

State Employee Advisory Commission and Public-School Advisory Commission Minutes

July 8, 2025

The Arkansas State Employee Advisory Commission and Public-School Employee Advisory Commission met on Tuesday, July 8, 2025, 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
Jerry Jones
Cynthia Dunlap
Bruce Maloch
Marty Casteel**

PSE Commission Members Present:

**Billy Jackson
Jim Tucker
Greg Rogers
Julie Bates
Kurt Knickrehm**

Others present were Grant Wallace, Director of Employee Benefits Division, and Amanda Land, Deputy Director of Employee Benefits Division. Also present were staff from the Employee Benefits Division, EBRx, Milliman, and Navitus Health Solutions.

Chairwoman Dunlap, seeing a quorum, called the meeting to order. Chairwoman Dunlap asked for a motion to accept the minutes of the previous meeting on June 10, 2025. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Jim Tucker and was seconded by Ronda Walthall. All members were in favor.

Chairwoman Dunlap then recognized Jay Eickman of Navitus Health Solutions to present the July Formulary Advisory Committee recommendations. A motion was made by Billy Jackson to approve the pharmacy benefit formulary recommendation, which was seconded by Julie Bates. All members were in favor.

Chairwoman Dunlap invited Paul Sakhrani from Milliman to provide an update on the preliminary 2026 rates for both the State and Public-School populations, as outlined in the financial report. A motion to approve the rate changes was made by Jim Tucker and seconded by Jerry Jones. All members were in favor.

Chairwoman Dunlap called on Director Wallace to present an update under Other Business. Director Wallace stated that the ALC is meeting a week early in August, so the next Advisory Commission meeting will also need to be moved up to Tuesday, August 5, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. to ensure all deadlines in the approval process are met. He also noted that August 5, 2025, is the effective date for the change in meeting frequency for the Commission with August 5th being the last monthly meeting. The Commission will then transition to a quarterly schedule, with the next meeting tentatively planned for October or November. This timing will depend on the State Board of Finance meeting schedule and the workflow through the end of the year to ensure proper timing for the review and approval process. Director Wallace also advised that the open enrollment process was initiated with today's approval of rates, with the process set to begin in August and with plans to resume outreach, education, and awareness efforts for open enrollment. Finally, Director Wallace provided an update on the special procurements discussed last month regarding third-party administration. The end date for the procurement will need to be extended to December 31, 2026, instead of the previously stated December 2025. This change is necessary to allow adequate time to complete the evaluation process.

Lastly, seeing no other business to come before the Commissions, Chairwoman Dunlap stated a motion to adjourn would be entertained. A motion was made by Jerry Jones, which was seconded by Marty Casteel. All members were in favor.