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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Sariñana/Baca/Jaramillo/Herrera
LAST UPDATED _____
ORIGINAL DATE 3/7/23
SHORT TITLE School Computer Science Classes
BILL NUMBER House Bill 335
ANALYST Helms

APPROPRIATION* (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY23	FY24		
	\$1,100.0	Nonrecurring	General Fund

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

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT* (dollars in thousands)

	FY23	FY24	FY25	2 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
		\$1,100.0 – 9,000.0	\$500.0 – \$1,000.0	\$1,600.0 – 10,000.0	Recurring	Public School Operating Budgets

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

Sources of Information

LFC Files

Responses Received From
 Public Education Department (PED)
 Department of Information Technology (DoIT)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of House Bill 335

House Bill 335 (HB335) appropriates \$1.1 million from the general fund to the computer science program fund to provide for computer science instruction, curriculum integration, courses, and teacher professional development. HB335 amends [Section 22-13-1 NMSA 1978](#) of the Public School Code to require public schools to offer computer science as embedded in existing elementary and middle school courses and as a new, stand-alone course in all high schools.

This bill does not contain an effective date and, as a result, would go into effect June 16, 2023, (90 days after the Legislature adjourns) if signed into law.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$1.1 million is a nonrecurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY24 and any subsequent years shall not revert to the general fund.

HB335 creates the computer science program fund to be administered by PED. The fund may be used for grants to districts, state-chartered charter schools, public post-secondary educational institutions, and to regional education cooperatives to develop and implement teacher professional development programs for computer science courses and content.

LFC analysis finds an appropriation of \$1.1 million is likely insufficient to meet the requirements of the bill, which include computer science professional development for teachers and requiring a dedicated computer science class, including related materials and staff, at every high school. LFC analysis was unable to find information on any existing computer science programs or equipment at the state's high schools. From 2012 to 2016, a University of New Mexico program collaborated with PED to offer computer science courses to 800 students at 30 schools, which cost roughly \$1.23 million from a federal grant; in House Bill 335, schools would have to implement the program at over 250 high schools in addition to training and curriculum integration at all elementary and middle schools. LFC estimates first-year costs for the computer science program to fulfill all requirements in the bill could reach \$9 million, and ongoing statewide costs for training and equipment in subsequent years would range from \$500 thousand to \$1 million.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

HB335 requires computer science to be embedded in elementary and middle school curriculums and offered as a standalone class in high schools beginning SY24-25. Beginning in April 2024, schools would be required to report data from computer science classes to include student demographic information and number of teachers with a computer science background of training. The bill encourages PED to prioritize the enrollment of females and underrepresented minorities.

Analysis from the Department of Information Technology notes it is not clear how the computer science curriculum or standards would be developed and notes fields including artificial intelligence, machine learning, data analytics, and cybersecurity could be important for incorporation into the computer science program.

However, computer science course availability could be beneficial to the state's long-term goals for a skilled workforce. As of January 2023, state government information technology positions averaged a 22 percent vacancy rate. This is much higher than national rates for technology positions; nationally, the unemployment rate in the technology sector dropped from 2 percent in November 2022 to 1.8 percent in December 2022, according to the Computer Technology Industry Association.

PED already offers an endorsement in computer science. Additionally, PED has adopted the [New Mexico Computer Science Strategic Plan](#) completed in June 2021 to focus on adopting New Mexico Computer Science Standards. The five-year strategic plan includes actions for policy development, district implementation, and supporting educators related to academic standards,

teacher certification, course pathways, student access to programs and educator professional learning.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

HB335 requires PED to administer the computer science program fund where PED would request and evaluate applications for funding based on the framework established in HB335. PED analysis notes this work could be accomplished with current agency staff and resources.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

Relates to House Bill 126, School Graduation Requirements.

Relates to House Bill 256, creating a pilot project for hybrid dual credit system to address the needs of computer science/cybersecurity workforce and training.

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