

Update on Implementation of New State Math Requirements

Analysts: Marit Andrews, Principal Policy Analyst

Annie Armatage, Senior Policy Analyst II

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In the 2026 legislative session, lawmakers enacted [Laws 2026, Chapter 53 \(Senate Bill 29\)](#), LESC-endorsed legislation that created a statewide framework to address mathematics instruction. The law amended the School Personnel Act to increase requirements for educator preparation programs (EPPs) and amended the Mathematics and Science Education Act to create a statewide mathematics instructional leadership framework, add requirements for school district and charter school professional learning plans, and create a system of screening and family notification for mathematics performance among kindergarten through third grade (K-3) students.

Laws 2026, Chapter 53 mirrors several of the requirements for [Laws 2026, Chapter 54 \(Senate Bill 37\)](#), which enacted the High Quality Literacy Instruction Act, to align math and reading requirements in state law. The new mathematics law requires the Public Education Department (PED) to adopt grade-specific math assessments that can be administered with minimal impact on instructional time and to provide timely reporting of assessment results that can be integrated with instructional support for teachers and students. Also in alignment with the High Quality Literacy Instruction Act, the new law requires schools to notify parents if a student displays characteristics of having a mathematics difficulty and report on student progress.

In recognition of the time needed for EPPs, PED, and school districts and charter schools to implement the new requirements in Laws 2026, Chapter 53, the law has staggered implementation timelines for the new requirements. As the new law will not be fully implemented until the 2027-2028 school year (SY28), LESC staff will continue to monitor implementation in the 2027 interim. This brief will focus on implementation work required by Laws 2026, Chapter 53 in the 2026 interim, including updating course requirements for EPPs and the development of the mathematics instructional leadership framework.

Key Takeaways

- The implementation process for the new state math requirements spans multiple school years, with the first deadlines in SY27 (*Pages 1-2*).
- PED and MSAC have already begun implementation work and expect to meet statutory deadlines (*Pages 2-3*).
- LESC staff reviewed EPP implementation plans; in general, most affected undergraduate programs will increase by three credit hours, while most postbaccalaureate programs will increase by six credit hours (*Pages 5-8*).
- PED should consider institutional deadlines when providing guidance to EPPs and EPPs should consider best practices to design math courses that produce well-prepared teachers without overburdening candidates. (*Page 8-9*).

Implementation Progress

The implementation process of requirements within Laws 2026, Chapter 53 span multiple school years, with the first deadlines in SY27, as shown in **Appendix A: Implementation Timeline of Laws 2026, Chapter 53**. EPPs and PED both have requirements they must meet in SY27 to comply with the provisions of Laws 2026, Chapter 53. Changes to the State Personnel Act require individuals seeking an elementary teaching license or secondary mathematics teaching endorsement to complete at least six hours of mathematics methods courses, beginning July 1, 2028. This means EPPs must begin offering these courses to candidates by SY27, with institutional deadlines for updates to course catalogs in fall 2026. The law also requires PED, in consultation with the Math and Science Advisory Council (MSAC), to promulgate rules to implement the provisions of the Mathematics and Science Education Act by December 31, 2026. In addition, PED, in consultation with MSAC, must develop a mathematics instructional leadership framework by December 31, 2026.

By the beginning of SY28, school districts and charter schools are required to develop and implement an elementary and secondary mathematics professional learning plan, in accordance with the standards developed

by PED and promulgated in rule. Also in accordance with requirements in PED rule, beginning in SY28, school districts and charter schools must administer a mathematics screening assessment to every student in K-3 grades. In addition, schools will be required to notify parents if their K-3 student is identified as having characteristics of math difficulty within 30 days of the determination; schools will then be required to provide parents with a mathematics support plan with monthly updates.

Finally, Laws 2026, Chapter 53 requires PED to report on the implementation of the new law to the governor and LESC no later than July 1, 2028, and annually each year thereafter.

PED Implementation

The department has begun working on implementation in partnership with MSAC. MSAC was created in statute alongside the Math and Science Bureau (MSB) at PED when the Math and Science Education Act was enacted in 2007. The statutory purpose of MSAC is to 1) advise the Math and Science Bureau at PED regarding the statewide strategic plan for improving math and science education; 2) report to PED and the Legislature on administration of math and science education and the spending of associated appropriations; and 3) work with the MSB to determine the need for improvement in math and science achievement among public school students and make recommendations to PED about how to meet those needs.

The Mathematics and Science Education Act requires PED to collaborate with MSAC to develop the mathematics instructional leadership framework, as well as to promulgate rule by December 31, 2026. PED recently published initial [draft guidance](#) for local education agencies (LEAs) for the mathematics instructional leadership guide, mathematics professional learning plan, mathematics intervention and support plan, and the early mathematics screener.

According to PED, New Mexico stakeholders—including LEA leaders, teachers, parents, community members, and mathematics professional learning providers—are invited to review the materials and provide public comment, which will open in July and run through August.

Mathematics Instructional Leadership Framework. The Mathematics and Science Education Act requires PED, in consultation with MSAC, to develop and publish a mathematics instructional leadership framework. The framework must include:

- Defined roles and responsibilities of instructional leaders in supporting mathematics instruction;
- Standards for high-quality math instruction and professional learning;
- Core competencies in mathematics pedagogy, data use, and student engagement;
- Guidance for implementing math coaching, mentoring, and collaborative planning structures;
- Procedures for monitoring, evaluating, supporting, and continuously improving mathematics teaching and learning; and
- Description of technical assistance that PED may provide to school districts and charter schools to support mathematics instruction.

School districts and charter schools are then required to develop elementary and secondary mathematics professional learning plans aligned to the department's mathematics instructional leadership framework in collaboration with stakeholders. Plans are to be updated every two years.

Rulemaking. PED and MSAC are also required to collaborate in promulgating rules to implement the new provisions of the Mathematics and Science Education Act by December 31, 2026. The rules must include criteria for approved mathematics screening assessments, standards for the mathematics instructional leadership framework and mathematics professional learning plans, and identified mathematics interventions.

Stakeholders will use PED's rules to prepare to fulfill their own requirements of The Mathematics and Science Education Act. For example, school districts and charter schools will begin the process of preparing to screen K-3 students, as well as the parental notification and mathematics support plan process for K-3 students identified as having a math difficulty. This means school districts, charter schools, and EPPs will have six months to fulfill their requirements of Laws 2026, Chapter 53 to meet a July 1, 2027 deadline, assuming rulemaking occurs by December 31, 2026.

EPP Implementation

Laws 2026, Chapter 54 amended the School Personnel Act to require individuals seeking an elementary or secondary mathematics teaching license to complete at least six hours of math methods courses, which equip teachers with math-specific pedagogical skills. The new requirement will apply to licenses issued on or after July 1, 2028. This requirement mirrors the six credit hours of reading courses candidates pursuing certain teaching licenses have been required to complete since 2003. PED has interpreted this law as also applying to individuals pursuing early childhood and special education teaching licenses. Over the interim, LESC staff collected implementation plans from each affected EPP.

When designing a program of study, EPPs must ensure teacher candidates complete adequate coursework to prepare them for the classroom, while meeting course requirements set by the state and their institution—all within a limited number of credit hours. For undergraduate programs, 120 credit hours is the national [benchmark](#), which allows students to graduate within four years. For postbaccalaureate alternative certificate programs, there is no clear national benchmark, but most programs are [designed](#) to be completed within one to two years of study and typically require 12 to 30 credit hours.

In making these decisions, EPPs must prioritize preparing teachers to teach math effectively. In New Mexico, fewer than one in four students demonstrated proficiency in math on state assessments administered in SY25. National best practices show preparation should include both math methods and math content, specific to each grade band of students a teacher will teach.

Math methods courses equip a teacher with specific pedagogical skills necessary to teach mathematics effectively. According to the [Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators \(AMTE\)](#), a national professional organization, effective math methods courses equip teachers with pedagogical knowledge, effective and equitable mathematics teaching practices, and positive dispositions toward teaching mathematics to support students' sense making, understanding, and reasoning. AMTE recommends blending the study of content and methods, when possible, and particularly for elementary teacher candidates.

The National Council for Teacher Quality recommends elementary teachers complete at least three credit hours in math methods and at least seven credit hours in math content knowledge. The National Council for Teacher Quality (NCTQ), a nonpartisan research organization, recommends the seven hours of math content instruction cover numbers and operations (45 instructional hours), algebraic thinking (20 instructional hours), geometry and measurement (25 instructional hours), and data analysis and probability (15 instructional hours). NCTQ equates 45 instructional hours to three credit hours. See **Table 1: NCTQ Recommended Elementary Teacher Preparation Math Coursework**. NCTQ notes alternative programs may struggle to fit the recommended 10 credit hours and suggests they consider requiring content knowledge tests for admission to diagnose where candidates need additional support and coursework, allowing programs to provide targeted support.

Table 1: NCTQ Recommended Elementary Teacher Preparation Math Coursework

Math Content				Math Methods	TOTAL
Numbers and Operations	Algebraic Thinking	Geometry and Measurement	Data Analysis and Probability	Mathematics Pedagogy	
45 Instructional Hours	20 Instructional Hours	25 Instructional Hours	15 Instructional Hours	45 Instructional Hours	150 Instructional Hours
One full three-credit course	Just under half a three-credit course	Just over half a three-credit course	One full three-credit course	One full three-credit course	10 credits

Source: Adapted from NCTQ

In 2025, about half of New Mexico EPPs reviewed met NCTQ's math pedagogy benchmark; none met all the content knowledge benchmarks. In 2025, six New Mexico higher education institutions participated in NCTQ's review of kindergarten through eighth grade (K-8) teacher preparation math coursework across the country. Of the six undergraduate programs reviewed, three met NCTQ's target of three hours of math pedagogy, one

approached the target (44 instructional hours), and two fell substantially below the target. Of the three graduate programs reviewed, two met this target.

None of the six undergraduate programs reviewed in New Mexico met all of NCTQ's benchmarks for math content knowledge—three met some benchmarks and three met none. None of the reviewed graduate programs met any of the content knowledge benchmarks. However, following this review, Northern New Mexico College (NNMC) revised its math course offerings and requirements to better reflect NCTQ's recommendations. See **Table 2: 2025 NCTQ Review of K-8 Teacher Math Preparation in New Mexico** below.

Table 2: 2025 NCTQ Review of K-8 Teacher Math Preparation in New Mexico

	Rating	Numbers, Operations, and Algebraic Thinking	Geometry and Measurement	Data Analysis and Probability	Pedagogy
Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU)	C	✓	✗	✓	✗
New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU)	B	✓	✗	✗	✓
New Mexico State University (NMSU)	C	✗	✓	✗	✓
Northern New Mexico College (NNMC)	D	✗	✗	✗	Approaching
University of New Mexico (UNM)	B	Approaching	✗	✗	✓
Western New Mexico University (WNMU)	C	✓	Approaching	✗	✗

Source: NCTQ

The Mathematical Education of Teachers II recommends additional hours of math methods and content coursework. The Mathematical Education of Teachers II (MET II), published by the Conference of the Mathematical Sciences, recommends a combination of math content and methods courses amounting to 18 to 21 credits for an elementary teacher. For prospective middle school teachers, MET II recommends 24 credit hours of math content courses and six credit hours of math methods courses. For prospective high school teachers, MET II recommends 24 to 33 credits of math content and six to nine hours of math methods courses. For each grade band, MET II recommends content courses cover a combination of content specific to that grade band, plus some content linking from the immediately preceding and following grade bands. Math methods courses should also be grade-band specific, see **Table 3: MET II Recommended Teacher Preparation Math Coursework** below.

Table 3: MET II Recommended Teacher Preparation Math Coursework

Grade Band	Math Content	Math Methods	TOTAL
Early Childhood	Six to nine credit hours - blended		Six to 9 credit hours
Upper Elementary	12 credit hours - blended		12 credit hours
Middle Grades	24 credit hours	Six credit hours	30 credit hours
High School	24 to 33 credit hours	Six to nine credit hours	30 to 42 credit hours

Note: MET II recommends prospective high school teachers complete nine credit hours specific to prospective teachers but does not specify how many of these credits should be methods courses. Based on the specific recommendation for middle grades teachers, at least six credits should be methods courses.

Source: The Mathematical Education of Teachers II

According to AMTE, teachers who will be licensed to teach multiple grade bands may need to complete additional content and methods coursework. The math preparation needs for teachers of early childhood, upper elementary, middle grades, and high school students are different. AMTE notes this means states offering licensure in multiple grade bands, such as New Mexico's K-8 teaching license, must ensure preparation adequately prepares teacher candidates to teach wide ranging mathematical concepts. For example, a candidate prepared in a K-8 program should be prepared with content and pedagogical knowledge specific to both early childhood and upper elementary. Those seeking a sixth through eighth grade math endorsement

would need additional preparation specific to the middle grades. Although AMTE stops short of recommending specific credit hours of content and methods coursework for each grade band, they do note teacher candidates pursuing multiple grade band licenses could require additional coursework.

Implementation Plans Reported by EPPs

EPP staff and faculty provided LESC staff with their preliminary plans for providing teacher candidates six credit hours of mathematics methods courses. LESC asked programs to tell LESC: 1) how courses will be revised or added to provide the necessary content; 2) how curricular changes will affect the total credit hours teacher candidates complete; and 3) the institutional timelines programs must work with to make these changes.

Half of undergraduate elementary teacher preparation programs, and most secondary math teacher preparation programs, plan to require an additional three credit hours for graduation. About half of undergraduate elementary teacher preparation programs already require completion of three credits of math methods coursework. NNMC reports they already meet the requirement. EPPs plan to avoid adding six credit hours to the total number of credits required for graduation, primarily by replacing or revising at least one currently required course. Half of these programs plan to increase the total number of credits required by three credit hours, and half do not plan to increase the number of credits required. See **Table 4: Planned Changes to Undergraduate Elementary Programs as Reported by EPPs** below.

Table 4: Planned Changes to Undergraduate Elementary Programs as Reported by EPPs

Institutions	Current Total Program Credit Hours	Planned Course Changes	Expected Total Program Credit Hours
ENMU (special education dual major)	129	Replace one math course	129
NMHU	120	Add one new course	123
NMSU	120	Replace one TESOL or bilingual course	123
NNMC	120	Program expects no changes needed	120
UNM	120	Replace a diversity strand course	123
University of the Southwest (USW)	120	Add two new courses and either drop two courses or drop one course and replace another	120-123
WNMU	120	Replace two courses	120

Source: LESC Files

One of the state's five undergraduate secondary math teacher preparation programs, ENMU, currently requires completion of one math methods course. ENMU will add one new course and drop an existing course to avoid adding any credit hours to the 129 credit hours already required for graduation from the elementary-special education dual license program. The remaining programs will generally add one course and revise an existing course, or add two courses and drop an existing course, adding three new credit hours. See **Table 5: Planned Changes to Undergraduate Secondary Math Programs as Reported by EPPs** on the subsequent page.

Of postbaccalaureate elementary and secondary math teacher preparation programs, about half will add three credit hours and about half will add six credit hours. No alternative license postbaccalaureate elementary or secondary math teacher preparation program currently requires candidates to complete a specific math methods course. See **Appendix A: Planned Course Changes to Elementary Postbaccalaureate Programs as Reported by EPPs** and **Appendix B: Planned Course Changes to Secondary Math Postbaccalaureate Programs as Reported by EPPs**. Programs increasing the total number of credits required for graduation by three credit hours are adding one course and revising an existing course or adding two courses and dropping an existing course. EPPs generally plan to revise math content courses and EPPs plan to drop courses focused on serving

diverse students, such as teachers of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) coursework, or general preparation courses, such as classroom management or curriculum development.

Table 5: Planned Changes to Undergraduate Secondary Math Programs as Reported by EPPs.

Institutions	Current Total Program Credit Hours	Planned Course Changes	Expected Total Program Credit Hours
ENMU	129	Adding one new course and dropping one math course	129
NMHU	119	Adding two new courses	125
NMSU	120	Revising a course, adding a new course, and dropping a TESOL or bilingual course	123
UNM	120	Revising an existing course	123
WNMU	120	Adding one course and revising a course	123

Source: LESC Files

About half of early childhood teacher preparation programs plan to add three credit hours to their programs of study and about half plan to add six credit hours. Although the School Personnel Act does not explicitly name early childhood teachers, PED informed LESC staff that it interprets the law to apply to early childhood teachers as individual pursuing the state's prekindergarten to third grade (PreK-3) teaching license may teach the same

Table 6: Planned Changes to Early Childhood Programs as Reported by EPPs

	Undergraduate			Postbaccalaureate		
	Current Total Program Credit Hours	Planned Course Changes	Expected Total Program Credit Hours	Current Total Program Credit Hours	Planned Course Changes	Expected Total Program Credit Hours
CNM				24	Add two courses, possibly drop one course	27-30
NMHU	125	Add two courses	131			
NMSU	122	Add one course, revise one course	125	21	Add one course, revise one course	24
NMSU (Master's Degree)				39	Add one course, revise one course	42
NNMC	120	Add one course	123			
SFCC				21	Add two courses, drop one course	24
UNM	121	Add one course and possibly drop one course	121-124			
USW	120	Revising two courses, or adding one course and revising one course	120-123	24	Revising two courses, or adding one course and revising one course	24-28
WNMU	120	Add one course, revise two courses	123	21	Add two courses	27

Source: LESC Files

students as an elementary or secondary math teacher. As in other preparation program areas, postbaccalaureate programs are more likely to need to add six credit hours to graduation requirements than undergraduate programs. See **Table 6: Planned Changes to Early Childhood Programs as Reported by EPPs** above.

Most undergraduate special education teacher preparation programs will add three credit hours to graduation requirements, and most postbaccalaureate programs will add six credit hours. Although the School Personnel Act does not explicitly name special education teachers, PED informed LESC staff it interprets the law to apply to special education teachers as individual pursuing the state's prekindergarten to 12th grade special education teaching license may teach the same students as an elementary or secondary math teacher. The anticipated changes would bring the total credits required for graduation from an undergraduate special education program to over 120 credit hours for every program except WNMU who plan to revise two existing courses to meet the new requirements. As in other preparation program areas, most postbaccalaureate programs will need to add two new courses to their program of study. See **Table 7: Planned Changes to Special Education Programs as Reported by EPPs** below.

Table 7: Planned Changes to Special Education Programs as Reported by EPPs

	Undergraduate			Postbaccalaureate Certificate		
	Current Total Program Credit Hours	Planned Course Changes	Expected Total Program Credit Hours	Current Total Program Credit Hours	Planned Course Changes	Expected Total Program Credit Hours
CES				Increasing from 20 instructional hours of math methods to 40 hours		
CNM				24	Add two courses, possibly drop one course	27-30
ENMU				21	Add two courses	27
NMHU	120	Adding two courses	126	21	Add two courses	27
NMSU	129	Add one course, revise one course, possibly drop one course	129-135	21	Add one course, revise one course	24
NMSU (Master's Degree)				42	Add one course, revise one course	45
SFCC				27	Add two courses, drop one existing course	30
SJC				21	Add two courses	27
UNM	127	Add one course, revise one course	130			
USW	120	Adding two courses and dropping one or two courses	120-123	24	Adding two courses and dropping one or two courses	24-27
WNMU	120	Add one course, revise two existing courses	123	22	Add two courses	28

Source: LESC Files

To meet the deadlines in the School Personnel Act, most EPPs will need to propose changes to programs of study by fall 2026. EPPs are expected to meet institutional deadlines when proposing new courses to a program of study or major course revisions. Programs develop course prerequisites, syllabi, and student learning outcomes, and typically submit the requested changes to a curriculum committee for approval. Nearly every EPP reported their institutional deadline to make submissions to this committee is in fall of 2026 for changes to course catalogues for SY28. Following this process, the Higher Education Department (HED) would review the requested changes by spring 2027. If HED approves the changes, the institution would then update their catalog, and the new courses would be available for students in fall 2027. This means EPPs need direction from PED on how to design new courses to meet forthcoming program approval requirements as soon as possible.

PED plans to collaboratively develop math methods course learning outcomes and competencies with EPPs, completing the process by December. PED contracted with Public Consulting Group, a national consulting firm focused on improving public sector operations, to design a facilitation series PED will use to collaboratively develop math methods course learning outcomes and competencies with EPPs. Learning outcomes and competencies will be developed for both candidates seeking an elementary teaching license and those seeking a secondary math endorsement. PED plans to begin the process in early September when faculty are contracted and conclude the process by December.

Implementation Considerations

LESC staff will continue to monitor implementation of Laws 2026, Chapter 53, including PED's solicitation, review, and incorporation of public comment on PED draft guidance on the mathematics instructional leadership framework, mathematics professional learning plan, mathematics intervention and support plan, and early mathematics screener.

Based on review of submitted EPP implementation plans, LESL staff recommend PED and EPPs consider the following changes to their implementation plans for Laws 2026, Chapter 53.

The Legislature should consider:

- Continuing to monitor implementation of Laws 2026, Chapter 53.

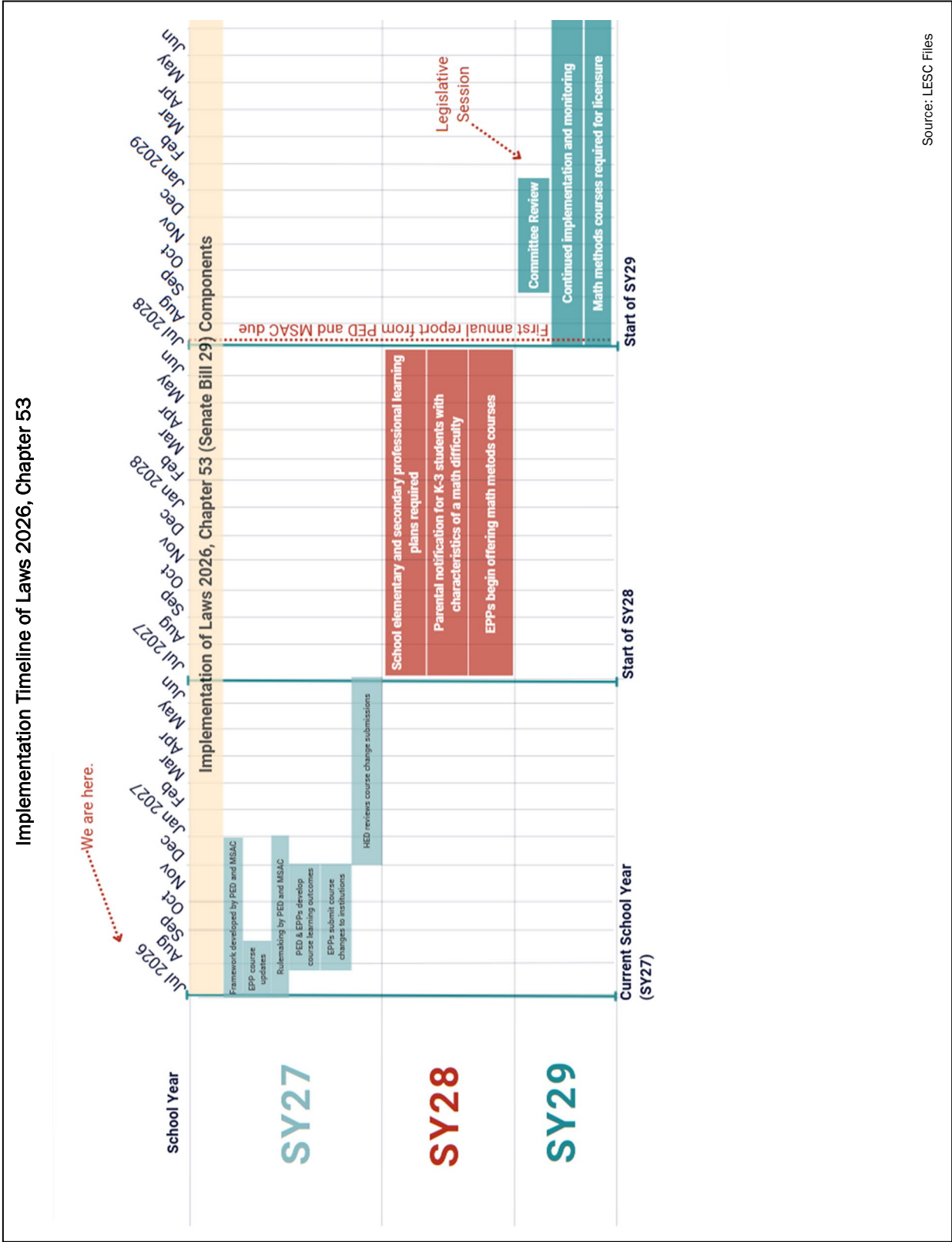
PED should consider:

- Exempting the cohort of candidates entering an undergraduate teacher preparation program in fall 2025 from completing six credit hours of math methods prior to teacher licensure;
- Providing EPPs early guidance in the form of administrative rule or memo to allow EPPs to meet institutional deadlines when revising programs of study;
- Blending instruction in math content and math methods when collaborating with EPPs to develop learning outcomes and competencies for new math methods courses, as recommended by the AMTE;
- Ensuring teacher candidates complete preparation in math content and math methods specific to the grade bands of students they will teach, with specialization in elementary and secondary preparation, at a minimum; and
- Ensuring both math methods and math content courses meet state requirements, even when the courses are taught by math department faculty.

EPPs should consider:

- Requiring teacher candidates to complete a diagnostic math content assessment prior to admission to the program to identify where candidates need additional support or coursework;
- Awarding credit for required math content coursework teacher candidates demonstrate mastery of through assessment;

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- Collaborating with PED to develop common course learning outcomes and competencies for both math methods and math content courses specific to the grade bands of students teachers will be licensed to teach; and
 - Conducting a comprehensive review of state coursework requirements for teacher candidates and making recommendations to PED and the Legislature for a comprehensive course of study that offers candidates strong preparation within four academic years of study for undergraduate programs and no more than 30 credit hours for postbaccalaureate certificate programs.



Appendix B

Planned Course Changes to Elementary Postbaccalaureate Programs as Reported by EPPs

	Institutions	Current Total Program Credit Hours	Planned Course Changes	Expected Total Program Credit Hours
Graduate Certificate Programs	Cooperative Educational Services (CES)	*Increasing from 20 instructional hours of math methods to 40 hours		
	Central New Mexico College (CNM)	24	Adding two courses, possibly dropping a curriculum development or classroom management course	27 or 30
	ENMU	21	Adding two courses	27
	New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology (NMT)	18	Adding one course and revising an existing course	21
	New Mexico Junior College (NMJC)	12	Adding two courses	18
	NMHU	21	Adding two courses	27
	NMSU	21	Revising an existing course, adding a new course, and dropping a TESOL or bilingual course	24
	NNMC	21	Adding one course	24
	Santa Fe Community College (SFCC)	21	Adding two courses	27
	San Juan College (SJC)	21	Adding two courses	27
	UNM	21	Adding one course and revising an existing course	24
	USW	24	Adding two courses and dropping one or two existing courses	24-27
	WNMU	19-21	Adding two courses	25-27
	UNM-Gallup	24	Adding two courses	27-30
Master's Degree Programs	NMSU	42	Revising an existing course, adding a new course, and dropping a TESOL or bilingual course	45
	WNMU	43-45	Revising two existing courses	43-45

Note: CES operates on instructional hours rather than academic credits.

Source: LESC Files

Appendix C

Planned Course Changes to Secondary Math Postbaccalaureate Programs as Reported by EPPs

Institutions	Current Total Program Credit Hours	Planned Course Changes	Expected Total Program Credit Hours
CES	*Increasing from 20 instructional hours of math methods to 40 hours		
CNM	21	Adding two courses, possibly dropping a curriculum development or classroom management course	24 or 27
ENMU	18	Adding two courses	24
NMT	18	Adding one course, revising one existing course	21
NMT (Undergraduate Minor)	27	Adding one course, revising one existing course	30
NMHU	18	Adding two courses	24
NMSU	18	Adding one course, revising one existing course	21
NNMC	18	Adding two courses	24
SFCC	18	Adding two courses	24
SJC	17	Adding two courses	23
UNM	17-21	Adding one course, revising one existing course	20-24
USW	24	Adding two courses and dropping one or two existing courses	24-27
WNMU	21	Adding two courses	27
UNM-Gallup	21	Adding two courses	27

Note: CES operates on instructional hours rather than academic credits.

Source: LESC Files