F I S C A L   I M P A C T   R E P O R T

SPONSOR	Gonzales/Sarinana/Mirabal Moya	**LAST UPDATED**	
		ORIGINAL DATE	2/17/25
SHORT TITLE	School Personnel Computer Science Licensure	**BILL NUMBER**	House Bill 297
		ANALYST	Liu

APPROPRIATION*
(dollars in thousands)

FY25	FY26	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
	$250.0	Recurring	General Fund

Parentheses ( ) indicate expenditure decreases.
*Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

Relates to Senate Bill 242
Relates to appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

Sources of Information
LFC Files
Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) Files

Agency Analysis Received From
Public Education Department (PED)
Higher Education Department (HED)
New Mexico Independent Community Colleges (NMICC)
University of New Mexico (UNM)
New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology (NMT)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of House Bill 297

House Bill 297 (HB297) appropriates $250 thousand from the general fund to PED to provide professional development for teachers who want to obtain or maintain a computer science endorsement in FY26 and FY27. This bill does not contain an effective date and, as a result, would go into effect 90 days after the Legislature adjourns if enacted, or June 20, 2025.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of $250 thousand contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general

fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY27 shall revert to the general fund. Although the bill does not specify future appropriations, establishing a new grant program could create an expectation the program will continue in future fiscal years; therefore, this cost is assumed to be recurring.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Provisions of this bill would simply incorporate the existing secondary computer science license endorsement pathways outlined in 6.64.20.8 NMAC, which were adopted in 2021. As such, these changes will likely not affect secondary teachers seeking this endorsement.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

This bill relates to Senate Bill 242, which amends a similar section of statute to create additional requirements for licensure related to the science of reading.

The executive, LESC, and LFC budget recommendations for public schools all include a three-year pilot program to improve student math achievement, ranging from $15.5 million to $38.4 million. LESC further recommends a $6 million recurring appropriation for a science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM) initiative to PED, which could cover purposes of this bill. LESC additionally recommends a $6 million, three-year pilot to create a STEM innovation network to coordinate resources and entities involved in STEM across the state.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

The Math and Science Advisory Council (MSAC), a 12-member council advising PED on policy and programs related to the Mathematics and Science Education Act, recommended in its 2024 annual report:
- Creating, implementing, funding, and recruiting educators to earn a kindergarten-to-sixth-grade computer science licensure endorsement, and
- Continuing to support and fund kindergarten-to-12th grade (K-12) teacher professional learning opportunities in computer science and related ecosystems (i.e., connecting classrooms, nonprofits, museums, and workforce partners).

In FY24, MSAC reported PED's Math and Science Bureau partnered with the New Teacher Project to provide a 40-hour virtual professional learning course for 34 educators to integrate computer science into math and science.

In 2021, PED adopted a five-year plan to provide a K-12 computer science education to all students by 2026. The plan included targets to:
- Create teacher pathways for computer science endorsement,
- Align annual course reviews and professional learning,
- Meet seven out of nine Code.org Policy Principles,
- Complete K-12 integration in the NM DASH platform,
- Ensure 50 percent of districts and charters have an implementation plan,
- Ensure 25 percent of districts and charters offer a computer science integrated course,
- Ensure every high school offers a secondary computer science course,
- Ensure every high school has computer science and information technology concentrators

or completers,
- Ensure 50 percent of high schools offer computer science certifications for students,
- Help 200 K-12 educators earn a computer science endorsement, and
- Provide ongoing training for administrators and school staff, and
- Acquire recurring funding sources from the Legislature to support computer science.

A 2016 LFC evaluation found the high tech industry in New Mexico hired a lower percent of graduates with STEM degrees from New Mexico institutions than expected compared to the industry national average. In other words, 75 percent of the workforce held a STEM degree in computer systems design companies nationwide, but only 40 percent of New Mexico graduates hired by computer systems design companies in New Mexico held a STEM degree. The cause of this finding was unclear, but the report suggested that New Mexico high tech industries preferred to hire STEM graduates from other states. Alternatively, it may mean that high tech companies in New Mexico required a less STEM-knowledgeable workforce.

According to Code.org, an education nonprofit, nationwide nearly 60 percent of high schools offered a foundational computer science course in 2024. New Mexico was slightly lower than the national average at 54 percent. Access to computer science courses was relatively even across geographic areas but more prevalent in larger high schools, with 42 percent of small high schools offering computer science versus 91 percent in large high schools.

A 2020 national survey by Kapor Center and the Computer Science Teachers Association found most computer science teachers in the United States identified as white (75 percent) and female (64 percent) and were teaching predominantly in high income, urban, and less racially diverse schools. Only 30 percent graduated with a computer science degree, 46 percent had a related credential, and only 16 percent had more than 11 years of experience in teaching computer science.

SL/hg/sgs