



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

August 6, 2024

Ms. Kathy Tulumello
News Director
Azcentral / Arizona Republic

Dear Ms. Tulumello:

I am writing to demand a retraction of the story that was posted on azcentral.com on Monday, August 5, 2024.

The story is false, and the reporter responsible for writing it dishonestly and, apparently with intent, withheld information given to him in advance of the story that clearly shows the story is false. This is unacceptable and cannot stand.

In an email from our communications director to Nick Sullivan at 9:41 a.m. on Friday, August 2 - three days prior to the story's publication - your reporter was told, "*The reverted funds represent federal school improvement dollars allocated in federal Fiscal Years 2021 and 2022 during the prior department administration.*" (That means the dollars had to be allocated by July 1, 2022, before I took office.) *They were to be obligated (spent) no later than Sept. 30, 2023.* (see note below #1).

That should have either been the end of the story, or at least placed the responsibility on the administration that was in office at the time these errors were made. Instead, your publication printed a story claiming that my administration caused this problem, which is absolutely false.

As you are well aware, the news media has a responsibility to be fair in its reporting and ensure that all the facts are presented to readers and viewers. This is not an issue of bias, or slanted reporting; in this case it is willful withholding of facts that did not fit the narrative the reporter had in mind. It is entirely untrue and unworthy of the state's newspaper of record. Therefore, I must reiterate my demand that this story be retracted.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Horne".

Tom Horne
Superintendent of Public Instruction

1. *This accounts for \$24 million out of the \$29 million reverted. As to the other \$5 million, we had no notice those funds had not been spent until the schools' end of year report to the department. We immediately started calling all of the affected districts and charters respectfully urging them to spend the funds. Ironically, we sometimes hear complaints that we call too much for this purpose, but it is an important role for this department.*

Tom Horne, Superintendent of Public Instruction

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