New Mexico Academy for the Media Arts
4401 Central Ave NE, Albuquerque, NM 87108
Governing Council Hybrid and In Person Meeting via the Zoom Platform April 14, 2026 at 12 pm.

Governance Board Members in Attendance

Carolyn Carlson	Channing Concho	Kendra Toth
Malinda Menke	Eddie Tafoya	

Others in Attendance at the Meeting

Chris Jones	Taihg McCabe	Yahnia Rodriguez
Ashley Wolfel	Anthony Conforti	Courtney Clyne
Bryn McCabe-Kelly	Donna Wickerd	

Date of Meeting: April 14, 2026
Time: Called to order at 12:02 pm
Location of Meeting: 4401 Central Ave NE, Albuquerque, NM
Meeting via Zoom

April Agenda

Carolyn moved to amend the agenda by removing public input from Mr. Landgraf, the executive session, and Action Item 5.

Jones noted that the Unified Title Application had already been submitted and formal board approval is not required until the May meeting.

The amended agenda was moved by Menke, seconded byTafoya, and passed unanimously.

March Minutes

Minutes from the previous meeting were moved by Concho, seconded by Menke, and passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Carlson provided a summary of a meeting regarding the front building's e-occupancy. Work is underway to install approximately 25 fire detectors. The team expects this work to be finished over the summer. The front part of the building is projected to be available for next school year as a multi-use open space.

Business Manager's Report

Wolfel presented the financial reports as of March 31:

The budget showed a negative balance of $119,000, but the recent "40th-day adjustment" revenue will bring the balance into the positive. However, carryover for next year will be significantly lower than in previous years (approx. $300,000 carried over this year).

Title I and IDEA B are expected to be fully spent down. Title II has $7,000 remaining, and Title IV will have a surplus due to a staff resignation.

Currently, $366,000 is available in Special Capital Outlay.

Next Year's Budget is due May 18. Ashley noted rising costs, including a 1% staff salary increase mandate, a shift to an 80/20 insurance split, and double-digit increases in medical/dental premiums.

Business Manager's Action Items

Carlson presented three Budget Adjustment Requests (BARs) for board approval. Following a formal motion, second, and roll call vote, all three financial adjustments were approved unanimously.

BAR Number	Type of Adjustment	Amount
25260022-I	Flow-through Increase	$8,258.46
25260023	Flow-through Decrease	$21,263.28
25260024	General Fund Capital Outlay Increase	$149,315.00

Tafoya motioned to approve the BARS, Toth seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Executive Director's Report

The campus fencing project is nearly finished. A new call box system is being installed to allow the front office to "buzz in" guests, replacing a staff-only code system to improve overall security.

The school is re-keying "ALICE gates" (fire marshal-required exits) to a single master key and adding a new gate to secure the middle school courtyard pickup area.

Jones requested approval for a $25,000–$30,000 project to install a new permanent shade structure and replace worn triangular shade sails. The goal is to have this completed by the May 14th end-of-year barbecue.

The school is currently operating on a "skeleton crew" with the smallest staff Jones has managed. To sustain operations, the school will have significantly less financial carryover next year.

Current staff are at their limit, with some core teachers managing six different class preparations with only one prep period. This has made it impossible to offer the additional electives students are requesting.

Jones warned that the board may face difficult decisions regarding staffing reductions and more efficient use of contractors to save money for the upcoming year.

The Unified Application (Title I, II, IV, and IDEA B) was submitted via the new OBMS system ahead of the deadline. Formal proposals will be brought to the board for signatures in May.

Jones is seeking board approval to amend the charter to allow for a Distance Learning/Virtual model. He believes this will attract students outside city limits and has already identified a potential partnership with a prep school that could transition approximately 40 students to their charter on a trial basis. Jones clarified that the school cannot legally offer an online-only program until the Public Education Commission (PEC) approves this contract amendment.

Jones explained the timeline for the Distance Learning amendment. If approved by the board today, the school must provide a 30-day notice to the Public Education Commission. This would likely place the school on the Commission's June agenda. If approved then, the school could begin marketing to distance learning students for the upcoming school year.

State testing (NM VISTA) began this week for middle school students. Math: April 14–16. ELA/Reading: April 21–24. Jones noted that while high schoolers are not tested, the school's official state grade is heavily dependent on middle school performance in these specific areas.

Jones requested approval for several policy updates developed in conjunction with the Student Government Association (SGA):

The ban on caffeine will be lifted (allowing students to bring coffee/soda), though energy drinks remain prohibited.

The school will align with state standards allowing up to 30 grams of sugar, removing the previous total ban.

Dress Code: Revisions aim to provide "clarity" to reduce enforcement friction.

Prohibited Items: Clothing promoting drugs, alcohol, or violence; "racialized aggression"; gore/blood; and sheer or see-through attire.

Clarity on Fit: Added specific language regarding "tops that reveal bare stomach/back" and skirts shorter than knee length.

The staff is meeting twice weekly to discuss school culture and the logistics of adding new electives/CTE pathways. Jones noted that adding these requires teachers to rewrite entire curricula and syllabi.

Jones attends SGA meetings weekly to maintain transparency, explaining "higher-level" administrative complexities to students.

A Principal’s Blog has been added to the school website to provide first-person, real-time communication to stakeholders.

The annual Education Plan and the "NM Dash" (90-day improvement plan) have been submitted to the PED. Teacher evaluations for the year are nearly complete.

Graduation is scheduled for May 15 at 10:30 AM at the Lobo Theater. Reyes and the SGA are spearheading the arrangements.

Executive Director’s Action Items

This portion of the meeting focused on the formal voting and approval of several key action items. Carlson led the board through a series of motions, all of which passed with unanimous approval via roll call.

Voting Results & Approved Action Items:

Item #	Action Item	Motion By	Seconded By	Result
1	Nutrition Policy Revisions	Concho	Menke	Approved Unanimously
2	Dress Code Policy Revisions	Tafoya	Toth	Approved Unanimously
3	Shade Structure Purchase	Menke	Concho	Approved Unanimously

4	Distance Learning Charter Amendment	Toth	Menke	Approved Unanimously

The administration is now authorized to implement the revised nutrition and dress code guidelines as discussed in the Executive Director's report.

The purchase of the shade structure is approved; Jones can proceed with the $25,000–$30,000 installation to meet the May 14 deadline.

Following the approval of Item #4, the 30-day notice period for the Public Education Commission can now officially begin.

Media Coordinator's Report/Intern Coordinator's Report

Conforti updated the board on distance learning, facilities, and partnerships:

Conforti advocated for a hybrid model to boost enrollment and reach rural students. He noted that COVID-19 proved online media education is viable—citing UCLA and USC as examples—and labeled online schools as their primary competition.

Following a tour of CNM's new professional studios at the Rail Yards, Conforti noted their high-quality acoustic wood floors as a potential long-term goal for school remodeling.

Chairwoman Barbara Baca will visit next week to discuss student paid internships at a new education center.

NAPPR: A request for promotional videos was received; while Conforti will follow up, major projects will likely wait until next school year due to current student bandwidth.

Taihg McCabe was thanked for filming a high-profile event featuring Secretary Deb Haaland.

Student Representative's Report

McCabe highlighted the success of Executive Director Chris Jones attending Student Government meetings over the past few weeks. He noted that students have greatly enjoyed the opportunity to share their thoughts and hear directly from leadership.

McCabe is currently scanning old school yearbooks to create a digital archive. He noted that he is still missing four years and requested leads on where to find them.

McCabe is collaborating with Ms. Rose (Food Services) to transition from paper-based feedback to an electronic survey. This data will help refine the breakfast and lunch menus for the next school year based on student preferences.

Carlson and Jones both highly commended McCabe for his initiative, calling him a "pivotal asset" to the school. They specifically praised his ability to provide reliable student data, which allows the board to make decisions that are authentically vetted by the student body.

Old/New Business

Carlson inquired if the school was seeking a new food provider. Director Jones clarified the following:

Alternative providers were found to be significantly more expensive. The school will stay with the current provider but focus on menu redevelopment.

The school is currently preparing the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) application, which includes this new menu development.

Carlson reported on a recent meeting with the Public Education Commission (PEC) regarding school audits. The meeting went smoothly, and the school was not placed on a corrective action plan. Carlson credited Jones and Wiffle for their hard work in bringing the school back into full compliance.

The school’s foundation has secured state nonprofit status and is currently awaiting its final IRS determination letter.

Due to the retirement of Dr. Linda Paul, the school is moving the Head Administrator evaluation process in-house to save costs.

The board is developing a new evaluation format based on updated PED guidelines. Carlson will work with Taihg McCabe and Ms. Rodriguez to deploy this via SurveyMonkey.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:49 pm.

T*he New Mexico Academy for the Media Arts (f.k.a. Media Arts Collaborative Charter School) offers secondary students a comprehensive, project-based, cross-curricular education centered in the media arts. We prepare our graduates for positions in the media industries and for the rigor of postsecondary education.*