

AN ACT

RELATING TO EDUCATION; EXPANDING THE GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS TO INCLUDE PASSING A STATE COMPETENCY EXAMINATION IN WRITING.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

Section 1. Section 22-2-8.4 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1986, Chapter 33, Section 5, as amended) is amended to read:

"22-2-8.4. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS. --

A. At the end of the eighth grade or during the ninth grade, each student shall prepare an individual program of study for grades nine through twelve. The program of study shall be signed by a student's parent or guardian.

B. Beginning with students entering the ninth grade in the 1986-87 school year, successful completion of a minimum of twenty-three units shall be required for graduation. These units shall be as follows:

(1) four units in English, with major emphasis on grammar and literature;

(2) three units in mathematics;

(3) two units in science, one of which shall have a laboratory component;

(4) three units in social science, which shall include United States history and geography, world history and geography, and government and economics;

(5) one unit in physical fitness;

(6) one unit in communication skills, with major emphasis on writing and speaking, which may include a language other than English; and

(7) nine elective units. Only the following elective units shall be counted toward meeting the requirements for graduation: fine arts, i.e., music, band, chorus and art; practical arts; physical education; languages other than English; speech; drama; vocational education; mathematics; science; English; R. O. T. C.; social science; computer science; health education; American sign language; and other electives approved by the state board.

With the approval of the local school board, participation on an athletic team or in an athletic sport during the school day may count toward fulfillment of the physical education required unit.

C. Final examinations shall be administered to all students in all classes offered for credit.

D. No student shall receive a high school diploma who has not passed a state graduation examination in the subject areas of reading, English, math, writing, science and social science. Beginning with the 1996-97 school year, the state graduation examinations on social science shall include a section on the constitution of the United States and the constitution of New Mexico. If a student exits from the school system at the end of grade twelve without having

passed a state graduation examination, he shall receive an appropriate state certificate indicating the number of credits earned and the grade completed. If within five years after a student exits from the school system he takes and passes the state graduation examination, he may receive a high school diploma.

E. The state board may establish a policy to provide for administrative interpretations to clarify curricular and testing provisions of the Public School Code. "