

LESC bill analyses are available on the New Mexico Legislature website (www.nmlegis.gov). Bill analyses are prepared by LESC staff for standing education committees of the New Mexico Legislature. LESC does not assume any responsibility for the accuracy of these reports if they are used for other purposes.

LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS
57th Legislature, 1st Session, 2025

Bill Number	<u>HB282</u>	Sponsor	<u>Chávez/Gurrola</u>
Tracking Number	<u>.229343.1</u>	Committee Referrals	<u>HLVMC/HEC</u>
Short Title	<u>Teach Employee Rights in High School</u>		
Analyst	<u>Hicks</u>	Original Date	<u>2/11/2025</u>
		Last Updated	<u></u>

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 282 (HB282) would amend New Mexico's high school graduation requirements for social science to include course content addressing employee rights in the workplace, the Human Rights Act, the Public Employee Bargaining Act, the federal National Labor Relations Act, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), and labor organizations. This proposed revision of the social science graduation requirements would begin with students entering ninth grade in the 2026-2027 school year (SY27).

FISCAL IMPACT

HB282 does not contain an appropriation.

According to the Public Education Department (PED), there would be costs for the department associated with updating content standards to comply with HB282. Public schools would likely also see fiscal impacts related to implementing these new standards.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

State and Federal Law. HB282 would require high school students in New Mexico learn about several state and federal laws prior to graduation.

New Mexico Human Rights Act. Enacted in 1969, [Chapter 28-1 NMSA 1978](#) prohibits discrimination in matters of housing, employment, credit, and public accommodations on the basis of race, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, age, disability, serious medical condition, sexual orientation, gender identity, or spousal affiliation, among other protections. The Human Rights Bureau within the Department of Workforce Solutions is responsible for enforcing the provisions of the Human Rights Act.

New Mexico Public Employee Bargaining Act. [Chapter 10-7E NMSA 1978](#) is the state's Public Employee Bargaining Act. This section of statute affirms the right of public employees in New

Mexico to engage in collective bargaining and creates the [Public Employee Labor Relations Board](#) to govern collective bargaining matters between employee organizations, individuals, and either state or local governments.

National Labor Relations Act. The [National Labor Relations Act \(NLRA\)](#) is considered one of the foundational pieces of modern U.S. labor law. Known informally as the Wagner Act, this 1935 law guarantees the right of private sector workers to unionize, engage in collective bargaining, and undertake collective labor actions such as strikes. The National Labor Relations Board was also created by the NLRA to establish collective bargaining rules and investigate and prosecute unfair labor practices. A subsequent act of Congress, the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act, limited the scope of the NLRA's protections, namely prohibiting specific types of strikes and allowing the creation of state-level right-to-work laws.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. SB282 would also require social science course content to address the [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \(EEOC\)](#). This federal agency, created by the 1964 Civil Rights Act, is tasked with enforcing federal anti-discrimination laws on behalf of job applicants and employees. These laws prohibit discrimination based on race, religion, sex, national origin, age, and disability. Companies with more than 15 employees are typically covered by EEOC laws, as are most labor unions and employment agencies. The EEOC conducts investigations in alleged discrimination and can, if deemed necessary, file lawsuits against the accused organization.

New Mexico Graduation Requirements. [Laws 2024, Chapter 2 \(HB171\)](#) updated New Mexico's graduation requirements for all high school students beginning ninth grade in SY26, as well as for all subsequent cohorts of students. The changes modernized the state's graduation requirements to ensure all students receive a rigorous academic foundation while also allowing requirements to be more responsive to student interests and reflect local contexts. While maintaining the total requirement of 24 units to earn a high school diploma, this law increased unit requirements in core academic subject areas like math, reading, language arts, writing, social studies, and science. Additionally, school districts and charter schools now set two of the required units for graduation at the local level, with approval from their school board or governing council. This law also allows students to take additional career and technical education and work-based learning courses that count toward core academic requirements, creating greater flexibility in how students can satisfy graduation requirements. Demonstration of competency in core subject areas as a requirement for graduation was also eliminated. PED is currently preparing for these new graduation requirements to take effect in SY26.

HB282 does not appear to increase required units to be earned in social sciences, which is currently four units, but does amend the expected course content that would be part of an already required unit on government, economics, and personal financial literacy.

Current PED Content Standards. Current PED [social studies standards](#) do not specifically require instruction on the state and federal laws included in SB282, nor do they specifically mention the EEOC. According to PED, the existing content standards broadly address the concepts of human rights, labor unions, civil rights, and the New Deal, as well as specific coverage of several collective actions carried out by labor organizations.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

According to PED, the department would need to revise the graduation manual outlining the proposed graduation requirements for New Mexico public school students.

Public schools in New Mexico would likely need to provide training to teachers to implement the new course content requirements.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

National Context. In 2023, California Governor Gavin Newsom signed [Assembly Bill 800](#) into law. This legislation declared the week including April 28 each year “Workplace Readiness Week” in the state and directed all public high schools to observe the week by teaching students about their rights as workers as part of their regular coursework in grades 11 and 12. Topics to be covered include worker safety, wage and hour protections, workers’ compensation, unemployment insurance, the right to unionize, and the role of the labor movement in securing these rights.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESC Files
- Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS)
- New Mexico Workers’ Compensation Administration (WCA)
- New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR)
- Public Education Department (PED)
- New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (NMSBVI)

CLH/mam/mca/jkh