



YUROK TRIBE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Yurok Education Director appointed to State Board of Education

Jim McQuillen brings 30 years of relevant experience to the Board of Education

California Governor Gavin Newsom recently appointed Yurok Education Department Director, Jim McQuillen, to the State Board of Education.

“I am honored to receive this appointment by Governor Newsom,” McQuillen said. “In this role, I will continue to advocate for our native students and for all students to receive equitable educational services.”

McQuillen is the first Yurok citizen to serve on the State Board of Education, which is California’s K-12 policy-making body for academic standards, curriculum, instructional materials, assessments and accountability. During his four-year term on the Board, he will draw upon 30 years of relevant experience to positively influence the lives of California students.

“I will continue in my current position as I give it my best to represent the unique needs of our students, which is more important than ever before because of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this new reality, we need to develop novel methods of engaging students in the learning process, since they may continue to learn remotely going into the fall. I want to help our youth feel more connected to each other and the community as a whole through participation in safe activities that promote wellness and inclusivity,” McQuillen said.

As the Yurok Tribe’s Education Department Director, McQuillen oversees a staff of 75 employees, who are focused on improving scholastic outcomes for students of every age, ranging from toddlers to young adults. The Department consists of three Head Starts, the nationally recognized Yurok Language Program, a Higher Education Program and several other services that support the advancement of tribal youth.

McQuillen headed up the team that paved the way for the Yurok language to be taught in three separate school districts. He is also a recipient of the American Civil Liberties Union’s Chief Justice Earl Warren Civil Liberties Award. In 2017, the ACLU presented McQuillen with this prestigious accolade for bringing local Native American language, culture and history to numerous public-school classrooms in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties.

“Jim is a consistent champion for the students of the North Coast and I have no doubt that he will be an equally amazing advocate for youth throughout the state,” said Joseph L. James, the Chairman of the Yurok Tribe. “Governor Newsom selected a great individual.”

McQuillen, a descendant from the Village of Turip, is a lifelong practitioner of the Tribe's traditional culture. His family organizes an annual Brush Dance, which is a healing ceremony. In addition to his cultural upbringing, McQuillen holds a Master of Arts degree in Psychology from California State University, Sacramento, a Pupil Personnel Services Credential (PPS) in school counseling, as well as a Marriage Family Therapy (MFT) license in California. He has been in private practice, a lecturer at Humboldt State University (HSU), and an Assistant Principal. He has served as the Director of the Yurok Tribe's Education Department since 2004 and will remain in this position while serving on the state board.

Members of the State Board of Education are first nominated for the position and then appointed by the governor. Each appointment requires confirmation from the California State Senate. Board members serve a four-year term. The 11 appointed members meet for two days every other month. The California State Board of Education meetings can be viewed live here: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/pn/lv/index.asp>