

Observer Corps Report, May 14, 2023
APS Board of Education meetings, 19 April and 3 May 2023
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The Board of Education meetings all follow a similar structure: a public forum and then the Board Members discuss Board internal business. I “attend” the YouTube live stream of the meetings, and I report on topics most relevant to LWVCNM policy positions.

A continuing presence at the 19 April and 3 May meetings is a faction of people accusing APS schools of manipulating students to assume LGBTQ+ identities and of not involving parents enough in counselling and curriculum decisions at schools. As a reminder from the previous report, the people representing these points of view at the public forum give the impression of following a “parents’ rights” script: <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/28/opinion/parents-rights-republicans-florida.html> Other issues raised at the public forum sessions were: a continued concern about safety from gun violence from students, parents and staff at West Mesa HS, and concern that diversity and bilingual programs should continue to be supported in the wake of “right sizing” in APS.

The Board meetings proper continued to involve detailed discussion of finalizing the strategic five-year plan for APS in order to satisfy the settlement requirements of the Yazzie-Martinez lawsuit, which addressed inequities faced by certain groups of students – in fact, the vast majority of students – in the New Mexico public school system: <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/yazzie-martinez-updates/> Also discussed was whether or not the contracts for El Camino Real Academy and Mark Armijo Academy (two charter schools) should be renewed. Both contracts were approved, but reluctantly. The issue with El Camino is the low performance scores, and attention was drawn to the new Goals and Guardrails for APS schools, as well as diversity goals. At Mark Armijo, the concern is whether the school should be planning an expansion when enrollment is falling at regular APS schools.