

Indian Ed spending called into question

Written by By Chrissy Largo Sun Correspondent
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Superintendent still in limbo

During the Gallup-McKinley County Schools Board of Education's regular meeting Oct. 5, the

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board addressed recent media reports calling into question the Indian Education Committee's spending at various casinos.

"We've never been cited for misuse of funds or abuse of funds," Indian Education Committee President Monica Yazzie said. "We have components in place that justifies our spending for our Native American children. We follow policy procedures under Navajo Nation and Gallup McKinley Schools for our travel and how we utilize our funding."

According to Priscilla Manuelito, Board of Education secretary, funds used at casinos were justifiably spent for conferences and orientations that will be used to educate parents and their children.

"These were mandatory meetings that our Indian Education Committee members were required to send representation of our school districts," she said. "We do not have a choice on where the Navajo Nation decides to host these events."

District 5 board member Lynn Huenemann recommended that an additional review be set in place to "delay the allegations" of misuse of funds.

"It is presented to the public that the committee spent money at the casinos, but we all know that the larger casinos and the smaller casinos in the country are places that have conferences rooms and a lot of meetings are held at those places," he said.

That same evening, the five-member school board went into executive session for approximately 50 minutes as a handful of curious parents and community members lingered about the meeting area.

However, no information was disclosed regarding GMCS Superintendent, Frank Chiapetti, who was placed on administrative leave about two months ago. An investigation into Chiapetti's role as superintendent is being conducted by investigator Dan Patterson.

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“At this time, we are still waiting to hear from the investigative end or from our attorneys,” District 1 Vice President Kevin Mitchell said during a phone interview.

Huenemann said that they are waiting on a report and have not received any further information.

District 4 board member Joe Menini said that he had not heard anything and “I couldn’t tell you a thing.”

On Aug. 17, Chiapetti was placed on administrative leave and Special Education Director Carmen Moffett was appointed to serve as interim superintendent. In previous years, Chiapetti served as principal of Miyamura High School.