

AN ACT

RELATING TO EDUCATION; REQUIRING NEXT-STEP PLANS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN WHICH THE STUDENTS SET PERSONAL POST-HIGH- SCHOOL GOALS; REQUIRING A FINAL NEXT-STEP PLAN AS PREREQUISITE FOR GRADUATION.

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

Section 1. A new section of the Public School Code is enacted to read:

"NEXT-STEP PLANS REQUIRED--SCHOOL DISTRICTS, STATE BOARD AND STATE SUPERINTENDENT --ADDITIONAL DUTIES.--

A. As used in this section:

(1) "interim next-step plan" means an annual personal written plan, developed by a student, in consultation with the student's parent or guardian and school counselor or other school official charged with coursework planning for the student, in which the student specifies post-high-school goals and sets forth the coursework that will allow the student to achieve those goals; and

(2) "final next-step plan" means a personal written plan, developed by a student, in consultation with the student's parent or guardian and school counselor or other school official charged with coursework planning for the student, that shows that the student has committed or intends to commit in the near future to a four-year college or university, a two-year college, a trade or vocational program, an internship or apprenticeship, military service or a job.

B. No student shall be promoted from the ninth, tenth or eleventh grade who has not developed and filed an updated interim next-step plan within sixty

days prior to the end of each school year. The plan shall explain any differences from previous interim next-step plans, shall be filed with the principal of the student's high school and shall be signed by the student, the student's parent or guardian and the student's guidance counselor or other school official charged with coursework planning for the student.

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C. No student shall receive a high school diploma who has not completed and filed a final next-step plan prior to graduation. The plan shall be filed with the principal of the student's high school and shall be signed by the student, the student's parent or guardian and the student's guidance counselor or other school official charged with coursework planning for the student.

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D. A local school board shall ensure that each high school student has the opportunity to develop the student's next-step plan and is reasonably informed about:

- (1) curricular and course options;
- (2) opportunities available that lead to different post-high-school options; and
- (3) alternative opportunities available if the student does not finish a planned curriculum.

E. The state board shall:

- (1) establish specific accountability standards for administrators, counselors, teachers and school district staff to ensure that every student has the opportunity to develop a next-step plan; and
- (2) promulgate rules for accredited private schools in order to ensure substantial compliance with the provisions of this section.

F. The state superintendent shall:

(1) monitor compliance with the requirements of this section;

and

(2) compile such information as is necessary to evaluate the success of next-step plans and report annually, by December 15, to the legislative education study committee and the governor."

Section 2. EFFECTIVE DATE.--The effective date of the provisions of this section is July 1, 2003.