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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 29/aSEC

SHORT TITLE: Math Requirements for Teaching License

SPONSOR: Sen. Soules/Rep. Sariñana

LAST ORIGINAL
UPDATE: 1/28/26 **DATE:** 1/22/26 **ANALYST:** Liu

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT*

(dollars in thousands)

Agency/Program	FY26	FY27	FY28	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
		Indeterminate but minimal	\$4,826.3 - \$5,504.3	\$4,826.3 - \$5,504.3	Recurring	General Fund

Parentheses () indicate expenditure decreases.

*Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

Relates to House Bills 89, 100, and Senate Bill 37

Sources of Information

LFC Files

Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) Files

Agency Analysis Received From

Public Education Department

Regional Education Cooperatives

University of New Mexico

New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology

SUMMARY

Synopsis of SEC Amendment

The Senate Education Committee amendment to Senate Bill 29 delays additional math method course requirements for teacher licensure until FY29, requires PED to adopt math tests that have minimal impact on instructional time with timely reporting of results, removes a requirement to administer the math screener within the first 30 days of the school year, limits parental notification and interventions to only students displaying characteristics of math difficulty on the screener, and requires an assurance that parents with students identified as having math difficulties will receive monthly written progress reports.

Synopsis of Senate Bill 29

Senate Bill 29 (SB29) adds new math course requirements for teacher licensure and math endorsement, expands the Public Education Department's (PED) monitoring and technical

assistance responsibilities for instructional materials and math plans, requires schools to administer a math screening test to every student in kindergarten through third grade, requires schools to notify parents about the results and provide interventions for struggling students, and adds new reporting to the governor and the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) on math plans and interventions. This bill is endorsed by LESC.

This bill does not contain an effective date and, as a result, would go into effect 90 days after the Legislature adjourns, which is May 20, 2026. However, certain provisions, such as the math screening test and interventions, have a delayed implementation date of the beginning of the 2027-2028 school year.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The bill does not include an appropriation but would create additional operating budget costs in FY28 with the implementation of new math screening, parental notification, and math intervention requirements for elementary schools. PED may also incur some additional operating costs to develop the math instructional leadership framework and provide technical assistance on math learning and support plans.

According to PED, the cost of administering a math screener could be absorbed by the department's assessment budget, and many schools already have a means for parental notification in place. As such, the main implementation costs will be providing evidence-based math interventions that are targeted, differentiated, and supplemental to core instruction beginning in FY28. In FY25, PED reported the following math proficiency rates for kindergarten through third grade:

New Mexico Math Proficiency Rates				
Assessment	Grade	2024	2025	2025 N Count
iStation	K	56%	57%	16,601
iStation	1	63%	63%	16,901
iStation	2	25%	25%	17,559
NM-MSSA	3	24%	25%	20,969

Source: PED

Assuming the student counts and proficiency rates are similar by FY28, schools would need to provide math interventions for approximately 42.3 thousand students. On average, 46 percent of students statewide scored at performance level 1 (novice) and 28 percent at performance level 2 (nearing proficiency) in FY25, meaning about 26.3 thousand students would likely need more intensive interventions than the average.

This fiscal impact assumes most schools will provide high-impact tutoring as the primary intervention for students with math difficulties. Providing a 4-to-1 student-to-tutor ratio for 90 minutes per week over the course of 14 weeks at a rate of \$35 per hour for 42.3 thousand students would cost about \$7.8 million. This cost is likely understated due to a lower test participation rate for kindergarten through second grade. Assuming the number of tested students in these grades matches the third grade count, the costs of providing high-impact tutoring could rise to about \$8.9 million.

The SEC amendment limits the requirement for providing math interventions to only students displaying characteristics of a math difficulty, which the bill defines as a student's inability to

perform at grade level when learning or applying mathematical concepts as determined by screening or other assessments. While the term “inability” is not defined, the change implies a more narrow subgroup of students that must receive interventions. As such, this analysis assumes the interventions will only apply to the proportion of students scoring at the lowest performance level (novice) and needing more intensive supports, which brings the cost assumption down to a range between \$4.8 million and \$5.5 million.

New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology (NMT) estimates the 3-year cost for additional faculty compensation and professional development would be \$83.8 thousand to provide the additional math methods courses outlined in this bill. UNM also notes the additional requirements for math method course hours may result in additional costs to higher education institutions from redesigning content, hiring faculty, and navigating program approval. Additionally, increased coursework requirements may extend the time to degree for teacher candidates and raise the costs of obtaining a degree.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Provisions of this bill are comparable to state practices related to early reading intervention, including the use of an early screening tool, alignment of instructional materials, alignment of professional learning, and development of improvement plans. Recent national movements to incorporate the “science of reading” within public schools have spurred legislative action to retrain teachers, restrict certain instructional approaches, and align operations to evidence-based practices. Unlike reading, however, an equivalent “science of math” does not yet exist, as the body of research and evidence is more limited. Like reading, advocates of math instruction often debate various aspects, including how much attention should be paid to procedural math knowledge (e.g. algorithms) and explicit instruction versus student discovery (or inquiry) and conceptual understandings of math. Still, early screening practices outlined in this bill may lead to earlier interventions to address low math proficiency. In general, research indicates the use of data to identify student needs and inform changes to instruction is a best practice.

The University of New Mexico (UNM) cites research from the National Center for Teacher Quality (NCTQ) and LESC both emphasizing the need to strengthen math content preparation for elementary educators. Both sources identify insufficient content knowledge, rather than pedagogy, as the primary barrier to teacher effectiveness in math. UNM notes the 6-credit hour math methods requirement in the bill exceeds best practices and recommended levels for pedagogy from NCTQ and LESC reports. NMT notes the 6-credit hour requirement is recommended for elementary educators but notes PED already requires a minimum of 24 credit hours in math coursework to obtain a math endorsement and at least 12 credit hours in upper-division math coursework for secondary teacher licenses.

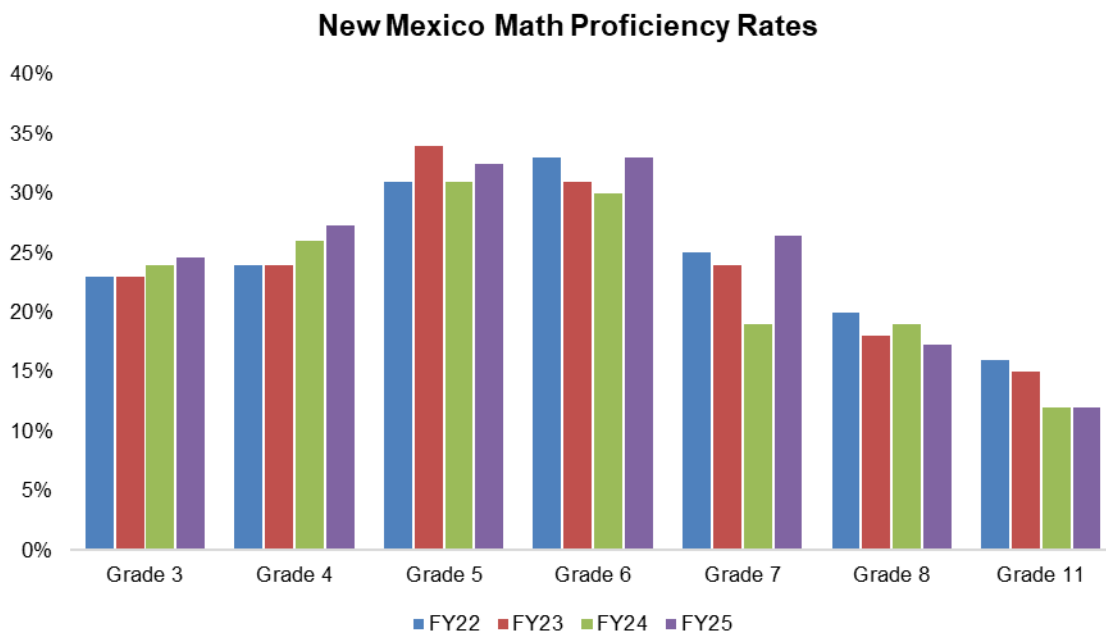
Additional requirements for teacher preparation may delay licensure or create barriers to entry for some candidates. Both nationally and in New Mexico, schools continue to report teacher shortages in math. According to New Mexico State University’s Southwest Outreach Academic Research Center, statewide teacher vacancy postings reached 604 positions in September 2025, a decrease from 751 teacher vacancies in September 2024. The subjects with the highest needs included math (37 vacancies), science (34 vacancies), and English language arts (28 vacancies).

New Mexico uses a computer-adaptive reading assessment and intervention program for grades K-2 called iStation and uses performance on the assessment as a component of the statewide

accountability system for elementary schools. The iStation test calibrates the difficulty level of questions for each student as they answer to predict their reading ability and measures growth in ability over time. iStation has a math test component; however, New Mexico does not use it for accountability purposes. The state only starts assessing math proficiency on the annual standardized test (known as MSSA) beginning in third grade. Provisions of this bill may expand the use of K-2 assessments for math and increase the need for professional learning for early mathematics.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

Provisions of this bill may affect math proficiency rates across the state. For FY25, only 25 percent of students in New Mexico tested proficient on grade-level math, which has remained consistently at this level for several years. Notably, performance on student math in the last four years has shown a trend of increasing proficiency between third grade and fifth grade before plummeting in high school.



Source: PED, MSAC

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

Provisions of the bill require PED’s Math and Science Bureau to monitor implementation of instructional materials for alignment with state standards, a role typically relegated to the Instructional Materials Bureau. PED must also create a math instructional leadership framework for school administrators that provides standards for math content, core teacher competencies, instruction, professional learning, coaching and collaboration, and technical assistance by December 31, 2026. The bill also requires all school districts and charter schools to develop and implement math professional learning plans aligned to PED’s framework by FY28.

The bill requires all elementary and secondary teachers seeking licensure after July 1, 2027, to complete six additional hours of math methods coursework. As such, educator preparation

programs may need to add math methods courses to their program for new teacher candidates. UNM notes curricular changes at the university require approximately 12 months to 18 months for internal faculty governance approval processes and additional time for state-level review and approval through the Professional Practices and Standards Council, which may create delays in meeting the implementation timeline set within the bill.

The bill further requires school districts and charter schools to develop and implement professional learning plans for elementary and secondary math in cooperation with teachers and school administrators, with updates every 2 years. Beginning in FY28, schools must begin assessing students' math performance using a math screening assessment for all students between kindergarten and third grade within 30 days of the start of the school year (the SEC amendment removes this deadline). Schools must analyze test scores and notify parents of the results if their student is at risk of not achieving grade-level proficiency within 30 days of determination (the SEC amendment limits this just to students with math difficulties). The notice must include information about the student's areas of need, interventions provided by the school, monitoring of the student's progress, and strategies for parents to use at home.

The bill also requires PED to submit a report to the governor and LESC annually on July 1 a report that details the number of students with math difficulties, the types and effectiveness of the interventions implemented, implementation of the math instructional leadership framework, and recommendations to improve instruction and student outcomes.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

This bill relates to Senate Bill 37, which requires a literacy assessment for students in kindergarten through third grade along with parental notification and school interventions; House Bill 89, which establishes requirements for teachers seeking a computer science endorsement, and House Bill 100, which appropriates funding for a STEM innovation network.

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