



Mike Morath/AJ Crabill Docs

By Alice Linahan - Texas Mom

Whatever happened to a state commissioner of education possessing actual proven experience and legitimate professional credentials?

Texas Commissioner of Education Mike Morath has NOT been honest about his credentials. No different than the varsity blues scandal. He is **not** a successful software entrepreneur, [he did not start minute menu](#), and it was never his company, much less is he self-made. This interview (found [here](#)) was from early 2011 while Morath was running for office. Morath started the myth then that he was a successful "tech entrepreneur" and that he was "stepping down as CEO" to devote himself to "fixing public education". This is a false narrative, one that Morath invented.

Those who profit off Texas children's behavioral student data are pushing Morath's false narrative, such as (Todd Williams) with Commit Dallas who was a [reference](#) on Mike Morath's application for the Next Generation of Assessments and Accountability Commission (found [here](#)).

Certainly, if you look at Morath's career post-college, 1998 until 2011, on his application found [here](#), Morath's entire work experience during this period can be summed up thusly: two failed ventures, and then as an employee for 10 years of a very small software company, Minute Menu Systems.

Many believe as I do, Commissioner Morath was specifically put in his position, championed by both Republicans and Democrats, to restructure education in Texas for-profit and adult jobs. Not the education of the next generation of Texas students.

Aside from the fact that Mike Morath is implementing the federal ESSA vision of Education Reform, I believe there is a real concern with fraud and possibly unethical, illegal things happening within the TEA.

TEA entered into a no-bid contract with a company named SPEDX. They handed over hundreds of thousands of student Individual Educational Plans (IEP) to SPEDx without proper parent notification or consent. IEPs include student diagnoses, medications, behavioral intervention plans, school accommodations, health data, and more. The SPEDx mission was to data-mine the information from the student's IEPs and come up with a "plan" to fix special education in Texas. TEA terminated the contract when concerned

parents spoke out against it. The owner and founder of SPEDx, Dr. Richard Nyankori, has since started a new company that sells special education software. To this date, the state of Texas has not received notification from SPEDx that the student IEP data was ever destroyed.

- The documents show Morath is who signed off on the SpedX deal. Texas Education Agency (TEA) Spedx Original Contract signed by Commissioner Mike Morath: http://womenonthewall.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/1.-Original_SPEDx_TEA_Contract.pdf
- TEA Amended Contract signed by Commissioner Mike Morath: http://womenonthewall.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2.-Contract_Amendment_SPEDx.pdf
- School District Data License Agreement with SpedX: [http://womenonthewall.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/3.-LEA_MOU.p df](http://womenonthewall.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/3.-LEA_MOU.pdf)
- State of Louisiana Data Sharing Agreement with SpedX: http://womenonthewall.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/4.-LA_SPEDX_MOU.pdf
- TEA Documents: Letter of Reprimand of Whistleblower Lourie Kash, Phd http://womenonthewall.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/TEA-1.-Letter_of_Reprimand.pdf
- Response letter to TEA from Dr. Kash: http://womenonthewall.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/TEA-2.-Dr.Kash_Response_to_Reprimand.pdf
- TEA Projected Grant Costs with note by source TxSER: http://womenonthewall.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/TEA-4.-PROJECTED_GRANT_COSTS.pdf
- TEA document of Participating School Districts: http://womenonthewall.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/TEA-3.-Participating_Districts_11-28-17.pdf
- TEA Internal Audit Document: http://womenonthewall.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/TEA5.Internal_Audit.pdf
- TEA News Release of canceled SpedX Contract: http://womenonthewall.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/TEA-6.PR_SPE_Dx_Cancelled.pdf

After obtaining the application of Commissioner of Education Mike Morath, it seems the only application on file with Governor Abbott's office is the application for Mike Morath to be on the Next Generation of Assessments and Accountability Committee. It appears there is no application for Mr. Morath to serve as the Commissioner of Education. ([See this PDF](#)).

Did he complete the proper application process to become the Commissioner of Education of Texas? What vetting process was completed to determine the appointment of Mike

Morath? Based on the application obtained, it is clear the information and dates on the online form he filled out do not match his very short resume. What experience as an educator of students, in the education field, does Mike Morath have that would warrant his appointment to be the Commissioner of Education of the State of Texas?

This article (see [here](#)) was written back when "Home Rule" was being pushed in Dallas ISD, the article connected the dots...and called out Morath's deep involvement with the attempted takeover of the Dallas ISD board.

While there are some minor typos in the article (DISD real estate is worth about \$8 billion, not trillion) it captured what happened in 2014.

Mike Morath and his Deputy of Governance AJ Crabill are connected through the Council of Great City Schools (CGS). CGS is a national nonprofit whose funding streams comes from school districts. Crabill and Michael Casserly, Executive Director of CGS have had a very cozy relationship for years - hardly arm's length. In fact, back when Crabill was Airick West and a Kansas City Public School board member, he, Crabill failed to report thousands in campaign \$ he received from Casserly - and was later sanctioned by the state Ethics Commission. In this CGS schools 2013-2014 annual report, you will see Morath ([page 24](#)) is a board member.

In April of 2016 Commissioner of Education, Mike Morath [announced](#) the [restructuring the Texas Education Agency](#). As reported in the [Dallas Morning News](#). Excerpts are as follows:

- The Dallas Morning News recently [reported Morath had named AJ Crabill](#), a former chairman of the Kansas City (Mo.) School Board, to the position of deputy commissioner for governance. Crabill was known as Airick West during his time in Kansas City. He and the commissioner have declined several requests for interviews and questions about how Morath met Crabill and the circumstances surrounding his hiring in the last several weeks.
- Crabill, Schwinn, and Winchester will make an annual salary of \$180,000 each. Aghazadian will make \$160,000, the education agency confirmed. The three new hires announced Wednesday will start at the agency on May 9.

After obtaining the application for AJ Crabill (West), (See this [PDF](#)), whom Mike Morath hired to be the Deputy of Governance.


AJ West's experience in governance is virtually nonexistent. In fact, [here is an interesting scoring sheet from Atlanta public schools](#). AJ West did not make the cut on his own merits.

AJ Crabill's Texas Education Agency (TEA) application states the name "West." It is my understanding he was legally not able to use the name Crabill at the time of his employment and thereafter. (Note: from the research, I have obtained, there is no legal record or court verdict in Texas or Missouri or any court sanctioned "adult adoption" and/or evidence showing his legal name change.) This official state employment application, signed under penalty, is dated March 7, 2016.

West's first day of official employment with TEA was March 28, 2016. His name was not officially changed at that time. A review of Mr. West's application reveals the following work experience timeline and information:

- 6/2005 - Present (11 years) - Self Employed, "Governance & Cultural Competency Consultant".
- 1/2002 - 6/2004: Owner, StrategicHERO (Missouri). Stated that the company failed.
- 10/1999 - 2/2001: Owner, PixSoul (Kansas). "Provided e-commerce solutions to corporate clients. Led a team of graphic designers and web developers. Managed the transfer of Pixsoul assets to a Fortune 500 acquirer". (After checking with both the Kansas Secretary of State and also the Kansas Department of Revenue there are NO records of the existence of this company, nor any record of its sale, nor any payment of state taxes.)
- There is no work history disclosed prior to 10/1999.
- There is no Education attainment listed at all - not even a High School diploma.
- There are also serious employment gaps given in the periods of 6/2004 -6/2005 (1 year) and 2/2001 - 1/2002 (11 months).
- TEA's Deputy Commissioner of Governance, AJ Crabill/Airick West was sanctioned several times by the state of Missouri as recently as 2015 for a serious Ethics Violation: <http://mec.mo.gov/Scanned/CasedocsPDF/22110.pdf>

However, upon verifying the information given, it has been discovered that Mr. West's application may actually contain false information and material omissions.



A check of [state records in Kansas](#) and Missouri reveals that Mr. West has failed to disclose his association with numerous companies he has formed, is listed as an officer or director, and some that failed or were sanctioned.

The Missouri Secretary of State shows that Mr. West formed and is currently listed as an officer of a for-profit not disclosed on his TEA application (Colbairi Corporation) and a non-profit corporation, Camp 360KC.

According to another filing, Mr. West served as an officer for several political action committees State Democratic Party treasurer, Airick West PAC (for which he was sanctioned by the Missouri Ethics Commission for violations) and also KCU4EA PAC (which he founded and ran and which was also sanctioned by the Missouri Ethics Commission for numerous violations).

Regarding his alleged work experience, Missouri records show that Strategic Hero Inc. was incorporated by West in 7/3/2003 (roughly 1.5 years after the date given on the application). The business address was 6301 Rockhill Rd, Suite 412, Kansas City, Missouri. This enterprise failed and was dissolved by the state of Missouri on 6/24/2004 for failure to file a Registration Report. Already you can see where his reported dates are not truthful. Moreover, this location was the subject of a lawsuit against Sherry Payne, his mother, for failure to pay rent. West's biological mother, Sherry Payne, signed the corporate lease on the space and was the official "Tenant". (See Kansas City, Missouri civil case #04CV227101 Rockhill Properties LLC versus Sherry L Payne) - Default Judgment against Sherry Payne dated 10/12/2004.

Mr. West has failed to disclose that he worked for a dot-com company. He alleges the company that "recruited him" away from the University of Kansas. (Need to verify whether it was Cephass Multimedia, a fast-growing start-up that was founded in 1995 and built websites and was located in Overland Park Kansas. This company failed and folded around the 2000/01 time frame.) Mr. West failed to disclose the nature of his employment with this company, his salary, and responsibilities. It also appears that he never paid taxes in accordance with his employment.

Mr. West also fails to list that he graduated from High School in June 1997, as well as the dates he attended the University of Kansas, whether he earned any credits, as well as the date indicating when he "dropped out."

What is so troubling are the countless companies and other organization that Mr. West has been involved in, none of which is listed on his TEA application.

Did anyone at TEA verify or conduct a background check or confirm/review his resume?

Please see this invoice (See [this PDF](#)) to Dallas ISD, which covers November and December 2015 when Mike Morath was still officially on the DISD board. Please note, it is my understanding that at no time did Airick Leonard West (Crabill) ever possess a valid procurement or public contract for services with DISD and was never vetted and/or selected to do this work by DISD, yet Airick Leonard West called DISD his client.

By formally submitting an "[Invoice](#)" (recorded as DISD-2015-0001) covering "Governance Training & Coaching" he fraudulently depicts himself as a "Senior Trainer" and "Board Member Coach" warranting invoicing (billing) the District \$24,100 based on under 4 days of alleged work. Notice West's personal billing rates for a public sector consulting are egregious and outrageous and do not represent any reasonable standard: \$5,000 per day, and \$650 per hour). What is troubling went ahead and without any authorization or agreement sent a bill for his own services then turned around and called it a donation requesting the district validate the full amount of the bill with a "tax receipt". The charges to the District are as follows: Board training (November & December - no specific dates shown - for 3 days @ a rate of \$5,000 per day, total \$15,000), board member coaching/interviews (12 hours, \$650/hr, total \$7,800) and management coaching (2 hours @ \$650/hr, \$1,300).

Mr. West has paying instructions that direct the district to do the following: "Opting to donate training and coaching hours for this billing period to DISD. For tax purposes, please provide a letter noting the value of this donation. If there are questions regarding your bill, please contact Airick Leonard west at 913.481.7779." The business address for this invoice was shown as Mr. West's residence, 3239 Wabash, KC MO 64109.

Mr. West was fully aware that Dallas ISD NEVER contracted for any services from him, whether gratis or otherwise. It is also my understanding that Mr. West was asked to not come back.

Travel & expense fees were not assessed on this bill. It is unclear if he was reimbursed for travel and by whom.

Mr. West states that his professional services should be treated as a "donation" to Dallas ISD and requests, "for tax purposes" a letter be sent to "Airick Leonard West" noting the total value of \$24,100 he attempts to bill for services he allegedly rendered.

Mr. West values his consulting services well above basic market rates, yet possesses almost no substantive governance experience, licenses, certifications or other professional credentials (much less a college degree) to justify such a ludicrous billing rate.

What's more troubling is that at the time of this 2015 invoice to Dallas ISD, Mr. West was still an [elected official with Kansas City Public Schools \(KCPS\)](#) while serving on the [Executive Committee of the Council of the Great City Schools \(CGCS\)](#), a 501C3 organization that receives millions of dollars in fees from large urban school districts. The Executive Committee oversees and appraises the Executive Director (Casserly) and governs CGCS.

For Mr. West to be selling professional services while avoiding the scrutiny of procurement by public school districts as a resource for CGCS seems to be a huge conflict of interest and possibly illegal. Airick West changed his name to AJ Crabill in 2016 after he was officially hired by TEA in March 2016.

Mr. West (now Deputy Commissioner of TEA Crabill, hired by Commissioner Mike Morath) should be formally investigated by the state.

Please keep in mind, AJ Crabill (WEST) has the authority as Deputy of Governance, to decide whether our Independent School Districts and Charter schools, such as the Harmony Gulen schools, are investigated.

The TEA Deputy of Governance is a \$180,000 plus benefits state executive level position. I would like to know why many qualified Texans were passed over for this position, so that an out of state highly unqualified, possible fraud could be hired. What an insult and disgrace to the students, parents and educators of Texas!

Currently, Mr. Crabill has been soliciting consulting work during working hours. In addition, his coworkers and subordinates [indicate](#) that he is also charging school districts for consulting work; many of these districts he has/had discretion over for issues such as

Turnaround Plan approval and the offering of abatement agreements in instances of non-accredited status.

This work appears to violate Penal Code Chapter 36 and requires a PIR of TEA payments to Mr. Crabill, as well any payments to Mr. Crabill from any districts he has provided training to, whether they be direct or indirect (ie, funneled through an ESC or non-profit.)

For example, Casserly and A.J. Crabill, the Texas deputy commissioner of education and a member of the Council of the Great City Schools executive board, who also attended the meeting below, both said it is the superintendent's job to worry about implementing the goals.

http://www.greensboro.com/news/schools/guilford-school-board-talks-about-goals-for-student-performance-school/article_03b56ca9-e3a0-5ed9-9ce6-1e02128c6a46.html

This from November 2017:

"All nine of the board members attended the day-long communication and governance training retreat held from about 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in a meeting space at High Point University. One member had to leave early for a funeral, but otherwise, everyone stayed for the whole presentation. (Checking to see whether agenda was posted and who led this session).

Guilford County Schools just happens to be a "member" of CGCS; superintendent Contreras and trustee Weborn both sit on the CGCS board. Also, AJC cannot be a member of the Exec Committee of CGCS (it is a nonprofit, governed by its members) while being paid as the Texas Deputy Commissioner of Education.

"Casserly and A.J. Crabill, the Texas deputy commissioner of education and a member of the Council of the Great City Schools executive board, who also attended the meeting, both said it is the superintendent's job to worry about implementing the goals."

What's interesting is that the current "Acting Superintendent" in Oklahoma City came from Atlanta Public schools!

Below is information obtained through an ORR to Atlanta Public Schools on Airick Leonard West. (We have redacted the name of the requestor). He attempted to get hired by Atlanta

Public Schools in November 2014, but as you can see his proposal was amateurish. He possessed almost no board governance training experience at that time.

- Airick West Pricing sheet:
<http://womenonthewall.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Airleonard-West-Pricing-1.pdf>
- Airick West RFQ Submission:
http://womenonthewall.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Proposal-and-Required-Documents_Redacted-1.pdf
- Airick West Public School RFQ:
<http://womenonthewall.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Public-School-Board-Self-Assessment-and-Governance-Professional-RFQ-3.pdf>

Airick Leonard West, now AJ Crabill, was hired by TEA in March 2016 to be the Deputy Commissioner of Governance and claimed when he was hired by Texas to have had significant governance experience.

This official "proposal" as part of Atlanta's procurement for board training services (see attached) was submitted by West to Atlanta Public Schools as of November 2014 - a little more than one year prior to West's TEA application. Notice how he was the lowest scorer. He proposed his "all in" rate was \$250/hour - ridiculous considering no experience and no formal credentials.

According to his linked bio, the ONLY school districts West had done ANY Governance work for as of November 2014 included just two: Des Moines (he was allegedly hired in July 2014 We have requested FOI on this - they failed to do a public procurement and it appears his hiring there was improper as he was paid for this work) and the only other experience listed was oddly the very district where he was a trustee - Kansas City (representing a large conflict to be the one "training" your own board). So, as of November 2014, West possessed no other professional board governance training experience.