

Potential Impact of Early Literacy be Subsumed into the WPU Add-On for At-Risk

Background: In the January 25, 2024 Public Education Appropriations Legislative Meeting, the committee made the recommendation to roll the \$14,550,000 currently dedicated to Early Literacy under [53F-2-503](#) into [53F-2-314](#), the WPU Add-On for Students who are At-Risk. To clearly articulate the implications of this recommendation, the following information presents the impacts of the proposed change.

Board Recommendation Prior to PEA Recommendation: Move the Early Literacy Program line item into the Basic School Program maintaining the integrity of the K-3 Literacy Program with an earmark.

General Summary of Potential Impacts of PEA Recommendation

- Current program requirements may continue and add additional demands associated with the WPU Add-On
- No matching requirement for districts, cutting funding in half
- *If code repealed, 53G-7-218 remains potentially maintaining the goals, system of support, local board requirement, and ELDP. The plan would be removed.
- Funding focused on students who are at risk only
- Removes early literacy funding guardrails, providing flexibility in funding
- May impact improvement to meet the 70% goal
- Removes state priority of early literacy
- Reduces LEA accountability
- Allows for growth in funding over time

Use of Funds

Early Literacy Program (Now)	WPU Add-On for Students Who are At-Risk (Next Year)
<p>An LEA governing board shall use program money for early literacy interventions and supports in kindergarten through grade 3 that have proven to significantly increase the percentage of students who are proficient in literacy, including:</p> <p>(i) evidence-based intervention curriculum;</p>	<p>The funding would not be required to be used for literacy, but for any allowable uses under the At Risk Add On which includes improving academic achievement of students who are at-risk.</p> <p>At risk is defined as “scores below proficient on a state board or LEA approved assessment” or “meets and LEA</p>

<p>(ii) literacy assessments that identify student learning needs and monitor learning progress; or</p> <p>(iii) focused literacy interventions that may include:</p> <p>(A) the use of reading specialists or paraprofessionals;</p> <p>(B) tutoring;</p> <p>(C) before or after school programs;</p> <p>(D) summer school programs; or</p> <p>(E) the use of interactive computer software programs for literacy instruction and assessments for students.</p> <p>(b) An LEA governing board may use program money for portable technology devices used to administer literacy assessments.</p>	<p>governing board’s approved definition of an at risk student”.</p>
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Financial Implications

Early Literacy Program (Now)	WPU Add-On for Students Who are At-Risk (Next Year)
<p>Local levy match at the Base Level, Guarantee or Low Income Program that increases dedicated dollars available to support early literacy attainment in grades K-3</p>	<p>The local levy requirement would no longer exist and approximately \$15 million less in local funds would be dedicated to investing in early literacy.</p>
<p>The LEA funding amount is based on the number of students in the LEA in grades K-3.</p>	<p>The LEA funding amount would be based on the number students who qualify for free or reduced price lunch and for students who are identified and limited English proficient in grades K-12.</p>
<p>Currently, the state board may use up to 3% of the funds appropriated by the Legislature to carry out the provisions of this section for administration of the program. This would potentially cut two positions at USBE supporting literacy.</p>	

Reporting Requirements

Early Literacy Program (Now)	WPU Add-On for Students Who are At-Risk (Next Year)
<p>LEAs</p> <p>A plan to the state board for literacy proficiency improvement that incorporates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the essential literacy components (b) intervention strategies that are aligned to student needs; (c) assessments that support adjustments to core and intervention instruction; (d) a growth goal and proficiency goal for the school district or charter school <p>The state board shall verify that a local school board allocates the money required from the levy.</p>	<p>LEAs</p> <p>A report of the LEA's use of funds allocated under this section through the annual financial reporting process; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (ii) the LEA's outcome data or a report of intervention effectiveness related to the use of the LEA's use of funds allocated under this section. <p>Additionally, due to 53G-7-218, all requirements from the Early Literacy Program may continue.</p>
<p>USB</p> <p>The state board shall make an annual report in accordance with Section 53E-1-203 that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) includes information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) student learning gains in early literacy for the past school year and the five-year trend; (ii) the percentage of grade 3 students who are proficient in English language arts in the past school year and the five-year trend; (iii) the progress of school districts and charter schools in meeting goals described in a plan described in Subsection (4); and 	<p>USB</p> <p>There would be no annual reporting requirement. The state board shall monitor the learning outcomes resulting from the LEA's use of funds under this section.</p>

<p>(iv) the specific strategies or interventions used by school districts or charter schools that have significantly improved early grade literacy proficiency; and</p> <p>(b) may include recommendations on how to increase the percentage of grade 3 students who are proficient in English language arts, including how to use a strategy or intervention described in Subsection (16)(a)(iv) to improve literacy proficiency for additional students.</p>	
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Options for Maintaining the Integrity of Early Literacy in Utah

Option 1: Maintain current line item (no change)

Option 2: Move to above the line and maintain the early literacy earmark (Current Board Recommendation and supported by JLC)

Option 3: Create a new Literacy Add-on (to provide some flexibility and allow the funds to grow) but to maintain a dedication to literacy.

Option 4: Maintain an annual literacy plan requirement which USBE monitors and holds LEAs accountable for.

Option 5: Maintain an annual plan and require LEAs to report the amount of funds dedicated to early literacy, which may not be lower than the amount of funds the LEAs spent in FY24 (with potential exceptions for LEAs with declining student enrollment).

Option 6: Maintain current program for districts only to maintain program and matching, but remove burden and requirements for charter schools.