



## **PRESS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release 8/31/23

Ryan Walters was sworn in as Oklahoma Superintendent of Public Instruction on January 9 th, 2023. Today there is a smattering of critics publicly pushing for his impeachment. We reject this. Superintendent Walters was elected with 57% of the vote, and won 96% (74/77) of all counties, including Tulsa. The night he was elected, he told *The Oklahoman*, "I've heard it all over the state. Oklahomans want parent empowerment in education. They want radical left-wing ideology from the Biden Administration out, and they want accountability and transparency. That's exactly what I'm going to bring to state government." Ryan Walters was elected to make the changes he articulated during his campaign, and this is exactly what he is now doing. We applaud him.

On August 24, 2023, Ryan Walters and the state school board addressed the need for changes at Tulsa Public Schools (TPS). TPS is the largest district by population and academically one of the lowest performing in the state, with recent reading and math proficiency rates of 13% and 10% respectively. The district also reports an abysmal "good attendance" rate nearly 30% lower than the state average. The meeting ended with TPS being "accredited with deficiencies." The district is now required to provide monthly reports to the OSDE and to develop a new actionable plan to positively affect academics, with special attention to reading. Superintendent Walters stated, "Tulsa has been given an opportunity to correct themselves, and to be very clear, I will not let this district fail. If they do not fix these problems, I will. The clock has started. There will be accountability." These are BOLD words coming from our State Superintendent and while we know boldness is rare in today's politics, this is exactly what "We the People" have been waiting for and we trust he is just beginning.

Ryan Walters is being accused of "hateful rhetoric", "intimidation" and unprofessionally engaging in a "culture war". What too few are willing to acknowledge is that this "culture war" has been ongoing but *one-sided* for years. Simply by now expressing views and taking actions that differ from that **one** side, Superintendent Walters is being castigated as a villain. The last state superintendent implemented curriculum and instructional changes that shifted Oklahoma education from an academic focus to behavior modification, data collection, Social Emotional Learning/Mental Health, and Common Core-aligned focus. As evident by our state's low academic ranking (49th), none of this has been good for Oklahoma students or families. By instituting these radical changes, she too engaged in the "culture war," but with little attention or critical questioning. She changed the education environment for both teachers and students, and the results have been devastating. This is why Ryan Walters was elected and why we continue to support him. He has put attention back on the students, exactly where it should be.

Every child is a blessing. Every child has been uniquely Created for great purpose. As adults, we're responsible for ensuring/demanding all Oklahoma children be given every opportunity to attend good schools and be taught the academic skills (classical education) needed for life. No immutable trait or socioeconomic factor is an excuse for poor academic outcomes. This is not a politically "right or left" position. This is the [historically] agreed moral position, to not stand idly by as children are the ones hurt.

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