

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/14/2009 4:07:45 PM)

Thank you very much for posting the email from Dr. Sisney.

I read it several times, trying to get its meaning from different perspectives; from perspective of a concerned superintendent who was dismayed by the seemingly irresponsible actions of board members, and who was trying to address concerns, fears, and rumors among his staff; and from the perspective of a superintendent who knew pieces of information could be coming to light soon that could be potentially damaging to him, and who was trying to set the stage to guide his staff's perception of the events to his benefit.

There are several sentences in the letter that conflict, in my mind, with the "benevolent leader" perspective.

"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..." - this is a contradiction. Trying to excuse their bad behavior by saying it wasn't intentional while pointing out that it was intentional doesn't make sense. I believe the BA debate team could pull this off better, without the contradiction being detected.

"...look for facts to be unfolded over time that will shed significant light on the real issues..."

- this looks more like a distraction than a reassuring, supportive, or informational statement. It gives the impression of setting the stage for an orchestrated series of events.

"...doing my best to keep our employees out of harm's way..." - this letter specifically draws employees into the controversy while attempting to present itself as keeping them out of it.

Bringing up negotiations and pay issues looks like an attempt to generate staff outrage at the board's actions, by pointing out how it can personally negatively affect them.

A letter that was written to address concerns would not encourage employees to take sides. To me this looks like a attempt to intercept people's perceptions and steer them in a direction that draws their attention away from the superintendent and toward the 3 school board members.

Even if Dr. Sisney was sincere in writing this letter, and he had truly tried to be accommodating and reasonable but the board members insisted on behaving irresponsibly, it is still out of line for him to disparage them in writing to all Broken Arrow staff.

In my opinion, this letter is not designed to provide honest and constructive information to staff; it's designed to fan the flames.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/14/2009 6:26:13 PM)

Exactly right, 612. That's my perception of the e-mail, as well, that Dr. Sisney was laying the ground for his public campaign against the board members. The intent of this e-mail appears to be similar to his whispering into Bob Lewis's ear to write an op-ed piece for the Ledger about the problems with the board's review of Dr. Sisney's contract, also published in August.

Do you think anyone trying to reassure their staff would comment on the sleepless nights they were having as a result of dealing with the board? This was more

suitable for him to share with a confidante, not the entire employed staff of the BAPS district. If his supporters on the Ledger read this e-mail, would they call him a 'crybaby' for his whining, self-pity displayed in a professional business communication? Or do they just reserve those criticisms for the teachers?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/14/2009 7:42:31 PM)

I just visited the baparentsvsbaboe website. They have a new addition at the top of the page. A photo of Maryanne Flippo with the following written in bright yellow letters over the image:

"TILL FLIPPO IS GONE!!!" followed by a countdown timer for the days, hours, minutes, and seconds remaining to her service on the board.

Is that tacky or what?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/14/2009 10:25:34 PM)

That kind of thing makes them look so juvenile. How can they expect anyone to take their point of view seriously?

And WE'RE the ones "trashing people".

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Stratolifter, (3/15/2009 6:01:58 PM)

B.A. - Bass Ackwards.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/15/2009 9:57:02 PM)

Posted on Ledger "Gerber contract extended through June 30, 2010"

The poll on the Ledger does indeed show that the turmoil continues. But I hope no one considers the result a true indicator of public opinion. Even if there is a mechanism to prevent an IP address from registering a vote more than once, it's still very subjective. It only measures the responses of online readers, and within that group, only those who choose to vote. It's more a measure of where Ledger readers' emotions are highest than what the majority of BA citizens really believe.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/16/2009 10:29:07 AM)

612, I think you should post a response on the Ledger analyzing Sisney's e-mail, just as you did here. Some people are not looking closely enough, I think. Your post is well thought out, and may highlight some points that others might overlook otherwise.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/16/2009 10:38:14 AM)

I saw the reactions on the Ledger. I think that if you're being manipulated successfully, it's hard to see that you're being manipulated.

Some people are probably not convinceable, but there may be others who are willing to think about it in more depth. I'll post my analysis - thanks for the encouragement.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/16/2009 10:43:09 AM)

Posted on Ledger 3/16 10:40 AM

[analysis of Sisney email posted on this article 3/14/2009 4:07:45 PM]

I will probably get some fan mail. Can't wait :)

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

2112, (3/16/2009 10:48:36 AM)

Did you guys see the correction notice on the ledger webpage. Says that the insurance company is paying for the lawsuits and Mann has not represented the district for any of Sisney's stuff.

Which I think should raise even more questions about the atty fees. At least the earlier statements somewhat supported that much money. What do you think? It also doesn't quote anybody on that article either.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/16/2009 10:56:12 AM)

I would think Mann would have billed the school district for the fees regardless of who was going to end up paying them.

My impression was that the dollare amount that was reported was the amount billed by Mann's company. That needs to be clarified now.

So the question is - is the dollar amount that was reported the amount that Mann BILLED, or is the the amount that the district has to pay, with the insurance amount already deducted from it?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/16/2009 10:56:43 AM)

"Dollare" - that's French you know.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/16/2009 10:59:01 AM)

612, I still want you to write a post on the Ledger, but I hope you don't mind, I went ahead and put my own two cents in (and used one of your points brought up in it, but please, include it again in your post).

Submitted on 3/16/09 at 11 am

QUOTE

It's obvious to me that Dr. Sisney's primary purpose for writing the e-mail was to deflect criticism from himself, gain support from district employees, while setting up opposition toward the board. I can certainly understand why the Board members were unhappy with this communication.

He pretends to be sympathetic and wanting to comfort the teachers and staff, while doing the exact opposite--attempting to stir up anxieties about their pay negotiations and adopting a phony posture of 'protecting' them from the Board's actions.

I believe Dr. Sisney intended this to be preview of things to come--his version, of course, before he unveiled his allegations of misconduct through filing his defamation lawsuit and manipulating the public's opinion through the media.

I find his e-mail to be inflammatory, disrespectful, self-serving, and, most of all, unprofessional. (Talking about sleepless nights to your 1,600 employees? How

about hiring a therapist, if you don't have a friend to confide that piece of information to?)

Chris Tharp, I'm not surprised that you didn't see any problems with his e-mail. After all, you're the same man who thought it was acceptable to recently put a photo of Maryanne Flippo at the top of the home page on your baparentsvsbaboe website, with bold yellow letters stating "TILL FLIPPO IS GONE" above a countdown timer for the days, hours, minutes, and seconds left for her service on the school board. (How very mature of you.) You're the same person who at the beginning of publicity of this controversy, rushed to create a website that set up divisiveness by calling it Broken Arrow Parents VERSUS the Broken Arrow Board of Education. It's natural then, that you would see nothing wrong with Dr. Sisney's approach in his e-mail and his perceived campaign to destroy the reputations of individuals within our community.

Jolie

END QUOTE

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/16/2009 11:05:19 AM)

612, thanks for going ahead and posting your comment on the Ledger. I'm glad that you managed to get yours in before I posted mine. (I didn't read your comment here until afterward.)

btw, Chris Tharp is a man, right (I hope I didn't get that wrong...)

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/16/2009 11:21:00 AM)

Here is the Ledger's article from today, in full:

QUOTE

CORRECTION

Published:

Monday, March 16, 2009 7:57 AM CDT

An article in the March 4 Ledger said attorney Doug Mann is representing three members of the board of education in a lawsuit filed by former superintendent Dr. Jim Sisney. That statement is incorrect. The three BOE members are being represented by Phyllis Walta, an attorney who is being paid through a district insurance policy.

The article also said Mann was defending the district in Sisney's lawsuit. The school district is not a party to that action.

END QUOTE

I suspect that the bulk of the legal fees from Doug Mann's firm must then be related to suspending and terminating Dr. Sisney's employment and preparing for a possible due process hearing and possible litigation filed by Dr. Sisney.

The court record does show that Phyllis Walta was/is the three board members legal representative, although Maryanne Flippo's and Shari Wilkins's names are not even listed under the attorney representation portion at the top of the page (but Sharon Whelpley's is--right next to Phyllis Walta's). The last entry on the record, dated January 12, 2009, lists "Phyllis (no last name included)" as the attorney for all three defendants.

I assume that Doug Mann and his firm could not represent the three BOE members because of a conflict of interest, as Mr. Mann was also one of the defendants, but more importantly, the insurance company must have had to use its own attorney for the case if they were paying the bill.

I had read Ms. Walta's name before but I never "saw" it and put two and two together. Why has this point not been noticed before now? Has the board deliberately allowed the misconception to continue, while people were demanding a breakdown of fees of the legal bills?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/16/2009 11:50:25 AM)

My assumption was that Chris Tharp is a man. I can't think of what gave me that impression, though, so I'm not sure.

Ok, so Mann's fees don't include ANY of the legal representation for Sisney's defamation case. It makes sense of course that Mann couldn't represent the board members when he was himself a defendant.

From the "BA Legal Fees Soar" article:

QUOTE

Interim Superintendent Dr. Gary Gerber said there are two reasons why these expenses are higher than was budgeted. The first, he said, "is a significant amount of time required by our legal counsel" to defend the district and three members of the board of education against a lawsuit filed by former Superintendent Dr. Jim Sisney and a taxpayers' demand initiated by a group of 10 citizens.

Second, Gerber pointed to what he called an expanded role assumed by attorney Doug Mann when he was hired by the school board just before Sisney's termination.

UNQUOTE

There are a few possible explanations for Gerber including the defense of the board members on Sisney's lawsuit:

- 1) The legal fees reported in this article (BA Legal Fees Soar) do not specify who billed them. The total given was for all legal expenses, and could include other attorneys besides just Mann's firm;
- 2) Phyllis Walta is the defense attorney on Dr. Sisney's case, but that does not mean Mr. Mann and his firm did not do any work (research, documentation, advice) relating to the case;
- 3) Gerber mentions the taxpayer demand also. I don't think Phyllis Walta is involved in this; as far as we know, all of the legal counsel for this was provided by Mr. Mann.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

2112, (3/16/2009 11:51:25 AM)

Jolie,

Your last question/sentence in that post is exactly right on.

That little correction article does raise a few more questions, doesn't it. I will say to me a few things are not adding up. How many postings have we read where a lot of us were justifying the legal expenses to one issue(Sisney) and now with one little article/correction it is totally upside down on justification? you are right, the board may be wise to release detailed legal bills to temper this issue or this circle will just start again on this legal cost issue.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/16/2009 12:00:50 PM)

I think the board has allowed a lot of misconceptions to continue. I'm not sure why. Of course, confidentiality is a big part of it. In a few instances, Dr. Gerber issued press releases to address concerns that have been raised(though not everyone knows where to look for them and they typically do not get linked to from the Ledger).

The few times the board has tried to explain, they've been criticized for "protesting too much". They may be reluctant to provide explanations, because they seem to just add to the conflict.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/16/2009 12:02:29 PM)

Jolie, I've been thinking about the point you raised about Maryanne Flippo possibly being bound by confidentiality requirements if she tried to take some action against Dr. Sisney after she is off the school board. It does seem likely to me that she would be bound by confidentiality requirements if she filed for something like defamation of character or emotional suffering. But what if she knows of a specific crime Sisney committed while she was on the board? I can't help thinking it's well within her rights as a citizen to take action. In fact, I think it would be wrong not to.

The threat Ms. Flippo described - a PR nightmare for the board and for her personally if Sisney did not get what he wanted in his contract - fits the definition of blackmail: extortion of money or something else of value from a person by the threat of exposing a criminal act or discreditable information. Blackmail is a felony.

A valid question would be – why did the board not file a complaint at the time, or any time since? Possible reasons could be 1) avoiding additional legal fees; 2) avoiding further disruption and embarrassment for the district; 3) avoiding further damage to Dr. Sisney's reputation. There are probably some legal reasons that I don't know anything about. Of course, it's possible that the board hasn't filed a complaint because the Ms. Flippo made it up. Or, maybe the board has filed a complaint (somewhere besides the Tulsa court system) and we just don't know about it.

There is still the question of the still-pending defamation lawsuit that Sisney filed. It just makes me think that maybe some things are waiting for the right time.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/16/2009 12:13:53 PM)

Another possible explanation for Dr. Gerber including the defense of the 3 board members in Dr. Sisney's defamation lawsuit. This is really mostly what I had in mind when I wrote #1.

We don't know if Phyllis Walta's fees were billed directly to the insurance company. They could have been billed to the district, with the insurance company then reimbursing the district. If that is the case, they would be included in the total for the legal fees for the fiscal year - and would make sense in Gerber's statement.

I don't know if there is a requirement for an insurance company to use their own attorney, and have those fees billed directly to them - does anybody know how this usually works?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/16/2009 12:35:35 PM)

...and two last explanations that I shouldn't leave off -

1) Dr. Gerber doesn't know what he is talking about;

2) Dr. Gerber is trying to gloss over the total that he knows is too high, and is mentioning the lawsuit filed by Dr. Sisney to make people blame Dr. Sisney.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/16/2009 12:48:00 PM)

Very even-handed of you, 612. :)

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/16/2009 1:20:46 PM)

Thank you :)

btw, I have an answer for you on whether you can vote more than once on a Ledger poll.

After you vote, the page comes back with your vote still in the radio button you chose. If you click the "Vote" button again, it just acts as if you clicked the "View Results" link; it doesn't register any additional votes.

If you refresh the page, the buttons no longer show up, so you can't vote again.

But if you delete your baledger cookie and open the baledger website in another browser window, the radio buttons come back, and if you vote again, the vote will be registered.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/16/2009 1:31:36 PM)

I voted three times in my testing, but it's ok - I picked each option once.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/16/2009 2:52:15 PM)

I am watching the Ledger for a response to our comments on Sisney's email from Been There Done That. I notice similarities in the persuasion tactics in his posts to the the tactics used by Sisney in his email.

These tactics include taking a flawed premise as fact and building on it, appealing to "reasonableness", appearing to praise while discrediting, minimizing others' claims, mischaracterizing statements by others in order to make them look unreasonable, using inapposite analogies, and distracting with questionable assertions.

Useful tactics if your goal is to sway others to your way of thinking and discourage them from considering alternate viewpoints.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/16/2009 3:56:04 PM)

Just read your new, improved comments published at the Ledger--well done. I think your calm reasoning will likely leave readers open to considering your points. I think my strongly worded opinion will be the one to get the hate mail. :O

I'm glad that we can remain anonymous while posting online, but am curious to know who some of the posters are and how they connect to the story. Do you think that 'Been There Done That' could be one of the key players, maybe even Dr. Sisney?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/16/2009 3:58:17 PM)

Oh, and thanks for testing the Ledger's polling mechanisms. If it's not that easy to re-vote, then it's less likely that someone would resort to doing so, for such a small pay-off.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/16/2009 4:43:05 PM)

Actually, I cheated and just copied my earlier post. Looking at it now, I wish I had taken 2 seconds to fix a couple of typos. I hope our posts will get at least a few people to take more than a surface look at the email.

Been There Done That strikes me as someone who knows that there were issues with Dr. Sisney but is trying to perpetuate the impression that anything we hear is just typical employee griping. Setting the picture in readers' minds of teachers and staff gossiping and whining like hens in the teacher's lounge helps make this scenario appear more reasonable. Of course employees complain sometimes. But his argument seems to suggest that that in itself proves that Dr. Sisney didn't do anything wrong. Pretty weak when you think about it, but I think some people probably went along with it. I don't get the impression that Been There Done That really believes it.

His posts are manipulative and persuasive, which leads me to doubt his motives. When I read the email, I noticed the similarities in tactics. For now, I'm not going to dismiss the possibility that it could be Dr. Sisney. On the other hand, it could give Been There Done That a good laugh if he reads this post (and isn't Dr. Sisney).

I agree, it's unlikely anyone would go through the trouble of re-voting on the Ledger site. But as we know, the people who feel the strongest are going to be more likely to vote, and the ones who realize that there is not enough information to make a decision probably won't. And the anti-board people will read the results any way they want to.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/16/2009 4:53:46 PM)

Posted on Ledger:

Chris, it's not necessary for there to be a lie or incorrect information in an email in order for it to be divisive and detrimental.

I know Jolie's posts are much more interesting than mine, but I did take the time to point out some of the statements in the email that appear to be manipulating people's perceptions of the events.

It may be difficult to see through the persuasive tactics if you have already been manipulated into believing this point of view as fact.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/16/2009 7:32:26 PM)

You wrote a nice new introduction to your existing post--that counts.

I wasn't sure if Mr. Tharp's last sentence to me was truthful or sarcasm, but I'll think I'll take it at face value. I've submitted an apology to him on the Ledger about assuming that he ran the baparentsvsbaboe website.

For what it's worth, I wish I could write as clearly as you do and have as much insight.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/17/2009 12:01:35 AM)

Thank you, Jolie, that means a lot coming from you, because I have been amazed at what you have noticed that I have missed, and impressed with how clearly you articulate the questions we should all be considering. It was your posts in the beginning of all this that made me question the story we were being fed. I think you have made a difference to a lot of people.

I agree with taking Mr. Tharp at his word. I think he really does value your input, and not just as entertainment. I get the sense that he is genuine, even though at the moment he seems unwilling to consider that there may be another side to this. He may reconsider yet.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/17/2009 8:24:48 AM)

Response to my fan mail regarding Sisney's email. Apparently I have a biased filter.

Posted on Ledger:

Hey, it's ok with me if you don't agree with my assessment of Sisney's email. That's the way I see it. Frequently people do get their point across disguised as something else.

I am not ashamed, and neither should anyone else be to share their thoughts here in a civil manner.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/17/2009 10:35:07 AM)

Here's my response to the same poster, submitted to the Ledger on 3/17/09 at 10:35 am

QUOTE

to the one who ended his/her post with "You should be ashamed"

I'll bet you took former President George W. Bush's words at face value, too, when he said the reason(s) we went to war with Iraq was first 1) Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction, and then when WMD weren't found, 2) to free the Iraqi people from the oppressive dictator Saddam Hussein, meanwhile while in actuality he was putting our country in billions of dollars of debt while certain people and companies made enormous war profits. Our government's actions by invading Iraq (illegally in a pre-emptive war) actually served as a recruiting tool for terrorist action and participation, instead of reducing or eliminating it. Some of us saw through Bush's messages when he and the media were beating the drums to get us into a war with Iraq and knew he wanted us in that war, no matter what, and had been planning it for some time.

612 was able to look at the way the message was phrased and what was included and what was omitted to understand the likely intentions of the writer. Many people are able to go beyond simple interpretations of taking words at face value to understand deeper meanings to messages. This is not rocket science but it does require critical thinking skills. Police detectives do this type of analysis all the time when investigating crimes.

As for calling Dr. Sisney to ask him what he meant by his e-mail, it would require a level of trust in the person in order to believe his answers. This is a person who was unwilling to communicate directly with some of the members of the Board of Education, who he was responsible for reporting to, and instead resorted to

communicating with them through his attorney, by August of last summer. This is a man who chose to file a defamation lawsuit and make allegations through the media instead of reporting any evidence he had to the proper authorities with oversight over the district. This is a man who said he was wrongfully terminated but declined a due process hearing to contest his employment termination, and so far, has not followed through on his threat to file a wrongful termination suit. (One poster here has repeatedly said that by not requesting a due process hearing, he will be unable to file a lawsuit. It would be good to have verification of this as fact, though.)

It is important to observe a person's actions, in addition to his words, to take a measure of his intentions and truthfulness.

Jolie

END QUOTE

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/17/2009 11:30:01 AM)

submitted to the Ledger on 3/17/09 at 11:30 am

QUOTE

If I were superintendent writing a letter to with the intention of reassuring district employees, my message would have actually been reassuring and maintained a professional attitude, not attempting to persuade the employees to choose sides in the issue. Here is a quick, simple example to show you the difference between being helpful to the employees (my version) and trying to build a case against the board (Sisney's version). Notice the difference in message and tone?

"Dear District Employees,

Recent events reported in the media regarding problems between myself, Mr. Terry Stover, and the Board of Education may have some of your wondering about the details of what is happening. Let me reassure you that I am doing everything I can to help resolve the difficult issues at hand and come to an agreeable solution for all parties involved. I regret that the issues of teacher contract negotiations and pay raises could not be addressed at the regularly scheduled board meeting of August __, but they will be addressed at a special board meeting scheduled for August __.

It is important that all of us stay focused on what is important: continuing to provide an excellent educational environment for the children in our district. You are crucial to their success, and I thank you for all that you do each day to helping them achieve academically and become prepared for their future.

If you have any questions about this or any other concerns, remember that I am available to answer them and to listen. Please call me at ____ or schedule an appointment with my assistant ____ at ____.

Sincerely,

Superintendent Jolie"

Of course, if I wanted to add in more information about the details of the conflict and facts of explanation, I would try to avoid emotional descriptions of my reactions to them. For example, I would have certainly not included the following messages from Dr. Sisney's e-mail:

"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." [my note: obviously, he gave up the struggle to behave maturely and with discretion and was now willing to work to inflame the employees' opinions against the board]

"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." [my note: what the heck was that included for ??]

"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." [my note: their actions are 'political' but his are not? Note that his shortcomings in dealing with the board are not addressed.]

"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." [my note: again, implying what others should think about what has happened by sharing his own emotional reaction to it]

"...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." [my note: as 612 pointed out--exactly how were the employees threatened with being in harm's way? and again, as I mentioned before, why add in something personal about losing sleep over the conflict, unless it is to cause anxiety in the employees and try to gain sympathy for his own point of view]

Perhaps someone else would like to have a go at composing a more professional, unbiased e-mail than Dr. Sisney's to show folks how it'

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/17/2009 12:10:16 PM)

Your version is much more believable. It doesn't try to hint at information that can't be shared, but does let employees know that an issue that is important to them is still being addressed. There is no point in throwing out these hints unless you are trying to stir up speculation and steer people's thinking.

After the mountain of assumptions people have made about the board members' actions and motives, I think it's pretty ridiculous to cry foul when someone questions Sisney's motives.

I think it would be funny to write a letter that spells out exactly what Sisney was actually saying, like: "...doing my best to keep our employees misinformed well in advance, in case any actual information comes out and threatens to obscure my version of events with facts..."

Too bad that "life" thing takes up so much of my time...

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/17/2009 12:27:28 PM)

Oh, 612, I hope you manage to find the time to write that satirical letter; that would be so funny and wonderful (from my biased viewpoint ;)

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/17/2009 12:42:21 PM)

I'll try to find time. Things are a little easier with all the school and outside-of-school activities off for the break. I'm so disgusted by the letter. I'll have to work at the convoluted run-on sentences.

The more that comes out about Sisney and his actions through the summer and fall, the more desperate his actions look to me. If he really did blackmail Ms.

Flippo, he knows there could be serious repercussions. Not only could he find it difficult to find a new position, but he could actually be at risk of being convicted of a felony. To me, that fear explains his actions better than any other explanation that's come up.

I think he is probably especially aware of the danger to him because he knows there is documentation that can show that this threat is part of an ongoing pattern - which makes Ms. Flippo more believable to a judge and jury, and increases the likelihood of a guilty verdict. If he really did threaten her, and he really did run the district with tactics of intimidation, he has a lot to worry about.

If, on the other hand, what we have heard are just exaggerated stories from teachers and staff who couldn't handle being corrected, and a big lie from a board member who was trying to cover up her part in corruption (I still wonder what she did with the money she made off the AA deal), I think Dr. Sisney would do his reputation and job prospects some good by being more up front with the evidence has against the board and with the history of his job performance. He knew that some of the staff thought he was terrible (he said so in his letter), and he had to be aware of the negative stories about his behavior. By the time he started having difficulties with the school board, he should have known that he would need documentation to protect his reputation, if the stories about him were untrue.

He has tried to make himself out to be a selfless hero, but it seems suspicious that he would be willing to let his career tank in order to bring board members to justice, when he could have accomplished the same thing without raising questions about his own integrity.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/17/2009 12:46:58 PM)

And another thing.

Where are all the "Where there's smoke there's fire" people? I got so sick of hearing that about AA, when there really wasn't much of substance to go on. But isn't this "smoke" that we're hearing from district employees about Sisney? Why don't they think there is any "fire" there?

Must be my biased filter kicking in again.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/17/2009 2:16:34 PM)

Dr. Sisney's actions in this controversy make no sense unless looked at with the view that he is hiding something. If he were not guilty of some wrongdoing, in my opinion, he had the clout in his position of addressing the alleged serious problems with the board, vendor, and possibly staff with an outside agency, while maintaining his position as superintendent. He would have likely been protected in a whistleblower status by that agency from losing his job while any investigation was proceeding. It would have been clear to ALL BA citizens that he was serious about doing right by the school district and the citizens of BA and not just looking out for his own self-interest. It would have most certainly made quite a difference in how I perceived the chain of events in this story.

The "shameful" poster on the Ledger has no problem making assumptions about the board members ("It appears to me that the three were attempting to micro-manage the school system which is a perversion of what the board is supposed to be doing.") based on her interpretation of events but is unhappy when someone questions Jim Sisney's motivations.

Why don't people see their own biases while they are busy criticizing others for perceived prejudices?

Why do people want to protect Jim Sisney from close scrutiny?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/17/2009 2:29:22 PM)

I'd like to go back to your comment about Maryanne Flippo and the alleged attempts at blackmailing her and the board last summer. It puzzles me that once the

allegations were made against AA and the board, why she did not come forward then with her own allegations of Dr. Sisney's threats to her and the board, through her, or at least go to the police and make a report then or, if not then, then, finally, when she broke her silence and spoke out at her press conference in February.

Too bad that after the first time Dr. Sisney allegedly threatened her, she didn't carry a tape recorder with her to record any further conversations with Dr. Sisney. Without that, and without witnesses, her testimony would be she said/he said, unless others who had been threatened or intimidated by Dr. Sisney or were witness to such actions came forward to testify.

If Dr. Sisney's is/was as controlling, intimidating, and threatening in the workplace as many posters have suggested, it's too bad that there has not been a suitable mechanism for them to come forward as a group, or one right after the other, after another, to stand up to him, in the eye of the public.

Is Dr. Sisney still married? I don't hear mention of a wife, only child/children.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/17/2009 2:49:41 PM)

I went back to the TW article from September 3, 2008, announcing Dr. Sisney's filing a defamation lawsuit. One of the comments posted then is interesting:

QUOTE

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

WW, (9/3/2008 12:44:01 PM)

BA School Board protocol requires that the superintendent approve any item set on the agenda. If he doesn't like the item or it concerns him, he vetoes it. This seems like an odd rule, especially if the board has issues with his performance. But, that's what happened.

When the 3 board members didn't show up in protest, he sent out an email to all the employees in the district. In the email he spoke derogatorily of them and even told the employees that it was the board member's fault that they didn't get a raise in pay this year because of that action. What an insult to their intelligence. He even signed the letter 'Jim' as if he were one of their pals, instead of Dr. Sisney as all other forms of correspondence had been signed over his time in the superintendent's position.

The reporting in the media hasn't spoke of this. It's probably because the Communications Director, who used to be employed in Tulsa media, is responsible for getting this information out, so its possible that the boss controls this, too.

Now its time for him to 'bully' with the use of a lawyer.

END QUOTE

We didn't pay attention to his signature on the e-mail and note its significance, but his signing the e-mail by his first name only (which is not his usual habit, according to the poster) is another form of manipulation displayed by Dr. Sisney in his communication.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/17/2009 3:00:25 PM)

I thought pointing out the signature on the e-mail was worth a comment posted on the Ledger, so I've submitted the following on 3/17/09 at 3:00 pm:

QUOTE

In a comment posted to the Tulsa World's September 3, 2008, article entitled 'Superintendent Files Defamation Lawsuit,' one reader noted the following:

QUOTE

Report Comment | Ignore User

WW, (9/3/2008 12:44:01 PM)

BA School Board protocol requires that the superintendent approve any item set on the agenda. If he doesn't like the item or it concerns him, he vetoes it. This seems like an odd rule, especially if the board has issues with his performance. But, that's what happened.

When the 3 board members didn't show up in protest, he sent out an email to all the employees in the district. In the email he spoke derogatorily of them and even told the employees that it was the board member's fault that they didn't get a raise in pay this year because of that action. What an insult to their intelligence. He even signed the letter 'Jim' as if he were one of their pals, instead of Dr. Sisney as all other forms of correspondence had been signed over his time in the superintendent's position.

The reporting in the media hasn't spoke of this. It's probably because the Communications Director, who used to be employed in Tulsa media, is responsible for getting this information out, so its possible that the boss controls this, too.

Now its time for him to 'bully' with the use of a lawyer.

END QUOTE

If it's true that Dr. Sisney didn't usually use his first name to sign correspondence with district staff, the fact that he did so in the August e-mail is another sign of his trying to manipulate the staff to feel closer to him and side with him in this controversy.

Jolie

END QUOTE

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/17/2009 3:13:18 PM)

That post is interesting - I notice that Sisney made the point in his email that superintendents rarely put anything on the agenda, but failed to note that he had veto power and used it. That's pretty misleading.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/17/2009 3:14:50 PM)

"Why do people want to protect Jim Sisney from close scrutiny?"

That is a very important question. Why the chorus of indignant protests whenever anyone suggests that maybe his version of events is somewhat edited?

Are people running interference for him because they believe him? Or are there some who are purposely covering for him?

I think Maryanne Flippo may have more up her sleeve than she is letting on. I don't know why she would not have brought up Sisney's threat at the time, but it's possible she has taken some action we don't know about yet. Maybe she even has a recording. If Sisney did threaten her, I hope she has proof. I get the impression that she has something to back up the claim she made at her press conference. She doesn't seem to have a track record of using Sisney's tactics of spreading unsubstantiated rumors, so it makes me think that if she mentioned it, there is more to it.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/17/2009 3:32:15 PM)

I was watching a Newson6 video from September 3 of Dr. Sisney speaking at a press conference announcing his defamation lawsuit. My observations are: 1) he has trouble holding his head still and connecting his eyes with anyone for any period of time, and 2) at the very end of the interview, Dr. Sisney touches/rubs his nose, right after he says "How can a person ever become another superintendent, regardless of the academic process and progress that you've made as a school district, if, if it's implied that you can't work with your school board and you can't work with money, and each of those, uh, are incorrect..." (rubs nose immediately after the last word) and video cuts away to reporter speaking. Both of those behaviors are signs that someone might not be telling the truth.** He doesn't come across as being upfront and honest, to me.

Take a look for yourself and let me know what you think (see 'Superintendent Files Defamation Lawsuit' on newson6 for September 3, 2008).

** From 'The Top Seven Signs that Someone is Lying to You' at sixwise dot com :

1) No eye contact. Generally, if someone is lying they will not look you in the eye, at least during a certain part of the conversation. Normally, people make eye contact for at least half of a conversation, so anything less than this could be suspicious. One caveat: there are some people who will take great pains to make eye contact with you even if they're lying, simply to make you think they're not.

3) Unusual body language. If a person taps their foot a lot, fidgets with their hands, raises their shoulders, turns away from you or brings their hand to their face (to touch their chin or nose, etc.) -- in other words, if they act nervous or uncomfortable -- it could mean they're telling a lie. Also watch out for blushing (or becoming pale) and increased blinking.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/17/2009 3:42:24 PM)

Interesting. Is there any video of Maryanne Flippo? I remember that she was reading, so there may not be much to go on as far as eye contact.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/17/2009 3:54:05 PM)

I do think there are some posters who are out to defend Dr. Sisney, not necessarily because they believe his side is truthful, but because his side is their side/team to support. This is not uncommon in online forums. In the Madeline McCann story, some people from around the world were recruited and allegedly paid (and some were volunteers, too, I think) by one of the front organizations supporting the McCanns to find Madeleine to spin the story online in their favor. I've 'talked' with some of them on a regular basis on one of the forums devoted to the subject. You knew who the professionals were because of their approach, always ignoring any and all information, even the most basic and obvious facts, that suggested the McCanns' guilt/culpability but always willing to believe in the possible corruption and/or incompetence of the Portuguese investigators. In fact, the McCanns' professional spokesperson, Clarence Mitchell, worked for the UK government's Central Office of Information's Media Monitoring Unit, which was starting to monitor online blogs which were publishing stories on hot topics related to the government, at the time that story broke in 2007. He was still with that agency when he was assigned by the government to assist the McCanns for many months and then supposedly 'resigned' and had his salary paid for by a multi-millionaire donor, and which is now paid for by the Find Madeleine Fund (which raised millions for the McCanns)--oops--I told you it was a long, involved, and interesting story...

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/17/2009 3:59:31 PM)

When the defamation lawsuit was filed, Sisney still had almost 3 more years to go as superintendent at BA, right? Why was he talking about becoming another superintendent? I guess we were supposed to take that as the premise for his defamation lawsuit, but it seems like a contentious way to go about clearing his good name. Seems like just doing a good job (and showing a spirit of cooperation) for the next 2 3/4 years would make a better impression. How many people was he really defamed to? The bad things that were supposedly said about him weren't really publicly known, until he made them public. "Look for facts to be unfolded over time", indeed.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/17/2009 4:00:30 PM)

Yes, there is a four-part video of Maryanne Flippo making her statements at the February 5, 2009, press conference that she called. It's on KTUL's website. Just do a search on their site for "Flippo" and it will pull all four parts up. I haven't been able to get my computer to play them and KTUL never responded to my e-mail back then asking them for guidance on how to get them to play. Let me know if you have any success and what your impressions are. Words are important, but are only a small fraction of the important communication between humans (someone told me recently that it only accounts for 17%). Body language is the primary way for us to communicate our true intentions.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/17/2009 4:07:30 PM)

That was my reaction to Sisney filing his lawsuit, as well. If he didn't want his reputation besmirched, he sure took the long way around to protect it, didn't he? Making sure that it became a major news story in our area and becoming part of online news available on searches connected to his name was not a smart move, if he truly was interested in protecting his reputation. He will never be able to professionally outrun the connection to this controversy. The only way that he will come out of this with his career intact is if the OSBI investigation finds criminal wrongdoing that backs up Sisney's allegations. Otherwise, he's wearing the taint of this mess on himself for the rest of his working life.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/17/2009 4:14:40 PM)

The Ledger has posted your comments and both of my responses to the 'shaming' poster, but has not yet printed my post about Dr. Sisney signing his August e-mail with 'Jim.'

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/17/2009 4:16:29 PM)

612, I'll be offline the rest of the night (Elton John/Billy Joel concert!!), but will check back in tomorrow morning. Have a good one. :)

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/17/2009 4:18:02 PM)

At least it made a little sense if you thought he was about to be looking for a new job. Was it public knowledge at the time that his contract hadn't been renewed? I don't think I knew, and even after he was fired, I didn't know for a long time that his contract was renewed 3 years in advance. The way he talked in the interview, it was as if he knew he was going to be out before the end of the 3-year period. That had not yet been decided - at least not in public. What did he know in advance?

I think some of the Sisney supporters posting on the Ledger are in on it with him.

I wasn't able to get the Flippo video to play either.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/17/2009 4:18:55 PM)

Have fun! See you tomorrow.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/17/2009 6:23:38 PM)

Since the Ledger seems to be printing everything we post lately, I'm trying to post the question about the Kitchens' signatures again.

Posted on Ledger:

I wonder when we will hear from John Lare with his taxpayer's lawsuit.

I don't remember seeing if there was ever an explanation for how the Kitchens became involved with the taxpayer demand letter. The Tulsa World article from 2/26 quoted a letter in which the Kitchens claimed that they did not agree to anything that was in the letter, had never seen it, and did not want to be part of the action. How did their names get on there in the first place, if they had never seen the letter? Which is accurate - they actually signed the letter, or their statement saying they had never seen it?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/18/2009 9:09:35 AM)

Interesting. They've posted everything else I submitted on this article, but still won't post this question about the Richardsons' signatures. Why not?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/18/2009 10:34:51 AM)

Not the Richardsons' signatures, the Kitchens'.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/18/2009 10:41:40 AM)

Posted again on the Ledger, slightly reworded.

I made sure I hit the "Post Comment" button and got the "Your comment has been submitted and will be viewable once it is approved." message. Sometimes I'm not sure if I noticed if the code letters were accepted, so sometimes it might be my fault the Ledger doesn't post my comments.

I wonder when we will hear from Mr. Lare and Mr. Richardson with the next step in the taxpayers demand. I believe they mentioned that a lawsuit would be the next likely step.

I don't remember seeing if there was ever an explanation for how the Kitchens became involved with the taxpayer demand letter. The Tulsa World article from 2/26 quoted a letter in which the Kitchens claimed that they did not agree to anything that was in the letter, had never seen it, and did not want to be part of the action. How did their names get on there in the first place, if they had never seen the letter? Which is accurate - they actually signed the letter, or their statement saying they had never seen it?

I would think Mr. Richardson would want to clarify this to avoid the embarrassment of having his statements contradicted.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/18/2009 11:37:10 AM)

Have you noticed, 612? The BA Ledger is now REQUIRING you to enter an e-mail address in order to post and requires you agree to their online submission policy, as follows:

QUOTE

Online Comment Policy

We invite all to submit comments at our website. Please take the opportunity to contribute to these interactive forums and share your thoughts with our other loyal readers.

In order to keep these forums enjoyable and interesting for all, we ask that you follow the rules below.

By submitting content, you are consenting to these rules:

1. You agree not to submit inappropriate content. Inappropriate content includes any content that:

- infringes upon or violates the copyrights, trademarks or other intellectual property rights of any person
- is libelous or defamatory
- is obscene, pornographic, or sexually explicit
- violates a person's right to privacy
- violates any local, state, national, or international law
- contains or advocates illegal or violent acts
- degrades others on the basis of gender, race, class, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual preference, disability, or other classification
- is predatory, hateful, or intended to intimidate or harass
- contains advertising or solicitation of any kind
- misrepresents your identity or affiliation
- impersonates others

2. Comments will be restricted to 250 words or less per entry. Multiple entries made by one reader within the comment area of one story are discouraged and will be published at the discretion of Neighbor Newspapers.

3. You understand and agree that we may remove content that we deem inappropriate for any reason whatsoever without consent.

4. You acknowledge and agree any use and/or reliance on any information obtained through the interactive forums at your own risk. We are not in any manner endorsing the content of the interactive forums and will not vouch for its reliability.

5. For any content that you submit, you give us permission to use such content. You hereby grant to Neighbor Newspapers a royalty-free, perpetual, worldwide, exclusive, license to use, reproduce, modify, adapt, publish, translate, create derivative works from, incorporate into other works, distribute, perform, display, and otherwise exploit such content, in whole or in part.

6. You have read and agree to abide by our User Agreement and Privacy Policy.

END QUOTE

It looks like they're trying to shut people up, and if they can't do that, it looks like information entered may be used for potential litigation for 'libelous or defamatory' comments. Not to mention that they are limiting the size of the posts and only one post per person per story. Censorship at its best, don't you think! Darn them! This most certainly emphasizes their desire to control this story.

I will not be posting on the Ledger any longer. I really don't want to be tracked, and because I definitely don't trust the Ledger to be professional about protecting reader/poster confidentiality, as they've demonstrated bias in reporting this story, I think it's too risky to provide identifying information like my e-mail, which contains my unusual last name. If you continue posting, will you make mention why I am no longer posting and state that I will continue posting here on the Tulsa World?

Thanks, 612.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/18/2009 11:54:49 AM)

Is that new as of today? Did you get a message?

I agree, I don't trust the Ledger to treat email addresses with confidentiality.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/18/2009 12:13:32 PM)

I found out when I tried to post a reply today. It wouldn't accept my submission without an e-mail address. The submission form has changed, too. You can try it (without adding the e-mail address, of course) to read it for yourself directly on their site.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/18/2009 12:27:07 PM)

I see the new form now. I submitted one this morning at 10:40, but I hadn't refreshed the page since last night, so that may be why it didn't do the new stuff. My post will probably be rejected.

This new policy may be in response to Sisney's letter being posted online. Do you suppose there are more documents that he doesn't want posted in full, and he asked his friend at the Ledger to make it more difficult?

I created a generic email address on yahoo, without my name and real email address. If there is something on the Ledger site that verifies the existence of an email address, this should pass. But it won't identify me any more than "612" does. I don't know if I'll continue to post; I might just try to direct people here from time to time. We can get around the email address and the 250-word requirements, but the limit to one comment per story is pretty, well, limiting.

Do you want me to post a sign-off message for you? Something like:

Due to the new limits on words and number of posts allowed on each story, and the new requirement to provide an email address, Jolie will no longer be posting on the Ledger. She will continue to post on Tulsa World articles. See "BA school board rejects probe", published 2/26/2008, for recent comments.

Let me know how you'd like it worded.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/18/2009 1:12:38 PM)

Wow, the Ledger posted my comment on the Kitchens's signatures. I think it was my 7th try, on two different articles.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/18/2009 1:15:13 PM)

That would be fine, 612. Thank you very much. I also have another e-mail address, also on yahoo, in addition to my regular one, that is not readily self-identifying, but if someone wanted to track down who it belongs to, for potential litigation as an example, it would not be difficult to do, I'm sure.

The negatives of posting have outweighed the positives for me, for now, at least.

And, yes, I think Sisney and his attorney put pressure on Bob Lewis to do something about the free sharing of information on the Ledger. We must have cut too close to the quick for his comfort. Looks like we're on the right track.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/18/2009 1:20:41 PM)

Posted on Ledger 1:20 PM:

Due to the new limits on words and number of posts allowed on each story, and the new requirement to provide an email address, Jolie will no longer be posting on the Ledger. She will continue to post on Tulsa World articles. See "BA school board rejects probe", published 2/26/2008, for recent comments.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/18/2009 1:40:11 PM)

I think it was "Been There Done That" who earlier tried to explain away Dr. Sisney's refusal to provide documentation for his claims by saying it was like a game - Sisney was waiting until the time was right, and didn't want to "tip his hand". Like the most recent explanations offered by BTDT, this could be a convincing argument for those who are eager to believe anything that supports their point of view, but if you think about it, it doesn't make any sense at all. In what way is bringing to justice corrupt officials like a game that requires precise timing?

I used to think "Been there done that" was just a patronizing screen name, but I'm beginning to think it's literal.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/18/2009 3:01:49 PM)

Hey, 612, would you mind keeping me apprised of any new and/or important developments on the BA Ledger related to the story? It will help us to keep a record here, and I will be glad not to read the Ledger again, except when you let me know there's a new article that I will want to read in full. It is frustrating to have my hands tied and not be able to comment freely on the articles, so it is better I refrain from visiting the site, for the most part.

I don't think they'll print your comment about my not posting on the Ledger.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/18/2009 5:07:10 PM)

Yep, I'll let you know if there's anything worth reading.

One good thing is that everyone else is limited on their contributions too. People may be less willing to waste words calling each other idiots.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/18/2009 9:23:46 PM)

Sure enough, the Ledger didn't post my comment about why you won't be posting there. So now they're censoring comments about their censorship.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/19/2009 11:00:28 AM)

Response to this post:

QUOTE

Unbelievable... wrote on Mar 18, 2009 5:19 PM:

" You people are ridiculous. If you had 100 people from another city read Sisney's email, I bet not 2 or 3 would see a thing in the world wrong with chastising a BOE that deliberately skipped a meeting and held a public rally down the street...and then having the gall to turn around a few months later and pass a Board of Ethics statement that says they should attend all board meetings. Get a grip people. "

UNQUOTE

My response:

QUOTE

My comments on Sisney's letter are based on the events that have been reported and the letter itself, not on what people in this city or any other city might think of it.

UNQUOTE

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/19/2009 12:04:40 PM)

I've been looking back through past comments, to see if anything stands out from today's perspective. This one caught my eye for the comment about teachers not being allowed to speak to the press or BOE members.

BA superintendent files defamation suit, 9/4/2008

QUOTE

Fairway Barbie, Norman (9/5/2008 9:57:28 PM)

The teacher morale has been terrible since Dr. Sisney took over. But of course, the teachers have been told in their meetings that they aren't allowed to talk to the press or to board of education members. Dr. Sisney, I have a news flash for you: the board is elected by the citizens. They hire YOU, not the other way around.

You are divisive and vindictive and you need to pack your bags.

UNQUOTE

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/19/2009 12:37:18 PM)

I think the likelihood that ProLady and exbateacher are making this up is very small. This method of eliminating people falls way outside the "gruff" or "not touchy-feely enough" descriptions that people try to use to characterize Dr. Sisney's behavior. I wonder how many people were moved to another job in order to make them struggle so they could be fired?

ProLady mentions appropriate notification and a plan of improvement that are required before firing a person. The board would probably have needed this before firing Dr. Sisney, since he was an employee too.

Lawsuit says BA schools violated work policies, 9/5/2008

QUOTE

ProLady, (9/5/2008 8:26:30 PM)

And one more thing... doing away with a position, is Jim Sisney's standard way of getting rid of someone with whom he disagrees or wants to fire. He cannot fire the individual because he hasn't actually followed any kind of appropriate notification or plan of improvement for the person. So, he drops the position, leaving the professional in a real spot in that they cannot find another position in the district that meets their payscale and qualifications. At least one other person who had the same thing happen filed a lawsuit and Sisney had to put her back on, at the same salary to do busy work for the last three years.

exbateacher, Broken Arrow (9/5/2008 9:44:13 PM)

Further, he places people specifically in jobs they are not qualified for and when they flounder, he has reason to fire them. He appears to be extremely manipulative and mean spirited. You are correct "Pro Lady!"

UNQUOTE

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/19/2009 12:42:18 PM)

ProLady is as unimpressed with Sisney's communication skills as we are.

I had heard that Sisney raised test scores. According to ProLady, he only raised them back to where they were before he took over.

Lawsuit says BA schools violated work policies, 9/5/2008

QUOTE

ProLady, 9/7/2008 6:30 PM

This last year Sisney bragged on the district website about how the district's ACT scores were up and how it proved what a good job his administration was doing. One only had to go back a few years to see that Sisney's administration had finally recovered to the point that ACT scores had held before he took over the helm. They had dropped from previous administrations.

...

Sisney's ego is amazing, and if you have ever heard the man speak or if you have read transcripts of his presentations to the board as I have done, you would be flabbergasted. This man cannot articulate a cohesive thought. I have heard many talk about how truly brilliant he is saying things like "he is just so much smarter than us all that we can't keep up with him". What baloney! He often makes no sense whatsoever. He has a handful of multi-syllabic words that he throws together in completely incomprehensible ways. My vocabulary actually includes those words, and I can say without hesitation that he frequently makes no sense whatsoever.

UNQUOTE

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/19/2009 4:09:28 PM)

I think the employee whose position was eliminated and then sued, won, and was re-employed was Carol Lunn, previously the head of Special Services (Special Education). I believe the discussion of her predicament was on the Ledger's article on Dr. Gerber's contract extension. Ms. Lunn now works as the director of enrollment. I did read articles from 2005 that stated BAPS was on a list of schools needing improvement because of low test scores for the special education and English language learner students. You can read the details in the Tulsa World article titled "BA schools to reorganize special services division" dated June 29, 2005. (look under that date--it says this article was last modified March 31, 2008--almost three years later? strange, don't you think?)

This is likely what happened with Dr. Gerber, when Dr. Sisney eliminated the position he held as Assistant Superintendent of Operations, and why he chose retirement at that time, because there likely was no other position of similar rank and salary to move to and was assigned to "special projects." It is also possible that Dr. Sisney made an threatening ultimatum to force him to retire early, if what some posters write is true.

I was just reading the news article in the district's publication "Arrowpoint Online!" titled "Three Decades of Service: Longtime BA resident Dr. Gary Gerber to retire." I noticed that the article states Dr. Gerber became Assistant Superintendent of Operations in 2000. Dr. Sisney became Superintendent of Schools in March 2003. Before that, beginning in 2000, he was the Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services (a position now held by Brian Beagles**), who supervises the special education services director, among others. So, as one or two posters have stated was so, it is possible that Dr. Gerber was moved out of his position running special services, which he held for 23 years, by Dr. Sisney, not as a promotion/reward but for Sisney's own purposes, if he had then-Superintendent Dennis Shoemaker's cooperation and approval for that 'promotion.'

The BAPS website has a link to the organizational chart at the bottom of the page that lists names of department heads and contact information. Click on 'Departments' in the left column of the home page to get there.

** An interesting side note. Some posters have mentioned that Dr. Sisney liked to place his 'buddies' in positions of authority (after removing the existing personnel out of the way). Remember when Dr. Sisney returned six boxes of books to the district after he was suspended (and returned without permission and took some items away)? The person he returned the boxes to was Brian Beagles.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/19/2009 4:13:09 PM)

Re. BAPS district organizational charts

Note that the BAPS website has more than one chart (five in total), beginning with the oldest from 2003-2004, up to 2007-2008.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/19/2009 4:38:04 PM)

This is my third time trying to copy and paste an article-it wasn't posting because there was a website address in it that I hadn't noticed.

From gtrnews dot com, published after Dr. Sisney's termination and before Dr. Gerber received his first official contract as superintendent of schools.

Note par. 6 where Dr. Gerber lays ultimate responsibility for the district's purchasing and bidding activities directly with the superintendent. In par. 8, he illustrates Dr. Sisney's proclivity for moving highly competent personnel from jobs where they are successful to ones they have no experience in by mentioning Jill Poole's reassignment.

QUOTE

INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT CLARIFIES ORGANIZATION

Interim Superintendent of Schools Dr. Gary Gerber says the School District must do a better job of communicating organizational details of Broken Arrow Public Schools with school board members and the community.

He sent each school board member an organizational chart in order to provide them and the community a clear understanding of the lines of authority in the school district.

The public can request or view all historical organizational charts of the School District, Gerber says. The current organizational chart is available online at (lists website).

Gerber believes a better understanding of the district's organizational chart will create a better understanding of the various checks and balances of working through the School District's Finance/Purchasing and Procurement department(s).

He says that approach is common in business organizations and certainly was in effect during the last four Superintendents of Broken Arrow Public Schools covering a time span of more than 30 years.

Organizationally, the School District's various department directors of the implementation departments such as custodial, child nutrition, transportation, and maintenance have always worked directly and in a collaborative manner with purchasing and procurement encumbrance clerks, purchasing directors, accounting directors, and the chief financial officer.

Gerber says he does understand that the Superintendent of Schools is ultimately responsible for supervising all purchasing, quoting, sealed bidding, and public competitive bid activities as the Superintendent is expected to provide oversight to the Chief Financial Officer and Directors of Accounting and Purchasing.

Gerber says that a school district the size of Broken Arrow's can be a complex organization to navigate. The organizational charts and the Superintendent's job description are excellent tools and do provide clarity.

Poole Resumes as Director of Child Nutrition

Gerber announced that Jill Poole is resuming her duties as director of child nutrition for the school district.

She was the district's award winning child nutrition director for eight years before taking on leadership over all of the district's operations during the past few

months while Gerber was working on special projects and away from the day-to-day oversight of operations.

Gerber says the day-to-day role of director of operations won't be filled in the short term as Executive Director of Construction, Jim Moburg and Director of Purchasing Mark Bilby will divide oversight over district maintenance, plant operations, and the district transportation department, as well as child nutrition.

END QUOTE

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/19/2009 5:54:26 PM)

If Sisney really did these things, it's no wonder he had trouble sleeping. Even if his conscience didn't keep him up, it takes time to do all that scheming.

The posts about Sisney moving people to different jobs to get rid of them are pretty believable when you put them together with the verifiable facts about Gerber, Lunn, and Poole. Those are the ones we know about; I get the impression from some posts that this was common practice for Sisney, so there may be more.

I noticed a TW article from 9/28, "BA District Sets New Procedures", in which Ann Wade, BA Schools' CFO, speaks knowledgeably about the budget, Air Assurance invoices, the old blanket PO procedures, and the new procedures. It seems to me that, if Sisney really thought there were serious problems and corruption, she would be involved in the allegations and investigations. Managing this is her job - not the board's. It doesn't make any sense to accuse the board. How in the world could they have gotten any secret deals or overpriced work past the CFO AND the superintendent?

Below she talks about AA invoices that came in at the end of the fiscal year. Is it possible that this has something to do with the hand-modified invoice dates? I am not convinced that there was anything sinister behind those changes on the invoices. If someone was trying to hide something, would they really just cross it out and rewrite it? This sounds like nothing more than changing accounting periods on some invoices in order to get them paid on time and assigned to the correct fiscal year. Most likely more hype from Sisney and Richardson (look here! look here!)

QUOTE

Ann Wade, Broken Arrow Public Schools' chief financial officer, said questions were raised last spring about Air Assurance when invoices came in after expenditures were frozen so that the staff could start the budget process for this school year.

"We had to lower some other purchase orders to pay this vendor," she said, adding that this is not an uncommon practice.

UNQUOTE

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/19/2009 7:43:02 PM)

Thank you for bringing that September 28 article to my attention. You've raised a very good point about Ann Wade's responsibility and Jim Sisney purposely not including her in either the staff changes (when eliminating Bill Miller's and Gary Gerber's positions) or including mention of possible culpability in the defamation suit and media campaign.

I think those changed dates on invoices are not uncommon, and is probably related to the freezing of expenditures occurs routinely at the end of one fiscal year while preparing the next year's budget that Ms. Wade mentioned in the Sept. 28 article. The special audit report findings (see page 4 of the audit, which is page 5 of the pdf file online at the BAPS website) confirm this date changing to move dates to the next fiscal year happened in each of the fiscal years reviewed for the invoices.

I do believe that Dr. Sisney likely knowingly is misleading the public and the police that this date changing could be related to fraud. I hope, if true, he is

prosecuted for providing false testimony and evidence.

This is something you should bring up on the Ledger when the time seems right, about the Sept. 28 article, the audit report findings, and the information from the February 2009 police affidavit related to the search warrant that described the date changes, which made the changes appear to be fraudulent. This is very important, I think, for people to know.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/19/2009 11:06:37 PM)

Trish Williams was the CFO until the end of June 2008. Then she took the CFO job at Tulsa Public Schools, and Ann Wade came from Claremore Public Schools to take her place, starting July 1, 2008. This was in a Ledger article, "BAPS picks Ann Wade as chief financial officer" from May 13, 2008.

The corruption alleged by Sisney takes place before July 2008, so if any CFO were to be held responsible, it would be Trish Williams, not Ann Wade.

People do change jobs, and Ms. Williams could have had any number of reasons for moving to TPS. But here in Sisneyland, you can't help but wonder if there is more to the story. Changing CFOs in the middle of a financial "scandal" that was about to be unleashed...is there more here than a simple job change?

Regardless of who was in the position at the time, the CFO would be a key participant in anything involving large vendor contracts and invoicing. Why have we heard so much about the board's involvement in vendor contracts and performance, when they really have little to do with them, and nothing about the CFO, who should be one of several people overseeing the vendor dealings?

Announced in Ledger article July 18, 2008, "New Year, New Job Assignments":

Judy Hutter, Lynn Wood Elementary - retiring

JoAnn Bierig, Margeret Hudson Program - retiring

Jill Poole - moved from Director of Child Nutrition to Executive Director of district operations

Carol Lunn - in charge of enrollment center (added to overseeing the district's grants programs

Michael Sowards - from H.S. math teacher to math learning coach

Sisneyland...maybe it's just late, but I thought that was pretty good.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/20/2009 6:50:17 AM)

Very good detective work, 612. I only wish the folks in BA could be reading all of this information.

If a journalist ever were to do a serious investigative piece on this story, this comments thread would give him/her a lot of leads to pursue for possible interviews and research.

I like your use of the word Sisneyland; I think it is fitting.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/20/2009 6:51:29 AM)

correction "to do" instead of "do to" in second paragraph of my last post. :)

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

thenight1, (3/20/2009 3:07:22 PM)

I got to thinking about this again lately and the problems I have with blaming so much on Sisney is that he got good performance reviews for 5 years and then

ONLY after bringing to light the AA and bidding controversy, and Rampey from AA telling board members that he should be fired, is he then suspended and fired. Since numerous people have commented on his management style I am inclined to believe them as well, but if he was such an ogre, why 5 years of everything is good performance reviews and then suddenly, he's gone? The only significant change seems to be starting the investigation of AA.

If nothing significant was done wrong, why was BAPD unable to properly investigate and they turn it over to the OSBI? They must have had some significant evidence or why turn it over to OSBI instead of just closing the investigation?

Sisney believed that Gerber was part of the problem with the bidding and AA, what kind of management decision is it to then bring him back to run the district after Sisney is fired? The best management decision would seem to be to hire someone else not implicated in this mess. That person could investigate BOTH sides of the mess and have credibility.

The timing of the fire at AA's storage building seems too strong a coincidence.

I don't believe that Sisney was any kind of Saint but something smells and it's not all Sisney.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/20/2009 4:55:49 PM)

We don't really know what kind of reviews Sisney got for the past 5 years. They were good enough to keep his contract renewed, but, as one teacher pointed out, it took a long time for the board to realize how significant the problems were. I asked why it took so long, but haven't gotten a response. A poster said that teachers were forbidden to talk with members of the BOE. And we have heard that Sisney punished people who spoke out against him. With this in mind, it's not hard to figure out why the board didn't know the extent of the problems until recently, when they started getting the Sisney treatment themselves.

I don't think the triggering event was the AA investigation at all. I think it was the inability of Sisney and the board to agree on his contract. It was when he couldn't get what he wanted in his contract that he stopped communicating with the board, took over the board's agenda, denied them access to legal representation, and started reassigning people.

The AA scandal is invented. Since most of us citizens don't really know anything about how a school district is run (me included), it would be easy to make normal, run-of-the-mill things look suspicious. An example is the invoices that had their dates changed. See the above posts - this looks like it's typically done every year in order to get the invoices paid on time, while the expenditures account is frozen to prepare for the end of the fiscal year. The reason BAPD couldn't do the investigation? They are not experts in financial investigations. It needs to be handled by someone who has a background in auditing large business entities who would know what accounting/purchasing/operational practices are normal and ordinary.

At this point, after all his antics, anything Sisney says is suspect. So many things he has claimed have been discredited. He says the board boycotted a meeting but doesn't mention that he had been manipulating the agenda in order to make it impossible for them to conduct business. He says the board needlessly hired new legal council, but fails to mention that he had denied them access to the school district's council. He claimed that HVAC work had been done at an eye doctor's office and paid for by BAPS - and continued to claim that months after he had seen evidence that it was false (and it could be proven with GPS).

At what point do we start questioning his integrity, and stop taking everything he feeds us as gospel?

He says Gerber is part of the problem - why does he not mention the CFO at the time, Trish Williams? She was in charge of the blanket PO's, managing the budget, and paying invoices. Why is her name not mentioned? Because there is no corruption, and Sisney knows it.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

thenight1, (3/20/2009 10:11:16 PM)

I'm old enough to know not to trust what anyone says when you are only hearing one side of the story. It certainly appears that Sisney was a manager I would not want to work for. As his employer, it is the school boards job to know accurately what his true performance is. If he was as bad as some would lead us to believe, the board was negligent in not being aware of the problem and getting rid of him a lot sooner. If they couldn't even see that, then I certainly believe the board would miss any competitive bidding problems.

My friend in the air conditioning business tells me that several good companies were blackballed from bidding and this is someone I have known for quite some time so I do trust him. What he can't or won't tell me is who was responsible for that? Did AA apply pressure to reduce or eliminate their competition? Was the administration just lazy and took the easy way out and just have AA do everything? Did Sisney try to blackmail AA and didn't get his way?

Not having all the answers I can't say if Gerber was part of the problem or not but I stand by my statement that giving him the superintendent position when he has been implicated in this mess was a poor management decision. I just feeds the fire. The fact that he made any changes to the audit request (however minor they were)shows poor judgement since he had to know that Lare and Sisney would jump on that. A good manager would either leave it alone to show he's not afraid of what it may say, OR make it significantly tougher and openly show the public how it's tougher.

I assume Sisney got good reviews since if he didn't, then renewing his contract as they kept doing would be more evidence of incompetence on their part.

The facts shown here do indicate that Sisney was moving people around perhaps to positions they weren't really qualified for or experienced at but once again, if that was happening, he should have been eliminated earlier. Were was the oversight of his work?

The CFO during all of this absolutely should be questioned as they should have put a stop to the problems unless they were involved in them.

Too many questions, not enough facts in the public knowledge to appropriately answer them. If Lare and Sisney really have hard evidence of wrongdoing, I wish they would just go ahead, sue, and bring it all into the open in court so it can be judged and the truth come out, one way or another. The longer this goes on, the more damage is done, it needs to be brought to a conclusion asap.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/21/2009 11:00:43 AM)

I tried to post this as one very long message, but was told to refrain from using innappropriate language [sic]. I can't find my bad word (!) so I'm going to post it in pieces to narrow it down.

Agreed, thenight1, those are the questions we should be asking.

If Sisney was as bad as we are hearing, why was he kept so long? And why was the vote 3-2? Is it possible that the board members knew of the problems before this year and would have taken action, but, until Ms. Wilkins joined the board, there was not a majority that would have voted to remove him?

If Dr. Sisney was so bad, and we call the board incompetent for failing to remove him earlier, I think we've had it backwards all along. Instead of attacking the 3 board members as incompetent, we need to look at the 2 votes that were against firing him.

Ms. Updike has made some statements that, knowing what we know now, seem odd: She said she didn't know of any reasons to fire Dr. Sisney; that she didn't believe anyone had been prevented from putting items on the agenda; and that she didn't believe anyone had been denied access to legal council. Those

statements make it sound like either she is seriously out of the loop, or she is not telling the truth. We have all heard from many people with reasons to get rid of Dr. Sisney, and Maryanne Flippo specifically claimed that they had been denied access to legal council and prevented from putting items on the agenda. Who do we believe? All the teachers and staff who claim Sisney ruled by intimidation and the board members who sacrificed their own reputations to do what they thought was right? Or one board member who, possibly under threat of the very thing that is happening to the 3 board members, claimed no knowledge of any of the problems?

Maybe Dr. Sisney knew that he was no longer protected by his majority on the board, and that's when he started manipulating people and events. Dr. Sisney did some good things, and I think it's likely that the board's preference for the past several years has been to keep him. His personnel file may contain some attempts by the board over the years to address the problems dealing with staff and teachers. It may be that they were willing to take the bad with the good, until things went over the top this year and he became impossible to work with.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/21/2009 11:07:05 AM)

Part 2

I don't think having Dr. Gerber fill the superintendent position is really a problem. The only problem with it is the one Sisney has generated. Dr. Gerber has not been implicated in anything; he was not included in Dr. Sisney's defamation lawsuit and is not under investigation himself. People only think he is because of the rumors Sisney started.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/21/2009 11:11:09 AM)

This frustrating. I don't know what is being considered "inappropriate". It looks like I'll have to smaller pieces until I get it figured out.

Part 3

I also don't think the board had much of a choice. There are specific requirements for the superintendent position. I think I read that it has to be a certified superintendent.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/21/2009 11:12:40 AM)

Part 4

There were probably not many qualified candidates to choose from at the time.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/21/2009 11:13:38 AM)

The board has been clear from the beginning that this was a temporary position for Gerber.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/21/2009 11:16:46 AM)

Part 6

BA is too big and complicated to bring in someone new at the top with no transition time.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/21/2009 11:19:49 AM)

part 7

Back in March 2003, when Dr. Shoemaker was about to retire,

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/21/2009 11:21:20 AM)

he said one of the two

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/21/2009 11:23:16 AM)

Apparently I can't say Gerber's title, which I will purposely misspell to get it past the checker. Let's try it:

Asistant

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/21/2009 11:24:41 AM)

Ok, Tulsa World, let's back that upgrade out.

Here's the whole post, with the offensive word abbreviated "As.st"

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/21/2009 11:27:08 AM)

Agreed, thenight1, those are the questions we should be asking.

If Sisney was as bad as we are hearing, why was he kept so long? And why was the vote 3-2? Is it possible that the board members knew of the problems before this year and would have taken action, but, until Ms. Wilkins joined the board, there was not a majority that would have voted to remove him?

If Dr. Sisney was so bad, and we call the board incompetent for failing to remove him earlier, I think we've had it backwards all along. Instead of attacking the 3 board members as incompetent, we need to look at the 2 votes that were against firing him.

Ms. Updike has made some statements that, knowing what we know now, seem odd: She said she didn't know of any reasons to fire Dr. Sisney; that she didn't believe anyone had been prevented from putting items on the agenda; and that she didn't believe anyone had been denied access to legal council. Those statements make it sound like either she is seriously out of the loop, or she is not telling the truth. We have all heard from many people with reasons to get rid of Dr. Sisney, and Maryanne Flippo specifically claimed that they had been denied access to legal council and prevented from putting items on the agenda. Who do we believe? All the teachers and staff who claim Sisney ruled by intimidation and the board members who sacrificed their own reputations to do what they thought was right? Or one board member who, possibly under threat of the very thing that is happening to the 3 board members, claimed no knowledge of any of the problems?

Maybe Dr. Sisney knew that he was no longer protected by his majority on the board, and that's when he started manipulating people and events. Dr. Sisney did some good things, and I think it's likely that the board's preference for the past several years has been to keep him. His personnel file may contain some attempts by the board over the years to address the problems dealing with staff and teachers. It may be that they were willing to take the bad with the good, until things went over the top this year and he became impossible to work with.

I don't think having Dr. Gerber fill the superintendent position is really a problem. The only problem with it is the one Sisney has generated. Dr. Gerber has not been implicated in anything; he was not included in Dr. Sisney's defamation lawsuit and is not under investigation himself. People only think he is because of the rumors Sisney started. I also don't think the board had much of a choice. There are specific requirements for the superintendent position (I think I read that it has to be a certified superintendent). I don't think there were that many qualified people on hand to choose from at the time. The board has been clear from the beginning that this was a temporary position for Gerber. BA is too big and complicated to bring in someone new at the top with no transition time.

Back in March 2003, when Dr. Shoemaker was about to retire, he said one of the two as.st superintendents would be chosen to replace him. The choice was between Sisney and Gerber. I don't know if there are any other qualified candidates in the district. If Gerber was the only legal choice, people should be satisfied, and glad that we have him. But if that is the case, don't expect the Ledger to point it out.

We don't really know who changed the audit. I doubt if Gerber made the changes, since the letter was from the auditing firm. Like all the other things Sisney has pointed to, there are probably very sensible and boring reasons it was changed. The important thing to note is that, as we pointed out in earlier posts on this article (3/9/2009 2:53:50 PM), nothing was removed, and a few things were added. Sisney pointed to the removal of bid-splitting as evidence of a coverup. I believe this specific item was removed in favor of a more comprehensive look into the competitive bidding issues. To me, this just looks like another "look here!" from Sisney, designed to inflame us regular people who really don't

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/21/2009 11:28:49 AM)
To Tulsa World

I can no longer post the word "as.sistant" (I added the period to get it through the language checker).

I get a message that says it's inappropriate [sic] language.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/21/2009 11:30:58 AM)

I reported my comment on the language checker so maybe someone will look at it.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/21/2009 11:31:52 AM)

... and the rest of my original comment. I guess it was too long.

We don't really know who changed the audit. I doubt if Gerber made the changes, since the letter was from the auditing firm. Like all the other things Sisney has pointed to, there are probably very sensible and boring reasons it was changed. The important thing to note is that, as we pointed out in earlier posts on this article (3/9/2009 2:53:50 PM), nothing was removed, and a few things were added. Sisney pointed to the removal of bid-splitting as evidence of a coverup. I believe this specific item was removed in favor of a more comprehensive look into the competitive bidding issues. To me, this just looks like another "look here!" from Sisney, designed to inflame us regular people who really don't know enough about district operations and financial procedures to know that these things are

normal and ordinary.

I do believe there were problems in the bidding process, and I believe your friend knows what he is talking about. The most likely reason is that things had been working pretty well and no one had the time or inclination to change it. There could have been resistance to other companies that wanted to bid. That would be bad, and needs to be addressed. If that is the case though, it doesn't have anything to do with the board. It's a pretty big leap to think 3 board members would be able to secretly scheme with one HVAC company and no one in the operations or finance departments would notice. It also seems unlikely that Dr. Gerber would be involved at this level. Does your friend know who at BAPS was approached with attempts to bid? I don't really know who would have been in charge of that. Why have we heard blame placed on the board, where it doesn't make any sense, but not on anyone whose job it should have been to handle bids?

So far, Dr. Sisney and Mr. Richardson haven't made any accusations that amount to anything beyond sticking with one HVAC company instead of going through the proper process of considering bids. This is being addressed through the investigation, and even if it's true, probably won't be found to be criminal. Anything else they have said is either easily explained as normal and ordinary, or has been discredited. I'm surprised that anyone is still listening to them.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/21/2009 12:27:54 PM)

Note: I used the abbreviation "as.st" because the full word is not accepted by the language checker. The Tulsa World kindly responded to my request to remove all the partial comments I posted while I was attempting to figure out which word was considered inappropriate.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/25/2009 12:12:14 PM)

I hope you're not out of words, 612. You've presented an excellent summary of what is known so far related to Dr. Sisney's actions and behavior. You've made good use of the material available online to make your analysis.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/25/2009 3:54:49 PM)

Thanks, Jolie. My posts are probably getting too long for people to wade through. They don't seem that long when I'm typing them...

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (3/25/2009 4:28:31 PM)

If anyone is truly interested in the story, they will make the time to read longer posts, particularly if they are well written, as yours are, because they want to know more and understand what has happened, If they're not interested in learning more, then it doesn't matter if they read it or not.

If OSBI comes back with no criminal findings on the Board and district's part, do you think anyone should file a lawsuit against Dr. Sisney for defamation? Or do you think it would be better for the community and everyone involved to just move forward?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/25/2009 7:54:10 PM)

Some kind of closure is needed. There are too many people who have dug their heels in on one side or the other, and people have been hurt because of it.

If it's a case of personalities clashing, we need to know that there were problems on both sides that escalated, and we need to work out a plan to allow us to recognize the situation before it gets to that level again.

If the board shut Sisney out, overrode him on decisions, and had an inappropriate business relationship with any vendors, we need to know the extent of each individual's participation, and we need to put policies in place that will bring any problems out in the open.

If Sisney manipulated people, created an unworkable teaching environment, blackmailed the board, and publicly made false accusations, we need to understand that the board was put in a difficult position, and that they took what they thought was the best course of action they could at the time.

I hope there is another way to get to the truth besides a lawsuit. Anybody who filed one would probably be a target for more criticism. But if the only way to get to the truth is a lawsuit, I think it's worth it. If Maryanne Flippo has proof that Sisney blackmailed her, I think it's her duty to file. That's unfortunate, because if it's true, she has certainly already been through enough, especially for an unpaid volunteer.

Regardless of the outcome, hopefully everyone who has been watching this story will understand that things are not always as they seem from the news reports, and that public opinion is not an accurate way to judge the guilt or innocence or the people involved.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

2112, (3/26/2009 9:29:22 AM)

good comments 612, and yes, shouting is not the answer to all.

One comment you made that raised my eyebrows, you said "we all know Sisney made false accusations in his lawsuit" and then you said that has been confirmed by his lawyer. I don't recall reading or seeing that. or are you using where some individuals were dropped from lawsuit as your qualification? I just don't remember ever hearing anyone saying "sorry I was wrong" to summarize your post.

There are so many accusations, who knows?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

2112, (3/26/2009 9:50:33 AM)

We have gone so long on this, I would like to regress some to what began this in the public eye as it seems we are now analyzing the dust on a bookshelf.

To me, it seems that when he was being terminated you had parents stage a protest to it. Wasn't there, but Sisney did not orchestrate that. I have a good idea who did or the group that did. That was parents on their own and yes, there was a HVAC contractor out there also. don't need to beat that fact up anymore

I think it was arrogance by the 3 to not justify to parents and completely ignore what parents wanted (an explanation). Underlying fact is that it was a 3-2 vote. I don't buy any comment on here that claims they were already blackmailed or threatened at all.

I don't think the public likes being fed "we know what is best for you" being shoved on them. Do you? Also, for every employee that was not happy I believe you could find equal number to counter, to me that negates a lot. At that meeting you also had a 3-2 vote to eliminate public comment? Why, if you are proud and justified on your vote, then take the heat and explain. It just comes across like, "we know what is good for you" so shut up. doesn't it? That philosophy just doesn't work well in the USA and I think that is evident by Mrs. Flippo not running for office again.

Question: Do you think Ms. Flippo would have been reelected if she ran? I think the answer is no. Do you think she voted the way she did understanding it was political suicide? Or was it, I am going to take him down with me? I simply don't understand the motivation or strategy if they knew some parents would be upset? or maybe they didn't predict how this was going to fall out at all? very confusing.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/26/2009 12:45:15 PM)

Hi 2112, I agree, the way the board handled the votes to suspend and terminate was really inflammatory. Yes, their hands were tied somewhat because some of the information involved was protected by employee confidentiality. But they didn't even explain that they couldn't explain! You can't just say "personnel issue" and expect everyone to say, "oh, ok, that's all right then, let's get some ice cream".

I agree, I think most of the protesters were probably regular parents. I don't think Sisney set them up. That's not surprising to me, since Sisney was a popular and successful superintendent, and had the respect of BA citizens.

I can imagine the board members were nervous and upset with all of the events leading up to this, and none of them had been through anything like this before. So lack of experience probably had something to do with it - arrogance might be a little harsh. But after the reaction to the vote to suspend, it would have been a really good idea to issue a press release and explain what they could. Better late than never.

I can understand why public comment wasn't allowed; they knew that the public didn't know what they knew, and that it would probably just make people mad if they heard the parents, and then voted to suspend anyway. But again, they could have at least explained their reasoning. I don't think any of the 3 were proud or happy about their vote; I think they reluctantly did what they thought was best; and that was only after a long history of attempts to improve the situation with Dr. Sisney. If we ever see his personnel file, we will find out if they tried to address problems with him previously. I believe it's absolutely impossible for them to fire him without a trail of attempts to address problems. The idea that they suddenly turned on him when he started uncovering their conspiracy sounds preposterous to me, given the controls in place to prevent wrongful termination.

I think there are various explanations for the 3-2 vote to suspend/terminate. To me, it seems that the most likely one is that, while all five probably hated the idea of the upheaval in the district, the two also wanted to avoid the unpleasantness of being blamed for firing a superintendent who was popular with the public. I also think they were afraid of Dr. Sisney, whether he threatened outright them or not.

No, I don't think Ms. Flippo would have been reelected. But I don't think she was considering that in her decision. I think she voted her conscience, and made the hard decision that she felt had to be made. I really don't think anyone knew that the backlash would be this bad. I believe a large part of it is the PR campaign Sisney has run; but part of it is the lack of communication from the board. I can understand how a lot of parents felt insulted and left out. It certainly could have been handled better.

From what I have heard, I believe the atmosphere under Sisney was poisonous. Certainly you can find some teachers and staff who weren't personally the subject of a tirade, or were forced to follow a directive that went against their training and experience, or felt like they couldn't bring up ideas. But we have heard that the overall environment was very negative and stifling. I hope people understand that it's not the teachers' feelings that are the biggest concern - it's their ability to perform their best and serve our kids.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/26/2009 12:52:50 PM)

Oh, forgot to respond to your first question.

The false accusations on the lawsuit are the ones against the Rampeys, particularly the one that said work was done at Dr. Hudkins' office. Sisney and Richardson had already seen the letter that explained the typo in the invoice, and the GPS that confirmed where the work was done. But they left the accusations in there anyway.

Then when Mike Rampey told the public about the typo and the GPS, Richardson said that it was the first he had seen it. That's just not true. It's one of the things that really make me wonder about the other things Sisney and Richardson have claimed.

We have also never gotten an answer from Richardson on how the Kitchens' signatures got on the taxpayer demand letter, when they claimed they had never even seen it. I can accept either answer - either they didn't sign it, or they signed it but then changed their minds. But Richardson has never explained how it could be both. That's another reason his credibility is suspect.

Now, let's have that ice cream! :)

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

2112, (3/26/2009 8:28:06 PM)

I would prefer to leave comments from Rampey out of this discussion.

Because, I could say that he told a board member he wanted Sisney fired. and while we mention the word "fire". you know where I am going.

To me. It is a moot point whatever he/they say.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/26/2009 9:17:24 PM)

2112, I'm detecting circular reasoning again. You don't believe Rampey because you've already decided Rampey's a crook. Again, looking at the evidence in the light of a foregone conclusion.

The only person who has accused Rampey is Sisney. What if Sisney is lying? Why take the word of one person as golden, and assume everyone around him is lying? It's possible, but the evidence so far doesn't support it. At least, if you're going to be suspicious, be suspicious of everyone equally.

The only source we have for Rampey's comment that he wanted Sisney fired is ...Sisney. Why would we give this claim any more credence than we give claims anybody else has made? Why is what Sisney says above question, while what anyone else says is "moot"? I think you will have a long journey to the truth if you apply these prejudices to the information you get.

Anyway, you don't have to take Rampey's word in order to see that Sisney's claim of the work at the eye doctor's office was false. I can understand Sisney questioning it originally, but continuing to make the claim after he knew it was explained as a typo is dishonest, and hurts his credibility.

Rampey showed the GPS proof, and had staff at Sequoyah Middle School verify that the work specified on the invoice was done there.

Sisney was wrong to continue with the claim after he knew it was false, and Richardson made himself look bad when he claimed he had not seen the explanation of the clerical error.

I'm not sure what you meant about knowing where you are going with the word "fire" ...?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

2112, (3/26/2009 10:04:22 PM)

612,

a couple of questions since you believe GPS answers it all.

Do you think HVAC should be installed per code? Yes or No.

What would you think if you were showed proof(with pictures) where HVAC was not installed per code were our kids are? Ok with it, or not?

Does Carbon Monoxide mean anything to you? yes or no?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

2112, (3/26/2009 10:09:21 PM)

I guess I forgot my main question, that is: if BAPS purchases HVAC services, do they get installed per code or is that extra?

If you say they get that every time, what do you say if I say I have seen differently?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

2112, (3/26/2009 10:40:05 PM)

Either way, I will shut up when shown proof that they bid out the HVAC work several years prior. Since I know they don't have that, I won't shut up. Either the competitive bidding act has merit or it doesn't.

In fact, the documents that Rampey presented at his "rally" do not have where anyone with signature authority from BAPS obligating his "bid" as he says. Keep in mind he always used the word "bid" and never used the word "contract". It is a shell game and I wish they would just admit as such.

It is just a popularity contest in BA and it doesnt stop at the high school level

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

2112, (3/26/2009 11:14:15 PM)

one more post. I think we are the only 3 or 4 reading this on post. so let me know when we all want to meet and solve the worlds problems. I think it would be very stimulating for all of us.

Communication is the key, and that would have solved all we are talking about a long time ago.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (3/27/2009 9:51:47 AM)

Valid questions, 2112, even if asked in a somewhat adversarial manner.

I don't believe I said GPS answers it all; but it does corroborate Rampey's defense to the claim involving the eye doctor's office. That is the only context in which I have brought GPS up.

I don't know if there are problems with the way AA has done the work. There could be issues, or it could be unfounded accusations. I haven't defended AA's work, because I don't know enough about the industry, and I don't have access to any evidence that proves their competence. I also have not joined in the accusations. Again, I don't have the knowledge or evidence. In addition, there is no need - there are already many voices speaking out against AA.

As I have stated earlier, I do believe there was a failure to follow bidding procedures. Whether it was a criminal scheme or not remains to be seen. I believe it's more likely that it was just a matter of leaving in place a relationship that was established. That doesn't make it right, but it's a far cry from a sinister conspiracy.

So I don't think you're going to get proof that they bid out the HVAC work several years prior. Keep in mind though, that doesn't reflect on AA or Rampey at all - it's

not his job to monitor whether the school district follows bidding procedures.

I don't want you to shut up. Keep posting the information you have - it all helps to add more dots to the picture. Just try to connect them in pencil, so you can revise if necessary. :)

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (4/1/2009 1:47:50 PM)

There are two new articles on the Ledger. One is about Dr. Gerber's new contract. I didn't see any surprises there.

The other one is reporting on two issues that were brought up at Monday's board meeting. Ms. Flippo was against providing more details to the public on legal expenditures. Her quote: "I don't believe the public is entitled to know these details. That is my job as an elected official."

That's gonna generate some anger. I don't know if Ms. Flippo elaborated on her point of view at the meeting. The quote in the article gives a bad impression though. The article doesn't specify exactly what would be provided to the public.

That is a direct quote, and Ms. Flippo knows by now that anything she says can be quoted in or out of context. It seems to me that she is being rather blunt considering the bad publicity she has gotten in the past for her statements. It makes it sound like she is hiding something. If she is, it could be something that she has done wrong, or it could be information she is trying to protect for some other reason. I can imagine that releasing this information would also give clues to other information that is not public knowledge. Maybe she thinks it's best if the public not even get into that.

The other issue was approving a proposal for the state audit. The 3 board members plus Ms. Updike voted to delay the issue until the next meeting. Ms. Wilkins pointed out that none of the board members had had an opportunity to study the proposal or get legal review. The short delay to evaluate the proposal seems sensible to me.

I'm not reading the comments. On the Gerber article, it'll probably be more of the he-is-a-criminal stuff. I don't really want to feel compelled to respond. And on the other one, since I wasn't at the meeting, I can't really contribute anything in terms of Ms. Flippo's demeanor, reasoning, or intentions. Anyway, anyone who is still doing the knee-jerk response to Ledger articles isn't going to pay any attention to my posts anyway.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (4/1/2009 9:29:12 PM)

The comments are more of the same, just as you expected, 612.

Personally, if I were serving on the board, I would welcome, even insist on a state audit to prove there was no misconduct, if there was none. If the audit report cleared the board, the district, and AA of criminal wrongdoing, could it be used as the basis for a civil suit against Jim Sisney, John Lare, et al.? Perhaps demand for reimbursement for cost of the audit could be part of the damages requested.

I agree that Mrs. Flippo's responses are not diplomatic. I think she should have found a more cordial and informative way of answering citizen concerns about the mounting legal expenses and explain her reasoning for not wanting the details released.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

thenight1, (4/2/2009 11:35:10 AM)

The parents vs boe has a link to audio of Flippo's comments. She seemed rather adamant that the public isn't entitled to know the details of the legal bills. I understand that there may be some legal issues that have nothing to do with the controversy that don't need put into the public sphere but at least releasing some information about the spending over the various issues relating to Sisney, and this whole mess would be reasonable.

As for the state audit proposal, wasn't that started MONTHS ago? I would think reviewing and studying that proposal would be a high priority and would be done by now. If they have done nothing wrong, a in depth state audit would clear the air and take the wind out of the sails of the doubters. I understand that's more money to spend but to gain public trust and perhaps save in legal fees, I would think the audit would be a good investment. Unless of course, the audit would reveal/prove many of the accusations that have been made of wrongdoing. In that instance, I understand why the board would want to delay or stop the audit but it just prolongs the agony and lessens my trust of the BOE.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

2112, (4/2/2009 1:52:09 PM)

Good point night,

two items to vote on to help clear the air and it gets shot down again. Doesn't make sense. I used to really not even care about what may be on the legal bills, but after listening to that big defense on why not, I am now wondering what someone is hiding. Sorry, that is just the way it comes across.

Second, the audit. Seems like a no brainer, but yet it gets shot down.

after listening to audio I don't know how Sisney worked in that environment? Seems like it was above him that him that was creating whatever difficulties he is accused of.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (4/2/2009 5:37:36 PM)

The audit wasn't shot down - just put off till the next meeting so they can review it. Ms. Updike voted to postpone voting too. I think it would be irresponsible for them to vote on something if they didn't know what was in it.

I agree that Ms. Flippo's remarks seem to raise suspicions. I don't know how she expects the community to accept her explanations. Her reluctance to release this information doesn't prove that she is hiding something, but it sure isn't reassuring anybody. We need an explanation for the explanation!

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (4/3/2009 7:03:22 AM)

The Ledger has a new article up: "Gerber to Break out BAPS Legal Expense" dated April 2. This information will be provided to the board and the public in writing at the April 20 board meeting. Here is an excerpt:

QUOTE

In a news release issued by the school district, Gerber said he will report on legal expenses for the period Aug. 1, 2008, through March 31, 2009, and break down these expenses into various general categories.

According to the release, the superintendent's report will show the percentage of charges for each category. For example, the news release said Gerber's report may show the percentage of billings incurred for legal issues involving employee matters, board governance issues, legal issues involving construction matters, etc.

The exact billing categories will be determined following an analysis of all of the billings.

END QUOTE

The article goes on to say that periodic reports after that may be issued.

This is a very positive step forward and should satisfy many people (but, of course, not everyone).

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (4/3/2009 8:30:51 AM)

TO 612

Remember my promising you information on the Madeleine McCann case? Instead of my re-inventing the wheel, I'd like to direct you to three websites to read. This first one has a condensed copy of the full booklet called "Whatever Happened to Madeleine McCann? 60 Reasons Which Suggest She Was Not Abducted" which I very highly recommend that everyone interested in the case read. It contains so much information that did not make it into the British or American press but is confirmed by the official release of police investigation files from Portugal last year. The Madeleine McCann Foundation sent letters to the McCann parents and their lawyers requesting that they notify the Foundation of any errors in the booklet prior to publication. No one responded back. This litigious couple has not filed a lawsuit against the Foundation for publishing this booklet, primarily because they do not want to go to court and have this information become even more publicly known.

PLEASE go to madeleinefoundation dot org and once you enter the site, you can read the booklet by clicking on the top tab labeled '30 Reasons.'

For an excellent reference website on this case, please go to mccannfiles dot com

I also highly recommend the following Portuguese blogger site for another historical resource and up-to-date information on the case: joana-morais dot blogspot dot com

Joana and fellow blogger Astro are dedicated and fearless in putting out the truth about this case and are definitely of the opinion that the McCanns knew that Madeleine had died May 3 and were directly involved in the coverup and media spin to avoid any consequences (and also allowed them to collect millions in donations as a private business, not a charity). This is also the head Portuguese detective's opinion of what happened. Goncalo Amaral has written a book 'The Truth of the Lie' about the investigation, which has been published in Portuguese and Spanish and is soon to be published in English.

Be cautioned, though, once you start reading, you may find yourself obsessed by the case.

I will copy and paste this post on the last Tulsa World article on the subject "Police Halt Probe on Absent Girl" dated 7/22/08. If you'd like to discuss this case further, let's post our comments there to avoid clogging this thread any longer.

I did put some detail on this thread because I would like everyone to have an opportunity to learn the true facts of the case, many of which have purposely been not published by the British press.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (4/3/2009 9:13:41 AM)

This thread has just bumped up to the #1 spot for Most Commented.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

thenight1, (4/3/2009 10:29:22 AM)

I'm glad to see Gerber will release some information. I won't jump for joy until I see it since the categories are still being developed. If they are overly broad, it won't reveal much.

I agree that BOE members should not vote for the audit not having seen the proposal but this has been going on for so long, WHY haven't they seen it yet? That should have already been done so they could approve it and get on with it instead of delaying further.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (4/4/2009 6:50:04 PM)

It does seem likely that the categories that are provided may be high-level. We might see the categories and the numbers for each category, but the specifics may not be there...which may leave a lot of our questions unanswered. Frustrating.

I am glad Dr. Gerber is addressing this concern, even if the information will be limited.

Mr. Honea's comments, from the "Kelly, Honea vie for school board post" article on the Ledger:

QUOTE

"I see no reason why this kind of detail cannot be released to the public upon request. If there is something in the detail that would be detrimental to the school system's litigation efforts, that detail could always be restricted."

UNQUOTE

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (4/7/2009 10:58:13 PM)

Well, Cheryl Kelly is our winner. Not to say I think Honea would do a better job, but I expect things would be quieter if he were to join the board. Kelly is already perceived by some as being in with the "amigos", so anything she does is likely to be disapproved of just on that basis. If the 3-2 votes continued with Honea on the Whelpley-Wilkins side, people might start to give it some real thought, whereas a 3-2 vote with Kelly will be automatically trashed.

I thought the tact and diplomacy Honea displayed through the campaign would have served the board well. Even when tough decisions have to be made, it is beneficial to all to communicate them in a sensitive way. There seemed to be a bit of a disconnect in that area with the recent events. It looks like Dr. Gerber is working to improve public relations.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (4/8/2009 8:15:27 AM)

It didn't help Archer Honea's campaign that he did not attend the last three board meetings. Some people perceived that as his inability to find time because of his work demands during tax season and question whether that would interfere with his duties during each tax season in each of the five years of serving a full board term.

Cheryl Kelly will likely be able to hit the ground running in the board position, as she is already very familiar with many facets of school operations. Let's hope she will be a reasonable, intelligent presence on the Board and communicate clearly and diplomatically with the community and other board members while serving.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (4/8/2009 8:42:25 AM)

P.S. - I was basing my comments about Mr. Honea's not attending recent board meetings on readers' comments posted on the Ledger, which may or may not be accurate. I apologize if I have repeated something that is not true. I checked and saw he was present at the March 9 regular meeting but not recorded as present at the March 13 special meeting. The minutes from the March 31 regular meeting are not yet available, so I cannot report on whether he was in attendance.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

thenight1, (4/8/2009 9:00:19 AM)

Now we have a new BOE member, I suppose the state audit will be delayed again to give Ms. Kelly time to review the proposal. I wonder what the excuse will be after that?

I know that comment was a bit snarky but I really wish the audit would be approved and get underway to clear up this mess.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

momofweethree, (4/8/2009 9:36:14 AM)

I think it is pretty plain and simple. If you have nothing to hide, you only have transparency and trust restored to gain by allowing a probe into the school board's actions, even if you are confident it is a waste of time.

Refusing the probe is simply saying "I refuse to cooperate to clear the air, I do not think anything good will come of this probe". And therefore leaves even more reason to suspect something is going on.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

2112, (4/8/2009 10:04:21 AM)

It seems that if you have nothing to hide you give the "naysayers" what they want so they look like the fools. Right?

Used to not even care about the legal billing, but with the stanch defence to not release it does make me wonder.

and another thought. If they thought an audit would have an inkling that it would make Sisney look bad, wouldn't they approve in an heartbeat. I would. Maybe it is being put off because he may come out looking somewhat vindicated? or maybe nobody really knows and scared of the unknown?

Doesn't matter, at the next meeting where the audit is brought up they will say that legal counsel says it is not required and based on that it will get voted 3-2 to not do it and the drama will continue.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (4/8/2009 11:18:42 AM)

The audit was requested by the school board before the OSBI investigation started; it made sense then. But now we've got the OSBI investigation looking into the very issues that the audit was going to cover. Why are people still pushing for the school system to pay extra money for a redundant audit? I don't see how that could benefit us.

Why not see what the OSBI investigation turns up, and see if there are still questions before authorizing yet another audit (and spending a bunch more money)?

I think people aren't so concerned with the audit itself as much as they are disgusted with the school board. Waiting for the OSBI audit makes sense; but the public is already condemning the school board in advance for doing what makes sense. These comments show how illogical people can be when they let their emotions do their thinking.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

thenight1, (4/8/2009 11:40:01 AM)

As far as I know, the OSBI is investigating criminal allegations, not conducting an audit. Even if they did conduct an audit, I imagine it would be very restricted.

Whether it is legally required or not, a thorough, detailed audit would seem to be a way to regain public trust which is essential for a public entity like the BOE.

Like it or not, the BOE has to deal with the perception of what is and has happened, not necessarily the reality of what is and has happened. The general perception is not good from what I see.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

2112, (4/8/2009 11:55:58 AM)

612,

What OSBI audit? I don't think anyone has said that. If they were doing that wouldn't they be "engaging" the state auditor to do that?

I think the night is correct.

I disagree and don't see it being illogical to go ahead and request an audit. That is a proactive thing to do if you are going to start asking the public to vote on upcoming bond issues. Again, as I said, it will be killed at a board meeting because legal counsel says we don't need it.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (4/8/2009 1:01:08 PM)

We've already had an audit. The OSBI investigation covers much of the same ground, since the allegations involve improper payments, bidding, etc. It's all the same stuff being looked at. If the audit suggested areas needing improvement, and the OSBI investigation shows where criminal activity did or did not occur, what more do we need to know? Good heavens.

All I hear is a bunch of people pinning all their frustration on one irrelevant issue, because they're mad about something else. I agree that the board's communication has been frustrating. Let's address the real problem instead of spending energy (and losing focus and credibility) with knee-jerk fussing.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

2112, (4/8/2009 1:23:59 PM)

612, sorry to be a stick in the mud. But I don't think you are correct.

The state auditor that came to the board meeting last week, and this is just coming from recollection and trying to hear him and understand, so I could have misheard.

But what he said is that the state audit is completely different from the audit they already did. He said the district did a "financial" audit and those "privately" hired auditors just tell you what is missing. Where as the state auditor is an "investigative" audit and they try find out why it is missing. Two complete different types of audits as he explained it. He went on to say that the state audit uses two agents to conduct interviews (with whoever they want, current employees, ex employees) and they have the power to go as far as they want and expand it if they see something wrong, and yes, the district will pay for that if it expands. Those are powers that the previous audit did not have. He also explained that their cost at this time were based on two agents full time for about a month, as long as the district cooperated with providing all the documents they want and a room to conduct interviews. Also said that good or bad the audit report get turned over to the DA,AG and some others.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (4/8/2009 1:46:16 PM)

The only reason people have given for wanting another audit is to "clear the air". There have been no reasons given to suspect anything beyond what has already been audited and what is currently under investigation.

We already know that we need to make improvements in processes, and correct the bidding procedures.

Any criminal wrongdoing is already being investigated.

There can be circumstances in which a more in-depth audit might be required; I don't agree that pacifying public opinion is a valid one.

If someone can provide some reason other than "we think the board should be willing", then I would consider that reason. I haven't seen one yet, but maybe it's just hard to read through all the "automatic static" that gets generated any time there's a vote.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

2112, (4/8/2009 2:48:07 PM)

Pacifying public opinion is not valid? What? isn't that what this is about? I think a point is that they have lost alot of public confidence and this is a manner to get it back. sorry it cost money to do that, but that is how it goes. and you make a point yourself, "correct the bidding procedures", Ok, if you admit that it was wrong don't you want to know why and ensure nothing criminal was done? or are you part of the camp where we just acknowledge some vendors got screwed, but we all just need to get along? What is scary about that is then the "public" may assume that the bidding procedures may not have changed unless Sisney made a deal over it. I don't know? did he find out and make the changes or did it just happen by itself?

We also don't know what is being investigated by the OSBI or to what level. I just think the state audit is one way the district can take ahold of this situation and try to end it one way or another themselves. If the OSBI request the audit, the district will still have to pay for it any, it won't be free then either.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (4/8/2009 3:14:02 PM)

Public opinion should be managed better than the board has managed it. But it shouldn't need pacifying, since the public should behave like adults. We have not achieved that standard.

I don't believe that the bidding procedures have necessarily been fully corrected yet. But I don't see another audit as a step toward verifying that it gets done. Though no problems have been proven, I believe (you said "admit" - I am not involved in this situation, therefore can't "admit" anything) there were failures to follow procedures. Unless the purpose of this audit is to compensate vendors for lost opportunities, at this point I don't see any value in investigating it further.

As for ensuring nothing criminal was done - again, the OSBI investigation is targeting that very thing.

It's not that I'm dead-set against an audit, if there are real reasons for it. I'm just against the incessant criticism of everything the board does, without regard to whether or not it makes sense.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

1adam12, (4/8/2009 3:41:17 PM)

to 2112, mrtharp, you think that is what you heard? why don't you just replay the tape recording matt used to record ms flippo? then quote exactly what was said.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

thenight1, (4/8/2009 5:25:14 PM)

I wasn't at the meeting but my understanding is similar to 2112 that the state audit is a very different audit than what was done previously. It is much more thorough and would find and illuminate any issues. It is that illumination that the public is asking for.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

1adam12, (4/9/2009 6:47:48 AM)

Ok let me get this straight, we have spent over 200,000 dollars on legal bills which I am sure a large part has been to defend accusations from sisney and a small group of citizens and a taxpayer demand that 4 people did not know what they signed. All of which not one accusation has been proven. Not one. In fact many of the accusations have been proven to be false, then we spent 10,000 on an audit. Then we waste administrators time obtaining FOI requests in search of wrong

doing and to discredit good people that do so much for the community. (I have not seen any of the complainers do anything positive for our community. No suggestions of how they would like to work with the district to be a positive force instead of tearing and slandering good people that differ with them). These people take much of what has been in the paper and lawsuits as fact instead of waiting for the facts. Not even considering that this could have been an attempt to discredit good people. Now we want to force the board to spend another 50,000 to 100,000 to do another audit, not counting the time it will take of the employees of the district, instead of concentrating on the business at hand. All on accusations. I for one am tired of these complainers costing the taxpayers so much of our hard earned money with the cover that they are trying to stop waste. Look what lare has cost us already including the city. Think for a second, what if everything sisney has said so far were false. would we have spent what we have. A few people in this community have cost this district thousands and they can't get along with anyone. They make degrading videos and put them on u tube, they make tape recordings and play on their website, they get on the radio and cry foul, their website name is written to be advisarial instead of promoting working together, they call good people names. I wonder if there is enough people that would get together that could file a class action lawsuit against all of these people for costing so much not only in dollars but costing our home values because no one wants to move here. All of these complainers are well known in this community and when you check their history they are known for this. How about it, is there anyone out there that would be interested in taking action against these so called advocates for justice? I will say this, at least these complainers go to the board meetings. But at the same time it is embarrassing to see them roll their eyes and act like middle schoolers when they do not agree. Do they go to the meetings because they are interested in improving our schools or to just find fault and record meetings? I think some know who these people and business are that are striking behind the lines. It is time that they be called out and this whole community know who these people and business are and what their true motives are. I am ready to expose all of these and their history. What would be better is to put behind us what has been done by one, and move forward with a great tradition of excellence in this community.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (4/9/2009 9:13:55 AM)

*** standing ovation ***

1adam12, as you said, "concentrating on the business at hand" is what we should be doing.

One of the main reasons I have been reluctant to accept the Sisney-was-railroaded/HVAC conspiracy (besides it not really making sense) is the behavior of the anti-board individuals. It's hard to take their point of view seriously when they are so quick to call names, repeat hearsay as facts, and sneer at and mock anyone who offers another possible point of view. These are not the actions of people who consider evidence thoughtfully.

If all we are doing at this point is responding to their repetitive but unfounded accusations, it's not worth any more time or effort, and it's certainly not worth any more conflict.

That's how I see this latest call for the state audit - just a pacifier. We should just grow up instead. And concentrate on the business at hand.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (4/9/2009 9:33:00 AM)

P.S. I notice that 2112's and thenight1's posts have been thoughtful and polite, while mine have been less so. Sorry for being cranky, y'all.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

thenight1, (4/9/2009 11:56:59 AM)

BA has been very generous in approving bond issues for the schools. We appreciate our schools and the great job they do for our children. My children have opportunities my school never offered. (we won't get into how long ago that may have been ;)) I love our schools but has my trust been betrayed?

I'll try to spell out some of my concern.

If the district has been wasting money by not following proper bidding procedures, why would I have confidence that they won't waste the next bond issue? The BOE needs the confidence of the public. The information I read about the audit that was done shows that competitive bidding procedures were not strictly followed and I didn't see anything in it that went back very far in time. How extensive is the problem? I don't know yet and the BOE doesn't seem to be taking steps to either alleviate my concern or show that future money won't be wasted. As I understand it, the state audit might do that. Has anyone learned their lesson if wrongdoing occurred? If they haven't learned, they are likely to make the same mistakes again. My sense of justice kicks in here wanting the innocent to be exonerated and the guilty punished.

The BOE is spending a lot on legal bills. Is the money being spent wisely? Are we fighting things instead of being transparent to regain public trust? If Sisney was rightfully terminated, could it have been handled better to prevent the expenditure of all the legal bills if that is what the \$ is being spent on? We're talking about a school system here and yet it can't clearly point out the lessons already learned or the lesson plan for the future.

Once again, I love our schools but my trust has been shaken if not outright betrayed. It can be regained by enough transparency to show nothing wrong happened and we weren't betrayed or that wrong happened but lessons have been learned and procedures are in place to insure it doesn't happen again. That doesn't seem to much to ask of a public entity supported by my tax dollars.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

1adam12, (4/9/2009 1:33:20 PM)

to the night1, do you really believe that if nothing is found that people will still believe it. no matter what proof they put up or money they spend they will still cry foul. The word transparency has been over used in all of this. the audit went back 5 years, was that not enough. how many more years do you want to go? when all becomes "transparent" will they then bring up something like teachers sick pay in 2000 or whatever else. Why don't you just ask a board member or Dr. Gerber if any of the problems found in the audit have been corrected and how. Again, one person by many false accusations got this started, promised a board member he would cause these problems if he did not get what he wanted, broke into the board building taking several boxes after being told not to go back and for 6 years while he was in charge all of this so called corruption supposedly went on and he did not know. He did not even know there was competitive bidding when there was, and all the while he has taken no responsibility but only blamed past and present board members, teachers, administrators and employees. Should we try to get the money back that we have paid him for the past years for not knowing what was going on or not going on? In corporate america you start at the top and most good executives will admit when it was their fault not throw everyone else under the bus. I still can't help but to believe that some have something to gain by this. They come across as it is for the kids but is it really for their own gain? Broken Arrow is smart and these people will be rewarded. My suggestion to try to be a part of the solution, do what mr honea did. I am just guessing but if the character that archer showed I bet he will be available to be a part of a positive solution to all of the board members including the one that beat him. Run for board and get in and change some things. Do something positive for a change. Do you have to win at all costs or can you be part of a positive change to win for the kids? Let's move forward. Last comment, A couple goes through all of their years in ba schools, raises their kids here, serves the district 30 plus years, served the city and this community giving back of their time and we don't believe a word they say, They must be crooks. At the same time someone outside this community comes here and works for 9 years, no loyalty, makes a bunch of accusations, hires a sleazy attorney that says he had never heard of that before (when it was in his own lawsuit) and sues his own board and community members, breaks into the EDC and we believe them all, even when some have already been proven wrong . And we believe him? I am having a real hard time with logic here. can you help BT ?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

2112, (4/9/2009 1:56:34 PM)

just checked this since last post yesterday. Only read the first couple since Adam12 (cool posting name btw) has some really long posts. Will read later tonight. BTW, I figured thenight was Tharp. So the guessing game continues.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (4/9/2009 2:24:27 PM)

The things people seem so concerned about – how money is being spent, how vendors are being managed – all of these things are no more important now than they ever were. All of this newfound interest in how the school district is run has not been brought about because of new discoveries of vast wastefulness, criminals siphoning off money for their own gain, or secret schemes to channel money to a crooked vendor. It's been brought about by the increasingly discredited accusations of one man with a controversial career with the district.

Where was the interest in the details of how the district was run before Sisney generated the outcry with his questionable accusations? The only thing left to wring our hands about is the legal fees – which have taken a huge leap precisely because of the extra work demanded by Sisney's antics and the antics of his followers.

Now we're all saying I want transparency – I want to be reassured that MY TAX DOLLARS are being used wisely. Why the sudden interest? Why are we just now demanding accountability? Seems like we're just chasing the distraction. Months ago "Golfer Girl" called it a "shiny object" that Sisney had waved in front of us.

The blame is already being handled by the OSBI investigation, so we can let go of the fear that guilty parties will get away free (not counting Sisney).

If we want accountability, let's work with the board to create an environment where facts can be provided to a public that considers them thoughtfully. If the board has to provide details to a rabid band of hecklers that condemns everything they do without trying to understand the reasoning, they're going to have to think carefully about what they provide and how they provide it. That diminishes the ability to provide transparency, requires extra work, and costs extra money. The public has proven that we're not equipped to consider information thoughtfully. We have proven that we make rash, cynical judgments on things we don't know much about, and broadcast derisive and damaging opinions based on nothing but our emotional response, fueled by the promptings of online agitators.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

thenight1, (4/9/2009 3:39:28 PM)

First of all, I'm not Bob Townsend (I presume that is who you mean by BT), or Chris Tharp. My work schedule prevents me from attending most BOE meetings so I am not a voice in that arena. I am a parent who bought my house in BA 18 years ago, and is raising 3 children in that house who all attend BAPS.

According to the audit, original bids for maint and quotes for repairs were not available. (page 7 of the audit) In AA's press conference, Mr. Rampey showed his copy of 1 of a bid(I believe it was 2007) but again, nothing prior. So I repeat myself, how extensive is/was the problem?

Why do I care about it now and not before? I trusted my elected officials to do the job they were elected to do and the administration to do what they were paid to do. Until Dr Sisney's accusations, I had no reason not to trust.

I agree with others that many of the comments made about this are far less than constructive. I've made a few of those myself but I've tried to be much better as have most posters on this particular thread. I think much of the public is very capable of considering information thoughtfully and making up their minds. I just don't think we have the information we need yet.

1adam12's comments seem to trust Flippo's accusations about Sisney and saying Sisney 'broke into the board building' seems rather inflammatory. Sisney made a poor decision to go back without escort but it is reasonable for him to expect to be able to clean out his desk and retrieve any personal items. I also put blame on Sisney if the problems were going on for so long under his watch. If the accusations are true, I'm glad they are being brought out to be addressed but I wonder why it took this long.

I may lean one direction in this but I've tried to keep an open mind in the search for the truth and will gladly accept results that answer my questions regardless of what those results are. There may a few that will try to drag this on beyond reason but there is currently enough doubt that reasonable people can still look for

answers.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

1adam12, (4/10/2009 6:45:56 AM)

to the night one, you presumed wrong. But anyway you make some good conversation. 612 I am leaving it up to you. I'm done.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (4/10/2009 8:37:57 AM)

Thanks for your input, 1adam12. I hope we'll hear from you again.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (4/10/2009 9:19:12 AM)

Also, I'm going to pout now because nobody thinks I'm anybody.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

2112, (4/10/2009 9:35:50 AM)

Funny one 612.

Guess Adam12 got it off his/her chest and wanted to move on. That, was some serious venting.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

thenight1, (4/10/2009 9:44:14 AM)

Now I guess I have to do another search to figure out who BT is. I do hope you'll return 1adam12 as we enjoy good conversation here.

Sorry 612, I haven't been trying to guess who anybody here is, so it's not personal. I figured the 'big wigs' such as Chris Tharp, Dr Sisney, Dr Gerber, John Lare etc would be too busy to hang out here with us.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

thenight1, (4/10/2009 11:16:26 AM)

I guess I'm blind, I can't figure out who BT would be. I thought it was stretching a bit to be Bob Townsend but that's the only BT I can think of that is active in BA politics. (And apparently there are 2 Bob Townsends now that I've been searching)

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (4/16/2009 11:42:50 AM)

The comments on the Ledger are so juvenile and divisive. At this point, I'm all for anything that will bring out the truth once and for all, if it will just SHUT UP the people who are so prejudiced, shrill, and hateful. Either they are right and they will be vindicated, so they'll stop shrieking, or they're wrong and should slink away. I'm not convinced though that any investigation would ever be enough to get them to admit it if they were manipulated.

Even if they are right in some way, it doesn't justify this disgraceful show of antagonism. I'm disgusted at the tone of these so-called adults. I don't believe they have the ability to consider issues impartially when they are filled with such rancor, and our district is likely to suffer more lost teachers and lost dollars because of it.

Go ahead with the audit. I'll get my checkbook.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (4/17/2009 12:02:40 PM)

I'd like to see investigation results that are as definitive as the Semgroup results just published. All the rumors plus much, much more we never anticipated!

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

2112, (4/17/2009 11:42:49 PM)

612, very noble in your comments and requests. But, unfortunately that just won't do it in this type of government. I think your style assumes that our elected officials are thinking of "us" foremost, and I feel that is simply not the case.

I will say that I thought Mr. Newell's letter would have caused him to be ripped, but on the contrary I am amazed at the response (agreing with him) he got. I never would have saw that.

Obviously, there is an undercurrent of mistrust here that I for sure did not see.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (4/20/2009 1:24:35 PM)

Sisney's advocates continue to carry on his fight for him. He set this in motion because he knew he was on his way out, and he had to try to make it look like everybody turned against him because they were crooks. Otherwise, how is he going to explain his contract not being renewed when he's interviewing for his next job? A few people still believe his story, and they're the few voices still ranting on the Ledger.

In addition to his steadfast supporters, he has played on good people's sense of outrage at alleged misuse of money, and come up with another choir to rail against the administration. He knows that the general public has no idea how a school district is run, so he throws insignificant morsels out there and lets them whip up their outrage over nothing. This HVAC thing, even if some of it is true, is a tiny aspect of the business of the district. We have no idea what really goes on.

The few are still stirring up controversy, and embarrassing Broken Arrow. Everyone else is just weary.

Jolie - another "No, wait! it's a conspiracy against me! I'm the victim!" story from another guy who got caught. In today's Business section - "Conspiracy alleged by SemGroup co-founder".

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

thenight1, (4/20/2009 3:49:30 PM)

If a bride walked down the aisle with a perfectly white dress except for one brown stain, everyone is going to notice and comment on the stain, even a small one.

Many would also comment on the beautiful bride but the stain draws your eye to it.

BAPS may be doing everything else by the book but the HVAC thing is the stain that everybody is noticing. I think we have a great school system but I don't currently trust the administration. My eyes keep getting drawn to the stain.

The OSBI investigation and the state audit are the stain removers, combine those with a wash of justice and people will once again focus on the great schools we have.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (4/20/2009 3:56:16 PM)

I don't think running a school district is like a bride's dress in the least. Creating the expectation that anything less than perfection has to be due to a "conspiracy" is exactly what Sisney is using to lead people on this wild goose chase. This is all to draw your attention away from the real issues. I don't think it's really working on that many people, but the ones who are led astray by it are much more vocal.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

thenight1, (4/20/2009 4:19:34 PM)

So what are the real issues you would address?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (4/20/2009 5:18:08 PM)

The biggest issue has already been resolved – eliminating Sisney.

Remaining issues (a few off the top of my head) – teachers, administrators – feel free to add or modify:

- 1) Communication from the board/administration to the public – determine what should be disseminated to the public; in what form; level of detail; timing (monthly reports, quarterly, etc.); provide a method for addressing issues and questions brought up by the public. Provide a cost breakdown for the staff effort required to fulfill each reporting requirement and allow the public to provide feedback on whether they want to pay for them.
- 2) Put in the superintendent's contract (and possibly other staff's contracts) a clause that allows the board to release personnel records that are pertinent in the event of ongoing insubordination or other misbehavior on the superintendent's (or other staff member's) part. It is unacceptable that the board could not provide details on why they fired Sisney.
- 3) Put in place a method of direct communication from teachers and staff to board members. This communication must not be suppressable. Teachers and staff must have a safe way to report conflicts, without fear of retribution. Provide a method to investigate complaints made by teachers and staff.
- 4) File a lawsuit against Sisney for costing the district so much money, workplace harrassment, and blackmailing at least one board member. The purpose of this would be to let the public see the evidence for the board's decision to fire him. Lawyers would know what to file to make sure his personnel records are made public. The dollar amount of the lawsuit should be the court costs for the action. Sisney can't afford to pay the amount he has really cost us, but he should cover the cost to prove to the public that his termination was unavoidable and his claims were malicious and without merit, the latter being subject to the findings of the OSBI investigation.
- 5) After the OSBI investigation results are provided, take any action required to remove and charge people who committed fraud or other crimes. Also take any action required to publicly exonerate those who have been unfairly smeared.
- 6) Develop a plan to make sure ALL areas of district operations are following procedures within a reasonable tolerance. HVAC is just one of many areas – human resources, facilities & grounds maintenance, construction, utilities, buses and other vehicles, academic programs, supplies, equipment, sports, music...just to name a few. There are just as likely to be mistakes and sidestepped policies in these areas. If people are really concerned about money being wasted, they should be concerned about it in all aspects of the district's operations.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

thenight1, (4/21/2009 11:37:03 AM)

Not sure I'd start another lawsuit(on any side without plenty of hard evidence) until after the OSBI results are in but I'd say I agree with you. Very good points that need to be addressed.

I saw the state audit has been approved. Definitely a big step in the right direction. I do wish that it covered the entire period of Sisney's administration and not just back to 2006 since that is just when Sisney said he found out about the problems. If those problems existed in 2006 then the audit should cover most of what needs to be examined though. An audit going back to Sisney's beginnings though would likely show what he knew, when he should have known it and did it start under his watch. I do NOT support paying for the audit to go back indefinitely since they could drag things back 50 years if they wanted too and cost more \$ than information that old is worth.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

thenight1, (4/22/2009 7:55:21 AM)

And audit covering the entire period of Sisney's administration would also be more likely to reveal any patterns of abuse. It's hard to see a pattern if you are only looking at the most recent data.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (4/22/2009 1:18:30 PM)

This is interesting, from OSCN on Sisney's case. Sisney is considered a "public official" because of his position. That appears to have an effect on whether the law of privacy applies to him.

"... THE "FALSE LIGHT" CLAIM IS DISMISSED AS THE COURT FINDS THAT A SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT OF A MAJOR SCHOOL DISTRICT (WHICH IS NOT IN DISPUTE) IS A "PUBLIC OFFICIAL". UNDER THE MCCORMACK CASE, AS NOTED BY THE DEFENDANT, THE LAW OF PRIVACY PROTECTS "THOSE PERSONS WITH WHOSE AFFAIRS THE COMMUNITY HAS NO LEGITIMATE CONCERN." SUCH CANNOT BE SAID OF PLAINTIFF'S PERFORMANCE OF OFFICIAL DUTIES."

Two descriptions of "False Light Invasion of Privacy:

1) Placing the plaintiff in a false light in the public eye

2) False light invasion of privacy occurs when information is published about a person that is false or places the person in a false light, is highly offensive to a reasonable person, and is published with knowledge or in reckless disregard of whether the information was false or would place the person in a false light.

The reason this was dismissed is that Sisney is not protected by the law of privacy. My understanding of this is that, since he is a public official, people can write bad things about him, in the same way we are allowed to write bad things about politicians without fear of being sued.

The "Injurious Falsehood" charge was dismissed because it's not officially a tort in Oklahoma.

So both of these were dismissed because of legal reasons - not because the defendants showed that any of the charges were without merit.

The remaining charges (defamation, tortious interference, and intentional infliction of emotional distress) are going to be considered. The court notes: "...WHILE THE DEFENDANT'S ARGUMENTS ABOUT THE "THINLY PLED" ALLEGATIONS ARE WELL TAKEN, AND THE ISSUE REGARDING ABSOLUTE AND/OR QUALIFIED IMMUNITY BY SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS IS ONE WORTHY OF FURTHER EXPLORATION, THE MOTIONS ARE DENIED AT THIS STAGE OF THE PROCEEDINGS WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO BEING REURGED AFTER FURTHER DISCOVERY."

My understanding of this is that the court believes that the defendants' arguments are worthy of consideration, but more needs to be looked at before a determination can be made.

It's scheduled for a conference on 4/29. Probably nothing will happen then - maybe just scheduling more hearings.

I don't know why the timing of this update came out so close to the end of Ms. Flippo's term on the board. It could just be coincidence - it sounds like there was some research to be done. Maybe there are a few other things on the judge's desk, too...

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (4/22/2009 1:38:05 PM)

Tortious Interference With A Business Contract

66. The Defendants intentionally and improperly interfered with the contract of employment between Jim Sisney and the Broken Arrow School District.

67. The Defendants enticed and induced the Broken Arrow School Board not to perform the contract.

68. As a result of the Defendants' interference with and actions concerning the employment contract between Jim Sisney and the Broken Arrow School District, Dr. Sisney has sustained damages in an amount in excess of \$10,000.00. Since three of the defendants are on the school board, this probably is targeted more at the Rampeys. Sisney is claiming that the only reason he was dismissed was that the Rampeys put pressure on the school board. I believe that Sisney will have to prove that this was the only - or overwhelmingly predominant - reason in order to make this stick. The board will probably try to prove that there were other compelling reasons, making the claim that the Rampeys forced his dismissal moot. If this is the case, we may eventually have access to the details surrounding Sisney's firing.

Either the school board trumped up their "reasons" in an attempt to cover themselves for bending to the Rampeys' pressure, or Sisney was a bad egg and both the school board and the Rampeys knew it. I hope the court's "discovery" on this charge determines which. It doesn't look like anything will happen any time soon though. ** sigh **

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

thenight1, (4/22/2009 4:46:28 PM)

Thanks for the info, I hadn't seen anything lately on the lawsuit on the news sites.

Wonder where Jolie has gone? Haven't seen her post in a couple of weeks or so.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

tsks, tulsa (4/22/2009 11:34:43 PM)

And the state is trying to dereg the schools?Wow!

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (4/23/2009 9:51:57 AM)

Hi, everyone. I'm still checking in to read every couple of days but too busy to comment with any depth right now. Our son was in the hospital for a while and is now out but still requires much care.

Thanks for continuing to research and comment on this case. I'll chime in at a later time if I have anything to add to the conversation.

612--I appreciate the update on Sisney's defamation lawsuit in particular. Good work.

Jolie

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (4/23/2009 11:07:13 AM)

Jolie, I hope your son recovers quickly. I'm sure everyone is glad he is home now!

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

thenight1, (4/24/2009 7:47:55 AM)

If you don't mind, I'll add your son to my prayers for a speedy recovery and strength for rest of your family as you deal with his illness.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (4/24/2009 1:55:26 PM)

Thank you both very much for your hopes and prayers on my son's behalf.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

thenight1, (4/29/2009 7:49:55 AM)

I guess Sisney has a new job.....

Tulsa World: Sperry schools hires ex-BA superintendent (29 April 2009)

That's interesting. It's a much smaller school district but it keeps him in this area which is convenient for pursuing his legal actions. It's a temporary contract, only runs through June 30.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (4/29/2009 8:01:02 AM)

Oh my. I never would have called that one.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (4/29/2009 9:52:08 AM)

I feel sorry for Sperry's teachers and staff. What in the world was their board thinking, hiring someone who is embroiled in troubles in his last district and the outcome still unknown?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (4/29/2009 10:05:20 AM)

Sperry may be having a hard time attracting good superintendent candidates right now. Sisney is certainly qualified to do the job. The short term lowers their risk; anyone can stay on their best behavior for a few months.

But I would be very concerned that Sisney might be more concerned with vindicating himself in the Broken Arrow situation. At best, he may be distracted; at worst, he may use the position for further manipulation and his PR campaign against Broken Arrow.

Of course, if it's true that he has committed blackmail, workplace harrassment, and intentionally taken steps designed to destroy the reputations of Broken Arrow schools and its board and staff, Sperry might be in for a lot more conflict and controversy than they imagine.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (4/29/2009 10:08:09 AM)

It's also possible that Sperry is considering Sisney for the permanent position. This short term contract may be a trial period. I predict he passes with flying colors.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

thenight1, (4/29/2009 12:56:44 PM)

Keep in mind that if Sisney is the victim in the BA situation (and I know that is a HUGE IF), then Sperry might have just hired a guy who is obviously not afraid to tackle tough situations (such as bucking the will of the school board to fix bidding issues), and a guy who has experience with an even larger school district than what he is now running.

Who knows, with all of the chaos they are having, maybe they want/need the heavy hand that Sisney is reputed to be.

It all definitely ads an interesting plot twist.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (4/29/2009 1:03:14 PM)

You're right about that, he might be just the ticket! I don't know the Sperry situation at all, but if (another big IF) there are some agitators at work there, they may be about to meet their match.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

thenight1, (4/29/2009 1:03:41 PM)

I wonder if Sisney provided any of his reputed evidence to Sperry to convince them to take his side as truth? If they are believing him then I imagine they would more or less ignore the trouble surrounding him and think they just got a bargain in luring him from a large district.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (4/29/2009 1:12:53 PM)

True, if he wanted to present his side to Sperry, it would be informal - not considered evidence in a court; therefore not subject to the requirement that it be true to the best of his knowledge, at the risk of perjury.

The only question then would be how convincing he was. And, innocent or otherwise, I believe Sisney has shown that he can be pretty darn convincing.

I'm not sure about the details, but I remember that BA had a requirement to fill the superintendent position quickly. Sperry may have had to act fast, if the previous superintendent left as unexpectedly as reported. Sisney was already local, obviously well-qualified, and probably critically important, immediately available.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

thenight1, (4/29/2009 3:36:10 PM)

Just as Gerber was well qualified and available for BA, Sisney fit that need for Sperry. I'm sure that's why both were signed on to temporary contracts. Once Gerber showed his ability in the position, his contract was extended and the same thing may happen to Sisney.

Had I been doing the hiring, I doubt I would have hired either of them since both are caught up in the mess at BA. Until it is resolved, both Sisney and Gerber are somewhat tainted in regards to running a school system as far as perception is concerned.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

cowboyfan, (4/29/2009 7:49:24 PM)

What has Sisney got to lose? Any decisions he makes that involve replacing personnel can be blamed on previous administrations. If he takes a tough stand with staff, he won't come off looking like a bully because he's been hired to clean things up.

I believe he'll be hired on after June 30th as well, and stay long enough to "restore his reputation" and possibly get his sidekick Beagles up there with him and then give the job to him. No matter what happens with the BA situation, Sisney will come out smelling like a rose...he's done it before, he'll do it again.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (4/29/2009 9:52:13 PM)

Cowboyfan, it sounds like you know some things I'm only guessing at.

Broken Arrow may end up getting cleaned up too, if Sisney takes his friends to Sperry with him.

Has he been able to come out smelling like a rose in as public a situation as this? I think there is a possibility that the lawsuit he filed may uncover something he'd rather keep quiet. Of course, he would have known about that risk before he filed...as long as his counsel was aware of the risk and was up front with him.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (4/30/2009 12:14:38 PM)

The Ledger had a story on Sperry hiring Sisney yesterday; that story's link was broken. There is another story dated today (may be the same text) but you have to click on "More News" and scroll down to find it.

Strange that it got moved so quickly from the front page (if it was ever there), considering the public's apparent interest in this story, and the length of time past stories on this topic remained on the front page.

Makes you wonder if this is being downplayed in Broken Arrow for a reason.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (5/1/2009 12:51:23 PM)

Thinking about this - Sisney doesn't really have to come out on top, does he.

All he really has to do is introduce questions about his firing - which he has done with great success - and then turn on the charm.

As long as there is doubt about the circumstances surrounding his termination, he can wiggle out of the stigma of being fired.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (5/1/2009 1:02:52 PM)

The Tulsa World has announced that Jim Sisney has filed a lawsuit against the BA District and its school board for wrongful termination. See today's article entitled "Former Broken Arrow superintendent sues district"

Unless there's a deadline for him to meet in filing this lawsuit, what's his hurry unless it's another act in a dog-and-pony show to distract the public.

Pending OSBI investigation results and the state audit would do a lot of the work for him and his attorney, if what he is claiming against the Board and the district is true. So again, what's the hurry in filing this lawsuit?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (5/1/2009 1:44:11 PM)

I wonder why the impeccable timing. He waited this long, then, days after getting hired an interim super (probably with permanent in mind), he finally filed the lawsuit he threatened months ago.

Thinking about why he would file a lawsuit in federal court with what looks like a flimsy case (the Tulsa court seems to agree, based on the comments on OSCN on his defamation case) -

It's possible that he will try for a settlement. That way he could maintain the appearance of being a victim of a conspiracy without having to prove anything, or risk having his personnel records open to the public.

If Broken Arrow agrees to a settlement, he can claim that it's an admission of guilt.

If Broken Arrow doesn't agree to a settlement, there will probably be more of the outcry against the board wasting taxpayer money. Sisney may be counting on this to put pressure on the board. In fact, he may help generate it. If this is indeed his approach, he is the one the outcry should be against.

Here we go again.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

thenight1, (5/1/2009 4:15:25 PM)

I wonder if Sperry required him to 'settle' the matter with BA and this is his way of settling it?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (5/2/2009 9:19:36 AM)

Wonder why the BA Ledger is slow to report on Sisney's new lawsuit? So far, they have not published anything. Aren't you surprised at that?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

Jolie2, (5/2/2009 9:23:01 AM)

612, that's a gamble that Sisney might be making by filing this lawsuit. To some, his persistence is 'evidence' that he is in the right. A settlement would look like an admission of guilt on the district's part. I hope the board/district will not back down for a second, no matter how much it costs, if they are innocent of criminal wrongdoing and Sisney was filed for legitimate reasons.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (5/3/2009 4:37:43 PM)

The Ledger barely reported Sperry hiring Sisney, and hasn't said a word about the lawsuit. I'm sure there's something behind that. I wonder if they're having a hard time controlling the comments that are made on Sisney stories. They probably don't want word getting out that they censor.

It's possible that Sisney filed his lawsuit because he really believes he was wrongfully terminated, but either way, he has a lot to gain and little at risk. A settlement would be a huge win for him, because, as you said, everyone would take it as an admission of guilt. Plus there's the cash of course.

But he benefits even if BA won't settle. There's the appearance of righteous persistence, like you mentioned. And it also keeps his story in the public eye, so there are more chances to let his supporters bash the board.

It's possible that he really had to file wrongful termination because of appearance. Failing to file might have been inconsistent with the story he told Sperry, to the point where they might have doubts about whether he was telling the truth if he didn't file.

The only risk would be if his personnel records became evidence. I think he has a plan to prevent this from happening. I can easily see him coming up with a diversion to use as an explanation when he drops the lawsuit. This is a tactic he has already used, and it seems to go over well with his followers. There seem to be many who are eager to take any explanation he offers, no matter how implausible, to rationalize his actions.

He can undoubtedly come up with a rationale that will make him look even more like a hero/victim. Along the lines of "I'm doing this for Broken Arrow. Someone has to put an end to the litigation...".

Can't wait to hear that, can you? Almost as bad as his quote in the Sperry article about seeking understanding, and it's not about who's right or wrong. Whoa, tell that to the teachers and staff who have worked for him.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

thenight1, (5/4/2009 2:49:59 PM)

Also keep in mind that if the school district settles with Sisney, would that encourage any ac companies that feel they were locked out to sue? I could certainly picture some people thinking easy money and piling on. Others might have legitimate reasons. I'm not sure what grounds they have or if they can sue for discrimination or lost business?

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

cowboyfan, (5/4/2009 5:55:35 PM)

Like I said, he'll come out smelling like a rose. He may be corrupt, but he's not stupid.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (5/4/2009 11:58:55 PM)

You're right about that, cowboyfan. It's win-win for Sisney; not because he's right, but because he knows how to work his audience.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (5/5/2009 3:47:54 PM)

I think it's really strange that the Ledger insists that Sisney filed his defamation lawsuit after he was terminated.

Posted on Ledger article "Sisney lawsuit names BAPS, board of ed".
This article states that this is the second lawsuit Sisney filed as a result of his termination.

His first was filed on Sept. 3. He was suspended on October 6 and terminated on October 23.

This is the second Ledger article that has gotten the sequence wrong.

The "OSBI gets school investigation" story from 3/2/2009 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

Why is it habitually being reported that Sisney filed his defamation lawsuit AFTER he was terminated? This is a significant error. It doesn't exactly build trust in the Ledger's reporting.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (5/5/2009 3:52:42 PM)

Well that wasn't very clear. The whole post on the Ledger was:

This article states that this is the second lawsuit Sisney filed as a result of his termination.

His first was filed on Sept. 3. He was suspended on October 6 and terminated on October 23.

This is the second Ledger article that has gotten the sequence wrong.

The "OSBI gets school investigation" story from 3/2/2009 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

Why is it habitually being reported that Sisney filed his defamation lawsuit AFTER he was terminated? This is a significant error. It doesn't exactly build trust in the

Ledger's reporting.

[Report Comment](#) | [Ignore User](#)

612, Broken Arrow (5/5/2009 3:54:46 PM)

This is the text from the Ledger article that gets it backwards:

QUOTE

The lawsuit is the second to be filed by the former superintendent as a result of his termination.

The first was filed in Tulsa County District Court on Sept. 3. It alleges he was defamed by school board members Maryanne Flippo, Sharon Whelpley and Shari Wilkins, Air Assurance owner Mike Rampey and optometrist Dr. Douglas Hudkins.

UNQUOTE

The Ledger may correct the article rather than post my comment. Either would be an improvement.