

Public Education Commission (PEC) Work Session

July 17, 2025

Open Public Meeting via Zoom Webinar and in person at the Jerry Apodaca Building
300 Don Gaspar Avenue, Santa Fe, NM 87501

[Link to Meeting Recording](#)

Chair Rebekka Burt called the Work Session to order at 9:01 a.m.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Commissioners in attendance in person:

Commissioner Rebekka Burt, Chair, District 4, Rio Rancho
Commissioner Patricia Gipson, Vice-Chair, District 7, Las Cruces
Commissioner Steven Carrillo, Secretary, District 10, Santa Fe
Commissioner Timothy Beck, District 2, Albuquerque
Commissioner Stewart Ingham, District 6, Deming
Commissioner K.T. Manis, District 9, Hobbs
Commissioner Sam Obenshain, District 1, Albuquerque
Commissioner Michael Taylor, District 8, Roswell

Commissioners in attendance by Zoom:

Commissioner Sharon Clahchischilliage, District 5, Aztec

Also Present:

Julia Barnes, PEC Attorney
Dr. Brigitte Russell, Interim Director, Charter Schools Division, PED
Melissa "Missy" Brown, Interim Deputy Director, Charter Schools Division, PED

Members of the Public

Susan Fox, Charter Law Office
Patricia Matthews, Attorney
Valery Ratliff-Parker, Public Charter Schools of New Mexico

2. Discussion of Public School Capital Outlay Council (PSCOC) agenda items

Lease reimbursement rates

The Commission discussed the Public School Capital Outlay Council's current interpretation of Chapter 22, Article 24, Section 4 of the 1978 *New Mexico Statutes Annotated* (2024), which interpretation allows the PSCOC to unduly withhold the available funds from schools. Julia Barnes, Patricia Matthews, Susan Fox and Valery Ratliff-Parker joined the discussion. The Commission asked attorney Julia Barnes to draft a letter to the Public Schools Finance Authority (PSFA), offering a clear and concise rebuttal to the current interpretation, as well as an explication of the PEC's position, and asking that the PSCOC award funds to schools based on the accurate interpretation of statute.

3. Discussion of possible development of a PEC Strategic Plan

Chair Burt proposed hiring the National Charter Schools Institute (NCSI) to oversee the production of a PEC strategic plan, which would provide a clear pathway for current and future commissioners. Commissioners were enthusiastic about the proposal, discussing the relative value of a 5-year plan versus a 10-year plan, and discussing the process of creating the document under the guidance of NCSI.

4. Discussion of Procurement Office form change

First reading of Procurement Officer form change

Ms. Barnes explained that the Procurement Officer form was separated from the Business Manager form because the board does not have to approve the Business Manager, as they do the Procurement Officer.

5. Discussion of 2026 Calendar, first review

The commissioners suggested changes to the PEC's annual calendar, including the addition of revision dates, removing a conflict with a conference by moving the PEC meeting to the week prior, choosing colors that provide more contrast, and adding two extra days for renewal hearings, should they be needed. Dr. Russell mentioned that she polled charter schools to ascertain preferences for charter school conference dates.

6. Input to Chair on New Applicant questions or request for further information

Commissioners discussed additional questions to be included in a letter to new charter applicants. For Collins Lake Outdoor School, commissioners discussed the benefits and appropriateness of asking that the Public School Finance Authority make an early assessment of the school's facilities to ensure the school can meet adequacy standards.

Because the PEC does not use this criterion to approve or disapprove an application, and because schools have a full year to put a facilities plan into place, the Commission decided not to include the question. The Commission had no additional questions for Inspira STEAM Academy.

7. Discussion of Implementation Year Checklist review of necessary changes

Ms. Brown informed the PEC commissioners of the changes made by the Charter Schools Division to the Implementation Year Checklist. Changes included the addition of the PEC logo, layout changes to the document to increase clarity and facilitate compliance, more consistent submission deadlines, and increased assurances regarding nepotism and conflicts of interest. The Commission made no changes to the CSD draft.

8. Discussion of subcommittee process

The Commission discussed subcommittee procedures that would increase efficiency, communication, and transparency, as well as ensuring whole-commission oversight of subcommittee work.

9. Discussion and input to Executive Committee regarding protocol of PEC Work Session and Meeting Schedules

The Commission discussed the advantages and disadvantages of scheduling their work sessions and public meetings on the same day, when the agendas make that feasible. One advantage is a shorter time commitment for commissioners, school leaders, and the public. Disadvantages include the difficulty of estimating how long the meetings will last, as well as long days and potentially dangerous driving conditions for people who travel long distances to attend. The Commission concluded that this decision should be left to the Executive Committee, as has been the practice.

10. Subcommittee updates

PEC Subcommittee

a) Charter Performance

The subcommittee did not meet

b) Budget

The subcommittee did not meet

c) Policy

The subcommittee reviewed the record-of-performance procedures, considering necessary steps, consistency across different situations, and intervention-ladder actions.

The subcommittee also discussed potential school mergers, considering legal and contractual ramifications, potential conflict between school leadership and governing boards, and the PEC making equitable and consistent decisions over time. The Commission agreed that a policy or rule should include national best practices, anticipate many potential scenarios, and consider such issues as lease reimbursement and board governance. CSD will send charter leaders a survey regarding the Expedited Renewal policy draft.

d) Legislative

This part of the meeting was inaudible

e) Board Awards

The subcommittee did not meet

f) Indicators of Success

The subcommittee did not meet

11. Reports from PEC Liaisons and members who attended conferences

<u>Other State Committee</u>	<u>Commissioner assigned</u>
a) Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) The Legislative Education Study Committee is scheduled to meet the week of July 21.	Vice Chair Gipson
b) Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) Secretary Padilla updated the committee on actions taken in response to the Martinez/Yazzie settlement. Concern was expressed that despite the large output of funds, academic outcomes have not increased. The PED hired Los Alamos Foundation and WestEd to compose a response to the courts.	Chair Burt
c) NM Indian Education Advisory Council The NM Indian Education Advisory Council met on July 9. Commissioner Clahchischilliage expressed her frustration at not having a voice in the Advisory Council. She discovered that despite her giving notice, they had not realized she had taken the place of Commissioner Armijo on the Council. She expects to participate more fully in the August meeting.	Commissioner Clahchischilliage
d) NM Public School Capital Outlay Council (PSCOC) Commissioner Ingham stated that he is working to overcome significant barriers for charter schools to access PSFA funds. He suggested that statute may need to be changed to ensure that the different needs of charter schools, given that they do not have bonding capacity, are given equitable consideration.	Commissioner Ingham

- e) NM Public School Insurance Authority (NMPSIA) Commissioner Manis
NMPSIA held their annual board retreat early in the week of July 14. During the retreat, three charter schools were approved for membership. NMPSIA was budgeted \$100,000,000 to cover large losses and an increase in premium benefits. With the state now covering 80% of insurance premiums, NMPSIA would like school districts to cover the increase. Commissioner Manis learned, at a conference, about an option for national benefit funds for charter schools. However, individual schools cannot apply; only larger entities can. He is considering whether NMPSIA could be such an entity. Another conference session addressed the rising costs of medical insurance and encouraged preventative screenings to bring costs down.
- f) NM School Boards Association (NMSBA) Secretary Carrillo
The NM School Boards Association did not meet..
- g) NM State Library Commission Commissioner Taylor
The next NM State Library Commission meeting is scheduled for October 3, 2025.
- 12) Charter School conference reports regarding nationally recognized principles and standards for quality charter authorizing (NMSA 22-8B-5.3.H.)

Commissioner Manis reported that mental health issues have come to the forefront at conferences. He suggested including a requirement for schools to participate in the STOP IT campaign, or other campaigns that address mental health and violence. Finally, the commissioners raised the issue of school districts with small student numbers becoming charter schools.

Chair Burt attended sessions on accountability and family engagement, which emphasized the need to have accountability standards that fit individual schools. She mentioned the value of the A-Game's new resource, the Responsive Goals Directory. She was encouraged by Memphis Lift, a parent advocacy group.

Chair Burt adjourned the meeting at 1:28 p.m.

No votes were taken by Commissioners on items during this work session.

Submitted by Kelli Renken, CSD