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**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE**  
**BILL ANALYSIS**  
**53rd Legislature, 1st Session, 2017**

<b>Bill Number</b>	<u>HB303</u>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<u>McQueen</u>
<b>Tracking Number</b>	<u>.205212.2</u>	<b>Committee Referrals</b>	<u>HEC</u>
<b>Short Title</b>	<u>Life Skills as Graduation Requirement</u>		
<b>Analyst</b>	<u>Terrazas</u>	<b>Original Date</b>	<u>2/17/17</u>
		<b>Last Updated</b>	<u></u>

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## **BILL SUMMARY**

### Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 303 (HB303) changes graduation requirements for the New Mexico diploma of excellence for students entering the ninth grade in the 2017-2018 school year. HB303 reduces the mathematics units from four to three and increases the elective units from seven and one-half to eight and one-half. The mathematics units must include algebra and geometry. HB303 moves career cluster courses and languages other than English to elective units. Life skills would emphasize financial literacy, media literacy, and workplace readiness.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

HB303 does not contain an appropriation.

There may be a fiscal impact to school districts in making more elective courses available at high schools and dual credit courses at higher education institutions (HEIs). There may also be additional costs associated with the development of the life skills unit.

## **SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

Students who entered the ninth grade beginning the 2009-2010 school year are required to complete a minimum of 24 units aligned to the state academic content and performance standards to earn a New Mexico diploma of excellence. Four of those units are in mathematics, one of which needs to be equivalent to or higher than Algebra 2, unless a parent submits written, signed permission for the student to complete a lesser mathematics unit. A financial literacy course that meets given content and performance standards could qualify as one of the four mathematics units required. HB303 reduces the required number of mathematics units to three and requires these units to include algebra and geometry for students who enter the ninth grade in the 2017-2018 school year. HB303 does not give parents the option to sign for a student to complete a lesser mathematics unit, nor does it allow for a financial literacy course to qualify as one of the mathematics units.

Students who entered the ninth grade beginning the 2009-2010 school year are also required to complete seven and one-half elective units that meet the Public Education Department (PED) content and performance standards. For these students, career and technical education courses, student service learning, and financial literacy count as elective units, as do pre-apprenticeship programs and media literacy. HB303 increases the required elective units to eight and one-half. The courses that count as electives under HB303 are career and technical education, student service learning, career cluster, and languages other than English. Pre-apprenticeship programs may still be offered as electives. Life skills remains a one-unit requirement, but under HB303 must have a major emphasis on financial literacy, media literacy, and workplace readiness.

<b>Current and HB303 Proposed Requirements for the New Mexico Diploma of Excellence</b>	
<b>Students who entered ninth grade in the 2009-2010 school year</b>	<b>Students who enter ninth grade in the 2017-2018 school year (HB303)</b>
<b>Mathematics</b>	
<u>4 units</u> 1 shall be equivalent to or higher than algebra 2. A financial literacy course that meets state mathematics academic content and performance standards shall qualify as one of the four required mathematics units.	<u>3 units</u> Shall include algebra and geometry
<b>Life Skills</b>	
<u>1 unit</u> In one of the following: career cluster course, workplace readiness, or a language other than English	<u>1 unit</u> With a major emphasis on financial literacy, media literacy, and workplace readiness
<b>Electives</b>	
<u>7.5 units</u> Career and technical education courses, student service learning, and financial literacy must be offered. Pre-apprenticeship programs and media literacy may be offered.	<u>8.5 units</u> Career and technical education courses, student service learning, career cluster courses, and languages other than English. Pre-apprenticeship programs may be offered.
<b>Units that remain the same</b>	
4 units in English	
3 units in science	
3.5 units in social science	
1 unit in physical education	
<b>24 units total</b>	<b>24 units total</b>

**ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

Public high schools may need to review their curricula to evaluate the availability of math courses and electives.

PED and public high schools would need to collaborate to ensure life skill courses and electives offered to students meet PED content and performance standards.

**OTHER SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

The Higher Education Department states it is possible that dual credit opportunities with HEIs could be impacted by the proposed changes.

**RELATED BILLS**

Relates to SB219/SECS, Define & Require School Ethnic Studies. A bill that requires ethnic studies courses in grades 4 through 12 by removing one-half of a unit from the required elective units and assigning the one-half unit to social science requirements.

Relates to SB31, Remove Certain Graduation Requirements. A bill that removes the requirement for students entering ninth grade after the 2016-2017 school year to take at least one advanced placement, honors, dual-credit or distance learning course for high school graduation.

Conflicts with SB134/SECS, Computer Science for School Graduation. A bill that allows students to substitute a computer science unit for either a mathematics or a science unit.

**SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

- LESC Files
- Higher Education Department

**DT/rab**