

Gallup Sun Editorial: How could this happen?

Written by Gallupsun Staff
Friday, 30 December 2016 10:58



Like other taxpaying citizens, we at the *Gallup Sun* have been appalled in 2016 by the actions of the Gallup-McKinley County Schools Board of Education. Putting Superintendent Frank Chiapetti on paid administrative leave last week was something everybody this side of Santa Fe saw coming a long time ago.

But why do it at Tse Yi Gai High School in Pueblo Pintado and out of eyesight from folks who would have otherwise attended the school board meeting?

Now, folks with students attending McKinley County schools are watching to see where the situation goes from here: Will there be some concessions offered by either side? Is the situation really a done deal? Was racism involved in the situation?

It wasn't a shocker when the state Public Education Department cautioned GMCS about board member Sandra Jeff living outside of the district's boundaries. Nor was it shocking to see retired Gallup educator Joe Menini vote against the Chiapetti paid administrative leave thing.

Things at GMCS tend to go from bad to worse, at least lately, anyway. Chiapetti led the district through a rise of student test scores, and was effective by the board's own measurement. Most parents and teachers who recognized the improvements liked him.

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A guy who was making a difference in a short amount of time was, effectively, dismissed. There are no scandalous allegations here.

And if there was anything scandalous, it would be in the investigative report of Chiapetti conducted while he was placed on administrative leave in 2015. The *Gallup Sun's* repeated Inspection of Public Records Act requests to obtain this document has been met with roadblocks, with the district claiming that it's part of Chiapetti's personnel file and not subject to public review.

And regardless of what's in the report, Chiapetti was reinstated until now.

This latest move looks like pure politics: Someone apparently just got bent out of shape to the point where they just didn't like Chiapetti and he became the fall guy.

The release of Chiapetti was a mistake. He was getting results, and his motivation was to continue getting results. Why in the world would anyone have a problem with that?

The Board of Education should have continued working with Chiapetti, at least until the end of his contract. The inability of some board members to do so, and learn from the experience, reveals another glaring deficiency.

How could this happen?