LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS
57th Legislature, 2nd Session, 2026

Bill Number HB100 **Sponsor** Gonzales, A./Sariñana/Garratt

Tracking Number .233227.1 **Committee Referrals** HEC/HAFC

Short Title STEM Innovation Network Funding

Analyst Hicks **Original Date** 1/26/2026
Last Updated

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 100 (HB100) would appropriate $3 million from the general fund to the Public Education Department (PED) to support the operations of the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) innovation network for FY27.

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill appropriates $3 million from the general fund to PED for expenditure in FY27. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY27 shall revert to the general fund.

The LESC budget recommendation for FY27 includes $3 million specifically for the STEM innovation network and an additional $3 million for broader science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) initiatives. The executive recommendation includes $6 million for STEAM initiatives, which could include the STEM innovation network, but it does not specifically name this purpose. Similarly, the Legislative Finance Committee's budget recommendation includes $3 million for STEAM initiatives, but it does not include specific funding for the STEM innovation network.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

STEM Innovation Network Funding. In the 2025 legislative session, lawmakers appropriated $3 million from the general fund to PED to launch the STEM innovation network and support its operations in FY26. This funding was included in the General Appropriation Act of 2025.

New Mexico STEM Innovation Network. In summer 2025, PED signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the STEM Outreach Center at New Mexico State University (NMSU) to serve as the principal hub of the STEM innovation network. This MOU directed the STEM innovation network to focus on three priorities in its first year:

- Inquiry-based STEM learning, with a particular focus on math during the 2025-2026 academic year (SY26);
- Expansion of out-of-school time (OST) STEM programs; and
- Strengthening connections between education and industry.

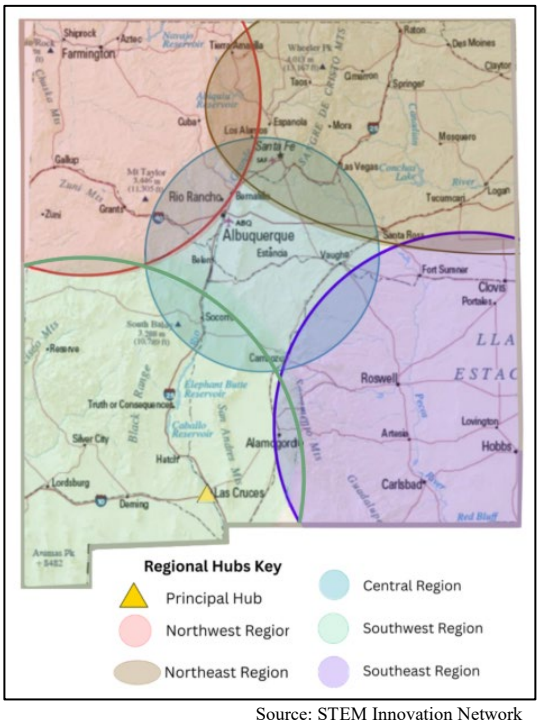
Principal Hub. Under the terms of the MOU, the network is meant to consist of one principal hub at NMSU and up to eight regional hubs. The NMSU principal hub is directed to work closely with PED, primarily through the department's Math and Science Bureau, to align network activities with state priorities. The principal hub is also responsible for supporting regional hubs through professional development and resources; hosting statewide leadership convenings on math instruction, OST resources, and school-industry partnerships and pathways; organizing the annual Governor's STEM Challenge and Showcase; providing support to the Supercomputing Challenge; and offering mini-grants to support teacher professional learning and STEM engagement.

Regional Hubs. As of January 2026, the STEM innovation network has designated five regional hubs:

- Northwest Region: San Juan College;
- Northeast Region: New Mexico Highlands University;
- Central Region: Explora/R4Creating/New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology;
- Southwest Region: Western New Mexico University/Southwest Regional Education Cooperative; and
- Southeast Region: Regional Education Cooperative #6 (Portales).

These regional hubs are intended to serve as the local footprint of the network and develop partnerships with higher education, industry, career and technical education programs, and the Department of Workforce Solutions to coordinate regional resources, identify and promote programs, share best practices, and connect industry partners and educational organizations to provide pathways to STEM careers.

Figure 1: STEM Network Primary and Regional Hubs



Source: STEM Innovation Network

STEM Mini-Grants. According to the STEM network's January 2026 summary report, the NMSU principal hub issued almost $300 thousand in mini-grant funding to 23 awardees representing six geographic regions of the state. This funding was used to connect nearly 2,300 students with both in- and out-of-school STEM programs and competitions, provide 375 educators with STEM professional development, and support projects focused on artificial intelligence, robotics, cybersecurity, aerospace, fabrication, healthcare, and other topics. Of the 23 awardee projects, 18 serve rural areas. Seven of the 23 projects serve tribal communities.

STEM Readiness. New Mexico's STEM Ready! science standards and math framework place a strong emphasis on preparing students for a 21st century economy and society increasingly driven by the impacts of STEM. However, assessment data shows New Mexico students are not

adequately prepared for the current and future STEM job market. NM Vistas data from SY25 shows just 25 percent of New Mexico students were proficient in math, though this is a slight improvement from 23 percent in the previous year. In science, 35 percent of students were proficient in SY25, down from 38 percent in SY24.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

HB100 would provide funding to continue the operations of the STEM innovation network. Continued funding would likely translate to continued administrative support from PED to the network. Given that this administrative support is already being provided, it is unlikely continued funding would create an additional burden on the department.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

National Context. At a July 2024 LESC hearing, both national and state representatives with expertise in STEM education and workforce development, along with PED and LESC staff, presented on the potential of a STEM innovation network. Panelists cited the state's low proficiency rates in both science and math, as well as the siloed nature of existing resources, as barriers to workforce development and academic excellence in STEM. Testimony from STEMx, a national STEM organization supporting STEM networks in other states, outlined best practices in various states' STEM networks, which informed the design of New Mexico's.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESC Files
- New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology
- New Mexico Regional Education Cooperatives (REC)

CLH/ec/mca/jkh