



MEMORANDUM

TO: Utah State Board of Education (USBE) Finance Committee Members

FROM: Scott Jones, Deputy Superintendent of Operations

DATE: December 8, 2023

SUBJECT: Board Member Requests for Use of Available USBE Discretionary Funds

Project/Program Background, Information, Scope, and/or Justification:

The following requests have been made by board members for use of the board's discretionary funds. Please review the available discretionary funds by type in the upper left-hand corner of the discretionary funds report. There are sufficient funds available to cover these requests should the committee recommend that the board approve the requests for discretionary funds for these projects/programs and the board approves. These requests total \$500,000 from the available tax delay funds and \$540,000 from the available FML funds.

1. Classroom Materials - Recommend Using Tax Delay Funds

a. \$500,000 - from available tax delay funds

Establish a grant program to provide educators with secure containers for students to store phones during classroom instruction. Complete an initial educator and student survey to determine current practices and usage of phones in the classroom. Once a grant is accepted and the secure containers have been in use for a semester, course, or a full grading period the same survey will be completed again by the educator and students. The survey feedback will be reviewed for trends and possible policy recommendations.

Educators will submit a request for grant money that includes:

- Their classroom technology policy - including exceptions for cell phone usage (e.g., medical, etc.).
- How cell phone secure containers will be used in their classroom.
- What product they want to use to secure cell phones.

- Expected timeline for completing a USBE educator and student survey concerning cell phone usage in the classroom before and after using secure containers.

Total Tax Delay Funds: \$500,000

2. Research and Development Projects - Recommend Using FML Funds

a. \$30,000 from available FML funds Family Studies

Years of research coming from the Institute for Family Studies has looked at the sequence of life events for youth that lead to financial and marital success in the United States. These characteristics are also known as the "Success Sequence" or these three characteristics "getting an education, working hard, getting married, and then having children". This sequence can lead to achieving success no matter your economic background or race. The vast majority of black (96%) and Hispanic (97%) Millennials who followed this sequence were not poor by their mid-30s, along with 94% of Millennials who grew up in poor families, and 95% of those who grew up in single-parent families.

Research Questions:

- How could Utah schools incorporate the "Success Sequence" within Health Education courses already established within schools?
- What learning objectives do Health Education I and II teach concerning the key components of the "Success Sequence"?
- What portion of class instruction is currently focused on protective factors similar to the "Success Sequence"?

<https://ifstudies.org/ifs-admin/resources/reports/successsequencedisadvantagedya-final.pdf>

<https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/IFS-MillennialSuccessSequence-Final.pdf>

b. \$50,000 from available FML funds - A broad look at the structural challenges that face school-age boys in Utah: A micro-analysis to a national discussion. (see Richard V Reeves, *Of Boys and Men*)

- Where is the system creating vulnerability for Utah boys?
- What important role do young men play in society?
- Are young men prepared to meet today's challenges academically and socially?
- How can schools support boys better?

c. \$30,000 from available FML funds - Survey of the current landscape of SEL in Utah public schools.

Systemically identify core components of social emotional learning programs currently used within Utah public schools. Components to be identified:

- Program design and evidence of effectiveness
- Scientific rigor associated with the program
- Types of intervention being implemented
- Time commitment of programs including frequency and dosage
- Parent components including consent and engagement
- Individual data collected by this program
- Self-regulation activities (mindfulness, meditation, etc.)
- Types of group discussions
- Cost to the district
- Personnel cost
- How success is measured
- How long has the program been in place
- Positive protective factors present in the program (goal setting, gratitude, parent engagement)

d. \$30,000 from available FML funds - Math fluency in middle school classrooms

Research the basic fluency rate in the areas of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division facts of 7th and 8th grade students and how fluency impacts reliance on technology (calculator computation) and student perceptions related to math success.

Does basic math fluency impact a student's ability to be successful in a 7th or 8th grade classroom?

What is the relationship between basic math fluency and reliance on technology? Does basic math fluency correlate with a student's perception of success in math class?

e. \$400,000 from available FML funds - Pathful Connect

Pathful Connect is a virtual work-based learning platform that will connect Utah industry professionals with K-12 classrooms virtually to achieve authentic work-based learning at scale.

How does the Connect Platform work?

The Connect platform matches professionals into the classrooms through an automated matching algorithm. Skills of working professionals are matched to classroom requests

(tied to learning objectives) to help bring abstract lessons to life, offer project mentorship and evaluation, virtual tours, mock interviews, and virtual workplace experiences.

Educators can easily leverage industry connections to bring real-world knowledge and skills to students while Utah companies and regional intermediaries (like workforce boards, chamber, economic development) can easily and effectively engage the current workforce with the future workforce. It will also help to ensure more equitable participation in work-based learning by removing access barriers, such as transportation especially in rural areas of the state.

The Connect platform enables effective collaboration among all members of the Utah community to engage students in their learning and to inspire them for the future of work and expose them to the many diverse careers in their state and across the country.

How is Pathful Connect customized to the unique needs of Utah students, educators, and employers?

A white label version of Pathful Connect provides a branded custom version of the platform for the state of Utah enabling Educators, students, and employers in the state to connect, communicate and collaborate on one site. This white label version adds additional resources and custom features which include:

- Custom branding in-product
- A dedicated landing page aligned to Utah's needs and initiatives
- A registry of employers in the state of Utah, allowing each employer to create their own special landing pages, post work-based learning opportunities both in person and virtual, add all their live and video-based content all in one place and track all employee and student engagement.
- An additional library of exclusive professionally produced work-based learning videos.
- A resource to help students find the right college in Utah based on the job they're interested in.
- Embedded lessons tied to Utah state standards
- Special job boards to show jobs and internships in the state
- Employability skills Micro credentialing to help Utah students enter the workforce with evidence of industry-identified skills
- Detailed reporting for all schools in the state, based on Utah's requirements and initiatives

What state partnerships does Pathful currently have in our region?

The state of Nevada and Idaho have statewide white label implementations and are excellent references; Dr. Linda Clark (State Board President) of Idaho has offered to collaborate with the Utah state board chair on implementation best practices and regional collaboration across the state white labels. I can help get that set up with her for you.

What is the cost for a partnership?

The annual cost for the Utah white label is \$175,000 and includes the aforementioned customized resources.

The Utah discounted subscription rate for each school is:

- \$4,500 for all schools over 301 Students
- \$3,500 for schools with enrollment between 100 – 300 Students
- \$2,500 for schools with enrollment under 100 students

The 12-month annual subscription includes unlimited access to the white label platform for **all** teachers and students in the building.

- Teachers can set up as many live connections as they need throughout the year, students can view as many videos from our video library at school or with their parents at home.

Total FML for Research and Development: \$540,000

Recommended motion: *The Finance Committee recommends that the Board approves using \$500,000 from the tax delay fund and \$540,000 from the Federal Mineral Lease (FML) Fund from the board's discretionary funds for these programs/projects:*

Tax Delay

- *\$500,000 - Classroom Materials*

Federal Mineral Lease – Research and Development

- *\$30,000 - Family studies*
- *\$50,000 - A broad look at the structural challenges that face school-age boys in Utah*
- *\$30,000 - Survey of the current landscape of SEL in Utah public schools*
- *\$30,000 - Math fluency in middle school classrooms*
- *\$400,000 - Pathful Connect*

The Finance Committee further recommends that the Board directs staff to ensure proper and allowable use of these funds through applicable procurement and/or project implementation under applicable laws and/or rules governing the management and control of these funds.