

## Shake-up at GMCS Board of Education

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent  
Friday, 05 May 2017 11:07

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### Newcomer Charles Long now sitting in the driver's seat

A couple of members of the Gallup-McKinley County Schools Board of Education were elected to new board seats in a school system leadership shake-up May 1. Another board member retained the seat as vice-president. The moves took place at the regular board meeting at school district headquarters on Boardman Drive.

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Newcomer Charles Long, who was nominated by fellow school board newcomer Michael Schaaf, is the newly elected board president by a 3-2 majority. Long, a former McKinley County Treasurer and Crownpoint native, replaces Prescilla Manuelito who is now board secretary.

Long-time board vice-president Kevin Mitchell was re-elected to the position. Schaaf, Christopher Mortensen and Long voted for Long. As per policy, the board can elect its own president, vice president and secretary.

"The kids are still going to be a priority," Long said after being elected. "It's my vision to see that our children are receiving the best possible education that can be provided. If our children desire to go to college, I want our students to be able to go to a college or university without any problems."

Typically, the election of new board officers occurs during the first board meeting of July. But that policy changed via a board vote when Long, Mortensen and Schaaf took office. It was Long who suggested the change and at a board meeting prior to the new members being sworn in.

Mitchell let it be known during the election process who he preferred as board president. He held up two state awards that Manuelito recently received for leadership skills.

"I would like to stand behind the belief that you are the most qualified person to be president of our school board," Mitchell said. "These are state awards that were given to you as a leader. I would like to nominate you to continue as our school board president."

Manuelito wasn't shy in returning the favor to Mitchell. Manuelito's nomination of Mitchell garnered the 4-1 winning vote margin of Mortensen, Long, and Manuelito and Mitchell.

"I will not sell out our children," Manuelito said upon giving up the board president seat. "Please continue to speak out and let your voices be heard."

### ***EURO TRIP UPDATE***

Cody Moody and Garrett Stolz, who teach AP history at Miyamura High School, gave board members an update on a planned summer trip to Europe for students in 2018. The two said there are 29 students and four chaperones registered to go on the 12-day excursion. The venture includes cultural exposure trips to Berlin, Dresden, Potsdam, Krakow, Prague, Budapest, Vienna and Auschwitz.

“We already have \$2,500 raised,” Moody told board members. “We have 29 students who are interested. Our cap was 24, but we could not say no to the others.”

Moody and Stolz, who agreed to periodically update board members on the trip, said the \$4,220 cost includes round-trip flights and transportation, hotels, breakfast and dinner daily, entrance fees to attractions and an educational itinerary, among other things.

“Have all of the students worked on getting passports?” Long asked. “Sounds like fun,” Mortensen said. “I wish you guys the best of luck in meeting your (financial) goal,” Mitchell told the pair.

Essentially, Moody and Stolz want the board’s stamp of approval in taking the students overseas. There is no class credit involved, but the two have called the get-away beneficial. Moody and Stolz gave an ethnic breakdown of who’s registered for the trip so far: There are 12 Native Americans; 4 Asians; 10 Hispanics and 3 Caucasians.

### ***NM LEGISLATORS HONORED***

The Board of Education recognized Sen. George Muñoz, D-Gallup, and Sen. John Pinto, D-Tohatchi, and Rep. D. Wonda Johnson, D-Gallup, for their achievements at the state level. Each received a certificate of appreciation.

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Pinto is the longest serving member of the New Mexico Legislature. Johnson narrowly beat Mitchell in last year's race. Muñoz was first elected in 2009 and is the son of the late Gallup mayor Ed Muñoz.

Also, the state School Boards Association awarded twelve district students for outstanding academic achievement.

***By Bernie Dotson  
Sun Correspondent***