

Agency: UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Request Title: *Mentoring and Supporting Teacher Excellence and Refinement (MASTER) Pilot Program Extension*

Purpose Statement:

State code [53F-5-222](#) (established 07/01/2024). The Mentoring and Supporting Teacher Excellence and Refinement Pilot Program was established by the 2024 legislative session and was funded for two years. The early indicators of the impact of this program on teacher effectiveness and teacher retention has been very promising. In order to continue the pilot program and collect more data on its effectiveness, this request seeks the same amount of funding for two more years, and small adjustments to the policy to accommodate the expanded timeline.

What is the nature of your request?

BOTH POLICY and FUNDING – You are proposing a new program or expansion of an existing program that will require new/amended state code and financial resources.

Questions? Please contact:

Greg Connell (Greg.Connell@schools.utah.gov) for questions related to a policy request.

Current Funding for FY 2026:

FY 2025 One-Time Funding- \$4.8 million was appropriated by the legislature to be used over a two year period.

Projected Results: *(Provide 1-2 bullets on how the policy/funding request would lead to a measurable outcome in the K-12 education system (ex. performance measure).)*

- Improved teacher retention rates in the LEAs that are participating in the pilot program.
- Increased student academic achievement, due to refinement of teaching skills.

Rationale:

- Early indicators on the success of this program are very promising. In order to collect more accurate, and actionable data, the program needs to be in place for a longer period of time.
- Extending the pilot program for an additional two years will allow trend lines of both qualitative and quantitative data to become more visible, allowing for accurate decision making for legislators as to the expansion of this initiative.

If not funded/approved:

The MASTER Pilot Program will come to an end in June of 2026 when funding is exhausted. While early evidence from current grant participants is promising, it may be difficult to make decisions about continuation without additional data.

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USBE Section: Teaching and Learning

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USBE Section: Student Achievement

POLICY REQUEST

1. Section(s) of State Code to be addressed (if none, insert “N/A”):
 - [53F-5-222](#)
 - [63I-2-253](#)
2. Summarize the request, the specific problem it will solve, and how it will solve the problem. (Describe the issues or concerns the legislation will address:)
 - Make adjustments to verbiage and dates that allow for an extension of the program from two years to four years.
 - Extend the repeal date to allow time to assess and consider the data, allowing for decision making about continuation or expansion.
 - Add language that permits LEAs who are currently in the program to have priority for continuation, before accepting any new applicants, thus providing that longer timeframe for data collection.
3. Describe the history of the issues or concerns including relevant context and timelines:
 - The current two year timeline has not allowed for robust data collection.
4. What are the suggested legislative solutions? Include code references and suggested language where possible:
 - [53F-5-222](#). Mentoring and Supporting Teacher Excellence and Refinement Pilot Program. Subsection “(2) There is created a **two-year** pilot program.”
 - i. Include language to extend the program for an additional 2 years for a total of 4 years.
 - [53F-5-222](#). Mentoring and Supporting Teacher Excellence and Refinement Pilot Program. Subsection (5)
 - i. Include language that allows the state board to prioritize granting funds to LEAs already in the pilot to continue participation for the second two years.
 - [63I-2-253](#) subsection (10), extend the repeal date to July 1st, 2029
5. Provide details, sources, research, and analysis to which forms evidence-basis for this request or the associated program (e.g., cost benefit analysis, program evaluation, results from pilot program, etc).

Include whether this data is currently collected and available or whether new data will be collected:

- As the program has currently only been in place for one year, the data is predominantly baseline data at this time, hence the request to extend the program and the timeline so that data can be collected for decision making.
- During the first year of the pilot, grants were awarded to 30 LEAs, including 20 charter schools and 10 districts. In the second year, all of the initial LEAs continued in the program and there was funds to add an additional eight LEAs.
- Anecdotal data from participating teachers and LEAs shows a very positive experience. With quotes such as the following:
 - “I loved seeing the growth of not only the (new) teacher but the changes that were happening in her class. I also was able to take away many ideas and things that I could do to improve my own teaching in my classroom.”
 - “I am way more confident in my abilities in my classroom as well as helping others. The biggest confidence booster I received is to ask for leadership opportunities and advocate for myself and my school.”
 - “It was an honor being chosen as a model teacher. I was excited to help another teacher in our district.”
 - “My project has helped me recognize the skills that I have as a teacher and how they can benefit others on my team, in my school, and beyond.”
 - “Watching my paired teacher become a more confident and empowered educator. It was such an amazing experience, start to finish!”

If you are making a **Policy Request**, **STOP here** and email Greg Connell (Greg.Connell@schools.utah.gov) to inform him the request is complete and has been reviewed by your Deputy Superintendent.

FUNDING REQUEST

This section only needs to be completed if you are seeking new or additional funding.

Board Action for Request: (Date/Board Item/Committee)

- Summarize the request, the specific problem it will solve, and how it will

solve the problem.

- State code [53F-5-222](#) (established 07/01/2024). The Mentoring and Supporting Teacher Excellence and Refinement Pilot Program was established by the 2024 legislative session and was funded for two years. The early indicators of the impact of this program on teacher effectiveness and teacher retention has been very promising. In order to continue the pilot program and collect more data on its effectiveness, this request seeks the same amount of funding for two years, and small adjustments to the policy to accommodate the expanded timeline. A longer timeline is required to collect teacher retention and student growth data to determine the overall effectiveness of the initiative.

● **Amount Requested:**

Funding Source	Amount (\$)
FY 2027 one-time funding	\$ 4,800,000.00
FY 2027 ongoing funding	\$
TOTAL funding requested	\$ 4,800,000.00

- **Provide an itemized budget, including revenue and expenditure sources, for how the funding will be utilized.**

Funding Source(s):

Cost Category	FY 2025-2026 (Current fiscal year)	FY 2027-2028
Personnel Services	\$4,800,000.00	\$ 4,800,000.00
Travel/In State	\$	\$
Travel/Out State	\$	\$
Current Expenses	\$	\$

Data Processing Current Expenses	\$	\$
Data Processing Capital Outlay	\$	\$
Capital Outlay	\$	\$
Other Charges/Pass Through	\$	\$
Transfers	\$	\$
Other	\$	\$
Total	\$4,800,000.00	\$4,800,000.00
NEW USBE FTEs being requested as part of the funding request	FY 2025-2026 (Current fiscal year)	FY 2027-2028
NEW USBE FTEs	0	0

- **To what extent is this request scalable? Articulate the impacts if lower funding amounts were provided for this request.**
 - This program is highly scalable and is only limited by the amount of funding available. There are currently 38 participating LEAs, and there were 11 more interested that we were unable to fund. This shows a high level of interest. Additionally all 30 LEAs from the first year of the program applied to participate in the second year, showing the early success and interest in continuation.
 - If a lower funding amount is provided, then all of the initial pilot participants would not be able to continue with their initiatives and collecting data. Using the program rubric for decision making, some of the current participants would be eliminated.
- **What has been done or considered to address this problem with existing resources, instead of requesting additional state funding?**
 - Most LEAs would be unable to fund this teacher leadership initiative without legislative funding. Because of the high value that they place on the program, it is anticipated that some LEAs would attempt to continue

some aspects of their initiative, but it would likely be significantly smaller in scope.

- **Summarize the current budget for the project or program that is being funded. If this is a new project or program, summarize resources that are available for like-objectives within USBE.**
 - The current funding is allocated to approved LEAs through grants spread over a two year period, based on a competitive grant application process.
 - LEAs have used these funds to improve retention of strong educators who remain in the classroom and have access to growth opportunities in the form of innovative teacher leadership tracks outside of contractual educator steps and lanes to:
 - Foster development of leadership skills in participating teachers; and
 - Provide the opportunity for a master teacher to impact and provide guidance for fellow teachers seeking to refine instructional skills. ([53F-5-222](#))
 - 6.25% of the funds were allocated for administrative costs to the state, and these funds have paid for part of the salaries of two education specialists at USBE, who actively manage the program including data collection and analysis.
- **Does this request create any future funding obligations (operations and maintenance, multi-year scale up, etc)?**
 - This request does not create any future obligations.
- **Describe how the funding case supports the goals and metrics of the [USBE Strategic Plan](#).**
 - **Current Board Strategic Plan Goals:**
 - **Law and Licensing-** “to increase the presence of highly qualified educators for every student in Utah”
 - **2018 Historical Strategic Plan**
 - 2A: Support districts and schools in providing effective mentoring for beginning educators and leaders
 - 2B: Assist districts and schools in providing continuous personalized professional learning for each educator and leader
 - 2E: Promote equitable access to highly effective teachers
 - 2F: Increase the supply of transformational school leaders across the state

- **What value will additional resources create for Utah? What performance measures for that value will be reported or are already reported?**
 - Resources will provide a continuation of the MASTER Pilot teacher leader program which creates teacher leadership paths outside of administration, leading to professional growth for both the teacher leaders and the peers they serve.
 - Adding two additional years to the pilot program will allow for data collection specifically related to teacher retention, and student achievement.
- **Provide details, sources, research, and analysis to which forms evidence-basis for this request or the associated program (e.g., cost benefit analysis, program evaluation, results from pilot program, etc).**
 - Teacher retention is a critical component of an effective education system. Highly qualified, and experienced teachers, consistently provide the best outcomes for students. Teacher leadership opportunities not only encourage teachers to stay in the profession, but also grow the skills of teacher leaders and those they serve.
 - The MASTER Pilot grant is organized to provide strong administrative support for teachers seeking leadership and growth opportunities. (See attached compilation of research generated by AI.)
 - [*The Role of Teacher Leadership Opportunities in Enhancing Teacher Retention*](#)
- **Which populations or geographic areas will benefit most from this request? What safeguards will be implemented to prevent inequities or other unintended distributional consequences as it relates to this request?**
 - The current legislation does not differentiate between the size of the LEA, and the amount of funding received. Thus a very small LEA (such as a charter or rural area) may receive the same amount of funding as a very large LEA.
 - For the purposes of data collection within the pilot, this allows us to learn about the impact of different funding levels across different LEAs. If this program is expanded and continued beyond a pilot status, this difference should be considered and addressed.
- **Which stakeholders have you engaged and coordinated with during the development of this request?**
 - The 30 LEAs who initially launched the pilot program with USBE support.

Last Step: When the Legislative Request Form is complete and has been reviewed by your Deputy Superintendent, email Greg Connell, Greg.Connell@schools.utah.gov to inform him the request is ready for next steps.