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Dear Colleagues,

We appreciate the excellent work that you do in OKCPS despite the many challenges you face daily. Please understand that AFT has been and continues to be a steadfast advocate on your behalf. While we encounter many difficulties there are three critical issues that can potentially do irreversible harm to our district:

- ◆ Chronically disruptive students
- ◆ Massive budget cuts
- ◆ Converting neighborhood schools into charters

It is time to discuss whether Superintendent Rob Neu has the skills and commitment to address these issues. Can he make decisions that are in the best interests of students, parents and community? Does he treat employees fairly and with dignity? Will he do irreversible harm to our district before he leaves for greener pastures?

Author and poet Maya Angelou once said “When someone shows you who they are, believe them the first time.” Let’s examine what our Superintendent has shown our district as well as previous districts.

In May of 2010, Neu shared with the Waterford Drift newspaper why he was leaving Michigan and the Waterford School District for Federal Way, Washington:

“[My wife and I] picked regions of the country that we’d like to live with the idea that we were going to improve our quality of life,” he said. “In part, because of the economic factors facing Michigan.” Neu has concerns that the economy will continue to worsen, not only in Waterford, but in Goodrich where he lives, and in districts throughout the state. “While 30% of our operating budget was cut . . . [I’m] leaving this district in good financial shape . . . We decided that we’re going to make a move now, before we got in a situation where the programs won’t be available.”

When our district hired Neu, the Federal Way Mirror newspaper said the following in a May 16, 2014 editorial:

“His tenure in Federal Way has been rocky at best. There are lessons to be learned from this as the Federal Way community moves forward and as Oklahoma City (OKC) begins its transition into the Neu administration. Keep an eye on the money. Be very careful when Neu starts asking for and taking a \$42,000 raise for himself, spending \$100,000 on board-sponsored trips to Europe and the Far East . . . Knowing Neu’s penchant to spend for [administrative] salaries, OKC should require board oversight for all of these expenditures along with an independent review board.”

“Watch out for promises. During an editorial board meeting with Neu, he stated that he would have a 100% graduation rate in two years . . . If Neu makes this same goal in OKC, they should consider themselves on notice that Neu plans to move on again before any chickens come home to roost. Expect the unexpected. Any superintendent with a ready-fire-aim approach should be fired before shooting the district in their own collective foot. A public entity entrusted with the task of educating our future leaders has to give serious thought before making monumental system wide changes. The complexity of change needs to be honored, with all players at the table.”

Neu tried to fire a Federal Way principal when she voiced concern on his overseas trips. There were no grounds for dismissal and the school district paid the principal \$219,000 to avoid litigation.

Sixty-eight percent of Federal Way schools were listed as failing. It is no wonder Neu does not like schools labeled as failing since he has a history of failing to improve student achievement.

Neu has not changed his management style since his arrival in Oklahoma City. He rules by fear and he will do or say anything to get what he wants. His displays of anger and shouting are well known. He frequently blames the messenger, down plays problems and displays a lack of transparency.

To summarize, Superintendent Neu did not live in his Michigan school district and left Michigan because he didn't want to deal with budget problems. He also wanted to improve his family's quality of life. Therefore he moved to Federal Way, Washington, where his family still resides.

In Federal Way, Superintendent Neu insulated himself by rewarding himself and those around him with high salaries and saw no problem with spending weeks in Europe and Asia on the district's dime. He said it was hard work going overseas. Neu set goals that were unattainable, had a shoot first approach to his job and didn't listen to others, particularly if they disagreed with him.

In Oklahoma City, Neu received a lavish employment contract and has hired over 100 people at the central office and gave significant raises to some central office employees. He has been disrespectful to school employees, legislators, community members and the union. Instead of an unattainable 100% graduation rate in two years, the Superintendent promises OKC a forgettable 100% graduation rate by 2029.

On our three most challenging issues Superintendent Neu:

- ◆ Believes virtually all chronic student misbehavior will disappear if teachers had more positive behavior training.
- ◆ Before abandoning his school district in Waterford Michigan he bragged "While 30% of our operating budget was cut, we didn't cut any programs or services to students." Yet in OKC in the face of our budget crisis he has already dismissed 208 teachers.
- ◆ Has been discussing converting many of our schools into charters for a year. Yet the school board and public have been kept in the dark, and the Superintendent continues being secretive and deceptive.

At this critical time in our district we have a superintendent that leads by dividing, rather than uniting. His main skill is selling himself. His pronouncements are deceptive and illusory; and his goals are unattainable and/or forgettable. We have a mirage leading our district, one who is counting on the community to see something that is not there. "Suspend your disbelief" is a favorite saying of our superintendent.

The wise Maya Angelou knew not to suspend disbelief, "When someone shows you who they are, believe them the first time."

In Solidarity,



Ed Allen, President
Oklahoma City AFT

EA/kj
Enclosure



A Union of Professionals

Oklahoma City AFT

Superintendent Neu should reopen his employment contract and take significant reductions in order to share in the budgetary pain. No leader should let others shoulder the burden.

Highlights of Superintendent Rob Neu’s Employment Contract

Term	3 years, 07/01/14 to 06/30/17
Salary	\$240,000 Annually
Retirement	Fully paid contribution to Oklahoma Teacher Retirement System
Tax Qualified Retirement Plan	Additional \$25,000 annual contribution to 403(b) retirement plan
Life Insurance	\$500,000 term life insurance
Medical Insurance	Fully paid family health, vision, and dental
Sick Leave	12 days Annually
Vacation	35 days Annually
Holidays	10 days Annually
Personal Business Leave	3 days Annually
Car	\$10,000 Annually
Disability Insurance	Fully paid, provides \$10,000 per month if disabled
Physical Examination	\$1,200.00
Cell Phone	Provided at no cost
Laptop Computer, Home Computer, Printer and iPad	Provided at no cost
One-time Relocation Temporary Housing Expense*	Up to \$30,000
Consulting and Outside Employment	May undertake consulting work, speaking engagements, writing, lecturing or other professional activities to earn additional compensation
Reassignment	District may not reassign the Superintendent without his consent.

*Superintendent Neu’s family has not moved to Oklahoma City.