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The Oklahoma Superintendent of Public Instruction is an elected executive position in the Oklahoma state government. The superintendent is the chief education officer of the state and is responsible for giving advice and making recommendations to the State Board of Education regarding the public school system and the State Department of Education. Current officeholder The current Oklahoma Superintendent of Public Instruction is Ryan Walters (R). Walters assumed office in 2023. Authority The office of the Oklahoma Superintendent is established in Article VI, Section 1 of the Oklahoma Constitution. Article VI, Section 1. A. The Executive authority of the state shall be vested in a Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, State Auditor and Inspector, Attorney General, State Treasurer, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Commissioner of Labor, Commissioner of Insurance and other officers provided by law and this Constitution, each of whom shall keep his office and public records, books and papers at the seat of government, and shall perform such duties as may be designated in this Constitution or prescribed by law. B. The Secretary of State shall be appointed by the Governor by and with the consent of the Senate for a term of four (4) years to run concurrently with the term of the Governor.[1] Qualifications The Oklahoma superintendent of public instruction must be: a citizen of the United States at least 31 years old a qualified elector of Oklahoma for the 10 preceding years Article VI, Section 3 of the Oklahoma Constitution establishes the qualifications of the office: No person shall be eligible to the office of Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, State Auditor and Inspector, Attorney General, State Treasurer or Superintendent of Public Instruction except a citizen of the United States of the age of not less than thirty-one (31) years and who shall have been ten (10) years next preceding his or her election, or appointment, a qualified elector of this state.[2] Elections The Oklahoma superintendent of public instruction is elected in mid-term election years, such as 2018, 2022, and 2026. On March 14, 2011, the Oklahoma State Senate approved a bill that would give the governor the power to appoint seven of the 11 statewide elected officials, including the superintendent. Voters would have decided whether to approve the measure, but it did not make the ballot.[3] Term limits No person may serve as the Oklahoma superintendent of public instruction for more than eight years, excluding years served for less than a full term to fill a vacancy in the office.[4] 2022 See also: Oklahoma Superintendent of Public Instruction election, 2022 General electionRepublican primary runoff electionDemocratic primary electionThe Democratic primary election was canceled. Jena Nelson advanced from the Democratic primary for Oklahoma Superintendent of Public Instruction.Republican primary election Past elections See also: Oklahoma Superintendent of Public Instruction election, 2018 General electionRepublican primary runoff electionDemocratic primary electionRepublican primary election On November 2, 2010, Janet Barresi won election to the office of Oklahoma Superintendent of Public Instruction. She defeated Susan Paddock (D) and Richard E. Cooper (I) in the general election. Oklahoma Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2010 Party Candidate Vote % Votes Republican Janet Barresi 55.9% 573,716 Democratic Susan Paddock 37.7% 387,007 Independent Richard E. Cooper 6.4% 65,243 Total Votes 1,025,966 Election results via Oklahoma State Board of Elections. On November 7, 2006, Sandy Garrett won re-election to the office of Oklahoma Superintendent of Public Instruction. She defeated Bill Crozier (R) in the general election. Oklahoma Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2006 Party Candidate Vote % Votes Democratic Sandy Garrett Incumbent 62.6% 576,304 Republican Bill Crozier 37.4% 343,900 Total Votes 920,204 Election results via Oklahoma State Board of Elections. On November 5, 2002, Sandy Garrett won re-election to the office of Oklahoma Superintendent of Public Instruction. She defeated Lloyd Rottger (R) in the general election. Oklahoma Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2002 Party Candidate Vote % Votes Democratic Sandy Garrett Incumbent 59.7% 609,851 Republican Lloyd Rottger 40.3% 411,814 Total Votes 1,021,665 Election results via Oklahoma State Board of Elections. Vacancies Under Article 6, Section 13 of the state Constitution, in the event of a vacancy in the office the governor appoints a person to serve until a successor is either elected or appointed and qualified by law.[5] Duties Under Oklahoma statutes, the superintendent of public instruction "shall have the control of and direct the State Department of Education." State law says the superintendent shall do the following:[6] " Give advice and make recommendations to the State Board of Education on all matters pertaining to the policies and administration of the public school system; 2. Adopt policies and make rules for the organization, operation and administration of the State Department of Education; 3. Organize and have control of the administration of the State Department of Education and any other supervisory agencies, divisions, personnel and their appointment and salaries and other operations necessary to carry out the powers, duties and functions of the State Superintendent and the State Board of Education; 4. Have authority to require the coordination of all divisions of the State Department of Education and have general supervision of all employees of the Department; 5. Present all recommendations of the Department to the State Board and require employees of the Department to present specific matters directly to the State Board; and 6. Be responsible for interpretation of policy and rules set by the State Board.[7] " The superintendent serves on the following boards and commissions, among others:[8] State Board of Education, Chair State Board of Career and Technology Education, Chair Regional University System of Oklahoma, Regent Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness/Smart Start Oklahoma State Budget See also: Oklahoma state budget and finances The budget for the Department of Education in fiscal year 2025 was \$3,861,909,518.[9] Compensation See also: Compensation of state executive officers See statutes: Title 74, Chapter 10 of the Oklahoma Statutes Title 74, Chapter 10, Section 250.4 (§74-250.4) of the Oklahoma Statutes set the superintendent's annual salary at \$124,373 as of January 2021.[10] The amount of compensation is prescribed by law, pursuant to Article VI, Section 34 of the Oklahoma Constitution: Each of the officers in this article named shall, at stated times, during his continuance in office, receive for his services a compensation, which shall not be increased or diminished during the term for which he shall have been elected; nor shall he receive by his use, any fees, cost, or perquisites of office or other compensation.[11] 2023 In 2023, the officer's salary was \$124,373, according to the Council of State Governments.[12] 2022 In 2022, the officer's salary was \$124,373, according to the Council of State Governments.[13] 2021 In 2021, the superintendent received a salary of \$124,373, according to the Council of State Governments.[14] 2020 In 2020, the superintendent received a salary of \$124,373, according to the Council of State Governments.[15] 2019 In 2019, the superintendent received a salary of \$124,373, according to the Council of State Governments.[16] 2018 In 2018, the superintendent received a salary of \$124,373, according to the Council of State Governments.[17] 2017 In 2017, the superintendent received a salary of \$124,373, according to the Council of State Governments.[18] 2016 In 2016, the superintendent received a salary of \$124,373, according to the Council of State Governments.[19] 2015 In 2015, the superintendent received a salary of \$124,373, according to the Council of State Governments.[20] 2014 In 2014, the superintendent was paid an estimated \$124,373, according to the Council of State Governments.[21] 2013 In 2013, the superintendent was paid an estimated \$124,373, according to the Council of State Governments.[22] 2010 In 2010, the superintendent was paid an estimated \$124,373, according to the Council of State Governments.[23] Historical officeholders Note: Ballotpedia's state executive officials project researches state official websites for chronological lists of historical officeholders; information for the Oklahoma Superintendent of Public Instruction has not yet been added because the information was unavailable on the relevant state official websites, or we are currently in the process of formatting the list for this office. If you have any additional information about this office for inclusion on this section and/or page, please email us. The link below is to the most recent stories in a Google news search for the terms Oklahoma Superintendent of Public Instruction. These results are automatically generated from Google. Ballotpedia does not curate or endorse these articles. Contact information Oklahoma State Department of Education Oliver Hodge Building 2500 North Lincoln Boulevard Oklahoma City, OK 73105 Phone: 405-521-3301 See also: External links Suggest a link Oklahoma Superintendent of Public Instruction 1 Oklahoma State Courts Network, "Oklahoma Constitution, Section Article 6 section 1 - Executive officers enumerated - Offices and records - Duties," accessed January 19, 2021 1 Oklahoma State Courts Network, "Oklahoma Constitution, Section Article 6 section 3 - Eligibility to certain state offices," accessed January 19, 2021 1 KFOR, "Okla voters could decide to expand governor's power to appoint current elected officials," March 14, 2011 1 Oklahoma State Courts Network, "Oklahoma Constitution - Section Article 6 section 4 - Terms of office - Succession," accessed January 19, 2021 1 Oklahoma State Courts Network, "Oklahoma Constitution, Section Article 6 section 13 - Officers' commissions - Vacancies," accessed January 19, 2021 1 Justia, "2019 Oklahoma Statutes, Title 70, Schools, §70-3-107.1. State Superintendent of Public Instruction - Powers and duties," accessed January 20, 2021 1 Note: This text is quoted verbatim from the original source. Any inconsistencies are attributable to the original source. 1 Cite error: Invalid tag; no text was provided for refs named office 1 Oklahoma House of Representatives, "Appropriations and Budget Subcommittees," accessed January 22, 2025 1 Oklahoma State Courts Network, "Oklahoma Statutes, §74-250.4," accessed January 20, 2021 1 Oklahoma State Court Networks, "Oklahoma Constitution, Section Article 6 section 34 - Compensation of officers," accessed January 19, 2021 1 Council of State Governments, "Book of the States 2023 Table 4.11: Selected State Administrative Officials: Annual Salaries," accessed September 28, 2022 1 ISSUU, "The Book of the States | 2020 | Volume 52," accessed January 19, 2021 1 Council of State Governments, "Selected State Administrative Officials: Annual Salaries, 2019," accessed January 19, 2021 1 Council of State Governments, "Selected State Administrative Officials: Annual Salaries, 2018," accessed January 19, 2021 1 Council of State Governments, "Selected State Administrative Officials: Annual Salaries, 2017," accessed January 19, 2021 1 Council of State Governments, "Selected State Administrative Officials: Annual Salaries, 2016," accessed August 27, 2016 1 Council of State Governments, "Selected State Administrative Officials: Annual Salaries, 2015," accessed August 27, 2016 1 Council of State Governments, "Selected State Administrative Officials: Annual Salaries," accessed December 4, 2014 1 Council of State Governments, "Selected State Administrative Officials: Annual Salaries," January 28, 2014 1 The Council of State Governments, "The Book of States 2010 Table 4.11," accessed May 14, 2011 1 Oklahoma State Superintendent of Public Instruction, sometimes called the Oklahoma State School Superintendent, is the chief executive officer for the Oklahoma State Department of Education and the president of the Oklahoma State Board of Education. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction is responsible for overseeing, implementing and reviewing the policies of the Oklahoma's public school system. Office of the State Superintendent of Public InstructionAgency overviewFormedNovember 17, 1907Headquarters2500 N. Lincoln BlvdOklahoma City, OklahomaAgency executiveRyan Walters, State SuperintendentParent agencyOklahoma State Department of EducationWebsiteState Department of Education The current State Superintendent of Public Instruction is Republican Ryan Walters. The Office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction has requirements that set it apart from all other state offices. As with all executive branch officials, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction must be at least 31 years old and have been a register elector within Oklahoma for 10 years prior to election. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction is elected directly by the people of Oklahoma. Elections for the State Superintendent of Public Instruction are held on a four-year concurrent basis with the election of the governor. After all votes are collected, the Legislature of Oklahoma shall convene in the hall of the House of Representatives and the Speaker of the House of Representatives announce the results of the elections in the presence of a majority of each branch of the legislature. The persons having the highest number of votes for the office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction shall be declared duly elected. However, in case two or more shall have an equal and the highest number of votes for the office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction, the legislature shall, by joint ballot, choose one of the said persons having an equal and the highest number of votes for the office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction. For the November 2010 general election, Sandy Garrett (the five-time and incumbent Democratic officeholder) chose not to seek re-election for a sixth term. Susan Paddock, a former secondary school science teacher and member of the Oklahoma Senate,[1] was nominated by the Democratic Party as her potential successor. The Republican candidate was Janet Barresi, a dentist, school speech pathologist, and founder of two charter schools in Oklahoma (Independence Charter Middle School, the first charter school in the state of Oklahoma, and Harding High School.[2] In addition, Richard E. Cooper ran as an independent candidate.[3] Barresi won the general election. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction's four-year term begins on the first Monday in January following the general election, and runs concurrently with that of the Governor of Oklahoma. The Oklahoma Term Limits Amendment, also known as State Question 747, was on the November 2, 2010 ballot in Oklahoma as a legislatively referred constitutional amendment, where it was approved. The measure was sponsored by Randy Brogdon. The measure enacted an eight-year lifetime limit for the governor, lieutenant governor, state auditor and inspector, attorney general, state treasurer, labor commissioner, state schools superintendent and insurance commissioner. Constitutionally, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction has no duties. The office's powers and responsibilities come from Oklahoma School Code and the powers granted to the office by the Oklahoma State Board of Education. The primary function of the State Superintendent is giving advice and making recommendations to the State Board of Education on matters pertaining to the policies and administration of the State Department of Education and the public school system.[4] The State Superintendent's powers over the Department of Education come from its ex officio positions as president of the Oklahoma State Board of Education and Oklahoma State Board of Career and Technology Education.[4] As the president of these boards, the State Superintendent presides at meetings and has the full right of discussion and voting on measures.[4] As the chief executive officer of the State Department of Education, State Superintendent coordinates the divisions of the state education department and supervises department employees. As Oklahoma's state education agency, the Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction is responsible for the general administration, coordination, supervision, promotion, evaluation, and improvement of educational programs, the state superintendent interprets and implements the policies of the State Board of Education. Also, upon request, the State Superintendent must advise district superintendents of schools on questions as to the powers, duties, and functions of school district officials. Every two years, the State Superintendent must compile, publish, and distribute a book of laws and Attorney General's opinions on schools, and issue annually a statistical report for the governor and legislators on the education department. Depending on the relationship between the two, the State Superintendent can serve as the chief education advisor to the Governor of Oklahoma, as demonstrated by the relationship between Governor Brad Henry and Superintendent Sandy Garrett. The State Superintendent serves as the official representative from Oklahoma to the United States Department of Education. "I, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support, obey, and defend the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitution of the State of Oklahoma, and that I will not, knowingly, receive, directly or indirectly, any money or other valuable thing, for the performance or nonperformance of any act or duty pertaining to my office, other than the compensation allowed by law; I further swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully discharge my duties as State Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Oklahoma to the best of my ability." # Name Party Term 1 Evan Dhu Cameron Democratic 1907-1911 2 R. H. Wilson Democratic 1911-1923 3 M. A. Nash Democratic 1923-1927 4 John Vaughan Democratic 1927[5]-1936 5 A. L. Crable Democratic 1936[5]-1947 6 Oliver Hodge Democratic 1947-1968 7 D. D. Creech Republican 1968[5]-1971 8 Leslie R. Fisher Democratic 1971-1984 9 John M. Folks Democratic 1984[5]-1998 10 Gerald E. Hoeltzel Republican 1988[5]-1991 11 Sandy Garrett Democratic 1991-2011 12 Janet Barresi Republican 2011-2015 13 Joy Hofmeister Republican 2015-2021 Democratic 2021-2023 14 Ryan Walters Republican 2023-present State education agency Oklahoma State Department of Education ^ "Throughout her life, Susan Paddock has been passionate about education". Archived from the original on 2010-11-03. ^ "Janet Barresi | Join the Campaign". www.janetbarresi.com. Archived from the original on 2010-07-26. ^ "Official List of 2010 General Election Candidates" (PDF). p. 5. Archived from the original (PDF) on 2017-08-03. ^ a b c Oklahoma School Code, Section 37.1 Powers of State Superintendent. (accessed August 22, 2013) ^ a b c d e Appointed State Department of Education website Retrieved from "[This article was originally delivered to subscribers of our Education Watch newsletter. Sign up now to receive Education Watch directly in your inbox.] Shortly after Ryan Walters was sworn in as state superintendent of public instruction, the governor reappointed him secretary of education, according to the Tulsa World, a cabinet position Walters has held since 2020. If the appointment is confirmed by the Senate, Walters will be in the unusual position of serving both roles for the state. Even more unusual, if not unprecedented, he will receive both salaries: \$124,373 for state superintendent plus \$40,000 for his Cabinet secretary position. That's more than the governor's \$147,000 salary. The two positions are distinct under state law. The main duty of the state superintendent is to control and direct the state Department of Education, as well as advise the Board of Education and adopt policies and rules for the department. The state superintendent serves as chairman of the Board of Education and the state Board of Career and Technology Education and holds a seat on the Board of Equalization. Duties of the secretary of education include oversight of the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, a state agency that handles teacher certification and teacher college accreditation, and generally advising the governor of policy changes or problems with education in the state. Just before the inauguration, Walters resigned from Every Kid Counts Oklahoma, a not-for-profit education reform organization, where he was executive director and earned at least \$120,000 a year. Critics viewed that position as a conflict of interest with his responsibilities to the state. Also, Stitt shook up the state Board of Education by appointing four new members: Donald Burdick, CEO of an energy company, Marla Hill, a homeschooling mother, Kendra Wesson, who owns an accounting firm in Norman and unsuccessfully ran for the House in 2022, and Suzanne Reynolds, a pharmacist. They replace Brian Bobek, Jennifer Monies, Estela Hernandez and Carlisha Bradley. Thoughts, comments, or story ideas? I'd love to hear from you via email or direct message. — Jennifer Palmer Oklahoma auditor says Epic Charter Schools missed \$30 million in public education dollars — more than previously thought. [The Oklahoman] The chairman of the Senate education committee unveiled an education reform plan that includes \$241 for teacher pay raises and maternity leave for educators. [KFOR] An employee at the school where a first-grade teacher was shot searched the backpack of a 6-year-old student to check for a gun. No weapon was found, but police accuse the child of shooting his teacher later that afternoon. [The New York Times] In Florida, colleges are cancelling classes or modifying curriculum since the "Stop Woke Act" was signed into law in April — limiting the freedom of professors who are experts in their fields. [ProPublica] A telephone is seen inside an inmate housing unit at Joseph Harp Correctional Center in Lexington. (Whitney Bryen/Oklahoma Watch) A new federal law with bipartisan support takes aim at the high cost of prison phone calls. Here's why it will take further action to help Oklahoma families. [Read More] Oklahoma Watch education reporter Jennifer Palmer explains why the state's virtual charter school board remains in limbo. Also: Keaton Ross on a legislators' personal financial interests and Ashley Huffman on capping prison phone rates. [Listen here] Top legislative leaders have left positions on the Statewide Virtual Charter School Board unfilled for months, rendering it unable to meet. Reforms to Epic Charter Schools and an anticipated application for a Catholic charter school await. [Read more] Oklahoma Watch has obtained the most recent legislative financial disclosure reports and included them in a searchable and sortable database. [Read more] Oklahoma needs high-quality investigative journalism. That is our mission at Oklahoma Watch. We produce stories that hold government and public officials accountable and that make transparent what some prefer to keep secret. We depend on financial support from readers like you to sustain our coverage. Help us make a difference. Every day we strive to produce journalism that matters — stories that strengthen accountability and transparency, provide value and resonate with readers like you. This work is essential to a better-informed community and a healthy democracy. But it isn't possible without your support. Republish our articles for free, online or in print, under a Creative Commons license. Ryan Walters taught eight years as a high school history teacher in his hometown at McAlester High School. During his time at MHS, Walters taught Advanced Placement courses in World History, U.S. History and U.S. Government. He also taught on-level history classes, special education classes and Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) classes. The Oklahoma State Department of Education named Walters as an Oklahoma Teacher of the Year Finalist in 2016. Ryan is passionate about the students of Oklahoma and advocating for their immediate and long term successes. Walters serves today as Secretary of Public Education for the State of Oklahoma, and was named Secretary of Public Education by Governor Kevin Stitt in September of 2020. As Secretary of Education, Walters is responsible for various agencies, boards and commissions, including the State Board of Education, College and University Boards of Regents or Trustees, Office of Educational Quality and Accountability and the State Board of Career and Technology Education. Walters also serves as Executive Director of Every Kid Counts Oklahoma (EKCO) and simultaneously teaches AP U.S. History at Millwood High School and McAlester High School. As Executive Director of EKCO, he is empowering teachers, parents and community leaders to improve Oklahoma's education system for all students. He previously served as the Executive Director of Oklahoma Achieves, an education initiative of the State Chamber of Oklahoma that sought to get the business community more actively engaged in education. Ryan is a lifelong advocate of improving Oklahoma's education system and helping every student reach their full potential. A loving husband to his wife Katie, Ryan has four children — Violet (6), Ella (4), Benjamin (2) and newborn Samuel. Thursday, June 5th 2025, 4:40 pm by: David Prock Oklahoma State Superintendent Ryan Walters joined News On 6 to address sweeping changes underway in the state's K-12 education system, from teacher shortages and student migration to charter schools, to new, controversial standards in history instruction.Walters said the state is embracing a model of "school choice," which he views as a fundamental principle for modernizing education. "We're going to be a school choice state," Walters said. "Parents get to choose where their kids go to school." "Charter School Layoffs Seen as 'Free Market' in Action" The superintendent downplayed concerns over recent layoffs affecting more than 300 teachers and staff at Epic Charter Schools, calling it part of the "free market at work." "When parents choose a charter school like Epic, Epic grew. They hired more folks. They hired more teachers," said Walters. "Well, when parents have also said, 'you know actually,' a lot of parents have chosen to put their kids back in Tulsa Public Schools because of the improvements there." He said the changes are the free market at work, and he thinks they create competition for high-quality educators and could result in better teacher recruitment across all schools.Related Story: Epic Charter Schools cuts 357 staff members, phases out Learning CentersNew History Standards Promote "American Exceptionalism"Walters also celebrated what he called a major legislative win: the adoption of new history standards that emphasize "American exceptionalism" and mandate the inclusion of the Bible in the curriculum. "Now, Oklahoma has the best history standards in the country," Walters said. "These history standards will make sure your kids understand what makes America exceptional. We put the Bible back in the standards so kids can understand the role that Judeo-Christian values played in American history, specifically the Bible." He said students will explore founding documents like the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, and claimed other states may look to Oklahoma as a model. "I think every state you're going to see across the country is going to be looking at these standards in the future to start emulating those things. So, Oklahoma is going to be a leader," he said.Related Story: Debate over social studies standards: Lawmakers weigh revisions and approvalPushback on Bible in CurriculumThe move to include the Bible has caused debate among parents concerned about the separation of church and state. Walters dismissed that criticism as ideological censorship. "We're going to have the Bible back in every classroom this fall," he said. "It's the most read book in American history. It's the most cited book in American history. I don't know how you understand anything about our society or government if you don't understand the Bible and the role that it played." "Whether you like it or not, where you a Christian or not, whatever your faith may be that's American history," he added. "Our kids need to understand American history that so we can continue to be this great country." Related Story: Oklahomans React To Proposed Classroom Bible BudgetNon-Christian Religious Leaders React To Walters' Bible In Classroom MandateLooking AheadWhile the state still faces teacher shortages and shifting student enrollment patterns, Walters remains optimistic. "I'm very proud that our kids are going to get that kind of education," he said. "And I'm very proud for the future of our country." Related Story: Bkbyx superintendent Rob Miller announces run for state superintendentOklahoma's National Education RankingDespite these reforms, Oklahoma continues to face challenges in education. The state ranks 48th out of 51 in overall public school rankings, considering factors like K-12 performance, funding, higher education quality, and safety. Additionally, the 2024 Kids Count report placed Oklahoma 49th in education, highlighting ongoing issues in the state's educational outcomes.NAEP ranked Oklahoma 47th in fourth-grade reading and 48th in eighth-grade reading. For math, Oklahoma ranked 44th in fourth grade and 45th in eighth grade. Trump nominates yet another Fox news host to cabinetDonald Trump has nominated FCC and transportation roles to cabinet, which includes another Fox News host.Oklahoma's top educator vigorously criticized "the left" in a heated appearance on CNN Monday, in which he defended his mandate for schools to play a video that shows him praying for President-elect Donald Trump. "The left has driven the Bible out of schools, driven prayer out of schools, and everything in education has gotten worse since," Oklahoma state schools Superintendent Ryan Walters told CNN anchor Pam Brown.The video was part of a flurry of recent moves by Walters as he works to elevate his national profile. Trump is quickly filling out his incoming Cabinet, and Walters' name has been mentioned by some news outlets as a potential pick for education secretary or adviser. Ryan Walters is the state Superintendent of Public Instruction in Oklahoma.A 2016 teacher of the year finalist, Walters taught high school history for eight years, according to his government biography.In Sept. 2020, he was appointed as Secretary of Public Education in Oklahoma. He was elected to his current position in 2022, according to Ballotpedia, and his term ends in January 2027.Walters has long supported Trump, echoing several of his stances on education.Walters, like Trump, has called for the elimination of the U.S. Department of Education. In recent months, he has made a number of moves that drew national attention.In June, Walter mandated school districts to include the Bible "as an instructional support into the curriculum" for grades 5 through 12, citing its importance as a historical document. The mandate is being challenged in court.The Bible mandate further made headlines when a call for Bible vendors was written in such a way that very few versions of the Bible — namely one endorsed by former President Donald Trump — appeared to meet all the standards specified. At the urging of officials from the state Office of Management and Enterprise Services, minor changes were made to the RFP.In the video discussed recently on CNN, Walters said he would create a new Office of Religious Liberty and Patriotism and bowed his head in prayer. He sent an email requiring districts to show the video to all enrolled students and distribute it to parents as well. Several school districts said they would not show the video and the Oklahoma attorney general sided with the districts.Phil Bacharach, a spokesman for the state attorney general's office, told this to the the Oklahoman, part of the USA TODAY Network: "Not only is this edict unenforceable, it is contrary to parents' rights, local control and individual free-exercise rights."Kinsey Crowley is a trending news reporter at USA TODAY. Reach her at kcrowley@gannett.com, and follow her on X and TikTok @kinseycrowley.

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