



Commission Meeting Minutes

Pursuant to A.R.S. 38.431.02, notice was hereby given on January 10, 2025, to the members of the Metropolitan Education Commission and to the public, that the **Metropolitan Education Commission would hold a Zoom meeting on Thursday, January 23, 2025, convening at 4:30 p.m.**

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 4:38 p.m., with 15 of 19 Commissioners present, constituting a quorum with more than one half of 19 active members present. Present are Mark Hanna, Jake Blumenthal, Michael Wilkerson, Alejandro Tavera-Reyes, Matthew Schmidgall, Rich Nickel, Kathy Prather, Irene Robles, Rocque Perez, Dustin Williams, Sharon O'Brien, Adriana Grijalva, Jose Gastelum, Robert Ramirez, Leslie Ferre.

2. Executive Report | 5 Minutes

- 2.1. Welcome
- 2.2. Approval of Consent Agenda

Commissioner Perez sought input, directive and insights to inform item 2.21, 2.2.3, and 2.2.4, presenting them for final review and approval.

2.2.1. Approval of 12.3.2024 Commission Meeting Minutes.

2.2.2. Approval of Teen Town Hall 2024-2025 Dialogue Report.

Commissioner Perez briefly presented the Teen Town Hall Dialogue Report, an informative digest of insights derived from dialogue circles composed of one hundred students across Pima County. Commissioners will receive both digital and printed copies of the Dialogue Report, with active promotion by Commission staff.

2.2.3. Approval of Resolution 2025-01 on Proclamation of Read Aloud Week.

Commissioner Perez briefly presented Resolution 2025-001 acknowledging the importance of literacy and reading aloud, recommending a proclamation designating a Pima-Tucson Read Aloud Week by the Pima County Board of Supervisors.

2.2.4. Approval of Annual Award Categories and Selection Process.

Commissioner Perez briefly presented a budget, proposed award categories and nomination decision process for the upcoming reprisal of the Commission's annual awards through "An Evening to Empower(ED)". This event represents a significant opportunity to celebrate and recognize the remarkable contributions of educators, learners, and community partners who drive education forward in the greater Tucson area.

Commissioner Perez welcomed a motion to approve the consent agenda. Commissioner Hanna motioned as so, seconded by Commissioner Wilkerson. A unanimous vote in favor.

3. Loyalty Oath Completion | 5 Minutes

Commissioner Perez explained the intention to distribute the City of Tucson and Pima County loyalty oaths through an online notary. Commissioner Perez shared that the Executive Committee has voted to approve and welcome Karla Silva, Director for Hispanic Serving Institution Initiatives from the University of Arizona, to fill a vacancy on the Commission. Further, sharing the interest of Jennifer Vasquez, College and Career Coordinator from Rincon High School and Co-Coordinator for the Southern Arizona College and Career Night, pending approval by the Pima County Superintendent of Schools.

4. Resolution Update, Discussion and Consideration | 40 Minutes

4.1. City and County response to Resolution No. 2024-004 | Strategic Investment of Municipal Funding and Resolution No. 2024-005 | Recommendation Amending Authorizing Resolutions.

4.2. Consider [Resolution 2025-002 | Support for Proposition 414](#)

Commissioner Perez welcomed Charlene Mendoza, Chief of Staff to the Mayor of the City of Tucson, to present on Proposition 414, wherein the City of Tucson will ask voters to consider a half-cent sales tax increase for the next 10 years to fund a safer and more vibrant Tucson. If approved by voters on Tuesday, March 11, the City's sales tax rate would increase to 3.1% and generate a projected \$800 million over those 10 years. Ms. Mendoza arrived at 4:55 p.m. and discussed the ordinance in tandem with the language as presented on the City of Tucson Proposition 414 webpage.

With Ms. Mendoza present, Commissioner Perez inquired on whether workforce development, early childhood programs, and youth workforce development funding would be open to local agencies to seek in a competitive process. Ms. Mendoza confirmed funds would be open to local agencies in an annual competitive process. Commissioner Williams inquired on whether funding would be to replace existing funding sources for PEEPS, Pima Early Education Program scholarships, or to increase the city's annual allocation. Ms. Mendoza clarified it would increase the existing annual allocation on behalf of the city.

Commissioner Perez thanked Ms. Mendoza for visiting. Upon Ms. Mendoza's departure, Commissioner Perez expressed the opportunity, a body representative of the educational continuum, to weigh in on the proposition with his perceived connection to youth safety and development. Commissioner Hanna expressed hesitation with the proposed total sales tax rate increasing from 8.7% to 9.2%, which may be burdensome for families. Commissioner Williams expressed interest in hearing opposing perspectives. Commissioner Williams expressed hesitation as there was a lot of information for consideration under short time, further inquiring on the thoughts of Commissioner Scott. Commissioner Scott vocalized his

intention to abstain from discussion and a decision in support or opposition of Proposition 414 due to holding the capacity of Chair for the Pima County Board of Supervisors, in addition to the standard abstention of county in weighing in on municipal tax policy. Commissioner Nickel also vocalized the intention of abstaining due to his capacity within a state-wide agency, specifically focused on state policy.

Commissioner Prather expressed the idea of proposing a statement expressing support for elements of the Proposition that the Commission does agree on, particularly on education and youth, while Commissioner Perez expressed interest in, if Proposition 414 were not to pass, for the Commission to propose an iteration specific to the purview of the Commission.

Commissioner Hanna welcomed a motion to table discussion and consideration of any action in response to Proposition 414, including Resolution 2025-002. Commissioner Wilkerson motioned as so, seconded by Commissioner Hanna. A unanimous vote in favor.

5. Finance Review | 10 Minutes

- 5.1. Closure of Fiscal Year 2023/2024 books.
- 5.2. Mid-Year Financial Summary.
 - 5.2.1. 2024-2025 Approved Budget
 - 5.2.2. July - December 2024 Statement of Activity
- 5.3. Mid-Year Actuals vs. Budget.

Commissioner Perez shared that following the departure of his successor and accountant, the organization's loss of access to its Quickbooks and dated accounting practices required a comprehensive review and reconciliation of all expenses from the last fiscal year to date. The Community Foundation for Southern Arizona afforded the organization a \$2,000.00 in funds to charter a service of need. The organization chartered an accountant to create a new chart of accounts and account for all required expenses. Services are reaching completion and closure of books, mid-year summaries, and budget vs. actuals will be presented in the next meeting.

6. Adjournment

Commissioner Perez welcomed a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Tavera-Reyes motioned as so, seconded by Commissioner Ferre. A unanimous vote in favor.

Pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.02, notice was 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 agenda could have been directed to Rocque Perez, Executive Director for the Metropolitan Education Commission, by calling (520) 462-3806 or rocque@mectucson.org.