

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 May 19, 2025 at 12 pm.

Governance Board Members in Attendance

Carolyn Carlson
Malinda Menke
Channing Concho

Governance Board Members Absent

Eddie Tafoya – excused absence
Kendra Toth – excused absence

Others in Attendance at the Meeting

Anthony Conforti	Ashley Wolfel	Courtney Clyne
Donna Wickerd	Brian McCabe-Kelly	
Chris Jones	Mariana Vasquez	

Date of Meeting: May 18, 2026
Time: Called to order at 12:01 pm
Location of Meeting: 4401 Central Ave NE, Albuquerque, NM
Meeting via Zoom at:
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89937355843?pwd=v2KrGbsi4WqTWwthl1LmO5dsmrEhN.1>

May Agenda

Jones requested to amend the agenda by moving items 5-2 (Approval of the FY27 Budget) and 5-3 (Approval for Business Manager and Chris Jones to enter and submit final budget adjustment requests) out of the Business Manager's Report and into Section 7 (Action Items) as items J and K.

Concho moved to approve the agenda with the proposed amendments (including five previously read BARs and moving items 5-2 and 5-3 to Section 7). The motion was seconded by Menke. Motion passed unanimously by roll call with all board members present voting in the affirmative.

Public Input

The floor was opened for public comment; no public input was provided.

April Minutes

Menke moved to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Concho. Motion passed unanimously by roll call.

Business manager's report

All reimbursements are up to date. Several Budget Adjustment Requests (BARs) were received from the Public Education Department (PED) this week. Fourth-quarter lease assistance will be requested the first week of June following the release of May bank statements.

Operational fund was positive at \$14,000 (expected to increase with incoming BARs, adding to next year's carryover).

Food service was slightly negative; funds may be moved from operational to balance it. Title I received a decrease, requiring some expenses to be shifted to operational. Idea B received an increase, balancing a previous \$10,000 deficit. Title IV and library funds are being spent down. The state litter control and beautification grant is almost fully spent. HB33 and SB9 unspent funds will carry over.

The bank balance was \$420,572.73, with an expected General Ledger (GL) balance of \$415,161.07 after outstanding checks. Remaining encumbrances total \$213,000, most of which is expected to be used.

Business Manager Action Items

Approval of Financial BARs: **25-I:** Idea B increase of \$16,487.18. **26-M & 27-T & 28-T:** Operational maintenance and transfer BARs to clean up negative lines. **29-I:** GLB Library Fund increase of \$3,727.

Concho motioned to approve all the BARs, Menke seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

FY27 Budget Presentation & Enrollment Strategy

The upcoming FY27 budget is balanced but projected to be very tight. It is conservatively based on an enrollment of 120 students. The State Equalization Guarantee (SEG) decreased by approximately \$335,000, and projected carryover was conservatively set at \$20,000.

Staffing & Benefits Changes: Implemented a mandatory 1% salary schedule increase for all tiers of staff (Level 1, 2, and 3 teachers). Shifted health insurance from a 60-40 split to an 80-20 split. Factored in a 10% increase for medical premiums, a 4% increase for dental premiums, and a \$3,000 increase to the annual NMPSIA risk payments. Budget decreases required staff adjustments and shifting some federal grant expenses into operational lines.

Enrollment & Marketing Strategy: Jones reported that a local high school recently closed, resulting in an influx of new students. The school is actively recruiting over the summer. Additionally, if a pending education program amendment for a virtual option is approved, the school will market it to potentially capture up to 20% of total enrollment via virtual learning.

Wolfel reported that the FY27 budget was submitted to the Public Education Department (PED) on time. Any subsequent adjustments will require a Budget Adjustment Request (BAR) in the upcoming fiscal year.

Business Manager's Action Items

Concho moved to approve the FY27 budget as submitted. The motion was seconded by Menke. Motion passed unanimously by roll call with all members present voting in the affirmative.

Executive Director's Report

The fencing project is complete (invoicing submitted for capital outlay payment); campus security will be finalized upon the arrival of a call box component.

The new shade structure is complete and being utilized for school events.

Quotes are being obtained for a digital marquee on Central Avenue, to be submitted to the PED for potential capital outlay funding.

Staffing contracts will be finalized by Friday. Upcoming federal awards will be allocated entirely to highly qualified instructional personnel salaries:

- **Title I & IV:** School social workers (crisis protocols, restorative practices).
- **Title II:** Master teacher stipends for mentoring/PLCs.
- **IDEA B:** A portion of a special education teacher's salary.

Management is awaiting PED clarification on a House bill that could limit full unit-value funding for virtual students who exceed initial enrollment projections.

Annual training hours must be completed online before June 30, as the annual June charter conference is canceled.

The PEC will present a new performance framework model at the June meeting. This Friday, the PEC will evaluate the school's virtual program amendment. Following state guidance, online enrollment will be capped at 20% (max 25 students) and used strictly for student retention and health accommodations.

The student film festival is Thursday at the Guild Theater.

Current enrollment is verified at 94 students and rising.

The school achieved a 28% exit rate on the Access for ELL assessment, tracking significantly higher than the state average.

Staff successfully cleared a multi-year backlog by updating graduation Next Step Plans, removing a PED corrective action plan. The Board will review a new \$5,000 standardized Special Education Policy Handbook designed to align local policies with state codes.

Executive Director's Action Items

- **Infrastructure & Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP):** Approved an \$800,000 ICIP (\$500,000 for general facility upgrades; \$300,000 for security/tech) to comply with new legislative requirements. *(Motion: Concho, Second: Menke; Unanimous roll call vote).*
- **National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Contract:** Approved a \$68,600 contract for Universal Meals under the Community Eligibility Provision to maximize state reimbursement; menu revisions will be finalized in June. *(Motion: Menke, Second: Concho; Unanimous roll call vote).*
- **Title I Application:** Approved the programmatic application for federal Title I funding. *(Motion: Menke, Second: Concho; Unanimous vote).*
- **Title II Application:** Approved the programmatic application for federal Title II funding. *(Motion: Concho, Second: Menke; Unanimous vote).*
- **Title IV Application:** Approved the programmatic application for federal Title IV funding. *(Motion: Menke, Second: Concho; Unanimous vote).*
- **IDEA B Application:** Approved the programmatic application for federal IDEA B funding. *(Motion: Menke, Second: Concho; Unanimous vote).*
- **Special Education Policy Handbook:** Approved the new standardized handbook to align local policies with state codes. *(Motion: Menke, Second: Concho; Unanimous vote).*
- **School Year 2026–2027 Calendar Revisions:** Approved the proposed revisions to the upcoming school year calendar. *(Motion: Concho, Second: Menke; Unanimous vote).*
- **Charter Law School Office Professional Services Agreement (PSA):** Approved the upcoming fiscal year contract for retained legal services. *(Motion: Menke, Second: Concho; Unanimous vote).*
- **Resolution Granting Final BAR Authority:** Approved end-of-year authority for leadership to submit non-cash budget adjustment requests for audit compliance, with full review at the next meeting. *(Motion: Concho, Second: Menke; Unanimous vote).*

Intern Coordinator Report and Media Coordinator Report

Mr. Conforti reported that a recent computer server malfunction was successfully resolved by Director Jones; the issue was traced back to a local power outage.

Five student film submissions have been formally entered into the Regional Emmy Awards.

New Mexico State University (NMSU) was recently ranked among the top animation colleges nationally.

The University of New Mexico (UNM) reported an increasing trend of students choosing double majors that pair high-demand STEM or healthcare fields with passion-driven programs like film or flamenco.

Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) remains on track to debut its new film school facility at the rail yards in August, which will feature a studio run by a media arts collective for professional student collaboration.

A professional short film crew recently utilized the school facility (including the bank, the conference room, and the "Marilyn Monroe Room") for a 12-hour-a-day weekend shoot.

Student Representative Taihg McCabe and seniors Destiny and Kay Rivera worked directly on the crew as professional Production Assistants (PAs) rather than simple observers.

The project was referred by Cindy McCrossen at the Albuquerque Film Office. Mr. Conforti plans to follow up with the film office to market the school's unique spaces for future high-budget productions.

Additionally, the project's director expressed intent to enroll her son—a SAG actor with a significant social media following—into the school's new hybrid-online 9th-grade program.

Mr. Conforti highlighted new Academy of Motion Picture rules prioritizing productions that offer paid student internships.

Taihg McCabe confirmed the production weekend was a massive success and reported that the experience has already led to invitations to serve as a PA on two additional local film productions.

In response to a query from Malinda Menke, Mr. Conforti clarified that Thursday's event at the Guild Theater starting at 5:00 p.m. is a non-competitive student *exhibition* spanning all grade levels, rather than a curated cross-school competition, to ensure a positive and supportive showcase for the student body.

Student Representative Report

Taigh McCabe reported that the school's recent end-of-year milestone events—including the student barbecue, graduation ceremony, and prom—were executed smoothly without issue.

New & Old Business & Council Roundtable

Absences: Board members Kendra and Dr. Tafoya were formally excused. Chair Carlson noted that Dr. Tafoya is currently coordinating his formal retirement from New Mexico Highlands University.

Board Training Compliance: Members were reminded to utilize the online Canvas platform to finalize their remaining mandatory governing council training credits before the end-of-year deadline.

Facility Tax Status: Chair Carlson announced that the school received official documentation from the county granting non-taxable status for the remaining portion of the building, securing substantial operational savings. The documentation will be scanned and forwarded to Business Manager Ashley Wolfel.

Board Recruitment: Management is actively interviewing a prospective candidate with a strong finance or accounting background, aiming to add two additional members to strengthen the Governing Council for the upcoming fiscal year.

Community Outreach & Rural Engagement: Channing Concho volunteered to assist with summer "street team" recruitment events and distributed flyers. She emphasized that the newly approved 20% hybrid-online structure holds immense potential for retaining and recruiting students from rural and tribal reservation communities (such as Laguna Pueblo and Acoma Pueblo) who lack local media arts programs.

Route 66 Visitor Center Event: Ms. Concho noted that faculty member Mr. Richardson is performing at the grand opening of the Route 66 Visitor Center in Westgate this July. The board will look into securing a promotional organizational booth at the event and sending students to gather B-roll footage.

Executive Session: Chair Carlson determined that an executive session was not required.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:19 p.m.

The 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.