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**Rule Citation:** NMAC 6.29.1 General Provisions

## Overview of Update to Proposed Rule

**Agency:** Public Education Department

**Rulemaking Action:** Update to Amendment

**Date of Notice:** December 10, 2024

**Public Comment Period:** December 10, 2024, to January 10, 2025

## Summary of Proposed Amendment to NMAC 6.29.1: General Provisions

The Public Education Department's (PED) amendment to NMAC 6.29.1 is primarily intended to align rule language with two pieces of legislation passed during the 2024 legislative session: [Laws 2024, Chapter 2 \(House Bill 171\)](#) and [Laws 2024, Chapter 43 \(Senate Bill 137\)](#). These acts updated high school graduation requirements and established new mandatory training requirements for school boards and charter school governing bodies, respectively. In addition, this proposed amendment revises diploma options for students receiving special education services.

### Graduation Requirements

Laws 2024, Chapter 2, directs the PED secretary to develop guidance to support school districts and charter schools in developing graduate profiles, helping to inform the creation of students' Next Step Plans for their path after high school. Districts and charter schools would be required to use a department-approved template for Next Step Plans. The proposed rule adds definitions for graduate profiles, Next Step Plans, interim Next Step Plans, and final Next Step Plans. These definitions align with those set out in Laws 2024, Chapter 2. To reflect statutory changes made through Laws 2024, Chapter 2, the proposed rule would allow academic units earned in health, algebra I, and geometry prior to high school to satisfy unit requirements for high school graduation.

Revisions proposed in this rule update also strike language regarding demonstrations of competency, which are no longer required following the enactment of Laws 2024, Chapter 2. Prior to the enactment of this legislation, earning a high school diploma in New Mexico required two components: completion of required course units *and* demonstrating competency in core subjects like math, reading, language arts, writing, social studies, and science. With passage of Laws 2024, Chapter 2, students may now earn a high school diploma solely through completion of required units as specified in state law. This removal of demonstration of competency applies to all students, including those with disabilities. Under previous law, PED had created through rule three programs of study (standard, modified, and ability) to provide options for students with disabilities to meet statutory requirements to both earn units and demonstrate competency to graduate high school. The language proposed in this rule appears to be responsive to these statutory changes.

### School Board Training Requirements

The proposed rule would clarify that school board trainings must be provided by either PED, the New Mexico School Boards Association (NMSBA), or other department-approved providers. The current rule language only mentions NMSBA as the provider of school board trainings. The

proposed rule increases mandatory training for newly-elected or appointed local school board and charter school governing body members to 10 hours, up from the previously required five hours. The rule also specifies subject areas to be covered in these trainings. For returning school board members, the proposed language requires five hours of training on an annual basis under the proposed language.

The proposed rule, in alignment with statute, also requires school boards and charter school governing bodies to broadcast live audio and video of official meetings and allow for both written and verbal public comment. Retention policies for recordings are also set.

Additional changes to the rule separate out requirements for local school boards and charter school governing bodies, rather than addressing both governance models with a single section of rule. The requirements in terms of training hours and general training topics are the same for both governance structures.

### **Special Education Diploma Options**

Proposed changes to special education diploma options include eliminating state assessment requirements and classifying the ability program option as a state-defined alternate diploma. The department also proposes language clarifying the individualized education program (IEP) team as the sole decision maker in whether a student has the most significant cognitive disabilities before the student can be placed into the ability program of study.

In an update published on December 10, 2024, the department proposed additional language to clarify a student's eligibility for the modified and ability programs of study. Under the proposed language, only students with disabilities who begin the ninth grade prior to the 2025-2026 school year (SY26) would be eligible for enrollment in the modified program of study. If a student who begins ninth grade before SY26 does not meet the definition of most significant cognitive disability and is enrolled in the ability program of study, they must be moved to either the modified or standard program of study within the first 20 days of SY26.

### **Standards-Based Assessments**

The proposed rule also amends existing language requiring students' participation in standards-based assessments. Current language requires participation in the state's system of assessments in grades three through 12. The proposed change extends this requirement to encompass kindergarten through grade 12. New Mexico's [current](#) system of required assessments includes screening tests in kindergarten through second grade for dyslexia, gifted, English learner status, and IStation Indicators of Progress for reading and math, among others. Current language in rule does not reflect their inclusion in the system of assessments. It appears PED may be updating this to reflect the state's broader system of assessments.

## **Impact**

This proposed rule would ensure department guidance is reflective of statutory changes made during the 2024 session. Anticipated impacts to the operations of PED are expected to be limited.

Changes to graduation requirements will not be enforced by the department until SY26. However, the mandate for schools and districts to use department-approved templates for Next Step Plans

will likely require process changes at the local school district and charter school level ahead of SY26.

The revisions proposed to address graduation requirements are likely not the only changes needed to bring rule and other department guidance in alignment with statute, as graduation requirements are addressed in multiple sections throughout administrative code. For example, Next Step Plans are also addressed in administrative code relating to apprenticeships, dual credit, and career and technical education. These references may require updating to align with this proposed rule.

Language establishing ability program option diplomas as state-defined alternate diplomas should allow for reports to the federal government to more adequately capture how many students with disabilities graduate with either a regular or alternate diploma. Currently, all high school diplomas issued in New Mexico are reported to the federal government as regular diplomas. Additionally, the December 10, 2024, update to the proposed rule phases out the modified program of study beginning in SY26, leaving students with two program options: standard and ability, with enrollment in either program being determined by the student's IEP team. With the removal of demonstrations of competency as a requirement for high school graduation for New Mexico students, the proposed rule appears to be an effort by PED to streamline the programs of study available to students receiving special education services. Should the modified program be phased out under the proposed rule, students would then be enrolled in the standard program of study unless they are determined by their IEP team to have the most significant cognitive disabilities, in which case they may be enrolled in the ability program.

The proposed rule also clarifies school board trainings other than those provided by NMSBA are acceptable to satisfy the training requirements, subject to approval by the department. This could expand the training options available to boards and governing bodies to comply with the rule.

Finally, the proposed amendment to which grades are required to participate in standards-based assessments appears to be an effort to bring departmental guidance into alignment with the full scheme of the state's system of required assessments.

**TITLE 6            PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**  
**CHAPTER 29       STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE**  
**PART 1            GENERAL PROVISIONS**

**6.29.1.1            ISSUING AGENCY:** Public Education Department hereinafter referred to as the department.  
[6.29.1.1 NMAC - Rp, 6.30.2.1 NMAC, 6/30/2009]

**6.29.1.2            SCOPE:** All public schools, state educational institutions and educational programs conducted in state institutions other than New Mexico military institute.  
[6.29.1.2 NMAC - Rp, 6.30.2.2 NMAC, 6/30/2009]

**6.29.1.3            STATUTORY AUTHORITY:** This rule is being promulgated pursuant to Sections 9-24-8, 22-2-1, 22-2-2, 22-2-2.1, 22-2C-3, 22-2C-4, 22-5-13, 22-13-1.1, and 22-13-14 NMSA 1978.  
[6.29.1.3 NMAC - Rp, 6.30.2.3 NMAC, 6/30/2009; A, 12/15/2020; A, 7/31/2023; A, 1/28/2025]

**6.29.1.4            DURATION:** Permanent.  
[6.29.1.4 NMAC - Rp, 6.30.2.4 NMAC, 6/30/2009]

**6.29.1.5            EFFECTIVE DATE:** June 30, 2009, unless a later date is cited at the end of a section.  
[6.29.1.5 NMAC - Rp, 6.30.2.5 NMAC, 6/30/2009]

**6.29.1.6            OBJECTIVE:** This rule provides for the implementation of educational standards and expectations for all students who attend public schools in the state.  
[6.29.1.6 NMAC - Rp, 6.30.2.6 NMAC, 6/30/2009; A, 12/15/2020]

**6.29.1.7            DEFINITIONS:**

**A.            “Accreditation”** means the official recognition that a school or school district meets required standards. Schools are accredited by voluntary regional accrediting associations or by state government. Accreditation also refers to the process of certifying that institutions of higher education meet certain standards in relation to such matters as the qualifications of their faculty, the condition of their facilities, and the appropriateness of their curriculum.

**B.            “Advanced placement (AP)”** means a course taught by high school teachers trained in advanced placement course delivery provided through the college board. These courses are more difficult and involve more work than a standard class. AP courses are considered college-level courses and may allow a student to earn college credit, depending on college or university policies.

**C.            “Bilingual multicultural education”** means a program of instruction using two languages, including English and the home or heritage language, as a medium of instruction in the teaching and learning process.

**D.            “Career and technical education”** means organized programs offering a sequence of courses, including technical education and applied technology education, which are directly related to the preparation of individuals for paid or unpaid employment in current or emerging occupations requiring an industry-recognized credential, certificate, or degree. [~~This phrase is also referred to as “vocational education” at Section 22-14-1 NMSA 1978.~~]

**E.            “Career cluster”** means a grouping of occupations in industry sectors based on recognized commonalities. Career clusters provide an organizing tool for developing instruction within the educational system.

**F.            “Career pathways”** means a sub-grouping used as an organizing tool for curriculum design and instruction of occupations or career specialties that share a set of common knowledge and skills for career success.

**G.            “Caseload”** means the total number of students receiving special education and speech-only services as special education, for whom a special education teacher or speech language pathologist has responsibility for developing and monitoring the students' IEPs. “Caseload” may also mean the number of students for which individual support services staff members are responsible.

**H.            “Certified district reviewer”** means an LEA employee who is certified to review and approve an LEA's NM School DASH plans.

**I.            “Chartering authority”** means a local school board or the commission that approves and oversees a charter school.

**J.** “**Class load**” means the number of students for whom a teacher structures activities at a given time.

**K.** “**Commission**” means the public education commission.

**L.** “**Content standard**” means a statement about performance that describes what students should know and be able to do in content areas at each grade level.

**M.** “**Correspondence course**” means a form of distance learning conducted via traditional mail. A correspondence course is used to teach non-resident students by mailing them lessons and exercises, which upon completion, are returned to the correspondence school for grading.

**N.** “**Distance learning**” means the technology and the educational process used to provide instruction for credit or for a grade when the course provider and the distance learning student are not physically present at the same time or place. Distance learning does not include educational software that utilizes only on site teaching.

**[N] Q.** “**Dual credit program**” means a program that allows high school students to enroll in college-level courses offered by a post-secondary educational institution that may be academic or career-technical but not be remedial or developmental, and simultaneously to earn credit toward high school graduation and a post-secondary degree or certificate.

**[O] P.** “**Education plan**” is the strategic plan written by all school districts, locally chartered and state-chartered charter schools to improve student performance.

**[P] Q.** “**English language learner**” means a student whose first or heritage language is not English and who is unable to read, write, speak, or understand English at a level comparable to grade-level English proficient peers and native English speakers.

**R.** “**English language proficiency assessment (ELPA)**” means an assessment administered only to identified English learners that measures students’ progress towards English language proficiency that is aligned to the state’s English language development standards.

**[Q] —** “**Free appropriate public education (FAPE)**” means special education and related services that are provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction without charge, which meet the standards of the department in providing appropriate preschool, elementary or secondary education in New Mexico; and which are provided in conformity with an individualized education program (IEP) that meets the requirements of 34 CFR Sections 300.320 through 300.324.]

**[R] S.** “**Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**” means rights, pursuant to 20 U.S. Code 1232(g) and 34 CFR Part 99, afforded to parents and students over 18 years of age with respect to the student's education records, that include: the right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days, the right to request amendment to the student's education records for various reasons, the right to consent or refuse to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information in the student's records (except for those records that FERPA authorizes for disclosure without consent) and the right to file a complaint with the U.S. department of education concerning non-compliance with FERPA.

**T.** “**Final next-step plan**” means a next-step plan that shows that the student has committed or intends to commit in the near future to a four-year college or university, a two-year college, a trade or vocational program, an internship or apprenticeship, military service or a job.

**U.** “**Free appropriate public education (FAPE)**” means special education and related services that are provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction without charge, which meet the standards of the department in providing appropriate preschool, elementary, or secondary education in New Mexico; and which are provided in conformity with an individualized education program (IEP) that meets the requirements of 34 CFR Sections 300.320 through 300.324

**V.** “**Graduate profile**” means a document that a school district or charter school creates and uses to specify the cognitive, personal, and interpersonal competencies that students should have when they graduate. The core academic competencies and subjects identified in a school district’s or charter school’s graduate profile shall align with required graduation units.

**[S] W.** “**Heritage language**” means a language other than English that is inherited from a family, tribe, community, or country of origin.

**[F] X.** “**Home language**” means a language other than English that is the primary or heritage language spoken at home or in the community.

**[U] Y.** “**Individualized education program (IEP)**” means a written statement for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with 34 CFR Secs. 300.320 through 300.324.

~~[V]~~ **Z.** **“Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA)”** means the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, 20 U.S. Code Secs. 1401 et seq., including future amendments.

**AA.** **“Interim next-step plan”** means an annual next-step plan in which the student specifies post-high-school goals and sets forth the coursework that will allow the student to achieve those goals.

~~[W]~~ **AB.** **“Laboratory component”** means an experience in the laboratory, classroom or the field that provides students with opportunities to interact directly with natural phenomena or with data collected by others using tools, materials, data collection techniques and models. Throughout the process, students should have opportunities to design investigations, engage in scientific reasoning, manipulate equipment, record data, analyze results, and discuss their findings.

~~[X]~~ **AC.** **“Local educational agency (LEA)”** means a local educational agency as defined in 34 CFR Sec. 300.28. The LEA may be a public school district, a state-chartered charter school, or a state educational institution.

~~[Y]~~ **AD.** **“MLSS Self-assessment”** means analysis of MLSS implementation that each school shall submit in a form and by a due date determined by the department. The MLSS Self-assessment shall contribute to a school’s NM School DASH, but it shall not be a component in the evaluation of a school by the department.

~~[Z]~~ **AE.** **“Multi-layered system of supports (MLSS)”** means a coordinated and comprehensive framework that uses increasingly intensive evidence-based academic and behavioral supports that address student needs as evidenced by student data. It is a model for holistic school improvement that provides progress measures for additional supports such as school-based team structures, professional development, health and wellness, and family and community engagement. MLSS satisfies the definition of “multi-tiered system of supports” contained within the ESSA.

**AF.** **“Next-Step Plan”** means an annual personal written plan of studies developed by a student in a public school or other state-supported school or institution in consultation with the student's parent and school counselor or other school official charged with coursework planning for the student, which includes one or more of the following:

- ~~(a)~~ advanced placement, international baccalaureate, or honors courses;
- ~~(b)~~ dual-credit courses offered in cooperation with an institution of higher education;
- ~~(c)~~ distance learning courses;
- ~~(d)~~ career technical education or work-based learning courses; and
- ~~(e)~~ pre-apprenticeship programs.

~~[AA]~~ **AG.** **“NM School DASH”** means the strategic plan written by schools to improve student outcomes. It contains the annual plan, both 90-day plans, and functions as a school site improvement plan.

~~[AB]~~ **AH.** **“Performance standard”** means the statement of a standard that describes the specific level of mastery expected in achieving the New Mexico content standards with benchmarks.

~~[AC]~~ **AI.** **“Prior written notice (PWN)”** means the written notice that goes to parents from the school district, informing them the district proposes or refuses to initiate or change the identification, evaluation or educational placement of their child, or the provision of FAPE to the child, and which meets the requirements of 34 CFR Sections 300.503 and 300.504.

~~[AD]~~ **AJ.** **“Short-cycle assessment”** is a formative assessment that is regularly used to assess student performance over a short time period.

~~[AE]~~ **AK.** **“Small group setting”** means a planned intervention group containing no more than 15 students.

~~[AF]~~ **AL.** **“Socioeconomic status”** means the stratification of groups of people by status ascribed through social constructs such as race, gender, ethnicity, educational attainment, economic resources, language, and national origin.

**AM.** **“Standards-based assessments”** means assessments that are aligned to the New Mexico content standards.

~~[AG]~~ **AN.** **“State educational institution”** means a school that is under the direction of a state agency other than the department or a separate board of regents.

~~[AH]~~ **AO.** **“Student assistance team (SAT)”** means a school-based group of people whose purpose is to provide additional educational support to students experiencing difficulties preventing them from benefitting from general education.

~~[AI]~~ **AP.** **“System of assessments”** means the collection of formative, interim, and summative instruments that assess student academic performance annually and the students’ progress toward meeting the New Mexico content standards ~~[with benchmarks and performance standards.]~~

~~[A-J]~~ **AQ.** “Transition plan” means a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability, which specifies special education and related services designed to meet a student's unique needs and to prepare the student for future education, employment, and independent living. The use of individualized educational program (IEP) transition planning, graduation planning and post-secondary transitions is described in Subparagraph (a) of Paragraph (13) of Subsection J of 6.29.1.9 NMAC.  
[6.29.1.7 NMAC - Rp, 6.30.2.7 NMAC, 6/30/2009; A, 10/31/2011; A, 12/15/2020; A, 1/28/2025]

**6.29.1.8 IMPLEMENTATION:** This regulation shall assist in the implementation of standards for excellence through the use of the Education Plan for all school districts and charter schools. At the school site level this regulation shall assist in the implementation of standards for excellence through the use of the NM School DASH, content standards with benchmarks and performance standards, and additional program and procedural requirements specified in this regulation.

**A.** District and charter school responsibilities for the Education Plan and NM School DASH. The Education Plan and NM School DASH are strategic improvement plans that are written or revised based on trend data and the academic achievement of the school and district. Each district and each charter school is required to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate the Education Plan on an annual basis. Additionally, the district shall ensure that a site-level NM School DASH is developed and implemented by each school within the district and by each charter school for which the district is the chartering agency. LEAs shall have each NM School DASH evaluated and approved by a certified district reviewer. State-chartered charter schools shall develop a site-level NM School DASH. Districts with fewer than 200 students may write only one NM School DASH for the entire district; however, a district with a school in or receiving a school improvement status classification is not eligible for this option.

**B.** The Education Plan and NM School DASH shall be guided by questions determined by the department.  
[6.29.1.8 NMAC - Rp, 6.30.2.9 NMAC, 6/30/2009; A, 10/31/2011; A, 12/15/2020]

**6.29.1.9 PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS:** Local school board members shall attend a department training course that explains department rules, policies and procedures, statutory powers and duties of local school boards, legal concepts pertaining to public schools, finance and budget and other matters deemed relevant by the department.

**A.** Duties and powers of the local school board [~~of education or charter school governing body~~]. The local school board [~~of education or charter school governing body~~] shall:

(1) review, approve, and support each school site-level department-approved NM School DASH and *MLSS Self-assessment* for each school site in improvement status;

(2) employ and evaluate the local superintendent [~~or charter school administrator~~];

(3) develop a planned program of training annually, in which each member of the board participates, to assist in the performance of specified duties; this planned program shall align with the LEA’s Education Plan; training shall include the following requirements and procedures.

(a) All local school board members shall receive [~~a total of five hours of annual~~] training provided by the department, the New Mexico school boards association (NMSBA), or other department-approved providers, and shall include a minimum of one hour of training during each term in office on equity and culturally and linguistically responsive practices.

(b) [~~Newly elected or appointed local school board members, who are in office for less than a year, shall receive three of the five hours from attending a training course developed by the department and sponsored by the NMSBA. The additional two hours of annual training for new board members shall consist of sessions sponsored by the NMSBA and approved by the department.~~] Elected or appointed school board members in their first term shall complete at least ten hours of mandatory training during their first year serving on the board. Training for new local school board members shall include:

(i) at least two hours covering laws and department policies and procedures affecting local school boards or public schools, including ethics and school personnel;

(ii) at least two hours covering public school finance, budgeting, and fiduciary responsibilities of local school boards;

(iii) at least two hours covering legal concepts pertaining to local school boards and school districts, including the Open Meetings Act and the Inspection of Public Records Act;

(iv) at least two hours covering effective governance practices and effective methods of supporting and supervising the local superintendent; and

(v) at least two hours covering student achievement and student support services.

(c) [All local school board members who have been in office for one or more years shall attend five hours of annual training sponsored by the NMSBA and approved by the department.] Mandatory training for all other local school board members shall include at least five hours per year and shall cover:

(i) laws and department policies and procedures affecting local school boards or public schools, including ethics and school personnel;

(ii) public school finance, budgeting, and fiduciary responsibilities of local school boards and performance-based budgeting;

(iii) a local school board's role in evaluating and improving student academic achievement and using data to set individual school goals for student academic achievement in each of the school district's public schools;

(iv) a local school board's role in providing a safe learning environment conducive to improving student outcomes;

(v) legal concepts pertaining to local school boards and school districts, including the Open Meetings Act and the Inspection of Public Records Act;

(vi) effective governance practices and effective methods of supporting and supervising the local superintendent; and

(vii) other matters deemed relevant by the department.

(d) [In order to] To be credited with attendance at these courses, each attendee shall comply with written attendance procedures established by the department. Prior to [September] January 1 of each year, the NMSBA shall provide each local superintendent with a list of training hours earned annually by each local school board member. The school district's accountability report shall include [the names of those local school board members who failed to attend annual mandatory training] the number of hours of training attended by local school board members and whether each member met statutory training requirements (see Subsection E of Section 22-2C-11 NMSA 1978);

(4) delegate administrative and supervisory functions to the local superintendent [or charter school administrator];

(5) refrain from involvement in delegated administrative functions;

(6) review district [or charter school] policies on an annual basis and revise as needed;

(7) award high school graduation diplomas to students who have successfully completed graduation requirements;

(8) ensure the alignment of district [or charter school] curricula with New Mexico content standards with benchmarks and performance standards;

(9) ensure that district [or charter school] funds are appropriately managed and disbursed in accordance with laws, regulations and terms of grants;

(10) approve the annual district [or charter school] budget;

(11) be responsible for oversight of revenue and expenditures within the district [or charter school budget]; and

(12) coordinate with the district's superintendent to establish the procedures for discharging and terminating school employees pursuant to the School Personnel Act (Chapter 22, Article 10-A NMSA 1978).

(13) broadcast, through the school district's website, live audio and video webcasts of local school board meetings and make available a user interface that allows members of the public to submit written or verbal comments. A webcast shall:

(a) begin as soon as practicable after the chair has called the meeting to order;

(b) terminate as soon as practicable after the local school board has adjourned;

(c) be recorded and posted, along with an electronic copy of any minutes approved at the meeting, on the school district's website within one week of the meeting's conclusion; and

(d) be publicly available for at least three years following the date of the meeting unless the state records retention schedule, as established in 1.21.2 NMAC, provides otherwise.

**B.** Duties and powers of the governing body of a charter school. In addition to the powers and duties set out in Section 22-5-4 NMSA 1978 and Section 22-1-1 et seq. NMSA 1978 of the Public School Code, the governing body of a charter school shall:



- (1) review, approve and support the district's department-approved improvement plan and each school site-level *MLSS Self-assessment* and department approved improvement plan, or the charter school's department approved improvement plan;
- (2) employ and evaluate the charter school administrator;
- (3) develop a planned program of training annually, in which each member of the governing body participates, to assist in the performance of specified duties; this planned program shall align with all requirements of statute and any other department regulations; training shall include the following requirements and procedures.
  - (a) Governing body members in their first term shall complete at least ten hours of mandatory training during their first year serving on the governing body. Training for new members shall include:
    - (i) at least two hours covering laws and department policies and procedures affecting governing bodies or charter schools, including ethics and school personnel;
    - (ii) at least two hours covering public school finance, budgeting, and fiduciary responsibilities of governing bodies;
    - (iii) at least two hours covering legal concepts pertaining to governing bodies and charter schools, including the Open Meetings Act and the Inspection of Public Records Act;
    - (iv) at least two hours covering effective governance practices and effective methods of supporting and supervising a charter school leader; and
    - (v) at least two hours covering student achievement and student support services.
  - (b) Mandatory training for all other governing body members shall include at least five hours per year and shall cover:
    - (i) laws and department policies and procedures affecting governing bodies or charter schools, including ethics and school personnel;
    - (ii) public school finance, budgeting and fiduciary responsibilities of governing bodies, and performance-based budgeting;
    - (iii) a governing body's role in evaluating and improving student academic achievement and using data to set individual school goals for student academic achievement in charter schools;
    - (iv) a governing body's role in providing a safe learning environment conducive to improving student outcomes;
    - (v) legal concepts pertaining to governing bodies and charter schools, including the Open Meetings Act and the Inspection of Public Records Act;
    - (vi) effective governance practices and effective methods of supporting and supervising charter school leaders; and
    - (vii) other matters deemed relevant by the department.
- (4) delegate administrative and supervisory functions to the local superintendent or charter school administrator;
- (5) refrain from involvement in delegated administrative functions;
- (6) review ~~[district or]~~ charter school policies on an annual basis and revise as needed;
- (7) award high school graduation diplomas to students who have successfully completed graduation requirements;
- (8) ensure the alignment of ~~[district or]~~ charter school curricula with New Mexico content standards with benchmarks and performance standards;
- (9) ensure that ~~[district or]~~ charter school funds are appropriately managed and disbursed in accordance with laws, regulations and terms of grants;
- (10) approve the annual ~~[district or]~~ charter school budget;
- (11) be responsible for oversight of revenue and expenditures within the ~~[district or]~~ charter school budget; and
- (12) coordinate with the ~~[district's superintendent]~~ charter school's administrator to establish the procedures for discharging and terminating school employees pursuant to the School Personnel Act (Chapter 22, Article 10-A NMSA 1978).
- (13) broadcast, through the charter school's website, live audio and video webcasts of governing body meetings and make available a user interface that allows members of the public to submit written or verbal comments. A webcast shall:
  - (a) begin as soon as practicable after the chair has called the meeting to order;
  - (b) terminate as soon as practicable after the governing body has adjourned;

(c) be recorded and posted, along with an electronic copy of any minutes approved at the meeting, on the charter school's website within one week of the meeting's conclusion; and

(d) be publicly available for at least three years following the date of the meeting unless the state records retention schedule, as established in 1.21.2 NMAC, provides otherwise.

C. Duties and powers of the district superintendent or the administrator of a charter school. In addition to the powers and duties set out in Section 22-5-14 NMSA 1978 of the Public School Code, the local superintendent (or charter school administrator, where relevant) shall:

(1) administer local board's (or governing body of a charter school's) policies, state and federal requirements and applicable laws, including the Public School Code;

(2) be accountable for student achievement; budget management; expenditure of funds; dissemination of information; district or charter school communications; development, implementation and evaluation of the Education Plan and all other district or charter school business;

(3) review, approve and support the district Education Plan and each school site-level *MLSS Self-assessment* and NM School DASH or the charter school's *MLSS Self-assessment* and NM School DASH;

(4) attend all local board or governing body of a charter school's meetings or, when necessary, designate a licensed administrator to attend;

(5) ensure that school patrons and the public are informed and involved in the acquisition, planning and development of school facilities and that students are provided with adequate facilities which conform to state and federal mandates;

(6) be accountable for student safety (see 6.12.6 NMAC - *School District Wellness Policy*):

(a) ensure that all students are supervised while on school property and while attending or traveling to school events or activities on school-provided transportation;

(b) ensure that all buildings, grounds and facilities provide a safe and orderly environment for public use (see Subsection P of 6.29.1.9 NMAC - *School Facilities and Grounds*; Paragraph (8) of Subsection D of 6.12.6.8 NMAC - *School District Wellness Policy* and 6.19.3 NMAC - *Unsafe School Choice Option*);

(7) administer and implement the district's or charter school's approved staff accountability plan and procedures;

(8) ensure that a process is in place to identify, train, assign and support the use of unlicensed content-area experts as resources in classrooms, team teaching, online instruction, curriculum development and other purposes as determined by the superintendent, which shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

(a) establish the specific expertise of the person;

(b) obtain a background check and fingerprint records;

(c) provide the person with a three-hour training, prior to entering a classroom, about how the school operates, appropriate teaching methods and expectations of principal and assigned teacher;

(d) establish a start date and ending date for the person;

(e) ensure that the person is under the direct supervision of the teacher assigned when students are present; and

(f) provide for an evaluation of services upon completion of the assignment;

(9) shall issue the following notifications in accordance with Section 22-10A-16 NMSA 1978, in addition to any other parental notification requirements contained in the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended; a school district or charter school shall issue these notifications in English and, to the extent possible, in the language of the parent or guardian (if it is known that the parent or guardian's home or heritage language is not English); the district or charter school shall retain a copy of all notifications and shall ensure that information required under this paragraph is available to the public upon request.

(a) Within 60 calendar days from the beginning of each school year, a school district or charter school shall issue a notice to parents informing them that they may obtain written information regarding:

(i) the professional qualifications of their child's teachers, instructional support providers and school principals or charter school administrators;

(ii) other descriptive information, such as whether their teacher has met all qualifications for licensure for the grade level and subjects being taught;

(iii) whether their child's teacher is teaching under a teaching or assignment waiver;

(iv) the teacher's degree major and any other license or graduate degree held by the teacher;

(v) the qualifications of any instructional support providers that serve their child.

(b) When, by the end of a consecutive four-week period, a child is still being taught by a substitute teacher or a teacher not holding the requisite licensure or licensure endorsement, the school district or charter school shall provide written notice to the parent or guardian that the child is being taught by a substitute teacher or a teacher not holding the requisite licensure or licensure endorsement.

(c) No class may be taught by a substitute teacher, in lieu of a licensed teacher under contract, for more than 45 school days during a school year.

(d) The secretary shall consider deviations from the requirements of Subparagraph (c) of Paragraph (9) of Subsection C of 6.29.1.9 NMAC when a written request by a local superintendent or charter school administrator is submitted. The request shall include:

(i) the size of the school district;  
(ii) the geographic location of the district;  
(iii) demonstrated efforts to employ an appropriately licensed person in the area(s) of need;

(iv) the historical use of substitutes in the district; and  
(v) an estimation of the number of days that a substitute will be utilized that exceed the 45 day limit.

**D. Licensed staff and administrators.**

(1) The licensed staff shall exercise duties specified in law and those assigned by the local district or charter school.

(2) As required by state and federal law, all licensed staff and administrators shall be evaluated on an annual basis.

(3) The detection and reporting of child abuse or neglect is required by both the Children's Code (Section 32A-4-3 NMSA 1978) and the Public School Code (Section 22-5-4.2 NMSA 1978). Abuse of a child under the Children's Code refers to the physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse of a child by a parent, guardian or custodian. According to the Children's Code, failure to report abuse or neglect of a child is a misdemeanor. The terms "abuse" and "neglect" are defined in detail in Section 32A-4-2 NMSA 1978 of the Children's Code. There is also the crime of child abuse, which consists of anyone who knowingly, intentionally, negligently or without cause, causes or permits a child to be placed in a situation of endangerment to the child's life or health, torturing or cruelly confining a child, or exposing a child to the inclemency of weather. To address the detection and reporting of child abuse or neglect in public schools:

(a) school districts and charter schools shall adopt written policies that establish a process for the coordination and internal tracking of child abuse or neglect reports made by district personnel;

(b) school districts and charter schools shall include in their policies a requirement that all personnel shall immediately report suspected child abuse or neglect to either a law enforcement agency, the New Mexico children, youth and families department, or a tribal law enforcement or social services agency for any Indian child residing on tribal land;

(c) school districts and charter schools shall not require their personnel to first report to or notify designated school personnel or go through their chain of command before making the mandatory report described in Subparagraph (a) of Paragraph (3) of Subsection D of 6.29.1.9 NMAC;

(d) no school district or charter school shall adopt a policy that relieves any personnel of their duty to report suspected child abuse or neglect;

(e) school personnel detecting suspected child abuse or neglect, including the suspected crime of child abuse, shall immediately - i.e., the same day - report their observations to one of the offices designated in Subparagraph (b) of Paragraph (3) of Subsection D of 6.29.1.9 NMAC;

(f) all licensed school personnel, including substitute teachers, educational assistants, school nurses, school counselors, school psychologists and other instructional service providers shall complete training provided by the department in the detection and reporting of child abuse or neglect, within their first year of employment by, or providing services to, a school district or charter school;

(g) all persons who have never received training required under Subparagraph (f) of Paragraph (3) of Subsection D of 6.29.1.9 NMAC shall make arrangements to receive training before the end of their current school year;

(h) the department shall develop a training program to detect child abuse or neglect, in coordination with the New Mexico human services department and the New Mexico department of health. This

program shall be made available to all colleges, school districts and charter schools in the state offering teacher preparation courses;

(i) nothing in Paragraph (3) of Subsection D of 6.29.1.9 NMAC shall be interpreted as preventing a school district or charter school from developing and providing its own training for all staff to detect and report suspected child abuse or neglect, in addition to the training offered by the department.

E. Student intervention system. The school and school district shall follow the multi-layered system of supports (MLSS), which is a three-layer model of student intervention as a proactive system for early intervention for students who demonstrate a need for educational support for learning or behavior or for students who demonstrate a need for advanced instruction. All students shall have access to layer-1, -2, and -3 interventions without a need to convene a SAT team or a referral to special education or related services. At any layer, a parent may request initial evaluation to determine whether a student is a child with a disability requiring special education and related service, in accordance with 6.31.2.10 NMAC. There are no additional documentation requirements under the MLSS outside of what is already required for education professionals.

(1) In layer 1, the school and school district shall ensure that adequate universal screening in the areas of general health and well-being, language proficiency status, and academic levels of proficiency has been completed for each student enrolled. If data from universal screening and progress monitoring suggests that a particular student is in need of additional behavioral and academic supports, then teacher teams shall make a determination on whether or not the student would benefit from layer-2 interventions. Teacher teams, when making a determination for moving a student up or down a layer may consult with non-teacher staff such as counselors, paraprofessionals, administrators, and ancillary personnel to inform the teacher team on how to plan and implement relevant learner interventions in the general education environment.

(2) In layer 2, a properly constituted teacher team shall conduct the student study process and consider, implement, and document the effectiveness of appropriate evidence-based interventions utilizing curriculum-based measures. As part of this process, the teacher team shall address culture and acculturation, socioeconomic status, possible lack of appropriate instruction in reading or math, teaching and learning styles and instructional delivery mechanisms in order to rule out other possible causes of the student's educational difficulties.

(3) In layer 3, students are provided with intensive academic and behavioral supports that are progress-monitored on a bi-weekly basis. At the end of each progress monitoring cycle, the teacher team shall evaluate the efficacy of the supports provided using all available data. At that time, the teacher team may decide whether to continue with the current support, change the intensity, or nature of support. If progress monitoring data suggests that the learner has benefited from provided layer-3 supports and does not show concern for regression, then the teacher team may decide to move the student out of receiving layer-3 supports.

(4) All students shall have access to the MLSS layers of screening and support. Nothing in this section prevents a school district from evaluating a student during the provision of any layer of MLSS to determine whether the student is a child with a disability requiring special education and related services. A parent may request an initial special education evaluation at any time during the public agency's implementation of MLSS, and a school or school district may determine a referral to special education is necessary at any time during the implementation of MLSS if the student is suspected of having a disability. If a school district rejects a request for initial special education evaluation, the parent may use the IDEA procedural safeguards in 34 CFR Secs. 300.506 through 5007 to dispute the rejection of the request to evaluate.

(5) The department's manual, *Multi-layered System of Supports*, shall be the guiding document for schools and districts to use in implementing the student intervention system.

(6) Schools shall complete the *MLSS Self-assessment* annually.

(7) Schools shall include a report on intervention systems in NM School DASH.

(8) Schools shall provide time embedded within the regular school schedule for all students to access targeted and intensive learner interventions or advanced instruction described as follows:

(a) in small group settings;

(b) aligned with New Mexico standard; and

(c) not to exceed twenty-five percent of instructional hours.

(9) Student placement in embedded intervention or advanced instruction shall be reviewed each quarter and students shall be moved in or out of embedded intervention or advanced instruction based on quantitative and qualitative MLSS data.

(10) Embedded intervention or advanced instruction time shall be provided to students without forgoing instruction in art, music, theater, dance, computer science, physical education, library, or other enrichment or experiential learning activities or courses.

(11) Equitable access. Students in any layer shall have access to grade-appropriate, standards-aligned instruction seventy-five percent or more of their instructional hours unless instructional time is allocated differently in an IEP of a student receiving special education or gifted education services.

**F. Records and reports.**

(1) Each district and charter school shall maintain and treat all personally identifiable educational records in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the implementing regulations set forth at 34 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 99 and Inspection of Public Records Act, Sections 14-2-1 through 14-2-12 NMSA 1978.

(2) All records shall be safe from fire and theft and stored in a retrievable manner. All student records, including disciplinary and grading records, shall be retained and disposed of pursuant to 1.20.2 NMAC.

(3) Transcripts and copies of pertinent records of students transferring from one school to another, including disciplinary records with respect to suspension and expulsion, shall be forwarded promptly upon written request by the receiving school.

(4) Local school boards and governing bodies of charter schools shall establish policies providing for inspection of education records by students and parents.

~~(5) After the administration of the high school system of assessments, school districts and charter schools are required to record test results on each student's official transcript. The information recorded shall include the following:~~

~~\_\_\_\_\_ (a) district and high school administering the examination;~~

~~\_\_\_\_\_ (b) date of examination administration;~~

~~\_\_\_\_\_ (c) results of the examination for each subject area tested; and~~

~~\_\_\_\_\_ (d) reports of the results in a format and language that is understandable to parents.]~~

**G. Organization of grade levels and establishing/closing schools.** Any change in a school district or charter school's organizational pattern, including the establishment or closing of a school, shall have the secretary's approval prior to implementation. Requests for change shall be submitted using the department's *organization of grade levels and establishing/closing school waiver request form*. This form shall include: name of superintendent; district/school; mailing address; phone; fax; email address; name of a secondary contact person including the same information; date of submission; local board policy requirement and approval, if required; date of board approval; statement of applicable district or charter school policy and rationale for request. The waiver request shall outline the expected educational benefits.

**H. Class loads.** Class loads shall be in compliance with the most current class load requirements in Section 22-10A-20 NMSA 1978 and Section 22-5-15 NMSA 1978.

(1) The individual class load for elementary school teachers shall not exceed 20 students for kindergarten, provided that any teacher in kindergarten with a class load of 15 to 20 students shall be entitled to the assistance of an educational assistant.

(2) The average class load for elementary school teachers at an individual school shall not exceed 22 students when averaged among grades one, two and three, provided that any teacher in grade one with a class load of 21 or more shall be entitled to the full-time assistance of an educational assistant.

(3) The average class load for an elementary school teacher at an individual school shall not exceed 24 students when averaged among grades four, five and six.

(4) The daily teaching load per teacher for grades seven through 12 shall not exceed 160 students, except the daily teaching load for teachers of required English courses in grades seven and eight shall not exceed 135, with a maximum of 27 students per class; and the daily teaching load for teachers of required English courses in grades nine through 12 shall not exceed 150 students, with a maximum of 30 students per class. The teaching load for teachers assigned to laboratories and shops shall adhere to the current workplace safety codes of the industry.

(5) Students receiving special education services integrated into a regular classroom for any part of the day shall be counted in the calculation of class load averages. Students receiving special education services not integrated into the regular classroom shall not be counted in the calculation of class load averages. Only classroom teachers charged with responsibility for the regular classroom instructional program shall be counted in determining average class loads. In elementary schools offering only one grade level, average class loads may be calculated by averaging appropriate grade levels between schools in the school district.

(6) The secretary may waive the individual school class load requirements established in this section. Waivers shall be applied for annually, and a waiver shall not be granted for more than two consecutive years. Requests for class load waivers shall be submitted using the department's *class size waiver request form*.

This form shall include: name of superintendent; district/school; mailing address; phone; fax; email address; name of a secondary contact person including the same information; date of submission; local board policy requirement and approval, if required; date of board approval; statement of applicable district or charter school policy and rationale for request. Waivers may only be granted if a school district or charter school demonstrates:

- (a) no portable classrooms are available;
- (b) no other available sources of funding exist to meet the need for additional classrooms;
- (c) the district or charter school is planning alternatives to increase building capacity for implementation within one year; and
- (d) the parents of all children affected by the waiver have been notified in writing of the statutory class load requirements; that the school district or charter school has made a decision to deviate from these class load requirements; and of the school district's or charter school's plan to achieve compliance with the class load requirements.

(7) If a waiver is granted pursuant to Paragraph (6) of Subsection H of 6.29.1.9 NMAC to an individual school, the average class load for elementary school teachers at that school shall not exceed 20 students in kindergarten and grade one, and shall not exceed 25 students when averaged among grades two, three, four, five and six.

(8) Each school district or charter school shall report to the department the size and composition of classes subsequent to the 40th day report and the December 1 count. Failure to meet class load requirements within two years shall be justification for the disapproval of the school district's or charter school's budget by the secretary.

(9) The department shall report to the legislative education study committee by November 30 of each year regarding each school district's or charter school's ability to meet class load requirements imposed by law.

(10) Notwithstanding the provisions of Paragraph (6) of Subsection H of 6.29.1.9 NMAC, the secretary may waive the individual class load and teaching load requirements established in this section upon demonstration of a viable alternative curricular plan and a finding by the department that the plan is in the best interest of the school district or charter school; and that, on an annual basis, the plan has been presented to and is supported by the affected teaching staff. The department shall evaluate the impact of each alternative curricular plan annually. Annual reports shall be made to the legislative education study committee. Requests for alternative curricular plans shall be submitted using the department's *collaborative school improvement programs waiver request form*. This form shall include: name of superintendent; district/school; mailing address; phone; fax; email address; name of a secondary contact person including the same information; date of submission; local board policy requirement and approval, if required; date of board approval; statement of applicable district or charter school policy and rationale for request.

**I. Student/staff caseloads in gifted and special education.**

(1) The student/staff caseload shall not exceed 35:1 for a special education teacher and 60:1 for a speech-language pathologist for special education services or speech-only services, in which properly licensed special education teachers or speech-language pathologists travel from class to class or school to school, providing services to students with disabilities whose individualized education programs (IEPs) require a minimal amount of special education. (A minimal amount of special education services shall not exceed ten percent of the school day/week.)

(2) The student/staff caseload shall not exceed 24:1 for a special education teacher and 35:1 for a speech-language pathologist for special education services or speech-only services which properly licensed special education teachers or speech-language pathologists provide to students with disabilities whose IEPs require a moderate amount of special education. (A moderate amount of special education services shall be less than fifty percent of the school day.)

(3) The student/staff caseload shall not exceed 15:1 for special education services in which properly licensed special education teachers provide services to students with disabilities whose IEPs require an extensive amount of special education for a portion of the school day as appropriate to implement the plan. (An extensive amount of special education services shall be provided fifty percent or more of the school day.)

(4) The student/staff caseload shall not exceed 8:1 for special education services in which a properly licensed professional provides services to students with disabilities whose IEPs require a maximum amount of special education. (A maximum amount of special education services shall be provided in an amount approaching a full school day.)

(5) The student/adult caseload shall not exceed 4:1 for center-based special education services in which one of the adults in the program is a properly licensed professional providing three- and four-year old children with the amount of special education needed to implement each child's IEP.

(6) The student/adult caseload shall not exceed 2:1 for center-based special education services in which three- and four-year old children have profound educational needs.

(7) Adequate student/staff caseloads shall be provided to appropriately address needs identified in the IEPs. Paraprofessionals and assistants who are appropriately trained and supervised in accordance with applicable department licensure rules or written department policy may be used to assist in the provision of special education and related services to students with disabilities under Part B of IDEA.

(8) If the student/staff caseload ratio exceeds the standards provided above, a request for waiver shall be submitted to the department for review and approval by the secretary.

**J. Graduation requirements.**

(1) ~~[The New Mexico high school system of assessments.]~~ The district or charter school shall ~~[be in compliance]~~ comply with requirements as specified in Section 22-13-1.1 NMSA 1978 and Subsection L of Section 66-7-506 NMSA 1978 (offering driver education, service learning and financial literacy as electives). The department specifies that students shall meet all graduation requirements to be eligible to receive a diploma. ~~[This includes the requirement of passing the high school system of assessments.]~~

(2) The next step plan. Each student shall complete a next step plan for each high school year. The plan shall be aligned to the graduate profile of the student's school district or charter school and shall be completed on a department-approved template. For students with individualized education programs (IEPs), the transition plan substitutes for the next step plan. The next step plan requires that:

(a) each grade-level next step plan shall be completed within the last 60 school days of the preceding school year (for example, the 9th grade interim next step plan shall be made before the end of the 8th grade year);

(b) only one grade-level next step plan shall be completed for a student each year;

(c) the development of the next step plan shall include the student, the student's parent or guardian and the advisor, but may include additional relevant parties;

(d) ~~[to write the next step plan,]~~ the advisor shall ~~[consult]~~ collaborate with the student and the student's parent or guardian on academic choices that target the student's interests and meet graduation requirements;

(e) the next step plan shall address career clusters in career and technical education, academic support and study skills, extracurricular experiences and out-of-school activities, exposure to post-secondary education and career options, family and social supports, assessments, credentials and any other relevant information; as part of the next step plan, the advisor shall disseminate and share information concerning advanced placement, honors, dual-credit and distance learning programs;

(f) the next step plan determines whether or not the student is on track with graduation requirements; the plan ensures that gaps in courses and test-taking are filled;

(g) the next step plan may be made in large-group, small-group or individual student settings;

(h) the advisor has the responsibility to see that the student is reasonably informed about curricular and course options, opportunities available that lead to broader post-high school options, and alternative opportunities available if the student does not finish a planned curriculum;

(i) the next step plan shall be signed by the student, the student's parent or guardian and the advisor;

(j) the completed next step plan shall be filed with the school principal or charter school administrator and only the final next step plan shall be filed in the student's cumulative file upon graduation;

~~[(k) during the development of the student's next step plan for the eleventh grade, a plan allowing the student to complete a fourth mathematics course other than algebra 2 may be developed using data from the student's high school short cycle assessments, the student's most recent system of assessments score in mathematics, other relevant assessment scores and coursework grades and educational career plans recorded in the student's next step plan;~~

~~[(l) for the student to take four mathematics courses that contain a lesser content than that recommended for inclusion in algebra 2 or its equivalent, the student's parent shall provide written, signed permission on the student's next step plan; parental signature on the next step plan for the eleventh grade indicating the mathematics courses the student will take shall serve as the required signed permission.]~~

**(3)** Transfer of credits. For students enrolling or re-enrolling in public schools, local school boards or governing bodies of charter schools will establish policies as follows.

**(a)** Credits shall be transferable with no loss of value between schools that are accredited by a state board of education in the United States, United States territories, Puerto Rico, the freely associated states and outlying areas of the United States, department of defense schools or other authorized body.

**(b)** Policies of the local school board or the governing body of a charter school, for students transferring from home schools, private schools, or foreign schools to the public schools, will be in accordance with Subsection D of Section 22-1-4 NMSA 1978.

**(c)** Acceptance of credits earned through correspondence extension study, foreign study, home study courses or non-department accredited, non-public schools is determined by the policy of the local school board or the governing body of a charter school.

**(4)** Correspondence courses. For students currently enrolled in public schools, local school boards or governing bodies of charter schools will establish policies addressing the use of correspondence courses to meet graduation requirements.

**(a)** Policies should be based on the following circumstances:

**(i)** when road conditions or distance from access to school transportation prohibit regular daily attendance;

**(ii)** when a student cannot attend school due to prolonged illness or recovery from injury, as part of the individual plan to address the student's educational needs developed in accordance with applicable state and federal regulations governing the education of students with disabilities;

**(iii)** when the occupation of the parent or student requires prolonged periods of time away from the school district;

**(iv)** when a student is housed in a long-term residential facility; or

**(v)** to enhance or supplement graduation requirements based on a student's individual need(s).

**(b)** Schools counting credit for correspondence courses for enrolled students shall ensure that such courses are part of the student's individual plan for graduation. If applicable, such courses are part of the IEP developed in accordance with applicable state and federal regulations governing the education of students with disabilities, and schools shall ensure that assistance is available to students as needed to complete the correspondence courses.

**(c)** Correspondence courses used to provide graduation credit to currently enrolled students shall be provided by:

**(i)** a school accredited by the state board of education of the state in which the school is located, or

**(ii)** a college or university with regional accreditation to perform such function.

**(5)** Dual credit program. "Dual credit program" means a program that allows high school students to enroll in college-level courses offered by public post-secondary educational institutions that may be academic or career-technical in nature, but may not be remedial or developmental, and through which students can simultaneously earn credit toward high school graduation and a post-secondary degree or certificate. (Refer to 6.30.7.6 NMAC.)

**(6)** Distance learning courses. [~~"Distance learning" means the technology and the educational process used to provide instruction for credit or for a grade when the course provider and the distance-learning student are not necessarily physically present at the same time or place. Distance learning does not include educational software that utilizes only on-site teaching.~~] Any program involving distance learning shall be governed by the department's distance learning rule, found at 6.30.8 NMAC.

**(7)** Standardized grading system. A standardized grading system is required to be implemented by each district and charter school. The system shall include the following components:

~~[(a) a written report to parents regarding the performance of their children tested with the New Mexico standards-based assessments;]~~

~~[(b)]~~ **(a)** for grades 3-12, a standardized alphabetic grading system, based on the 4.0 scale (i.e., a minimum of 4.0 or higher=A, 3.0=B, 2.0=C, 1.0=D); certain courses may be assigned a weighted score according to local policy;

~~[(c)]~~ **(b)** alignment of all district and school curriculum to the New Mexico content standards with benchmarks and performance standards; and



~~(d)~~ (c) all school report cards ~~[shall include the results of standards-based assessments and]~~ may augment the standardized grading system with a narrative or other method that measures a student's academic, social, behavioral or other skills.

(8) Final examination. A final examination shall be administered to all students in all courses offered for credit.

(9) Credit. Credit cannot be earned twice for the same course.

(10) Other elective credit. Elective credit courses shall meet all New Mexico content standards with benchmarks and performance standards, and shall:

- (a) include a written, sequential curriculum;
- (b) be taught by an instructor who is appropriately licensed and endorsed to teach the course;
- (c) include a final examination; and
- (d) be reviewed and approved by the local board of education or governing body of a charter school.

(11) Alternative credit. Local districts, charter schools or state educational institutions may design elective courses, known as alternative credit courses, to satisfy any of the specified credits required for graduation.

- (a) The process includes:
  - (i) review of the licensure and endorsements of affected staff;
  - (ii) review of required course content standards with benchmarks and performance standards with the proposed elective course, and summary of alignment between the two courses;
  - (iii) determination of the amount of credit that will be generated;
  - (iv) publication of information regarding what course is available for alternative credit and identification of course number;
  - (v) inclusion of the availability of alternative credit in all next-step plans;
  - (vi) note on the student transcript that the graduation requirement course was completed using the named alternative credit course;
  - (vii) review and preliminary approval by the local board of education or governing body of a charter school.

(b) Once the process has been completed, the district superintendent or administrator of a charter school or state educational institution shall submit a written request, with appropriate documentation, to the secretary for approval.

(12) Excuses from physical education. The physical education graduation requirement may be waived by the secretary, based upon a request by the local superintendent or charter school administrator with documentation from a licensed medical doctor, osteopath, certified nurse practitioner with prescriptive authority or chiropractor, that the student has a permanent or chronic condition that does not permit physical activity. Such requests shall be submitted using the department's *physical education waiver request form*. This form shall include: name of superintendent; district/school; mailing address; phone; fax; email address; name of a secondary contact person including the same information; date of submission; local board policy requirement and approval, if required; date of board approval; statement of applicable district or charter school policy and, for each student for whom the waiver is requested: name, school and year of student graduation, district affirmation that it possesses required medical documentation, name and email address of school principal and rationale for the request. A student receiving special education supports and services pursuant to the IDEA or Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act may also be eligible to request this waiver, when appropriate medical documentation is provided in the IEP.

(13) Graduation requirements for issuance of a conditional certificate of transition or a diploma for students with an IEP. The development of a program of study and the granting of a diploma, or use of a conditional certificate of transition in the form of a continuing or transition individualized educational program (IEP) for students receiving special education services, includes the following governing principles:

(a) The IEP team is responsible for determining whether the student has completed a planned program of study based on the student's strengths, interests, preferences, identified educational and functional needs and long-term educational or occupational goals, making the student eligible to receive either a diploma or a conditional certificate of transition. A conditional certificate of transition allows the student to participate in graduation activities. If a student receives a conditional certificate of transition, the student shall then return to the program specified in the IEP to complete the student's secondary program and meet the requirements for a diploma. Receipt of a conditional certificate of transition shall not end a student's right to FAPE. In addition, all IEPs shall provide a description of how the student's progress toward meeting annual goals and graduation

requirements will be measured, and at what intervals progress will be reported to parents or guardians. A student shall be awarded a diploma upon completion of a planned program of study that meets the requirements of Paragraph (b).

**(b)** A student may be awarded a diploma (Section 22-13-1.1 NMSA 1978) ~~[through the]~~ in accordance with the requirements of the following programs of study described in Items (i) through ~~[(iii)]~~ (iv). All IEP team discussion points and decisions identified herein, including the identification of the student's program of study and any student or parent proposals accepted or rejected by the IEP team (if the student has not reached the age of majority), shall be documented on the student's IEP and in the prior written notice (PWN) of proposed action.

**(i)** A standard program of study is based upon meeting or exceeding all requirements for graduation based on the New Mexico standards for excellence (Subsection J of 6.29.1.9 NMAC) with or without reasonable accommodations of delivery and assessment methods, ~~[In addition, a student shall pass all sections of the current state graduation examination(s) administered pursuant to Subsection I of Section 22-13-1.1 NMSA 1978 under standard administration or with state approved accommodations and shall meet]~~ as well as all other standard graduation requirements of the district or charter school. A diploma obtained through the standard program of study is considered a "regular high school diploma" as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 300.102(a)(3)(iv). Pursuant to 34 C.F.R. § 300.102(a)(3)(i), students with disabilities who graduate from high school with a regular diploma through the standard program of study are no longer entitled to FAPE or continued receipt of special education and related services.

**(ii)** A modified program of study is developed to provide relevance and is based on a student's career interest as it relates to one of the career clusters, with or without reasonable accommodations of delivery and assessment methods. In addition, a student shall take the current state standards-based assessments required for high school students, under standard administration or with state-approved accommodations as determined by the [SEA] department. ~~[Once the student has attempted the state required high school assessments, the student shall achieve a level of competency pre-determined by the student's IEP team on the current state approved demonstration of competency options for graduation.]~~ The student shall earn at least the minimum number of credits required by the district or charter school for graduation through standard or alternative courses that address the employability and career development standards with benchmarks and performance standards, as determined by the IEP team. Course work shall include a minimum of four units of career development opportunities and learning experiences that may include any of the following: career readiness and vocational course work, work experience, community-based instruction, student service learning, job shadowing, mentoring or entrepreneurship related to the student's occupational choices. Credits for work experience shall be related to the program of study that the school offers and specific to the district's ability to offer work experience or community-based instruction credits. The student shall achieve competency in all areas of the employability and career development standards with benchmarks and performance standards, as determined by the IEP team and the student's interest as it relates to the career clusters. The program of study shall address the New Mexico content standards with benchmarks and performance standards in other subject areas as appropriate. A diploma obtained through the modified program of study is not considered a "regular high school diploma" as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 300.102(a)(3)(iv). Pursuant to 34 C.F.R. § 300.102(a)(3)(ii), a student's right to FAPE does not end upon obtaining an alternative diploma through the modified program of study and a student may continue to receive special education and related services until student either meets the requirements to obtain a diploma through the standard program of study or until the end of the academic year in which the student becomes 22 years of age.

**(iii)** An ability program of study ~~[was developed for students who have a significant cognitive disability or severe mental health issues.]~~ is for students with disabilities who are determined to have the most significant cognitive disabilities as the term is defined by the department. A student's IEP team has the sole discretion to determine that a student has the most significant cognitive disabilities before placing the student on the ability program of study. The IEP goals and functional curriculum course work shall be based on the New Mexico alternate standards with benchmarks and performance standards ~~[and employability and career development standards with benchmarks and performance standards]~~. Students in this program of study shall earn the minimum number of credits ~~[or be provided equivalent educational opportunities required by the district or charter school,]~~ aligned with state requirements for a diploma obtained through the standard program of study with course work individualized to meet the unique needs of the student through support of the IEP. In addition, a student on the ability program of study shall take ~~[either the current state standards-based assessments required for high school students, under standard administration or with state approved accommodations, or]~~ the state-approved alternate assessment. ~~[Once the student has participated in the state required high school assessments, the student shall achieve a level of competency pre-determined by the student's IEP team on the current state approved~~

~~demonstration of competency options for graduation and meet all other graduation requirements established by the IEP team.] A diploma obtained through the ability program of study is not considered a “regular high school diploma” as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 300.102(a)(3)(iv), but it is considered a state-defined alternate diploma for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities as defined in 20 U.S.C. § 7801(25)(A)(ii)(I)(bb). Pursuant to 34 C.F.R. § 300.102(a)(3)(ii), a student’s right to FAPE does not end upon obtaining a diploma through the ability program of study and a student may continue to receive special education and related services until student either meets the requirements to obtain a diploma through the standard program of study or until the end of the academic year in which the student becomes 22 years of age.~~

(iv) The modified program of study shall only be available to students with disabilities that began the ninth grade before the 2025-2026 school year. Students with disabilities entering the ninth grade in or after the 2025-2026 school year may not be placed on the modified program of study. Students with disabilities that began the ninth grade before the 2025-2026 school year currently assigned to the ability program of study that do not meet the definition of a student with the most significant cognitive disability must be moved to the modified or standard program of study within the first 20 days of the start of the 2025-2026 school year. The appropriate program of study shall be determined by the student’s IEP team.

(c) Students receiving a diploma through any of the programs of study are permitted to participate in all graduation activities.

(d) Any special education student who obtains a diploma through the modified or ability programs of study may choose to exit high school after receiving the diploma but continues to have an entitlement to FAPE. A student may elect to resume their high school education at the school district or charter school that they are attending when they receive the diploma or at their school district of residence until student either meets the requirements to obtain a diploma through the standard program of study or until the end of the academic year in which the student becomes 22 years of age.

(e) By the end of the eighth grade, each student's IEP shall contain a proposed individual program of study for grades nine through 12. The program of study shall identify by name all course options the student may take and shall align with the student's long-range measurable post-secondary goals and transition services to facilitate a smooth transition to high school and beyond. This program of study shall be reviewed on an annual basis and adjusted to address the student's strengths, interests, preferences and areas of identified educational and functional needs. The IEP team shall document on the IEP the student's progress toward earning required graduation credits ~~[and passing the current graduation examination].~~

(f) A district or charter school shall provide each student, who has an IEP and who graduates or reaches the maximum age for special education services, a summary of the student's academic achievement and functional performance, which shall include recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting post-secondary goals.

~~(g) Students graduating on the standard program of study shall meet the state's minimum requirements on all sections of the graduation examination. IEP teams shall document a plan of action on the IEP and the PWN to be carried out by both the student and the district or charter school, to ensure that the student will pass all sections of the graduation examination.~~

~~(h) To establish a level of proficiency on the current graduation examination or the state approved alternate assessment for students on a modified program of study or ability program of study, IEP teams shall review the student's performance on the first attempt and establish a targeted proficiency on all sections that are below the state's minimum requirement. For those students who meet participation criteria for the New Mexico alternate assessment, IEP teams shall set targeted levels of proficiency based upon previous performance on the test. If the student has previously been administered the New Mexico alternate assessment and has achieved an advanced level of overall performance, the IEP team shall arrange for the student to participate in the general graduation examination and shall identify appropriate accommodations that the student may require. IEP teams shall document the targeted levels of proficiency on the IEP and the PWN, outlining the plan of action to be taken by both the student and the district or charter school to ensure that the student will meet the targeted levels of proficiency. Districts or charter schools may submit a written request for a waiver to the secretary in cases where a student has medical or mental health issues that may result in regression or that negatively influence the student's ability to achieve targeted levels of proficiency. The written request shall be signed by the superintendent or charter school administrator and shall include documentation of the medical or mental health issues.]~~

~~(i)~~ (g) Changes in programs of study.

(i) Departures from the standard program of study for students receiving special education services and supports shall be considered in the order of the options listed in Subparagraph (b) of Paragraph (13) of Subsection J of 6.29.1.9 NMAC. ~~[Any modified program of study may depart from a standard~~

~~program of study only so far as is necessary to meet an individual student's educational needs as determined by the IEP team.]~~ Districts and charter schools are obligated to meet the requirements of IDEA to provide students with IEPs on any one of the three programs of study, and access to the general curriculum in the least restrictive environment. When an alternative program of study is developed, a building administrator or designee who has knowledge about the student shall be a member of the IEP team.

(ii) Districts and charter schools shall document changes from the standard program of study on the PWN. IEP teams shall identify the reasons for changing the student's program of study, shall provide parents with clear concise explanations of the modified or ability programs of study, shall notify parents and students of the potential consequences that may delay or otherwise affect the student from completing the requirements for a regular high school diploma and limit the student's post-secondary options ~~[-and-]~~. The IEP team shall make required changes to the IEP and course of study, to ensure that the student meets the requirements of that program of study.

(iii) The IEP team shall not change the program of study for a student entering the final year of high school (not the cohort with which the student entered high school) from the standard program of study to the modified program of study, nor from the modified program of study to the ability program of study, after the 20th school day of the final year of high school. IEP teams may change a student's program of study from the ability program of study to the modified program of study, or from the modified program of study to the standard program of study, if the student meets the graduation requirements of that program of study and if the change is made and documented appropriately in a revised IEP and PWN by a properly constituted IEP team in a properly convened meeting.

~~[(j)]~~ (h) A student who receives special education services may be granted a conditional certificate of transition in the form of a continuing or transition IEP when:

(i) the IEP team provides sufficient documentation and justification that the issuance of a conditional certificate of transition for an individual student is warranted;

(ii) prior to the student's projected graduation date, the IEP team provides a PWN stating that the student will receive a conditional certificate of transition;

(iii) the district or charter school ensures that a conditional certificate of transition is not a program of study leading to a diploma and does not end the student's right to a FAPE;

(iv) the district or charter school ensures that a conditional certificate of transition entitles a student who has attended four years or more of high school to participate in graduation activities, and requires that the student continue receiving special education supports and services needed to obtain the high school diploma;

(v) the district or charter school ensures that, prior to receiving a conditional certificate of transition, the ~~[student has a continuing or transition IEP]~~ student's IEP has been reviewed and revised to include measures, resources, and specific responsibilities for both the student and the district or charter school to ensure that the student receives a diploma through an appropriate program of study for the student.

~~[(vi)]~~ ~~the student's continuing or transition IEP outlines measures, resources, and specific responsibilities for both the student and the district or charter school to ensure that the student receives a diploma.]~~

~~[(k)]~~ (i) A student who receives a certificate of ~~transition but does not return to complete the program of study as outlined in the [continuing or transition]~~ IEP will not be considered a dropout.

~~[(4)]~~ (j) A student who receives a conditional certificate of transition is eligible to continue receiving special education services until receipt of a diploma or until the end of the academic year in which the student becomes 22 years of age.

~~[(m)]~~ (k) Graduation plans shall be a part of all IEPs:

(i) by the end of eighth grade, or by the time the student turns 14 years of age, and concurrent with the development of the student's transition plan in accordance with federal regulations at 34 CFR 300.320;

(ii) when a student returns to a school after an extended absence, and if an IEP program of study may have been developed but needs to be reviewed; or

(iii) when evaluations warrant the need for a different program of study at any time after development of an initial graduation plan.

~~[(n)]~~ (l) Graduation plans shall be a part of all of all IEPs and annual reviews and shall follow the student in all educational settings. Receiving institutions that fall under the department's jurisdiction will recognize these graduation plans, subject to revision by new IEP teams, if appropriate to meet a student's changing needs.

~~[(p)]~~ **(m)** At the exit IEP meeting, the team shall review the student's transition plan, and shall confirm and document that all state and district requirements for graduation under the final IEP have been satisfied. A building administrator who has knowledge about the student shall be a member of this team, and shall sign specifically to verify and accept completed graduation plans, goals and objectives pursuant to (i) – ~~[(iii)]~~ **(iv)** of Subparagraph (b) of Paragraph (13) of Subsection J of 6.29.1.9 NMAC, or plans for a conditional certificate of transition ~~[with a continuing or transition IEP]~~, pursuant to Subparagraph (i) of Paragraph (13) of Subsection J of 6.29.1.9 NMAC. The IEP team shall ensure that the student has current and relevant evaluations, reports, or other documentation necessary to support a smooth and effective transition to post-secondary services for a student who will graduate on one of the three programs of study. The school shall arrange for any necessary information to be provided at no cost to the students or parents. The school shall submit a list of students who will receive the diploma through a modified or ability program of study to the local superintendent or charter school administrator, using the students' identification numbers. This list shall be totaled and submitted to the local school board or governing body of a charter school. This information shall be treated as confidential ~~[in accordance with]~~ to the extent required by FERPA.

~~[(p)]~~ **(n)** Students eligible for special education services are entitled to a FAPE through age 21. If a student turns 22 during the school year, the student shall be allowed to complete the school year. If a student becomes 22 prior to the first day of the school year, the student is no longer eligible to receive special education services.

~~[(q)]~~ **(o)** All diplomas awarded by a school district or charter school shall be identical in appearance and content, except that symbols or notations may be added to individual students' diplomas to reflect official school honors or awards earned by students.

~~[(14) — Future changes in graduation requirements. Refer to 6.29.1.13 NMAC.]~~

**K.** Statewide accountability program.

**(1)** Educational accountability. The local board of education or charter school governing body and the district superintendent or charter school administrator are responsible for providing educational services that support student learning. Educational accountability has two mechanisms and three indicators which impact the approval of the district's budget and accreditation status. The accountability mechanisms are accreditation and the program/budget review process. These two mechanisms shall align directly with the district or charter school's Education Plan. The indicators are community representation, local accountability indicators and statewide accountability indicators.

**(2)** Accountability mechanisms.

**(a)** Accreditation. Accreditation will be conducted in accordance with Subsection F of Section 22-2-2 NMSA 1978 and 6.19.4 NMAC. Verification of the district or charter school's Education Plan and student progress will occur on a regular basis. State and federal regulations which fall within the scope of accreditation will also be monitored.

**(b)** Program/budget review and approval. The program/budget review and approval process, including assessment and evaluation, occurs annually. Its purpose is to link the district or charter school's program needs directly with budgetary resources. In order for a district or charter school to obtain an approved budget, the district shall:

**(i)** document the local board or charter school governing body's determination of needs as defined in its Education Plan (Section 22-8-18 NMSA 1978);

**(ii)** document minimum budget requirements (Section 22-8-9 NMSA 1978);

**(iii)** document parent involvement in budget preparation (Section 22-8-11 NMSA 1978);

**(iv)** complete the annual program/budget questionnaire; and

**(v)** comply with requirements specified in Section 22-8-5 NMSA 1978.

**(3)** Accountability indicators.

**(a)** Community representation. Community representatives shall be involved in the budget preparation process, the Education Plan process, the NM School DASH process, Education Plan evaluation (including the establishment of local student performance indicators) and the accreditation process. Community representatives include parents, students and other community members who reflect the composition of the student population. Evidence shall be provided to verify different forms of representation.

**(b)** Local student performance indicators. Local student performance indicators shall:

(i) be identified by the local school district or charter school in conjunction with students, parents, community members and businesses;

(ii) be part of the local Education Plan evaluation;

(iii) measure and demonstrate student progress toward the New Mexico content standards with benchmarks and performance standards;

(iv) demonstrate student progress toward identified NM School DASH process goals and desired outcomes;

(v) be included as an integral part of the accreditation and program/budget review processes; and

(vi) use any other indicators the district or charter school shall choose for its students.

(c) Statewide student performance indicators. Statewide student performance indicators shall:

(i) be included as an integral part of the accreditation and program/budget review processes;

(ii) be part of the local Education Plan evaluation and NM School DASH monitoring;

(iii) measure and demonstrate student progress toward the New Mexico content standards with benchmarks and performance standards;

(iv) communicate clearly to parents and the general public the students' progress toward meeting the goals established by the district and school, or charter school; and

(v) describe performance levels across the grade levels and across the curriculum.

**L.** Statewide student assessment system. As stated in Section 22-2-8.13 NMSA 1978, students' knowledge and skills are assessed and evaluated through the New Mexico content standards with benchmarks and performance standards, the system of assessments, and local measures.

(1) The statewide student assessment system. All public-school students, with the exceptions indicated below, shall participate in the system of assessments, which includes standards-based assessments in ~~[3 through]~~ kindergarten through grade 8 and high school.

(2) Exceptions. ~~[Exceptions include special provisions and requirements for the assessment of English language learners and students with IEPs.]~~

(a) English language learners. Students who have limited English language skills (i.e., students who are “English language learners”) as determined by the department-approved English language proficiency screening assessment shall participate in the statewide assessment program. The following considerations specify how assessment shall be conducted.

(i) Length of enrollment in U.S. schools. The options for participation of English language learners in the New Mexico standards-based assessment program depend on the length of time that the student has been enrolled in U.S. public schools. For students who are new to U.S. schools, the following applies: Students who are enrolled for the first year in a U.S. school may receive an exemption from the system of assessments for English language arts, including all subtests therein but shall participate in the state’s English language proficiency assessment (ELPA), administered only to English learners. In all other content areas of the system of assessments, the student shall participate in the Spanish-language version of the assessment (if available and appropriate) or in the English-language version with accommodations provided, if they are determined to be appropriate by the local school’s team, as described in (iii) of Subparagraph (a) of Paragraph (2) of Subsection L of 6.29.1.9 NMAC. For the subtests other than reading, the test completion status shall be student tested all sessions, and the types of accommodations that are provided, if any, shall be indicated in the student information system. Students who have been in U.S. schools for at least 12 months and less than three consecutive years shall participate in the statewide assessment program in one of three ways: the student may participate in the standard administration of the English-language version of the assessment without accommodations; the student may participate in the English-language version of the assessment with appropriate accommodations; or the student may participate in the standard administration of the Spanish-language version of the assessment, where available and appropriate.

(ii) Waivers for home language assessment. Students who have been in U.S. schools for three or more consecutive years shall participate in the English-language version of the assessment with or without allowable accommodations unless a request based on the determination of the local education agency to continue the testing of the student in the home language of Spanish and the request is approved by the ~~[secretary]~~ department. If, after three consecutive years in U.S. schools, the district or charter school determines (on

a case-by-case basis) that academic assessments in the student's home language of Spanish would yield more accurate and reliable information about the student's knowledge of a subject, the district or charter school may request a waiver from the ~~[secretary]~~ department to continue to assess the student in the home language of Spanish. Approved waivers are effective for the current year only; annual waiver requests may be approved for a maximum of two years. The waiver request shall be submitted to the ~~[secretary]~~ department for approval at least three months before the assessment, by the district's superintendent or the charter school administrator. The request shall include: student name, student state identification number, school in which the student is currently enrolled, student's grade level, student's most recent department-approved English language proficiency, assessment date and overall composite score, length of enrollment in U.S. schools, an indication of whether this is the first or second waiver request for the student, the reason or justification for the waiver request, and names of the school team members involved in the decision to request the waiver.

**(iii)** Accommodations. Districts and charter schools shall provide accommodations to English language learners after consideration of their appropriateness for the individual student. To determine the appropriateness of allowing accommodations, the district or charter school shall consider the student's level of proficiency in all domains of language (listening, speaking, reading, writing and comprehension) and the nature of the school's instructional program. The district or charter school shall ensure that students do not receive accommodations without current justification supported by data. District and school staff may obtain the technical assistance on procedures for accommodations from the department's district test coordinator's manual or from the department. Each school shall utilize a team to review individual student progress in order to determine accommodations. For students being served on an individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan, those teams (IEP or Section 504) will respectively determine appropriate test accommodations. For all other students, the school may use its student assistance team (SAT) or form another school-based team for this purpose, but the team shall be comprised of at least three school staff, including staff who are familiar with the student's abilities and language needs, standardized test procedures and valid ELL test accommodations. Team members may include: the student's bilingual multicultural education- or TESOL-endorsed teacher, the bilingual multicultural education program coordinator, the student's other teacher(s), administrators or school test coordinators, or the school counselor. The student's parent or guardian, the student and other staff members may be also included, as appropriate. The team shall base its decisions about appropriate accommodations on the following: annual review of the student's progress in attaining English proficiency, student's current English language proficiency, including the student's experience and time in U. S. schools, student's expected date for exiting English language learner accommodations, student's familiarity with the accommodation under consideration, the primary language of instruction used in the content area to be assessed and the length of time that the student has received instruction in that language, and the student's grade level. Written documentation of accommodation decisions made by the team shall be stored in the student's cumulative file and shall be reported to the department's bureau of assessment and evaluation.

**(b)** Students with IEPs. Students with IEPs who receive special education and related services shall participate in all statewide and district-wide assessments of student achievement or in state-approved alternate assessments if the students have been identified as having a most significant cognitive disability as documented in the IEP. Pursuant to Subsection E of 6.31.2.11 NMAC, 34 CFR 300.320 (a)(2)(ii) and 34 CFR 300.320(a)(6), the IEPs for such students shall specify which assessments each student will participate in and what, if any, accommodations or modifications in administration are needed to enable the student to participate. The IEPs for students who will not participate in a particular statewide or district-wide assessment shall meet state-approved criteria, methods and instruments.

~~**(c)** Waiver of the high school system of assessments (graduation requirement assessment).~~

~~**(i)** With the approval of the local board of education or charter school governing body, the local superintendent or charter school administrator may request written approval from the secretary to award a diploma to a student who has not passed the high school system of assessments. The district or charter school shall document student attainment of required competencies through an alternative assessment procedure and shall submit such a request using the department's *high school system of assessments waiver request form*. This form shall include: name of superintendent; district/school; mailing address; phone; fax; email address; name of a secondary contact person including the same information; date of submission; statement of applicable district or charter school policy, list of students for whom the waiver request is being made including: student name, school, date of board approval, and statement of whether or not competencies are documented through an alternative assessment; and rationale for request.~~

~~(ii) With appropriate documentation, a passing score on another state's graduation requirement assessment shall substitute for the high school system of assessments.]~~

**M. Indigent identification and guidelines.**

(1) A student who has been deemed eligible for free or reduced-price school meals, or a student who has been identified by the children, youth and families department as being in the custody of the state, shall be deemed indigent for the purposes of remediation programs and damage of instructional materials, as discussed in Sections 22-2C-6 and 22-15-10 NMSA 1978.

(2) A parent or guardian of a student who has not applied for free or reduced-price school meals shall be notified in writing by the local school board or governing body of a charter school of the availability of remediation at no charge upon an eligibility determination for free or reduced-price school meals.

**N. Emergency drills and practiced evacuations.**

(1) Emergency drills shall be conducted in each public school and private school in the state, as follows:

- (a) at least once per week during the first four weeks of the school year;
  - (i) one of these drills shall be a shelter-in-place drill, which includes preparation to respond to an active shooter;
  - (ii) one of these drills shall be an evacuation drill;
  - (iii) two of these drills shall be fire drills;
- (b) during the rest of the school year, each school shall conduct at least four more emergency drills, at least two of which shall be fire drills;
- (c) in locations where a fire department is maintained, a member of the fire department shall be requested to be in attendance during the emergency drills for the purpose of giving instruction and constructive criticism;
- (d) it shall be the responsibility of the person in charge of a school to carry out the provisions related to emergency drills.

(2) Requirements to comply and penalties for non-compliance:

(a) It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent of a school district, a charter school administrator or private school counterpart(s) to ensure that each school under the person's authority follows the requirements set forth in Subsection N of 6.29.1.9 NMAC.

(b) In the event that the person responsible for complying with Subsection N of 6.29.1.9 NMAC fails or refuses to comply with this subsection, the department may, in the case of a public school, take any action designed to ensure prompt corrective action or future compliance, including reporting the non-compliance to either the state fire marshal or to a local fire department. In the case of a private school, the department will report the non-compliance to either the state fire marshal or to a local fire department and may consider adverse licensure action.

(c) Failure or refusal to comply with the requirements in Subsection N of 6.29.1.9 NMAC for holding emergency drills shall constitute grounds to suspend or revoke the license of the person responsible for compliance. The due process procedures under the Uniform Licensing Act (Sections 61-1-1 through 61-1-31 NMSA 1978) shall apply.

**O. School facilities and grounds.** Pursuant to Subsection C of 6.29.1.9 NMAC (*Duties of the Superintendent*); Subsection D of 6.12.6.8 NMAC (*School District Wellness Policy*) [~~and 6.19.3 NMAC (*Unsafe School Choice Option*)~~], each school district or charter school shall ensure that all buildings, facilities and grounds provide a safe and orderly environment for public use; i.e., that they shall be:

- (1) safe, healthy, orderly, clean and in good repair;
- (2) in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act-Part III and state fire marshal regulations, Sections 59A-52-1 through 59A-52-25 NMSA 1978;
- (3) safe for conducting experiments and school projects in all school laboratories and shops, as established in written school safety procedures which are reviewed annually; these procedures include, but are not limited to:

- (a) personal protective equipment;
  - (b) adequate ventilation and electrical circuitry;
  - (c) material safety data sheets;
  - (d) body and eye washes; and
  - (e) training appropriate for each teaching situation;
- (4) the maximum number of occupants in a laboratory or shop teaching space shall be based on the following:



- (a) the number of work stations;
- (b) the building and fire safety codes;
- (c) the design of the laboratory or shop teaching facility;
- (d) appropriate supervision and the special needs of students; and
- (e) all applicable OSHA regulations;

(5) appropriate procedures for the storing, handling and removal of toxic or dangerous substances shall be established and implemented; all school programs (including those areas noted above and custodial areas, art room, library and cafeteria) shall comply with standard safety practices and all applicable state and federal regulations;

(6) use of pesticides by districts and charter schools will be governed by the following standards:

(a) Definitions as used in this section:

(i) "Pesticide" means any substance or mixture of substances intended for preventing, destroying, repelling or mitigating any pest.

(ii) "Pest" means any living organism injurious to other living organisms, except humans, viruses, bacteria or other microorganisms in or on other living organisms other than plants, which is declared to be a pest pursuant to the Pesticide Control Act, Sections 76-4-1 through 76-4-39 NMSA 1978.

(b) Districts and charter schools will develop procedures for the implementation of pest management with consideration for reducing the possible impact of pesticide use on human health and the environment, including people with special sensitivities to pesticides. Procedures will include, but are not limited to, the following:

(i) No pesticide may be applied to public school property and no pest control device, as defined in the New Mexico Pesticide Control Act, may be used on public school property except those pesticides and devices currently registered for legal use in the state by the New Mexico department of agriculture.

(ii) No pesticide may be applied to public school property except by those persons certified in the applicable category and currently licensed by the New Mexico department of agriculture or by employees under their direct supervision.

(iii) Pesticides will only be applied in or on the outside of school buildings when a pest is present and will not be applied on a regular or calendar basis unless it is to treat an infestation and is a part of a pest management system being implemented to address a particular target pest. A pest is considered to be present when it is observed directly or can reasonably be expected to be present based on finding evidence, such as droppings, body parts, or damage that is typically done by the pest. This section of the regulation does not apply to pre-construction termite treatments or the use of outdoor herbicides.

(iv) Pesticides that are applied in a liquid, aerosolized or gaseous form through spraying, aerosol cans, bombs, fumigation or injections into the ground, foundation or plants will not be applied on public school property when students, staff or visitors are present, or may reasonably be expected to be present within 6 hours of the application. In emergency cases, where a pest infestation threatens the health or safety of the occupants of public school property, and which requires the immediate application of a pesticide to remediate, students, staff and other school occupants will be removed from the treatment area prior to the application. Small amounts of gel or liquid pesticides applied to cracks and crevices or baits used to treat pest infestation are exempt from this section.

(v) At the beginning of each year, and when new students register, schools will develop a list of parents and guardians who wish to be notified prior to pesticide application during the school year. These parents/guardians will be notified in writing prior to pesticide application. General notification of anticipated pesticide applications will occur by posting or dissemination of notices, by oral communication or other means of communication. In emergency cases where a pest infestation threatens the health or safety of the occupants of public school property, no pre-notification is required. Immediately following the application of a pesticide in emergency cases, signs will be posted indicating an application was made.

(vi) Written records of pesticide applications will be kept for three years at each school site and be available upon request to parents, guardians, students, teachers and staff.

(vii) If any part of Paragraph (6) of Subsection O of 6.29.1.9 NMAC is found to be in conflict with the provisions of the Pesticide Control Act, the remainder of the regulation will remain in full force and effect.

P. School district budgeting. Section 22-8-4 NMSA 1978 requires the department to prescribe forms for, supervise and control the preparation of all budgets of all public schools and school districts, and to compile

accurate information concerning public school finance and administration. Sections 22-8-5 through 22-8-12.1 NMSA 1978 set out specific budget preparation and submission requirements for the department, public schools and public school districts. Regulations governing budgeting and accounting for New Mexico public schools and school districts are set out in 6.20.2 NMAC.

**Q.** Final course and other student grade changes. Any changes to students' course or other grades shall be governed by the state rule, "*Final Course and Other Student Grade Changes*" (6.30.10 NMAC). [6.29.1.9 NMAC - Rp, 6.30.2.10 NMAC, 6/30/2009; A, 02/12/2010; A, 10/31/2011; A, 2/28/2017; A, 07/25/2017; A, 12/15/2020; A, 5/24/2022; A, 1/28/2025]

**6.29.1.10 WAIVERS:**

**A.** To obtain a waiver from the department for procedural or program requirements, a district superintendent or the administrator of a state-chartered charter school shall submit a request to the secretary, in the manner required by the department, with justification for the change. The request and the response shall be kept on file by the district or charter school and the department, and these records shall be available for review by the public.

**B.** The secretary may waive a graduation requirement for a student based upon the written request of the superintendent or the administrator of a state-chartered charter school, using the department's *graduation waiver request* form. This form shall include: name of superintendent; district/school; mailing address; phone; fax; email address; name of a secondary contact person including the same information; date of submission; local board policy requirement and approval, if required; date of board approval; statement of applicable district or charter school policy and rationale for request.

**C.** No other waivers of provisions of the Public School Code shall be permitted unless authorized by law.

[6.29.1.10 NMAC - N, 6/30/2009]

**6.29.1.11 PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS:**

**A.** Curriculum.

**(1)** Local curricula shall be aligned with the applicable New Mexico content standards with benchmarks and performance standards. In accordance with Section 22-13-1.6 NMSA 1978, each school district shall align its curricula to meet the state standards for each grade level and subject area so that students who transfer between public schools within the school district receive the same educational opportunity within the same grade or subject area.

**(2)** Adopted instructional materials shall support the aligned local curricula. The state standards revision cycle, the local curriculum cycle and the instructional materials cycle shall be aligned and sequenced to provide standards-based curricula that are supported by aligned instructional materials. At the completion of each standards revision cycle, the standards-based state assessment program shall be reviewed to determine the need for realignment.

**(3)** All courses offered for credit shall have written, delivered, assessed and sequential curriculum.

**(4)** Written and delivered curricula shall be congruent, state what students should know and be able to do, and include an assessment process.

**(5)** The curricula shall support the Education Plan and NM School DASH.

**B.** Subject areas. The district or charter school shall [~~be in compliance~~] comply with subject area requirements as specified in Section 22-13-1 NMSA 1978.

**(1)** The department shall require instruction in specific subject areas as provided in Paragraphs (2) through (7) of Subsection B of 6.29.1.11 NMAC. Any public school or school district failing to meet these minimum requirements shall not be accredited by the department.

**(2)** All kindergarten through third grade classes shall provide daily instruction in reading and language arts skills, including phonemic awareness, phonics, and comprehension; and in mathematics. Students in kindergarten and first grades shall be screened and monitored for progress in reading and language arts skills, and students in second grade shall take diagnostic tests on reading and language arts skills.

**(3)** All first, second and third grade classes shall provide instruction in art, music and a language other than English, and instruction that meets content standards, benchmarks and performance standards shall be provided in science, social studies, physical education and health education.

**(4)** In fourth through eighth grades, instruction that meets academic content and performance standards shall be provided in the following subject areas:

- (a) reading and language arts skills, with an emphasis on writing and editing for at least one year and an emphasis on grammar and writing for at least one year;
- (b) mathematics;
- (c) a language other than English;
- (d) communication skills;
- (e) science;
- (f) art;
- (g) music;
- (h) social studies;
- (i) New Mexico history;
- (j) United States history;
- (k) geography;
- (l) physical education; and
- (m) health education.

(5) In eighth grade, algebra I shall be offered in regular classroom settings, through online courses or agreements with high schools.

(6) Units earned in health, algebra I, and geometry prior to enrolling in high school shall satisfy unit requirements required to earn a New Mexico diploma of excellence.

~~[(6)]~~ (7) In fourth through eighth grades, school districts and charter schools shall offer electives that contribute to academic growth and skill development and provide career and technical education.

~~[(7)]~~ (8) In ninth through 12th grades, instruction that meets academic content and performance standards shall be provided in health education, including:

- (a) age-appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention training that meets department standards developed in consultation with the federal centers for disease control and prevention that are based on evidence-based methods that have proved to be effective;

- (b) lifesaving skills training that follows nationally recognized guidelines for hands-on, compression only, psychomotor skills (skills that use hands-on practice to support cognitive learning) cardiopulmonary resuscitation training including:

- (i) use of a course curriculum, which allows for demonstration of competency in performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation and associated skills;

- (ii) training that conforms to the most recent, national, evidence-based guidelines established by the American heart association, the American red cross, or another nationally recognized, NM public education department-approved non-profit organization;

- (iii) training to recognize the signs of a heart attack;

- (iv) training on use of an automated external defibrillator; and

- (v) training on how to perform the Heimlich maneuver for choking victims;

- (c) lifesaving skills training that may use the following instructors if qualified to teach hands-on psychomotor skills cardiopulmonary resuscitation training:

- (i) school nurses;

- (ii) health teachers;

- (iii) athletic department personnel as instructors; and

- (iv) any qualified volunteers, as defined by 6.50.18.8 NMAC, providing

training at no cost to the school district that the school district determines to be eligible to offer instruction as prescribed in Subparagraph (b) of Paragraph (7) of Subsection B of 6.29.1.11 NMAC including, but not limited to, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, police officers, firefighters, representatives of the American heart association or the American red cross, or other similarly qualified individuals;

- (d) training and instructional materials related to Subparagraph (b) of Paragraph (7) of Subsection B of 6.29.1.11 NMAC in both English and Spanish to include:

- (i) materials, equipment, and services that are needed as part of the instruction obtained on loan from state-recognized organizations, such as the New Mexico heart institute; and

- (ii) materials, equipment, and services received by schools as in-kind donations; and

- (e) combined instruction, whereby school districts and charter schools may work with other school districts and charter schools to provide the training or with a regional education cooperative to provide or facilitate the training.

~~[(8)]~~ **(9)** The requirements as prescribed in Subparagraph (b) of Paragraph (7) of Subsection B of 6.29.1.11 NMAC for health education shall not be required for students in grades nine through 12 who are enrolled in a virtual charter school.

~~[(9)]~~ **(10)** A school district or charter school may submit a waiver request to the department for the requirement as prescribed in Subparagraph (b) of Paragraph (7) of Subsection B of 6.29.1.11 NMAC for health education for a student receiving special education supports and services pursuant to the IDEA or Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act in grades nine through 12 with a disability as documented through an individualized education program (IEP) if the requirement as prescribed in Subparagraph (b) of Paragraph (7) of Subsection B of 6.29.1.11 NMAC cannot be reasonably met with accommodations for a given student.

~~[(10)]~~ **(11)** In every grade, inquiry-based laboratory components are at the core of the science program and shall be woven into every lesson and concept strand. For required science units in grades nine through twelve, “laboratory component” means an experience in the laboratory, classroom or the field that provides students with opportunities to interact directly with natural phenomena or with data collected by others using tools, materials, data collection techniques and models. Throughout the process, students shall have opportunities to design investigations, engage in scientific reasoning, manipulate equipment, record data, analyze results and discuss their findings. The laboratory component comprises at least 40 per cent of the unit's instructional time. All science classes that include dissection activities as part of the curriculum shall provide virtual dissection techniques as alternative activities for any student who is opposed to real dissections for ethical, moral, cultural or religious reasons. Alternative techniques shall approximate the experience of real dissection activities as closely and appropriately as possible. A virtual dissection technique means carrying out dissection activities using computer two-dimensional or three-dimensional simulations, videotape or videodisk simulations, take-apart anatomical models, photographs or anatomical atlases.

**C.** Bilingual multicultural education. Bilingual multicultural education programs shall be provided to meet the identified educational and linguistic needs of linguistically and culturally different students, including Native American children, and other students who may wish to participate, in grades K-12, with priority to be given to programs in grades K-3. These programs shall:

**(1)** provide services in accordance with the Bilingual Multicultural Education Act (Sections 22-23-1 through 6 NMSA 1978) and the Bilingual Multicultural Education Program Regulation (Sections 6.32.2.7 through 6.32.2.11 NMAC);

**(2)** be implemented in accordance with the identified needs of qualifying culturally and linguistically different students and ensure equal educational opportunities;

**(3)** be assessed as part of the Education Plan process; and

**(4)** support the local curriculum and Education Plan and NM School DASH.

**D.** Career and technical education (CTE). Career and technical education programs for both elementary and secondary levels shall:

**(1)** be in accordance with Section 22-14-1 through 22-14-30 NMSA 1978 and the Carl Perkins Act;

**(2)** provide exploratory and skill development program offerings;

**(3)** ensure students' mastery of the New Mexico career and technical education content standards with benchmarks and performance standards;

**(4)** include competency-based applied learning; and

**(5)** support the local curriculum and the NM School DASH.

**E.** School health. School health programs provide opportunities for all students to develop healthy behaviors. Districts and charter schools shall provide or make provisions for school health programs that address the health needs of students and staff. Districts and charter schools shall provide the following programs: health education, physical education, health services and school counseling. Additional programs may include: nutrition, staff wellness, family-school-community partnerships, healthy environment and psychological services. These programs shall:

**(1)** be in accordance with Section 22-10A-34 and Section 24-5-1 through 24-5-6 NMSA 1978;

**(2)** provide education and skill development program offerings;

**(3)** provide community partnerships which help to achieve the goal of healthy students and staff; and

**(4)** support the local curriculum Education Plan, and NM School DASH.

**F.** Special education. Special education is specially designed instruction that is provided at no cost to parents to meet the unique needs of a student with a disability, as defined in the IDEA regulations (34 CFR Part 300 and state special education regulations (6.31.2 NMAC). Special education programs shall:

- (1) provide specially designed instruction in career and technical education and travel training for students whose IEPs require such services;
- (2) provide instruction to students placed on homebound services as per their IEP; and
- (3) provide instruction in state-supported educational programs, hospitals, institutions and other settings. As set forth in the state special education regulations at Paragraph (15) of Subsection C of 6.31.2.7 NMAC, special education may include speech-language pathology services consisting of specially-designed instruction that is provided to enable a student with a disability, as recognized under IDEA, to have access to the general curriculum and to meet the educational standards of the public agency that apply to all children;
- (4) be assessed as part of the Education Plan process; and
- (5) support the local curriculum, Education Plan, and NM School DASH.

**G.** Supplemental programs. Programs which supplement, but do not replace, state operational programs may include, but are not limited to: Title I - Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged; Title II - Preparing, Training and Recruiting High Quality Teachers and Principals; Title III - Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students; Title IV, Part A - Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities; Title V - Promoting Informed Parental Choice and Innovative Programs; Title VI - Flexibility and Accountability; Title VII - Indian, Native Hawaiian and Alaska Native Education; Title VIII - Impact Aid Program; the Johnson-O'Malley Act; and Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA). Supplemental programs shall:

- (1) provide services as required by federal laws and assurances, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA) of 1974;
- (2) be assessed as part of the Education Plan process; and
- (3) support the local curriculum, Education Plan, and NM School DASH.

**H.** Support services. Districts and charter schools shall provide support service programs which strengthen the instructional program. Required support service programs are library media, school counseling and health services. Support services shall:

- (1) have a written, delivered and assessed program, K-12;
- (2) provide licensed staff to develop and supervise the program; and
- (3) support the local curriculum, Education Plan, and NM School DASH.

**I.** Technology in education. The Technology for Education Act establishes a fund and a system for equal distribution of funds based upon final funded student membership within each school district and charter school. The Technology for Education Act requires annual review and approval of each school district and charter school's educational technology plan, through which every school district and charter school reports to the department the fiscal distributions received, expenditures made and educational technology obtained by the district or charter school, and other related information. As districts and charter schools develop, refine and implement strategic long-range plans for utilizing educational technology, each plan shall:

- (1) be in accordance with Section 22-15A-10 NMSA 1978; and
- (2) support the local curriculum, Education Plan, and NM School DASH.

**J.** Gifted education. Gifted education is specially designed instruction to meet the individual needs of gifted students pursuant to 6.31.3 NMAC. Gifted education programs shall:

- (1) provide gifted students appropriate instruction in required subject areas, in accordance with Article 13 of Chapter 22 NMSA 1978;
- (2) be assessed as part of the Education Plan process; and
- (3) support the local curriculum, Education Plan, and NM School DASH.

[6.29.1.11 NMAC - Rp, 6.30.2.11 NMAC, 6/30/2009; A, 2/28/2017; A, 12/15/2020; A, 1/28/2025]

**6.29.1.12 SEVERABILITY:** If any part or application of this rule is held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remainder or its application to other situations shall not be affected.

[6.29.1.12 NMAC - N, 6/30/2009]

**6.29.1.13 FUTURE CHANGES IN LAW THAT AFFECT THIS RULE:** This rule will be periodically amended to reflect changes in law or laws that were enacted with delayed effect provisions.

[6.29.1.13 NMAC - N, 6/30/2009; A, 10/31/2011]

**HISTORY OF 6.29.1 NMAC:**

**Pre-NMAC HISTORY:** The material in this part is derived from that previously filed with the State Records Center:

SDE 74-17, (Certificate No. 74-17), Minimum Educational Standards for New Mexico Schools, filed April 16, 1975.

SDE 76-9, (Certificate No. 76-9), Minimum Education Standards for New Mexico Schools, filed July 7, 1976.

SDE 78-9, Minimum Education Standards for New Mexico Schools, filed August 17, 1978.

SBE 80-4, Educational Standards for New Mexico Schools, filed September 10, 1980.

SBE 81-4, Educational Standards for New Mexico Schools, filed July 27, 1981.

SBE 82-4, Educational Standards for New Mexico Schools, Basic and Vocational Program Standards, filed November 16, 1982.

SBE Regulation No. 83-1, Educational Standards for New Mexico Schools, Basic and Vocational Program Standards, filed June 24, 1983.

SBE Regulation 84-7, Educational Standards for New Mexico Schools, Basic and Vocational Program Standards, filed August 27, 1984.

SBE Regulation 85-4, Educational Standards for New Mexico Schools, Basic, Special Education, and Vocational Programs, filed October 21, 1985.

SBE Regulation No. 86-7, Educational Standards for New Mexico Schools, filed September 2, 1986.

SBE Regulation No. 87-8, Educational Standards for New Mexico Schools, filed February 2, 1988.

SBE Regulation No. 88-9, Educational Standards for New Mexico Schools, filed October 28, 1988.

SBE Regulation No. 89-8, Educational Standards for New Mexico Schools, filed November 22, 1989.

SBE Regulation No. 90-2, Educational Standards for New Mexico Schools, filed September 7, 1990.

SBE Regulation No. 92-1, Standards for Excellence, filed June 30, 1992.

**History of Repealed Material:**

6.30.2 NMAC, Standards for Excellence, filed November 2, 2000 - Repealed effective June 30, 2009.

**NMAC History:**

6 NMAC 3.2, Standards for Excellence, filed October 17, 1996.

6.30.2 NMAC, Standards for Excellence, November 2, 2000, replaced by 6.29.1 NMAC, General Provisions; 6.29.2 NMAC, Arts Education; 6.29.3 NMAC, Career and Technical Education; 6.29.4 NMAC, English Language Arts; 6.29.5 NMAC, English Language Development; 6.29.6 NMAC, Health Education; 6.29.7 NMAC, Mathematics; 6.29.8 NMAC, Modern, Classical and Native Languages; 6.29.9 NMAC, Physical Education; 6.29.10 NMAC, Science; 6.29.11 NMAC, Social Studies; effective June 30, 2009.