

Fiscal impact reports (FIRs) are prepared by the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) for standing finance committees of the NM Legislature. The LFC does not assume responsibility for the accuracy of these reports if they are used for other purposes.

Current and previously issued FIRs are available on the NM Legislative Website (www.nmlegis.gov).

FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Candelaria/Stewart ORIGINAL DATE 2/06/2020
LAST UPDATED 2/07/2020 HB _____

SHORT TITLE Pre-Service Teacher Computer Science Program SB 222

ANALYST Chilton

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY20	FY21		
	\$1,000.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Similar to 2019 HB341

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

New Mexico Independent Community Colleges (NMICC)

University of New Mexico (UNM)

Higher Education Department (HED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 222 appropriates \$1 million from the general fund to the Higher Education Department for the purpose of developing a grant program for state higher education institutions to develop pre-service computer science education programs to address shortages in computer science teachers' availability to New Mexico schools.

The grants to be made by HED under this bill would require recipient colleges and universities to make linkages with schools that need such teachers, to assure that there would be a career pathway for teachers prepared under this program.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$1 million contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of each fiscal year shall revert to the general fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Senate Bill 222 makes reference to the lack of available computer science teachers for New Mexico schools, despite a \$400 thousand appropriation to the Public Education Department for grants to schools, included in the budget for fiscal year 2020. One website, indeed.com, indicates 42 computer science teacher openings in New Mexico. If more educational opportunities in computer science were made available for newly-graduated teachers and for teachers wishing to change fields, these vacant positions might be more easily filled.

NMICC notes that “According to the sponsors of Computer Science Education Week, 90 percent of parents want their children to study computer science, but only 45 percent of high schools actually teach computer science. Yet in the modern world, computer science is foundational just like biology, chemistry, and physics. (csedweek.org/promote).”

Paige Prescott, president of the Computer, when asked to quantify unfilled positions for computer science teachers in New Mexico, wrote that there are no available data on this overall, but that

...the following districts/schools have advertised for positions for CS but were not able to fill them:

- Santa Fe Public Schools- middle school CS, full time for 2019-2020, advertised, unfilled
- Las Cruces Public Schools- HS and MS CS 2019-2020. No applicants for those specific positions so they worked with existing staff to take on those classes with trainings over the summer
- APS- 2 current CS teacher have too many sections for their FTEs, no applicants willing to take on CS
- Hobbs- advertised for a CS teacher 2018-19, had to split the position between 2 teachers and get trainings over the summer
- Central Consolidated (Shiprock HS)- teacher that had 2 sections of CS, left district in 2018, no applicants willing to take on CS classes therefore no CS classes have been offered.

This type of situation is common- A teacher creates a CS class, grows a CS program but then there are no new teachers ready to teach these classes and therefore the program ceases if/when that teacher leaves.

RELATIONSHIP

Relates to 2019 HB341, which would have appropriated funds to the Public Education Department to make grants to secondary schools (“eligible entities”) to further computer science education preparation for those entities’ teachers.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

NMICC points out that, although they have teacher preparation programs, they would appear to be excluded from applying for the grants that would be awarded through HED, in that the grant specifies “state educational institutions.”

UNM makes the following points:

- Without more clear requirements for the funding/grants, it will be difficult to measure progress and effectiveness of the grantees. If this is mean to be left up to HED to determine in the request for proposals, the primary aim for this bill may or may not end up being fulfilled.
- A plan will be needed to outline long-term funding.
- It is unclear what is meant by “to address equity” on page 1, line 22. It is also unclear how the requirement will address the equity.

HED notes that the bill does not specify a method of disbursing funds, requesting that SB222 indicate which of the following methods is to be used:

- “1) to all Higher Education Institutes (HEI's) based on the funding formula for calculations;
- 2) to all HEI's with Teacher Preparation Programs, based on the funding formula for calculations;
- 3) to a set of HEI's based on their responses to a Request for Proposal soliciting proposals for the development of a pre-service teacher computer science education program to address the computer science teacher shortage in the state; or
- 4) another process identified by the bill's sponsors.”

LAC/rl/sb