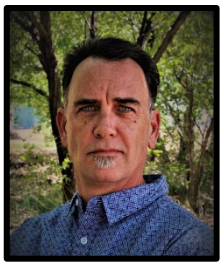
New Mexico Public Education Commission

District 1



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Term Expires 12/2029

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District 3

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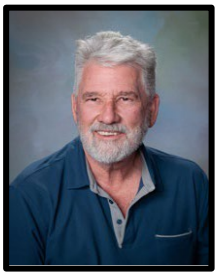

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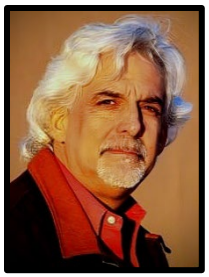
District 10



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Updated: August 1, 2025

COMMISSIONER BIOGRAPHIES

Sam S. Obenshain - District 1

Sam has worked in public education for over 35 years and has worked in the charter school space for over 20 of those years. Sam began his career as an Educational Assistant at Ernie Pyle Middle School in the South Valley of Albuquerque and remained with Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) for 15 years as an EA, a middle and high school special education teacher, mid and high school coach, and later as an assistant principal and then principal in APS. Sam left APS to begin the first-ever state-charter authorizing process in New Mexico, running the newly created Charter Schools Division (CSD) for the New Mexico Public Education Department (PED). After 4 and a half years at PED, Sam moved on to become the Executive Director of Cottonwood Classical Preparatory School (CCPS), a state-chartered school in Albuquerque. During his tenure at CCPS, the school was ranked as the top public school in New Mexico and the 20th best public charter school in the nation by *US News & World Report.* After retiring at 30 years in education, Sam went back to work in a virtual charter school as an Instructional Coach until he retired for a second time prior to running for the Public Education Commission.

Timothy E. Beck-District 2

Tim Beck is a recently retired Level 3 high school teacher from Sandia High School, having taught Advanced Placement World History, A.P. U.S. Government and Politics, A.P. Economics and International Baccalaureate History of the Americas courses. At Sandia, he was Chair of the Social studies department, as well as Chair of the Instructional Council. He is a past Golden Apple Excellence in Teaching Nominee and **APS Education Foundation Teacher of the Month**. He was awarded **NMHSCA Golf Coach of the Year** in 2009 and 2011.

At Sandia High School, Beck was Head Golf coach for eleven years, with his teams having earned six state championships and four runners-up. Prior to his teaching career, he was part owner and president of a national sales and marketing company in the textiles industry representing both international and domestic manufacturers. Prior to that, he was a textiles buyer for Macy's in New York, a vice-president of textiles at May Company in Los Angeles and head of merchandising for American Furniture in Albuquerque.

"My passion in education is giving every student an opportunity for excellence and success in their futures," said Beck. "My experience has taught me that every student is unique in their strengths and learning methods. Having curriculum and processes that support those qualities are critical to their success in learning. Watching them succeed in school and beyond is the best gift for an educator." With the experience as an educator, coach and businessperson, Tim has the leadership qualities that will help our children further their quality education and ensure that strong data will reflect the improvement of their learning.

Tim holds a bachelor's degree in business, and an MBA in finance and economics from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. Tim is married to his wife Patsy of more than 30 years; they have four children who are all graduates of Sandia High School and APS, and six grandchildren (who are too young to attend school). In their spare time, they enjoy golf and traveling to visit family.

Rebekka Burt-District 4

Bekka Burt was born and raised in New Mexico and has represented District 4 on the New Mexico Public Education Commission since January 2021. She has a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and a Master of Business Administration, both from New Mexico Highlands University. She is the Director of Education & Business Outreach for a local NM, start-up tech company based in Albuquerque. She has worked for over a decade in education and government, starting her career as a middle school Language Arts teacher in Rio Rancho Public Schools, the same district from which she graduated. As an educator, she saw first-hand that students will rise to any challenge and to a high set of standards and rigorous curriculum if they have access and appropriate supports. She then joined the staff of Albuquerque City Council as a policy analyst, working on policy review and recommendations. She then combined her background and

passion in education and government and joined the New Mexico Public Education Department, as the Director of Community Engagement, where she worked to connect with educators, families, and business leaders across the State.

Bekka has two children currently attending New Mexico public schools, one at a traditional high school and the other at a magnet high school.

Sharon Clahchischilliage-District 5

Sharon Clahchischilliage is a native of New Mexico and a member of the Navajo Nation. She is from Gadii'ahi, New Mexico and was raised in Shiprock, New Mexico. She is retired and volunteers in many community roles to initiate and strategize to create plans of improvement.

Sharon began her professional career in education as a Special Education teacher of behaviorally challenged students. The education concept was ingrained in her from an early age and was taught that it was essential in the development of individual growth. She pursued a degree in teaching, however, Special Education seemed more challenging and rewarding. From her teaching experiences, she believes the way children are trained and schooled is a crucial demonstration of the way they are perceived and treated in a given society. Further, she believes that economic and social conditions define and drive educational structures and precedents.

Sharon taught in the Bernalillo School District, Albuquerque Public Schools, Farmington School District, Dine College, and Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute. She received her BSE degree from Eastern New Mexico University, Portales, NM and her MSW degree from the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA. Initially she went to U of Penn to attend law school. The law school recommended that she complete the MSW degree first before going to law school. After earning her MSW degree she joined the Commissioned Corp, United States Public Health Service as an officer. Her tours of duty included the Indian Health Hospitals in New Mexico, Texas, and various military bases. After the completion of her tour of duty Sharon left as a Lieutenant.

Sharon served as a three term State Representative in the NM House of Representatives from January 2013 to November 2018. Throughout her political career, she has worked with seven Navajo Nation Chairmen and one Navajo Nation Speaker. The Navajo Nation appointed her as the Director of the Navajo Nation Washington DC Office. She worked under the administration of Presidents George W. Bush, Bill Clinton and the first half of the Obama administration. She also directed the National Council of Urban Indian Health in Washington, DC.

Sharon lives in Farmington, NM with her husband, Harry McCabe. They have one daughter, three sons, four grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Stewart Ingham-District 6

Stewart Ingham was born and raised in Albuquerque. His parents, Stewart and Betty Ingham moved here after his father landed a job with Sandia Labs as an Electrical Engineer and worked there until he retired in1992. Stewart attended Bandelier, Wilson, and Highland High Schools and Graduated in 1975. He started his college career at NM Tech where attending until December of 1979 when he switched from Metallurgy to Physics. He realized he wasn't interested enough to continue pursuing a career in any of these fields.

After trying several different avenues, he found himself in a laborer position building pool enclosures. This was his start in what became his career in construction. He progressed from laborer to carpenter to assistant superintendent. He received his contractor's license in 1986 and shortly after started at UNM in the Construction Management program and graduated in 1992 with a Bachelor of Science degree. He worked as an independent contractor in residential and light commercial construction for several years. He then started working at the Intel site in Rio Rancho working for a

contractor and then for the construction manager. Stewart worked as a Project Manager and Superintendent on projects at Intel and in the Albuquerque area. In late 2006 construction activities were stopped at the Rio Rancho site and rather than traveling he decided to move from the contractor side to look for work on the owner's side. He started

at Albuquerque Public Schools in April 2007 as a Construction Manager. He managed large projects such as Atrisco Heritage and Del Norte High Schools and many smaller projects in 3 high school clusters, Del Norte, La Cueva, and Cibola. He recently retired from APS in October 2022.

1986 was a pivotal year for him. Besides getting my contractor's license, I met and married the love of my life Mary and committed my life to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. These two events changed my perspective completely from

a me centered focus to the realization that he needed to seek and obey God's will for his life. He and Mary eventually decided to start the adoption process and shortly after adopted 2 boys and were blessed with a baby girl. Needless to say, the next years were quite eventful. They were blessed with a second daughter and a son to fill their quiver. They built and continue to live in their home next to his parents in the South Valley of Albuquerque.

His plan to start a new career in small farming was superseded by a calling to political action in 2019. He believes that being elected to the PEC as a write-in candidate was providential and that he needs to be fully engaged in this work to serve the Charter School movement to the best of his abilities.

Patricia Gipson-District 7

Commissioner Patricia Gipson spent 29 years in the Garden State of New Jersey (NJ) as an educator, teaching primarily AP United States history, sociology, and economics. During her tenure, she also served as a staff development trainer for her school district, a peer education coordinator and served on numerous curriculum development committees.

She was the recipient of a Ford Foundation Grant, which was a multi-year project to develop curriculum with other educators in NJ to incorporate cooperative learning techniques into the classroom. Incorporating civic responsibility was always a priority. She says, "I was fortunate enough to help write and implement an elective course for high school seniors which culminated in their researching community problems and completing a community service project related to a solution for one of the issues identified."

Ms. Gipson was the Student Council advisor, and she had the privilege of coaching an outstanding group of scholar athletes during her 10 years as a varsity soccer coach.

In addition to her teaching duties, she served as vice president and grievance chair for an all-inclusive National Education Association (NEA) local. During that time, she also co-chaired numerous contract negotiations, which afforded her the opportunity to gain extensive training in negotiations and mediation.

Since retiring, she has been involved in many charitable organizations and events in southern New Mexico such as The New Mexico Mission of Mercy, Empty Bowls and Cowboys for Cancer to name a few.

She is actively involved in the Democratic Party of Doña Ana County, currently serving as the District 52 Director, the VP of the Doña Ana County Federation of Democratic Women and Secretary of the State Federation.

Michael Taylor-District 8

Mike Taylor was raised in Boise, Idaho. He earned a Bachelor of Science in zoology and a minor in chemistry from The College of Idaho in Caldwell, Idaho. He went on to complete a Doctor of Dental Surgery from Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska, and a Master of Science in dentistry from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. He has practiced as an orthodontist in Roswell, Ruidoso, and Artesia for nearly 30 years. Taylor has been married to his wife, Kim, for almost 31 years, and they have three grown children, Emily, Myles, and Gillian.

Taylor has served on the Governing Council for Sidney Gutierrez Middle School for the past thirteen years. His involvement with the school began soon after his eldest daughter was enrolled. He is a member of Christ’s Church in Roswell where he serves as a deacon, is on the praise and worship team, and has served on many mission trips. He is a committed supporter of the Chaves County CASA Program and has been the primary sponsor of an annual community fundraiser that he started 20 years ago to benefit CASA. Taylor has been a member of the New Mexico Amigos, the official goodwill ambassadors of the state of New Mexico, for nearly 10 years. He enjoys tending his vineyard, traveling, reading, serving others, working on creative projects and being in the company of his family and good friends.

Although not an educator by profession, Taylor values the importance of options in education. He wants to help ensure that young people have opportunities to learn in environments that enrich their giftings and challenge them to excel. He is committed to improving education in New Mexico by working to authorize and hold accountable quality charter schools in the state.

K.T. Manis, Ph.D.-District 9

KT Manis, Ph.D. is the Public Education Commissioner for the 9th District of the State of New Mexico. KT was born and raised in Hobbs, NM.

Professionally, KT is an entrepreneur, educator, and researcher. Specifically, KT has businesses in New Mexico and Texas and works for the Jerry S. Rawls College of Business Administration at Texas Tech University. He earned his first Ph.D. in Hospitality Administration from Texas Tech University in 2018. KT is completing a second Ph.D. in Business Administration (Marketing) at the Jerry S. Rawls College of Business Administration at Texas Tech University. KT's research broadly focuses on technology-marketing interfaces: technology-strategy, technology-consumer, and technology-pedagogy.

KT has published in the Journal of Business Research (the #1 ranked marketing journal according to Google Scholar) where his conceptualization of virtual reality was used as an organizing framework for the introduction to the special issue. Recently, he has had co-authored publications accepted to Marketing Education Review (the #2 ranked marketing pedagogy journal), Harvard Business Review, and the Journal of Macromarketing. Additionally, KT was selected as a winner of the 2020 AMS Review/Sheth Foundation Doctoral Competition for Conceptual Articles.

KT has presented over 15 research papers at national/international marketing conferences including Winter American Marketing Association (AMA), Academy of Marketing Science (AMS) Annual, Summer AMA, Association for Consumer Research, Society of Marketing Advances, AMS World, and SERVSIG. Additionally, he was selected as one of ten international students to present their work at SERVSIG's Got Talent at the 2019 AMA Summer Academic Conference.

Also, KT's work on artificial intelligence (AI) was recently accepted to an AI and Strategy workshop hosted by the Indian School of Business (ISB – Hyderabad) (the #7 ranked business school worldwide and #1 in Asia) where he was awarded a research travel grant from ISB. He was also awarded the Outstanding Contributions to Research as a Doctoral Student Award at Texas Tech University in 2019.

Steven J. Carrillo-District 10

"As a parent, my hope for my son's future is rooted in the quality education he receives in our schools. The betterment of our children's education is my priority and it's why I've decided to run for school board."

My son is now 20, and a 2018 graduate of Santa Fe High School. That statement is as true today as it was when I was running for the school board in 2011. It is why I decided to continue my service to our kids and public education by serving on the Public Education Commission.

I was born and raised in Los Angeles to middle class parents; parents who were children of the Great Depression. It's from them that I learned the value of hard work, education, thrift, and service to others. Raised primarily by my mother it was instilled in me at an early age the importance of social responsibility and civic action. I graduated from Loyola High School in 1977 and in 1981, from Loyola Marymount University with a degree in film and television arts. But life had other plans for me.

In the early 80's I became very involved in efforts to end U.S. involvement in Central America. This led to work anti-nuclear work, walking across the United States in 1986, the Ukraine in 1988, and landing in Washington, D.C. I completed a program through the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute and spent the next year on the road in Mississippi, Illinois, Georgia, and Massachusetts organizing unions. This profound experience, organizing workers in lumber mills, hospitals, universities, and nursing homes, working in board rooms and on picket lines, shaped who I am today and cemented my commitment to social justice, equality, and equity. My work in organized labor led me West and on March 6, 1991, I ended up here in Santa Fe. In 1994 I declined to go on the road again. I found home.

The next fifteen-plus years I spent a working in the food & beverage industry and have extensive experience managing employees, budgets, and regulatory compliance. As a former business owner, I fully understand the importance of effective public schools in fostering economic development to the betterment of our state and our public charter schools as an essential tool in preparing our kids for their future success.

When you work with unions, electoral campaigns, and employees, you learn how to collaborate; to listen to all sides and to reach the best possible solutions. By doing so we are all the real winners. Sometimes there is conflict and sometimes it's not pretty. And with regards to my nine years on the Santa Fe Public Schools Board of Education, my

advocacy and passion for the success of our kids and our schools had never wavered, been compromised, or politicized. I bring this same commitment and advocacy for our state charter schools to my work as part of the PEC.

Aside from a longtime career in the food and beverage industry, managing and opening restaurants, my final professional career is in financial services. I'm thankful that this work essentially funds my education advocacy work and allows me to schedule my time to fully support our schools and our kids. I look forward to being an effective and relevant member of the Public Education Commission.