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Hiring Decisions At APS Defended

Board Member: Not Enough Minorities

By Andrea Schoellkopf Journal Staff Writer

Hispanic school board members are defending Superintendent Winston Brooks' hiring choices, after some critics said he hadn't named enough minorities.

Board member Paula Maes, at a meeting this week, read from the résumés of Hispanic associate superintendents Raquel Reedy, Eddie Soto and Diane Kerschen, saying they had started careers in highpoverty schools and were often the first in their families to get degrees.

"It's not true they're not Hispanic enough," Maes said.

The comments were in response to concerns from some in the Hispanic community, particularly South Valley board member Dolores Griego, that Brooks' picks for top jobs were not as diverse as Albuquerque Public Schools' student enrollment.

According to 2006-2007 demographics, APS' student population is 55 percent Hispanic and 33 percent Caucasian. According to figures provided by Brooks to the school board, the 18-member leadership team is 61 percent Anglo and 39 percent Hispanic. Of the principals, 55 percent are Anglo and 40 percent are Hispanic.

Board member Marty Esquivel said Hispanics are well-represented in leadership.

"It is reflective of the students we serve," he said. "Minority (issues) aside, the real issue we need to confront is the issue of poverty."

Griego took issue with the comments and said her words had been twisted, although she went on to defend her earlier statements.

"My concerns are the concerns of my district," said Griego, who had been a vocal supporter of APS assistant superintendent Diego Gallegos, an unsuccessful candidate for the superintendent job. "It's an issue."

She said if APS needs to diversify the ethnic makeup of employees, it needs to be from the top down.

"Should we start with the janitorial staff?" she asked.

Board member Robert Lucero also defended non-Hispanic chief academic officer Linda Sink and chief operations officer Brad Winter. "They have all been very, very successful at what they've done," Lucero said.

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