

Broken Arrow

PRESS RELEASES

Superintendent comments on Feb. 19, Feb. 20 media reports

“Recently the Broken Arrow police, as a result of a suspicious fire at a storage facility, obtained a search warrant for School District records. Their stated intent was to compare our records with those of Air Assurance found in one of the storage buildings that sustained smoke damage. There were twenty units damaged and our understanding is that the fire started several buildings away from the Air Assurance Unit.

The affidavit on which the judge based his decision to issue the search warrant and which the District first saw on February 20, 2009 lists allegations that have heretofore not been shared in any manner with any administrator or board member of the School District.

The School District has stated repeatedly that we will cooperate fully with any investigation. That will always be our position.

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

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

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

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

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

The specific documents alluded to have not been provided to the school district by this ex-employee even though the school attorney demanded documents referred to in the taxpayer lawsuit over 30 days ago. To this day the complaining party is still refusing to provide the school district with any evidence of in support of his allegations of wrongdoing.

One has to ask why would the complaining party continue to refuse to provide this evidence if it, in fact, really exists? This creates a very significant credibility issue.

The private audit completed by the school district looked at all Air Assurance invoices and stated that the majority had all of the proper documentation for payment. In short they found no wrongdoing only human error.

The work order system (TMA software) alluded to many times by Channel 6 is simply an internal tracking software program purchased by the district for the Maintenance Department to manage work requests that number in the seven to ten thousand range in numbers every year. Work requests are forwarded by site secretaries, principals, custodians, and maintenance personnel; anyone, who might see a problem requiring maintenance work. The work is then assigned based on whether internal staff can do the job or if a trade vendor is needed. The vendors are set up on blanket purchase orders and are then called in to do the work as assigned by the Maintenance director or his staff. The work order system was never utilized as a part of the documents for payment because the invoice received from the company and the purchase order are all that is legally required.

The same system is in operation today. The only change made by the district has been made by the current superintendent and CFO who now require that the Work Order be attached and accompany the invoice when submitted for payment. Again this has been determined by the current superintendent and CFO to be a better internal practice. This process was never asked for by the Purchasing Office until this year and after the current superintendent was hired. The work orders, therefore, in all previous years were NOT attached to invoices. To attempt to go back and do that now would mean pulling tens of thousands of documents by hand and attaching them. If the Broken Arrow Board directs staff to undertake this task, it will, of course, be done.

The Broken Arrow School District administration and board continue to work to make this District the best in the State.”