New Mexico

New Mexico High School Competency Examination (NMHSCE)

Type of test	Minimum competency
Purpose of the exam	To meet a state mandate
Major changes/pending changes in exit exam policy	This assessment will sunset on June 30, 2010. It will be replaced by the standards-based assessment in 11th grade as a graduation requirement in the 2010-11 school year.
Test used by colleges or universities for undergraduate admission?	Students can be admitted to public universities in New Mexico without having a high school diploma, but they cannot receive financial aid without a diploma or GED. A certificate of completion does not meet the requirements for financial aid. Some state universities and most community colleges use the exit exams for course placement.
Year first administered	1987-88
Year diplomas first withheld	Students in the class of 1990 were the first required to pass all subjects of the exit exam before receiving a diploma.
Subjects tested	Reading, language arts, written composition, mathematics, science, social studies
Types of questions	Multiple-choice, several short-answer questions, and a writing sample.
Grade first administered	10th
Grade(s) exam aligned to	8th-grade standards in reading, language arts, math, science, and social studies
Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12	Four. Students initially take the test once in the 10th grade and may retake it in the fall and spring of 11th grade. They have two more opportunities to retake it by the end of 12th grade.
Retakes after grade 12	Two retake opportunities each year for up to five years after 12th grade
Does the state have reciprocity with other states?	Results on another stateôs test is part of the portfolio of information submitted to the secretary of education in a waiver request and is considered on a case-by-case basis.
Exit exam used for No	In school year 2010-11, exit exams will be used for both NCLB and

Child Left Behind (NCLB)?	high school graduation, most likely with different cut scores for each purpose.
Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?	See above
Do schools face *additional* (other than NCLB) accountability consequences linked to student performance on the exit exam?	No
Evaluations of the state exit exam	State committees, in partnership with the test vendor, conducted item review and field testing of new items for the NMHSCE every year from 1987 to 1998. The last item review was conducted in 2003-04. The 2006 technical report is available online at http://ped.state.nm.us/AssessmentAccountability/AcademicGrowth/dl08/TechnicalReports/New%20Mexico%20HSCE%202006%20Technical%20Report.pdf
State test contractor	CTB/McGraw Hill was the original contractor. Harcourt is printing, distributing, and scoring the NMHSCE beginning in the 2006-07 school year. Pearson is continuing the contractual obligation since their merger with Harcourt.
Does the state provide students with alternate paths to graduation?	The state does not allow students to submit scores from other tests to replace its exit exam, but it does allow districts to grant waivers of the exam requirement. Students who have met all graduation requirements except passing the exit exam may be granted a certificate of completion indicating the number of credits earned and the grade completed. Beginning in school year 2010-11, if a student is not able to demonstrate competence in math, reading, language arts (writing), science, and social studies, a certificate of credits earned and grade completed will be issued. The student will have five years from completion of the 12th grade to demonstrate competency and subsequently be issued a diploma. In the 2010-11 school year, students will have an opportunity to offer an alternate demonstration of competency through a portfolio of standards-based indicators in any subject area that was not passed on the 11th grade standards-based assessment.

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	(22-13-1.1 NMSA)
Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners	No, but English language learners (ELLs) are eligible for the same waiver and certificate options as general education students. Also, a Spanish version of the exam is available.
Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities	There are currently three pathways to the diploma in New Mexico. The pathways are Standard, Career Readiness, and Ability, and each has its own requirements: • **Standard:** Students must meet the districtôs graduation requirements that apply to all students • **Career Readiness:** Students must take the NMHSCE and meet a competency level determined by the studentôs individualized education program (IEP) team • **Ability:** Students must take either the NMHSCE or the New Mexico alternate assessment and meet a competency level determined by the IEP team Like all other students, students with disabilities who complete 12th grade without having passed the exit exam may receive a certificate of completion. However, a follow-up plan of action must be completed in order to provide a free, appropriate public education to these students as they pursue the process of meeting graduation requirements. Students with disabilities receive accommodations according to their needs. Please see the link below: http://sde.state.nm.us/AssessmentAccountability/AssessmentEvaluation/dl09/2009%20Accommodations%20Manual.pdf For students with significant cognitive disability, the New Mexico Alternate Performance Assessment serves as the assessment for adequate yearly progress (AYP) and the graduation exit exam.
Who makes decisions on whether a student is eligible to use alternate paths?	The school principal, district superintendent, local school board, and the state secretary of education
What is the process for a student to apply for alternate paths to graduate?	The appeal must be initiated by the school principal and sent to the district superintendent and local school board. If the waiver is approved by the local school board, the district superintendent submits a waiver request to the state secretary of education for consideration and approval. The waiver request must include documentation of the student having met all other graduation requirements.

	In the 2010-11 school year, students will have an opportunity to offer an alternate demonstration of competency through a portfolio of standards-based indicators in any subject area that was not passed on the 11th grade standards-based assessment. The New Mexico statute that establishes the alternate paths does not specify who makes the determination. This will become a local education agency decision.
When calculating the graduation rate for AYP purposes, does the state count students taking alternate paths together with graduates who passed the high school exit exams?	These rules have not been established.
Types of assistance the state provides for all districts to raise *initial* pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam	The state does *not* provide assistance or intervention to all districts to raise initial pass rates.
Types of assistance or remediation the state provides for all districts to help students who have failed their initial attempt to pass the exit exam	The state does *not* provide assistance or remediation to all districts to help students who have failed in their initial attempt to pass the exit exam.
Does the state provide funding for remediation?	No
Are districts mandated by law to provide remediation?	No
Are students required to participate in remediation?	No

Initial pass rates, 2008

Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try, 2008							
Student Group	**Reading**	**Language Arts**	**Writing Composition**	**Math**	**Science**	**Social Studies**	**All Six Subjects**
All students	83.0%	74.8%	89.1 %	76.8%	74.1%	79.9%	57.1%
White	93.2%	86.3%	93.4%	88.0%	88.5%	90.0%	75.5%
African American	81.6%	71.0%	87.1%	69.1%	67.6%	75.1%	50.1%
Latino	79.5%	70.9%	87.5%	73.1%	70.2%	76.0%	50.0%
Asian	88.3%	83.1%	91.9%	90.0%	83.7%	85.0%	73.2%
Native American	76.4%	69.5%	87.7%	71.0%	63.9%	77.0%	43.7%
English language learners	56.6%	47.7%	73.4%	53.6%	45.5%	58.4%	19.7%
Migrant	52.3%	42.0%	67.1%	53.9%	38.3%	50.9%	16.2%
Students with disabilities	58.6%	45.9%	71.1%	48.7%	49.1%	59.3%	29.9%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	77.2%	67.9%	85.5%	70.1%	66.1%	74.2%	46.2%
Passing score (on a varying scale*)	**175**	**175**	**3.0**	**175**	**175**	**175**	**175**

Note: The tests, except for writing, are scored on a scale of 0 to approximately 300 points, depending on the particular forms used each year. The writing test is scored using a 6-point rubric. These data do not include results from the New Mexico Alternate Performance Assessment for students with severe cognitive disabilities. English and Spanish testing results are combined.

Cumulative pass rates, 2008

Percentage of Students Passing by the End of 12th Grade							
	Reading	**Language Arts**	**Writing Composition**	**Math**	**Science**	**Social Studies**	**All Six Subjects**
All students	76.7%	68.6%	85.3%	70.1%	66.2%	73.5%	55.8%
White	90.4%	82.4%	90.6%	83.8%	84.5%	86.8%	74.8%
African American	75.1%	65.3%	82.5%	61.8%	60.0%	69.3%	49.0%
Latino	72.3%	64.1%	83.2%	65.9%	61.6%	68.6%	48.6%
Asian	85.2%	80.9%	89.7%	87.6%	80.6%	82.8%	72.6%
Native American	67.7%	61.0%	82.7%	62.0%	53.7%	68.4%	42.1%
English language learners	49.8%	42.6%	68.6%	48.1%	40.0%	51.7%	19.0%
Migrant	48.8%	42.3%	67.7%	52.9%	44.5%	49.2%	16.1%
Students with disabilities	52.6%	42.6%	66.7%	43.4%	44.5%	54.9%	28.5%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	70.2%	61.6%	81.2%	63.3%	58.2%	67.3%	44.9%

Note: These data do not include results from the New Mexico Alternate Performance Assessment for students with severe cognitive disabilities. English and Spanish testing results are combined.

State graduation rates in 2007-08	Not available