

Apartments for teachers

Written by By Molly Ann Howell Sun Correspondent
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GMCS uses housing incentives to retain, draw quality staff

School districts across the nation are experiencing staff shortages.

According to a National Education Association survey that was published on Feb. 1, 74% of the teachers surveyed said they've had to fill in for colleagues or take on other duties because of a staff shortage. While 55% of the teachers interviewed said they plan to leave the profession sooner than they originally planned because of the pandemic.

The Gallup-McKinley County Schools district is trying to counter this national exodus from the profession and the area's housing shortage by building housing specifically for teachers.

"As many people are aware, Gallup has a significant housing problem, and it's not just a pricing problem; it is actually a lack of available units," GMCS's Assistant Supervisor of Business Services Jvanna Hanks III said during the March 28 school board meeting. "So this is going to be a great benefit to the district in order to continue to retain those quality staff that we need for all of our students."

In an email to the *Sun*, Hanks said the apartments the district is funding will be located near

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Clay Street in Gallup.

She said 152 apartments would be built, and the building plans include on-site storage, a community building, and an activities area for children. Construction is slated to start in the fall.

The district has been building new teacherages since 2002, but this particular set of apartments has been in the planning stages for three years. Hanks said the district is just now in the final stages of securing the property and finalizing funding and the design. The district is still tallying up the final costs for the project.

The apartments will be available to GMCS certified instructional staff.

Hanks noted that the district is also working on additional duplexes in Crownpoint, Tohatchi, and Navajo.

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