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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

BILL NUMBER: House Memorial 2

SHORT TITLE: Study Screen Use In Elementary Classrooms

SPONSOR: Garratt

LAST ORIGINAL
UPDATE: _____ **DATE:** 01/22/2026 **ANALYST:** Chilton

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT* (dollars in thousands)

Agency/Program	FY26	FY27	FY28	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
	No fiscal impact	No fiscal impact	No fiscal impact	No fiscal impact		

Parentheses () indicate expenditure decreases.

*Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

Sources of Information

LFC Files

Agency or Agencies Providing Analysis

Higher Education Department

Early Childhood Education and Care Department

Public Education Department

SUMMARY

Synopsis of House Memorial 2

House Memorial 2 (HM2), making note of several sources that indicate educational and psychological risks to young children coming from excessive screen time, asks the Public Education Department (PED) to study screen time experienced by elementary school children; to collaborate with educators, family members, and administrators to develop guidelines for computer screen use in classrooms, and to ensure that classroom technology use be based according to proven research proving the benefit of its use.

As noted by the Higher Education Department (HED), “The memorial notes concerns that excessive screen use may negatively affect attention, sleep, stress, social-emotional development, and foundational academic and social skills. It recognizes the increasing reliance on screens in public schools and references the Martinez/Yazzie decision that requires evaluation of the cultural, linguistic, and accessibility appropriateness of computer-based assessments.”

This memorial 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.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

Memorials do not contain appropriations and are not enforceable as state law. The study requested in this memorial is within the normal operations of the agencies involved and is unlikely to result in significant costs to state agencies.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Technology is currently used in almost all schools, both for instruction and references and for assessment of students, according to an [analysis](#) by Kathryn Cook in EBSCO Knowledge. Advantages may include access to the extensive knowledge available on the internet, equalization of access to the internet for children from families that do not have home internet access, and information demonstrating appropriate use of English, such as research summaries and blogs. On the other hand, screen use has been associated with online bullying, exposure to inappropriate material, reading fewer books, and exposure to inaccurate information, with children often having difficulty distinguishing between accuracy and inaccuracy in what is available online.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that parents regulate the time their children spend online, stating that “there is evidence that rules focusing on balance, content, co-viewing and communication are associated with better well-being outcomes than rules focused on screen time.”

The American Psychological Association (APA) (www.apa.org/press/releases/2025/06/screen-time-problems-children) and the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (www.aacap.org/aacap/families_andYouth) both have made general statements about the benefits and dangers of screen time as a whole for children, but none of these organizations appear to have addressed the benefits and dangers of school-time technology use. The APA notes that excessive screen time overall may lead to

- Sleep problems
- Lower grades in school
- Reading fewer books
- Less time with friends and family
- Not enough outdoor or physical activity
- Weight problems
- Mood problems
- Poor self-image and body image issues
- Fear of missing out, and
- Less time learning other ways to relax and have fun.

However, as pointed out by PED, the APA study’s “authors caution that effect sizes were generally modest and that outcomes differed substantially based on content, context, and intensity of screen use, suggesting that not all screen use has the same implications for child development. The findings emphasize the importance of distinguishing between purposeful, developmentally appropriate uses of technology and higher risk or prolonged exposure, rather than applying uniform limits. In addition, the studies summarized in the APA article deal with overall screen use, not with technology use in classrooms. The fact that studies do not appear to have dealt specifically with the effect of screen use during instructional time may support the

need for the study envisioned by this memorial.”

The Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) states that “the Department of Education stresses the importance of active versus passive use of technology.

- Active Use involves critical thinking and includes activities such as coding, immersive simulations, media production, interaction with experts, making global connections, design, and peer collaboration.
- Passive Use includes activities such as filling out digital worksheets or consuming digital content without accompanying reflection, imagination, or participation.”

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

As noted by HED, “The memorial does not outline the scope, methodology, or deliverables for the requested study. To support completion of the study, the LESC may choose to partner with an established education program at a New Mexico higher education institution.”

LAC/ct/dw/sgs