

# The Pueblo Chieftain

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## School board names interim superintendent

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*Pueblo City Schools district again turns to Kathy West.*

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Kathy West

By JOHN NORTON  
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

The Pueblo City Schools Board of Education unanimously voted Wednesday to turn over the reins of the district, at least temporarily, to Associate Superintendent Kathy West.

It will be the second time West has stepped into the role of interim superintendent. The last time was three years ago when she was assistant superintendent for human resources. Superintendent Joyce Bales had left for a job in California and the board was searching for Bales' replacement, so West was appointed.

The administrator they chose, John Covington, promoted West to associate superintendent, the No. 2 executive position and she worked on the development of the district's strategic plan and magnet school program.

Covington is taking the superintendent's job in Kansas City, Mo. His last official day is July 16 but with vacation time, he'll be leaving at the end of June, so the board made West's appointment effective July 1.

The last time West stepped in, she made it clear she wasn't going to apply for the permanent position. This time, however, she said, "I'm considering it because I'm committed to the direction we're going." Following the board vote, West, who was in the audience with other administrators, said: "With this great team, we'll hold it together for you."

Even though the board's vote was unanimous, member Kathy DeNiro expressed concern about

burdening a staff member with more responsibilities, adding that there were several retired superintendents and other former administrators in the community who could step in.

Shawn Yoxey, the first to urge appointing West, pointed to her work on the strategic plan.

Kitty Kennedy agreed, adding: "I'm concerned with continuity. I'm not looking for a space holder."

Kennedy said that even if an experienced former superintendent was called in, "When they have questions, whose job is it going to be to bring them up to date?"

Dan Comden also stressed the need for someone who's been working with ongoing projects.

"There have been 20 or 21 new initiatives and some of them had had squeaky wheels, some have had their tires fall off. We need someone who is aware of what's been going on," Comden said.

Board President Stephanie Garcia agreed, saying: "We need someone in place.

It makes sense to have someone who won't miss a beat."

Prior to the public meeting, the board held an executive session to discuss how it would search for a new superintendent and will continue those talks at another special meeting scheduled at 11 a.m. Monday.

Garcia said the board had not decided how it would proceed, but said, "I would like to have our new superintendent in place before the school year starts and I would hope to have a search limited to a local or state level."