

# What success in public education? Fiscal conservative in public education?

Jim McBride took the meteoric leap from office staff to state superintendent of schools with the help of a governor from the other party. From superintendent of a small school district in Colorado to state superintendent of public instruction in Wyoming took no time at all.

In yet another example of the ineptness of the Republican Party Central Committee, McBride's name was among three forwarded to the Democratic governor to choose a successor to the elected superintendent, who had resigned his office to accept a position in Barrow, Alaska.

Only politics would allow McBride to be chosen over Annette Bohling and Don Bryngelson. Ms. Bohling was widely regarded as the most capable of the WDE leadership when Trent Blankenship resigned and Bryngelson had 26 years as a Wyoming public school superintendent and was the first Wyoming School Facilities Commission chairman.

Jim McBride was a middle-level employee unknown to most in public education.

On September 11, 2006, I hand-delivered a letter to McBride at the Department of Education office in the Hathaway Building, in which I asked him four questions. On September 19, he mailed a response.

Because his answer to the final questions raised concern over just what transpired to lead to his short tenure in Bennett, Colorado, follow-up forwarded to him on September 29th. Those answers will be reported in the next issue of the Herald.

The exchange went as follows:

McBride had been quoted in a newspaper article as saying that contributors to the campaign of his opponent, Michelle Hoffman, were "from people I let go," and that "many of the individuals in education who supported her were people whose job I had terminated or contractors who had not had their contracts renewed under my command."

I sent him a list of contributors to the Hoffman campaign and asked him to identify those who were employed at WDE when he became superintendent. I also provided him a list of contributors to his own campaign and asked him to identify those who were WDE employees or contractors.

*These claims appear near the bottom of Jim McBride's campaign letterhead*

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Proven Leader • Life-Long Republican and Educator • Track Record of Success  
Fiscal Conservative • A Man of Vision and Integrity

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**Board Travel & Registration Expense Review:**  
--- "The Board travel budget has been below budget; however, the Superintendent's travel budget is already over budget for the fiscal year."  
*Bennett Board of Education Nov. 21, 2002 meeting minutes*

The only job Jim McBride held in public education prior to being hired by WDE was as school district superintendent in Bennett, Colorado, a school district of about 1,100 students. He retired from the Air Force in December 2001 and took the Bennett job soon thereafter. Nine months later, he "resigned." Track record of success? Where?

His answer: "On the report you provided, one contributor is a contractor. Mr. James Popham began his contract in the previous administration. I have continued the relationship. One contributor is the husband of a WDE employee." (The name was provided.)


He did not, could not, or would not provide names for the contributors to the other campaign. It appears to have been a fabrication. Ms. Hoffman has told me that there are two contributors who have been employees of WDE and, combined, they have contributed \$150.00 to her campaign. The two identified by McBride as contributors to his campaign gave \$600.00 to him.

He was also asked if he'd like to retract the claim he made that he had not solicited money from WDE employees (because I believe I can prove that he did). His response was: "Previously reported


comments from me were accurate, and there is no need for further clarification."

While his inability to identify WDE people he had fired as contributors to the other campaign was interesting, his confirmation of a short tenure as superintendent of schools in Bennett, Colorado, was more telling. I asked him if he were hired away from that job to work at WDE and if he had already ended that employment before being hired by WDE, what were "the circumstances of the termination?"


His answer was incomplete. He wrote: "I resigned from the Bennett school district, effective October 5, 2002. I began my employment with the Wyoming Department of Education in April, 2003." In his answer he confirms that his Colorado employment (the only public school experience he had) ended only a month into a school year. Why was he terminated? I will answer that in the next issue.




## Wyoming's Best Choice For State Superintendent of Public Instruction



# Michelle HOFFMAN



"I ask for your vote on November 7<sup>th</sup>  
and I thank you."  
*Michelle*



### Experience at all Levels of Public Education

20 years experience in the Wyoming School System

- ✓ Curriculum Coordinator
- ✓ Special Education Director
- ✓ School District No. 1 Board of Trustees
- ✓ Fremont County School District No. 14

Wyoming B.A., University of Wyoming M.A., Leadership Administration

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