

School board discusses results of Parents as Teachers program

By Cody Begaye
Sun Correspondent

With many students taking the option to learn from home during the pandemic, parents have found themselves with additional

duties in addition to caring for their children. These duties can lead to a greater strain on their wellbeing and resources.

But there are programs, such as Gallup-McKinley County Schools Parents as Teachers, that aim to help parents get their children ready for school from a young age.

The GMCS Board of Education heard a presentation from Ashley Ryan, Ph.D., director of curriculum and instruction for GMCS, on some of the key statistics from the program during their Oct. 6 meeting.

"The purpose of the Parents as Teachers program is for our parent educators to do home visits," Ryan said.

There are three main goals for the PAT program, where enrolled families receive information and support on:

- Engaging in daily literacy activities
- Safe breastfeeding and safe sleep practices

Between July 1, 2019 and June 16, 2020, over 40 new families enrolled in the program and PAT served about 148 families in total with home visiting sessions and then virtual visiting sessions once the pandemic hit.

According to the presentation, 98 families of GMCS students are enrolled in Parents as Teachers and meet with certified parent educators to receive parenting tips, resources and referrals to support agencies, prenatal and early childhood guidance, and activities to promote brain and motor skill development.

Pregnant women and new fathers can participate in the program, along with teen parents and any families in McKinley County with children under the age of five.

"Gallup-McKinley County supporting. Superintendent Mike Hyatt said the PAT program has been very effective and is fully funded by MIECHV, which is what the district should be



Ashley Ryan, Ph.D., Director of Curriculum and Assessment for Gallup-McKinley County Schools

Dist. 3 Board Member Priscilla Manuelito was curious to know if virtual visits and training are being provided with the ongoing pandemic.

"To make sure we're giving the right support to families, we made sure we had enough proper supplies from the start of the pandemic, and our educators deliver those resources to the parents and then we set up a phone call or virtual meeting and then a follow-up to make sure the family can continue with what they are learning in the program," Ryan said. "We're excited for the future of this program."

The item involved just the presentation, so no action or further discussion was needed.



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