



Meeting Minutes

Pursuant to A.R.S. 38.431.02, notice was hereby given on November 27, 2024, to the members of the Metropolitan Education Commission and to the public, that the **Metropolitan Education Commission** would hold a Zoom meeting on Tuesday, December 3, 2024, convening at 4:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order

Mark Hanna

Meeting called to order by Chair Mark Hanna at 4:32 p.m.

Present are Ex. Director Perez and Commissioners Sylvia Lee, Leslie Ferre, Adriana Grijalva, Alejandro Tavera-Reyes, Dave Mason, Sharon O'Brien, Robert Ramirez, Rich Nikel, Mark Hanna, Marla Franco and Jake Blumenthal. Not present are Dustin Williams, Matthew Schmidgall, Kelle Maslyn, Lane Santa Cruz, Kathy Prather, Treya Allen, Michael Wilkerson and Irene Robles-Lopez. With a presence of 12 of 20 commissioners, this meeting meets quorum.

2. Executive Report

2.1. Welcome and chair report

2.1.1. Teen Town Hall and Report

Ex. Director Perez, reported that the 30th Teen Town Hall was an immense success with 94 students participating in 12 dialogue circles, in addition to the Commissions 10 Youth Civic Fellows. Circles consisted of 5 on mental health totaling 45 students, 3 on educational equity totaling 22, 2 on climate justice totaling 14 and 2 on substance misuse totaling 13 students. Circles were facilitated by 19 trained volunteers and 10 of our Youth Fellows. Later in the circle sessions, after circles of the same topics grouped together, they shared and discussed their findings with experts from the community, including Pima County, UA, Pipeline AZ, Education Forward Arizona. 9 officials, 8 colleges/universities, and 10 community organizations took part in the occasion and \$1,500 in scholarships were raffled thanks to the contributions of Vantage West and Education Forward Arizona. With a \$10,950 budget, \$10,887.46 was expended remaining with allocation.

Chair Mark Hanna noted the support of County Supervisor Sylvia Lee in helping secure the venue of the Teen Town Hall at the Pima County Historic Courthouse.


2.2. Consent Agenda

2.2.1. Approval of October Pima County Outside Agency Expenditure Report and Invoice.

Rocque Perez noted the future Commission agenda will include a consent agenda and it will grow increasingly similar to that of a traditional nonprofit organization. Perez further noted a consent agenda typically includes budgets, spending reports, programs reports and more. This will be recurrent as MEC consolidates governance of the organization and public body governance as one in the same.

- 2.2.2. Approval of November Pima County Outside Agency Expenditure Report and Invoice.

Mark Hanna noted that these reports have been reviewed and will be approved by Treasurer Jake Blumenthal.

- 2.2.3. Approval of  10.9.24 MEC Meeting Minutes.pdf

Motion to approve consent agenda by Sharon O'Brien and seconded by Jake Blumenthal. Commission voted unanimously to approve.

3. Program Report

Rocque Perez

- 3.1. Pima College Access Network
3.1.1. FAFSA Beta Testing and Workshop Organizing
3.1.2. Website Landing Page Launch

Ex. Director Perez shared that the Pima College Access Network (PCAN) had joined in on the beta testing for the 2025-2026 FAFSA Application Process. In an effort to ensure county completion at a quicker pace, PCAN has organized workshops with each specific to a cluster of schools. Each school was given materials about all workshops and other materials specific to the workshop closest to that school. Digital and printed assets were made available to the schools, local government, and Commissioners.

- 3.2. Empower(ED) Nominations/Selections
3.2.1. Nomination Launch
3.2.2. Digital Campaign

Ex. Director Perez shared that the first round of nominations have come in and will require review by a minimum of 3 commission members. Commissioners Sharon O'Brien, Marla Franco, and Robert Ramirez have volunteered to independently review nominations for this round.

4. Resolution Discussion and Consideration

- 4.1. Resolution No. 2024-004 | Strategic Investment of Municipal Funding
4.2. Resolution No. 2024-005 | Recommendation Amending Authorizing Resolutions
4.3. Resolution No. 2024-006 (Only for discussion)

Discussion among all items within Agenda Item 4

Executive Director Perez shared that upon assuming his role, the Commission's composition included 39 members. At that time, funding from Pima County and the City of Tucson was uncertain, and the alignment of its programs with the goals of the City, County, and local and state agencies lacked definition.

Resolution 2024-004 requests that the City of Tucson and Pima County initiate a joint discussion ahead of a formal budget request, as outlined in Pima County Resolution No. 1990-178 and City of Tucson Resolution No. 15453. The resolution emphasizes the need for collaboration on a strategic investment in postsecondary navigational support and civic empowerment for young people. It also addresses the limitations of MEC's current funding model, highlighting the importance of a unified investment from both parties.

The resolution identifies key challenges, including statewide education funding cuts, the University of Arizona's financial crisis affecting student support services, and the potential closure of the Santa Rosa Library, a vital community resource. MEC proposes increased and sustained investment from both the City and County, the integration of key personnel under either municipality for improved strategic alignment, and occupation of the Santa Rosa Library space to expand services for young people in high-need areas.

By addressing immediate concerns, such as declining FAFSA completion rates, and fostering long-term benefits like postsecondary and workforce readiness, the resolution aims to enhance economic mobility for young people and improve the welfare of the broader community through strengthened collaboration and resource optimization.

Resolution 2024-005 seeks to further enhance the efficiency of the Commission while maintaining representation of the educational environment. It reaffirms the commitment to reduce the number of members to a final count of 24, building on the previous reduction from 39 to 29.

Resolutions 2024-004 and 2024-005 lay the foundation for subsequent actions. Following discussions with Youth Civic Fellows, Peer Coaches, Commissioners, and community stakeholders, Resolution 2024-006 will propose renaming the body and rebranding the organization to reflect its evolving mission.

Immediate motions to approve Resolutions 2024-004 and 2024-005 empower Executive Director Perez to engage with the City and County on matters of governance, financing, and potential use of the Santa Rosa Library space.

Commissioner O'Brien inquired about potential challenges if staff were integrated under local government and the organization later grew capable of sustaining personnel costs. She also asked if it was the Commission's intention to approve this resolution at this time. Executive Director Perez provided historical context, noting the Commission's decades-long struggle to secure consistent funding, which has depended heavily on municipal budgets, political support, and the visibility of program outcomes to elected officials. He further noted that the Commission is unique in being the only body under Pima County and the City of Tucson not staffed by either municipality. He expressed his desire to approve the resolution as presented.

Commissioner Franco echoed Perez's sentiments, emphasizing the urgency for meaningful discussions with the City and County to address funding challenges and continuity. She supported empowering Perez to initiate these conversations.

Commissioner Nikel asked if these resolutions simply empower Executive Director Perez, who serves at the pleasure of the board, to act on behalf of the Body to arrive at the outlined desirable outcomes.

Executive Director Perez confirmed and clarified that the resolutions are positioning statements rather than immediate actions. They provide formal authorization for him to represent the Commission in discussions. As his role serves at the pleasure of the Commission, he cannot act unilaterally without its approval.

Motion to approve Resolution 2024-004 by Commissioner O'Brien and Seconded by Commissioner Ferre. Resolution 2024-004 supported unanimously.

Motion to approve Resolution 2024-005 by Commissioner Nikel and Seconded by Commissioner Franco. Resolution 2024-004 supported unanimously.

5. Adjournment

Mark Hanna

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner O'Brien and Seconded by Commissioner Nikel. Adjournment support unanimously.

Pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.02, notice is given that a meeting will be conducted at the time and date set forth above. Questions and requests for reasonable accommodations or a copy of the agency can be directed to Rocque Perez, Executive Director for the Metropolitan Education Commission, by calling (520) 462-3806 or rocque@mectucson.org.