

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE  
BILL ANALYSIS**

**Bill Number:** SB 169

**51st Legislature, 2nd Session, 2014**

**Tracking Number:** .196009.1

**Short Title:** Summer Civics School Courses as Electives

**Sponsor(s):** Senator George K. Munoz and Others

**Analyst:** Travis Dulany

**Date:** February 6, 2014

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**Bill Summary:**

SB 169 amends the *Public School Code* (code) to allow summer civic courses to be offered as electives.

**Fiscal Impact:**

SB 169 does not contain an appropriation.

**Substantive Issues:**

In 2013, legislation was passed to amend the code to allow approved summer civics courses or programs to be offered as an elective and to count toward credits needed to graduate and to earn a New Mexico Diploma of Excellence; however, the bill was pocket vetoed.

The Fiscal Impact Report from the Legislative Finance Committee points out that, under state rule, districts and charter schools do not need to seek PED approval to develop and offer elective courses if approved by the local school board.

According to the Public Education Department (PED) bill analysis:

- SB 169 would duplicate existing rule and content standards;
- students are already required to receive instruction in and pass courses aligned with the content standards and benchmarks for social studies, which includes civics; and
- the bill would require districts to offer a summer civics course as an elective.<sup>1</sup>

**Background:**

***Current Law***

Secondary students are required to complete 24 units of coursework to earn a New Mexico Diploma of Excellence, including 3.5 units in social science, which must include US history and geography, world history and geography and government and economics, and 0.5 unit in New Mexico history, and 7.5 elective units that meet department content and performance standards.

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<sup>1</sup> The use of the wording “may be offered” indicates that school districts would not necessarily be required to offer summer civics courses.

School districts and charter schools are also required to offer electives in student service learning and financial literacy.

Pre-apprenticeships programs and media literacy may be offered as electives.

***PED Rule***

The Standards for Excellence in Social Studies in 6.29.11 NMAC outline content standards with benchmarks and performance standards for social studies that are mandated for students in grades K-12.

The four strand content areas included in social studies are:

1. history;
2. geography;
3. civics and government; and
4. economics.

For the civics and government content standard, PED rule states that students should “understand the ideals, rights and responsibilities of citizenship and understand the content and history of the founding documents of the United States, with particular emphasis on the United States and New Mexico constitutions, and how governments function at local, state, tribal and national levels.”

**Committee Referrals:**

SCC/SEC/SPAC

**Related Bills:**

- SB 34 *No Standards-Based Tests Factored into GPA*
- \*SB 122a *School District P.E. Requirements*
- SB 148 *Computer Programming as School Language*
- \*HB 66 *School Graduation & Diploma Requirements*
- HB 312 *High School Work Force Assessment System*
- HB 329 *Home School Testing & Diplomas*
- \*HB 357 *Diploma for Students Meeting Requirements*