LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS
57th Legislature, 1st Session, 2025

Bill Number HB297/aHEC/aSEC **Sponsor** Gonzales/Sariñana/Mirabal Moya

Tracking Number .229704.1 **Committee Referrals** HEC/HGEIC;SEC/SFC

Short Title School Personnel Computer Science Licensure

Analyst Armatage **Original Date** 2/17/2025
Last Updated 3/7/2025

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of SEC Amendment

The Senate Education Committee Amendment to House Bill 297 (HB297/aHEC/aSEC) strikes all House Education Committee amendments. The amendment also removes the requirements for attaining a computer science endorsement, by striking language beginning on page 3, line 16, through page 4, line 16.

Synopsis of HEC Amendment

The House Education Committee Amendment to House Bill 297 (HB297/aHEC) adds language which makes grammatical corrections to language proposed in HB297.

Synopsis of Original Bill

House Bill 297 (HB297) would amend the School Personnel Act to codify existing pathways to computer science teacher endorsement, reinstate two recently expired pathways to endorsement, and expand computer science endorsement eligibility to all kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12) teachers who meet endorsement requirements.

This bill does not contain an effective date and, as a result, would go into effect 90 days after the Legislature adjourns if enacted, or June 20, 2025.

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill appropriates $250 thousand from the general fund to the Public Education Department (PED) for expenditure in FY26 to FY27. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY27 shall revert to the general fund.

The costs of implementing HB297/aHEC/aSEC would likely be minimal and limited to PED staff processing additional computer science endorsements for some elementary, middle school, and junior high teachers.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

Computer Science Endorsement for K-12 Teachers. HB297/aHEC/aSEC would amend the state's School Personnel Act to expand eligibility for computer science endorsement beyond secondary teachers to all K-12 teachers who meet endorsement requirements as determined by PED.

PED rule currently provides four pathways to computer science endorsement for secondary school teachers (seventh through 12th grade) plus two additional pathways that expired on January 1, 2025. See **Table 1: PED Pathways to Secondary Computer Science Endorsement**.

Table 1: PED Pathways to Secondary Computer Science Endorsement

Pathways	Requirements
Coursework	15 credit hours postsecondary computer science
Exam	Pass the licensure exam for computer science
Work Experience	Two or more years of related work experience
Industry Certification	Possess an industry certification in field related to computer science
Professional Development	Complete 60 hours of professional development within the three years immediately prior to applying for endorsement – **expired January 1, 2025**
Teaching Experience	Possess three or more years of computer science teaching experience – **expired January 1, 2025**

Source: NMAC 6.64.20.8

Technology Endorsement for K-12 Teachers. According to PED, teachers of elementary school computer classes are currently required to obtain a technology endorsement. PED's licensure webpage for technology endorsement describes technology education as including any coursework specific to computers. The endorsement is available for middle level teachers, secondary teachers, prekindergarten through 12th grade specialty teachers, and special education teachers. See **Table 2: PED Requirements for Technology Education Endorsement**.

Table 2: PED Requirements for Technology Education Endorsement

Pathway	Endorsement Requirements
Beginning Teacher (on an alternative license)	• 24-36 semester hours in technology educational coursework; and • Pass the PRAXIS Technology Education exam
Existing Teacher (has completed a standard or alternative preparation program)	• 24-36 semester hours in technology educational coursework; or • Pass the PRAXIS Technology Education exam; or • Certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in technology education.

Source: NMAC 6.64.16.1

The secondary computer courses that currently require a technology endorsement, and those that require a computer science endorsement, is somewhat ambiguous. These determinations are made by PED and published in the annual Student Teacher Accountability Reporting System (STARS) manual. LESC staff analysis of the 2022-2023 School Year (SY23) STARS Course Licensure Requirement Manual found 29 courses that could be taught by a teacher with either a computer

science endorsement or a technology endorsement. Two computer courses specifically required a technology endorsement. See **Table 3: SY23 STARS Course Endorsement Requirements**.

Table 3: SY23 STARS Course Endorsement Requirements

Course Name	Technology Education Endorsement	Computer Science Endorsement
Advanced Word Processing for Business	X	
Business Computer Skills	X	
Computer Applications II	X	X
Desktop Publishing I	X	X
Desktop Publishing II	X	X
Computer Graphics II	X	X
Computer Graphics III	X	X
Computer Graphics IV	X	X
Intro to 3D Design and Animation	X	X
Computer Science/Programming	X	X
Computer Networking II	X	X
Computer Technology Assistant I	X	X
Computer Technology Assistant II	X	X
Computer Technology Assistant III	X	X
AP Computer Science	X	X
Advanced Career-Computers/Networks/Databases	X	X
Advanced Career - Design for Digital World	X	X
Advanced Career - Databases in the Cloud	X	X
Advanced Career - Developing Cloud Presence	X	X
AP Computer Science Principles	X	X
PLTW Computer Science Essentials	X	X
AP PLTW Computer Science Principles	X	X
AP PLTW Computer Science A	X	X
PLTW Cybersecurity	X	X
PLTW App Creators	X	X
PLTW Computer Science for Innovators and Makers	X	X
Cyber Literacy	X	X
Cyber Literacy 2	X	X
Cybersecurity	X	X
Cyber and Society	X	X
Art and Computer Science	X	X

Source: LESC Analysis of SY23 STARS Course License Requirements

If there are no courses that specifically require a computer science endorsement, it's unclear how necessary a computer science endorsement is. The purpose of a computer science endorsement for elementary school teachers could be even less clear as computer classes may be more basic than those at a secondary level, which still allow for a technology endorsement.

However, with more pathways to a computer science endorsement than to a technology endorsement, computer course teachers in elementary school may opt to attain a computer science

license rather than a technology license. This could benefit instruction, as the requirements for a computer science license are more job-specific than those for a technology education endorsement. For comparison, however, a computer science endorsement requires 15 credit hours of relevant coursework, while a technology endorsement requires 24 to 36 credit hours.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

State of Computer Science Education. According to 2023 data from Code.org, a national advocacy organization focused on expanding access to computer science, 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 SY23. 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 K-12 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. When New Mexico's graduation requirements were revised in 2024, the state began requiring that all high schools offer a computer science course and allowed computer science to count toward math and science graduation requirements, addressing the seventh and eighth policy recommendations. Code.org suggests New Mexico can increase computer science opportunities for students by requiring all preservice teachers to receive instruction in computer science education.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

PED staff would need to update administrative code and potentially process license applications for additional teachers.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESC Files
- New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology (NMT)
- University of New Mexico (UNM)
- New Mexico Independent Community Colleges (NMICC)
- New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED)
- Public Education Department (NMPED)

AA/clh/mca/jkh