

GMCS asks legislators for funding for technology

Written by Molly Ann Howell Managing Editor
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In order to continue their mission of leading their students to success, Gallup-McKinley County Schools is asking the state for funding during the 2024 legislative session. During the Dec. 18 GMCS school board meeting, Deputy Superintendent Jvanna Hanks III explained the three main projects she presented to the lawmakers at an earlier date.

All three of the asks Hanks presented involved technology that would improve students' learning.

The first priority was experimental simulators and auto center equipment that would help with specific Career Pathways that high school students take on. The district requested almost \$1.8 million for a variety of simulators, including hydraulic excavators, dozers, semi trucks, and other heavy machinery.

Hanks explained that the simulators would be highly beneficial and save the district money in the long run.

"It really gets [students] prepared and comfortable and knowledgeable about how the equipment works," Hanks said. "So not only does that bolster the students' confidence and give the teacher a lot of great information, it also saves us a ton of money because they're not using the actual equipment until they're really confident and ready to do so. ..."

Hanks said that the simulation training the students would do would serve as industry-recognized certification.

"... We're kind of targeting it based on the industry and what the industry is doing because we don't just want to give [our students] a piece of paper, we want to give them a very valuable piece of paper for them in their futures," she said.

The simulators would serve about 1,100 students and community partners. Hanks noted that the district has a partnership with Swift Transportation, so they would also be training

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community members how to use the equipment.

The second item Hanks presented was immersive educational technology that would be used in elementary gyms. Hanks explained how the proposed projectors would enhance students' learning. She noted that when kids are more active during a lesson plan, the more information they retain.

The gym projectors cost a total of \$875,000, and if they were in every elementary school they would reach up to 4,600 kids.

Finally, the district is requesting \$340,000 from the state for STEM kits that would be used in Discovery Centers in the elementary and middle schools. Focusing on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math, the kits will help students develop important skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, teamwork, perseverance, and decision-making.

District leaders traveled to Santa Fe on Jan. 24 for McKinley County Day, where lawmakers would be listening to representatives from the county to see how they could help the local area. The legislative session started on Jan. 16 and will end on Feb. 15. Hanks and GMCS Superintendent Mike Hyatt will provide the school board with updates on bills that will affect the school district at a future school board meeting.

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