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President of Adams State sues, asks to be reinstated

By Arthur Kane
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The president of Adams State College says the school board violated open-records law when deciding to put him on leave and wants to be reinstated, according to a lawsuit filed Thursday.

Richard Wueste, who has served as the school's president for about a year, was put on administrative leave in July and the board has moved to have him fired for financial mismanagement.

Wueste's attorney asked a judge in Alamosa District Court to issue an injunction to prevent the board from firing him because the board repeatedly violated open-meetings laws in his removal.

"They held secret meetings with predetermined results," said Todd J. McNamara, who is representing Wueste. "The very purpose of the law is to prevent these actions."

Kathleen Eck, chairwoman of the school's board, has previously said the board abided by open-meetings laws, but she could not be reached for comment Thursday on the lawsuit.

The board met repeatedly this summer to discuss Wueste's performance, and on July 14 sent him a letter outlining why they want to fire him.

Wueste signed contracts despite the board asking him not to enter into new financial obligations, lost the confidence of his executive team, and made unapproved hires, the letter charged.

McNamara said Wueste denies all the allegations

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against him, but the lawsuit focuses on violations of the open-meetings laws to attempt to reinstate him.

The board held a June 26 meeting on budget issues and passed a motion to remove Wueste's authority over two subordinates, which should have been held in open session, the lawsuit claims. The board only posted a notice hours before an emergency July 6 meeting, and the board also improperly discussed the budget in a closed session of a July 14 meeting, the lawsuit claims.

"Despite enduring a climate of conspiratorial backstabbing, Dr. Wueste continued to act professionally," the lawsuit states.

A hearing is scheduled for Sept. 28 on the injunction to block his firing.

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