

One Wisconsin Now: Lowell Holtz makes the case that Lowell Holtz can't be trusted to stand up for public schools

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MADISON, Wis. — In a weekend television appearance, candidate for State Superintendent of Public Instruction Lowell Holtz attempted to absolve himself of responsibility for a bungled and possibly illegal election bribe. But according to One Wisconsin Now Research Director Jenni Dye, Holtz's excuse, claiming he was working on behalf of unnamed "business leaders," shows he can't be trusted to advocate for what's best for Wisconsin public schools or students.

"How can we possibly trust Lowell Holtz to stand up for public schools when he'll try to put together a sleazy and possibly illegal election bribe because some 'business leaders' told him to?" asked Dye. "Besides showing an appalling lack of ethics Holtz has shown he also seems to lack any political spine."

Holtz and another candidate, John Humphries, both acknowledge that they met in late December at the behest of as yet unnamed parties before the early January deadline for filing papers to run for the office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. According to documents provided to the media, the two discussed a scheme in which one of them would support the other and would receive a taxpayer-funded job and authority over Wisconsin's urban schools. The proposed deal would have

been worth over \$500,000 of tax dollars, including a guaranteed three year state job at an annual salary of \$150,000, a chauffeur, full state health and retirement benefits and complete power over Wisconsin's largest school districts.

[One Wisconsin Now filed a complaint](#) with the Wisconsin Elections Commission calling for Holtz, Humphries and other unnamed parties to be investigated for possible violations of state laws prohibiting election related bribery.

Even prior to these latest revelations Holtz and Humphries had serious credibility issues, flip-flopping in public statements over their positions on academic standards, supporting Donald Trump's pick of manifestly unqualified Betsy DeVos for Secretary of Education, and pandering to right wing groups that support more public tax dollars being taken from public schools to fund less accountable private voucher schools.

In addition, Dye noted that Holtz's opponent John Humphries had already negotiated a controversial side deal for himself as part of his run for political office. He left his position with the Dodgeville School District in exchange for receiving a consulting contract that allows him to bill the school for up to \$650 a day to work on his own as a contractor instead of an employee overseen by the district. The rate he is paid as a contractor is nearly \$300 more per day than what he received as a salaried employee.

She concluded, "Lowell Holtz going on television and trying to excuse his sleazy and possibly illegal behavior by claiming he was just doing it because someone else told him to speak for itself. Lowell Holtz can't be trusted to put Wisconsin kids first."