



## New Mexico Public Education Commission (PEC)

### Educational Program Amendment Instructions

**Purpose:** To request that the Public Education Commission (PEC) accept a proposed change to the educational program in the charter contract, including a change related to virtual or online teaching.

**Submission Deadline:** The form must be approved prior to the change being implemented. Amendments completed 28 days prior to the next PEC meeting will be placed on the next agenda.

**PEC Direction:** Any changes made should support and align with the charter mission. The amendment may not change the purpose of the school's mission without an amendment to the mission statement being submitted at the same time for consideration.

A school must submit a request to change the online/virtual teaching at the school that generally affects the student population as an educational program change. However, a head administrator may allow virtual/online instruction for individual students with an individualized plan or in a special circumstance that is temporary without submitting an amendment request.

**CSD will** provide performance data (academic, organizational, and financial) for the contract term through the most recent annual report, including any outstanding compliance or investigations, and highlight information relevant to the amendment request.

#### **The school must provide:**

- ☐ Fully completed form including rationale for the change
- ☐ Approved board minutes or certification of the vote taken by the board
- ☐ Rationale for the change, including how the change will support students' outcomes and growth
- ☐ Concise narrative addressing how the proposed changes may affect: (1) staffing; (2) enrollment targets; (3) advertising and marketing; (4) the curriculum, assessment, and instruction; (5) resources and budget; (6) the community; and (7) the capacity of the facility

Contact [charter.schools@ped.nm.gov](mailto:charter.schools@ped.nm.gov) with questions about completing or submitting documents.

## Educational Program Request Form

Submit this form and all supporting documents to [charter.schools@ped.nm.gov](mailto:charter.schools@ped.nm.gov)

The Charter Contract was entered into by and between the New Mexico Public Education Commission (PEC) and Roots & Wings Community School, hereafter "the school," effective on June 1, 2021

**The school requests consideration from the PEC to change the terms of its contract as follows:** Amend Sections 5.8 and 5.9 of the Charter Contract to provide that the School may utilize no more than 12 remote instruction days in its school calendar per school year, as an intentional extension of its expeditionary learning educational model.

**The Charter School Contract Enrollment Cap currently reads:** The School shall serve no more than 60 students in grades K-8.

**Current Enrollment and Demographics:** Projected enrollment for the 25/26 school year is 58 students, with current enrollment at 51. The RWCS student body reflects the vast diversity of Taos County, with students from many different cultural backgrounds. 67% of our students qualify for the Free or Reduced Lunch Program, and 33% qualify for IEPs or other special education services.

**The amendment requests that the PEC approve an addition to Section 5.8 & 5.9**

Student Attendance and Instructional Hours. **of the school's contract so that the Educational Program reads, in relevant part:** "The school calendar for Roots & Wings will include no more than 12 remote learning days per school year; such remote learning days shall be utilized to provide meaningful and relevant professional development for staff, and to provide flexible, self-directed inquiry or fieldwork opportunities for students, encouraging students to engage deeply with their environment, families, and communities as extensions of the classroom."

**Rationale for the requested amendment/change, including how the change will support students' outcomes and growth:** Section 5.2.2 of the school charter reads, "The mission of Roots and Wings Charter School is to inspire our students to academic and personal excellence. Our innovative learning community creates classroom, farm, and wilderness adventure - engaging the head, hands, and heart - enabling students to achieve more than they think possible and to take an active role in our ever-changing world." Our school's mission is founded on and grounded in the principles of expeditionary learning, which values student agency, experiential learning, and authentic connections between academics and real-world experiences. Remote learning days allow for flexible, self-directed inquiry and promote the development of appropriate educational autonomy that mirrors the fieldwork and reflection components of expeditionary learning, encouraging students to engage deeply with their environment, families, and communities as extensions of the classroom.

**Describe how the proposed change will affect the curriculum, methods of instruction, formative and summative assessments, staffing and resources, budget, and the community:**

*Curriculum and methods of instruction:*

- Section 5.1.1 "Roots & Wings Community School makes education relevant, experiential, compelling. At the center of the RWCS curriculum is the concept of the "Learning Expedition," an engaging interdisciplinary, academically rigorous thematic unit that is project-based and lasts for many weeks. Each Learning Expedition at RWCS is aligned with the New Mexico State Content Standards, Common Core State Standards, and the

Next Generation Science Standards.”

- Deepen learning projects that begin on campus and continue independently at home.
  - K-2: Gardening and recycling are key components of their daily lessons. Students will continue such projects at their homes in the community on remote days.
  - 3-5: Leave no trace is a focus of study in this classroom. In addition to core academics that support this theme, lessons, lessons and activities around this intention will be continued on the remote days.
  - 6-8: By this point in their academic career at Roots & Wings, students are participating in 5-7 day backcountry camping trips twice a year. We are instilling a lifelong passion for getting out in nature, and giving students a foundation they can build on—whether that is a future career in many of the recreational or wilderness management jobs available locally. In addition to core academics, students will also engage in activities that continue to foster the passion for seeing their place in nature.
- Support outdoor, place-based education—for example, students might tend their home gardens, conduct weather or ecology observations, or create land art installations, then document and reflect on their work through multimedia submissions.
- Allow for interdisciplinary connections that are best nurtured in a flexible learning environment, such as combining art, writing, and science in at-home creative projects.
- Provide space for project-based learning check-ins, independent reading, and one-on-one virtual mentoring, aligned with our personalized learning goals.
- Each remote learning day is intentionally designed and aligned with New Mexico state standards. Students are provided with:
  - Clearly articulated learning objectives and success criteria.
  - Opportunities for real-time feedback through online office hours or small group check-ins.
  - A digital platform where teachers can monitor participation, provide timely feedback, and ensure student accountability.

*Staffing and resources:*

- Allows for intentional professional development time for staff, such as development of more robust outdoor education planning and preteaching for our outdoor trips; working with local farmers and artist to better understand how to create and maintain a food forest on campus and how students can document their learning and understanding of the world around them using nature journals; and attend trainings from offered from the i-Ready math curriculum on how to better differentiate and analysis data offered through their program to meet the needs of all students.
- Ensures staffing and resources are used in an effective, impactful, and inclusive manner by giving the staff the time needed to come together as a whole and discuss and problem-solve gaps in student learning as well as social-emotional needs (MLSS).
- Allow staff the time to analyze student data more thoroughly and collaboratively
- We are a small school (60 students) with a staff of 5 FTE teachers and 1 FTE educational assistant. We do not have the staffing or financial resources to come together for professional development when students are on campus.

### *Budget:*

- Allowing these remote days would enhance the School's budget by allowing the School to access the K-12+ program funding, inasmuch as the remote days could be counted as part of the required number of 'instructional days' for the School to participate in K-12+. Although Subsection 8.G of the NMPED's School Calendar Requirements regulation, 6.10.5 NMAC, restricts 'remote instruction' to no more than four instructional days/32 hours per school year, with at least 50% of remote instruction to be synchronous instruction, the regulation provides a clear exception for "(2) ...charter schools in accordance with the contract between the school and its chartering authority, or schools without attendance boundaries." 6.10.5.8.G.2 NMAC. Despite the fact that charter schools, and particularly state-authorized charters like Roots & Wings, necessarily fall within the term "schools without attendance boundaries", and this exception should apply to Roots & Wings, PED has refused to apply this exception to Roots & Wings' proposed calendar, and has indicated that the only way a charter school can provide more remote asynchronous instructional days than allowed in the Rule is for the Charter Contract to expressly provide for/permit it. If the PEC does not allow this amendment, the impact on the School's calendar and budget will be significant in that we will be asking more of staff while offering less robust professional development opportunities, which are crucial to the continued growth and sustainability of the school and its students. Additionally, it will reduce the opportunities to support our belief that experiential learning is essential to making education relevant, compelling, and engaging for all students by allowing students to develop confidence, teamwork, and problem-solving skills outside classroom-enabling students to achieve more than they think possible and to take an active role in our ever-changing world.

### *Community:*

- Because we are a rural community, these remote days will give our families the flexibility to schedule dental, doctor, and other appointments for their students on a timeline that reduces the need to miss school in accordance with the Attendance for Success Act.
- Reducing the burden on families for transportation. Roots & Wings Community School is a rural school, and the majority of our students travel 30-60 minutes one way to get to school. Others rely on public transportation, which often takes 90 minutes. Remote days will offer students and families a break from the daily travel while providing students more time to learn.
- Remote learning days provide time and opportunity for great family engagement with their student as a learner; they are scheduled and planned for with families in advance. Some examples of families engaging with the student include the year-long passion projects that students in grades 3-8 took on this school year. Part of the expectation on remote learning days was for the student to complete certain components of their chosen project, such as making sure they had supplies, "practicing" the goal they had set, and recording the progress towards their final project. Parents partnered with the school on these days to support and engage with their students' projects.

- Our school places a strong emphasis on gardening, art, and environmental stewardship. Remote learning days provide time and flexibility for students to:
  - Practice gardening skills at home, engage in household sustainability practices, and document their learning.
  - Create art pieces from natural or found materials and reflect on their process in digital portfolios.
  - Participate in service-learning projects within their communities, connecting to expedition themes.
  - Students come to the school for these types of outdoor opportunities that are not offered in most public schools.

**Effective Date:** 7/28/2025 First staff day of the 25/26 school year

**The school's contract amendment is hereby submitted by:** Alice Allen, 2025-26 Interim Director

**Signature of School Representative:** Alice Allen **Date:** 5/29/25

**Signature of Governing Board Chair:**  **Date:** 5/29/25

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**For PEC/CSD use only**

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**PEC Meeting Date:**

**Agenda:** ☐ Regular required

**The school's contract amendment was:** ☐ Approved ☐ Denied (see transcript)

**Electronic signature of PEC Chair:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Roots and Wings Community School

35 La Lama Rd, Questa, NM 87556  
School Ph. (575) 586-2076

## Governing Council Special Meeting

May 27, 2025 at 5:00 pm

Via Google Meet [link](#)

Or dial: (US) +1 575-689-8456 PIN: 587 302 208#

### I. OPENING BUSINESS

- A. Call to Order - Meeting is called to order at 5:09 pm
- B. Roll Call - Victor Castillo, present, David Blood, present, Odalys Diaz, present, one member of the public, Alice Allen, school's Interim Director for 25/26. Another member, Laura Mattingly, might join later.
- C. Vote to Approve Agenda - David Blood motions to approve, Victor Castillo seconds, all Ay, motions carries
- D. Vote to Approve Prior Meeting Minutes - Victor motions to approve, David seconds, all in favor, motion passes.
  - A. 4-15-2025
  - B. 5-20-2025

### II. PUBLIC COMMENT (3 minutes/person or 12 minutes max) If more time is needed, a letter/email should be sent to the GC before the meeting or request the topic be on a future agenda.

**NOTE:** "Due to restrictions of the Open Meetings Act, the GC cannot respond to public comments presented at this time as the Public has not been sufficiently notified of the discussion. The GC will take all comments under advisement. The public should understand that any comments made in the public comment if defamatory may subject them to liability for which the governing council is not responsible."

### III. DISCUSSION ITEMS - Governing Board

- A. Fine Arts Application - Odalys shares her screen about the Fine Arts Application, form covers assurances, this application is for funding to pay for an art teacher.
- B. IDEA-B Grant - Odalys discusses the deadline, June 30th for some portions of the application, other portions later for July, so this action item will be moved to our next regular meeting.
- C. A-2 Education Program Amendment - Alice discusses some of the comments added by the school's attorney, and the additions that she has made, including rationale and supporting details. Due by Friday or before. There is still a question about the information pertaining to demographics, which she will verify with the school's Office Manager. Alice discusses the implications of getting the amendment approved and the impact on the

# Roots and Wings Community School

25/26 school calendar. Discusses how this amendment ties into the school's existing model, expeditionary learning, and student's current opportunities for independent learning at home. Some questions about the impact on the school's budget, maybe making this point a little more concise.

Other items discussed were who would submit (Interim vs current Director), and who would attend the meeting scheduled for early July (Odalys)

Information about the school's transportation model and its inclusion in the amendment for the charter contract was also discussed.

- D. Director's Report - Odalys presented the Director's report which was sent to the board before the last meeting, but we didn't get a chance to cover it.
- E. Board Retreat Planning - Existing venues were not available, so the retreat will have to be at somebody's house. Alice Allen has volunteered her house, catering will have to be provided. Council discusses the time of the meeting, food preferences, logistics.

Laura Mattingly joined the meeting at 5:21pm

## IV. **Closed Session** - *Closed Session Pursuant to NM Statute Section 10-15-1 H(#2), limited personnel matters*

## V. **ACTION ITEMS**

- A. Interim Director Contract - Odalys motions to approve the contract for the 25/26 school year, Laura seconds, all in favor, contract is approved.
- B. Fine Arts Application - Laura motions to approve the fine arts application, David seconds, all in favor, motion carries.
- C. IDEA-B Grant - This item will be postponed, some portions due by deadline June 30th other portions later in July.
- D. A-2 Education Program Amendment - David motions to approve the program amendment, Laura seconds, all in favor, motion carries.

## VI. **CLOSING BUSINESS**

- A. Agenda Items for Next Meeting
  - Idea-B Grant
  - Board membership
  - Retreat recap
  - Charter Renewal
- B. Next Meeting - June 17, 2025, 5:30 PM
- C. Adjourn - Meeting was adjourned at 5:39 pm

If you are an individual with a disability who is in need of a reader, amplifier, qualified sign language interpreter, or any other form of auxiliary aid or service to attend or participate in the hearing or meeting,

# Roots and Wings Community School

please contact [office.manager@rwcs.org](mailto:office.manager@rwcs.org) or (575) 586-2076 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting or as soon as possible. Public documents, including the agenda and minutes, can be provided in various accessible formats. Please contact Mr. Orris at the phone number or email address above if a summary or other type of accessible format is needed.