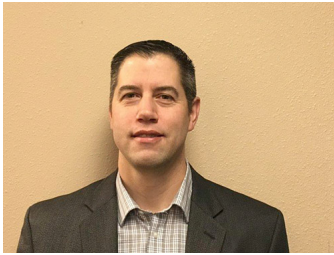


## GMCS implements pay raises

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent  
Friday, 28 April 2017 03:45

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## GMCS, MCFUSE come to terms at April 3 meeting

The Gallup-McKinley County Board of Education has approved across-the-board pay raises for employees, officials confirmed. The action took place at the April 3 regular school board meeting at district headquarters and was unanimous. The action took place alongside the two-year ratification of the current collective bargaining agreement between GMCS and the McKinley County Federation of United School Employees.

“All returning salaried employees are receiving a daily wage increase for the 2017-2018 school year,” Interim Superintendent Mike Hyatt told the *Gallup Sun* this week. Hyatt is interim superintendent until the end of June. “I cannot give a specific number as to who is to receive the raise because the number of employees at the start of the year varies.”

Hyatt said the pay increase was done at the same time of a collective bargaining agreement. He said members of the general public may have missed the increase because the two were taken up together.

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Hyatt said the pay raise amount depends on the employees' current rate of pay. Hyatt, appointed to the interim position in December 2016, said the increase varies from 4 to 10 percent "where the higher end rate was negotiated for the lowest paid employees and the higher paid employees received a lower rate increase." Hyatt is set to earn \$150,000 under his superintendent contract.

Hyatt said members of MCFUSE received a pay raise, saying union membership represents approximately 90 percent of district employees. An exact number of full and part-time school district employees was not immediately available. The last time district employees received a pay raise was about two years ago and that was for 1 percent, Hyatt said.

### **MCFUSE, GMCS REACTION**

Brian Bernard, president of the school district union, said the new collective bargaining agreement and the pay raise component were welcomed wholeheartedly. Bernard was part of the collective bargaining negotiating team and said the agreement, among other things, tightens existing terminology.

"It's a very good and welcomed two-year agreement," Bernard said. "In years past, the agreement has been for one year. This document was unanimously approved by union membership and unanimously approved by the members of the school board. That's always a good equation."

Kevin Mitchell, vice president of the school board with a near seven-years of board service, said the pay raise was something well-deserved by the employees. "They work hard and they deserve the raise," Mitchell said. "Everybody was in agreement with this."

Mitchell noted that discussions regarding the pay raise were started back before new board members Charles Long, Chris Mortensen and Michael Schaaf were elected. The new board members were elected in February and Long has publicly championed the work done by district employees.

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Hyatt said the pay raises took place at this juncture because the district and MCFUSE hold negotiations at least once yearly and the subject of pay raises usually surfaces.

“Our employees deserve an increase in pay as they are on average paid less than many K-12 school entities that are within or surround our district’s boundaries,” Hyatt said. “This increase is one benefit that helps recruit and retain quality employees to serve our students.”

On the reaction of employees receiving the pay raises, Hyatt said, “I have never met a person who is unhappy to receive a pay increase. Everyone that I was able to speak with seemed pleased with the increase.”

***By Bernie Dotson***  
***Sun Correspondent***