

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

LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS
56th Legislature, 1st Session, 2023

Bill Number	<u>HB125/aHFI#1</u>	Sponsor	<u>Romero, GA</u>
Tracking Number	<u>.223835.2</u>	Committee Referrals	<u>HEC;SRC/SEC</u>
Short Title	<u>School Dual Credit Task Force</u>		
Analyst	<u>Hathaway</u>	Original Date	<u>1/24/23</u>
		Last Updated	<u>2/7/2023</u>

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of HFI#1 Amendment

The House Floor #1 amendment to House Bill 125 (HB125) changes the members that must be included in the dual credit task force. The membership of the task force of HB125/aHFI#1 is changed to include one member representing branch community colleges and two, instead of three, members representing the independent community colleges.

Synopsis of Original Bill

House Bill 125 (HB125/aHFI#1) creates a temporary provision in law to create a dual credit task force. HB125/aHFI#1 specifies members that must be included in the task force, what the task force must study, and a requirement for the task force to report its findings.

The task force must be appointed by July 1, 2023 and provide a final report by January 1, 2024.

FISCAL IMPACT

HB125/aHFI#1 does not contain an appropriation.

The Higher Education Department (HED), the Public Education Department (PED), and the participating institutions of higher education (IHEs) would be required to provide staff for the task force, which may create some fiscal impact to allocate staff.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

Task Force Requirements and Membership. HB125/aHFI#1 would require the following 12 members to participate in the task force with required members appointed by July 1, 2023:

- To be appointed by the secretary of HED:
 - Two members representing four-year higher education institutions;
 - Two members representing independent community colleges;

- One member representing the branch community colleges;
- To be appointed by the secretary of PED:
 - Two members representing school superintendents;
 - Three members representing high school principals;
- The secretary of higher education or a designee; and
- The secretary of public education or a designee.

HB125/aHFI#1 would require the task force to examine current dual credit course offerings, dual credit enrollment practices, faculty hiring processes, student support services, credit transferability, and current barriers to increasing dual credit participation.

Dual Credit Defined and Research Base. Dual enrollment (or dual credit, as it is called in New Mexico) is a term used to describe programs that allow high school students to take a college course and earn both high school and college credit. Research from the Institute of Education Sciences, the statistics, research, and evaluation arm of the U.S. Department of Education, shows dual credit programs generally have [positive effects](#) on students. In particular, participation in dual credit programs has a strong positive effect on students' college degree attainment, college access and enrollment, credit accumulation, completing high school, and general academic achievement in high school. In New Mexico, dual credit students graduate from high school at higher rates, on average, than students who do not take dual credit courses. The statewide four-year cohort of 2020 graduation rate for dual credit students was 89.3 percent compared with 76.9 percent across the entire four-year cohort of the same year.

Dual Credit Participation in New Mexico. HED and PED reported in the 2020–2021 school year, 16,587 total students enrolled in dual credit courses, taking a combined 44,402 dual credit courses. This is a decrease from the 2019–2020 school year, during which 21,757 total students took a combined 54,265 dual credit courses.

There are 27 IHEs that offer dual credit programs, but four institutions serve the majority of students: Central New Mexico Community College (CNM), San Juan College, Santa Fe Community College, and New Mexico State University–Doña Ana. Of these, CNM serves the largest share, with 4,479 dual credit students in the 2020–2021 school year.

The five most common subject areas students take dual credit courses are English language and literature/letters (5,012 course enrollments), mathematics and statistics (4,744 course enrollments), visual and performing arts (2,980 course enrollments), biological and biomedical sciences (2,921 course enrollments), and foreign languages, literatures, and linguistics (2,674 course enrollments).

Funding of Dual Credit. The primary costs of dual credit include tuition, fees, instructional materials (including textbooks), and transportation costs to and from the student's high school and the IHE. Each participating entity (student/family, secondary school, and postsecondary school) bear responsibility for various parts of these costs. IHEs waive tuition for dual credit students—while state law does *encourage* the waiving of tuition, it is administrative code that *requires* tuition to be waived by IHEs. State law does require IHEs to waive general fees for dual credit students, but course-specific fees may be charged to students. State law also requires the high school that a student primarily attends to pay the cost of required textbooks and other course supplies. Students and families must arrange transportation to and from the postsecondary institution although some school districts are able to help students with this. Students and families must also pay for course-specific fees.

Students taking dual credit courses, since they are still full-time students at their respective high schools, still generate funding through the state equalization guarantee (SEG), the state’s public education funding formula. IHEs also claim dual credit hours in their postsecondary funding formula.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

In its analysis of HB125, HED notes the bill calls for a major study within a six-month period, highlighting it would need to allocate staff resources to complete the study, which may delay HED’s focus on other projects. HED also notes some of this work may already be available via the state’s dual credit council, which consists of three PED staff members appointed by the PED secretary and three HED staff members appointed by the HED secretary. The dual credit council is charged with handling appeals, preparing and maintaining a dual credit policy and procedures manual, and publishing an annual report.

In its analysis of HB125, the New Mexico Independent Community Colleges (NMICC) notes colleges are not adequately reimbursed for dual credit students and in FY24, NMICC, the Council of University Presidents, and the New Mexico Association of Community Colleges have requested \$15 million in nonrecurring funding to support dual credit over a period of three to five years.

PED, in its analysis of HB125, notes that while staffing the task force would place additional demands on existing personnel, the report of the proposed task force would be useful to PED.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Dual Credit Statute and Administrative Rule. The statutory provisions related to dual credit are outlined in several sections of state law, and clarified in administrative rule:

- Section [21-1-1.2 NMSA 1978](#) details eligibility to participate in dual credit, responsibilities of PED, HED, and participating IHEs, and various performance and reporting requirements.
- [Section 22-13-1.4 NMSA 1978](#) requires each school district to offer a program of courses for dual-credit, in cooperation with an institution of higher education, and a program of distance learning courses.
- [Section 22-13-1.1 NMSA 1978](#) requires each high school student to be “reasonably informed” about dual-credit courses, among other course offerings.
- [6.30.7 New Mexico Administrative Code](#) in detail outlines requirements of students and families, the PED, and HED in offering dual credit courses.
- [5.2.4.9 NMAC](#) further requires institutions of higher education to provide educational services in a cost-effective and efficient manner, which may include dual-credit programs.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESC Files
- Higher Education Department (HED)
- New Mexico Independent Community Colleges (NMICC)
- Public Education Department (HED)