

GMCS board celebrates House Bill 6

Written by By Molly Adamson Sun Correspondent
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Thanks Rep. Lundstrom, House Speaker Egolf

The Gallup-McKinley Community School District is finally getting a chance to provide its students with a chance at a great future, or at least that's what the school's board members and New Mexico Rep. Patricia Lundstrom, D-Gallup, and New Mexico's Speaker of the House Brian Egolf, D-Santa Fe, believe, now that House Bill 6 has passed.

House Bill 6 will eliminate the State Equalization Guarantee. In a previous interview with the *Sun*, Lundstrom explained how the guarantee had been put in place over 50 years ago and said that

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it negatively impacted Gallup. The guarantee was a formula that gave the 81 public school districts in New Mexico funding. She said this formula gave funding intended for GMCS schools to schools outside the district.

The bill will allow \$24 million back into the school district next year, and the state as a whole will be getting \$60 million back.

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham signed the bill April 5.

During the April 12 school board meeting, GMCS Superintendent Michael Hyatt and the board members thanked Lundstrom and Egolf for their efforts in getting the bill passed. Lundstrom sponsored the bill, and said it was the bill she was most proud of in her entire career as a representative.

“So many students will finally have a real shot at the kind of future we all hope that they have ...” Egolf declared.

“I just thank you on behalf of myself as a former GMCS student [who] wished for a lot of things and saw a lot of things that I wish our school district had,” Board Member Priscilla Manuelito commented.

Egolf and Hyatt estimated that the new money coming into the district because of this bill would lead to about a 25 percent budget increase, with that increase happening every school year.

“I think we’ve been short-changed on Impact Aid money for many years, and the money that the state was taking was used in other parts of the state where there were really no Native American students going to school, and they’d taken our money,” Board President Charles Long said.

“They had nice classrooms, nice school buildings, [and] good sports facilities. We’ve been

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wanting those kinds of new schools [and] sports facilities in our area, and we've been wishing [for] that for a long time. I want to thank the two of you and others that helped, for making it possible," Long addressed Lundstrom and Egolf.

Board Vice President Chris Mortensen called the bill a "generational change."

"Our administration and our school district have been fighting with one hand tied behind their back for all these many years and really making a difference in these kids," Mortensen said. "It will be very exciting to see the difference going forward and what our kids can do to live up to their potential."

House Bill 6 will go into effect July 1.

By Molly Adamson
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