



# NEW MEXICO

## Public Education Department

*Investing for tomorrow. Delivering today.*



# High School Graduation Requirements Guidance

## HB171

# **ATTRIBUTIONS**

**Michelle Lujan Grisham**  
Governor

**Mariana D. Padilla**  
Secretary-Designate of Public Education

**Margaret Cage, Ed.D.**  
Deputy Secretary, Office of Special Education

**Amanda DeBell**  
Deputy Secretary of Teaching Learning and Innovation

**Gregory Frostad**  
Assistant Secretary of Policy and Technology

**Jacqueline Costales, Ed.D.**  
Division Director of Curriculum and Instruction

**Shafiq Chaudhary**  
Math and Science Bureau Director

**Breezy Gutierrez**  
College and Career Readiness Bureau Director

**Severo Martinez**  
Literacy and Humanities Bureau Director

**Denise Terrazas**  
Policy and Legislative Affairs Division Director

**Lynn Vasquez**  
Assessment, Research, Evaluation, and Accountability Division Director

**Ria Gill**  
Assistant Deputy Director, Office of Special Education

**Judy Cruz**  
Education Administrator/Grad Requirements, College and Career Readiness Bureau

**Chase Deaton**  
Language Arts Specialist, Literacy and Humanities Bureau

**Lisa Sanchez**  
Science Specialist, Math and Science Bureau

**Erica Wheeler**  
Humanities Program Specialist, Literacy and Humanities Bureau

**Mira Misleh**  
Communications Coordinator, College and Career Readiness Bureau

**Connor Boyle**  
Managing Editor, Communications Office

***Special thanks to the Graduation Guidance Advisory Committee (GGAC)***

**Adrian Acosta**, General Education Teacher  
Cobre High School

**Milo McMinn**, Director of College/Career  
Readiness, Farmington Municipal School  
District

**Marie Acosta**, Special Education Teacher  
Gadsden High School

**Emily Mendoza**, Counselor  
Animas High School

**Mark Garcia**, Assistant Superintendent  
Albuquerque Public Schools

**Wendi Miller-Tomlinson, Ph.D.**, Deputy  
Superintendent, Las Cruces Public Schools

**Brandy Holguin**, Principal  
Hatch Valley High School

**Howie Morales**, Lieutenant Governor/Parent  
Silver City

**Kristi Howe**, Counselor  
Tatum Municipal Schools

**Johnnie Walker**, Parent  
Alamogordo

**Karen Kaufma**, Counselor  
New Mexico Connections Academy

**Sheri West**, Principal  
Santa Rosa High School

# CONTENTS

ATTRIBUTIONS.....	2
INTRODUCTION .....	5
Key Changes.....	5
SECTION 1: NEW MEXICO DIPLOMA OF EXCELLENCE .....	7
Removal of Graduation Demonstrations of Competency .....	7
Coursework Requirements.....	8
SECTION 2: CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) AND WORK-BASED LEARNING (WBL) COURSES FOR CORE CREDIT.....	11
Department-Approved CTE Courses .....	11
Department-Approved WBL Courses .....	12
Coursework Waivers.....	15
SECTION 3: ESSA, TITLE I ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS .....	16
SECTION 4: PROPOSED CHANGES TO GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES .....	18
The Public Education Department is currently accepting public comments on the proposed amendment to 6.29.1 NMAC, General Provisions, which includes proposed changes to graduation requirements for students with disabilities. ....	18
SECTION 5: MORE INFORMATION.....	19
RESOURCES .....	19

## INTRODUCTION

During the 2024 legislative session, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham signed [House Bill 171, School Graduation Requirements](#), updating high school graduation requirements for the first time in over a decade, with changes becoming effective for students entering ninth grade in the 2025-2026 school year. The new requirements require successful completion of a minimum of 24 units aligned to the state academic content and performance standards.

### Key Changes

- **Career Technical Education and Work-Based Learning:** Department-approved work-based learning and career technical education qualifying in the core content areas of English, mathematics, and science.
- **Algebra 2:** Removal of Algebra 2 as a requirement, although it must be offered as a mathematics course.
- **Credits Prior to High School:** Units in Health, Algebra 1, and Geometry prior to enrolling in high school shall satisfy unit requirements to earn a New Mexico Diploma of Excellence.
- **Honors/AP, Dual Credit, Distance Learning:** Removal of the required Advanced Placement®, honors, dual credit, or distance learning units, although a student's opportunity to take these courses shall not be affected.
- **Student Choice Two-Unit Elective Pathway:** Requirement that electives include a two-unit pathway concentration of the student's choice in a language other than English, including American sign language; fine arts; health; military career preparation; a career technical education program; or community learning, a capstone course, or work-based learning; provided that financial literacy and computer science shall be offered as electives.
- **Local Education Agency Choice Two Units:** Two units set by each local school board or governing body that meet department academic content and performance standards.
- **Demonstration of Competency:** [Removal of the state required demonstrations of competency](#) in five core subject areas (i.e., mathematics, reading and language arts, writing, social studies, and science). Although high school students must still participate in the state's required Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) assessments, the *additional* requirement of demonstrating competency in five core subject areas is no longer necessary.

Note: All resources and links in the manual can be found on the PED website: [Graduation Requirements – New Mexico Public Education Department](#)

## SECTION 1: NEW MEXICO DIPLOMA OF EXCELLENCE

Students in New Mexico must meet coursework requirements to earn a New Mexico Diploma of Excellence. Per [state law](#), students must complete a minimum of 24 credits. Nothing in the minimum graduation requirements affects:

- A school district's or charter school's authority to require more units for graduation than provided in this section; or
- A student's opportunity to take Advanced Placement® or honors courses, International Baccalaureate® courses or distance learning courses offered by the public school, or dual credit courses offered in cooperation with institutions of higher education.

### Removal of Graduation Demonstrations of Competency

The passing of House Bill 171 (HB171) in the 2024 legislative session amends current law to update New Mexico's high school graduation requirements related to assessments. Students are **no longer required** to complete demonstrations of competency (DOCs) in core academic subjects (i.e., mathematics, reading and language arts, writing, social studies, and science) to receive a high school diploma. The PED formally announced this change to districts and charter schools in March of 2024 in a [memorandum](#). Additionally, the removal of the state's DOC requirement should be retroactively applied to prior graduation cohorts (e.g., a 2018 cohort graduate that returns to complete high school diploma requirements would not be held to completing DOCs).

Although HB 171 removes the state's requirement for students to demonstrate competency in the five core subject areas, districts or charter schools may exercise their local authority to require local demonstrations of competency (e.g., portfolios, capstones, end-of-course exams).

## Coursework Requirements

Cohort 2025-26, graduating class of 2029 and beyond. 24 total units required as outlined below:

Content Area	Coursework Requirements	Coursework Options (Course Codes)
<b>English</b>	<b>4 credits of English</b> (must include a 3-unit sequence)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ELA 1 (1001)/ELA-ELD I (1064)**</li> <li>• ELA 2 (1002)/ELA-ELD II (1065)**</li> <li>• ELA 3 (1003)/ELA-ELD III (1066)**</li> <li>• Additional options vary by school</li> </ul> <p>&gt; Department-approved WBL Course &gt; Department-approved CTE Course</p> <p>**English development courses that meet ELA development academic content and performance standards. ELD courses are intended for English learners whose proficiency level is nearing proficiency, as measured by the PED-approved English language proficiency assessment.</p>
<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>4 credits of math</b> (2 units shall include a sequence of Algebra I and Geometry or equivalent Integrated Pathway)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Algebra I (2031) or Integrated Pathway: Math I (2080)</li> <li>• Geometry (2034) or Integrated Pathway: Math II (2081)</li> <li>• Additional options vary by school.</li> </ul> <p>&gt; Department-approved WBL Course &gt; Department-approved CTE Course</p> <p>Algebra 2 and Financial Literacy shall be offered as math courses. Units earned in Algebra 1 and Geometry prior to high school shall satisfy.</p>
<b>Science</b>	<b>3 credits of science</b> (must include 2 units of a laboratory component)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 laboratory sciences</li> <li>• Additional options vary by school.</li> </ul> <p>&gt; Department-approved WBL Course &gt; Department-approved CTE Course</p>



Content Area	Coursework Requirements	Coursework Options (Course Codes)
<b>Social Studies</b>	<b>4 credits of social studies</b> (Government/Economics and Personal Financial Literacy course content shall contain civics)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• U.S. History and Geography (2729)*</li> <li>• U.S. Government (2730)^</li> <li>• Economics (2741)^</li> <li>• World History and Geography (2706)</li> <li>• Additional options vary by school</li> </ul> <p>*Course content shall contain NM history. Note: NM History can also be offered as a stand-alone course.</p> <p>^Can be offered as 0.5 credit.</p>
<b>Physical Education</b>	<b>1 unit in physical education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical Education (2305)</li> <li>• Marching band</li> <li>• JROTC</li> <li>• Interscholastic sports sanctioned by the NMAA or other co-curricular physical activity</li> <li>• Additional options vary by school</li> </ul>
<b>Health</b>	<b>1 course (0.5 credit) in health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health (1401) as an elective unit above (E) or as completed in middle school (MS)</li> </ul>
<b>Electives</b>	<b>5.5 elective units that meet department content and performance standards and provide a two-unit pathway concentration of the student's choice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language other than English (including American Sign Language)</li> <li>• Fine arts</li> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Military career preparation</li> <li>• Student service learning</li> <li>• Career technical education (CTE)</li> <li>• Community or service learning</li> <li>• Capstone course</li> <li>• Work-based learning (WBL)</li> </ul> <p>Computer Science and Financial Literacy shall be offered as electives.</p>
<b>Local Requirement</b>	<b>2 units set by each local school board or governing body that meet department academic content and performance standards</b>	If a high school student who has taken one or both units moves from one district/charter to another, the receiving district/charter shall accept those earned units toward the student's graduation.

A single course credit may fulfill the requirements for only one graduation category. Credit for the course cannot be applied simultaneously to multiple requirements, even if the course content overlaps with more than one category.

- For example, if a course satisfies both an "Elective" and a "Math" requirement, the official and student must designate which category the course will fulfill. The same credit cannot be counted toward both requirements.

The course can be listed on a record or transcript as meeting a graduation requirement, but a decision must be made as to which one the credit will be assigned to.

## **SECTION 2: CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) AND WORK-BASED LEARNING (WBL) COURSES FOR CORE CREDIT**

The *CTE/WBL Core Credit Guidance Manual* will outline the process and specific course content standards to obtain core credit in English language arts (ELA), math, or science. The manual will be made available by the agency and posted on the PED website: [Graduation Requirements – New Mexico Public Education Department](#)

### **Department-Approved CTE Courses**

The CTE courses for core credit equivalency process outlined below must align with New Mexico’s Core Content Standards to be eligible for core credit. New Mexico’s Core Content Standards can be viewed on the PED website: [NM Core Content Standards – New Mexico Public Education Department](#)

### **General Requirements**

Students must earn credit in the following courses with a passing grade of C or better:

- English: English 1, English 2, and English 3
- Math: Algebra 1 and Geometry **or** Integrated Math 1 and Integrated Math 2
- Science: Two lab sciences

The CTE teacher of record must hold the proper licenses in the core content areas.

### **Process**

1. LEA establishes a committee to review the CTE course for core credit in the area of interest: English, math, or science. A core content area teacher in the area of interest must be included in the committee. For:
  - ELA credit, a secondary ELA teacher must be included.
  - Math credit, a secondary math teacher must be included.
  - Science credit, a secondary science teacher must be included.
2. The committee, student, and parent or guardian select the path that best meets the needs of the student.
3. The LEA maintains a detailed documentation of this process.
4. The LEA requests the approval of their school board/governing council.

5. The LEA submits documentation to the PED. Refer to the *CTE/WBL Core Credit Guidance Manual* for instructions on submitting documentation.

## **Core Credit Process**

Must align with student's Next Step Plan.

## **Department-Approved WBL Courses**

To allow for the integration of WBL experiences with core academic credits, the criteria outlined below must be met. Additionally, this integration depends significantly on local district policies and the specific arrangements made between schools, students, and employers. WBL programs must align with New Mexico's Core Content Standards to be eligible for core credit, ensuring that students' work experiences contribute directly to the academic competencies. New Mexico's Core Content Standards can be viewed on the PED website: [NM Core Content Standards – New Mexico Public Education Department](#)

## **General Requirements**

Students must earn credit in the following courses with a passing grade of C or better:

- English: English 1, English 2, and English 3
- Math: Algebra 1 and Geometry **or** Integrated Math 1 and Integrated Math 2
- Science: Two lab sciences

The WBL teacher of record must hold the proper licenses in the core content area.

## **Process**

1. LEA establishes a committee to review the WBL course for core credit in the area of interest: English, math, or science. A core content area teacher in the area of interest must be included in the committee. For:
  - ELA credit, a secondary ELA teacher must be included.
  - Math credit, a secondary math teacher must be included.
  - Science credit, a secondary science teacher must be included.
2. The committee, student, and parent or guardian select the path that best meets the needs of the student.
3. The LEA maintains a detailed documentation of this process.
4. The LEA requests the approval of their school board/governing council.

5. The LEA submits documentation to the PED. Refer to the *CTE/WBL Core Credit Guidance Manual* for instructions on submitting documentation.

## Path Process

Must align to student's Next Step Plan.

- Educational alignment
- Collaboration among stakeholders
- Personalized learning gains
- Documentation and accreditation

## WBL Paths

The committee will choose the path that best meets student needs and will follow the steps outlined below, **a-d**. The plan must align with the student's Next Step Plan and be documented within. [NMAC 22.13-1.1](#)

- a. Educational Alignment:** For WBL to count as core academic credit, the activities involved in the WBL experience must align with the New Mexico Core Content Standards for the relevant subject area. This alignment is critical to ensure that students are not just working but are engaging in tasks that enhance their understanding of academic content.
- b. Collaboration Among Stakeholders:** The development of WBL programs that award core academic credits involves collaboration among WBL coordinators, academic teachers, and employers. This teamwork helps design work tasks that are meaningful from an academic perspective and ensures that the experiences are educational.
- c. Personalized Learning Plans:** Students participating in WBL programs should have personalized learning plans that outline how their work activities will help achieve specific academic and career objectives. These plans are particularly important when the work experience is intended to count towards core academic credits.
- d. Documentation and Accreditation:** Schools are required to maintain detailed documentation of all WBL experiences, especially those counting towards core credits. This includes logs of student activities, assessments, and periodic evaluations by both workplace supervisors and school faculty.

Path 1	Path 2	Path 3
<b>Course Content Standards Crosswalk</b>	<b>Mastery Scores</b>	<b>CTE WBL Capstone Completer Course</b>
Complete the CTE_WBL for Core Credit Application <i>More information will be provided in the CTE/WBL Core Credit Guidance Manual.</i>	Evaluate a student’s performance in WBL placements through a variety of assessments.	Complete an approved CTE three-course sequence including a WBL capstone course. <i>More information will be provided in the CTE/WBL Core Credit Guidance Manual.</i>
Submit the CTE_WBL for Core Credit Application and all supporting documents to the New Mexico Public Education Department <i>More information will be provided in the CTE/WBL Core Credit Guidance Manual.</i>	English and Math <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PSAT 10 &amp; PSAT/NMSQT</li> <li>SAT School Day</li> <li>Work Keys</li> </ul> Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of Science Readiness (ASR)</li> </ul>	A list of approved programs of study is available here: <a href="#">NM CTE Approved Programs of Study PDF</a>

**Examples of Integration into Core Subjects**

- **Mathematics Credits:** A student engaged in an accounting internship could apply their mathematical skills in real-world contexts, potentially earning math credits if the experience aligns with the academic standards for Algebra 1 and Geometry.
- **Science Credits:** Environmental science students working on conservation projects could earn science credits by applying biological and ecological concepts in fieldwork.
- **English Credits:** Students working in communications or media roles where they create and edit written content could earn English credits if their tasks align with NM Core Content Standards.

## Mastery Scores

PSAT 10 & PSAT/NMSQT	SAT School Day	NM-ASR	Work Keys
Reading and Writing 430+	Reading and Writing 480+	Science 1160+	Career Readiness Certificate – Silver NCRC Level
Math 480+	Math 530+		

## Coursework Waivers

The PED requires waivers for any requested change to the prescribed coursework requirements. Graduation coursework waivers are obtained from the [PED Waivers web page](#) and submitted to [Waivers.PED@ped.nm.gov](mailto:Waivers.PED@ped.nm.gov).

## **SECTION 3: ESSA, TITLE I ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

As required by state and federal law, **all high school students must participate in the state and federally required ESSA, Title I summative assessments in grade 11.** The PED actively monitors high school assessment participation rates. The requirements for high school assessment administration are as follows:

### **SAT School Day, Grade 11**

- Qualifying English learners (ELs) may participate in the Standards-Based Assessment (SBA) Spanish Reading in lieu of the SAT School Day Evidence-Based Reading & Writing domain, but will not receive a college reportable score, per College Board policy. ELs may elect to participate in the SAT School Day Evidence-Based Reading & Writing domain in order to have a college reportable score.
- A student with a [\*most significant cognitive disability\*](#) in their IEP will participate in the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) alternate assessment for math and language arts in lieu of SAT School Day.

### **New Mexico Assessment of Science Readiness (NM-ASR), Grade 11**

- A student with a [\*most significant cognitive disability\*](#) in their IEP will participate in the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) alternate assessment for science in lieu of NM-ASR.

### **ACCESS for ELLs, Grades 9–12**

- A student in grades 9–12 identified as an English learner is required to take ACCESS for ELLs—a measure of the student’s progress toward proficiency in the English language. However, if the student has met [\*the ACCESS exit criteria\*](#), they should not be administered the ACCESS in subsequent years.
- An English learner identified as having a [\*most significant cognitive disability\*](#) in their IEP must participate in the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs assessment to measure their progress toward English language proficiency in lieu of ACCESS for ELLs.

Please note that the PED does not require a specific cut score or achievement level on SAT School Day or NM-ASR in order for a student to graduate; however, local school boards can establish minimum achievement level requirements for these assessments as part of local graduation requirements.



## Clarifications for Early Graduates and Grade 12 Students

- For students graduating earlier than the spring grade 11 testing window: Districts and charter schools are responsible for planning testing in advance of this anticipated graduation status (e.g., an early college grade 10 student participating in grade 11 testing). District test coordinators must submit an [Off-Grade Testing Waiver](#) to the PED's [Assessment Bureau](#).
- Districts and charter schools are **required** to administer ACCESS for ELLs for students identified as English learners in grade 12, in accordance with the PED's Test Assignment Guidance, which complies with state and federal requirements.
- Grade 12 students who were absent during their grade 11 spring ESSA Title I assessment are not required to participate in state assessments during their grade 12 year but may choose to do so. District test coordinators must submit an [Off-Grade Testing Waiver](#) to the [Assessment Bureau](#). However, students are eligible to graduate if they decline this opportunity.
- Grade 12 transfer students, within state or from another state, with prior records or evidence of having completed their federally required math, language arts, and science ESSA Title I assessments should **not** be provided an additional testing opportunity in the grade year.
- Students who transfer to a New Mexico school from another country after the spring ESSA Title I assessments in grade 11 are encouraged to participate in testing during their grade 12 year. However, students are eligible to graduate if they decline this opportunity.
- Districts and state charters with unique scenarios not addressed in the above bullets should send an email to [PED.Assessment@ped.nm.gov](mailto:PED.Assessment@ped.nm.gov) with the subject line: Testing Requirements for High School Students.

For questions related to high school student assessment requirements:  
[PED.Assessment@ped.nm.gov](mailto:PED.Assessment@ped.nm.gov)

## **SECTION 4: PROPOSED CHANGES TO GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

The Public Education Department is currently accepting public comments on the proposed amendment to 6.29.1 NMAC, General Provisions, which includes proposed changes to graduation requirements for students with disabilities.

Additional Information: The Public Education Department will conduct a public hearing for the proposed amendment to 6.29.1 NMAC, General Provisions, on Friday, January 10, 2025, from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. (MDT) in Mabry Hall, located in the Jerry Apodaca Education Building, 300 Don Gaspar Ave., Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501. To view the proposed changes, please visit the [Proposed Rules webpage](#).

Interested parties may provide comment at the public hearing or may submit written comments by mail or e-mail. Mailing Address Policy and Legislative Affairs Division New Mexico Public Education Department 300 Don Gaspar Avenue, Room 121 Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501 E-Mail Address Rule.Feedback@ped.nm.gov Written comments must be received no later than 5 p.m. (MDT) on Friday, January 10, 2024. The PED encourages the early submission of written comments.

## **SECTION 5: MORE INFORMATION**

The High School Graduation Requirements document will be housed on the [Graduation Requirements web page](#) along with:

- Graduation Course Requirements and Checklists
- List of Industry Recognized Credentials
- List of Programs of Study by Content Area
- Required Coursework for Programs of Study
- [Graduation Options for Students with Disabilities and Entitlement to FAPE](#)

For more information, please email:

[Grad.Questions@ped.nm.gov](mailto:Grad.Questions@ped.nm.gov) for high school graduation coursework questions.

[OSE.Support@ped.nm.gov](mailto:OSE.Support@ped.nm.gov) for Ability Program of Study questions.

## **RESOURCES**

[NM Career Cluster Guide](#)

[Resource: CTE Approved Programs of Study \(Editable.XLS\)](#)

[Approved Computer Science Courses](#)