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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

BILL NUMBER: House Memorial 53

SHORT TITLE: Study “Gifted-in-Field” Teacher Endorsement

SPONSOR: Lujan/Gurrola/Romero, GA/Sariñana

LAST ORIGINAL
UPDATE: _____ **DATE:** 2/10/26 **ANALYST:** Liu

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT* (dollars in thousands)

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

Parentheses () indicate expenditure decreases.

*Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

Relates to Senate Bill 64

Sources of Information

LFC Files
Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) Files

Agency or Agencies Providing Analysis
Higher Education Department

Agency or Agencies That Were Asked for Analysis but did not Respond
Public Education Department

SUMMARY

Synopsis of House Memorial 53

House Memorial 53 (HM53) requests the Public Education Department (PED) collaborate with higher education institutions and gifted education organizations to study the creation of a “gifted in-field” endorsement for secondary school teachers and consider the content knowledge required for endorsement.

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.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The memorial requests PED to study to creation of a “gifted in-field” endorsement for secondary school gifted education teachers and to consider courses available from the state’s public postsecondary educational institutions and other criteria necessary to establish advanced content knowledge that could fulfill endorsement requirements.

The term, “gifted in-field” appears to be similar to a Georgia Professional Standards Commission rule on gifted in-field education endorsements. Teachers in Georgia with a gifted in-field education endorsement are qualified to provide direct instruction to gifted students in the grade levels and/or field(s) of their base teaching certificate(s), or to serve as a resource teacher for indirect gifted education services in any content area in grades P-12.

The commission recently made a rule change clarifying the “field” requirement could not be waived, even for charter schools. The change follows a FY21 report from Georgia’s state auditor, who found problems with Georgia’s program for gifted students related to class sizes, teacher training, and student selection. Georgia’s education department requires gifted classes to be led by teachers with gifted in-field endorsements, certificates which typically require nine to 12 hours of college credits, which can be expensive and time-consuming for working teachers.

In New Mexico, new gifted education teachers seeking gifted education endorsement must pass the PRAXIS exam for gifted education and complete a specified number of semester hours of credit in gifted coursework:

- Beginning teacher who has not completed a teacher program: 24 semester hours to 36 semester hours and
- Existing teacher who has completed a teacher program: 12 semester hours.

Unlike a gifted in-field endorsement, which requires teachers to teach within the grade level or field of their certification, New Mexico’s current gifted endorsement is an add-on to any license obtained by a teacher of record.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The memorial requests 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 education teachers and to consider courses available from the state’s public post-secondary educational institutions and other criteria necessary to establish advanced content knowledge that could fulfill endorsement requirements for those teachers.

The memorial also requests PED 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. The memorial does not set a date for completion.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

This memorial relates to Senate Bill 64, which establishes an Office of Special Education within PED.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

In FY26, PED began identifying gifted students in the funding formula, with preliminary counts from the 2024-2025 school year showing the state had nearly 13 thousand students identified as receiving special education services for gifted students. The New Mexico Association for the Gifted reported initial counts in the 2025-2026 school year reached 15.7 thousand gifted students, which represents a substantial increase of 2,708 students.

While 12.8 thousand gifted students in the 2024-2025 school year are classified as needing minimal or moderate services (A/B level), 122 gifted students need extensive or maximum services (C/D level). To serve these gifted students the state would need at least 543 FTE to meet average minimum caseloads. PED teacher license data from the first reporting date of 2025 suggests 727.8 FTE in New Mexico public schools have a gifted education endorsement. Assuming the 20 percent increase in gifted students in FY26 results in a proportionate increase in service level needs, the state would need an estimated 657 FTE to meet minimum caseloads.

The National Association for Gifted Children 2022-2023 State of the States report found gifted services provided in New Mexico high schools were similar to most states, with the top delivery models being: advanced placement, dual credit and concurrent enrollment programs, differentiation in general education classrooms, and honors or advanced coursework.

House Memorial 33 from the 2022 legislative session requested PED to study gifted and talented education in New Mexico and provide recommendations on four key areas related to: equity of student participation in gifted education, equity of gifted student performance, the use of research-based practices, and potential costs and benefits of implementing universal screening. In response to these key questions, PED's final report found higher-income, White, and male students were overrepresented in gifted programs, large achievement gaps remain across student subgroups, and only 22.2 percent of districts use research-based practices in gifted programs. The department's survey also found 23.6 percent of districts and charters offered no gifted identification or screening process. The estimated cost of a universal gifted and talented screening process for all third-grade students at the time was \$982.7 thousand.

PED's 2022 report further noted the process for gaining gifted certification will allow more teachers and staff to become certified. The report noted teachers were required to obtain a master's degree and pass the state certification exam, creating significant barriers to access. The department estimated a change in this process could increase the number of gifted certified teachers from the current 1,210 teachers to 1,850 teachers.

SL/cf/sgs