

# Jim McBride

## State School Superintendent candidate unmasked

*Foreword to Jim McBride and Drake Hill: Had either one of you guys responded to my repeated requests for information about McBride's tenure as district school superintendent in Bennett, Colorado, the disclosures on these pages may not have happened. You both thought that I would shrink into the shadows as other media in Wyoming does if you simply ignored my requests. You were wrong. The more people like you two resist providing information, the more determined I become about getting it. And things don't happen in a vacuum. Public employees usually leave a paper trail. All you had to do, Jim, was lie to me about your starting date and reason for termination from the Bennett job well before your contract expired. I may have believed you. I did not relish a 250-mile roundtrip down there the day after a blizzard closed many of the schools near Denver, including Bennett. But because neither of you guys would answer my simple requests for information, I was certain something stunk in Denmark. And it did. Because of what I learned in Bennett, I want to publicly thank both of you for your pertinaciousness, ignorance and refusal to respond to my requests. Read on.*

Jim McBride was hired by the Wyoming Department of Education with no background check and no verification of his last employment. He was interviewed and hired by Annette Bohling, according to former State Superintendent Trent Blankenship. That may account for the special relationship McBride and Bohling now have. The truth of the matter is that Jim McBride was, or should have been, unemployable in the education field

based on his job performance and evaluations during his brief stint as district superintendent in Bennett, Colorado.

Trent takes responsibility for the hiring because ultimately, the buck stopped with him. For the job for which Jim McBride was hired, which was little more than an entry-level office staffer, he trusted Annette Bohling and another to interview, screen and recommend McBride.

Later, when Trent resigned early to accept a school superintendent position in Barrow, Alaska, the Wyoming Republican Party Central Committee, of which Drake Hill has been a dismal failure as chairman, also betrayed the residents of Wyoming by not doing any background check or employment screening.

The job in Bennett, Colorado, was the only non-military job McBride had held during the previous 30 years. BSD29 was the only employer either the Wyoming Department of Education, via Annette Bohling, or the Wyoming Republican Party Central Committee, via Drake Hill, had to verify McBride's past with. Neither of them did that simplest of tasks.

McBride told the Cheyenne Herald, when he refused to respond to the circumstances of his early termination in Bennett, that he "had a letter of recommendation." Unfortunately, school districts are often willing to provide positive letters of recommendation just to rid themselves of a problem employee. You will see from his two District Evaluation Reports that he was, indeed, a troublesome employee who did a poor job.

Some may question why the Governor didn't look into McBride's past before appointing him to complete the unexpired term of Trent Blankenship. That is unfair. He had every right to rely on the WDE hiring process and WRPCC's screening process to uncover McBride's failings.

If WDE had known of McBride's Superintendent Evaluations from Bennett, Colorado, they would not have hired him. Trent Blankenship has told the Herald that had he known of those evaluations, he would not have hired McBride for any position within WDE. None. At any level.

Superintendent Evaluations in Colorado are public records. Any media can get them. The Cheyenne Herald has copies of Evaluations done of Jim McBride's performance as Bennett superintendent.

Before going into those, let's clear up his dates of employment in that district. During the recent WPTV debate (on October 23, 2006), Democratic candidate Michelle Hoffman had his exchange with McBride:

Michelle Hoffman: "Mr. McBride, on your website, on the biography page, you indicate you were superintendent in Bennett, Colorado, for two years when in reality, as documented by the board minutes in Bennett, you were employed there for only ten months. Can you tell me why you intentionally misled, or lied to, the voters of the state regarding your public school administration experience?"

Jim McBride: "Well, actually both pieces of data are a little incorrect. I was there for a year and a half."

That is not true. Records in Bennett show he was employed September 1, 2001 (even though he says he retired from the Air Force December, 2001) and his last day of employment in Bennett, evidenced by a form signed by him, was November 1, 2002. Yet, he told the Herald in a letter that he had resigned on October 5, 2002.

McBride, continuing his answer: "And I left under, ah ... by signing a non-disclosure agreement, but the real truth is we left because Sandy and I wanted to be here in town with our kids. There's never been in any case any intention to deceive, and what I would ask the audience to do, who care, is to go down to that paper, the local paper down there that I've now forgotten the name and do some research from the time I left, in maybe that subsequent year, there were lots of lawsuits, lots of improprieties, that I wanted to bring to the public's attention and the board simply would not allow me to do that. So I felt obligated to leave. That's as much detail as I can disclose."

Not true again. He did not sign a non-disclosure agreement. From the evidence, the truth would hurt only McBride. The local paper he refers to is the **I-70 Scout**. I spoke with them and they do not support him. You will see from the Evaluations that McBride is renowned for blaming others - so his response in the WPTV debate was in character.

Excerpts from the two Bennett Superintendent Evaluations appear on page 4. The entire eight (8) pages of the two Evaluations will be posted on the Cheyenne Herald website.

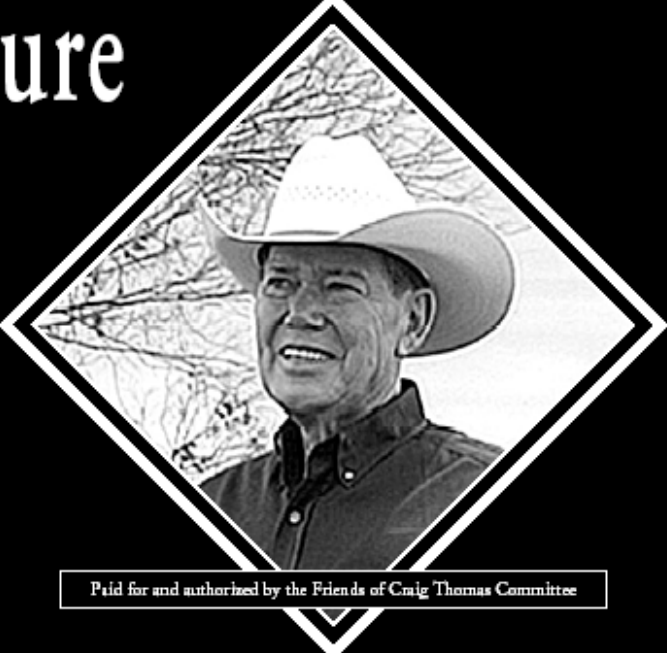
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