

NEW MEXICO SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS  
HIGH SCHOOL

**GRADUATION POLICY**

Graduation from New Mexico School for the Arts (NMSA) signifies that students have satisfactorily completed the course of study, have passed all examinations and have met all requirements established by the faculty, the Governing Council and the State of New Mexico.

A senior student, who fulfills all course credit requirements, but does not successfully pass one of the graduation assessments required by the State of New Mexico, may receive a certificate of completion but not a traditional high school diploma.

Participation in graduation ceremonies is a privilege, not a right. Only those students who have completed the required coursework may participate.

Blank diplomas will not be issued, nor shall any student who failed to complete all requirements for graduation as of May 15 of the graduation year be permitted to participate in graduation exercises. In other words, students must have passing grades (A,B,C, or D) in all courses needed to meet the graduation requirements as of May 15 of the graduation year in order to participate in the graduation ceremony.

NMSA will notify parents and students in writing each quarter regarding any student who is at risk for not meeting graduation requirements. Meetings will be convened to develop intervention plans to provide students with the resources required to be successful and to participate in graduation. NMSA will notify all students in writing of their graduation status by May 1. Any challenge to this status must be presented to the Principal not later than May 3. The Principal will make the final decision regarding graduation preparation.

**Grade Change Policy**

NMSA has a Grade Change Policy in the event there is a grade challenge.

**Awarding of Credits**

NMSA students shall receive credit for all course work completed with passing grades at private schools similarly approved or accredited. Appropriate adjustments in awarding credit will be made by successful completion of college credit through dual enrollment; or receiving a satisfactory grade from an accredited summer school course. Under special circumstances, though rare, the Principal may approve an independent course of study if recommended to the Principal by the counselor, based on recommendations from the department chair.

A student's middle school record of high school level math and, in certain cases, foreign language, will become a part of the student's high school transcript. If a middle school student takes a foreign language in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and the same language in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, or two full sequential years, that student may carry one (1) credit of foreign language to the high school as part of his/her high school transcript only if the student has earned a grade of "C" or better in all semesters. High school credit will be awarded to any middle school course that is posted on the middle school transcript as a high school class.

Graduation Policy

Adopted: 12/12/11

Amended: 10/1/13, 2/13/14, 7/11/14, 8/21/19, 11/16/22

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The Head of School, based on analysis from the registrar, will make final decisions on credit to be awarded, if any, for home study or from coursework at non-accredited institutions to insure that it aligns with Common Core State Standards.

NMSA requirements for graduation may exceed New Mexico minimums. Successful completion of the coursework is expected of all graduating students from NMSA.

It is the student's responsibility to meet individually with the counselor to make sure their course of studies meets any and all graduation requirements.

The Counselor completes a thorough credit check during the student's junior and senior years to ensure Graduation requirements are outlined with the students. Once credit checks are completed, it is the responsibility of the student to pass and complete the required courses.

All NMSA students in grades 9 – 11, will attend Next-Step-Planning sessions to ensure students are on track to graduate within four (4) years. This plan will be re-evaluated in the fall semester of the senior year.

During the student's senior year, at each quarter, any student who has a failing grade in any class will be notified in writing that he or she is in jeopardy of failing to graduate and will not be able to participate in graduation events. A Student Assistance Team (SAT) meeting or telephone conference call will be held with the student, parents, teacher, counselor and Head of School or Head of School's designee to ensure that the student, parents, guardians and families understand the consequences of the failing grade. For conference calls, a letter memorializing the conversation will be sent.

#### Grading Scale

It is the intent of the Governing Council to maintain a grading system that is consistent with college entrance grade requirements. NMSA has a 4.0 Grading Scale. Grades will be calculated as follows:

- A – 4 points
- B – 3 points
- C – 2 points
- D – 1 point
- F – 0 points

#### Weighted Credit

It is the intent of the Governing Council to maintain a grading system that is consistent with college entrance grade requirements; accordingly for courses taken at NMSA, weighted credit will be awarded for Honors and Advanced Placement Courses. Weighted credit will not be allowed for pre-AP courses.

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Such grades will be calculated as follows:

A – 5 points

B – 4 points

C – 2 points

D – 1 points

F – 0 points

All high school credits and grades, earned at another accredited high school, transferred by a student entering NMSA will be converted into the existing NMSA graduation and credit system approved for high school graduation.

G.P.A. will be re-calculated according to courses and grades used in NMSA. All conversions will be calculated by the registrar and verified by the counselor or designee.

Valedictorian, Salutatorian, Graduation with Honors

It is the intent of the Governing Council to recognize outstanding student performance.

The Grade Point Average (GPA) is calculated up to the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter (including the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter) of the graduation year.

Valedictorian: student with the highest GPA at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter (including the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter) of the graduation year.

Salutatorian: student with the second highest GPA at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter (including the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter) of the graduation year.

Honor Awards:

Highest Honors	$GPA \geq 4.0$
High Honors	$3.75 \leq GPA < 4.0$
Honors	$3.50 \leq GPA < 3.75$

State Seal of Bilingualism and Biliteracy

A student may receive the Seal of Bilingual-Biliteracy on the diploma and have it noted on the school transcript by demonstrating proficiency in a language other than English. Proficiency in a language other than English can be demonstrated through one of the following methods:

1. Certification by an individual Native American Tribe
2. Four units of credit and a nationally recognized assessment
3. Four units of credit and alternative process portfolio
4. Nationally recognized assessment and alternative portfolio process

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This Graduation Policy was amended by the Governing Council of the New Mexico School for the Arts, effective November 16, 2022.

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ATTEST;



Bill Beacham, Chair  
of the Governing Council



PAULA TACKETT, Secretary  
of the Governing Council