point Lewis was "doing his part" on behalf the effort against the Board, instead of remaining impartial. I'll see if I can find the exact entry on Tharp's website and copy and paste it here.

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**Jolie2**, (3/2/2009 3:09:29 PM)

I've searched through Tharp's BAParentsvsBABOE website and only found two pages of his personal notes from attending board meetings (through links on the past notes page, linked to the home page at the bottom). I believe some of the earlier stuff, prior to Sisney's employment termination may have been removed or the reference to Bob Lewis was removed from one of the existing pages (or I'm just not looking on the right page).

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**Jolie2**, (3/2/2009 3:45:44 PM)

612, I hope you don't mind my using the information you brought to my attention. I went ahead and submitted the following post under the Ledger's "OSBI Gets School Investigation" dated February 23:

QUOTE

The Ledger should be ashamed of its coverage of this topic. Was it deliberate to inaccurately report that Dr. Sisney filed his defamation lawsuit AFTER his employment was terminated?

FACT: Dr. Sisney filed his defamation lawsuit on SEPTEMBER 3, 2008. (He said it was because his contract was not going to be renewed.)

FACT: Dr. Sisney's employment with the district is suspended by the board on OCTOBER 6, 2008.

FACT: Dr. Sisney's employment was officially terminated by the board on OCTOBER 23, 2008.

Get the facts straight or start calling yourself a tabloid instead of newspaper.

END QUOTE

comment submitted to the Ledger on 3/2/09 at 3:50 pm

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/2/2009 5:16:44 PM)

Don't mind a bit...hope they print it. You'll probably be called a wacko for pedantically insisting that September comes before October :)

Agreed, if the information is being presented in an inaccurate or misleading way, there needs to be a counterbalance. A list is a good idea. People should have an opportunity to see what the Ledger has been omitting and slanting. Whether they want to accept it or not...

In my sixth (also unsuccessful) attempt to post on the Kitchen question, I wrote that I was also posting everything on the Tulsa World article. The screener may not have cared, or may not even have read past the "612" at the top.

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**Jolie2**, (3/2/2009 5:22:50 PM)

If the Ledger does print your comment, be prepared for the hostile posters from there to come over here and have a free-for-all. It'll be worth it, just to have the freedom for everyone's posts to be displayed immediately. However, we should both copy and paste the more important posts here today to our own computers, just in case someone gets the idea to "Report Comment" to have any comments they don't agree with removed. I'm not sure if the report feature is an automatic feature or if the editors actually read the comments reported to decide if they fit the category of abuse before deleting them.

BTW, if you don't mind sharing, what does the 612 refer to?

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/2/2009 5:23:33 PM)

I am wondering why anybody is giving Lare credit for initiating the OSBI investigation. Could Sisney not have requested an investigation back when he was

still superintendent? It seems like it would have been quicker and had better chances of "catching them in the act" if it had been done without all the fanfare.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/2/2009 5:36:38 PM)

Good idea on copying the posts. You never know.

The 612 is pretty meaningless. When this whole thing started, I posted some comments with a pretty generic name, "BA Parent". Someone commented that I had just made a pretty caustic comment with the opposite point of view. After I responded that that must have been a different BA Parent, they suggested that we number ourselves. I picked BA Parent 612 (number 1 seemed too ostentatious), and eventually dropped the BA Parent.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/2/2009 5:55:14 PM)

The "Forgery rumors debunked" article no longer shows up on the front page. It's also not in the Most Commented section, where older articles are kept alive long past their publication date. I guess nobody had anything to say on it...:)

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**Jolie2**, (3/2/2009 6:12:04 PM)

John Lare has put his name out front of these initiatives for having this matter officially investigated, so people assume that it is cause and effect, which may be partly true. The tenacious efforts of Mr. Lare and the small group of supporters with him may have pushed authorities into finally going ahead and getting to the bottom of things, once and for all, to satisfy these demands. The fire at the storage facility was the big attention-getter, though--the deal sealer, I believe.

You're right. If there was/is a real problem and Dr. Sisney wanted it handled so that the district could be operating on the up and up by removing the problems and possibly anyone involved in misconduct, he could have handled it much more quickly, efficiently, effectively, and professionally directly through official channels. Instead he chose personal litigation and to run a campaign through the media for, what I believe, is for his own gain and benefit (or to hide possible misconduct of his own).

You know, I really can understand the suspicion many have toward the Board and Gerber. Their end of things hasn't been completely forthcoming and transparent, either. It bothers me that Dr. Gerber removed the Boards' minutes of the meeting, except for two of the most recent meetings, from the electronic message board connected to the BOE/BAPS website after this controversy began. From reading the BAParentsvsBOE website, apparently some of the minutes have been what Chris Tharp calls 'sanitized' by removing the specific comments from the public during the meeting and just identifying the name of the speaker and the fact that they addressed spoke at the meeting. If true, that troubles me. Another troubling aspect is the very large impending legal bill from Doug Mann's firm without any type of breakdown for the public, as of yet, and the Board's reluctance to discuss it. I'd like to hear your point of view on these three items.

You see, I have no problem looking at both sides of the issue. What I do have a problem with is when some of the media refuses to be impartial on a news issue, and thereby unfairly skewing the public response to it.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/2/2009 6:27:20 PM)

There is a big difference between being troubled by something and assuming the worst about people's motives. Even though a lot of posts are sarcastic and insulting, I feel like I have to consider what the poster is saying, in case there is some validity to it. It's just a little harder to take someone seriously

when they're mostly calling other people idiots.

With the board's actions and Dr. Gerber's actions, it's hard to figure out where the line is between what they should divulge and what would really just cause more of an uproar to divulge. In some cases, like the legal fees, they may be able to provide the amounts and the technical breakdown, but they may be unable to provide the reason for needing the work. I would think that Ms. Flippo would have asked for legal counsel after being threatened, or for any number of issues with Dr. Sisney that could be considered personnel issues (if these things happened of course). But to release the numbers and the breakdown with no explanation of why the work was needed would probably make them look even worse.

I think the Ledger should ask Dr. Gerber about the breakdown, and the "sanitized" minutes. He can post his answer on the BA Schools website. If he doesn't answer, the Ledger can report that. Those are good questions, and if he can provide assurance that there are good reasons, it might go a long way toward restoring trust in the administration. On the other hand, if he can't or won't, it may allow board supporters to more thoughtfully consider the possibility of some level of wrongdoing.

I wonder why no one has reported any answer from Rep. Reynolds to Ms. Flippo's letter, or lack of answer. I believe I know why the Ledger has not reported further on this, but the Tulsa World reported on that story too; where is the followup?

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**Jolie2**, (3/2/2009 7:48:56 PM)

Sometimes I feel like making phone calls myself to follow up on the information that isn't questioned or followed up on by the media. But that's not my job.

The one paper that is best suited for making those calls on behalf of our community has chosen to only report part of the story and is not very good at it (or too good at it, depending on your perspective, I guess). The Ledger should be doing its very best to report the **WHOLE** story and should be making the calls, like you suggested, starting with 1) Rep. Reynolds' office. After that, they could:

2) Call Doug Mann and ask for a copy of the January 14 letter from the Kitchens. If received, call and question Mr. and Mrs. Kitchens directly, specifying their words in the letter, to get a direct quote in response. If necessary, follow up with John Lare again and Mr. Richardson, to clarify contradictions. And then print all of the information for the public to understand and make up their own minds about.

3) Call Judge Cantrell at Tulsa Co. District Court to follow up on the ruling in Dr. Sisney's defamation suit and report the status to the public in the next article published in the Ledger on the BA schools controversy.

What else?

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**Jolie2**, (3/2/2009 9:32:00 PM)

612

I just wanted to let you know that the Ledger did publish an article on October 16, entitled "Interim superintendent pulls electronic school board from use" which is available from the archives, for a fee. I think their system of archiving everything after older than a few weeks is ridiculous.

I read the article back then but can't remember what reason Dr. Gerber gave for this action.

One thing I can say for the BAParentsvsBABOE website is that they are thorough in providing titles and links to all articles in the news regarding the controversy for reference. At least we have titles of the BA articles, even if the links will not bring up the articles any longer. I wish that Chris Tharp had picked a less adversarial title for the site. If he couldn't come up with less hostile title, he should have named it "SomeBAParentsvsBABOE" instead of implying that all parents were antagonistic toward the board.

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**Jolie2**, (3/2/2009 10:04:14 PM)

I am submitting this post at 10 pm 3/2/09 on the BA Ledger's article entitled "Taxpayer demand not a dead issue, signer claims" redated for March 2, 2009 (but originally dated February 26 --see dates on first comments--another example of the Ledger changing the dates on their stories so that they come up high on the top of searches online)

#### QUOTE

If the media, particularly the Ledger, was even-handed in its reporting of this story, some of us who comment now might not even feel the need to post. It is because some of the aspects of this case continue to be ignored that some of us keep pounding on the same points, as we feel they are important as well--not more important than other things that have been discussed but certainly worth investigating and understanding. I am puzzled why some things which I would consider very important to understanding both sides of this controversy are shrugged off or even scorned as not the public's business or that even questioning in these areas is a form of vindictiveness. To make a fair assessment of the issues involved in this controversy is to examine all the aspects of it, not have tunnel vision.

I am thankful the OSBI is examining evidence and will do a thorough investigation. I suspect most people who post wanting more information released about Sisney's termination, with his written permission, feel the same way. We want answers. We want the truth. We aren't looking to have one side or the other win and understand that errors and/or misconduct could be discovered on either or both sides of this argument.

Why are some people so locked into one position that they are don't want to find out more about other aspects of this case, while we wait for the outcome of the investigation?

Has anyone who supports Sisney responded to Maryanne Flippo's reporting his alleged threats and alleged attempt at blackmail/extortion in the summer of 2008? Why is this not considered worthy of investigation and further reporting? I didn't make it up. I read about it in the press. Why is Dr. Sisney getting a "free pass" from so posters on this?

Jolie

END QUOTE

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/2/2009 10:35:29 PM)

I agree, I was turned off from the start by the website name. It's the same thing with the petition - it presumed guilt and demanded removal of the board members. Too confrontational for me.

I remember at one point reading the reasons for pulling the electronic school board. I don't remember what they were, but I remember thinking that they sounded, on the surface, reasonable enough. There are still questions about agendas being changed too. These are points that people keep bringing up, and it would be best for all if we could either settle them or show that they are indeed a problem. There will always be some that will not accept any explanation, but getting it out in the open is still better.

I never noticed the dates changing before, but after you mentioned it, I started seeing articles dated AFTER their first comment. Hmm...

Your most recent comment really spells it out. Why does merely asking a question bring on an onslaught of jeers, put-downs, and sarcasm? It sure seems like a lot of people would be happy to find out their school board was corrupt. Why in the world would they want that?

And it seems that people assume the culprit is EITHER one (the board) or the other (Sisney); one is spotless and the other is contemptible. Human relations don't work like that; particularly if there has been ongoing friction. I think it's very likely that there has been ongoing friction between Sisney and the board, and both sides have responded from time to time in less than productive ways.

I am going to start keeping track of questions I have and anomalies in reporting I see. I am really surprised, given the obvious interest in this topic, that very little investigation is being done by the newspapers. We told the Ledger when Doug Mann was dismissed from the lawsuit, for heaven's sake.

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**Jolie2**, (3/3/2009 11:41:02 AM)

Thanks, 612. The most recent comment of mine was published and I received a response. Here's my response to that poster on the "Taxpayer demand..." article:

QUOTE

to "What"

At the beginning of this controversy between Board and Superintendent, it was only Dr. Sisney's allegations and accusations that many people based their judgements on and were willing to condemn three members of the board, a vendor, and an administrator without considering any other side of this issue. There is still no established proof of wrongdoing that has been publicized in this case.

I respect your (and others') right to make a determination if someone is a credible source of information; however, I believe the media has a duty to treat information reported seriously and not make a judgement on whether or not to accept someone's word as valid or not, without investigation. Has anyone from the media bothered to question the other board members about knowledge of these incidents that Mrs. Flippo alleges occurred? Did she confide in them?

I do believe that the general terms of the Board's letter of reasons why it was seeking to terminate Dr. Sisney's employment could have and should have included this matter, without specifying the particulars of any incidents. Here is an excerpt from the Tulsa World article dated October 18, 2008, and titled "Claims against BA superintendent listed"

QUOTE

After the board voted 3-2 during a special meeting Oct. 6 to suspend Sisney, he was sent a notification letter last week listing the reasons for possible termination.

The letter alleges that Sisney demeaned and humiliated staff members; made derogatory remarks about district employees, former board members and superintendents of other schools; and made false allegations against a district vendor about its billing practices.

It states that Sisney isn't a good leader and does not work well with staff members or the community.

The letter also states that Sisney entered into a confidential agreement with an administrator for that administrator to be paid sick leave when he is not sick.

END QUOTE

Because of other negative comments from posters about Dr. Sisney's treatment of employees that I've read online, I believe that it is very possible that Mrs. Flippo could be telling the truth about the threats. If she is lying, she has certainly opened herself up to further/continued litigation against her by Dr. Sisney. Why would she put herself in that vulnerable position at this point in time, particularly when the authorities were already investigating the school and AA for possible criminal wrongdoing? She had nothing to gain, that I can think of, to come forward at this time, other than to help defend the district and the community from all the negative press. Her term on the board was ending and she was not running for re-election.

Even if the Board members and administration were trying to cover-up malfeasance, Dr. Sisney's alleged attempt to exploit this knowledge for his own gain would be misconduct on its own.

I am not satisfied with the explanations on either side of this issue and I don't believe the answers are in black and white but probably shades of gray.

I do see that there are some people and a newspaper who are not willing to have full discourse on this matter and appear to try to manipulate the direction of public opinion on it. That has been troubling. If someone is confident in the truth, why try to censor free speech (as to which comments are printed here) or report fact inaccurately, or not perform some basic journalism into the case beyond reporting what is fed to the media. Why? That leads me to believe that there is more to Dr. Sisney's side of the story than he or his supporters want revealed and I want to know and understand what that is, just as much as I want to know the results of the OSBI investigation into potential fraud within the district/vendor relationship.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/3/2009 11:51:02 AM)

I saw that response to your post. It really just illustrated what you were trying to say - that people have tended to give credence to one side but not the other, when there equally serious questions about each. The questions raised by the responder are valid, but no more valid than the questions about Dr. Sisney's actions.

I can't help noticing though, that no one really gets upset when you post legitimate questions or concerns about the board's or Dr. Gerber's actions. The backlash only comes from one direction.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/3/2009 11:57:59 AM)

Ok, for what it's worth, I just posted something to that effect. I forgot to copy and paste it first, so if it doesn't get posted, it's gone.

If it never gets posted, I will claim that it was especially compelling and persuasive, not to mention grammatically impeccable :)

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/3/2009 1:13:03 PM)

Hm, my post made it but yours didn't, at least not yet.

Copying mine, for posterity:

-----

On "Taxpayer demand not a dead issue, signer claims"

612 wrote on Mar 3, 2009 11:54 AM:

" "What", I believe your post illustrates what Jolie was pointing out.

The questions you bring up are valid, but no more valid or important than the questions about Dr. Sisney's actions. There are important questions to be settled on both sides, and regardless of how credible we think someone is, we should withhold our judgment until we find out the answers.

Demanding answers on one side and refusing to ask questions on the other (and attempting to silence those who do) will not lead us to the truth. "

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**cowgri**, (3/3/2009 1:47:06 PM)

To 612 and Jolie-

1st of all...congrats 612 on finally getting your comments posted again on the Ledger!! Hee Hee!!! I don't understand the selection process for the Ledger AT ALL!

To both of you...I just wanted to thank you for your open minded commentaries. For a long time I have seen the slanted reporting in the media, as well as the one-sided views of many of the bloggers here and on the Ledger. I've only commented here one time for fear of the attacks I've seen posters do to anyone who questions the other side...especially to you Jolie. I wish I were as fearless as you both are.

Thank you for trying to bring out facts instead of just rumors and allegations. It's obviously not your jobs to do what you're doing, but for the sake of BA, I'm glad you are (because no one else feels obligated to).

Hopefully the OSBI investigation will shed light on many of the issues at hand and maybe put an end to all this chaos. I'm like you both...I just want the truth and I think that the public deserves it regardless of who did what. It's obvious that no one is going to admit any wrong doing, so we can only hope that with an investigation and responsible reporting maybe one day we'll get it.

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**Jolie2**, (3/3/2009 2:16:20 PM)

612 - Look, we've got fan mail! This was posted to our attention on the "Forgery Debunked" article

QUOTE

TO jolie and 612 wrote on Mar 3, 2009 1:31 PM:

" If you wouldn't be so rude and biased, maybe all of your comments would be posted. All you do is trash talk everyone, including the newspaper, EXCEPT for the BOE and Gerber. YOU DO NOT KNOW WHO IS GUILTY- PERIOD! You are not superior to the rest of us, so quit talking like it. We are ALL sick of you both! "

END QUOTE

Hey, Cowgirl -- glad to have your company and read your supportive comments. How did you find your way to this little oasis?

BTW, it only take a little bravery to post under an anonymous name. I would never dare to reveal "Jolie's" true identity to anyone because of the irrational, hateful, and possibly dangerous behavior toward me and perhaps my family as a result, based on the responses posted to what I consider respectful, reasonable posts on my part.

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**Jolie2**, (3/3/2009 2:48:37 PM)

Here is my response, submitted on the Ledger at 2:50 pm on 3/3/09 on the "Forgery Debunked" article comments:

QUOTE

to the person who wrote to me and to 612 on 3/3/09 at 1:31 PM

If you want to read our "rude and biased" comments that haven't been posted here on the Ledger, you're welcome to read them at the Tulsa World, where we've copied and pasted them before submitting them here. Just go to the most recent article on this subject titled "BA school board rejects probe" dated 2/27/09 and scroll down the comments until you reach the ones starting at 2/26/09 at 9:21 pm, when we started keeping track of posts made on the Ledger and keeping track of whether or not they were published, and discussing the paper's coverage of this controversy.

This post will also be copied and pasted there.

Anyone else having trouble getting your comments posted on the Ledger, please come over there and post them at the Tulsa World where editors don't choose who gets to speak and who doesn't and what is discussed, and where posts submitted show up immediately.

Have you read some of the rude and insulting posts that the Ledger has chosen to publish, not only about certain board members and Dr. Gerber, but directed at posters here, including me? I am quite polite compared to many of those comments. Asking questions and pointing out inaccuracies or inconsistencies is not rude. If you have been reading my posts, you would have seen my statements that I believe either side or both sides could be guilty, and if the Ledger had published more of my comments you would have seen more of my questions about the board, although they have printed some of those.

Overwhelmingly, the comments have been in favor of Sisney and skeptical of the Board. I do not see the need of my having to repeat what has already been pointed out, if I agree with it. I am trying to bring another dimension into the conversation--the part that's been missing from the reportage and the comments until the last month or so--to help balance out the discussion.

I'm not asking you to stop posting. If anyone doesn't like reading my posts, they're welcome to skip any that have my name signed to them. I'm entitled to voice my opinions as much as any one of the rest of you.

Jolie

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/3/2009 2:53:43 PM)

Thanks for the encouragement, Cowgrl. I'm a chicken compared to Jolie. She was the Lone Ranger at the beginning of this, and I never felt like I needed to add anything to what she said. But at some point, it occurred to me that people might listen more if she had some supporting voices.

I'm amazed that anyone found the "Forgery Debunked" article. It's telling that the Ledger saw fit to print that comment, which does not reference the article at all, but did not print our comments which ONLY refer to the subject of the article.

What, us rude? Anyway, Cowgrl, you proved this post wrong, where it claims "we are ALL sick of you both!". Now we know there is at least one person is isn't! Thanks for your support.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/3/2009 2:59:11 PM)

Jolie, that might get posted on the Forgery Debunked article, since it doesn't mention anything about the Kitchens' letter. Though I'm not looking forward to wading through the spam that might start showing up here.

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**Jolie2**, (3/3/2009 2:59:40 PM)

Posted on the Ledger under "Taxpayer Demand Not a Dead Issue" article at 3 pm 3/3/09

QUOTE

To what

I replied to you, in a lengthy post that the Ledger chose not to publish. If you wish to read this reply, you can go to the Tulsa World's last article published on this controversy, "BA school board rejects probe" dated February 26. Scroll down the comments section to the one from me dated 3/3/03 at 11:41, about the same exact time the comment was submitted to the Ledger for publication.

You will find other copies of posts than I and 612 have submitted to the Ledger since 2/26, many of which the editor here has chosen not to publish, although we cannot think why they would be inadmissible, other than a bias on the part of the Ledger.

Please join us in a free discussion over there, without moderation delays, and without censorship.

Jolie

END QUOTE

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**Jolie2**, (3/3/2009 3:05:55 PM)

612

I know having unruly visitors might disrupt the peaceful atmosphere we have here now, but if the Ledger will print the location of our "whereabouts" here on the Tulsa World, many others who might not post but want to read unedited, uncensored honest discussion on this controversy will be able to find their way here, too. That's what we are hoping for, isn't it?

I'd also like to read other comments and opinions that might be getting suppressed by the Ledger's editors. This will give other folks a chance to be "heard," too.

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**cowgrl**, (3/3/2009 3:16:14 PM)

Jolie-

I've been following this story from the beginning...all the way back to September when Sisney filed his defamation suit. I've just sat back and read the blogs and news articles, but never felt the need to comment because it is obvious to me that the majority of bloggers still only want to see one side, so why waste my breath arguing to deaf ears/eyes. Plus you and 612 have done a good job of speaking for us chickens :) I look forward to reading more of your comments. Ignore the hostile and hateful comments and keep up the good work...I have yet to see a comment that is rude or biased. It is my opinion that they are well thought out and very impartial. You have tried to look at both sides and bring that to the public's attention. If that makes you rude than what do they call all the truly biased attackers on the blogs? Let's get to the bottom of this nonsense once and for all.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/3/2009 3:17:46 PM)

You're right, it will be good to know that we will see everything that is posted. The delay really does hinder communication, too.

I'm not afraid :)

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**Jolie2**, (3/3/2009 3:18:50 PM)

I just wanted to report that the Ledger did print my comments on the OSBI article pointed out their error in reporting the timeline of Sisney filing his defamation suit.

This is the post I copied and pasted here on my comment dated 3/2/09 at 3:45 pm.

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**Jolie2**, (3/3/2009 3:26:46 PM)

Thank you so much, Cowgirl. :)

It means a lot to read positive affirmations to counteract the poisonous remarks posted.

If only the Sisney supporters/anti-board side would realize that if they had acted honorably in the beginning, displaying a restraint and fairness in their inquiries into this matter, many of our posts would have been unnecessary. Dr. Sisney set the tone, I believe, by his public accusations and unwillingness to sort through the problems with professional conduct. I really think this could have been handled so much better, on both sides of the issue.

I would like to know if any of you know of where I can view a copy of the April 2008 e-mail sent out by Dr. Sisney criticizing the Board, which board members found disrespectful. I read this reference in news articles linked to the BAParentsvsBABOE website from last fall. If you don't know where I can read the e-mail in full, can anyone summarize what it said and tell me who the e-mail was sent out to? Thanks.

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**Jolie2**, (3/3/2009 3:29:03 PM)

612, don't forget to keep updating and copying and pasting from here to your computer memory and/or disk, too, in case 'something happens' here to our posts. I will, too.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/3/2009 4:35:37 PM)

Jolie, your post directing readers to this article has been published on the Ledger. I hope some others will join us here.

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**Jolie2**, (3/3/2009 5:45:06 PM)

I'm surprised they actually printed it. I wish they would also publish my post on the most recent article re. forgery, so that our 'fan' would have been sure to see it while he was looking for a response to his post.

It would be lovely to have more people interested in honest discussion of the issues join us. I hope posters will avoid being insulting to each other and try to focus on the information related to the case. Respect given will earn respect in return.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/3/2009 9:28:51 PM)

It's possible that other people have information that hasn't been reported, but have been unwilling to post because of the adversarial atmosphere. There are so many questions - I don't expect to get definitive answers, but maybe someone can provide some insight and possible explanations for the things we have been wondering about.

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**Jolie2**, (3/3/2009 10:11:35 PM)

I do hope that people will read about this opportunity and take advantage of it. I'm glad there hasn't been any new news in the press for a few days, but once another fresh article(s) comes up (and you know it will), let's renew our invitation at the Ledger and make it known on the Tulsa World that we'll keep posting on the most recent article at the TW until another new one is published. I don't think the TW will mind us using their space for communicating, particularly since it is on the general topic of the article.

I was thinking that some of the people who have felt comfortable writing derisive posts on the Ledger under an assortment of anonymous terms and salutations might be reluctant to post under only one identity name tied to the requirement of setting up an account with an e-mail address. That could work in our favor, if it leaves some of the more aggressive, negative personalities over at the Ledger.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/3/2009 10:44:15 PM)

Hmm, I hadn't thought of that. You're right, using a consistent name is required here.

There are plenty of aggressive personalities that post on TW articles - particularly the political ones - but they all seem to know each other and enjoy sparring.

I'm not by nature a suspicious person, and I don't want to be crying conspiracy everywhere, but I am really starting to wonder about the Ledger's unwillingness to print certain comments. This is getting harder to dismiss with each new example of bias, omission, and inaccurate reporting, and I can't help but wonder what is behind it.

It's possible that it could be the result of simple mistakes. It's possible that it could be due to an unintentional bias, out of loyalty to a friend, respect for an office, or other such factor.

Or it could be a conscious effort to protect certain information or individuals by reporting selectively, using wording and tone to portray individuals and events in a positive or negative light, phrasing headlines and articles to lead commenters to take sides, omitting certain information, and censoring comments.

This is out there, but - if Sisney is capable of threatening a board member with public disclosure of corrupt practices (real or invented) in the school administration and board, it is certainly possible that he is capable of using promises of reward and/or threats to persuade a local newspaper to report events in a way that is advantageous to him. From what I have seen so far, this scenario seems at least as likely to me as the corrupt board scenario.

I wonder if some other news outlet would be willing to dig into this story deeper, with an eye to what has been reported in the Ledger vs. what has been reported elsewhere, and see what else has been unreported or misreported. Our community needs to know all sides, and needs to know if it has been manipulated.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/3/2009 11:17:36 PM)

I don't see any motive that would explain Sisney's actions, except - as you mentioned earlier - the need to deflect attention from something he may not want known.

Besides the seemingly unnecessary and destructive course of action Sisney chose, I have additional reason to think he is capable of the actions outlined in the termination letter, as well as the threat mentioned by Ms. Flippo. I have talked with a person who worked for him in Bartlesville. I consider this person to be very trustworthy and not given to exaggeration or dramatics. She had personally heard frequent, loud confrontations with staff members and teachers. She also told me of one of his other questionable tactics. Of course, this is not something I expect other readers to take as evidence. I'm just saying that in my mind, it increases the level of believability in what the termination letter, and various comments, say about Sisney.

A nagging question is - why was the alleged threat not included as a reason for termination in the letter? Good question. The place to start would be with Marianne Flippo. I wonder why no one is asking her questions (or if they are, why they're not printing the answers).

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**Jolie2**, (3/4/2009 12:33:58 AM)

I am a cynical person and it never occurred to me that the Ledger could be skewing the reporting this story because of unwelcome pressure or promise of reward. Interesting thought and certainly not impossible. My assumption was that it was due to a friendship with Dr. Sisney. Your other suggestions for reasons are also

plausible.

The question as to why the alleged threats by Dr. Sisney to the board through Maryanne Flippo were not included in the board's letter to Dr. Sisney listing reasons for his dismissal is a good one. "What" on the Ledger brought that up yesterday. Since the issue of fraud involving AA was already in the press and in the public's mind, they couldn't have been trying to keep the issue from being revealed by not including it. That would be a very good question to ask Maryanne Flippo. Has anyone else from the Board commented on her allegations made at the press conference?

Thank you for sharing the information you've learned from a former coworker of Dr. Sisney's. How did he manage to go from B'ville to BA without some of that information about his unprofessional behavior being passed along? He worked in the district for at least three years before being hired as superintendent. You would have thought that his interpersonal skills would have been well known by then, if he had any problems working well with people.

I wish there was a way people from Bartlesville and BA school systems who have direct experience, good and bad, of working with Dr. Sisney could freely come forward and relate that information to the public through an interview article by the Tulsa World, without worrying about negative repercussions legally or professionally.

Another thing that bothers me is why the Board didn't take a stronger stand, right at the beginning of this issue, when they were preparing to suspend and then fire Dr. Sisney, and communicate clearly to the community and the media exactly why they were doing what they were doing and exactly what they could say and what they couldn't reveal and why, and explaining why they were not allowing public remarks, instead of letting the public come to its own conclusions. They very easily could have cited policies, regulations, and laws that needed to be followed in personnel matters. They could have been more diplomatic and sensitive in their communications by expressing sympathy for people within the community who admired and respected Dr. Sisney and were distressed at his being ousted from his position, but emphasizing that what was being done was for the good of the district and absolutely necessary. They could have done a much better job of spelling out the process of suspension and then termination and the due process hearing and what all of that meant.

Was any of this addressed and covered at the board meetings or the media? Perhaps at the meetings but then not covered by the media?

Even if the board didn't do these things, the media could have done a better job as journalists and conducted more interviews and research on their own to fill in the story, or requested that information from the board and/or district.

As far as another media outlet taking a look at the Ledger's coverage of this issue, in comparison with other media, I doubt any would want to take the time or think it newsworthy enough. They each probably have their own set of journalistic sins.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/4/2009 7:26:19 AM)

I would like to know what happened at the rally at the park. All I ever heard was that the board members skipped the board meeting and had their own rally instead. I never heard their reasons for having the rally, or anything they said. Maybe there was a story about it that I missed.

I have asked on comments on the Ledger when others brought it up, but either no one answered or any answers were censored.

I agree, the suspension and firing was done very abruptly and without explanation, leaving them open for a lot of criticism from a bewildered public. It could have been naivete at the time of the suspension, but certainly by the time they voted to terminate, they knew there would be an outcry - and, like you said, a lot of conclusion-jumping.

The thing is - managing the public's perception is something that conniving, scheming, manipulative criminals would probably be really good at. I guess some

would say that's because they are conniving, scheming, manipulative, INCOMPETENT criminals.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/4/2009 7:36:42 AM)

Good question, on how Dr. Sisney moved from Bartlesville to Broken Arrow, then to superintendent if he had serious problems working with others. Some have said that he has two sides, and you never see the "evil twin" side as long as you are doing what he wants.

I was reluctant to mention what my friend said on the Ledger, because I thought it was likely that a lot of people might not take it for what it was, and make it out to be an attempt to smear Dr. Sisney with lies. I don't expect anyone to take it as fact. It's just further input, and is really very light criticism when compared with what others have said about the board and Dr. Gerber (and us :)).

It's also possible that the problems had intensified toward the end, to the point where the situation was unworkable. I am sure that he did have a tendency to have outbursts. But an occasional temper flareup is not the same as the problems that were listed in the termination letter.

Of course it's also possible that the board made it up.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/4/2009 8:47:22 AM)

New story in the Ledger: BAPS legal fees soar

Posted 3/4/2009 8:46:

I understand that there might be some legal fees related to the controversy with the board that for whatever reason can't be released to the public, at least not yet.

Dr. Gerber also describes some of the other work Mr. Mann's firm is doing. It seems like this type of detail would be safe to release the fees for. Whether people agree with the expenditures or not, it would at least be solid information instead of conjecture.

If Mr. Mann's firm is performing these additional duties, does that mean someone else was doing them before? In that case, there should be some offsetting savings there. On the other hand, maybe no one was doing them. If this is the case, maybe Dr. Gerber can expand on why they are necessary.

I'm not sure everyone realizes how high the hourly fee can be for legal work. Maybe a comparison between Mr. Mann's firm's fees and typical, reasonable fees for that type of work would be helpful. It would either show that the fees are within reason, or it would point it out if his firm is higher than average.

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**2112**, (3/4/2009 9:23:57 AM)

...

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**2112**, (3/4/2009 9:28:37 AM)

Ok, Jolie, got your invitation. I signed in as "what" on ledger.

Just read a few things above about Bartlesville, before anybody gets to worked up about that keep in mind they are known statewide(to various educators) as having a terrible backwards school board. I have heard that from a family member who is not even close to this end of the state.

By the way, who is going to start a local chapter of "BA" Bloggers anonymous, LOL. we all need therapy.

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**thenight1**, (3/4/2009 9:34:04 AM)

I saw the post at the ledger and I too get tired of the delay and selective posts over there. I don't have the time to keep up with the blogging as much as I'd like but I try.

I for one, just want to see the guilty punished and the innocent exonerated. I do believe that wrongdoing occurred. I have friends in the hvac industry that tell me about companies being locked out of bidding.

I also saw in the one audit that was done that the bids were found for 2007 but nothing prior to that. I also question why some of the larger companies around town weren't even contacted for bids. That and nothing prior to 2007 was a big alarm bell for me. Small guys aren't going to respond to bid requests because they may not have high enough insurance to qualify or they know they are not equipped to service that large of an account. Asking unqualified companies for bids is just a way of asking for bids to meet requirements without really wanting those bids.

As I understand it, the state auditor would have more power in uncovering documents and would be more thorough. I would think that would be a good thing for uncovering the truth. I just wish it would all come out as soon as possible so we can get this over with and get on with concentrating on educating our kids.

I would also like to see what has happened to school HVAC expenses for this year and the last few years. Now that we know this year was open for bidding, have expenses gone down? The equipment is getting older, logically, the expenses should go up. If they are down, that is a red flag to me as well about past pricing.

It seems to me that good journalists would be asking more questions about both sides of this issue. The journalists I've seen seem more interesting in just publishing the press releases than really digging into the story.

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**Jolie2**, (3/4/2009 10:04:42 AM)

Hi, 2112 (aka "What")--glad you came over to discuss this and hope you'll stay. The same goes for thenight1. You both seem interested at getting to the truth.

2112 - I don't think conflict with the B'ville Board is where the alleged problems with Dr. Sisney lie but in day-to-day operations with his employees. There is repeated reference in the online posting to this controversy to Dr. Sisney as being dictatorial, controlling, and manipulative and creating a difficult atmosphere for staff and faculty to work in. I think that is what some are referring to when they mention his reputation in B'ville. I haven't read many details of it, however.

I hope you have hunted down my response to you from your post on the Ledger reprinted here. :) I'd like to hear your feedback to it.

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**2112**, (3/4/2009 10:09:29 AM)

I am confused reading above, u will have be more precise which one.

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**Jolie2**, (3/4/2009 10:31:18 AM)

Thenight1

You've brought up some very good issues, I think. Dr. Gerber says that all bidding documents from prior to 2007/2008 are on file and that the 2007/2008 school year bids have been replaced with copies from vendors. You commented that the audit report stating that the auditor only had the 2007/2008 bids on HVAC work

to review. I went back and re-read the audit report and see the part that references the unavailability of the 2007/2008 documents within the district files but that a copy from AA was obtained. No mention is made of the copy of the bid from the other bidding HVAC company being received for the audit. But nowhere did I see a mention at all of bidding documents (missing OR reviewed) for previous fiscal years. Did I overlook something--can you reference a page and paragraph number from the audit report?

It seems to me that I have read somewhere the statement that you wrote about previous years' bidding documents, but perhaps it was not in the audit report itself but in a media report about the audit or an online post in response to an article.

I think the auditor should have been much more explicit in spelling out exactly how the district did not comply with the competitive bidding requirements and what was actually done to request bids. The wording of the report leaves too many questions unanswered.

It is very bad policy, or worse, if the district was not publicly/legally posting advertising for bids (if in fact they did not), allowing all companies to compete for the HVAC contract work, and just selecting which companies to request bids from, particularly if the majority of the companies chosen to submit bids were not qualified or capable of handling the contract and therefore, unable to submit bids.

During all these years when AA was the HVAC vendor for the district, if this was the policy by the district and HVAC vendors knew they were missing out on the opportunity to bid, why was this not brought to someone's attention officially, long before 2008? It seems a well-placed call outside of the district operations if corruption was suspected, could have remedied this problem. Why would vendors be willing to let this work continue to go to the same competitor year after year, if they knew they were being shut out?

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**Jolie2**, (3/4/2009 10:36:45 AM)

2112

Here, I've made it easier for you by copying and pasting my message for you here:

Jolie2, (3/3/2009 11:41:02 AM)

Thanks, 612. The most recent comment of mine was published and I received a response. Here's my response to that poster on the "Taxpayer demand..." article:

QUOTE

to "What"

At the beginning of this controversy between Board and Superintendent, it was only Dr. Sisney's allegations and accusations that many people based their judgements on and were willing to condemn three members of the board, a vendor, and an administrator without considering any other side of this issue. There is still no established proof of wrongdoing that has been publicized in this case.

I respect your (and others') right to make a determination if someone is a credible source of information; however, I believe the media has a duty to treat information reported seriously and not make a judgement on whether or not to accept someone's word as valid or not, without investigation. Has anyone from the media bothered to question the other board members about knowledge of these incidents that Mrs. Flippo alleges occurred? Did she confide in them?

I do believe that the general terms of the Board's letter of reasons why it was seeking to terminate Dr. Sisney's employment could have and should have included

this matter, without specifying the particulars of any incidents. Here is an excerpt from the Tulsa World article dated October 18, 2008, and titled "Claims against BA superintendent listed"

#### QUOTE

After the board voted 3-2 during a special meeting Oct. 6 to suspend Sisney, he was sent a notification letter last week listing the reasons for possible termination.

The letter alleges that Sisney demeaned and humiliated staff members; made derogatory remarks about district employees, former board members and superintendents of other schools; and made false allegations against a district vendor about its billing practices.

It states that Sisney isn't a good leader and does not work well with staff members or the community.

The letter also states that Sisney entered into a confidential agreement with an administrator for that administrator to be paid sick leave when he is not sick.

#### END QUOTE

Because of other negative comments from posters about Dr. Sisney's treatment of employees that I've read online, I believe that it is very possible that Mrs. Flippo could be telling the truth about the threats. If she is lying, she has certainly opened herself up to further/continued litigation against her by Dr. Sisney. Why would she put herself in that vulnerable position at this point in time, particularly when the authorities were already investigating the school and AA for possible criminal wrongdoing? She had nothing to gain, that I can think of, to come forward at this time, other than to help defend the district and the community from all the negative press. Her term on the board was ending and she was not running for re-election.

Even if the Board members and administration were trying to cover-up malfeasance, Dr. Sisney's alleged attempt to exploit this knowledge for his own gain would be misconduct on its own.

I am not satisfied with the explanations on either side of this issue and I don't believe the answers are in black and white but probably shades of gray.

I do see that there are some people and a newspaper who are not willing to have full discourse on this matter and appear to try to manipulate the direction of public opinion on it. That has been troubling. If someone is confident in the truth, why try to censor free speech (as to which comments are printed here) or report fact inaccurately, or not perform some basic journalism into the case beyond reporting what is fed to the media. Why? That leads me to believe that there is more to Dr. Sisney's side of the story than he or his supporters want revealed and I want to know and understand what that is, just as much as I want to know the results of the OSBI investigation into potential fraud within the district/vendor relationship.

Joli

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**Jolie2**, (3/4/2009 10:45:38 AM)

Hi, 612 !

Your post on the legal bills is very good. I don't think the \$145,000 bill is automatically too high, considering the enormous demands by the district for legal expertise due to the termination of Dr. Sisney's employment and his defamation lawsuit and allegations against the district, all in a very short time. Adding all the other responsibilities given to the firm on behalf of the district, as outlined by Dr. Gerber, it could actually be a reasonable amount.

The district/board needs to do its best to be transparent in all their activities and financial dealings, if they hope to regain the trust of the community. They should have the bills/invoices from the legal firm itemized and presented at the Board meeting and explain, as you suggested, who was performing the tasks previously that have now been added to the firm's responsibilities.

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**Jolie2**, (3/4/2009 10:51:40 AM)  
to thenight1

I'd like to add another note in response to one of your comments. I believe I have read that more of the HVAC minor work is now being done in-house, to save money, as a correction to earlier procedure to request service work for almost every HVAC item. (I don't know where I saw it and if it was in an official context.) In theory, that could and should lower costs to the district this year from previous years.

I'm definitely with you in having an impatience/eagerness for all the facts to come out so that the community can deal with whatever it has to and then be able to move forward.

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**thenight1**, (3/4/2009 11:02:02 AM)

Jolie, you are correct, it was a media report I saw about not seeing bids prior to 2007. The audit is not very clear about that matter. One more reason for a proper audit to be done.

In my past experience dealing with government entities, you typically have to get on their bidding list and then they send you bid requests as they need them. I don't know if other companies were told that they would not be able to get on that list or if they were told they were on the list and then never got any bid requests. Depending on how it was handled by BAPS would determine how a company might handle the situation.

After seeing all the publicity over this matter, if a company thought they would be caught up in the middle of it, they might not want to open that can of worms. I know that I wouldn't.

I agree completely with you on this matter:

quote:

The district/board needs to do its best to be transparent in all their activities and financial dealings, if they hope to regain the trust of the community. They should have the bills/invoices from the legal firm itemized and presented at the Board meeting and explain, as you suggested, who was performing the tasks previously that have now been added to the firm's responsibilities.

End Quote

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**Jolie2**, (3/4/2009 11:15:35 AM)

612, Now I can respond to your question about the rally at the park held by Maryanne Flippo and Shari Wilkins last August. The Tulsa World has an article entitled "No-shows cancel BA Meeting" dated August 19, 2008, which details reasons behind those two members boycotting the board meeting because of not being able to get items put on the meeting agenda. The readers' comments that follow are well worth reading, too.

One poster's comments, in particular, you will want to read (bacompadre) who states that someone at the Ledger has a wife who works for the school system and was hired at a time when jobs were being cut, allegedly. I believe I have read in comments elsewhere that the Ledger employee is Bob Lewis. Perhaps this is the connection that you were looking for which would explain the apparent bias of the Ledger in reporting this story.

An August 23 article "BA School Board Battle" on KTUL/Ch.8 states:

"So much so that she and two other members have brought board business to a standstill until it's resolved, and that has brought lawyers into the picture. Lawyers?"

"Yes, sucking money out of the classroom." Flippo says, "Well, the superintendent is only talking to us through our attorney, he hired a personal attorney to contact our attorney to talk to me. What? Yes, that is correct, that is the way things are going." "

So in August, before Dr. Sisney filed his defamation lawsuit, he was already no longer communicating directly with some of the board members.

And then some people in the community complain that legal fees are so high. It is reported that only Terry Stover, President of the Board, and Dr. Sisney were allowed to contact the attorneys (from OKC) that represented the board. It was not unreasonable for the other three board members to seek legal representation that they would have access to and hire a different law firm, one that is experienced in school law.

Sharon Whelpley was not at the board meeting or the rally. I think I read somewhere that she could not be present at either because she had another, unrelated commitment that night. I don't know which place she would have attended if she did not have that other commitment.

I still would like to know more of the details or read a copy of the e-mails that Dr. Sisney sent to district employees in April and in August that some of the board members said was disrespectful toward them. Does anyone have a source or know the details?

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**Jolie2**, (3/4/2009 11:20:37 AM)  
to thenight1

Thanks for the further explanation of how the bidding process works. Any company entering the controversy after it exploded last fall would be opening themselves up to criticism and possible libelous/slandorous comments from the public. I can understand a company's reluctance at that point to enter the fray.

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**Jolie2**, (3/4/2009 11:21:49 AM)

I'll check back in late afternoon or evening--I actually have to get something done today that doesn't involve typing. :)

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/4/2009 12:06:32 PM)  
2112 and thenight1, glad to see you both.

I might not have communicated very well on my previous post on the Ledger's "BAPS legal fees soar" story.

This is my attempt to clarify. I really hope we can get a response from Dr. Gerber on these fees. Any improvement in communication that lets people feel that they're being heard goes a long way toward rebuilding the bridge so that we can work together productively.

-----

Actually, I was referring to the legal costs for the period described in the article, which I believe would be the seven months from July through January. Clearly a

presentation from August would not provide much insight into this.

I know there is a lot of controversy about the legal fees involved in the board controversy; I intentionally did not address that because we are all already (very) aware of the rumors and accusations, and rehashing them is really not productive. On that front, it would really be more sensible to wait until all of the information can be provided, so that we can make sense of it without all the rancor.

I am really asking for a breakdown of the fees charged on the new duties that Dr Gerber described, along with any savings that might be realized because whoever used to do these things doesn't have to any more; or, if these things were not being done, why they are now necessary.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/4/2009 12:21:58 PM)

Jolie and 2112, regarding Bartlesville, the employee I talked with worked at the school where Sisney was principal, and the experiences she related to me are from there. She didn't mention anything about the school board.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/4/2009 12:30:41 PM)

I had heard that Sisney was communicating directly with only some of the board members. I don't think the public has enough to go on to understand what was happening here. If it's true that they could not communicate with Sisney, and they were prevented from contacting the district's legal counsel, that sounds like a pretty difficult spot.

I'm not sure we can really second-guess what they should have done in this situation. I hate that so many people are condemning them for wasting money on their own counsel, when we don't know the background. Maybe they really had no alternative.

I'm not posting this on the Ledger - the atmosphere there is already too inflamed and the posts too sarcastic. I'd just look like I'm claiming the board is blameless, which would probably generate another avalanche of abuse toward the board members. There is a difference between insisting they are innocent, and withholding judgment until we know more.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/4/2009 12:46:09 PM)

2112 and thenight1, I am interested in what you think about this article and the fact that the Ledger declined to post any comments referring to the Kitchens' letter.

To you, does there seem to be a discrepancy between the two stories? An earlier article on the Ledger showed the document, with their signatures. This article states, "The Kitchens, along with Richard and Freida Roberts, later asked that their names be removed from the letter". Yet the text of their letter says they had never seen it. I am having hard time reconciling this. There could be an explanation; if there is, why have Richardson and Lare not provided it?

What reason could the Ledger have for not posting 5 (or 6, I lost count) attempts at adding this information on the topic, if it wasn't because they didn't want it known? The information was relevant to the news story, and there were very few swear words in the posts. :)

Most of the attempts are in this comment list. Do you see anything objectionable in them? I mean, more objectionable than the posts that they are willing to print?

Ok, lunch is over. Back to work...

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**thenight1**, (3/4/2009 1:04:48 PM)

I checked with a friend and found out that yes, they are doing some repair work in house so that should reduce those costs. They do have to get bids on all

equipment replacements though, so that number might be comparable if you compare similar jobs. That would take far more work though than I would see a journalist doing. Maybe, Lare and his group have done that. If so, I sure wish he would release that info. I understand not tipping his hand in legal matters but solid evidence would sure help bring this matter to an end. I'm sure the OSBI will do a good job but I would expect that to take quite some time.

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**thenight1**, (3/4/2009 1:11:18 PM)

612, I haven't seen anything in yours or Jolies posts that would give reason not to post them on the Ledger end. I really don't understand why they are being so selective in what they post or don't post.

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**Jolie2**, (3/4/2009 1:59:47 PM)

612, The Ledger was not the only media source to report the timeline of Dr. Sisney's employment termination and his filing the lawsuit in reverse. Newson6's article on February 23 entitled "Rally Supports Broken Arrow Schools" stated:

QUOTE

Broken Arrow Public Schools has had a rocky school year. First, the school board fired the superintendent. Then, he fired back with a lawsuit. Despite an internal audit, some taxpayers claim the district misspent their money.

END QUOTE

I've posted the following comment in response to correct that misinformation and to invite readers to join us here on this article's comments section:

Posted 1:52 pm on 3/4/06 at Newson6 KTUL

QUOTE

This article contains factual errors, by stating that first Dr. Sisney was fired and then he filed a lawsuit. That is incorrect.

Dr. Sisney filed his defamation lawsuit against the Rampeys, Dr. Hudkins, and then-three-unnamed co-conspirators on SEPTEMBER 3, 2008. According to Maryanne Flippo in a KTUL article back in August 19, 2008, Dr. Sisney stopped talking directly to those three board members and instead started speaking only through his attorney--and that was back in AUGUST.

The Board of Education suspended Dr. Sisney on OCTOBER 6, 2008. His employment was terminated on OCTOBER 23, 2008.

These are the facts.

The BA Ledger also reported the timeline in reverse on its article about the investigation being turned over to the OSBI.

This is not a minor error.

Some of us who have been reading and posting on the Ledger have noticed a definite bias in reporting this story. We have kept track of our comments submitted since February 26 and a record of which were published and which ones never appeared. If you want to read those posts which were omitted by the Ledger's editors and also other information about the Ledger's coverage, join several of us for unmoderated and uncensored discussion on this controversy--all sides of the issues--over at The Tulsa World on its most recent published article "BA school board rejects probe" dated February 26:

(link provided (and allowed) on the Newson6 site)

I'd like to request that posters be open-minded and respectful while expressing their opinions and presenting information so that we can all share and learn from

each other. Insults and derogatory remarks only shut down communication.  
Thanks!

END QUOTE

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**Jolie2**, (3/4/2009 2:06:09 PM)

I have not been attempting any posts on the Ledger, with the exception of one post early this morning on the new Target article, where I submitted more exact information about the location of the store, instead of the name of the shopping center and the little-known street name the store is situated on, to help people unfamiliar with the area, place it in their minds (Mapquest does not show the location of the new store address yet, but the Target website does.)

Funny thing is, the Ledger chose not to publish it or amend its article. Must be the "Jolie" attached to the post that prevented it from being published.

At this point, after all that I've written about the Ledger's bias there and here, I guess I can't blame them for feeling sore. :)

I'll just keep putting out invitations at various outlets when it seems appropriate and hope more and more interested persons join in the conversation here.

Pass it on!

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**Jolie2**, (3/4/2009 2:13:18 PM)

to thenight1

I don't see too many journalists doing too much of the basic investigatory work, either.

Is it out of laziness, not being concerned about the truth, or a lack of funds and manpower that has brought about this sad state of affairs where reports cannot be counted on for accuracy and little attempt is made to explore a subject in any depth to make sense of events or to ensure balanced reporting.

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**Jolie2**, (3/4/2009 4:34:38 PM)

Does anyone know approximately how many students are currently enrolled in the Broken Arrow School District? I've searched for this information on the official website and through an online search but haven't found it (and don't want to spend an enormous amount of time looking for it).

The Ledger's latest article on soaring legal fees has a quote from Gerber that includes number of teachers. Then the Ledger goes on to compare number of students at other districts to their legal fee budgets, saying that Union's student body size is closest to BA's without specifying BA's numbers. The other nearby school districts budgeted much higher amounts for legal fees than BA did this year. I would like to see an enrollment figure for BA to be able to make a better comparison.

From the Ledger:

QUOTE

By comparison, Union Public Schools, the district closest in size to BAPS with 14,573 students, budgeted \$170,000 for legal services this year and to date has spent \$14,368. Jenks Public Schools, with 10,000 students, budgeted \$105,000 and to-date has spent \$75,150. Officials note, however, this is far from a typical

year.

END QUOTE

Let's review. BA budgeted \$50,000 in legal fees, compared to Union's \$170,000 in fees. The Ledger says our legal fees are soaring and may run up to 290 percent of the budget, while avoiding the comparison that they are currently still less than what similar sized Union district has budgeted for, while avoiding mentioning that the BA's budget for legal fees is less than 1/3 of the similarly sized Union district, without explaining why such a disparity in amounts.

Notice the last sentence does not clarify which officials it is referring to. Are they from Jenks, and the sentence refers to the spending of \$75,150 for legal fees so far this year, or does it refer to the BAPS officials, which we know have had a far from typical year?

Why is there no comparison of how many teachers could be paid for one year in each district for the amount of money spent and/or budgeted for legal fees?

Exactly how much education does it require to get a job as a news reporter any way?

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**Jolie2**, (3/4/2009 4:38:50 PM)

I'd like to clarify my second to last paragraph in my most recent post to read:

The Ledger was quick to point out how many new teachers could be paid a year's salary with the fees spent/might yet be spent for this fiscal year in the BA school district. Why is there no comparison of how many teachers could be paid for one year in each of the other districts for the amount of money each spent and/or budgeted for legal fees?

\*\*\*

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/4/2009 4:44:38 PM)

I expect all schools have a July-June fiscal year, but that should be verified too. If Union has spent their 14,368 in two months, that's not as impressive.

I also wondered about who was having a far from typical year.

The headline on this story is, as usual, an opinion. 50,000 is puny.

From the Broken Arrow Chamber of Commerce site:

"Broken Arrow Public Schools boasts a growing student population that now numbers an enrollment of nearly 16,000 students with over 1,100 teachers in the dynamic district working hard to deliver a world class education to the students. The 115 square-mile school district is located in southeast Tulsa County and western Wagoner County. The Broken Arrow High School graduating Class of 2008 will mark the 100th graduating class in the illustrious history of BAHS."

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**Jolie2**, (3/4/2009 4:56:44 PM)

To answer my own question, as of 9/2/08, BAPS had 16,223 students enrolled. I found this in a September 2008 press release entitled "BA Enrollment "On the Grow Again" archived on the BAPS website.

To review then. BA has almost 2,000 more students enrolled than Union but has \$50,000 budgeted for legal fees, compared to Union's \$170,000 budget, more than three times BA's legal fees budget. The big question is why the disparity? Why did the Ledger not go further and find out why these other districts have such large budgets and also find out what they are paying per hour for their legal advice and comparing it to BA's current attorney fee charges? Perhaps the problem in BA is not legal fees being too high but inadequate budgeting?

I do think the Ledger should do a follow-up to explore those issues.

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**Jolie2**, (3/4/2009 5:01:16 PM)

612, thanks--I was researching and posting while you were, too. How hard would it have been for the Ledger to include that number in its article, since we each were able to find it from two different sources?

It's much easier to understand something when you can compare apples to apples (student enrollment to student enrollment) and not apples to oranges (student enrollment to number of employed teachers and a vague statement of "closest to").

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**Jolie2**, (3/4/2009 5:13:50 PM)

Submitted to the Ledger at 5:15 pm on "Legal Fees Soaring" article dated 3/4/09 (I couldn't help myself)

QUOTE

Broken Arrow has almost 2,000 more students enrolled this FY than Union (16,223 as of 9/2/08) and yet its budget for legal fees is less than one-third of Union's. Jenks has 6,000 LESS students than BA but budgeted twice what BA did for legal fees. Perhaps the issue here is not the high fees accrued but the twin issues of under-budgeting for this service and the necessity of having a much higher level of legal service due to out-of-the-ordinary litigation.

Why does the Ledger not investigate and report on the wide disparity in budgeting for legal fees in the BA, compared to similarly sized nearby districts and also what hourly rates they pay their legal counsel and compare it to what BA is paying? Those seem to be the important questions raised by the figures reported in this article.

Jolie

END QUOTE

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**Jolie2**, (3/4/2009 5:17:41 PM)

second p.s. comment submitted at 5:19 on the same article

QUOTE

The last sentence of this article reads: "Officials note, however, this is far from a typical year."

Please clarify if you are referring to Jenks officials or BA officials.

END QUOTE

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/4/2009 5:18:37 PM)

Jolie, good post. Whenever you see statistics and comparisons like that, you have to look at it with a little skepticism. Are they using the numbers to illustrate something or obfuscate something?

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**Jolie2**, (3/4/2009 5:34:05 PM)

If the article was intended to raise an outcry over high fees, why did they include the other districts' much higher budgeted amounts to compare with Broken Arrow's piddly budget? Do they think people will be led around by the nose based on the headlines they write and ignore the factual information contained within the article?

I expect the Ledger won't publish my comments but hope they will, as I'm curious to read any responses to them.

If they don't publish them, perhaps I'll just have to re-issue an invitation on that article for folks to join us over here and hope that they'll print that. :)

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**Jolie2**, (3/4/2009 5:41:22 PM)

I just received a response to my invitation to join us here from a poster on Newson6 called "Enlightenment" who says he/she has bookmarked this article, so I expect a visit soon from another interested party. :)

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**2112**, (3/4/2009 5:48:45 PM)

Jolie,

You are putting way too much thought on the ledger and what they can and can't do and report or don't report. So far there are only a handful that care about this, I think most on here are smart enough to calculate numbers different ways. The ledger is not the story, or is that what we are wanting to comment about now?

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**Jolie2**, (3/4/2009 6:38:34 PM)

I think we all are able to comment freely on what we want to discuss. I find discussion the Ledger's reporting of this issue interesting. If there's something else you'd like to discuss, please feel free to jump in and start up a conversation on the points that do interest you.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/4/2009 7:24:28 PM)

It's hard to tell how many people's perception of the controversy is affected by the Ledger's articles and the comments on them. If everyone who is angry about the board's alleged misuse of the legal budget has posted a comment saying so, then it really is just a handful.

But, for me anyway, it's hard to let something like that go without trying to raise questions where it looks like readers are being led to a questionable conclusion.

Since the Ledger frequently posts articles on this story, and especially since lately there has been a lot of censorship on the comments, I think its reporting is a significant part of this whole controversy.

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**Jolie2**, (3/4/2009 10:21:10 PM)

The Ledger printed both of my comments on the legal fees article.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/4/2009 11:46:47 PM)

I posted another invitation on the "Rally Just Plain Silly" story. Jolie, I quoted you - hope you don't mind. I liked the way you requested open-mindedness and respect.

-----

Posted 3/4/2009 11:43 PM

JaredA, and anyone else who would like to discuss these issues without moderation delays or censorship, feel free to join us on the latest Tulsa World article relating to this controversy.

The most recent article on TW is "BA school board rejects probe" dated February 26.

Jolie said it best:

I'd like to request that posters be open-minded and respectful while expressing their opinions and presenting information so that we can all share and learn from each other. Insults and derogatory remarks only shut down communication.

Thanks!

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**Jolie2**, (3/5/2009 6:51:24 AM)

I don't mind at all, 612. I hope your comment gets published.

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**2112**, (3/5/2009 8:02:19 AM)

Just another point on ledger, Keep in mind that the info for the atty fees was available before the last reg. board meeting. If wanted to stir more up, wouldn't you have printed that article the Monday of the board meeting instead of waiting two weeks? If that was my intent, I would have, wouldn't you?

And this is also kinda fuzzy to me, but I don't understand Gerber's comments about the district paying for the 3 board members litigation. They got sued as individuals, not as a board, so how does the district pick up the tab? Dr. Gerber also mentioned this "expanded role" does that just happen or does it have to go to the board? I don't know? and since he listed all these items why it was costing so much, is that waiving the atty client privilege? Can they now release detailed billing?

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/5/2009 8:33:33 AM)

Well, they didn't print my invitation. Drat.

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**thenight1**, (3/5/2009 9:08:36 AM)

If the legal action against the BOE individuals is due to actions they took as members of the BOE, then I agree that the schools should pick up the legal tab. That seems to be the case in this instance.

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**2112**, (3/5/2009 9:37:59 AM)

the night,

good point, but what I don't understand is that it was actions as individuals, not as a board, they are only a board when they have a quorum. Right? Example, it is

said they went to AA in two's and then one so it would not be a quorum.

Somebody mentioned on a blog about using the districts insurance, OK, fine. But if I was the insurer, I would say the policy is if they do something as a board to get sued, not individually. How can an insurance company cover anything they do individually? Of course, in order to get people to run for office they have to have some type of coverage, I am just not sure.

So I guess I don't completely agree with you.

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**Jolie2**, (3/5/2009 10:01:27 AM)  
TO 2112

There were other more high profile stories related to this controversy for the Ledger to publish during the week of the last regular board meeting held February 23. The affidavit related to the early February storage unit fire was released to the public on the 19th and news about the BAPD turning its investigation into the district's activities over to the OSBI was published on the 20th. The story about the legal fees was small potatoes in comparison and more useful to save as a filler on a slower news week to keep the issue to the forefront on the Ledger. And this week's article on the fees is in enough time for the next regular board meeting scheduled for Monday, March 9, where citizens will be able to voice their concerns.

The Board should have to review and approve the new duties assigned to the attorney, in my opinion, if it does incur additional expense which may not be accounted for somewhere else in the budget.

I am not surprised at the large legal bills, considering the amount of litigation that the district has had to deal with in the past six months. I believe we should be entitled to have a detailed itemization of those costs once the litigation and the OSBI investigation is completed. Itemizations provided then would certainly not interfere with ongoing processes.

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**2112**, (3/5/2009 10:17:51 AM)  
What litigation?????

It was a demand "letter" not suit. and nowhere has the district been sued. So are we saying that the fees are being spent to start a defense of a suit instead of just being forthcoming and show how all they(district) do is correct and the Lare's are wrong? It could be so easy to show and shut people up if you have the documents.

If someone is starting to work on a defense of a suit, then that tells me something is not right. Why hide? I would say bring it on, you lose, you pay atty fees.(as is done in OKla).

Of course, as you said, release billing info and it ends this conversation. but as usual with this drama, that would be too easy.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/5/2009 10:31:37 AM)

I guess we need to determine whether a "demand letter" is a legal instrument. If it's not, then they could have just thrown it away. If it is a legal instrument, and a timely response is required, that's litigation.

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**teacher**, (3/5/2009 10:35:11 AM)

Thank you Jolie and 612 for continuing to show the rest of those that don't see it, that there is another side, and to be openminded one way or the other. On another note, be careful of "wolves in sheeps clothing" as you continue to discuss certain issues with thenight1, etc. If you read former posts as I have, you'll know there is an agenda there, and they are just trying to gain your trust and a little more limelight on these discussions to at some point really bite.

Here are some other "ledger bias" I have noticed. Read the report on the rally. They reported nearly 200 people showed up. I was there, I thought Jolie, you said you were going, it looked more like 500 to me.

Did you see this weeks print edition? Look at page 10. Do you see anything, probably not. There was a blurb about the Rampey's on the cover of a national magazine. But of course it was printed smaller than half a business card. I really don't care, just think that's funny.

As you said before, Mr. Lewis does have a wife that was hired by Sisney during a "hiring freeze" and served on the BAPS PR board for Sisney, and is a close friend. Bob Bethel, other editor or staff or whatever, signed the petition to oust the board members(conflict of interest?). By the way, Bob Bethels wife happens to be the PR director for Union Public Schools as well.

And to comments regarding work going on at the schools. Yes, they hired 2 kids fresh out of school. They have no tools, they do not do any "maintenance", only do the small petty problems stuff. Do you honestly think that 2 kids could take care of the largest school complex in the state? That's why you'll still see many of the other companies here at the school regularly. The money that might be "saved" by the schools is the contract on maintenance as I see it. But if you'll watch the last board meeting, utility consumption has risen by (i can't remember), either 30% or \$30K, both very high. Yet, we have had one of the warmest winters and coolest summers to date. I had a class with no heat for nearly 3 weeks because they were waiting for bids to come in. At what point does this benefit the kids? When they finally put in the unit, they did it in the middle of the day with a large crane, while kids were in the area. Is that safe? That never happened before. I'm not saying who is wrong or right, all I can tell you is my experiences as a teacher in the current state we are in, and wonder if it's all worth it? I can tell you many other things about the former Super. and so could 99% of the rest of the faculty, but obviously, as you have said before, we are still afraid to speak out until this is all over with. Call me chicken, whatever. I could fill you in on many more things, but time to go back to class for now.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/5/2009 12:08:03 PM)

Teacher, I'm glad you found us. Thanks for your input, and for continuing to focus on teaching despite the drama. The controversy does not seem to have made its way into the classrooms, which just shows how professional our teachers are.

Please pass along our discussion location to others who might be interested in reading what is here and possibly contributing. We can't count on the Ledger to post our invitations.

I am curious as to what repercussions you think might follow if teachers and staff speak out. Of course, I understand if it's too risky to say anything.

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**Jolie2**, (3/5/2009 12:48:10 PM)

Teacher, I am so glad you are here and able to confirm some facts for us and give us the benefit of your direct experience. I look forward to when the time comes that district employees are not afraid to share their knowledge of Dr. Sisney's conduct as superintendent, but for now, I can completely understand any reluctance to do so. Even though we post under anonymous names, persons can still be tracked through computer IP addresses, by those who have the know-how or have connections to someone who does. Our accounts here are connected to an e-mail address, and I'm sure some people that post on the Ledger might be entering in their e-mail address onto the comment form, even though it is only optional. I've seen too many hostile comments online on this controversy to think some people might not retaliate against persons who are posting statements or information they consider unwelcome, if only they knew posters' identities.

Has there been any official or unofficial instruction to district employees as to what can and cannot be said in public venues about this controversy?

My understanding is that there are many individuals hired by Dr. Sisney who are still supportive of him working within the district. This makes it politically unwise for teachers to come out publicly with negative information about Dr. Sisney's employment, as they could face repercussions in the workplace and possible litigation by Dr. Sisney privately. I would hope it is not possible for it to happen, but if it is proven that the district/BOE was guilty of wrongdoing in handling the awarding of the HVAC contract work, and there is not a strong case to prove legitimate reasons for Dr. Sisney's removal from office, could it be possible that his employment would be reinstated? Based on the numerous comments about how he treated some of his employees, I hope that will never happen, but stranger things have occurred.

As for the rally, unfortunately, I was late for attending it (and sorry to have missed it) and only arrived in time for the parade. If you included the students, I would say there were more than 200 people in the parade and expect that the rally had more people attending than that, as some may who were at the rally may have decided not to continue on to the location of the board meeting, for one reason or another.

As for a certain poster's agenda, are you sure it is a poster with the same name or someone who posted a response "to" that person's name, as in "to thenight1." I wish folks would just pick a username on the Ledger and stick with it. It would just make things simpler to keep track of identities, which is why I suppose some people who want to stay completely unidentifiable in each post, come up with a new one each time. Ironically, some of those posters are the same ones who lash out at posters who do use the same username each time but are unwilling to divulge their true identities.

I have a question you might be able to help me with. I'm looking for copies of two e-mails that Dr. Sisney wrote that criticized board members" (which "surprise!" they found disrespectful) and which were sent to district employees: one was in April and the other, August. Do you know of a source online that has them or a detailed description of them? Do you personally remember reading them?

Thanks!

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/5/2009 12:48:33 PM)

This might shed some light onto the question of whether the school district did pay/should pay for the board members' defense.

From this, I get the sense that typically, for purposes of determining whether a board member is protected from liability, it matters more what the individual board member was doing, than whether all of the board members were acting together. It seems likely that this also has something to do with Ms. Flippo's statement that she was acting as an individual when she gave her press conference. Legal stuff can be really counterintuitive. We have to be careful when we try to interpret people's actions, because there can be weird, complicated legal reasons behind them.

From a book entitled "Education Law", by Charles J. Ruuso and Ralph D. Mawdsley:

QUOTE

Most states have enacted tort immunity statutes to protect school boards from liability for negligent acts. Tort immunity statutes protect school boards from liability arising from the operation of official governmental functions. Other states, such as Arizona, provide absolute immunity for those acts a board undertakes that are policy-making in nature.

School board members can be sued and held liable for certain tortious acts. Liability is typically premised upon whether a board member is acting in their official or individual capacities when the alleged conduct occurred. Board members act in their official capacities when they serve in an official legislative or executive capacity. Board members are usually immune from liability for acts taken in their official capacity. Yet, it is possible for a board member's conduct to be so

egregious that their actions take them outside their scope of authority as board members.

UNQUOTE

From Oklahoma State Law Chapter 2, Article IV, Section 560. Sovereign Immunity

QUOTE

A. The State of Oklahoma does hereby adopt the doctrine of sovereign immunity. The state, its political subdivisions, and all of their employees acting within the scope of their employment, whether performing governmental or proprietary functions, shall be immune from liability for torts.

"Employee" means any person who is authorized to act in behalf of a political subdivision or the state whether that person is acting on a permanent or temporary basis, with or without being compensated or on a full-time or part-time basis.

UNQUOTE

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**Jolie2**, (3/5/2009 1:05:06 PM)

Thanks, 612.

From what you posted, my understanding is that when Maryanne Flippo held the press conference, stating she was doing so as a private citizen, she was opening herself to possible litigation against herself, but protecting the board/district from being sued for her statements. Is that what you understand from your reading?

I also think that the Board members would be covered for legal expenses when sued for actions taken while acting in their professional capacity as a board member, whether they are alone or as part of an official quorum, based on the reference you posted from the OK State Law.

Excellent work, 612!

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**Jolie2**, (3/5/2009 1:07:03 PM)

to 612

PS I hope you will try to post on the Ledger the references you just posted here.

And thanks for thinking to ask "Teacher" to pass along this location to other associates of hers to get in on the conversation.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/5/2009 1:13:47 PM)

Thanks!

Yes, that is what I understand about Ms. Flippo's statement at the press conference.

You got exactly what I did out of the state law, regarding whether they are alone or part of an official quorum. That only makes sense - otherwise it would be impossible to split up any tasks or responsibilities among the members.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/5/2009 1:17:14 PM)

Posted on Ledger "BAPS Legal Fees Soar":

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Ok, I lied. I am going to address some of the points brought up about the legal fees spent in the controversy after all.

The Taxpayer Demand letter requested a response. The board had to either respond (which requires legal counsel) or ignore the letter. The letter did not specify the consequences of failing to respond; however, in some cases, a Taxpayer Demand Letter is a required step before filing suit. I don't know if that is the case here. Regardless, the board's choices were to ignore the letter or incur legal fees. Should they have ignored the letter? Or is someone saying they should have responded to the letter but without legal counsel?

As for the district paying the legal fees to defend the individual board members, that is normal and typical, and in fact, is state law.

From a book entitled "Education Law", by Charles J. Ruuso and Ralph D. Mawdsley:

QUOTE

Most states have enacted tort immunity statutes to protect school boards from liability for negligent acts. Tort immunity statutes protect school boards from liability arising from the operation of official governmental functions. Other states, such as Arizona, provide absolute immunity for those acts a board undertakes that are policy-making in nature.

School board members can be sued and held liable for certain tortious acts. Liability is typically premised upon whether a board member is acting in their official or individual capacities when the alleged conduct occurred. Board members act in their official capacities when they serve in an official legislative or executive capacity. Board members are usually immune from liability for acts taken in their official capacity. Yet, it is possible for a board member's conduct to be so egregious that their actions take them outside their scope of authority as board members.

UNQUOTE

From Oklahoma State Law Chapter 2, Article IV, Section 560. Sovereign Immunity

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"Employee" means any person who is authorized to act in behalf of a political subdivision or the state whether that person is acting on a permanent or temporary basis, with or without being compensated or on a full-time or part-time basis.

UNQUOTE

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/5/2009 1:22:59 PM)

It would be nice if someone had officially pointed this out (about the district paying the legal fees for the board members), but I can see how it could become a full-time job to keep up with all of the questions and rumors.

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**Jolie2**, (3/5/2009 2:20:50 PM)

Your comment was published, 612.

Did you see this on the same article about legal fees

QUOTE

"talk about a coverup wrote on Mar 5, 2009 12:43 PM:

" I would really like to know why Mr. Bob Lewis continues to filter posts.....

It seems that if the post has anything to do with revealing the truth it gets lost in cyberspace..... "

END QUOTE

I'm going to make an attempt to get another invitation here printed on the Ledger:

QUOTE

to "talk about a coverup"

You're welcome to join a group of us over at the Tulsa World who are posting/conversing with each other, without delay, without moderation, without censorship. Find us in the comments section of the most recent TW article titled "BA School Board Rejects Probe" dated February 26, 2009. More than 100 posts of the 170 on that article are from a group of us, most who are tired of the censorship here on the Ledger and want to be free to discuss all of the information.

Please, anyone is welcome if they will please treat others with respect and try to be open to what others have to say.

Thanks,  
Jolie

END QUOTE

Post submitted to Ledger on 2:20 pm

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/5/2009 2:24:54 PM)

I say "coverup's" comment and posted an invitation too! I hope at least one of them is printed. Now I am really curious to see what "coverup" had to say.

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**Jolie2**, (3/5/2009 2:37:14 PM)

Holy crow! They published both of our invitations! I think we may be getting some more visitors soon. :)

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/5/2009 2:37:26 PM)

It seems like the Ledger has been releasing comments more frequently lately. Both of our invitations were printed already.

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**thenight1**, (3/5/2009 4:30:44 PM)

I post under the same name here and on the ledger. My only agenda is as I've said before, punish the guilty, exonerate the innocent and get this over with so the schools can get back to concentrating on educating our kids. I have 3 kids in BAPS so I have 'skin in the game'.

As for the comment about using a crane during the school day. I think that is outrageous. That kind of work should be done after school. It is both dangerous and a distraction to the kids. Surely they could request that work to be done after school hours or on weekends in their bids?

As for waiting to get a unit replaced, when you are required to get bids, it takes time. I don't know how long BAPS is required to give for bids to come in but I would guess that it's several days. Then a day or 2 to make the decision and get the proper approvals. A friend of mine tells me some air conditioners and heaters are available locally, other times they have to be ordered and shipped, so maybe a few days to a week or more for that and then getting it scheduled and installed. I could see it taking a couple of weeks easy.

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**Jolie2**, (3/5/2009 5:01:51 PM)

Submitted for comment to the Ledger (legal fees article) at 5:00 pm 3/5/09

QUOTE

to Attorneys

The only people allowed to speak with the district attorneys were Dr. Sisney and Terry Stover as president of the Board. Allegedly, in July of 2008, Dr. Sisney had already threatened the Maryanne Flippo and the board through his conversations with Mrs. Flippo. According to a news article from August last year, by mid-August Dr. Sisney had stopped talking to (at least some) members of the board and were only communicating through his own personal attorney. He filed his defamation lawsuit September 3. I don't blame board members from seeking alternate representation immediately in that situation.

To "Gee whiz"

If it's too stressful for you to read all the remarks posted, I suggest you give yourself a break and refrain from reading them. Trying to shut people up won't work and I think your comment makes you sound like a small child that can't have his own way. The whaaambulance has been called and is on its way. :)

Jolie

END QUOTE

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**Jolie2**, (3/5/2009 5:04:35 PM)

612, you've been accused of being one of the 'three amigos' because of your research on the legal issues. Oh, oh--your cover's blown! :)

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/5/2009 5:14:32 PM)

Thwack! Biff! Kapow!

Wow, the Attorneys poster really sounds like he/she believes it too.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/5/2009 5:16:14 PM)

..and here's my response. Yours said it more succinctly, but what the heck - I already typed it.

---

To Attorneys:

There is a lot more to this than we can easily discuss with the constraints on this site. For instance, your statement that the board members had access to BAPS' council is debatable. It has been reported that only Stover and Sisney were allowed access to the attorneys who represented the board. If that is true, the other 4 board members did not have any representation.

In addition, it was reported that Sisney would communicate with the 3 board members only through his attorney.

To me, this seems it would put them in a difficult position.

I don't know about you, but I think the events and circumstances that led up to this controversy need to be considered before making a judgment. I think there are still too many missing pieces to make the call on who to blame.

You are of course invited to join us on the Tulsa World article mentioned previously.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/5/2009 5:18:04 PM)

I get the feeling that some of the questions people ask aren't really questions. They get awfully mad when you answer them!

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**Jolie2**, (3/5/2009 5:26:51 PM)

For some posters, I think you're right. They don't want their point of view challenged. Instead of thanking you for researching and posting answers, you are criticized for your efforts. I'm sure there are folks who are/will be glad you took the time to find out; I'm one of them.

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**Jolie2**, (3/5/2009 6:02:00 PM)

Another point is, as a board member in a contentious relationship with the superintendent who is only communicating with you through his attorney, would you want to trust confidential information to the attorneys that he worked closely with professionally up until that point and with whom you have not been able to deal with directly? I would be reluctant to do so. I wouldn't feel confident that I would get the best outcome and would worry about possibly being sabotaged by the attorney who was supposed to be working on my behalf.

We see a similar turn of events in the local coverage of this issue by the Ledger. We should be able to rely on impartial, full journalistic coverage and impartial

behavior on the part of the editors. Instead we see them operating on some kind of an agenda favoring one side of the issue, for whatever reason.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/5/2009 6:15:47 PM)

I was looking for the name of the law firm that was hired by the board in 2007 and fired in August when they hired Rosenstein, and ran across this, from NewsOn6:

BA Public Schools Receives Law Firm's Bill

Posted: Oct 24, 2008 08:54 PM CDT

QUOTE

The News On 6 spoke with board member Maryanne Flippo on the phone and she says the law firm is "absolutely worth every penny."

She says the district's attorney, Doug Mann, was charged with investigating the claims against fired superintendent Dr. Jim Sisney. And, that's probably the bulk of the bill. She says Broken Arrow Schools has been going through some tough times and they needed quality legal advice.

UNQUOTE

It's not clear to me what "the claims against fired superintendent Dr. Jim Sisney" means. Are these claims made by others against Sisney, or the claims the board put in his termination letter, or possibly something else?

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/5/2009 6:18:06 PM)

From a TW article, "BA superintendent files defamation suit" from 9/4/2008 -

QUOTE

Sisney, who has been superintendant [sic] at Broken Arrow for six years, said in the past, his contract has been extended one year so it is constantly a three-year contract, but that hasn't happened this year. His current contract expires in June 2011.

UNQUOTE

People have asked why he was fired when they could have just chosen not to renew his contract. I never realized that there was a 3-year delay. Jolie, had you heard this?

I think this could be why they acted to terminate him - otherwise, even if they didn't renew his contract, he would still be in office for 2 1/2 more years. If there is any truth to what we have heard about his behavior toward the board after his contract was not renewed, imagine how they felt about dealing with him for another 2 1/2 years.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/5/2009 9:42:02 PM)

Jolie, your comment to "Attorneys" was posted. Mine wasn't, but I think this time it's my fault rather than Ledger bias. I'm not entirely sure I hit the "Post Comment" button.

I tried again, but it doesn't matter that much if they post it, since you already covered it.

Posted on "BAPS legal fees soar":

-----

Attorneys, are you asking questions or just spewing accusations? I ask because last time I answered your question, you got really mad.

Again, if you would like to discuss your questions and share information, please join us on the Tulsa World article mentioned.

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**Jolie2**, (3/5/2009 10:19:26 PM)

612

Your referenced the October 24 News on 6 article with information provided by Maryanne Flippo included regarding the legal bills. I believe that there were other individuals who had made reports about Dr. Sisney which contributed to the reasons for his termination. I think this had to be verified with each individual affected, and perhaps witnesses, and documented by the attorney in preparation for a possible due process hearing and to be prepared in the event of further wrongful termination litigation brought by Dr. Sisney, as he threatened to do, but never followed through on. I strongly suspect Dr. Sisney knows they have this evidence and that is the real reason he chose not to ask for a hearing. What I would like to know is if a dismissed employee does not request a due process hearing, does that prevent him the legal recourse of filing a wrongful termination suit against his employer? I've read posters' comments alleging that but I would like to have it verified through a reliable source. Do you know where we might find that out? If we can confirm that is true, it would go a long way to understanding that Dr. Sisney was bluffing about the lawsuit and probably never intended or wanted to proceed in that direction, most likely to keep the details of the reasons for his termination private.

I have read about the extended contract terms before, but to be honest, it never really sank in. I do know that I read in the litigation documentation for his defamation lawsuit that the board had made it known that they did not plan on renewing his contract. If he had accepted that and not allegedly threatened the board through Mrs. Flippo, and then filed a defamation lawsuit, it would have been left at that and he could have continued as superintendent until his contract term expired. But his subsequent actions proved that it would have been impossible for him to continue be an active employee with the district.

btw, I liked your post as much, if not better than mine, particularly because you do a much better job of proofreading your posts than I do. I'm glad they printed mine, though, because of the added zinger to 'gee whiz' at the end. :)

Good night and good morning!

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/5/2009 11:23:46 PM)

Yeah, I liked the zinger too :)

I think a lot of documentation is required whenever anyone is fired. Maybe someone who is familiar with a human resources department can help out. My understanding is that there has to be documentation of incidents, warnings given, plans for addressing issues, performance reviews, etc. whenever someone is fired. That is to protect the company in case the ex-employee sues.

If all this is required for a private company, I expect it would be all the more important for an employee of the public school system, and even more so for a high-

profile employee like the superintendent. I can't imagine that the board members would risk the consequences of firing the superintendent without copious documentation.

That's why the quote from Ms. Flippo caught my attention. The reasons given in the termination letter are given in very general terms. Some call them flimsy, or an "excuse" for terminating. I think it's unlikely that the board members voted to terminate on a whim. I believe they knew had to be prepared for a wrongful termination lawsuit, and this required witnesses, documentation, and of course, legal counsel. The reasons given in the letter are vague, but I expect there is a considerable amount of supporting documentation. The bill was over 30,000. Of course, I don't know how much had to be documented. But I do know that lawyers are expensive.

I also remember reading that if Sisney waived his right to a due process hearing, he would be unable to file a wrongful termination lawsuit. "Discerning Citizen" made that statement recently on the "Taxpayer demand not a dead issue, signer claims" story on the Ledger. I don't know if that is the case. It would be nice if Discerning Citizen could confirm.

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**Jolie2**, (3/6/2009 7:26:11 AM)

I did a little online searching re. employment law and wrongful termination suits. It appears that in some states that employees have a deadline of six months from the date of employment termination to file an official notice of intent to file a suit (I can't remember what it is called; I slept since then. :) ) However, I don't know if that would apply to this state or this case.

If Dr. Sisney would file a wrongful termination suit, I expect he would file it under the protected status of "whistleblower." However, I did discover this piece of information which, if it applies to our state, would make his claiming the status of whistleblower difficult to prove legally:

QUOTE

Whistle-Blower Protections

In what might be regarded as a statutory extension of public policy, most workers are covered by "whistle blower" statutes which may support an action against the employer if the employee is fired for informing a state or regulatory agency about the employer's misconduct. Typically, the employee must make the report to the agency which is responsible for responding to the employer's misconduct - such as, for an employer which is dumping used oil down a storm drain, a state or federal environmental protection agency. Employees are not ordinarily protected for other types of disclosure, such as telling friends about the employer's misconduct, or for reporting the misconduct to the news media.

It is important to note that the statute of limitations applying to whistle blower cases is usually very short - some statutes require that action be taken literally within weeks of the employer's retaliatory act. Thus it is usually important for whistleblowers who suffer retaliation to consult with lawyers as soon as they can after they learn of the retaliation.

END QUOTE

This is from the library of a site called ExpertLaw dot com.

Ideally, if someone who had access to a lawyer experienced in employment law and wrongful terminations and is not directly involved in this case, we could get reliable answers in a very short period of time.

I do think it doesn't make sense for the Board to have terminated Dr. Sisney's employment without documented substantial justification. They already knew he was threatening a lawsuit if they terminated his employment. They knew that many in the community were up in arms over their actions against Sisney and the allegations of corruption. How would it serve them to remove Sisney at that point? They would have had to be very short-sighted to take those actions if they were without merit.

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**Jolie2**, (3/6/2009 7:35:45 AM)

to Teacher, Teacher :)

I hope you will come back and post some more when you have time.

This is a follow-up to my earlier response to you from yesterday.

I did see the small little article about Mike and Narissa Rampey on page 10 of the March 4 edition. It does look very nice, but how many people will notice it? For those who don't have their paper copy of the Ledger and do not have a subscription to review the e-Edition online to see this article, here is a copy of the text accompanying the small photo of the publication cover that features the Rampeys of Air Assurance.

QUOTE

**BA BUSINESS TEAM SPOTLIGHTED**

— Air Assurance Co. owners Mike and Narissa Rampey are featured on the cover of the Winter issue of "Contractor Excellence," a quarterly publication of the Air Conditioning Contractors of America. An accompanying article profiles the Rampeys and discusses what it is like being a family-owned business in the HVAC contracting field.

END QUOTE

You have to sign up to be a member to access the actual 'Contractor Excellence' publication online so I have been unable to read the article itself.

I'm guessing that this isn't even an official BA Ledger story but a promotional advertisement that Air Assurance paid for, based on the size and layout of it.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/6/2009 7:41:06 AM)

I never knew there was a whistle-blower protection. I agree, it doesn't seem that this case would be protected under it. Sisney didn't report the employer's misconduct to the appropriate agency, and did report it to the media. He had an attorney the whole time, so either Richardson didn't inform him of this possibility,

or they decided to go a different direction. It sounds like time has probably run out on this anyway.

Some people believe the board panicked and fired Sisney because they were afraid of being caught. But to me that doesn't make sense - they had already decided not to renew his contract before he even started investigating the vendor contract stuff. I think we need to know the reasons they didn't renew his contract. That would take out of the picture the argument that the board trumped up the reasons when their real reasons was to keep their coverup - well, covered up.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/6/2009 7:54:35 AM)

I feel like we've made more progress here in the past few days than in the previous 6 months.

I'm a little surprised we haven't had more company. We posted enough invitations on the Ledger - a lot of people who post there should have seen them.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/6/2009 8:52:11 AM)

From a NewsOn6 story, "Superintendent Files Defamation Suit", 9/3/2008

#### QUOTE

Superintendent Dr. Jim Sisney says it all started when he raised questions about work done for the district without competitive bidding. And since then, he says, he feels like he's been attacked.

"I felt like I was in a lynch mob," said Dr. Jim Sisney.

"I have totally sat silent on this and not commented and allowed my name to be disparaged for many, many months," said Dr. Jim Sisney.

Sisney's defamation lawsuit says the defendants made false and malicious statements about him that are extreme and outrageous and go beyond all possible bounds of decency.

#### UNQUOTE

How does he explain their decision not to renew his contract, if that decision had been made before he raised these questions? I don't think I've seen any explanation of why his contract was not renewed. I didn't find any news stories that addressed it.

Has Richardson or Sisney ever explained their reason for filing the defamation suit with the 3 board members unnamed? I can see how it's possible that it could have been to provide leverage to get something they wanted from the board members, but if that's the case it's certainly not the reason Richardson or Sisney would give. The news story I found just says, "Sisney's lawyer, Gary Richardson of Richardson Law Firm, said the three co-conspirators will be named at a later date." (TW "BA superintendent files defamation suit", 9/4/2008). It doesn't say why they were unnamed.

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**Jolie2**, (3/6/2009 9:08:34 AM)

From a Tulsa World article dated October 2, 2008, entitled "Lawsuit identifies 3 BA Board Members"

#### QUOTE

Three Broken Arrow school board members have been named as coconspirators in a defamation lawsuit filed Sept. 3 by Superintendent Jim Sisney. Maryanne Flippo, Sharon Whelpley and Shari Wilkins — two of whom called a special meeting for Monday to discuss suspending or terminating Sisney — had

previously been unnamed defendants.

Attorney Doug Mann, with Rosenstein, Fist and Ringold, was added as a fourth defendant in the lawsuit.

The other defendants are Mike and Narissa Rampey, owners of Air Assurance, a heating and air-conditioning company that had done business with the school district; and Douglas Hudkins, a Broken Arrow optometrist.

Sisney's attorney, Gary Richardson of Richardson Law Firm, said he had hoped to have the issue resolved, but he felt it was necessary to name the alleged co-conspirators at this time.

"They put us in this position," Richardson said.

His law firm is now in the discovery stage and investigating connections between the board members and Air Assurance.

END QUOTE

I agree with your point, and I believe this article demonstrates what Dr. Sisney had hoped for--that the threat of naming/including the three board members would change their minds about going ahead with terminating his employment. Notice that the names were released just four days before a special board meeting was to be held to discuss suspending and/or terminating Dr. Sisney's employment.

I'll keep answering the points in your comments you've posted this morning in separate e-mails, to keep any one of them from being too long and hard to follow. Also, if my computer glitches, I won't lose too much at one time. Please keep copying and pasting these comments to save elsewhere, in case anything happens. I wouldn't want to lose this information, particularly now that we are spending time researching for answers.

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**Jolie2**, (3/6/2009 10:02:16 AM)

I'm trying to discover which came first, the investigation into the Air Assurance business or the notification that his contract was not going to be renewed. I have not been able to find all of the information yet, but here is the information arranged by date on Dr. Sisney's investigation into the AA matter. I'll report back if I can find dates on meetings where Dr. Sisney was informed his contract would not be renewed.

Timeline of events according to the official court documents filed by Dr. Sisney and his attorney related to his defamation lawsuit (but summarized in my own words, for the most part):

April 1, 2008 - Mark Bilby, Procurement Director of BASD, informs Dr. Sisney that Air Assurance has been performed \$77,000(worth of work and that no money had been encumbered for it (approved by board before work is assigned). He subsequently informs the board (no date given as to when that was done). He alleges that he discovered that competitive bidding in relation to AA was avoided for quite some time by using blanket purchase orders.

April 14, 2008 - In executive session of the Board, Dr. Sisney informs the board he was changing the infrastructure of job responsibilities related to bidding, approval, monitoring, and payment of contract work to be placed all under Mark Bilby's authority.

May 22, 2008 - During a meeting with Shari Wilkins, Stephanie Updike, and Mike Rampey, Dr. Sisney goes over his discoveries, noting all the problems and

violations. Rampey says he will review the issues and discrepancies but announced his company would no longer be providing service to BAPS district. (my note: I think that either Mr. Rampey had something to hide or possibly Dr. Sisney's attitude angered him so much, he reacted hastily in response to perceived poor treatment. I do not believe Mr. Rampey's excuse of losing money on the BAPS account. What do you think?)

(two entries for the month of May discuss Wilkins' and Whelpley's alleged connections to the Rampeys and Air Assurance and the appearance of possible conflict of interest.)

Between May 27 through June 27 - Board members meet with Mr. Rampey, in several separate meetings, allegedly to avoid a quorum. Allegedly, Mike Rampey tells BOE president Terry Stover "I want him (Sisney) gone."

June 27, 2008 - The Rampeys send a letter to Dr. Sisney and the BOE members explaining discrepancies and demanding an apology from Dr. Sisney.

At the end of June 2008 - Dr. Sisney announces he is eliminating two positions: Director of Maintenance (Bill Miller's position) and Assistant Director of Operations (Dr. Gerber's position), partly related to the problems with the vendor contract with AA.

July 14, 2008, Dr. Sisney writes a letter to the board re. pressure he's been receiving related to Air Assurance

July 15, 2008 - at the board meeting, the letter from the Rampeys is discussed and it is mentioned that DR. SISNEY SENT A "LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE BROKEN ARROW SCHOOL SYSTEM (my note: This is a July 15, 2008, letter to Terry Stover, exhibit D in the pdf file with court documents at TW) TO INVESTIGATE THE APPEARANCE OF A CONFLICT OF INTEREST BETWEEN BOARD MEMBERS AND THE HANDLING OF AIR ASSURANCE MATTERS" (This is under item 37 of the court document on page 8 of 26) (my note: I don't think this would qualify as reporting to the appropriate agencies (re. whistleblower status), particularly since the letter was written to the President of the Board, the same body wherein the potential conflict of interest lie and which Dr. Sisney wanted investigated)

August 12, 2008 - A special board meeting convened to discuss hiring a new attorney for the district without discussing it with Dr. Sisney, allegedly in violation of the district's policy.

From skimming through the document, I have not yet found any dates for when his contract non-renewal was discussed. I'll post this for now and continue searching through the document.

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**Jolie2**, (3/6/2009 10:09:38 AM)

Combing through the documents, I discovered that I had overlooked that Mr. Rampey sent an e-mail on MAY 8, 2008, terminating his company's service to the BAPS district immediately. This is almost two weeks before the May 22 meeting where Dr. Sisney reviewed the problems and possible violations related to contract work with AA.

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**Jolie2**, (3/6/2009 10:16:19 AM)

Also noted is that prior to that e-mail, Mr. Rampey had made several attempts have been to set up a meeting to discuss any problems (Sisney says between May 5 and May 10, but I would think all attempts may have been before Mr. Rampey issued the May 8 e-mail) Dr. Sisney states in the court document he doesn't think it is appropriate to meet with Mr. Rampey while he was still investigating the perceived problems and therefore declines the invitations from Mr. Rampey to discuss these matters. (my note: which I perceive to be a weakness in leadership on his part. What was he afraid of?)

Dr. Sisney's unwillingness to meet with him could have angered Mr. Rampey enough to decide to cut ties with the district.

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**Jolie2**, (3/6/2009 10:39:37 AM)

I found it! I had overlooked Item 40 of the court documents (pages 8 and 9 of the pdf file) which states that AFTER the July 15 board meeting, the board held three special executive sessions to discuss Dr. Sisney's employment. The last one lasted 6 hours and Mr. and Mrs. Rampey were in attendance. Dr. Sisney was informed his employment contract would not be renewed.

If this is the correct sequence of events and Dr. Sisney was not given any previous notice or indication that his contract would not be renewed, the timeline could give the appearance of cause and effect, with his investigation into AA matters bringing about the non-renewal with his employment contract (and his subsequent termination).

However, this timeline would also fit Mrs. Flippo's allegations that Dr. Sisney held three threatening conversations with her in July. It is also possible that those special executive sessions were in response to his behavior toward her/the board and previously toward others, and could mostly be related to his investigation into AA.

So it comes down to three or more possibilities:

1) Dr. Sisney is correct and he was unfairly targeted because of his investigation into AA business relationship with the district.

2) The Board members are correct and Dr. Sisney handled his investigation in an unprofessional manner, maligning coworkers and a long-time vendor, harming reputations, and then committed grievous behavior in relation to a board member by making threats and demands. Dr. Sisney could be painting a much darker picture of corruption and illegal activity over what could be instead poor management practices, oversight, and recordkeeping, which may even include bidding violations but may not rise to the level of intentional wrongdoing or corruption. By refusing to work with staff, the Rampeys, and board members in a fair and constructive manner, he may have set the downward spiraling sequence of events in this controversy into motion.

3) There was corruption and/or criminal wrongdoing related to the AA vendor relationship and Dr. Sisney handled the situation badly and made poor choices in responding, choosing to use the courts and media instead of seeking redress through the reporting agencies within Oklahoma set up to deal with these matters.

I'm sure there are more scenarios than this.

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**teacher**, (3/6/2009 10:40:25 AM)

I will try and find them, I just don't know how to get them to you or post them somewhere. Maybe you can help with that? Maybe someone can start a website like the one that is so bent on bashing the board, to give "the other side" anonymously.

Yes, there are fears about the people that were in Sisney's "camp" that are still here and the repercussions that may lie in speaking out. I can assure you that the teachers are in a completely different state of happiness now with the current administration minus those who remain that are tied to the former.

Something else i'm disturbed about. If you watch the last board meeting, a vote was made in regards to moving a meeting that Ms. Flippo could not attend. She had a vacation planned and didn't foresee the fact that there would be a runoff and expected to be at another board meeting. They determined it would not delay payroll or vendor payments or anything else to move the meeting one day. They had already rescheduled a meeting for Ms. Updike because of her schedule, however, the vote comes back again at 3-2. Mr. Stover and Ms. Updike voted not to move it. They can't get along on something as easy and simple and courteous as this??? What is the problem with these two? Why are these two always the ones that don't come to any of the rally's, the Partners meetings, community

gatherings? If the 3 had something to hide, why are they always the ones there, even when they are the ones put under the most scrutiny?

On the comment about Air Assurance paying for the piece in the ledger, I doubt it. I know if I were them, after being slammed by the ledger so often, do you think they would want to "support" them by advertising with them? I don't know, but just trying to think out loud.

In regards to the lawsuit, most of that has been proven with the audit. Most has been proven by Air Assurance and the documentation provided by Air Assurance, so how can you put any faith behind the other accusations? I know there are emails that you can get off the BOEVBOARD website or by FOI request that in my mind show you why things happened within your timeline. Just my own conclusions anyway?

Anyways, keep up the good work! Back to class again, oh, and thanks for the compliment of not letting this affect the students. We do our best!

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**thenight1**, (3/6/2009 11:12:54 AM)

Jolie, I suspect scenario #3 is closest to the truth.

The lack of bids for services prior to 2007 and the audits finding that competitive bidding practices had not been strictly followed (I don't recall the exact words right now). I've heard through personal contacts of companies being blackballed or not given opportunities to bid. I don't think it's as bad as Sisney wants us to think but I do believe that something fishy was going on. I doubt it was what I think of when I think of corruption (no bribes or kickbacks). I suspect more just 'good ole boy' business.

Sisney surely could have handled it better though if he had hard evidence of wrongdoing by just taking that evidence to the police instead of the media.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/6/2009 11:35:02 AM)

Jolie, the timeline is a great help. It appears that Dr. Sisney brought up the vendor issues before he was notified that his contract was not going to be renewed. It's possible that he had some reason to believe it was in jeopardy before then, but I don't see anything that shows this, particularly since the board meetings to discuss his contract didn't happen until mid-July.

Were all of the board members at all of the meetings where they discussed Dr. Sisney's employment?

If so, then if Ms. Flippo brought Dr. Sisney's threats up to the board, then all five of them would be aware of the alleged threats. I would think the threats in themselves would be enough of a reason to decide not to renew his contract. I wonder how the vote went on that decision. 5-0, 3-2, or other? Hard to know what happened. Whether the threats were real, whether Flippo brought them up to the board, whether the other board members believed her.

There are real reasons to wonder what the board was up to. Most of the timeline information came from Dr. Sisney's documents. It would be good to verify which ones the board confirms; for example, the Rampeys' attendance at a meeting about Dr. Sisney's employment. That really can give the impression of a conspiracy. Were they really there, and if so, what was the Rampeys' role in this meeting? If they were answering questions from the board relating to Dr. Sisney's accusations against them, I can see how this would be relevant to the decision. They could have been plotting against him, but I wonder what they thought they would be able to get away with. There was nothing keeping him from going to the authorities at the time.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/6/2009 11:57:17 AM)

At this point, I'm with you on the AA thing, thenight1. I get the impression that the district was comfortable with AA, and, as the audit showed, pretty relaxed about procedures. I don't know if companies were prevented from bidding, but it definitely looks like the district didn't really go after following the bidding procedures they

way they should have.

I don't get the impression that there was criminal activity - just a bunch of people continuing to do things in a way that seemed to be working pretty well, and probably with not a lot of time and resources to commit to research and making a change. I bet changing from one HVAC vendor to another is a pretty big hassle, administratively.

What I am more concerned with now is finding out how much truth there is to the board members' alleged activities since then (the separate meetings, hiring their own counsel, boycotting the meeting), and understanding the reasons for doing these things. On the surface, these sound bad. But until we know the circumstances, we can't judge whether these actions were sneaky and malicious, naive and not well-thought out, or their only choice.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/6/2009 12:28:41 PM)

Posted on Ledger "BAPS legal fees soar" article, 12:25 PM

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To Attorneys:

I can't think why you didn't also post your response to Jolie on the Tulsa World article we invited you to. We are discussing those very questions there.

Are you asking questions, or just spewing accusations? I ask because whenever we try to answer your questions, you get really mad.

This is another invitation...you know where to find us. And if you really want to sock it to us, just think - you don't have to wait half a day to see if your comment gets posted!

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/6/2009 12:38:32 PM)

Teacher, what do you think about Ms. Flippo's claim that Dr. Sisney threatened her with a PR nightmare for the school district and for her personally? I don't think anyone besides the two of them can know for sure. With your experience working with Dr. Sisney, do you think it's possible?

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/6/2009 1:02:35 PM)

Teacher, another question for you. All teachers worked in the same Sisney-influenced atmosphere, which has been described as oppressive. But some teachers are in Sisney's "camp". Why are some in his camp? Is it loyalty, or maybe something he did that makes them think highly of him? Are they somehow insulated from the difficult working conditions? I'm wondering how their opinion of him can be different if they are working in the same environment and seeing the same behavior from him.

I am also wondering if you know any of the details behind the board's reasons for termination. I don't expect you to say what they are; just curious if you know specific examples that correspond with the reasons given.

Again, if you can't answer, I understand.

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**cowgrl**, (3/6/2009 1:38:29 PM)

612

I know you asked for Teachers response to your question, I'm wondering...don't you think Sisney has already created a "PR nightmare"? I mean look at everything he and Richardson (and even Lare for that matter) have gone to great lengths to make public (most of which is still unsubstantiated). While I'm glad to know some of the issues that I wouldn't have known otherwise had it not been in the media, but I can bet that their main objective was not to inform the public but merely to create this very nightmare he threatened (supposidly). I don't doubt Flippo's claim at all based on what I've seen so far.

As far as the mess with AA, I too think the claims have been a little inflated. Was it wrong to not place the jobs out for bid, of course, but I fail to see intentional criminal intent on either side by not doing so. I still feel it is an issue of procedures and not a cover up or conspiracy. I also think that if this (not getting bids) has gone on for as long as they say (10 years I think I read), then why are they (the hvac companies and Sisney just now upset about it? Shouldn't the whistle have been blown long ago? I hardly believe he just all of a sudden uncovered this issue. It's too coincidental if you ask me.

And like commented above...why not go straight to the authorities instead of the media first if he truly felt that there was criminal activity happening (under his supervision nonetheless). It would appear that because his threats failed, and that because the legal system wasn't producing the results he wanted fast enough, not to mention that the audit didn't conclude/prove what he was accusing... he had no choice but to make this nightmare to favor himself so he didn't sound like an idiot.

The timeline of events involving AA is also interesting. We can all draw our own conclusions based on that information, but I think we should also remember that this time line is according to Sisney. AA nor the board have confirmed these events or time line as factual . It's probably safe to say that the other parties involved have differing "facts" (if you will) regarding the events leading up to all of this. We've only heard one side on this matter , perhaps because this case (where Sisney's time line quoted above came from) is still pending a decision from the judge (anyone heard any word on that yet?).

I also have a hard time believing that the "excuse" reasons for firing Sisney are the actual reasons for his dismissal. I still think there are things that happened during his employment that Sisney knew he did that might jeopardize his contract renewal. I'm still of the mind that if he had nothing to hide there he would release his personnel file to contradict what the board is saying. Surely the board has documented their claims because if this drama continues like it has, its pretty evident it will end up in court somehow someday and the attorney's are going to subpoena it (file) as evidence. If they didn't document boy are they in trouble!!!

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/6/2009 1:51:27 PM)

Agreed, Cowgirl, this is indeed a PR nightmare! And even if Sisney's accusations are all true, it's still Sisney that brought it all into the media.

You're right, we need verification that Sisney's version of events is accurate. Since all we have to go on is what has been reported, we need some new input. It seems like, with enough people contributing, we might be able to put together a plausible picture of what really happened.

I am really amazed that anybody thinks the board fired Sisney without taking deliberate steps along the way. People have asked, why did they just up and fire him instead of warning him? Come on now folks! If they did warn him, do you really think we would know about it? Sheesh.

If Sisney never files his wrongful termination suit, I wonder if there is another way to find out the reasons for termination. It seems like, if there was a court case that used that information as evidence, it would then be public record. Maybe someone smarter than me can figure out how to make this happen (without costing the district!).

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/6/2009 1:55:45 PM)

Yeah, Sisney's defamation case. I bet there's some pretty interesting reading in there. And I am fairly convinced that it's being held from public view on purpose.

As soon as it's released back to records, anyone can look at those documents.

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**Jolie2**, (3/6/2009 2:20:06 PM)

Here's my latest response to "Attorneys" over at the Ledger's legal fees article, submitted at 2:20 pm:

QUOTE

to Attorneys, my post was to an earlier one of yours from Mar. 5, not the one time stamped for 4:41 pm that day, which is why it appears that I 'missed the point' when in reality I hadn't yet read your most recent post before submitting mine, which I had been working on, while reading information online to compose it.

Dr. Sisney was the first one to meet with Mike Rampey and two of the board members (not a quorum) on May 22, 2008, to discuss what he discovered through his internal investigation. Was his purpose of holding a meeting with only two board members present (Updike and Wilkins) for the purpose of avoiding a quorum and having minutes taken? It was only after that meeting that the other board members met with Mr. Rampey.

I can't say what the Board or Sisney's intentions were but only speculate, like nearly everyone else observing this story. Nothing about this case is straightforward and there is questionable behavior on all sides of this issue.

The BAParents vs BOE site lists the first legal bill encumbrance from Mann's company as dated (presented?) on September 15 for \$10,000. I don't know what your source is for the details of who contacted the firm first and when, but I can only say I am not familiar with this part of the story and feel unable to comment responsibly on it without having a source to review on the sequence of events.

Mrs. Flippo did not make a light accusation against Dr. Sisney. She said specifically that he wanted something for himself related to his employment in exchange for not making a PR nightmare for the district. She made these allegations on her own, as a private individual, for whatever reason, but this action kept the board and district from being liable for any potential resulting litigation, which I would think you would see as a good thing.

I think there is a lot of information documented about Dr. Sisney's termination that might answer a lot of our questions. Unfortunately, we do not have access to this information so far.

As for your last sentence, the smiley face at the end of my previous comment to 'gee whiz' should answer your question. If it doesn't, sorry, can't help you with that.

Jolie

END QUOTE

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**Jolie2**, (3/6/2009 2:25:27 PM)

followed up by this

QUOTE

P. S. to "Attorneys"

Maybe you're not familiar with the term "Whaaambulance?"

The Whaaa part of the word refers to crying, not to hitting, and it's a phrase I say to my child when she's whining about nonsense but acting like it's a big deal. So instead of an ambulance for a real injury, it's a whaaambulance for a whining complaint by an overdramatic child, similar to saying, "Would you like a little cheese with that whine?" to someone older.

Jolie

END QUOTE

submitted to the Ledger at 2:25 pm

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/6/2009 2:28:16 PM)

Well, I had never heard "Whaaamulance" before, but I figured it out before too long :)

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**Jolie2**, (3/6/2009 2:39:12 PM)

I've found comments posted here today interesting but don't have time to respond to any in-depth right now but did want to say one thing.

to 612 -- That was an interesting observation about the decision on the defamation lawsuit, which was due to be rendered within 7 days of the January 12 hearing, may be being held back from entering into the court system to prevent access to the records. I hadn't thought of there being information that could be released from court records, just the verdict. That's a brilliant thought, as an explanation for the long delay in anything further being posted since the January 12 hearing.

However, to be fair, it could be related to a delayed decision by the judge because of progress being made in the BA police (and now OSBI) investigations, while he waits for the outcome.

Maybe I will make a call to the judge's assistant to see what information she knows and can legally divulge to the public as to reasons for the delay.

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**Jolie2**, (3/6/2009 2:41:58 PM)

I can't resist commenting to cowgirl, as well (someone is going to have to pry the keyboard from my hands; actually they have tried!)

In Maryanne Flippo's press conference statements, she actually said that as she looked back over the events of the past six months, she realized that Dr. Sisney's (alleged) threats had been made true.

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**Jolie2**, (3/6/2009 2:47:29 PM)

to thenight1

While there may not have been competitive bidding prior to the 2007/2008 year for HVAC service, there is nothing official that confirms that fact.

The special CPA audit completed recently does not state one way or another whether those documents exist but only discusses the 2007/2008 fiscal year bids. This was particularly disappointing to many of us that the other years' bidding documents were not reviewed and reported on; after all, claims of circumventing

competitive bidding was a big part of the issues raised.

Dr. Gerber has officially stated that those earlier bidding documents do exist and are currently securely on file at the district offices and available for review. This is included in his press release that responded to media reports from February 19 and 20.

So until the OSBI investigation is completed and the results are released, we'll probably have to wait to know what is the truth on this aspect of the case.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/6/2009 2:56:03 PM)

It's true that the judge could still be waiting. Courts move exasperatingly slowly, and they would certainly postpone a decision if it looked like new pertinent information was going to be available soon.

But there are a few things make me think it's likely there has already been a decision.

- 1) The press conferences by Ms. Flippo and Air Assurance gave the impression that something had changed;
- 2) There is no entry on OSCN. There wouldn't necessarily be one, but so often you see entries saying that a hearing was rescheduled, etc. If it was postponed for a significant amount of time (weeks or months while the investigations go on), why was it not returned to Records in the meantime?
- 3) The judge stated that there would be a ruling in 7 days. That gives me the impression that at the time, he probably thought that he had enough to go on. Of course, something could have happened during those 7 days to throw something into doubt.
- 4) Sisney and Richardson have been silent about the case and anything in it, since about the time Air Assurance had its press conference. Richardson tried to defend himself on the Sequoyah dropdown issue, but we didn't hear anything more.

I am very curious about what happened to the 7 days. Probably it's just a boring, meaningless delay. But all that information being available to the public - that could change a lot of people's perceptions of the whole situation.

Maybe it's a delay AND the file is being held by the judge to prevent the public from looking at its contents during the OSBI investigation.

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**Jolie2**, (3/6/2009 2:56:34 PM)

to Teacher

I am great at researching online but not so much with technical details about computers. From my limited knowledge, if you know how, you might scan the documents into your computer memory and save them, then copy and paste what you want to share here. That would be the easiest, fastest, and least complicated way of doing that, I think, if it works.

As for setting up a website, I would be reluctant to visit a site set up by any individual where they might require an account be set up in order to post and which would be linked to an e-mail address, as it could be used as a trap for information to identify posters, if someone were unscrupulous enough to do so.

Personally, I am not on one side or the other, and not out to prove the innocence or guilt of anyone, either. Whereas, the BAParents vs BOE site has a definite agenda and POV and their site serves that purpose.

As long as we are able to post on the TW, I am content with that. If we didn't have the OSBI investigation going on that will eventually answer the most important questions for our community, I might be more anxious to have something more visible and accessible to more of the public. I am satisfied that the authorities will

have the final, legal word. And that's a good thing.

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**Jolie2**, (3/6/2009 2:58:58 PM)

612, thank you for reminding me of the timing of the January 12 hearing, followed by the press conferences by Air Assurance and Maryanne Flippo. At the time, I did think there was a likely connection to the finalization with the case to their feeling free to discuss information with the public.

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**Jolie2**, (3/6/2009 2:59:33 PM)

Must...pull...away.... :)

See you all later.

J.

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**2112**, (3/6/2009 3:32:39 PM)

Jolie,

Please confirm something and get an FOI in to get the previous bidding documents or somebody do it. Why does it always have to be the baparentsvsboe that get the FOI's??? Tired of always seeing them be the ones to turn stuff in to get. Is everybody else helpless or are they "scared" to be seen doing that? That issue for itself would end that discussion on here. I am like "thenight", the bids aint there, and I will say that is fact until shown otherwise. That is why they should have let Sisney's engagement letter fly as written instead of changing it. Or why didn't AA show all the previous bids at the rally, that would have ended this also and sold me on alot of things also. Need to focus discussion on items that can be discounted or eliminated. tired of conjenture.

612, Sisney did tell the "authorities" about what he found. He told his employers and their lawyer at the time agreed. and Nothing happened. Wait, sorry, he got fired. along with the lawyer. and now the OSBI has it, so I am guessing it made it to the proper authorities one way or another. Is that a bad thing? Let them decide.

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**Jolie2**, (3/6/2009 4:27:12 PM)

2112,

I have only so much time that I can and want to devote to this issue, and still spend more time reading and writing about it than I should because of other obligations on my time. Anyone who wants to request information regarding previous fiscal year HVAC bids through the FOI act is welcome to, including you. Are you Chris Tharp or someone else connected to the site and that is why you mentioned by does baparentsvsboe have to do all the FOI requests and why you're not volunteering to take this task on yourself and instead asking others to do it?

I would think this would be a basic piece of information that baparentsvsboe would like to have for themselves, unless they are worried that the result of their request might prove their conjecture wrong?

I know some people thought the rally was for political purposes but it really was not meant to be the time and place to go into details about the HVAC controversy. It was supposed to be an upbeat celebration of the district. A board meeting or press conference would be a more appropriate setting for releasing the information.

I have a healthy skepticism about all sides of this issue and have stated so from the beginning of the media coverage of it last summer. My primary purpose of joining in the discussion at the time was to ask people not to rush to judgement, waiting for the facts, not allegations, to be proven and published. Now I am hooked into following through on the story, but not obligated to do any more than I feel like doing in discussing or researching for information. As I said, the authorities are looking into the details and will uncover the facts.

I would have had no problem with baparentsvsboe or John Lare and his supporters insisting on having information to answer their questions, but I cannot support actions that presuppose guilt BEFORE the information is received and reviewed. This is what happened once the HVAC vendor contract issue was made public. People became adversarial in their approach instead of acting professionally and reasonably.

If you are tired of conjecture, you are welcome to stop reading it.

As for your comments to 612, we have discussed the possible legal requirements for the protected status of whistleblower and their right to that defense, based on the actions they take in reporting evidence of wrongdoing to the PROPER authorities (not the media, etc.). You can find this discussion in yesterday and today's postings.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/6/2009 4:34:40 PM)

I'm sorry, 2112, I don't see it that way.

Sisney told his employer about the problems in May. He was suspended in October. If he wasn't satisfied with the result, he had more than four months during which he could have taken the evidence to the police or OSBI, or any state authority that has the responsibility of handling these issues. Being superintendent, and with access to legal advice from firms that have experience dealing with public schools, it should not have been a problem for him to find out who should handle it. I don't believe for a minute that Dr. Sisney is as helpless as people make him out to be.

Even if he couldn't tell at first whether he was going to get satisfactory results, he certainly knew by the time he filed his lawsuit in September. Even then, he still had a month before he was suspended to take action with the authorities.

No, it is not a bad thing that OSBI has the information now. In my opinion, that's where it should have gone in the first place, not to the press.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/6/2009 5:58:38 PM)

Sigh. Posted again on "BAPS legal fees soar". Maybe I'm not sarcastic and adversarial enough. Or maybe it would help if I misspelled some words or - gasp - split an infinitive.

-----

To Attorneys:

I can't think why you didn't also post your response to Jolie on the Tulsa World article we invited you to. We are discussing those very questions there.

Are you asking questions, or just spewing accusations? I ask because whenever we try to answer your questions, you get really mad.

This is another invitation...you know where to find us. And if you really want to sock it to us, just think - you don't have to wait half a day to see if your comment

gets posted!

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**Jolie2**, (3/6/2009 6:18:41 PM)

The Ledger posted both of my comments to "Attorneys"

I find it comical that the posters like 'Gee whiz' who write petty insults and blanket criticisms are the ones who have little to add to the discussion. Are they trolls just trying to rile people up or do they seriously think they are contributing something of substance?

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**Jolie2**, (3/6/2009 6:20:44 PM)

I loved the last sentence on your most recent submission to the Ledger. You're asking for trouble now! They might start thinking we're getting lonely and desperate over here and willing to settle for heckling just to have company. :)

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/6/2009 7:30:12 PM)

Yeah, "Come hassle us - any time, day or night! No waiting! No hidden fees!"

I know what you mean about getting sucked into this. I don't know what it is about this story. Maybe it's that there are so many apparent contradictions, and there are such strong feelings - and personalities - on both sides. It's kind of like reading a mystery - trying to figure out how in the world the author is going to resolve all these seemingly irreconcilable clues. I hope the last page hasn't been torn out.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/6/2009 7:45:44 PM)

I notice a common tactic is to mischaracterize another's statement as something ridiculous, and then point out how ridiculous it is.

For example, you stated, "Allegedly, in July of 2008, Dr. Sisney had already threatened Maryanne Flippo..."

A commenter said, "You make it sound like he threatened to 'beat her up'..."

Where did that come from?

I guess it's a good debate strategy if your goal is to claim victory (in your own head), but it's a terrible strategy if you are trying to engage in a mutually beneficial exchange of information.

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**Jolie2**, (3/7/2009 9:28:40 AM)

Hi, 612

I'll be checking in a few times during the weekend to see if there's anything new here to respond to, but otherwise, I won't be adding anything new for a couple of days to enjoy the weekend. Have a good one!

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**Jolie2**, (3/7/2009 2:18:23 PM)

to thenight1 and 2112

This is a correction to my comments re. previous years' bidding documents posted here on 3/6/09 at 2:47:29 PM

I made a mistake in saying that Dr. Gerber specifically stated that the bidding documents for previous years were on file. As I re-read (again) the superintendent's press release responding to media reports of Feb. 19 and 20 (linked on the BAPS website) I discovered that I had unintentionally read more into his statements regarding documents on file than what was actually written. My apologies for the error.

Here is what he actually wrote:

QUOTE

The only records that the District is aware of that were missing are the original bid documents from 2007-2008 dealing with the HVAC contract. These records apparently went missing before Dr. Gerber became the superintendent. In order to have these records, Dr. Gerber requested a copy of those documents from the bidders during the weeks subsequent to Oct 6. Those documents have since been obtained from the vendors involved in that HVAC bid process.

END QUOTE

I initially assumed because there should be bidding documents on file for those previous years, when Dr. Gerber wrote that the only thing missing was the 2007-2008 bidding documents, that the other years' were there on file. However, what he could have meant is that all documents in existence were accounted for. If there never were bidding documents from previous years, they would not be considered missing.

Bottom line is that, from published comments available from official sources, we do not know if these documents exist or that they don't exist.

I do think if everything was in order related to the bidding and work requests, approvals, and payments related to the HVAC work, the district/BOE would have, or at least should have, been happy to hold a meeting and disseminate that information, in at least summary form with names, amounts, and dates, to confirm with the public that everything done was above board. That they did not do this at the very beginning when Dr. Sisney made his allegations of wrongdoing public, is a sign, to me, that there were, at the very least, some mistakes made in how this contract work with AA was handled. If it was only poor management and/or sloppy controls and not intentional criminal wrongdoing and/or collusion with the contractor, the management/Board made a mistake in not being forthcoming at that time, admitting what problems there were and why, and let the chips fall where they may. However, with the rancour and animosity displayed at the height of the initial allegations and the dismissal of

Dr. Sisney, they may have thought it was better to ride it out and hope for the best. They may have also thought that by admitting mistakes were made, people may assume that the truth was being whitewashed and that the reality was worse than stated and it may have also led people to believe that Dr. Sisney's removal for office was unjustified. They may have also worried that admitting to not following proper bidding procedures, they would open themselves up to litigation from other vendors and punitive action for government agencies. I'm only guessing.

To reiterate, the last paragraph above is only opinion and conjecture on my part.

Good thing OSBI is going to sort out a lot of this for us, although some of it, particularly related to Dr. Sisney's employment termination, may still remain a mystery.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/7/2009 3:09:51 PM)

Hi Jolie, I got away from my computer for a while too.

I think it's fairly likely there weren't bids for previous years, at least not consistently. That doesn't in itself make anyone a criminal or indicate intentional wrongdoing, but it certainly wouldn't be something the board would want to advertise, especially in the environment at the time. It seems to me that if someone was trying covertly to keep an exclusive relationship with AA, they would be sneaky and clever enough to ask for and accept bids from other companies, so they could reject them and put them in the file to fulfill the requirements. It is of course possible to be corrupt AND incompetent, but I guess it just seems more likely to me that the requirements were overlooked because the relationship had been in place for some time.

In addition to the possible reasons you gave for why they didn't lay everything out for the public, there is also the consideration of staff time to do the work. Even if the board members themselves spent a lot of additional time on it, I would expect it would take some staff time too, from the people who are knowledgeable about the work order system and the records. This might take some time, because if it's not documented thoroughly, it might raise more questions than it answers.

The board members probably feel like they would be criticized no matter what they do at this point. There seem to be some who frame every action by the board with the premise that they are corrupt. Spending extra time and possibly money on what some might call "protesting too much" could make them even more unpopular (if that's possible).

Good thought about opening themselves up to being sued by vendors, and other punitive actions. I can easily see how that could happen. I think other HVAC companies would be justified in suing, but they would probably think twice about it because of the potential negative publicity. Also, they're probably nice people who aren't eager to take money away from the schools. That may be why we haven't heard anything from other companies.

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**Jolie2**, (3/8/2009 9:33:39 AM)

Somewhere I saw information with links to copies of engagement letters for the special CPA audit; one was requested/proposed by Dr. Sisney, and the other was a different/modified version by Dr. Gerber, which was actually approved by the Board. I thought it was on the BAParentsvsBOE website, but I've combed it twice and can't seem to find it.

I also remember Dr. Gerber addressing those changes in an explanation that I also cannot find. Perhaps it is in the minutes of one of the board meeting? Or maybe a news article? I couldn't find the explanation in any of the BAPS press releases, from last fall to current time.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/9/2009 9:27:40 AM)

I don't think I saw the links for the audit engagement letters, but I remember reading something from Dr. Gerber about the changes.

These Ledger articles come up in a Google search and look like they might have comments about the audit items supposedly removed, but they are missing when you try to open them. They are all listed on the BAParents vs BOE site, but they don't work from there either.

Sisney Fired 10/23/2008

Grand Jury Petition Campaign Gets Judge's OK 10/22/2008

BAPS Reorganizes Staff Duties (10/22/2009)

The only comment I have found from Dr. Gerber is this one:

Sisney believes cover-up of criminal acts taking place, Ledger, 1/21/2009

## QUOTE

...Sisney pointed to an audit he requested in August that focused on district operations and adherence to open bidding requirements. As that project neared fruition, he said a parallel action was under way to get him fired. Shortly thereafter, he said "a new audit request was written by the interim superintendent or school board attorney" that excluded what Sisney considered a number of highly significant questions.

The results of that second audit, which were due in December, have yet to be released.

Gerber denied any request of the district's outside auditors has been killed or rewritten by anyone.

"The district is still waiting for the final signed audit. The outside auditors are free to reach any conclusions or find any facts they desire. In fact, the openness of the district to outside scrutiny is borne out by the fact the board of education unanimously voted to ask the State Auditor and Inspector to enter into a contract to audit every allegation contained in a taxpayer demand. I have already made contact with the SAI to initiate the contract process," he said.

## UNQUOTE

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**Jolie2**, (3/9/2009 9:59:26 AM)

Thank you, 612. I think those links I saw were on BAParentsvsBOE's website and maybe have been removed. It's too bad that more folks from BA are not coming over, because I'm sure someone knows the answer to my question.

I now wish I hadn't postponed reading the two different audit engagement letters signed by Sisney and Gerber.

I wonder if BAPS did follow through to request/arrange the state audit or if it was cancelled because of one or both reasons: 1) the OSBI was now investigating the matter and/or 2) the taxpayer demand was denied by a unanimous vote of the board.

I've read that the State is going to conduct an audit, but it was only in the Ledger's comments section, not through an official source.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/9/2009 10:08:07 AM)

Yes, I wondered if the state audit was still going forward too. We haven't heard anything about it recently.

Maybe we need to save Ledger articles and documents that are linked on them, for future reference in case they disappear.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/9/2009 10:13:35 AM)

In our spare time.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/9/2009 10:30:35 AM)

I am wondering what the board's expected level of involvement would be in overseeing vendor contracts. In all the time the administration was using Air Assurance, and supposedly using blanket PO's to bypass the bidding requirements, was the board involved in making these decisions? Should they have been?

Did the two board members ever question the exclusive use of AA? If so, are there previous split votes on HVAC-related issues? If they never brought it up, or if

all of the votes were unanimous, why would the three board members have more culpability?

It seems to me that either it's not the board's job, or it is the board's job and none of the five members were doing it.

Is it possible to get access to all of the board's topics and votes for the past several years? I would be interested to see how the votes went on HVAC vendor issues.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/9/2009 10:53:46 AM)

This is an editorial from back in August. Looking back, it seems like we're being prepped for something. The phrase "...the only proper measure of a superintendent of schools is bottom-line performance" sticks out to me.

-----

Why the delay in extending superintendent's contract? 08/08/08, Editorial by Bob Lewis

QUOTE

Perhaps the most important job of the Broken Arrow Board of Education is hiring a superintendent of schools and evaluating job performance on an annual basis.

This review process takes time and contract extensions are normally announced about the time the new school year begins, so it was not unusual when the school board entered into a four-hour executive session on July 14 to deal with this responsibility. It wasn't unusual when a second, four-hour executive session was held on July 22. It traditionally takes two such gatherings to deal with evaluation and contract details.

What was highly unusual was when the school board entered a third executive session Monday and remained behind closed doors for about six hours before tabling this issue.

Obviously, something is amiss here that needs to get resolved.

In the final analysis, the only proper measure of a superintendent of schools is bottom-line performance. And by any unit of measure one may wish to apply, Dr. Jim Sisney has done and is doing an outstanding job.

During his five years in office, test scores have improved every year. Broken Arrow High School seniors are receiving in excess of \$4 million in scholarships annually. He has created a strategy that allows the district to prosper under federal and state No Child Left Behind requirements while others districts struggle with them. Innovations like Parent University are the talk of the education world.

Notice the Performing Arts Center going up in downtown Broken Arrow? That was Sisney's idea and he had to fight like the dickens to keep it there because he felt the school system had a vital role to play in redevelopment of the core business district. The working relationship enjoyed by the city, schools and chamber of commerce wouldn't exist had it not been for a "cross-functional planning" initiative put forth by the superintendent.

Why it would take the school board a total of 14-hours-and-counting to extend a vote of confidence to an individual with such a glittering record of success is baffling.

To be completely fair, it must be noted there are five members of the school board and the Ledger is told the votes behind this delay are far from unanimous. Speculation on exactly why some members have elected to take this stand varies widely.

The only thing clear is, this issue needs to be put to rest as quickly as possible so all concerned can focus on the mission of making Broken Arrow Public Schools the finest school district in America. More than 16,000 kids are counting on them to do exactly that.

I have to believe it would be a good idea for the parents of Broken Arrow Public Schools students to phone their BOE representative and let their feelings be heard.

There's a lot at stake here and the actions the school board will take from this point forward are far too important to be made in a vacuum.

UNQUOTE

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/9/2009 12:13:39 PM)

Interesting... when you do a search on the Ledger website for "Sisney", and include all articles in the date range 1/1/2008 to today, there are a lot of articles. But there is a large gap from August 25 through November 13. None of the articles during the timeframe in which the defamation lawsuit was filed or Sisney was suspended and fired are available any more.

The gap is the same if you search on "Lare" or "Flipppo".

Why would the Ledger remove these articles in particular?

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**Jolie2**, (3/9/2009 12:54:35 PM)

How'd you get a hold of a copy of that little nugget? It's obvious by that one editorial and the timing of it that Bob Lewis had no intention of being impartial on this story, from the beginning, and was primed and used by Dr. Sisney to push his agenda by media early on. I feel sure that Dr. Sisney had Bob Lewis's ear all along. The only way he would have had that information was from Dr. Sisney himself. The editorial does seem to indicate that there are some other issues in Dr. Sisney's employment history other than "bottom-line performance" that were being considered by the board.

Some day, when I have time, I'm going to bite the bullet and unfortunately reward the Ledger for archiving their articles, by paying to access their archives and copy and save everything to my computer. I might not be able to share everything word for word from their articles on comments, but will be able to print excerpts from their articles, without worrying about legal copyright issues, I think. I have an e-subscription to the Ledger since last fall, but that will only give me access to about three months of actual scans of the Ledger paper (I think--I haven't tried to go very far back yet) and I don't know if there is a search function for finding a particular article.

Until the issue was brought up, I would guess that it would be easy for the board not to think about some HVAC company doing the work for years and years. After all, BAPS is a \$100 million-a-year operation and there must be a lot spending approvals that must be given each year. I don't know what the board's responsibilities in oversight of bidding/contract approvals and work payments are. Dr. Sisney would be the one to put together items that need approval from the board, on behalf of the district. Wouldn't he have been as likely as anyone on the board to notice that AA was the HVAC contractor year after year for the five years he was superintendent?

Obviously Dr. Gerber, as former Assistant Director of Operations, and his employee Bill Miller, Director of Maintenance, had the primary responsibility for ensuring proper competitive bidding and purchase order requirements were followed. Dr. Gerber should have been reviewing this aspect of Mr. Miller's job performance on a regular basis and, if there were problems, should have had them corrected. Similarly, Dr. Sisney should have been reviewing Dr. Gerber's performance carefully as well. It would be interesting to see performance objectives and job descriptions for all three positions (two of which were eliminated by Dr. Sisney) and an outline of the Board responsibilities. If we were obsessive enough, we could probably get copies of them through FOI requests. At this point, I can't afford the time to be that consumed by this case. (I'm still following the case of missing of British little girl Madeleine McCann who 'disappeared' on May 3, 2007, almost two years ago while on vacation with her family in Portugal. I have spent hundreds of hours reading, researching, and posting on the subject on various forums. Nowadays I just put in a short time each day to read updates and rarely post any more. Now that is a case that is amazingly complex, fascinating, infuriating, and may never be officially resolved because of the political interference. If you're interested, at some time, I could tell you brief synopsis of events and share my opinion of what happened (hint: she wasn't abducted), but I'm afraid to even get started, otherwise. : )

You have to hand it to the BAParentsvsBOE folks, though. They are very thorough in getting documentation. They have procured copies of all the board meeting minutes), through FOI requests, and have links to them on their website. Just click on the "FOI" header on their home page to bring up the list.

HEY, I FOUND IT! Under the FOI section is where the two audit engagement letters are linked. I thought they were on that site. Wunderbar! Off to read them.

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**Jolie2**, (3/9/2009 1:07:41 PM)

I was able to read the September 29 engagement letter (under Sisney's watch) for the audit. The later one dated October 9 is not accessible, as the link is not functioning. It appears that the site manager made a mistake in computer coding while setting it up. However, the scope of the actual audit, which would have been covered in that October 9 letter, is repeated in the audit report itself, so I can use that for a comparison to the September 29 letter.

Find both references in the FOI list, by the date of request (far left column on page) of 11/21/2008.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/9/2009 1:25:30 PM)

Yesterday I signed up for a month's worth of archives. I just finished saved every story I could find...before any more disappear. Let me know if I can dig something out of an old story for you.

We should probably save off the documents from the BAParentsvsBOE site too. You never know what might happen to them - intentional or not.

I've been afraid to read anything about the Madeleine McCann case - it's so hard to tell if the narrow glimpse you're getting from a news story is accurate, or enhanced to emphasize what MIGHT be the case. So often it's reported like the tabloids, where the huge headline screams "BRITNEY IS A SPACE ALIEN", followed by miniscule print that says "...friends fear". I would be interested in your take on that case.

Thanks for the tip on finding the audit engagement letters. I'm going to take a look.

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**Jolie2**, (3/9/2009 1:28:51 PM)

My comments on the comparison between the original engagement letter (Sisney's) and what was actually performed as agreed to by the Board in the October 9, 2008, letter:

- 1) Item to review athletic activity fund is the same in both for the same fiscal years and the scope of work to be performed.

2) Item to review building fund purchase orders for the 5-year-period ending June 30, 2008, is exactly the same in the both.

3) Item to review contracts signed by the Superintendent from July 1, 2005, through October 6, 2008, to determine whether the contracts were signed by the Board of Education are exactly the same in both documents.

4) Item to review the bond funds for purchase of buses out of construction bond issues is the exactly the same in both documents.

My question is if all those four items are the same in the actual audit as the original letter of engagement signed by Dr. Sisney but not approved by the Board, why are the anti-Board people misrepresenting it as something changed in the scope of work requested? Is this intentional propaganda? I think Dr. Gerber is correct in this instance that nothing changed. Would you please double check by comparing the two documents, because I think that is an important issue that can then be brought up on the Ledger's comment section and other media outlets if and when the opportunity arises.

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**Jolie2**, (3/9/2009 1:32:52 PM)

I would be very glad to share what I know about the McCann case (very much misrepresented in the British and American media and) some time later this week. I think I'll do a search for an article on the case here at the Tulsa World and post it there for you to read, without cluttering up this thread with off-topic discussion, and give you the name and date of the article where my comments are posted.

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**Jolie2**, (3/9/2009 1:34:13 PM)

Gone for a bit and will be back later on.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/9/2009 2:53:50 PM)

I found both of the engagement letters on the BAParents vs BOE site. The September 29 letter was signed by Sisney; the October 9 letter was signed by Stover (not Gerber). The completed audit agrees with the October engagement letter. There are differences between the two engagement letters:

Item 1 – In the September letter, this addresses the general fund, asking for the review of the reasons for increases and decreases, and also brings up the issue of the pay for unused sick day. The October letter doesn't mention the general fund or sick days at all; instead, the first item is asking for review of summer camps conducted by coaches to see if money was properly accounted for in the athletic fund.

Item 2 – Building fund

All of the items in 2a are the same; the October letter adds an item to review the original invoices from Air Assurance to determine that they contained the required information for payment.

2b – exactly the same; addresses blanket purchase orders

2c – worded differently but both address competitive bidding. The September letter specifically mentions bid-splitting, which Dr. Sisney said that he was particularly concerned with.

Item 3 in the October letter – this is a new item that was not in the October letter. It asks for review of contracts signed by the superintendent to see whether they needed approval by the BOE.

Item 3/4 – This addresses buying buses out of the building fund. The September letter and the October letter have the exact same wording for this; it's Item 3 in the September letter and item 4 in the October letter.

I believe eliminating the item addressing the general fund is deserving of an explanation. It's unclear what Sisney wanted addressed here. That could be why it was eliminated. Of course, the issue about payment for unused sick days was not needed, since that had been stopped years before. Sisney knew it had been stopped – why did he put it in there?

Item 2a adds an request in the October letter that targets the Air Assurance invoices. This is not an item you would expect to be added by an administration that was trying to cover up a conspiracy with that company. I don't know why anyone would fuss about this.

I think the rewording of the competitive bidding item is probably not significant. The October letter looks more general; this may have been reworded to increase the scope of the review regarding competitive bidding. Listing specific items can indicate that only these items should be addressed. If this is the case, it would be nice if it were explained.

Obviously, adding a new item (review of the contracts signed by the superintendent) doesn't cut down on the scope of the audit.

I think the criticism of the rewrite is probably overblown. Sisney should be criticized for including the non-issue of the unused sick day pay.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/9/2009 2:55:21 PM)

Typo: Item 3 in the October letter - this is a new item that was not in the October letter - that doesn't make sense. I meant it was not in the September letter.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/9/2009 2:59:40 PM)

Hey, this is interesting. Look at Ms. Flippo's comments on the content of the board reports. This is probably why the board reports and minutes are no longer available on the website. This article also mentions the disparaging email allegedly sent by Dr. Sisney. The 3-2 vote is interesting. I wonder what the reasoning was for the two board members who voted not to prevent Dr. Sisney from sending emails about the board and its members.

Does anyone have a copy of this email?

Ledger - School board gets back to business – August 25, 2008

QUOTE

Approved by a 5-0 vote after considerable discussion and a number of rewrites was a directive authored by Maryanne Flippo that reads, "I move that all board meetings be videotaped and shown unedited on BATV. I further move that board reports will consist only of agenda items and the vote on the agenda items."

The action came after what Flippo called "inaccurate" and inappropriate editorializing by the district on board decisions.

A directive by Shari Wilkins passed by a 3-2 vote. It reads, "I move that the superintendent be directed to refrain from using any school resources either directly or indirectly in the dissemination of any information or opinions regarding the board, its individual members or his relationship with the board."

Discussion indicated that directive was stimulated by an email Sisney sent to school district employees presenting his views on the aborted school board meeting and the actions of three

of its members.

UNQUOTE

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/9/2009 3:05:34 PM)

Ledger - School board conflict grows in intensity – August 18, 2008 – this is about the board members holding a rally in the park instead of attending the board meeting.

You could make either side out to be the bad guy from this article. I wonder how many teachers wanted to go to the park but were afraid.

What if Robin Williams, Tom Hanks, and Michael Keaton were playing the board members? Then we'd all think they were gutsy to take a stand against the tyrannical superintendent and school board members who were too frightened to do anything but quote rules. Stover's remark can easily be seen as obstructionist, if you are eager to pin blame on him:

"I am not attempting to keep the board from addressing any issues but am merely trying to make sure the board follows its policy and established procedures," Stover said.

Flippo's remarks:

QUOTE

"When the majority of the board is not being allowed to represent the constituents who elected us, there is no point in our attending a board meeting," Flippo said. "Mr. Stover and the superintendent are preventing the elected members of the Broken Arrow school board from conducting important business by refusing to place items for discussion on the agenda. By his actions, Mr. Stover is hijacking the entire board of education and placing it under his sole control. Together, Dr. Sisney and Mr Stover are keeping me and other board members from representing the citizens who elected us.

When asked how many items she was referring to, Flippo couldn't recall an exact number but said she thought it was "six or eight."

Wilkins said the two items she sought to add - a review of the district's 2008-09 budget with an explanation of why the reserve fund was reduced, and a motion to authorize legal counsel (Mann) to review board policies and recommend revisions - remain at the top of her priority list.

When asked how long this boycott might last, Flippo said "as soon as Dr. Sisney and Mr. Stover agree to let all board members place items on the agenda, the three of us will resume attendance at board meetings."

UNQUOTE

I think the only thing we can really conclude from this article is that there were serious conflicts going on, and there probably had been for some time.

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**Jolie2**, (3/9/2009 4:09:50 PM)

612, I'm embarrassed. I thought I wasn't able to pull up the October 9 audit engagement letter, but apparently I had and didn't know it, so I had two windows open, one for each letter, and used the October 9 letter to compare with the audit details, instead of the earlier one. I just tested out and proved my theory. No wonder the details matched on both the letter and the audit! :)

I'm so thankful I asked you to double check my results and you were able to catch it.

I'll respond a little later to all the information you posted.

Thanks,

Jolie

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**Jolie2**, (3/9/2009 4:26:35 PM)

The e-mail you are inquiring about is one of two that I have been looking for and posted comments repeatedly here asking if anyone had a source or knew the contents. 'Teacher' wrote that he/she would try to find his/her copies and post them. The other e-mail from Sisney to district employees was sent in April and apparently also contained negative comments about the Board.

I do remember reading a response from Mr. Stover that the problem was that the agenda items were not submitted early enough to be included in the official agenda. Even though it is not written policy, he said it was the practice of the Board to have all agenda item requests turned in no later than Tuesday before the Monday's board meeting so that all board members would have an opportunity to prepare themselves for what would be discussed. I believe it was Maryanne Flippo who responded that the deadline for submission was intended for members of the public, not the board.

I'll see if I can find that article and copy and paste the actual comments.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/9/2009 4:27:23 PM)

I opened them both from the website too, but couldn't switch between them like you normally can in Windows. I had to do a save-as before I could look at them both side by side. Glad you're able to see them both now.

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**Jolie2**, (3/9/2009 4:34:22 PM)

From a Tulsa World article dated August 19, 2008, titled "No-shows cancel BA Meeting"

QUOTE

Stover said "established practice" calls for items to be submitted five days before a meeting agenda is set. The board members did not meet that deadline, he said.

"If I deviate from my rules, then I am putting the district in jeopardy," he said.

Although the policy does not call for board members to give advance notice on items, they typically have done so without any problems, Stover said. Teachers and school contractors also follow the five-day policy, he added.

Flippo said in her statement that the policy applied only to members of the general public, not elected officials.

END QUOTE

So the question is, where the other board members (not Stover or Supt. Sisney) able to get agenda items approved if they did meet the deadline, or had they been stonewalled in having their items added to the agenda.

After the rally, the board changed its policy for putting items on the agenda. I'll read up on that next.

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**Jolie2**, (3/9/2009 4:36:42 PM)

Please excuse my typos as I go along. :)

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**Jolie2**, (3/9/2009 4:41:21 PM)

TW article "BA board agenda flap resolved" dated August 26, 2008 reads:

(this is a large portion of the text, but not the entire article)

QUOTE

Board members Maryanne Flippo and Shari Wilkins said the board had no previous policy regarding how members could add agenda items, but they said board President Terry Stover and Superintendent Jim Sisney used the board's public participation policy as a guide for board members' submissions.

According to that policy, members of the public must submit items they would like added to the agenda at least five working days before the scheduled meeting, and the superintendent and board president will consider putting the items on the agenda.

Flippo said the public participation policy should not apply to elected school board members.

"Five days is not the issue," she said, adding that the old practice "gives the superintendent veto power."

She said that as an elected official, she needs to be able to add items without approval from Sisney or Stover.

"Whether you like it or not, we have a clear policy," she said. "If we find there is something we can't manage, we can go back and address that."

The board also voted 3-2 in favor of a directive requiring that all board meetings be videotaped and broadcast uncut; that board reports consist only of agenda items and the vote on those items; and that Sisney refrain from using school resources such as district e-mail and telephones to give out any opinions or information regarding the school board, its members and his relationship with the board.

Flippo made the original motion with more restrictions, but after about 90 minutes of discussion and revisions, the directive was passed.

Some board members said they thought a districtwide e-mail Sisney had sent was disrespectful and attacking.

Flippo said she didn't think it was appropriate that e-mails were sent about board members' behavior and that their actions should be discussed only during meetings.

Board member Stephanie Updike took issue with the motion, especially the part dealing with communication between the superintendent and school employees.

"That seems extremely difficult and unwieldy. This is really broad and a little frightening," Updike said, adding that the directive could lead to a slippery slope. "My concern is unintended consequences," she said.

Flippo said that if it does lead to unintended consequences, it could be revised because it is a directive and not a policy.

An item regarding a new policy that would govern the scheduling and conduct of all board meetings was tabled.

"I don't understand why we are working at the speed of light," Updike said, adding that she would like more time to review the policy. "Steamrolled — that's how I feel about this. That's how I feel about this meeting, to be honest."

END QUOTE

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**Jolie2**, (3/9/2009 4:49:15 PM)

The only reason I can think of Dr. Sisney wanting to include the unused sick pay issue in the audit is he was looking for any and all ways to throw mud at his opposition and hope it sticks. I agree that it made no sense to have that item included in the audit. If he had a problem with the legality of the issue and wanted to pursue it further than just discontinuing the practice, he should have addressed it when he canceled the practice back in 2004.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/9/2009 4:50:56 PM)

Mr. Stover's use of the words "deadline" and "rules" strengthens the impression that the items should not be included. But if it's just an "established practice" - a guideline - then he had no business enforcing it, especially over strong objections.

Ms. Flippo continues to gain in credibility, in my mind.

I can understand Ms. Updike's concern about restrictions on emailing, but under the circumstances, I believe something needed to be done to address the problem of broadcasting negative things about board members via email.

I don't think the board members were the only ones working "at the speed of light". They had to act fast to counter some of the negative things they saw happening.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/9/2009 4:53:23 PM)

Yep, that's what I got out of Dr. Sisney including the unused sick pay. Totally for show.

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**2112**, (3/9/2009 4:53:30 PM)

Jolie,

thanks for putting the quotes up there. At first I thought it was tiresome to read. But, it actually put items back in perspective (who wants control). Very interesting

to read, knowing what we knew then compared to what we know now.

A 90 minute discussion over that stupid directive, unbelievable. What a waste of time.

First of all, they didn't bring a copy for other board members or the public. then they had to go over word by word. Uggh, it was so painful to listen and watch. and then it still only passed 3-2, accomplished absolutely zilch.>>>

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**Jolie2**, (3/9/2009 4:58:04 PM)

Comment re. board meeting minutes and videotaping. I wonder why Mrs. Flippo was in favor of videotaping and broadcasting the board meetings in their entirety but unwilling to have minutes with details of discussions at the meeting included in the minutes. That seems contradictory to me. If this is a public meeting, not executive sessions, why cannot the minutes be in-depth? It is more likely that most people would be using the minutes than watching board meeting videotapes to review what happened at the meeting, particularly for meetings that were not recent. As long as the board approved the final, official version of each meeting's minutes, I don't see what the problem is.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/9/2009 5:03:12 PM)

Apparently she thought the reporting was inaccurate and inappropriately edited. It makes sense to me that, instead of having someone write a summary in their own words, which could be intentionally or unintentionally biased, she would want just the bare facts reported (the votes) and any other substance to be available unedited.

I guess if the reports could be transcribed in their entirety, that probably would have been ok too.

From the Ledger article:

QUOTE

Approved by a 5-0 vote after considerable discussion and a number of rewrites was a directive authored by Maryanne Flippo that reads,"I move that all board meetings be videotaped and shown unedited on BATV. I further move that board reports will consist only of agenda items and the vote on the agenda items."

The action came after what Flippo called "inaccurate" and inappropriate editorializing by the district on board decisions.

UNQUOTE

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**2112**, (3/9/2009 5:03:16 PM)

Jolie,

I can't speak for her, but after the meeting where Dr. Ritze and Dr. Sisney spoke at during the public comment section about Mann. Those "minutes" made it to the I think to the board website fast. and I don't think they liked that. Since there have been more public comments it "appears" they don't want the public comments to be in depth about what they discussed. She even said at a meeting that she thinks public comments should be "Mr/Mrs. ----- spoke" and leave it at that.

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**2112**, (3/9/2009 5:06:58 PM)

It wasn't inaccurate. Show me where.

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**2112**, (3/9/2009 5:08:34 PM)

Jolie,

Per your post, I agree. Why? It is contradictory, if it is on tape then why not be descriptive in minutes???? I don't get it either.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/9/2009 5:10:17 PM)

Sorry, 2112, I am not saying that I thought it was inaccurate. My understanding is that Ms. Flipppo thought it was inaccurate, and that is what I communicated.

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**2112**, (3/9/2009 5:10:39 PM)

Also, why are meeting minutes such a big deal to be approved. It took two months to approve some recently, why?? Even held a special meeting to address meeting minutes only. Why????

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**2112**, (3/9/2009 5:11:38 PM)

my bad. didn't realize that was a quote at first.

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**Jolie2**, (3/9/2009 5:12:34 PM)

2112, the sentence "The action came after what Flipppo called "inaccurate" and inappropriate editorializing by the district on board decision." is part of the Ledger article that 612 quoted. I think only Mrs. Flipppo would be able to answer your question. :)

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**Jolie2**, (3/9/2009 5:20:51 PM)

2112, not to completely contradict myself, but just as news articles can be slanted by what is included and what is omitted and the words chosen to describe actions and comments, I'm sure that it is just as easy to show bias in reporting minutes of a meeting. I do think explanations of discussions held to decide on a matter should be briefly summarized and reported matter-of-factly, without including opinions of the meeting's events. Given the level of conflict and heated atmosphere at board meetings beginning late summer and early fall, I can understand the reluctance somewhat to trust in the administrations's judgement as what to include and what not to include, considering the e-mails that the Superintendent felt necessary to share with the employees of the entire district criticizing the actions of the board members.

In those circumstances, what could be done to ascertain impartiality in the reporting of more than the bare bones of the meetings? (This is NOT a rhetorical question; I'd like to know if there is a workable solution.)

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/9/2009 5:21:11 PM)

As long as a live person is translating verbal communication into written notes, there is potential for misinterpretation. I believe that Ms. Flipppo recognized how controversial the environment was, and was trying to find a way to minimize the damage that could be done (to any party) by intentional or unintentional mischaracterization of what anyone said or did.

It may not be the best way, and it's certainly less convenient to see what was said at a meeting. Maybe a better solution can be proposed. Possibly like what is done in court, where the reporter transcribes every word.

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**Jolie2**, (3/9/2009 5:23:05 PM)

Perhaps as 612 suggested, a complete transcript of the meeting could be made available as back-up to a summary page which outlines actual motions and votes. That would be lengthy and time consuming but it would be one way to ensure accurate reporting.

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**Jolie2**, (3/9/2009 5:27:37 PM)

Because of our activity posting on this article, it has moved up to the #5 spot on most commented article in the last 7 days. :)

Because of that, we may get some other Tulsa World readers who view the list of most commented stories joining us to find out how this article manages to crawl up the list of popularity.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/9/2009 5:47:09 PM)

I hope some of them have some answers for us!

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/10/2009 7:23:14 AM)

Posted on Ledger "Gerber contract extended through June 30, 2010"

-----

Did Mr. Stover and Ms. Updike oppose the extension, or did they oppose the provision that Dr. Gerber not apply for the position past June 30, 2010? It's not very clear.

The article makes it sound like Dr. Gerber is the one who wanted the end date of June 30, 2010.

If they opposed the extension itself, is it because they expect to have a superintendent sooner, and they didn't want to be locked in with someone that long? Superintendent jobs probably typically start in the summer, so it may be that they knew it was either this summer (not enough time to find someone and transition) or next year.

I would be interested in the reasoning behind the opposing votes.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/10/2009 11:16:42 AM)

Posted on Ledger "Gerber contract extended through June 30, 2010"

-----

Not knowing the constraints on superintendent-hiring, it's hard to make a call as to whether the extension was needed or not.

The article states that at least some of the board members were concerned about the short timeframe left to find a new super. How likely is it that a new super can be hired this summer? If one can be hired, would Dr. Gerber be available for a transition period, if his contract had not been extended? Since he has offered to stick around for another 6 months after June 2010 for a transition, it seems likely that he would.

If a super is not hired this summer, do we have to wait all the way until next summer?

If it's unlikely that a new super can be hired this summer, and if we would indeed have to wait until next summer, it may have been safest to extend the contract, to make sure BA is not without a superintendent at all.

The 3-2 vote still raises questions. A cynical view might suggest that Dr. Stover and Ms. Updike might have agreed with the need for the extension, but voted no to distance themselves from looking like they were supporting Dr. Gerber, knowing it was going to pass without their votes. I hope things are not that political, but the other three board members have been accused of worse.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/10/2009 11:18:07 AM)

Mr. Stover, that is, not Dr. Stover.

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**Jolie2**, (3/10/2009 11:27:00 AM)

I posted to to the BA Ledger article on Gerber's contract extension at 11:28 am 3/10/09

QUOTE

I don't know what everyone is afraid of. State officials (OSBI) are currently investigating the district. IF and when there is criminal wrongdoing found, then they will charge the person or persons responsible. If it turns out Dr. Gerber is involved in wrongdoing, he will be removed from his position then. Until then, get a grip, folks, and let's stop fussing and get on with the more important business of ensuring the needs of our educational system are met. This AA matter is just a very small part of the big picture. There are more important things to address while the investigators attend to their work. The OSBI spokesperson stated it could take several months to complete their work, which means it could be completed before the new school year starts.

MOST people do not want this controversy to continue on and on, and having Dr. Gerber at the helm while the investigation continues does make some people unhappy and uncertain. To those people, I say look at the bright side. At least you can be sure that he will not be the permanently hired superintendent.

Why would Dr. Gerber choose to stay in this position for another year, unless he thought it was in the best interests of the school system and community? Do you think he enjoys being targeted for criticism and ridicule by some of the citizens he is working for? The police and OSBI likely already have removed all district documents pertinent to the investigation. What do some of you naysayers think Dr. Gerber is going to change at this point "to cover his tracks" allegedly?

I wish some of the adults in this community could act more like grownups than is evidenced by the comments on this issue. Be patient. The answers will be given to us soon enough by authorities who have access to more information than any of us have and the knowledge and experience to interpret it.

If it turns out there is no criminal wrongdoing proven by Dr. Gerber or the three board members, I hope those who have been loudest to defame and condemn them will be the first to step up and offer sincere apologies for the pain and distress inflicted on them over this last half year (and more to come, I'm sure, unfortunately).

I agree with Dr. Gerber's reasoning in avoiding a rush into choosing the next superintendent and then regretting it later, and using his experience and familiarity with the district to accomplish important goals for our school district in the meantime.

END QUOTE

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/10/2009 1:06:46 PM)

Jolie, there is an article about this on the Tulsa World. I posted my same comment (11:16), typo and all (oops).

Do you want to move to the new article or stay with all our previous posts on this one?

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/10/2009 1:47:21 PM)

Wow, our comments made it. The the Ledger even corrected my typo!

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**Jolie2**, (3/10/2009 1:59:52 PM)

Hi, 612

My preference is to stay here for a while longer, at least, and leave the other story free for current posts on the subject of Dr. Gerber's contract extension. This article has bumped up to #4 in the Most Commented List, btw.

You're welcome to put a little reference/invitation to this article for those people wanting to discuss the subject more in depth or to read previous posts covering the subject.

Truly, the best thing that could happen for BA and the district would for this story to fall off the pages of the papers and disappear from news broadcasts, and for the public to lose interest, until the time the OSBI investigation is completed and the results are announced. The continuing controversy in the media does us no favors.

It would be nice if the Ledger was discontinuing its practice of censoring comments (other than correcting typos, of course. :) )

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**Jolie2**, (3/11/2009 11:51:42 AM)

I'm tempted to respond to some of the comments on the Ledger's most recent article, but even if the Ledger went ahead and published them, it probably wouldn't make a difference to the persons who are so dead set against the Board and Dr. Gerber, so for now, I'm staying quiet (for now) on responding to comments directed to my attention.

I can't believe that Stephanie Updike pulled items off the agenda for such a petty reason, because the board didn't see them before they were published for the public to review, even though she had no problem with the items themselves. It seems like an obstructionist, divisive move to me. She could have just as easily said this was a problem for her and please do it differently next time, but to go ahead with the agenda as is this time. I'm sick of the nonsense from supposedly adult people.

I saw your invitation on the other, more recent TW article. I don't think you'll get much response, as here doesn't seem to be too much interest in that news article, but it's worth a shot. Perhaps we can just publish a reference on each and every article on the TW, as it comes out, that there is plenty of reading material on this subject in the comments section.

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**BA Taxpayer, Parent, Alumni**, Broken Arrow (3/11/2009 12:40:52 PM)

Jolie,

To answer your question as to why Mrs. Updike would have items pulled off the agenda because the board had not got the agenda before the public is simple. We need to follow the policies set forth by the Board if we do not then we have chaos. That is why our district is suffering now for people not following policies set forth

by the board and we are reaping those policies that have been broken by certain individuals in the administration building.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/11/2009 12:55:16 PM)

I think there will be some people who will hang on to their initial beliefs no matter what new information comes out. If the next audit says there was no intentional wrongdoing, will everyone believe it? How many audits is enough?

Some of the points are worth responding to, but not the ones that just reiterate the same old "Sisney was railroaded" battlecry.

But even if the people who wrote them don't listen, others do. I believe your posts have made a lot of people think.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/11/2009 1:18:22 PM)

Ok, I couldn't let one go. Someone suggested that when Gerber requested the vendor documents, he was given only copies because they didn't trust him with the originals. That's just too ridiculous.

Posted on "Gerber contract extended through June 30, 2010"

beentheredonethat, it's policy to keep all of the original documents in their official files. Making copies of the documents Dr. Gerber requested doesn't have anything to do with his reputation.

If he is as bad as you say, there should be plenty of real evidence against him, that will be uncovered as the OSBI investigation continues.

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**2112**, (3/11/2009 5:12:43 PM)

Jolie,

I politely disagree, it wasn't petty. Those are policies that were put in place last year. If you don't follow them then where do they decide if it was "ok" or "not". Just another slippery slope. Maybe she just saved the district more embarrassment so we can't blog on how they violated policies again.

As for pulling the one item off the agenda for lack of description, go to the Sept 15 minutes and look at item 43. Hmm, looks like someone did the same thing to her at one time, with Mann's advice. I just find it interesting how Mann said it was legal agenda item at one meeting and it's not at another meeting. Very confusing.

Also, look at how many times others have voted to remove Updikes agenda items. It all has to be fair. and it wasn't just Updike that removed them last nite, others voted as well.

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**Jolie2**, (3/11/2009 8:41:21 PM)

Not knowing the full story for reasons behind the choices of why the Board members do what they do, it is difficult to understand which arguments have merit. There is likely to be conflict among Board members until this OSBI investigation is resolved and they/we know the results.

I tried to read up on the Board policies, but the electronic school board doesn't have them up. I suppose they could be in the process of being updated from recent changes made this year, but likely they've gone MIA, like the minutes of the meeting have, for whatever reason.

What was Dr. Gerber's explanation for the removal of the minutes of the meeting from the electronic school board? The Ledger had an article about it some time

ago, but it's archived.

612, do you have access to that article? It's titled "Interim superintendent pulls electronic school board from use" and begins : "... BROKEN ARROW - Dr. Gary Gerber says September ESB discrepancy discovered. Full Story"

BA Taxpayer and 2112 - thank you for the information in your posts.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/12/2009 1:11:13 AM)

I remember the article about pulling the electronic school board, but it's gone from the Ledger. The date of the article is October 17, which is during the "blackout" period of August 25 through November 13.

I was curious to see if there were any Ledger articles on anything during that timeframe, so I searched for "tigers". It was football season, after all. There were no documents found between 9/1/2008 and 10/31/2008.

When I searched for "a" to see if any documents came up at all, many documents were found...but none of them in English. I don't know what this means.

Sample below - does that look like Latin to you?

Etiam et urna et massa interdum auctor. Pellentesque vel enim a felis tempus sodales. Nunc elit eros, fringilla id, pretium eget, faucibus hendrerit, enim. Nulla facilisi. Cras eu libero. Praesent molestie iaculis mi. Aliquam eu sem. Duis ullamcorper...

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

**Jolie2**, (3/12/2009 7:25:03 AM)

That's very odd. Could you elaborate on what you mean about the "blackout" period? I don't remember you mentioning this phrase before, so I want to be sure I understand what you are referring to.

That phrase sure does look like Latin. I tried an online translator from Latin to English but only about a fifth of the words translated.

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**Jolie2**, (3/12/2009 7:41:53 AM)

I was hoping to find a copy of that October 16 article on the electronic school board as a Google cached page but so far no success in finding a link to one on any search item pulled up with the title.

It seems suspicious that a chunk of articles on this subject are no longer available from the Ledger, particularly since they've been exhibiting signs of bias and censorship on this story.

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**Jolie2**, (3/12/2009 8:05:38 AM)

I wonder why Teacher has not returned yet.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/12/2009 10:29:38 AM)

I noticed when I was copying the articles from the Ledger's archives that there was a chunk missing, between the dates of August 25 through November 13 (I noted this in a post on 3/9/2009 12:13:39 PM).

At the time, I was only looking for articles about this topic. But last night it occurred to me that it might be all articles that are missing for that date range, and that appears to be the case. Except for the Latin ones :)

It could be a technical reason – the storage device that held these articles may be offline or something. But any search that finds these articles seems to link to the Ledger site – I assume they can't keep a copy because of copyrights – and the articles are not found.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/12/2009 10:58:34 AM)

I'm disappointed too that we haven't heard more from Teacher. I suspect foul play.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/12/2009 10:59:18 AM)

Not really, but I've always wanted to say that.

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**Jolie2**, (3/12/2009 11:38:59 AM)

You're pretty funny, 612. :)

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**Jolie2**, (3/12/2009 11:58:11 AM)

I found this post today on the Ledger very interesting:

QUOTE

interested citizen wrote on Mar 12, 2009 9:44 AM:

" To the person who failed to give a screen name telling me not to post because I don't know what I am talking about: I'll give you that Dr. Sisney INITIATED contact with the city and landowners out east. I DO know the process was stopped dead in its tracks (stiffled it) until he got the contract he demanded and he did NOT get it. That started a year ago this month. Since he did not complete the process, he really can't be credited for its eventual success. New schools out east are ESSENTIAL!

NOW, readers have the rest of the story regarding the process of getting a bond issue to the voters....(more unrelated information of a personal nature to another poster finished this post).

END QUOTE

That would be a piece of information I'd like verified. If it's true that Dr. Sisney initiated but was not willing to move forward in handling this important issue for the district until his own personal employment contract was extended, it would lend credence to Maryanne Flippo's assertion that Dr. Sisney threatened the board last July that unless he received something related to his employment, he would make a big stink for the district. It would also demonstrate (depending on the timing of the alleged stalling the process for building of new schools out east) that Dr. Sisney may have had knowledge that his contract might not be renewed before last summer's July/August executive board meeting to discuss the matter, which could point to the possibility of Dr. Sisney looking for a weak area to exploit as leverage to get his contract extended.

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**Jolie2**, (3/12/2009 12:05:23 PM)

Submitted to the Ledger 3/12/08 12:07 re. Dr. Gerber's contract extension:

QUOTE

to "interested citizen"

Could you elaborate on your 9:44 AM post? You said that "That started a year ago this month." Are you referring to Dr. Sisney's stopping the process a year ago or his beginning the process of initiating contact with the city and land owners? If the first is true, that would mean that Dr. Sisney may have had knowledge that there were problems with getting his contract renewed BEFORE the AA vendor contract issue investigation began. And if that is true, isn't it possible that Dr. Sisney was looking for some weak area in the school administration to exploit and use as leverage in getting his employment contract extended? Food for thought.

Please let me know the answer to my question and if there is any way that your information can be verified from an independent source.

Thanks!

END QUOTE

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/12/2009 12:53:43 PM)

Hmm, it didn't occur to me that Interested Citizen could have been referring to Dr. Sisney's employment contract; I assumed it was a contract with the city/landowners that he was trying to get. Hopefully Interested Citizen can clarify.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/12/2009 1:53:25 PM)

Posted on "Gerber contract extended through June 30, 2010"

-----  
Interested Citizen,

I believe Dr. Sisney's management style is a key issue in this controversy.

From what I have heard firsthand from a Bartlesville teacher who worked for Dr. Sisney, I can see how Dr. Sisney's management style can be as damaging as you described.

As you mentioned, there have been comments that minimize the negative nature of Dr. Sisney's interaction with staff. I have seen it characterized as "just doing his job", or "not being touchy-feely enough". One post characterized Dr. Sisney's actions as simply reprimands from a superior, about attitude, performance, productivity, etc, and said that employees should be able to take constructive criticism.

I have seen comments that mention tactics of intimidation, threats, and humiliation. I don't believe anyone would consider these legitimate, constructive, or accepted methods of managing staff. It's more likely that the people who accuse teachers of being crybabies just don't believe that Dr. Sisney did any of these things. I don't believe anyone on the outside would necessarily know if he did.

If he really did engage in this behavior, do you have any examples? Do you know if anything was documented about any incidents? Was he given any reprimands

or warnings? What kinds of actions on his part resulted in people hiring attorneys to protect themselves? What was threatened – loss of job? Of course, I know there may be information that can't be made public. And of course, unless there is public documentation, nothing can be verified as fact. But anything you can add to help us understand what the environment was like would be helpful.

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**Jolie2**, (3/12/2009 2:22:27 PM)

You'd like to think that people directly affected by Dr. Sisney's alleged poor management style would come forward anonymously and post their experiences online. It cannot be judged as libel if what you post is true, correct? However, because it involves someone's employment history, would a person who is not the employer still be required laws related to confidentiality?

Perhaps it is the worry about repercussions outside of the legal system that keeps them silent.

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**Jolie2**, (3/12/2009 2:24:57 PM)

correction to second last sentence:

However, because it involves someone's employment history, would a person who is not the employer still be required TO FOLLOW the laws related to EMPLOYMENT confidentiality.

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**Jolie2**, (3/12/2009 2:44:29 PM)

I posted another question to 'interested citizen' asking him to clarify what type of contract he was referring to. Your interpretation is very likely the one he meant. I just have the non-renewal of Dr. Sisney's employment contract in the forefront of my mind as an important point in this story. Couple that with the alleged threats he has made to persons in the workplace, and I thought it could be possible. However, what it could illustrate is how difficult Dr. Sisney finds it to cooperate with others and keep working to find an equitable, satisfactory solution. Instead, the picture of Dr. Sisney that has been developing by many posters' comments is of a man who wants to have his own way and is not diplomatic or fair to others while attempting to accomplish his goals.

'Interesting Citizen's' posts certainly make interesting reading.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/12/2009 2:50:33 PM)

Teacher (I feel like a little kid saying that) said they're still scared of Sisney supporters that are still at BAPS. Maybe they're worried that they could be identified if they gave any specifics, and they just can't risk it. It's frustrating though. The person I talked with from Bartlesville was very clear about Dr. Sisney. She is a very upbeat, encouraging, positive person - not someone who looks for opportunities to criticize or gossip.

Every time I see a post that puts down the teachers as whiners, it really disgusts me. Do these people think workplace harrassment doesn't exist? Or are they convinced that Dr. Sisney couldn't have done these things? What makes them think they know?

I don't know all of the teachers in BA, but all of my kids' teachers have been more than accommodating when my kids needed special help, and have put in extra time and effort. It's obvious that their goal is the success of the kids, and I hate to see anyone make these ridiculous and self-righteous assumptions about them.

I don't know the question about employment confidentiality. I don't even know why it's confidential anyway, since he was a public employee. I think we have a right to know if he was engaging in destructive behavior, costing us money, damaging our district, and driving off teachers and staff. Maybe we don't have a right to see the exact contents of his personnel file, but I think we are owed an official statement. We wouldn't even have seen the termination letter if he hadn't released it.

Maybe we should file a lawsuit...

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**thenight1**, (3/12/2009 3:34:37 PM)

The teachers I know were talkative when this first hit but got very quiet after a couple of weeks. Why would they be afraid of Sisney supporters? He obviously is not coming back. I'd be more afraid of Gerber supporters since he is the one in charge.

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**Jolie2**, (3/12/2009 5:18:49 PM)

In case the Ledger doesn't publish my response (Submitted 3/12/09 5:18 pm) to "Jim" who criticized my posting "too much" about Dr. Gerber, I'm copying it here. Maybe Jim's been over here to visit and will return and will be able to read this.

First, here's Jim's post

QUOTE

Jim wrote on Mar 12, 2009 2:04 PM:

" Jolie do you ever work or have a life? All I ever see if you posting on something about Gerber this and Gerber that. Go and help out at a school or something instead of bird dogging the internet to see when you can put your next post. "

END QUOTE

and here's my response:

QUOTE

Hey, Jim

In case you haven't noticed, this is a comments section on an article about Dr. Gerber. Surprise, surprise! People are writing comments about Dr. Gerber on it (and also about Dr. Sisney), and not just me, so why are you singling me out from the group?

I manage to get plenty of other things done in my life in addition to posting on this issue, including supporting and helping out at my daughter's school. I don't understand why my posting on the subject bothers you enough that you feel the need to ask me to stop (unless your last name is Sisney ;) ). How about minding your own affairs and I'll worry about mine. Thanks.

Jolie

END QUOTE

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**612, Broken Arrow** (3/12/2009 5:35:51 PM)

I'm feeling a little left out. I guess Jim doesn't care if I have a life.

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**Jolie2**, (3/12/2009 5:38:49 PM)

:D :D

Thank you for lightening up the mood. :)

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/12/2009 5:56:21 PM)

Well, it is Spring Break...practically! :)

Good reply to Jim. It's exasperating when the comments start to be more about the commenters than about the story!

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**Jolie2**, (3/12/2009 10:11:22 PM)

Our frequent posting on this article has boosted it up to the #2 spot on Most Commented list.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/12/2009 10:51:50 PM)

Oops, posted a response on the Ledger to an incredibly insulting (to teachers) post by "been there done that" and forgot to copy it first. If it shows up I'll post it here.

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**Jolie2**, (3/13/2009 7:20:10 AM)

My comment submitted to the Ledger at 7:18 am ON 3/13/09

QUOTE

To School Employee

I have never mentioned this issue to any of the teachers or staff at the school, as I don't think it is appropriate to discuss it there and I wouldn't want to put anyone in a difficult, uncomfortable position by asking questions, etc. Contrary to your opinion, I am a responsible, respectful person.

I write opinions and comments on a forum intended for that purpose. Why do so many people have a problem with that?

to "Community Organizer" I read everyone's comments. You didn't specifically ask me a question in your four-point post, but even if you did, I am not a public servant required to answer the public's questions.

As you can see by this thread, there are plenty of people who have comments for me and yet I am criticized for posting too much on the subject. Kind of a Catch-22 position, isn't it?

We're all entitled to our opinions. I've stated mine. I've listened to your perspective and will keep your points in mind. I have never pretended to be an authority, just one individual among many who have questions and points of view on this subject.

END QUOTE

I really don't know why I keep getting targeted, other than some people really don't like it when someone has an opposing point of view to their own. Frankly, it's

tedious. I'd like to participate like anyone else and have the focus stay on the subject matter.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/13/2009 7:46:16 AM)

Jolie, I don't know why you are targeted more than others either. I do think people get more riled when the opposing view is presented coherently and objectively. It's harder to dismiss the author as a nut case when the sentences are complete, the spelling is correct, and no one is being called a moron in screaming capital letters.

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**Jolie2**, (3/13/2009 7:58:10 AM)

If that's the case, 612, you should be getting a larger share of the 'fan mail'. :)

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/13/2009 8:07:04 AM)

That is kind of you. :) I try not to let my inner nut case near the keyboard too often.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/13/2009 8:08:21 AM)

The Ledger posted our comments. Here is the one I forgot to cut and paster earlier.

612 wrote on Mar 12, 2009 10:47 PM:

" Ok, does anybody disagree with Been there done that's claim: "the whiners won this round"?

Can we honestly characterize teachers as the personality type who needs security in their job, and can easily get disturbed by a normal, ordinary request for improvement? That doesn't sound like any of the teachers I know.

Is it just me that thinks this is an incredibly condescending attitude? 'Cause I feel like apologizing to all the teachers on behalf of Been There Done That. "

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**Jolie2**, (3/13/2009 11:29:12 AM)

612 - 'interested citizen' got back to me with an answer as to what type of contract--it was Dr. Sisney's employment contract!

My response to 'interested citizen' submitted to the Ledger at 11:30 am 3/13/09

QUOTE

To 'interested citizen'

Thank you for your answer.

If your information is true, Dr. Sisney Is a dishonorable man, to stop working on behalf of the district's interests to build new schools until he got what he wanted for his own personal career--an extension on his employment contract. He was already operating under a paid contract with the district and was obligated to be doing the job he was hired to do at the best of his ability. There is no acceptable excuse for operating in this manner.

The District needs to find a way to expose this man's alleged inappropriate actions as a Superintendent in a legal, official way, I think. His alleged behavior is

unconscionable. I think almost all BA citizens would be appalled by this type of behavior, if it can be proven. The information needs to come from official sources and reliable witnesses willing to step forward and be identified, for people to believe the truth of it, though.

Jolie

END QUOTE

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**Jolie2**, (3/13/2009 12:16:25 PM)

612 - 'interested citizen' responded at length to you. I'm going to copy and paste it here, because in a few weeks, the article at the Ledger with its comments will be archived, and no longer accessible without paying a fee.

QUOTE

interested citizen wrote on Mar 13, 2009 9:30 AM:

" To 612: Since the receipts of his unprofessional behavior told me directly. I would never quote their words in a public forum. That is up to them. Dr. Sisney and Mr. Lare file lawsuits like crazy and never answer to anyone, so it is wise not to comment publically on a blog. That works for them and against everyone else and they enjoy the power of it that way. Yes, receipts documented it. Loss of job for the person and a spouse was often threatened. Public humiliation shut down anyone that offered input other than his even if it was of valuable to the learner. False rumors against any perceived threat were spread around and repeated as fact. That happened when he needed to shut up and or shut down someone. Yes, several of them hired an attorney following his tirades (screaming and yelling like a child having a tantrum) along with the above mentioned for self-protection. His behavior was documented by those around him when he went off and with witnesses. I cannot speak to whether the BOE members gave him any warnings because, of course, that is a personnel issue between them and the superintendent. I can tell you that more and more people have been telling me that following his firing, they finally felt free enough to share their troublesome experiences with BOE members and peers. Many kept quiet before because of fear of reprisals. I do know that people DID step up to the plate, willingly, to testify against him in court ,if necessary. I know of more than six people that offered because they told me. Seemingly, he did not want us to know anything about HIS actions for termination or the testimony of any additional witnesses unknown to him before an appeal. That would be too much of a risk. He couldn't shut down and or control public discourse like he did in the district. So, he chose the wimp's way out. Let the public know nothing about himself and his actions; just keep throwing out those accusations against others until something sticks has been his strategy. So far, it has worked but there is always a day of reckoning. We reap what we sow. I'd hate to reap what he has sown! WHEW! That is going to be quite a large negative harvest since he has sown so many, many bad seeds in so, so many people! "

END QUOTE

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/13/2009 12:53:14 PM)

Wow - the employment contract! Whoa. That's huge.

Response to Interested Citizen and Been There Done That, who appears to be backpedaling on his previous post:

-----

Thank you, Interested Citizen. I know you can't give specifics, but I was interested in exactly what you provided - the types of threats and tactics, and whether any

of it was documented. Since anything we say here is clearly not proof, I hope no one will make the assumption that you were providing it as such. It's just a discussion, people.

Been there done that, I will leave it to readers to take what they want from your post. I believe it goes way beyond "saying there are different personality types", but if that is what you are now saying you meant, so be it. I appreciate the kind words about teachers.

You know nothing about me and can not possibly know whether I have spent any time in teachers' lounges, so your "obviously..." assumption really doesn't do you any favors as far as credibility.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/13/2009 1:05:24 PM)

Interested Citizen said that Sisney didn't get the employment contract he wanted. That could be different from not getting the contract period.

I wonder if there was something he wanted in the contract that the board could not agree to let him have, and that's the real reason the contract wasn't renewed? Maybe Sisney wouldn't agree to a contract without this special stipulation.

That would mean that - instead of the board deciding to get rid of him - HE QUIT.

That would be big news, if it ever came out.

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**Jolie2**, (3/13/2009 1:15:56 PM)

Looks like the Ledger chose not to publish my most recent response to 'interested citizen' re. Sisney's behavior with regard to his employment contract and stopping the process for building new schools. Bob Lewis is probably afraid someone might take me up on my suggestion and step forward and take action that could spell considerable trouble for his friend Dr.Sisney.

I really would like to see a group of the six persons who were willing to go to court before, come forward together, for strength and to reinforce each others' efforts, and make their cases known to the public. It's understandable that they don't because of the possible blowback from Sisney in retaliation, but it might give some people in the community a chance to rethink what's been going on for more than half a year here and realize they may have been giving too much credibility to the wrong person.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/13/2009 1:33:02 PM)

We need to know the truth about Dr. Sisney. People are basing their opinions about the board, Dr. Gerber, and many others on the assumption that Dr. Sisney was an innocent victim. If what Interested Citizen said is true, he has done an enormous amount of damage to our school system, community, and teachers and staff. What he has done dwarfs the AA "scandal" he tried to invent. The truth needs to come out.

Since they didn't post your comment, I thought I'd try suggesting your idea too. We'll see if it makes it.

Posted on Ledger "Gerber contract extended through June 30, 2010"

-----

I wonder if some of the people who were harassed, threatened, or terminated by Dr. Sisney would be willing to file a lawsuit together. The community needs to know the other side of the story.

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**Jolie2**, (3/13/2009 1:35:15 PM)

You're right about it being big news if Dr. Sisney's demand for something in his contract was the reason it was not renewed. Maryanne Flippo made mention, too, that Dr. Sisney had made a demand related to his employment and then threatened the board, through her, with a PR nightmare if it were not granted. I wonder if it was a salary or bonus amount or some other condition?

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/13/2009 1:35:16 PM)

Ha, terminated. That's pretty harsh. I meant had their employment terminated.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/13/2009 1:41:03 PM)

It could be monetary, but since his salary is public information, it seems less likely to me that there would be contention there.

I wonder if it was something more along the lines of granting him some authority, or preventing anyone from releasing certain information. It sounds like it was pretty important to him.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/13/2009 1:53:28 PM)

One reason I'm not convinced by the Sisney supporters is that they don't seem to see that it's possible that the same guy who allegedly charmed some and threatened and intimidated others could also have charmed or threatened and intimidated the other two board members. They still point to the 3-2 vote and assume that the 2 must be right. That is illogical. I have pointed this out but they don't see the flaw in their reasoning.

It just occurred to me that the real reason Sisney is still raising a stink after all this time is probably to continue to intimidate anyone who is thinking about coming forward. I have wondered about what he has to gain at this point, since he can't be thinking he could be rehired. Revenge in itself doesn't seem like enough of an incentive to keep going, and I don't think he's enough of a loon to be doing it just for the attention.

I bet there's a real coverup, and it's not the board that's doing the covering.

If there were a lawsuit, there might be a lot of records opened to the court, including his personnel records.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/13/2009 3:25:09 PM)

One more thing to consider. If, as your friend suggested, Sisney is staying on the offensive to avoid being put on the defensive, he will have to maintain this position for a long time yet.

There is a real possibility that Maryanne Flippo will be the one to come forward, once she is no longer serving on the school board. After what Sisney has already unleashed on her, she may not have much to lose. I don't think he holds any leverage in terms of spreading rumors or defaming her character any more. She, on the other hand, knows all Sisney's secrets.

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**Jolie2**, (3/13/2009 10:22:30 PM)

Your analysis has a lot of merit, 612. I appreciate the time you've put in thinking things through and then posting about it.

I think that anyone who has suffered through an ordeal because of unfair treatment by a difficult, possibly malicious and vindictive, personality, would be reluctant to become involved in an action that would connect them to and involve them with that person again, even if there could be a positive gain, financially or morally, from it. It can suck the emotional life out of a person having to deal with someone like that.

Personally, I think if a group of persons negatively affected by Dr. Sisney's alleged unfair and inappropriate treatment of them on the job were to get together and pursue something published through the media, rather than a court of law, they could accomplish the goal of informing the public of specific examples of Dr. Sisney's behavior and serving some 'justice' to Dr. Sisney at the same time. Perhaps find a reputable journalist at the Tulsa World (not the Ledger) who could write an article with their detailed testimonies and identified by full names. They'd have to be secure with evidence and witnesses to these events to back up their claims, in the event that Dr. Sisney would attempt another defamation lawsuit. If they are telling the truth, however, it is likely that Dr. Sisney would be reluctant to have this go to trial and get even more negative publicity. Before anyone follows this suggestion, however, please, please be sure to consult with a reputable attorney to be sure that whatever course of action is taken, it is legal and permissible, so that no further harm comes to them.

That would apply to any possible actions that Maryanne Flippo might take once she completes her service on the Board, as well. She personally may feel she has nothing to lose, but if she breaks confidentiality laws related to knowledge she's gained through her official capacity, she could possibly lose in a court of law. She's no stranger to asking for legal advice lately, so I assume she would not proceed with any action to reveal information without knowing the possible legal consequences of doing so beforehand.

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**Jolie2**, (3/14/2009 9:34:16 AM)

612, I wonder if when 'interested citizen' responded to me with "the latter" s/he was responding to my first post, which asked, "Could you elaborate on your 9:44 AM post? You said that "That started a year ago this month." Are you referring to Dr. Sisney's stopping the process a year ago or his beginning the process of initiating contact with the city and land owners?"

I may have mistakenly assumed it was the second question I posed in another post s/he was answering: "Could you clarify for me if the contract your referred to was a contract for purchase with the land owners and City of BA or was it Dr. Sisney's employment contract renewal."

I think I'll try to get a more specific reply, to avoid a misunderstanding that makes a great deal of difference.

Submitted to the Ledger on 3/14/09 at 9:35 am

QUOTE

to "interested citizen"

I want to be sure that I understand your earlier response to me of "the latter." Since I asked two different questions of you in two separate posts, I'm not sure which one you were replying to. Could you be more specific in your answers to me and address both of my questions, if you don't mind. Thank you for your help.

Jolie

END QUOTE

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**exbateacher**, Broken Arrow (3/14/2009 11:24:13 AM)

I highly doubt that anyone effected by the wrath of Dr. Sisney would be willing to file a lawsuit or to be specific in this forum for fear of being included in some kind of defamation lawsuit in the future. Not because they necessarily fear him now, but because of the cost involved in defending themselves in such a suit even if what they say is found to be true. However, I can tell you of incidences that happened across the district with principals, teachers, community members that were

on the receiving end of his tantrums. Teachers who spoke out by asking questions about procedures, were told that if they spoke out again would be terminated, statements to principals were made in principal's meetings by Sisney that it wasn't our job to be concerned with students' health and welfare that it was to educate only and to test, test, test. As we all know students whose basic needs are not met cannot learn. Principals were threatened if they did not reprimand teachers who tried to reason with upper administration in meetings that were called by Sisney to voice their concerns and when they did, teachers were reprimanded by their principals. Sisney's primary tactic though was to place people in jobs that they were not qualified to do in order for them to become frustrated enough to quit, or make enough mistakes to fire them as unqualified for their position. For example, Dr. Gerber, who headed the special education department for many years was placed as the head of building and maintenance where he had no experience. After Dr. Gerber left Sisney made the head of food service oversight of the same department Dr. Gerber had vacated. And, I'm sure there were others that I cannot think of at this time. In addition, he was very verbal that teachers of this district were not capable of teaching and needed HIS almighty training. The truth of the matter is that when no child left behind was put into place all districts across the state and nation found themselves floundering with the criterias. Broken Arrow teachers would have risen to the top, as we always have with or without Dr. Sisney and his cronies. Take for instance Indian Springs Elementary who always led the district in test scores prior to and during Dr. Sisney's reign.

Now, as for the poster that commented about special ed. scores and Mrs. Lunn. When Mrs. Lunn was removed from her position, she was given a position that was far beneath her abilities. The truth is that she led that department and was leading that department in progression of test scores, but wasn't given the time and tools to accomplish that. So, Dr. Sisney tried to remove her, but to no avail. She fought and won to remain employed by the district and was replaced as the head of special ed with a friend of Dr. Sisney's and Dr. Beagles', who had no experience or qualification to head that department. That was evident within days of her taking it over. As the days continued when she couldn't handle the responsibility, Carol Grubin was hired to essentially tell her what to do and how to run the department.

There are many other incidences that could be cited. However, time and space don't allow me to elaborate further. I will say this that BA teachers are the best at what they do. We would have done well whether or not Dr. Sisney was in charge, because we have always stepped up to the plate. Dr. Sisney did not do this, BA teachers did!

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**Jolie2**, (3/14/2009 11:50:29 AM)

Thank you, exbateacher, for sharing this information. As frustrating as this controversy is for the average citizen in BA, it must be doubly so for those employed by the District who have direct knowledge of Dr. Sisney's tactics and behavior, not to have that side of the story exposed. It doesn't seem right that one man can control the story and protect himself at the expense of so many others.

Once the OSBI investigation is completed, and if there is no criminal wrongdoing found on the part of the district administration and board of education, I hope that people will find a way to make Dr. Sisney's history at BAPS very public, perhaps with the aid of an accomplished local journalist willing to interview people and write an in-depth piece about the man and his effect upon the community he was hired to serve.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/14/2009 12:26:28 PM)

Exbateacher, thanks for your input. I don't think all the things we have heard about Dr. Sisney's treatment of others can be easily dismissed. It is frustrating to me to hear people pooh-pooh them on the basis that "well, people tend to complain". Especially teacher types, according to one poster!

How can they think that they can know for sure that these things didn't happen? And do they really think the school board would have fired Dr. Sisney without documentation of incidents to back up the allegations in the termination letter?

The people who deny that Dr. Sisney could have acted this way seem to see teachers and staff as weak, thin-skinned, and whiny. This does not describe any of the teachers my kids have had, from elementary school through high school. I have been so thankful to be in Broken Arrow, where the teachers challenge the

kids, don't accept excuses, and yet are willing to do whatever it takes for each individual kid to succeed. I know parents aren't always easy to deal with, but my kids' teachers have always been so accessible and accommodating. I don't believe for a second that their professionalism is due to Dr. Sisney's policies. I'm just sorry that so many have been put through this, and that even one teacher was lost because of it.

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**Jolie2**, (3/14/2009 12:50:40 PM)

Submitted to the Ledger on 3/14/09 at 12:52 pm

#### QUOTE

to "interested citizen"

Don't be discouraged by the bullies here who can't handle anything that challenges their own point of view or puts their guy in a bad light. These very same posters have no problem believing the worst about other members of our community, however, and denigrating them in their comments here, I'm sure.

I can assure you that there are many of us here who appreciate your taking the time to share your knowledge and experiences with us.

For those of you who say Dr. Sisney is gone, I say he put the wheels in motion for this entire controversy. A completed OSBI investigation will tell us if there is an accuracy to his claims of fraud and corruption related to the HVAC contract work. However, in the meantime, we are dealing with the effects of Dr. Sisney's actions, and therefore, his actions and behavior while Superintendent of our district's schools are an integral part of this story. They may prove to be an explanation of his motivations for making allegations, filing a defamation suit, and using the media to run a campaign to try and publicly destroy reputations.

Jolie

#### END QUOTE

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/14/2009 12:56:33 PM)

Hey, my thoughts exactly. I forgot to copy my post; it said something like I appreciated hearing Interested Citizen's so-called "whining", and hoped people wouldn't be discouraged from participating in this discussion by antagonistic criticism. I wanted to make the point about Sisney not being gone, too, but hadn't come up with any good words...thanks for handling it so succinctly!

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/14/2009 1:18:39 PM)

It won't make any difference, but...posted on Ledger:

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When Sisney reports problems he's heralded as a "whistleblower", but when others report problems they're scorned as "crybabies"?

No one can be sure at this point if the claims against Sisney are true. Labeling his accusers "crybabies" shows prejudice.

If you are one of the people who is unwilling to acknowledge a fact that we all know (that you can't know for sure that Sisney didn't do these things) how are we supposed to take anything you say seriously?

Sisney is not gone. We are dealing with his legacy now, and the truth needs to be known.

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**exbateacher**, Broken Arrow (3/14/2009 1:27:46 PM)

Thank you Jolie. It is because of Sisney that many wonderful teachers and administrators chose to leave the BA district, although most did not give that as a reason for leaving, it was their primary source of reasoning. No one should have to endure threatening, intimidation, or childish tantrums in the work place. I am just sorry that it took so long for the board to recognize his incompetence in dealing with people.

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**612**, Broken Arrow (3/14/2009 1:31:10 PM)

Exbateacher, do you know why it took the board so long to recognize the problems?

Many people point to the 3-2 vote on Sisney's termination and say, see, he can't be that bad or it would have been unanimous. There can be many reasons the two voted not to terminate; do you know what their reasoning might have been?

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**concerned educator**, (3/14/2009 1:41:21 PM)

Here is the full text of the email sent to all BA staff that irritated the BOE.

I want to begin by expressing disappointment that you our valued employees are in large part caught in the middle of issues that have nothing to do with your roles and the education of children. I am ashamed and embarrassed that issues that could have been solved last spring have grown to this magnitude. I have tried to be mature and not talk about the issues publicly so that I would not add to the dissension in the district. I am anxious for the other sides of these issues to become transparent.

The height of this embarrassment for me occurred when three members of our Board did not show up for Monday night's (Aug. 18) Regular Meeting of the Broken Arrow Board of Education. One of the key items on the agenda that could not be addressed (because of a lack of quorum) was negotiations, impasse, and teachers pay raises. How is not having a meeting beneficial to this process? I believe these three items are three of the eight items they claimed the Board President and I would not add to the agenda. Negotiations, impasse, and teachers pay raises were on the agenda as part of executive session for a board meeting that three members chose not to attend.

They have hired new counsel at taxpayer expense to help them re-write various board policies even though they don't follow the current policies, and it should be pointed out that many of the district's current policies were written by the new counsel (Rosenstein, Fist & Ringold) when that firm was the district's old counsel prior to 2005 (including Board Policy 15.1). In 2000, Broken Arrow Public Schools paid Rosenstein, Fist and Ringold \$104, 861 dollars. That was the first year that I worked for the district. This past year, our legal fees with the Center for Education Law were \$8,501.18.1 stopped using Doug Mann and that firm because the district was not getting the service we needed and the cost was too high.

One of the issues that the three board members, who purposefully missed a regularly scheduled Board Meeting, continue to point to and intimate about is the district's fund balance or carryover.

Here are the facts: On April 25, 2008 (see below email), our district's then Chief Financial Officer Trish Williams, who is now CFO for Tulsa Public Schools, reported that our Fund Balance from 2007-2008 going into the 2008-2009 school year would be 7.2% or \$6,624,654.93.

Sisney, Jim

From: Williams, Irish

Sent: Friday, April 25, 2008 11 :08 AM

To: Martin, Brenda

Cc: Sisney, Jim; Piested, Joy C

Subject: RE: Fund Balance

Brenda - See below for fund balance projections for the General, Building, and Child Nutrition funds as of 6.30.2008. This assumes that state aid will be paid in full by the end of the year.

Beginning Fund Balance 7/1/07 Plus: Projected Revenue

6/30

Less: Projected Encumbrances as of 6/30 Less: Transfer to Arbitrage Fund 2.2008

Plus: 06-07 Lapsed Appropriations Estimated Fund Balance 6/30/08

Increase/(Decrease)

General Fund Building Fund Child Nutritio

7,984,000.70 785,060.21 1,308,354.36

91,439,092.07 (592,600,000.00) (8211,468.01) 2,669,401.00 (82,700,000.00) SO.OO 6,90' (86,730,000. SO.OO

13,030.17 134,236.76 115,337.06

6,624,654,93 888,697.97 1.601,595.44

(1,359,345.77)

7.2%

6/30/08 Fund Balance as % of Projected Revenue

/

Those are the numbers that reflected in our budget discussions and planning for the new fiscal year. The 2007-2008 fund balance provided by our new CFO Ann Wade and confirmed by our district auditor is \$5,925,936.29 which represents a decrease of \$2,058,064.41 from 2006-2007. Our Fund Balance is not 7.2% for the 2008-2009 school year as reported in the above email but instead is 6.48% a difference of \$698,718.64. Unfortunately, that difference has vast implications on the current salary negotiations because another board policy is that the fund balance not drop below 5%. The Board of Education was notified last April that I had concerns about the fund balance percentage.

Board Policy 15.1 whic

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**concerned educator**, (3/14/2009 1:42:39 PM)

part 2:

Those are the numbers that reflected in our budget discussions and planning for the new fiscal year. The 2007-2008 fund balance provided by our new CFO Ann Wade and confirmed by our district auditor is \$5,925,936.29 which represents a decrease of \$2,058,064.41 from 2006-2007. Our Fund Balance is not 7.2% for the 2008-2009 school year as reported in the above email but instead is 6.48% a difference of \$698,718.64. Unfortunately, that difference has vast implications on the current salary negotiations because another board policy is that the fund balance not drop below 5%. The Board of Education was notified last April that I had concerns about the fund balance percentage.

Board Policy 15.1 which governs how items are placed on the agenda was first adopted in 1984 and last edited under Rosenstein's legal eye by this school district in 1998 and has been followed by the school district and school board with no previous board member issues that I am aware of including during the three Board of Education presidencies of Mrs. Whelpley and two Board of Education presidencies of Mrs. Flippo. Board agendas are set on the Monday before a board meeting with the ESC staff. The items that are placed on the agenda come from their offices and reflect the issues going on at your buildings and the district. Very few items have ever been placed on a board agenda by the superintendent since I have been in Broken Arrow. And, this is true in all school districts.

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**concerned educator**, (3/14/2009 1:43:32 PM)

part 3:

I know that some of you think I am great and some of you think I am terrible. That is the nature of being Superintendent of a school district the size of Broken Arrow Public Schools, and I accept that. I also join you in accepting the responsibility of educating 16,000 students on a daily basis. Educating those students must be our focus no matter what political upheaval is being created by those who have somehow forgotten what our focus must be.

I am stunned that three elected officials would not follow through on their promises to the voters of this district to carry out the business of this school district by participating in the very office they were elected to-Board of Education member.

Again, I am sorry to you who do your jobs so well are to a certain extent caught up in this matter either indirectly as you attempt to answer co-workers' and parents' questions or directly as you wonder about negotiations and pay raises. Unless you have been a teacher or a site administrator, no one knows how much conversation goes on in the lounge and in the hallways and how destructive it is to have to figure out what is going on behind closed doors. With this "junk" going on, it is difficult to focus on education issues. To that point, look for facts to be unfolded over time that will shed significant light on the real issues. I don't believe the three board members who purposefully did not attend a regularly scheduled Board Meeting, intended for their behavior to cause these issues of concern, and I know that I am certainly losing sleep as I try to deal with their issues with me and the district while doing my best to keep our employees out of harm's way in an effort to effectively meet the needs and expectations of our students and staff.

If you have any questions about these issues, please contact me. Thank you for your great work for this school district. Sincerely, Jim

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**Jolie2**, (3/14/2009 3:10:21 PM)

Thank you, concerned educator.

One thing that strikes me about Jim Sisney, is that for a supposedly educated man, he does not communicate very intelligently. When I watched his press conference comments and as I read what he wrote in the e-mail, I feel confident that a great many of the teachers who worked for Dr. Sisney would have been much more capable of composing an articulate, persuasive message. Dr. Sisney's message seems to be very self-serving, unprofessional, and not truly concerned with the welfare of the teachers.

Isn't it telling that he would include the words, "I know that some of you think I am great and some of you think I am terrible." Isn't that a suitable subtitle the public's reaction to this current controversy?

Thank you so much for taking the time to find this e-mail and sharing it with us here.

I have read in a news article that there was another one sent by Dr. Sisney in April that also related to the Board. Do you remember reading it?