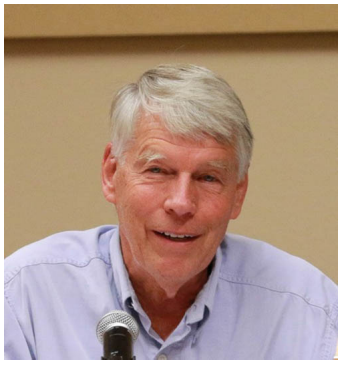






Manuelito slips on ice prior to meeting

Gallup-McKinley County Schools Board of Education President Titus Nez and Board secretary

Priscilla Manuelito were recently both summonsed to the Gallup District Court, pending a complaint charge that may recall their positions as Board members.

Nez is scheduled to appear at the Gallup District Court on Nov. 23 at 11 am and Manuelito is scheduled to appear in court on Nov. 30 at 9 am the following week.

There was no discussion on the matter at the Board's regular meeting on Nov. 16 and no comment from either party was given at press time.

In the same night, before the meeting started, Manuelito was walking towards the front entrance doors to the Student Support Center when she accidentally slipped on a patch of ice. Paramedics were called and she was taken to the nearest hospital. The extent of her injuries is unknown at this time.

However, the board meeting resumed and it was all business as District 5 Board member Lynn Huenemann discussed a summary of the board's four goals that aim to strengthen the district's operations and educational impact on its students.

The first goal is establishing the board's goals and study topics.

"I think we each individually have our hopes of contributing and strengthening the education of our students," Huenemann said, "but we haven't articulated any specific goals for the year or even longer term, or shorter term."

Huenemann addressed the second goal that involves the concerns associated with low testing scores on state tests of students within the districts and how to improve student achievements.

The third goal was to look into conducting open public forums by engaging ideas with constituents, parents, teachers and students.

“Sometimes teachers don’t feel free to say what they are thinking because they got to go through the chain of command,” Huenemann said. “They might be inhibited by a principal or just by their expectations. If we had some open forums where everybody could share their ideas, comparisons and to communicate together.”

The last goal is the Board’s role and responsibilities in supporting the revitalization of Navajo and other languages.

“I have to say, institutionally and historically, it’s the schools more than any other institution that probably have undermined, caused the lost of native language and some other languages in our various heritages,” Huenemann said.

Board President Titus Nez said since each student, teacher and parents have different goals and ideas, he would like to sit down first with his district’s parent advisory committees, students and schools and come back to the board room to exchange ideas.

“I think we can stand and say this is where we want to be, in the coming months and coming years,” Titus said. “If you keep your goals to a minimum, one to three years, you want to see the performance measures on those objectives and when you do that, you know that you have succeeded in prioritizing your goals.”

District 1 Vice President Kevin Mitchell suggested the best way to start dialogue about addressing the board’s goals is by having work sessions between board members, that way everybody is aware of what to take back to their communities.

“I had a parent’s forum in Tohatchi last month,” Mitchell said. “I am planning on continuing this and having another parent forum and bring in different areas from central office from our administration to communicate and answer questions that our communities have.”

It was recommended by Nez to conduct a work session an hour and half prior to the Dec. 21

regular board meeting, if weather permits, to discuss an exact date on conducting a future open public forum.

“I like the idea of hosting a district forum in my area to talk with parents,” Nez said. “A lot of times these elders, don’t have transportation to get to the schools. I think I feel more comfortable sitting down reaching their homes and listening to them.”

Superintendent Frank Chiapetti had no comments to add as he remained mum throughout the whole meeting.

Chiapetti was recently under investigation and was placed on administrative leave on Aug. 17, while Special Education Direct Carmen Moffett served as acting interim superintendent. He returned to his post Nov. 12.