McBride drags Wyoming public education kicking and screaming into the 20th Century!

While the rest of the nation has advanced to online test taking, your very own Dr. ~~Kevorkian~~ Jim McBride just issued an edict that Wyoming school children will hereafter take their tests by crayon.

Well, not by crayon but by No. 2 lead pencils. Little difference.

How far will voters allow public education in this state to slide before making a change at the top? Seriously, folks, Jim McBride is truly one of those guys who can not pour a liquid out a boot without directions on the heel.

McBride had only one other job in public education before mistakenly being hired by the Wyoming Department of Education and was fired from it. The job he was hired for here was little more than making coffee and asking Trent Blankenship if he needed anything. He did not serve WDOE in a position of importance.

Then, the careless and incompetent Republican State Central Committee forwarded McBride's name among the three from which Dave Freudenthal had to select a successor to Trent Blankenship, who had resigned before his term was up to take a lucrative school superintendent's position in Barrow, Alaska.

Trent and the former chairman of the State Central Committee, who now wants his wife to be superintendent of schools, have apologized to me for the mistakes they made concerning Jim McBride. But, those bells cannot be unrung.

Once appointed school superintendent by Freudenthal, McBride set about endearing himself to the governor by bowing and scraping. His subservience to a governor from the other political party has been enough to make me want to retch.

But what makes me sickest is the fact that McBride was driven from Bennett, Colorado for incompetence (see the Cheyenne Herald website, October 2006) and voters here still chose him over a very qualified Wyoming educator, Michelle Hoffman, in the 2006 general election.

So, before you whine too much about the state of public education in Wyoming now, take a good look in the mirror and ask yourself why you voted for some bozo simply because he had an "R" behind his name when you had a better choice but she had a "D" behind her name.

This is a quiz you can take with a No. 2 lead pencil: What element of public education has improved since Jim McBride became state superintendent of public instruction in Wyoming - first by mistake, then by vote? Tick. Tock. Tick. Tock.

McBride will claim to have had an important role in ridding the state of diploma mills. That is a lie. He, the UW prez, and the LCCC prez signed a joint letter after the Cheyenne Herald had momentum working against the degree sellers in our midst. He had as much to do with the law that exiled diploma mills to another state as Dave Christensen had for the success of walk-on kicker Ian Watts. None.

School children labored over the PAWS test this past year only to be told, "Never mind!" when McBride screwed things up. Standardized tests are no walk in the park for school children. They fret about them. They worry about their results. And, then when they're good, they're proud of their achievement. This time around, Kevorkian took his suicide machine to Wyoming public schools and killed off Wyoming's standardized test results.

Then, as McBride is wont to do, he blamed others. In Colorado, he blamed the school board. Well, I've talked with people in Bennett, Colorado and McBride failed on his own - it wasn't a school board out to get him. It was a school board wanting to get *rid* of him. And for very good reasons.

He is incompetent. Always has been. Always will be.

With our PAWS tests, like in Colorado, it is always someone else's fault. Here, at least, he could sue. He promised to sue the Cheyenne Herald and the Bennett, Colorado school district for releasing and publishing his superintendent evaluations, too. But he never did. If he did, even the book-licking newspapers in the state couldn't ignore his failings. They'd have to report when he was deposed and admitted what had happened in Bennett and why he was released from that job after a year. And, he'd have to admit to other allegations that were not in his superintendent evaluations. So, he's not going to sue me or Bennett, Colorado.

He can sue the PAWS contractor because it isn't his money being wasted and he knows that the results of any such lawsuit will not be known before the primary election in August. He has brought that lawsuit to cover his own failings. He can blame someone else and the truth won't be available to Wyoming voters before they fill in the oval in August. If you believe him again, shame on all of you. There are better choices. Choose one.

The calming islands were a dumb idea and it took them how long to figure that out?

There is a line that goes, "So soon old, so late smart," and it might have been written for Cheyenne's elected officials.

I wrote here several years ago that the design for the so-called "calming islands" put on Vandehei in Bar X to reduce or eliminate truck traffic was drawn on a cocktail napkin late more night (or early the next morning) in Uncle Charlie's.

Everything done to affect the traffic on Vandehei between Yellowstone and I-25 was done to reduce truck traffic, not to slow car traffic. That attempt began in about 1998 when residents demanded the City Council place "No Trucks" signs on Vandehei between I-25 and Yellowstone. That council would not agree to that and it was a couple years before two residents of Bar X were elected to the city council and devious measures were taken to satisfy that demand - **NO TRUCKS**!

Let me repeat: The calming islands on Vandehei were placed to reduce or eliminate truck traffic and for no other reason. If they also accomplished slowing car traffic and provided an unusable bike lane, that was residual effect, not the purpose.

Whatever is done to correct the misguided notion of calming islands, the objective of keeping truck traffic out of Bar X will remain paramount. Does anyone doubt my position?

Consider another action taken after the calming islands were placed in Bar X.

On Yellowstone, just south of Vandehei (street name to the west) and Gardenia (street name to the east), just before a northbound truck would turn left to cut across Vandehei to I-25, a highway sign was placed to direct those trucks miles further north. There is no concern for the truck mileage, just for keeping a perfectly legal vehicle out of Bar X.

The road sign does not say "Northbound to I-25" which would have been reasonable, almost appropriate. It directs trucks that want to go south to Denver, west to Laramie or east to Omaha to travel several miles more to the north before doubling back south on I-25 toward their destination.

When Bar X residents first demanded truck traffic be removed from what they consider their "private" street, I asked where the trucks coming off I-25 and heading east would be directed. The only alternative for those trucks would have been to go south on Hynds, then east on Western Hills - RIGHT PAST M^C^CORMICK JUNIOR HIGH! That was of no concern to Bar X residents. So long as the trucks did not use Vandehei, they did not care where they went. They wanted special consideration for their $500,000 heavily-mortgaged, sparsely-furnished houses. To hell with the kids.

What's the difference between a "life partner" and a live-in girlfriend?

I suppose the difference is your salary.

Every time a story is written about Denver Nuggets coach George Karl and a reference is made to Kim Van Derra, she is called his "life partner."

At ~$4 million a year, it probably sounds better than referring to her as his steady, his mate, significant other, or similar. Probably when a rich old dude like George Karl fathers a baby when he's in his mid-50's, his woman doesn't want to be known as his "squeeze" so life partner it is.

A lot of men think of their wife as their life partner but there isn't really an official designation as such. The 50% of life partner relationships that end in divorce also kind of messes up the term.

Tiger Woods considered Elin Nordegren his "life partner" as he cheated on her with half the female population in the hospitality industry. Maybe the divorce settlement is more expensive to a life partner than it is to a plain old girlfriend - whether she's had your kids or not. She's your live-in girlfriend, George. Call her that.

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