

Yurok education director appointed to State Board of Education

July 24, 2020



Gov. Gavin Newsom recently appointed Yurok Education Department Director and Crescent City resident 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. 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.

In his position with the tribe McQuillen oversees a staff of 75. The department includes three Head Starts, the Yurok Language Program and other services.

McQuillen helped pave 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. A descendant from the Village of Turip, is a lifelong practitioner of the Tribe's traditional culture. He holds a Master of Arts degree in Psychology from California State University, Sacramento, and other degrees and credentials.