



LFC Requester: Liu

**PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
BILL ANALYSIS
2026 REGULAR SESSION**

SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Check all that apply:

Original Amendment
Correction Substitute

Date Prepared: January 28 2026

Bill No: SB158

Committee Referrals: SEC/SFC

Agency Name and Code: PED - 924

Sponsor: Pope

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Short Title: PED MICRO-CREDENTIALING PILOT PROJECT

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SECTION II: FISCAL IMPACT

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY27	FY28		
\$3,000.0	None	Nonrecurring	GF

REVENUE (dollars in thousands)

Estimated Revenue			Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY27	FY28	FY29		
None	None	None	N/A	NFA

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY27	FY28	FY29	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total	None	None	None	None	N/A	NFA

Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act: None as of 1/29/26.

SECTION III: NARRATIVE

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis: Senate Bill 158 (SB158) would create a new section of the Public School Code to enact the micro-credential pilot project. The Public Education Department (PED) would be required to develop micro-credential pathways for site administrators and licensed teachers focused on equity-centered leadership and instruction aligned with the Martinez-Yazzie decision. The bill would also require the PED to establish the framework for implementing and evaluating the pilot project, collaborate with state nonprofit organizations with relevant expertise, and provide interim and final reports.

The project would be enacted in three phases over five years, consisting of pathway development, pathway validation, and statewide implementation. Statewide implementation of the project would begin in the 2028-29 school year, with annual limits on participation that increase over the first three years. Participating site administrators and teachers would be required to demonstrate competency through performance-based measures assessed on a pass-fail basis before progressing through each pathway.

The bill does not provide an effective date. Laws go into effect 90 days after the adjournment of the Legislature enacting them, unless a later date is specified. If enacted, this bill would become effective May 20, 2026.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

SB158 would appropriate \$3 million from the General Fund to the PED for expenditure in FY27-31 to implement and administer the micro-credential pilot project. Any unexpended balance remaining at the end of FY31 shall revert to the General Fund.

Costs incurred through implementing SB158 could include developing and validating micro-credential pathways, supporting participant facilitation and review, and collaborating with nonprofit partners. Additional costs may be associated with maintaining systems for performance review, documentation, and tracking participant progress. The extent to which PED can use existing micro-credential infrastructure would influence overall project costs.

The \$3 million appropriation would be sufficient to support initial development and pilot implementation of the program. Ongoing costs related to staffing, facilitation, and system maintenance would depend on program design and scale. The current micro-credential system costs approximately \$1.1 million annually to operate and maintain.

For existing micro-credential pathways, the total cost to teachers for completing micro-credentials required for advancement from a level 1 to a level 2 license is approximately \$300, and \$240 for advancement from a level 2 to a level 3 license. These costs may inform estimates for micro-credential courses for the proposed pilot project.

The FY27 Executive budget recommendation includes \$3.7 million for the learning management system and micro-credentials.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Micro-Credentials and Educator Licensure Advancement in New Mexico. The PED transitioned educator licensure advancement requirements from a dossier system to a competency based micro-credential model in school year 2023-24. Under rule [6.60.6 NMAC, Continuing Licensure for Licensed Educators in New Mexico](#), teachers may advance between licensure levels by completing a sequence of micro-credentials aligned with the state’s educator evaluation framework or by obtaining national board certification. Advancement from Level 2 to 3 also requires the attainment of a master’s degree.

The PED administers this system through its Advancement Program Level (APL) micro-credential system, which operates within a standardized statewide framework that includes sequenced coursework, facilitation, common rubrics, opportunities for resubmission, and the tracking of enrollment, completion, and progression. Under this framework, teachers complete defined micro-credential sequences at successive licensure levels, with each micro-credential requiring a mastery score of 85 percent or higher. This numeric threshold is distinct from the pass-fail competency determination described in SB158.

APL I Micro-Credential Sequence	APL II Micro-Credential Sequence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom environment • Assessment literacy • Multi-layered systems of support • Culturally and linguistically responsive instruction • Family engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social emotional learning • New Mexico Education Acts • Two electives chosen by the educator from a library of micro-credentials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Restorative practices ◦ Vocabulary development through cognates ◦ Engaging students in learning ◦ Mentoring/coaching teachers ◦ Trauma informed classroom ◦ Building and sustaining collaborative and inclusive teams

Micro-Credential Enrollment and Completion Totals

Program	Status	22-23 SY	23-24 SY	24-25 SY	25-26 SY	Total Enrollments
APL I-II	Total Enrollments	1,612	3,884	5,599	2,945	14,040
	Completed APL I-II	0	596	730	342	1,668
APL II-III	Total Enrollments	0	1,914	2,639	1,353	5,906
	Completed APL II-III	N/A	N/A	628	269	897

SB158 would create a standalone micro-credential pilot project focused on equity-centered leadership and instruction for site administrators and teachers. While micro-credentials are currently used in New Mexico for teacher licensure advancement, site administrators participate in professional learning through the [Excel NM](#) evaluation system and associated professional development requirements. SB158 would introduce micro-credentials for administrators within an area of practice currently addressed through evaluation-based professional learning.

The bill’s sequencing requirements, competency-based progression, and prohibition on advancement without demonstrated mastery reflect features of PED’s existing APL micro-

credential framework. Without explicit integration, the pilot project could duplicate existing systems related to micro-credential development, delivery, and evaluation. The subject matter of the micro-credential pathways proposed in SB158 may also overlap with content already addressed through existing APL micro-credentials, as current topics include instructional practice, culturally and linguistically responsive teaching, and school-level supports.

Martinez and Yazzie. In 2018, the New Mexico Supreme Court issued its decision in the Martinez and Yazzie Consolidated Lawsuit, finding that the state had failed to meet its constitutional obligation to provide a sufficient education for all students, particularly Native American students, English learners, students with disabilities, and students experiencing poverty. In November of 2025, the PED published the [Martinez and Yazzie Action Plan](#) as the state’s framework for addressing the deficiencies identified by the court. The plan emphasizes equitable access to high-quality instruction and well-prepared, culturally and linguistically responsive educators through systemic improvements in educator preparation, professional learning, and leadership practice.

SB158’s emphasis on competency-based pathways aligned with the Martinez and Yazzie decision is consistent with the PED’s existing professional learning and leadership development work, including statewide professional development focused on culturally and linguistically responsive instruction and equity-centered school leadership.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

SB158 would impact public school students through changes in instructional and leadership practices of participating teachers and site administrators. The establishment of additional micro-credential pathways focused on equity-centered leadership and instruction may lead to classroom practices that benefit students, particularly those from historically underserved groups. Because participation in the pilot project is limited, any potential effects are likely to be localized to schools with participating staff.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

SB158 would require the PED to establish and administer a standalone micro-credential pilot project for site administrators and licensed teachers. The PED currently administers micro-credentials for educator licensure advancement, and the bill would introduce an additional program with distinct requirements, timelines, participation caps, and reporting measures. Implementing the pilot project would require coordination to align platforms, review processes, documentation, and data collection systems with existing micro-credential infrastructure.

SB158 would also require the PED to enforce sequencing requirements and prohibit advancement without demonstrated competency. To implement this requirement, PED would need to issue guidance or promulgate rule clarifying enrollment, progression, resubmission, and completion timelines.

In addition, SB158 would also require the PED to implement a cohort-based model for site administrators, including recruitment, facilitation, scheduling, and ongoing participant support. The bill would also require PED to collaborate with state nonprofit organizations during the development and validation phases of the pilot project. Finally, PED would be required to provide interim reports on the pilot project to the Legislative Education Study Committee and a final report with recommendations to the governor and the legislature.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

Relates to:

- [House Bill 34, School Nurse Licensure Provisions](#), which would remove certain licensure requirements for school nurses and clarify requirements for school nurses employed by charter schools;
- [House Bill 89, Computer Science Teacher Licensure](#), which would provide for licensure endorsement in computer science for all grades;
- [House Bill 119, Bilingual License Endorsement Program Units](#), which would establish program units for licensed school employees with a bilingual endorsement;
- [House Bill 211, Speech-Language Pathology License](#), which would create a new license for speech-language pathology assistants; and
- [Senate Bill 29, Math Requirements for Teaching License](#), which would increase mathematics requirements for teaching licensure or endorsement.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

None.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

None.

ALTERNATIVES

None.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

None.

AMENDMENTS

None.