

LESC bill analyses are available on the New Mexico Legislature website (www.nmlegis.gov). Bill analyses are prepared by LESC staff for standing education committees of the New Mexico Legislature. LESC does not assume any responsibility for the accuracy of these reports if they are used for other purposes.

LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS
57th Legislature, 2nd Session, 2026

Bill Number HM53 **Sponsor** Lujan/Gurrola/Romero, GA/Sariñana
Tracking Number .233257.1 **Committee Referrals** HEC
Short Title Study “Gifted-In-Field” Teacher Endorsement
Analyst Armatage **Original Date** 2/10/2026
Last Updated _____

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of Memorial

HM53 would request the Public Education Department (PED) to collaborate with the state’s public postsecondary educational institutions and gifted education organizations to study the creation of a “gifted in-field” endorsement for secondary gifted education teachers, including consideration of courses available from the state’s public postsecondary educational institutional institutions.

PED would be requested to study and evaluate criteria to determine the amount of expertise necessary in various subject areas for the state to develop a gifted in-field endorsement teacher workforce that can both deliver advanced coursework in various content areas and serve the needs of secondary school gifted students to develop expertise in those subject areas.

FISCAL IMPACT

Legislative memorials do not carry appropriations.

HM53 could have a modest fiscal impact to PED and postsecondary educational institutions associated with staff time required to study the creation of a gifted in-field endorsement.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

Gifted Education. As the federal [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#) does not apply to gifted students, the provision of gifted education is a state responsibility.

State statute requires PED to develop standards for gifted education, and for school districts and charter schools to evaluate students to determine if they are gifted. New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC) requires all local education agencies (LEAs)—in other words school districts and charter schools—to offer a gifted education program (NMAC 6.31.3.9). State statute defines minimum requirements for these programs (Section 22-13-6.1 NMSA 1978). PED administrative code defines a gifted student as a person between the ages of five and 21 whose abilities, talents,

or potential for accomplishment are so exceptional or developmentally advanced that they require special provisions to meet their educational programming needs.

Gifted Education Teacher Licensure. Licensure requirements for teachers of gifted students in New Mexico are not set in statute, but are [set](#) by PED through administrative code (NMAC 6.64.18.8).

- Alternatively licensed teachers who have not yet completed a teacher preparation program must complete 24 semester hours of gifted coursework and pass the Gifted Education PRAXIS exam.
- Teachers who have completed a teacher preparation program must complete 12 semester hours of gifted coursework and pass the Gifted Education PRAXIS exam.

PED administrative code requires LEAs to report to PED the qualifications of teachers supporting gifted students, and that qualified gifted education personnel must demonstrate professional competencies in gifted education as determined by the department.

Competencies of Teachers of Gifted Students. Competencies for teachers of gifted students are also outlined in administrative code and include the following areas (NMAC 6.64.18.10):

- Knowledge of the purpose, functions, and laws of gifted education;
- Communication skills;
- Planning and implementing effective programs for gifted students;
- Least restrictive environments;
- Gifted Individualized Education Program (GIEP) responsibilities and implementation;
- Assessment and evaluation of students who are gifted;
- Curriculum;
- Instructional strategies for students who are gifted;
- Materials for gifted students;
- Transition for students who are gifted;
- Diversity; and
- Classroom environment.

The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), a national advocacy organization, [recommends](#) all preservice educators and special education professionals should be required to complete at least three credit hours in gifted education. New Mexico does not require this. NAGC recommends specialists in gifted education should receive more comprehensive preparation, however, the organization does not recommend specific credit hour or course requirements. The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), a national advocacy organization, [published](#) recommended professional preparation standards for gifted educators in 2024 that outline competencies rooted in clinical experience. These competencies do not differentiate by grade level.

Gifted Teacher Coursework. Required coursework at New Mexico educator preparator programs (EPPs) do not appear to differentiate between gifted education in elementary and secondary education. Coursework appears to reflect the state's gifted teacher competencies. See **Table 1: Examples of Coursework Required for Gifted Certificates, Endorsements, and Minors** for examples of coursework required by educator preparation programs. Programs were selected to represent a range of state programs and were limited to those with programmatic information available on the institution's website.

Table 1: Examples of Coursework Required for Gifted Certificates, Endorsements, and Minors

Educator Preparation Program	Required Courses
Central New Mexico Community College (Endorsement—12 Credit Hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Gifted Education • Curriculum for Gifted Learners • Strategies for Teaching Gifted Learners • Twice Exception and Special Populations of Gifted Learners
New Mexico Highlands University (Minor—24 Credit Hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundations of Gifted Education • Instructional Strategies for Gifted Education • Instructional Planning and Curriculum: Gifted Education • Twice Exceptional and Gifted Student • Learning Environment and Social Interaction: Gifted Education • Family of Children with Exceptional and Gifted Students • Ethical Practices: Student with Exception and Gifted • Ethical Practices: Student with Exception and Gifted • Achievement Test: Children with Exception and Gifted
San Juan College (Certificate—24 Credit Hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Gifted Education • Curriculum Models in Gifted Education • Social Emotional Needs of Gifted Student • ID and Assessment of Gifted Twice Exceptional • Paradigms, Systems and Models of Gifted Education • Instructional Methods of Gifted Education
Western New Mexico University (Endorsement—12 Credit Hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Gifted Education • Twice Exceptional and Special Populations of Gifted Students • Curriculum and Methods for Gifted Students • Contemporary Issues in Gifted Education or Practice Teaching Gifted Education • Practice Teaching Seminar

Note: Teachers who have completed a teacher preparation program must complete 12 credit hours of gifted education coursework, while alternative licensed teachers who have not completed a teacher preparation program must complete 24 credit hours of gifted education coursework.

Source: LESC Files

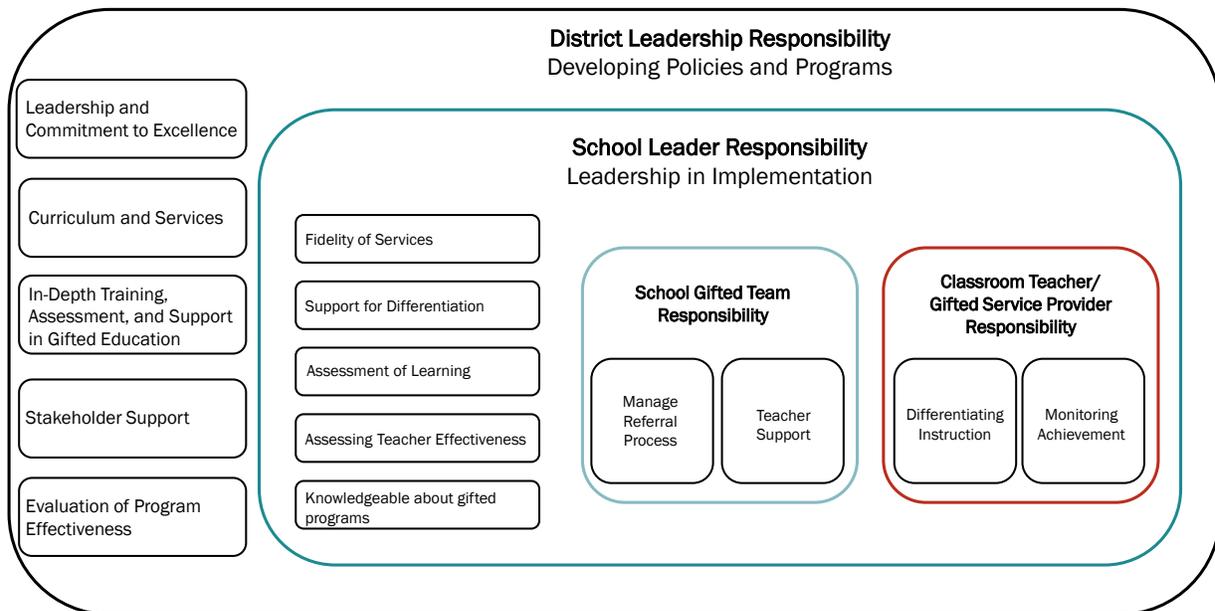
Gifted Education by Grade Level. PED administrative code outlines LEA requirements for implementing gifted education programs. Overall, the requirements are not differentiated by grade level. However, LEA gifted education program plans must address (among other factors):

- Structures by which gifted students’ anticipated individual needs shall be met at each grade level;
- Articulation to meet gifted students’ needs as they graduate from high school and continue in a postsecondary learning setting;
- Pre-advanced placement or precollege support; and
- Whole-grade and single-subject acceleration policy or procedures.

Gifted Education Roles and Responsibilities. PED’s [Gifted Education Technical Assistance Manual](#) specifies the role of gifted education teachers. **Figure 1: LEA Gifted Education Roles and Responsibilities Chart** shows the school gifted team is responsible for managing the referral

process and supporting teachers. The classroom teacher and/or gifted service provider are responsible for differentiating instruction and monitoring achievement.

Figure 1: LEA Gifted Education Roles and Responsibilities Chart



Source: LESC Analysis of PED Files

LEAs select service models for students who are gifted based on the needs of the student, availability of resources, and funding. PED suggests the following models as options:

- Cluster grouping;
- General classroom enrichment;
- Acceleration;
- Subject acceleration;
- Full-grade acceleration;
- Advanced classes within and across grade level;
- Curriculum compacting;
- Honors and advanced placement classes;
- Individual and small group counseling;
- Magnet or special schools;
- Pull-out groups within and across grades by target ability and interest areas;
- Self-designed courses or guided study; and
- Special enrichment options.

While the gifted referral process and development and maintenance of GEIPs should be managed by a licensed educator with a gifted education endorsement, some services for students who are gifted may be provided by a teacher without a gifted education endorsement. For example, placement in an Advanced Placement class could be a provision of a GEIP and the teacher does not need to have a gifted endorsement.

Requiring a gifted in-field endorsement for secondary subject area teachers could allow PED to more closely regulate who provides services to students who are gifted, including ensuring they have the content knowledge and skills necessary to be highly qualified. However, it could also result in far fewer teachers eligible to teach advanced coursework for students who are gifted.

Gifted Teacher Vacancies. According to the [2025 Educator Vacancy Report](#), published by New Mexico State University’s Southwest Outreach Academic Research Evaluation and Policy Center, there were an estimated 28 gifted teacher vacancies in the state at the beginning of the 2025-2026 school year.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

HM53 would require PED to collaborate with the state’s public postsecondary educational institutions and gifted education organizations to study the creation of a gifted in-field endorsement for secondary school gifted teachers, to consider courses available from the state’s public postsecondary education institutions, and other criteria necessary to establish advanced content knowledge that could fulfill endorsement requirements for those teachers. The department would also be requested to study and evaluate criteria to determine the amount of expertise necessary in various subject areas for the state to develop a gifted in-field endorsement teacher workforce that can both deliver advanced coursework in various content areas and serve the needs of secondary school gifted students to develop expertise in those subject areas

Faculty and staff at the state’s public postsecondary educational institutions would be requested to collaborate with PED to study creation of a gifted in-field endorsement for secondary school gifted teachers.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Gifted Education Licensure in Other States. According to the [2023 State of the States in Gifted Education](#) published by NAGC and the Council of State Directors of Programs for the Gifted, a national organization of state education agency personnel, 20 states reported not requiring teachers of gifted students to obtain training, 17 reported teachers are required to attain an endorsement, 10 reported teachers are required to attain a certification, 5 reported teachers must complete graduate work to receive a license, and five reported teachers may complete professional development at the local level. Only four states reported all preservice teachers are required to complete coursework in gifted education (Idaho, Iowa, Oklahoma, and Virginia).

LESC staff were unable to identify other states requiring a gifted education license specific to secondary school teachers.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESG Files
- New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED)

AA/mca/jkh