

GMCS approves Europe travel proposal

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
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Feb. 17 parent intro meeting planned

The Gallup-McKinley County School Board of Education unanimously approved a resolution Feb. 6 that permits two world history teachers to pursue plans for a 2018 student trip to Eastern Europe.

The matter was met with a little opposition from board members, who argued that a \$3,000 overseas trip might prove too costly for most of the district's students. McKinley County is one of the poorest counties in New Mexico.

This is not a trip to Canyon de Chelly (Chinle, Ariz.) or the Grand Canyon in Flagstaff, the board suggested. Board member Sandra Jeff did not attend the meeting.

"I'd like to see you (the group) go," outgoing board member Joe Menini said. "This is a once in a lifetime thing for some of our students. It's a good opportunity for these students."

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Garrett Stolz and Cody Moody, both AP world history teachers at Miyamura High School, pitched the idea to the board. Essentially, the trip would take place just after the end of the regular school year in 2018, the pair told board members. On the proposed itinerary are cities like Berlin, Dresden, Auschwitz and Vienna.

The trip is intended to be a learning experience for students who've never been outside of the United States. There is no high school or college credit associated with the trip, meaning the selected students won't be taking any kind of formal classes for credit in either of the countries.

"I don't know. I'd like to look this over a little more," board president Priscilla Manuelito said. "What are you going to do with the kids who want to go, but who can't afford to pay for the trip?" Manuelito asked.

Stolz replied that students would have every opportunity to fundraise and save money for the trip over the next several months. Both Stolz and Moody stated that a parent introductory meeting related to the logistics of the trip is set for Feb.17 at district headquarters on Boardman Drive.

The 12-day trip includes everything with respect to expenses, Moody said. The final fee includes air fare, food, guided tours, hotel stays – "most anything and everything that comes up," Moody said.

There is a 6 to 1 teacher to student ratio, based on preliminary plans, Stolz said, "so everyone will have a chaperone," he noted. A company named EFT Tours, of Massachusetts, will facilitate travel, the two said.

Not included in the trip are excursions to nearby islands or smaller countries. Moody is a first-year teacher from Mars, Pa. Stolz taught at Gallup Mid last year and is in his first year at Miyamura. Even if there aren't many students who go, the trip will still be a "go," Moody said. At least two other Miyamura teachers are penciled in for the trip.

"I've traveled to Ireland and Scotland," Moody said to a question by Menini. "It's a learning

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experience – especially for someone who’s never been out of the country,” Stolz said.

Also at the school board meeting, board members granted interim superintendent Mike Hyatt the authority to follow through on lawsuits on behalf of the board. That was put into the form of a motion. And a resolution was passed relevant to the school district remaining a part of the ongoing Zuni Pueblo lawsuit which is about an unequal distribution of funds pertaining to construction and maintenance projects.

In another meeting agenda item, the school board and the superintendent awarded certificates to employees with perfect attendance last year. Of the 15 employees selected, nine were from Thoreau High School and are school bus drivers. Selected from Thoreau were: Marlene Begay, Geneva Bennett, Annie Enditto, Felix Kowena, Tommy McDonald, Alice Sanders, Doris Thompson, Bertha Yazzie and Ruby Yazzie.

***By Bernie Dotson
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