

## Governor signs bill modernizing graduation requirements

Written by gallupsun  
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SANTA FE — Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham signed HB 171 into law, a bill that updates high school graduation requirements in New Mexico for the first time in over a decade, on Feb. 10.

“High school should be about preparing students for the real world while providing more opportunities to pursue their unique interests and future careers,” the governor said. “These changes will lead to more young New Mexicans staying engaged in school, graduating, and continuing that success in their adult lives.”

The requirements outlined in HB 171 will impact students entering the ninth grade in the 2025-2026 school year. The bill makes key changes to graduation requirements that better align with New Mexico’s workforce and higher education landscape. These include the addition of two units decided on by local school boards or charter school governing bodies, as long as they meet Public Education Department academic content and performance standards.

The new requirements provide options for students to demonstrate proficiency in math that align with their college or career interests.

“This allows flexibility for districts to tailor the requirements to the needs of their communities and allows students to gain valuable experience and receive credit at the same time,” Public Education Department Secretary Dr. Arsenio Romero said. “A modern, flexible, forward-looking curriculum will help engage students, address chronic absences and improve student achievement.”

The updated requirements provide a greater level of student choice while keeping the total number of credits needed to graduate at 24.

“I’m both proud and grateful to the Governor, PED Secretary Romero, and my co-sponsors, Rep. Andrés Romero and Sen. Bill Soules for the collaboration during the last four months,” Senate President Pro Tempore Mimi Stewart, one of the chief sponsors of HB 171, said. “Working together, we have created new graduation requirements that focus on more flexibility for students to create a path for those who want Career Technical Education classes and pathways while keeping high standards for core academic standards.”

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Rep. G. Andrés Romero agreed with Stewart.

“By providing our students with greater flexibility and control over their course load, we can better engage them, increase their graduation rates, and more effectively prepare them for life after high school,” he said. “House Bill 171 will help chart the path forward for students interested in the trades, giving them a head start to a successful career and helping New Mexico staff up these in-demand fields.”

Overall high school graduation has increased by 6.9% statewide in the last 10 years.

