

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY21	FY22	FY23	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total	NFI	NFI	NFI	N/A	N/A	N/A

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to: HB83, HB188

SECTION III: NARRATIVE

BILL SUMMARY

House Bill 126 (HB126) adds a new section to the Public School Code to define computer science and computer science courses, requires that each school district phase in computer science as a mandatory course offering within three years at every high school in the district, and it requires additional district and PED annual reporting for computer science courses.

HB126 further specifies that the required computer science course be offered in-person and only offered as an online option when a traditional classroom setting is not feasible. Dual credit is not mentioned as an option for course offerings.

HB126 includes new data reporting specific to computer science course offerings and that the agency post the data on the website after it is received from the districts.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

HB126 does not contain an appropriation.

The PED allocated \$300 thousand in FY21to support a request for applications from school districts to increase computer science course access to students.

Computer Science Funding in New Mexico	2019–20 Awards (Amount In Thousands)	2020–21 Awards (Amount in Thousands)
Computer Science PD funding	\$400.0	\$166.1
STEAM Initiative funding	\$282.2	\$133.9
TOTAL	\$682.2	\$300.0

Career and Technical Education (CTE) funding may be used to expand computer science course offerings in Information Technology or STEM programs especially in regions where those programs have been identified as a priority. Currently six of 10 CTE regions have identified priorities which may include computer science.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

According to Labor Market Information, technology careers and occupations requiring technical computer skills are in high demand and earn a high wage. HB126 would expand computer science access to high school students.

At the second reporting date Student Teacher Accountability Reporting System (STARS) snapshot for the 2020-21 school year, students in 58 of the 89 school districts had enrollment in a computer science course. It is unclear whether sponsor intended to require charter schools to offer computer science courses, as statute does not include charter schools in the definition of school districts.

As computer science courses are added throughout the state, funding professional development for teachers may be necessary to implement these courses, as well the hiring of additional faculty qualified to teach computer science. Currently, educators with endorsements in math, science, technology, or who have an 800 license, which is issued to experienced professionals, are able to teach computer science.

This bill does not provide guidance for dual credit programs or online providers currently offering computer science courses nor does it include language that addresses district or state charter schools.

Despite the phased-in timeline, HB126 may place an undue burden on small/micro-sized school districts, many of whom have only one high school. The proposal would require those districts to have a computer science course in place by the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year. Similarly, because of small faculty numbers or course offerings, small/micro school districts may be forced to choose to eliminate other course offerings to meet the mandate of HB126.

HB126 would increase access to computer science opportunities, but it does not mandate student enrollment in computer science courses.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

None.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The request for a school district report may be redundant, as the requested information is provided by districts for various other initiatives. And because PED would use district reports only to post data on its website, a district level report may not be necessary.

If approved with report requirements, HB126 would require staff to develop a report for school districts and create protocols for posting required data to the PED website.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

Relates to HB83 by proposing amendments to graduation requirements.

Relates to HB188, which requires the department to create an endorsement for secondary computer science teachers.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

None.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

None.

ALTERNATIVES

The sponsor may wish consider delaying the

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

None.

AMENDMENTS

None as of 1/26/2021.

Planning

Starting

Expanding an existing