

State Employee Advisory Commission and Public-School Advisory Commission Minutes

Tuesday, May 5, 2026

The Arkansas State Employee Advisory Commission and Public-School Employee Advisory Commission met on Tuesday, May 5, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. The meeting was recorded and is available upon request through the Department of Shared Administrative Services. The following members were present:

ASE Commission Members Present:

**Ronda Walthall
Shane David
Marty Casteel
Cynthia Dunlap
Bruce Maloch**

PSE Commission Members Present:

**Julie Bates
Debbie Jones
Zinnia Clanton
Kurt Knickrehm**

Also in attendance were Grant Wallace, Director of the Employee Benefits Division, and Fran Jansen, Deputy Director of the Employee Benefits, along with staff from the Employee Benefits Division, EBRx, Public Consulting Group, Colonial Life, and Navitus Health Solutions.

Chairwoman Dunlap called the meeting to order after confirming a quorum was present. She requested a motion to approve the minutes of the February 3, 2026, meeting. Ronda Walthall made the motion, which was seconded by Shane David. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairwoman Dunlap then recognized Jay Eickman of Navitus Health Solutions to present the March and April Pharmacy Formulary recommendations. Following the presentation, Chairwoman Dunlap requested a motion to approve the recommendations.

Julie Bates made the motion, seconded by Kurt Knickrehm. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairwoman Dunlap recognized Kristen Belew of EBRx to present the Cell and Gene Therapy Policy recommendation. Following the presentation, Chairwoman Dunlap called for a motion to approve the Cell and Gene Therapy Policy recommendation. Shane David made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Kurt Knickrehm. The motion carried unanimously.

Next, Chairwoman Dunlap recognized Scott Humpert and Luke Lofgren of the Public Consulting Group to present the fiscal year 2027 financials and rate proposals. Luke Lofgren explained that the proposed 2027 rate setting for the ASE plan includes a projected 9.8% increase for the active and pre-65 population and a 7.7% increase for the post-65 population. At the time of the presentation, MAPD rates were not yet available; however, they were projected to increase by approximately 6%. For the PSE plan, the active and pre-65 population is projected to increase by 4.9%, the post-65 population by 9.7%, while MAPD rate increase is projected at 6%. Following the presentation, Kurt Knickrehm made a motion to approve the fiscal year 2027 financials and rate proposals. The motion was seconded by Shane David carried unanimously.

Chairwoman Dunlap recognized Grant Wallace, Director of the Employee Benefits Division, to present the UAMS Professional Consultant Services (PCS) Contract. Director Wallace explained that the contract is a one-year renewal with UAMS and EBRx for continued services and includes a slight increase in the per-member, per-month cost for

the upcoming year. He further stated that the base contract totals approximately \$1.86 million, with optional services increasing the total amendment values to approximately \$2.596 million. Chairwoman Dunlap requested a motion to approve the renewal of the UAMS Professional Consultant Services (PCS) Contract. Julie Bates made the motion, seconded by Marty Casteel. The motion carried unanimously.

Director Wallace presented the proposed rules associated with Act 956 of 2025. He explained that the proposed rules would require vendors conducting business with the Employee Benefits Division to provide independent verification of the data they submit, particularly regarding fiscal impacts. Shane David made the motion to approve, seconded by Julie Bates. The motion carried unanimously.

With no further business to come before the Commission, Chairwoman Dunlap requested a motion to adjourn. Marty Casteel made the motion, which was seconded by Burce Maloch. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned.