



## New Mexico Public Education Commission (PEC)

### Governing Body Member Change Notification Instructions

**Purpose:** To notify the Public Education Commission (PEC) of a change in a member or members of the school's Governing Body. The school may report multiple member resignations/removals and designations on the same form.

**Submission Deadline:** Changes to the Governing Body membership do not require prior approval of the PEC; however, notice must be received within 30 calendar days of the change. Vacancies must be filled within 45 days; one 30-day extension may be requested.

Notifications completed 14 days prior to the next PEC meeting will be placed on the next agenda. Notifications of this type are typically placed on the consent agenda; however, any notification may be removed from the consent agenda and moved to the regular agenda for full discussion and possible action by the PEC.

Meeting minutes of the governing board of the school and the PEC will serve as an amendment to, or compliance with, the charter contract regarding this membership change. The documentation will be added to the board of finance documentation on file with CSD.

**The school must provide:**

- x Fully completed form
- x Approved board minutes or certification of the board's vote accepting the new member
- x Resignation Letter or board meeting minutes removing the previous member
- x Statement of Governing Body Member to Consult with PED
- x Affidavit of Governing Body Member
- x Assurances of Governing Body Member

Contact [charter.schools@ped.nm.gov](mailto:charter.schools@ped.nm.gov) with questions about completing or submitting documents.

**Governing Body Member Change Notification Form**

Submit this form and all supporting documents to [charter.schools@ped.nm.gov](mailto:charter.schools@ped.nm.gov)

The Charter Contract was entered into by and between the New Mexico Public Education Commission (PEC) and Taos Academy Charter School., hereafter "the school," effective on 3/13/24

**Current Governing Body Members and Positions:**

- Dean Caldwell – President
- Karen Shannon– Treasurer
- Lara Heister – Vice President
- Samantha Gonzales – Secretary
- Martin Molz – Member

**Governing Body Member(s) Resigning or Removed:** Donna Mellinger Resigned

**New Governing Body Member(s) and Position(s):** Lara E. Heister, Ph.D. Vice President

**Contact information for New Governing Body Member(s) (phone, email):** 530-304-3266  
Laraheister@gmail.com

Is the school requesting an extension to fill a vacancy:  yes     no  
If so, provide date of vacancy:

**Number of personnel changes (Head Administrator/Business Manager/Procurement Officer, Governing Board Member), including this change, submitted to PEC in the last 12 months:** 1

**Effective Date:** 2/13/24

The school's notification is hereby submitted by:

Traci Filiss

**Signature of School Representative:** Traci Filiss      **Date:** 2/13/24

**Signature of Governing Board Chair:** Ben J. Caldwell      **Date:** 2/13/24

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**For PEC/CSD use only**

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**PEC Meeting Date:**

**Agenda:**  Consent (typical)       Regular (unusual circumstance)

**The school's notification was:**  Accepted  Rejected (provide reason)

**Electronic signature of CSD Director:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Taos Academy Charter School**  
**Governing Council Meeting**  
**110 Paseo Del Canon Taos NM 87571**

**Date, February 12, 2024**

**5:30pm**

**Google Meet joining info**

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/ccx-kvho-bcc>

Or dial: (US) +1 929-277-6767 PIN: 210 345 036#

Live stream <https://stream.meet.google.com/stream/5854bd0e-1c74-49ee-b14f-9e383302b29e>

**A. Call To Order – 5:38 p,m**

**B. Roll Call** – Dean Caldwell (President) Present, Karen Shannon (Treasurer) Absent, vacant (Vice president), Samantha Gonzales (Member) present , Martin Molz (member) present.

NON-VOTING STAFF ATTENDANCE - Traci Filiss (Executive Director), Jamie Lucero-Martinez (Community Coordinator), Elizabeth LeBlanc (Director Teaching and Learning), Deanna Mooney (Contracted Finance Director/Business Official),

**C. Pledge of Allegiance- 5:38**

**D. Approval of Agenda ( Action)-** Approval of February agenda: Martin moves as modified to approve agenda, Sam seconds, Roll call, Dean yes, Martin yes, Sam yes, Motion carries.

**E. Approval of Minutes (Action) –** Approval of January minutes: Martin moves to approve minutes, Sam seconds, Roll call, Dean yes, Martin yes, Sam yes, Motion carries

**F. Governing Council Input - N/A**

**G. Public Input (See below)- N/A**

**H. Financial reports (Discussion & Action)**

**a. Business Services update**

*Financials and Bank Statements were provided to all Governing Council members. In addition to regular work, Quarterly reports were prepared and submitted for the second quarter of the fiscal year (PED Actuals and Cash Reporting) Fourth Quarter of the calendar year (941, WC, and SUTA) Completed W-2 , 1099 Processing., SB-9 Reporting and Risk Insurance Renewals. Audit is still under review by the State Auditor.*

**c. BAR Approvals (Action) - The following BARS were presented for Approval:**

*BAR 510-000-2324-0012-I is an increase BAR for FUND 31100 GO BOND BUILDING GRT in the amount of \$25,131.64. This brings balance to include full Series 2022 and Series 2023 Funding.*

*BAR 510-000-2324-0013-IB is an Initial Budget for FUND 26107 REC Funding previously budgeted under BAR 510-000-2324-0009-IB which has been voided per PED Guidance. The amount of this BAR is \$26,328.03.*

*BAR 510-000-2324-0014-I is a BAR created in error and voided  
BAR 510-000-2324-0015-I is an increase BAR for FUND 27107 GOB  
Library funding. To budget new award of \$5,795.00.  
BAR 510-000-2324-0016-I is an increase BAR for FUND 24154 Title II  
Funding. The amount of additional money is \$8,912.07 bringing final  
award to \$22,074.04.  
BAR 510-000-2324-0017-I is an increase BAR for FUND 24330 ESSER  
III Funding. The amount of carryover is \$1,017.00 bringing final  
award to \$216,955.92.*

Approval of BARS: Martin moves to approve BARS as presented,  
Sam seconds, Roll call, Dean yes, Martin yes, Sam yes, Motion  
carries

- d. Finance/Audit Committee update- The finance committee met prior to the meeting. Reviewed several expenditures. Discussion was held regarding the Debit Card Policy and Procedure that the Governing Board will be voting on. Grant Funds Management was also discussed, staff is currently working through all the grants to make sure that grants will be expended prior to expiration.

Approval of unaudited financial reports: Martin moves to approve the unaudited financial reports as presented, Sam seconds the motion. Roll call, Dean yes, Martin yes, Sam yes, Motion carries.

#### **I. Operations & Instructional Reports (Discussion & Action)-**

- a. GC Training - GC evaluation. Discussion was held on self-evaluation of the Governing Board.
- b. New potential GC member review - Laura Heister. Introduction.
- c. Foundation Report - No Foundation Report at this time.
- d. TA Community Council Report (PAC/EQ/CS)- (Lisa Joseph) Families are invited to attend TA Community Council meetings to learn about our Community School, Parent Advisory, and Equity Council. Training for parents is offered at the beginning of the meeting starting at 4:15 from TA teachers. Children were welcome to attend with their parents. At the January Community Council meeting STEAM-based education in collaboration with TWIRL was provided to eight students during the meeting. We had seven parents attend the meeting. This indicates that the TWIRL events will likely increase parent participation. In addition to more participation in our Community Council meeting this past month, parents offered to volunteer and asked how they could help. An appeal was made to have parents let Lisa Joseph know what kinds of help they can provide to us so that we can organize their volunteer work. One parent already asked to help with the Senior Trip bake sale. Families were asked to email [ljoseph@taosacademy.org](mailto:ljoseph@taosacademy.org) with any questions they may have about our community school and share any insights they have about how we can better support and serve our TA families. Community Council meeting and parent participation is an important goal. The development of our Technology Training for

the Community is also a goal through our student involvement in internships for providing courses. The wellness center is another initiative that is underway.

Equity Council - Parents provided feedback on what they would like the equity council to look into or include in the advisement package: Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Framework: What programs or activities are in place or planned were reviewed. Suggestions from parents: Role play practice for understanding different cultures. More service learning projects/opportunities - SEL, Leadership, Diversity clubs, etc. Possibly have Leadership classes create partnerships with other schools around the world.

e. STEM+ Director's Report - STEM Winter session has begun. Currently 111 registrations for the session. 43 high schoolers and 68 middle school students are registered. This is an overall 44.4% participation rate. 73% of middle schoolers and 27.4% of high schoolers.

Upcoming STEM events: STEM Night will be held on Thursday, March 7th, 2024 at Taos Academy from 5-6:30. Art, Computer Programming, Culinary, Music, and Science classes will participate in the event. The Middle School Theatre performance will be announced via the newsletter and email. On January 20th our High School STEM Research and Development team participated in the 5th annual NM Governor's STEM Challenge. Taos Academy is now five time state champions. The team was selected this year by Freeport McMoran. The National STEM Challenge selected two Taos Academy students as STEM Champions. These students will head to the National Showcase in Washington D.C. this April. The science club and classes will be participating in the North Eastern Regional Science Fair on Saturday, March 2nd at NM Highlands University.

We have added a computer programming class to our middle school programming. This is being offered in partnership with True Kids 1.

f. District Testing Coordinator's Report - Mid Year Measures of Academic Progress testing in reading and math is in progress. As of today we are at 93% participation. Growth results will be shared at the next meeting. WIDA Access testing began today. All ELL students who have not demonstrated proficiency participate in the test. This is approximately thirteen students. The spring state testing dates have been scheduled. All 5th-8th, and 11th grade students are expected to participate.

g. Director of Teaching & Learning (Principal's Report)  
First semester ended with 48% of TA students making the Honor Roll (over 3.00 GPA), up from 43% last year. Elizabeth just returned from a trip to Washington, DC through her doctoral program and after visiting several exemplary charter and public schools in the DC area, Taos Academy's innovation and use of technology is still on the forefront. She is completing her midyear check ins with staff; positive feedback on the start of second semester. We hosted the NMPED CCRB team for a site visit in late January; some high points included the diversity of pathways that we offer our

students, the passion of our teachers, and our internship programming/community partners. We will be working with the PED team to build out our formal CTE paths. We have received another Outdoor Equity grant that supports our leadership days and scholarships for outdoor activities and are midway through our Outdoor Trails and Rec grant for outdoor learning spaces that will support greenhouse refurbishment and the outdoor amphitheater.

h. Executive Director's Report - Working to procure the Wellness building. Budget session: waiting for the budget to be finalized. Jamie presented a Student Wellness survey.

i. Monthly GC Calendar Development and Strategic Planning Review - N/A

j. Policy (action) -

a. Debit Card Policy Approval. After discussions with auditors We have moved toward working on a policy for the ability to use a debit card for some transactions. Travel, postage, and some small purchases are difficult. This would lessen the need to reimburse employees. All normal purchase procedures would apply. Martin moves to approve policy and obtain the usage of Debit cards, Sam seconds the motion. Roll call, Dean yes, Martin yes, Sam yes, Motion carries.

b. G Personnel Policies (GAL - GAS) See website for policy details. Martin moves to approve G Personnel Policies as presented, Sam seconds the motion. Roll call, Dean yes, Martin yes, Sam yes, Motion carries.

k. Closed Session - GC only (7:31) p.m. - Martin moves to go into closed session to discuss the Director's adjusted contract. Sam seconds the motion. GC only is invited to stay. Roll call, Dean yes, Martin yes, Sam yes, Motion carries.

8:22 pm Martin moves to come out of closed session. Sam seconds the motion. Roll call, Dean yes, Donna yes, Martin yes, Karen yes, Sam yes, Motion carries.

Matters discussed during the closed session were limited to those specified in the motion for closure.

a. Executive Director Evaluation

b. Personnel discussion

c. Action for GC new member - Motion to have Laura Heister to join the GC Martin second Sam. Roll call, Dean yes, Donna yes, Martin yes, Karen yes, Sam yes, Motion carries.

l. Next Board Meeting Agenda-

m. Adjournment - Martin moves to adjourn, Sam seconds the motion. Roll call, Dean yes, Martin yes, Sam yes, Motion carries. Adjourned: 8:23

**Public Input:** Persons from the same group and having similar viewpoints are asked to select a spokesperson to speak on their behalf. Taos Academy Governing Council asks that any and all public input be limited to a reasonable amount of time, three to five minutes. No action will be taken on items presented and comments regarding matters under litigation will not be allowed. Individuals with a disability who need any form of auxiliary aid or service to attend or participate at this meeting are to contact Director Traci Filiss at [tfiliss@taosacademy.org](mailto:tfiliss@taosacademy.org) at least one week prior to the meeting.





----- Original Message -----

Subject: Re: Director's evaluation

Date: Tue, 9 Jan 2024 23:25:55 +0000

From: Donna Kopf-Mellinger <[donnakopf@mellinger.com](mailto:donnakopf@mellinger.com)>

To: Dean Caldwell <[drdean@caldwellu.com](mailto:drdean@caldwellu.com)>

Hello Dean,

Sadly, am resigning from the governing council effective immediately. It has been on my mind for several months. We are selling Sabroso and want to be free to travel.

My time on the GC has been lovely. Learned so much! The school is a fine representation of a charter school. The GC needs strong involved members and I am unable to fill the position.

Big Hug!

Sincerely,

Donna Mellinger

Sent from my iPad



**STATEMENT OF GOVERNING BODY TO CONSULT WITH PED**

We, the undersigned, make up the governing body of the ~~[insert name of school]~~, located in 110 Paseo Del Camino, New Mexico. Taos Academy  
Taos

In accordance with 6.80.4.16 NMAC, we agree to consult with the New Mexico Public Education Department on any matter not covered by the manual of accounting and budgeting before taking any action related to funds held as a board of finance.

We make this statement as part of [insert name of school]'s application to the Public Education Commission for status as a board of finance under 6.80.4.16 NMAC.

We understand that we must retain or hire a Licensed School Business Manager as soon as financial feasible and, thereafter, notify the New Mexico Public Education Commission within 30 days of hiring and/or changing in a Licensed School Business Manager for the school, and a new, signed "Affidavit of Financial Custodian" must be submitted.

We understand that we must submit an Affidavit of Governing Body Member to the Public Education Commission within 60 days of a change in membership of our governing body.

THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS OF THE Taos Academy ~~[INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL]~~ GIVE THE FOREGOING STATEMENT THIS 21 DAY OF Feb, 2024.

1. [signature]  
LEON F. HEISTER  
[print]
2. [signature]  
Dean Caldwell  
[print]
3. [signature]  
Karen Shannon  
[print]
4. [signature]  
Martin Molz  
[print]
5. [signature]  
Samantha Gonzales  
[print]

Attach additional pages if membership exceeds five.



**AFFIDAVIT OF GOVERNING BODY MEMBER**

STATE OF NEW MEXICO )  
 )  
COUNTY OF )

I, LARA HEISTER, after being duly sworn, state:

1. My name is LARA HEISTER and I reside in El Prado, New Mexico.

2. I am a member of the governing body of the [insert name of school] in Taos Academy 110 Paseo Del Camino W. Taos, New Mexico.

3. I attest that I am currently not a current governing body member of any other charter school authorized in the state of New Mexico.

4. I have never been a governing body member of a charter school that was suspended or failed to receive or maintain their board of finance designation.

5. I understand that as a member of the [insert name of school]'s governing body, I am entrusted with oversight of expenditure of public funds in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations and rules, including but without limitation any laws or rules pertaining to conflicts of interest, public school finance, and procurement.

[Handwritten Signature]

[Signature]

2/20/2024  
Date

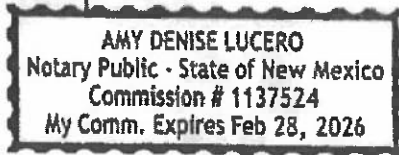
LARA E. HEISTER

[Print]

**VERIFICATION**

The forgoing Affidavit of Governing Body Member was subscribed and sworn to before me, this 20 day of February, 2024.

[Notary Seal:]



[Handwritten Signature]  
NOTARY PUBLIC

My commission expires: February 28, 2026.

10/10/2018

10/10/2018

10/10/2018

10/10/2018

10/10/2018

10/10/2018

10/10/2018

AMY DENISE LUCERO  
 Notary Public - State of New Mexico  
 Commission # 1131524  
 My Comm. Expires Feb 28, 2018

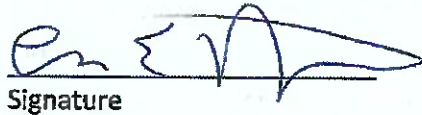
### ASSURANCES

My name is KARA HEISTER and I reside in El Paso, NM. I am a member of the governing body for Taos Academy a charter school which is located at 110 Basco Del Canon W, Taos, NM 87571. I assure that in my capacity as a member of the governing body, the CHARTER SCHOOL complies with all applicable federal and state laws governing the organizational, programmatic, and financial requirements applicable to charter schools, including:

1. The CHARTER SCHOOL'S admission processes are in compliance with Sections 22-2-4(A)-(D) and 22-8B-4.1 NMSA 1978.
2. The CHARTER SCHOOL'S admission process do not discriminate against anyone regarding race, color, age, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, spousal affiliation, physical or mental disability, or serious medical condition.
3. The CHARTER SCHOOL is a nonsectarian and non-religious public school.
4. Except as otherwise provided in Section 22-12-5(C) NMSA 1978 the Public School Code, the CHARTER SCHOOL does not charge tuition or have admission requirements.
5. The CHARTER SCHOOL complies with all state and federal health and safety requirements applicable to public schools, complies with Sections 22-8B-4.2(A), (C), and (D) NMSA 1978, and must produce an E-Occupancy certificate for all school facilities.
6. The governing body does not and will not contract with a for-profit entity for the management of the CHARTER SCHOOL.
7. The CHARTER SCHOOL complies with all applicable state and federal laws and rules related to identifying and providing special education services.
8. The CHARTER SCHOOL complies with provisions regarding public property identified in the Public School Code, the New Mexico Procurement Code, and the New Mexico Prohibited Sales Act, the Internal Revenue Code, and other applicable federal and state regulations.
9. The CHARTER SCHOOL ensures that criminal background checks are conducted on all employees and applicable reporting is completed in accordance with Section 22-10A-5 NMSA 1978.
10. The CHARTER SCHOOL ensures that it complies with state regulations regarding the use of volunteers set out in Section 6. 50.18 NMAC.
11. The CHARTER SCHOOL complies with the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
12. The CHARTER SCHOOL provides equitable access to and participation in its federally assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs.
13. Meetings of the CHARTER SCHOOL Governing Body comply with the New Mexico Open Meetings Act, Sections 10-15-1 et seq., NMSA 1978 and the Inspection of Public Records Act, Section 14-2-1 et seq., NMSA 1978.

14. The CHARTER SCHOOL complies with all requirements of The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99.
15. The CHARTER SCHOOL has and will adopt all policies and procedures required by the Public School Code, the New Mexico Administrative Code, and the Public Education Commission.
16. The Governing Body or head administrator of the CHARTER SCHOOL recognizes and works with employee labor representatives, if any.
17. The CHARTER SCHOOL has and will develop personnel policies that comply with all applicable federal and state labor laws, regulations and rules implementing them.
18. The CHARTER SCHOOL had and will develop a curriculum that is aligned to the New Mexico State Standards found in Title 6 Chapter 29 of the New Mexico Administrative Code, as amended.

LARA E. HEISTER  
Printed Name

  
Signature

2/20/24  
Date