

## **Agency: UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

## **Request Title: USHE Board Policy Request 2026**

**Purpose Statement:** To amend Utah State Code to add a voting member of the Utah State Board of Education (USB E) as an *ex-officio* member of the Utah Board of Higher Education (USHE).

## **What is the nature of your request?**

*Select one:*

**POLICY REQUEST** – You are seeking changes to Utah State Code to improve your program/services.

## **Projected Results:**

- **Improved alignment between K-12 curriculum standards (e.g., math pathways, science standards) and post-secondary expectations, leading to a measurable reduction in the number of Utah high school graduates requiring remedial coursework at USHE institutions.**
- **Increased efficiency in P-20 educational pathways, resulting in higher rates of post-secondary enrollment, credit transfer, and on-time completion for Utah students.**

## **Rationale:**

A formal governance link is necessary to bridge the gap between K-12 and higher education, ensuring seamless student transitions. Key policy areas like teacher

preparation, concurrent enrollment, and admissions standards directly affect both boards.

This policy creates a permanent, high-level structure for collaboration, ensuring K-12 perspectives are included in higher education governance, which is critical for Utah's long-term workforce and economic development.

## **USB E Lead Point of Contact:**

**Name:** Elisse Newey

**Email Address:** [elisse.newey@schools.utah.gov](mailto:elisse.newey@schools.utah.gov)

**Phone Number:** 646-280-7839

**USB E Section:** policy

## **POLICY REQUEST**

*This section only needs to be completed if you are making a policy request (creating or changing existing Utah Code language).*

### **1. Section(s) of State Code to be addressed (if none, insert "N/A"):**

53B-1-401. Board of Higher Education

### **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:)**

**Problem:** The K-12 (USB E) and Higher Education (USHE) systems in Utah are governed separately, creating policy gaps. Students face misaligned expectations, particularly in math and English, leading to high remediation rates in college. Furthermore, decisions made by one board (e.g., USHE on teacher preparation

programs, USBE on high school graduation requirements) directly impact the other, but there is no formal mechanism for joint governance.

**Request:** This request seeks to add one (1) voting, *ex-officio* member from the Utah State Board of Education to the Utah Board of Higher Education.

**Solution:** This individual will provide a direct, consistent communication channel at the highest level of governance. It ensures a K-12 perspective is integrated into USHE policy-making, fostering better curriculum alignment, smoother student transitions, and more effective collaboration on shared goals like concurrent enrollment and teacher pipelines.

### **3. Describe the history of the issues or concerns including relevant context and timelines:**

Historically, USBE and USHE have operated in separate silos. While joint committees and *ad hoc* task forces have been created to address specific, urgent issues (such as the 2020 math alignment), these bodies are often temporary and lack the formal authority of a board member. This structural disconnect has been a persistent challenge. Recent legislative focus on workforce development, "stackable credentials," and the path from high school to career has highlighted the critical need for a permanent, structural link between the two systems to ensure a seamless P-20 pipeline for all Utah students.

### **4. What are the suggested legislative solutions? Include code references and suggested language where possible:**

**Amend 53B-1-401. Board of Higher Education — Members...** (1) *The Utah Board of Higher Education is comprised of 21 members as follows: (a) 18 voting members, appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the Senate... [current language unchanged] (b) One voting, ex-officio member who is a current member of the Utah State Board of Education, designated by the leadership of the Utah State*

***Board of Education for a term of two years.*** (c) [Formerly (b)] *Two nonvoting student members... [current language unchanged]*