

Degree sellers scurrying

Long a haven for degree selling enterprises, improved state statutes will have an effect of ridding the neighborhood of the scoundrels but the Wyoming Legislature tossed them a bone by allowing five years to become accredited. None of them will or could, if allowed fifty years and it was a terrible mistake to provide that cushion to continue to mislead trusting students around the world.

It seems the WDOE just cannot bring itself to lose those junkets and will continue to accommodate the questionable operations of these outfits.

Preston University has moved its "operations" to Montgomery, Alabama. A "Google" on Preston will show an announcement from the same guy who told legislators that Wyoming could become the world leader in degree selling and the industry would flourish and become bigger than the coal industry - if only they didn't pass the law requiring the peddlers to become accredited by a legitimate and USDOE recognized accreditation firm.

March 15, 2007 was Montgomery's lucky day. The "Chancellor" said Preston was moving its "World Headquarters" down there, "effective immediately."

His blather continues: "While Preston enjoyed significant success during its tenure in Cheyenne Wyoming, the availability and support resources in Wyoming has proven insufficient to support the school's continued growth."

Then, "The favorable business climate of Alabama, together with its superior pool of education professionals, experience faculty and skilled support staff makes the State a logical location to support Preston University's strategic plan into coming decades."

Gag me with a spoon!

The guy doesn't mention that Wyoming became unattractive because it passed

a law to rid itself of bozos like him. Let's hope Kathryn Sessions and Jim Anderson feel real proud of their expense-paid junket, courtesy of Preston University.

Alabama has a "superior pool of education professionals, experienced faculty"? Oh, my God. And why would Preston care? What faculty are they going to have? Outfits like Preston collect fees from unsuspecting dupes, they don't provide a legitimate education or they could become accredited.

They adopted a different name to continue to operate in Wyoming and that should be in violation of the statute. They want to have their cake and eat it, too. Once they announced (on March 15, 2007) a move to Alabama, they ceased to have a physical presence in Wyoming and cannot assume a different name and continue to sell degrees from Cheyenne. If the WDOE does not put a stop to that, the Attorney General should. Boy, that's a pair to draw to. Fairmount University, the new name, should be eliminated.

Kennedy-Western University, the cellar dweller on 17th Street, downtown Cheyenne, has changed its name to Warren National University. Frances E. Warren must be spinning in his mausoleum. Why a new name all of a sudden? Could it have anything to do with Wyoming's new law? Thought so.

To allow continuation in scamming, the other online degree sellers based in Wyoming have supposedly made application for accreditation. American Central, American Global and American City (wonder why they stick "American" in their name?), Warren National (see above), Paramount University of Technology are "seeking accreditation". Sure they are.

They are legitimate, accredited schools operating in Cheyenne. College America, University of Phoenix and Institute of Business and Medical Careers should not be lumped with those unaccredited.

McBride is still a dope

Jim McBride has a simple philosophy: "Was it good? Yes? Then I did it. Was it bad? Yes? Then someone else did it."

Notorious for deflecting blame and craving credit, Jim McBride has now managed to botch acquiring the PAWS tests results in time to prepare students who must, or should, retake the test.

He is simply one of those people who cannot pour liquid from a boot even with directions on the heel.

His **ONLY** experience in **ANY** public school system was in Bennett, Colorado and he was shown the gate after only a few months of full-time employment there. Here are some of the comments from the District's April 15, 2002 and October 14, 2002 "Superintendent Evaluation" forms which he signed and did not dispute:

"You have a problem in uniting people to work toward a common goal. A trend has emerged in that you do not involve the appropriate people in the decision making process of the district."

"... due to your impulsive nature, you limit the opinions of others, you do not explore implications and options as you should, you avoid careful problem analysis ..."

"One thing that has become apparent is your ability to delegate research and information gathering to district staff that should be done by the superintendent ..."

"Several times you have 'passed the buck' and made the Board or Board members responsible for your errors in communications."

"Because you have a problem in listening to people, you are perceived as not attentive in trying to grasp ideas expressed by others."

"You are not a good listener, you are rude at meetings around the district by constantly interrupting ... You constantly get the wrong interpretation of the conversation by not listening. You are perceived as a person that talks at others not with them."

"Does not understand the issues."

"McBride brings no support to the staff - does not know school law, finance. Does not know how to work with subordinates."

"For too long he was stuck on growth, what about CSAP scores???"

"The desire seems to be there, but lacks the correct information to achieve."

"Strives for excellence, but lacks personal skills to get us there."

"Have seen very little leadership demonstrated. Can not focus on more than one issue at a time. Blames staff for his failures."

"Displays confidence, but has peddles quick"

"Seems to be unable to determine what problem is important and how to approach the situation."

"Always 'passes the buck' and keeps praise to himself."

"He can't make difficult decisions and he constantly 'passes the buck' when the solution isn't pretty and then he can accept the praise to make him look good."

"He sabotages the board and staff constantly."

"Interpersonal skills are very poor. NOT interested in others, what they think or feel."

"McBride is insincere, and strives to make himself look good at the expense of others. The board does not have any level of trust in McBride. He has been caught in several indiscretions on the truth concerning issues of his leadership."

"He is not a good listener, does not take other people's ideas. TAKES credit for other people's ideas and accomplishments."

Unsurprisingly, his employment as school district superintendent at Bennett was terminated well before his contract expired.

A leopard does not change its spots.

There is no reason to believe McBride will improve. He knowingly ran a campaign in which he withheld the truth from voters and lied on his own campaign website. He has the popular governor's support and the State Republican Party is embarrassed to have checked out his past before recommending his appointment to become State Superintendent to complete Trent Blankenship's term.

As usual, he will not be held accountable.

Students do not relish taking tests. To have to an unnecessary test because WDOE did not do its job is harmful to education. It discourages students and wastes precious teaching time.

The PAWS tests taken in January did not sneak up on anyone - except perhaps McBride, but no one else. Students had done dry runs on the test and the kinks were supposed to have been straightened out so the January test results would be timely and accurate. Benchmarks were changed as to what would determine a student "proficient" and no one seems to know on whose authority. Test results did not come in on schedule and students will return from Spring breaks to then learn whether they do or don't have to retake parts, or all, of the PAWS test.

Harcourt has failed in several states. Illinois has pulled most of its \$44.5 million contract "over delays." But McBride waived their penalty. The USDOE is reviewing whether the feds should assume testing oversight. The No Child Left Behind Act is very exacting. There is no way Jim McBride can handle this assignment.

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