LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS
56th Legislature, 2nd Session, 2024

Bill Number	HB277	**Sponsor**	Sariñana/Figueroa/Herrera/Gurrola/Madrid

Tracking Number	.226704.1	**Committee Referrals**	HEC/HAFC

Short Title	Teacher License Computer Science Endorsement

		Original Date	2/7/2024
Analyst	Armatage	**Last Updated**	

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 277 (HB277) would expand computer science license endorsements available through the Public Education Department (PED) from licenses only for secondary teachers to all kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12) teachers who hold a valid license and demonstrate sufficient content knowledge in computer science as determined by the department.

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill appropriates $150 thousand from the general fund to PED for expenditure in FY25 to expand the scope of the computer science license endorsement to all licensed teachers. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY25 shall revert to the general fund.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

Computer Science Endorsements for K-12 Teachers. HB277 would require PED to create a license endorsement in computer science available to all K-12 teachers who hold a valid license and demonstrate sufficient content knowledge in computer science as determined by the department by December 31, 2024.

Laws 2021, Chapter 102 (House Bill 188) required PED to create a pathway for endorsement in secondary computer science by December 31, 2021, and qualified secondary school teachers may now apply for a computer science endorsement. However, the Higher Education Department (HED) reports that only one of New Mexico's four-year postsecondary educational institutions offer a program that explicitly leads to licensure in teaching computer science. However, other institutions may offer coursework that prepares candidates for a computer science endorsement.

State of Computer Science Education. According to Code.org, a national advocacy organization focused on expanding access to computer science, as of 2023, New Mexico offers a foundational computer science course in 50 percent of its public high schools, and 3 percent of high school

students took a foundational computer science course in the 2022-2023 school year. Code.org also suggests 10 policies to make computer science "foundational" in schools across the country. The 10 suggested policies are:

1. Create a statewide plan for kindergarten through 12th grade computer science.
2. Define computer science and establish standards for K-12 computer science.
3. Allocate funding for rigorous computer science teacher professional learning.
4. Implement clear certification pathways for computer science teachers at elementary and secondary levels.
5. Create university programs to encourage all preservice teachers to gain exposure to computer science.
6. Establish dedicated computer science positions in a state education agency.
7. Require that all schools offer computer science with appropriate implementation timelines.
8. Allow computer science to count toward a core graduation requirement.
9. Allow computer science to satisfy an admission requirement at higher education institutions.
10. Require that all students take computer science to earn a high school diploma.

Of these, Code.org notes New Mexico has accomplished items one, two, three, four, six, and eight. Code.org suggests New Mexico can increase computer science opportunities for students by requiring all high schools to offer at least one computer science course and to require all preservice teachers to receive instruction in computer science education—the provisions in HB277 would address the fourth policy recommended by Code.org.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

PED would be required to consult with computer science education experts with experience creating or supporting computer science endorsement pathways when developing computer science endorsement requirements. PED would be required to create a license endorsement in computer science available to all teachers by December 31, 2024. Postsecondary educational institutions may need to offer additional coursework to prepare candidates for endorsement.

RELATED BILLS

Relates to HB136, Pre-Service Computer Science Ed. Program, which includes an appropriation of $1 million to HED for grants to public postsecondary education institutions to develop a pre-service teacher computer science education program.

Relates to HB278, Computer Science Embedded in Schools, which requires computer science to be embedded in elementary and middle school subjects and offered as a standalone class in high school. The bill also proposes professional development for educators related to computer science.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION
- LESC Files
- New Mexico Higher Education Department (HED)
- University of New Mexico (UNM)

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