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**AGENCY BILL ANALYSIS
2025 REGULAR SESSION**

WITHIN 24 HOURS OF BILL POSTING, EMAIL ANALYSIS TO:

LFC@NMLEGIS.GOV

and

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{Include the bill no. in the email subject line, e.g., HB2, and only attach one bill analysis and related documentation per email message}

SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

{Indicate if analysis is on an original bill, amendment, substitute or a correction of a previous bill}

Click all that apply:

Original **Amendment**
Correction **Substitute**

Date 2025-02-06
Bill No: HB297

Sponsor: Gonzales, Roberto "Bobby" J **Agency Name and Code** NMHED
Short SCHOOL PERSONNEL **Number:** _____
Title: COMPUTER SCIENCE **Person Writing** Chisholm, Mark
Phone: 5052716754 **Email** mark.chisholm@hed.n

SECTION II: FISCAL IMPACT

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY25	FY26		
N/A	\$250.0	Nonrecurring, balance, if any, reverts at end of FY27	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

REVENUE (dollars in thousands)

Estimated Revenue	Recurring	Fund
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FY25	FY26	FY27	or Nonrecurring	Affected
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY25	FY26	FY27	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates/Conflicts with/Companion to/Relates to:

Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act:

SECTION III: NARRATIVE

BILL SUMMARY

House Bill 297 (HB297) amends 22-10A-7. F. of the School Personnel Act to specify alternative qualifications required for a teaching license endorsement in computer science at any grade level.

A computer science endorsement currently exists in the act, but HB297 directs the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) to establish requirements for the endorsement. This measure appears to create six possible alternative qualifications for the endorsement, as follows:

- earned 15 postsecondary course credits in computer science;
- passed the NMPED-approved teacher licensure examination for computer science;
- a minimum of two years of work experience in an industry related to computer science, which the applicant must validate using a verifiable list of references;
- an industry certification in a field related to computer science, which the applicant must validate using official documentation of the industry certification;
- completed 60 hours of professional development within the three years immediately prior to applying for a computer science endorsement, which the applicant must validate using documentation from the organization that provided the professional development, including the number of hours of each training; or

- three or more years of computer science teaching experience, including computer coding program structure in one or more languages, debugging computer programs, computer modeling and skills relevant to applications such as data management, graphics, and text processing, which the applicant must validate with a letter signed by a school district administrator, charter school administrator or school principal.

HB297 also makes an appropriation of two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) in non-recurring funds from the General Fund for professional development for teachers who want a new or renewed computer science endorsement.

The New Mexico Higher Education Department's (NMHED's) analysis of this bill focuses on the higher education implications of the proposed legislation. Additional insight may be obtained from other agencies' analyses.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) in non-recurring funds from the General Fund to the NMPED is for expenditures in FY26 and FY27. Any unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY27 shall revert to the General Fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Per the requirements from HB188 enacted in the 2021 legislative session, NMPED has created a pathway for secondary teachers to earn an endorsement in computer science:
<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/licensure/endorsements-how-to-add-a-license/computer-science/>

HB297 removes the language relating to the secondary level, now requiring that a pathway be created for teachers of all K-12 levels.

The availability of computer science in K-12 varies across the nation. The organization Code.org tracks the offering of computer science in K-12 and produces annual reports:
<https://advocacy.code.org/stateofcs/#:~:text=This%20annual%20report%20on%20K,computer%20science%20education%20policy%2C%20including>

In their 2024 Annual Report, 54 percent of New Mexico high schools offer computer science compared to a national average of 60 percent.

A scan of New Mexico's four-year higher education institutions (HEIs) found that only New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU) offers a program explicitly leading to licensure in teaching computer science (Math and Computer Science for Secondary Teachers). It is unclear if math teacher preparation programs at other HEIs include pathways to earn computer science endorsements in their required coursework.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

HB297 explicitly lists six pathways for a teacher to earn or maintain a computer science endorsement. NMPED would need to modify their existing criteria for computer science endorsements and also ensure that the endorsement was available to all teachers, not just secondary teachers.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

NMPED will administer the program.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

The New Mexico Legislature has proposed several pieces of legislation regarding computer science in K-12 education since the 2017 legislative session. HB297 continues these efforts.

- In 2017, SB134 required that one unit of math or science coursework required for graduation could be fulfilled through one unit of computer science courses. This was enacted.
- In 2019, SJM9 sought to create a computer science task force to study the development of a strategic plan for expanding computer science education in elementary and secondary schools. This was not enacted.
- In 2019, HB341 sought to create a fund which would have provided grants to schools and districts for teacher professional development in computer science. This was not enacted.
- In 2020, SB222 sought to create pre-service computer science education programs. This bill was not enacted. A similar bill (HB136) has been proposed this legislative session (see Conflict, Duplication, Companionship and Relationship).
- In 2021, HB126 would have made computer science courses a required part of high school course offerings. This bill was not enacted. HB171 from the current legislative session includes a provision which requires computer science courses be offered in high school (see Conflict, Duplication, Companionship and Relationship).
- In 2021, HB188 amended existing statute to require NMPED to create a pathway for endorsement in secondary computer science by December 31, 2021. This bill was enacted. The requirements from HB188 from 2021 are what HB297 from this legislative session amends.
- In 2023, HB335 would have required computer science coursework be included in elementary and middle school. Additionally, it would have required that computer science courses be offered in high schools. This bill was not enacted.
- In 2024, HB171 included a provision which requires that computer science courses be offered in high school. This bill was enacted.
- In 2024, HB277 was introduced that was very similar to this year's HB297, though it did not list the six pathways to certification. That bill was not enacted.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

N/A

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

N/A

ALTERNATIVES

N/A

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

N/A

AMENDMENTS

N/A