

## Chiapetti one of two finalists for Flagstaff superintendent job

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent  
Friday, 21 April 2017 04:04

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### Iowa administrator picked over Chiapetti

Frank Chiapetti's quest to get back into business of education came close last week after not getting picked for the top job at the Flagstaff Unified School District, according to information provided to the *Gallup Sun* from the Flagstaff Unified School District.

Karin Eberhard, spokeswoman for the FUSD, said Chiapetti was one of 20 candidates who applied for the job. Eberhard said six candidates ended up getting a preliminary interview and two were finalists for the job. Chiapetti was the superintendent at Gallup-McKinley County Schools for about three years.

The Flagstaff Unified School District Governing Board voted 3-1 at a March meeting to enter into contractual negotiations with Mike Penca of Mason City, Iowa. Christine Fredericks, a member of the FUSD, recently told the *Arizona Daily Sun* that one of the reasons she didn't ultimately vote for Chiapetti was because of some newspaper articles in Gallup newspapers that talked about Chiapetti reassigning district staff, including principals, to improve test scores at

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district schools.

The reported move upset some Gallup administrators as well as students and parents, area officials have said.

Chiapetti, who, technically, remains the superintendent at Gallup-McKinley County Schools, was placed on paid administrative leave by the Gallup-McKinley County Board of Education in December 2016 in a 4-1 board vote. A major point of contention during Chiapetti's reign were suggestions by the Native American school board members that Chiapetti didn't have Natives in mind when it came to major decisions.

Chiapetti, 51, will be paid by Gallup-McKinley County Schools up until June 30. That makes career school district administrator Mike Hyatt the "interim" superintendent of the Gallup school district until the end of June.

Chiapetti earned \$132,000 annually in the job. Hyatt's contract pays \$150,000 annually and is believed to be the highest superintendent contract in the history of the Gallup-McKinley County School District. Hyatt is the highest paid public official in McKinley County.

Asked months ago, when he applied for a superintendent's job in Las Cruces and while he was going through some Gallup school board uncertainty, Chiapetti, a Gallup native, said he was looking elsewhere because "I've got to keep my options open."

Chiapetti did not return repeated telephone calls over the past few weeks from the *Sun* seeking comment. When asked if there were more applicants from either McKinley or Cibola counties who applied for the Flagstaff superintendent job, Eberhard chose to pass on the question.

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