



DRAFT MINUTES

PUBLIC EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

Tuesday, January 27, 2026 | 8:00 a.m. | 110 Senate Building

Members Present:

Sen. Heidi Balderree, Senate Chair
Rep. Stephen L. Whyte, House Chair
Rep. Matt MacPherson, House Vice Chair
Sen. Luz Escamilla
Sen. David P. Hinkins
Sen. John D. Johnson
Sen. Ann Millner
Rep. Tiara Auxier
Rep. Steve Eliason
Rep. Tracy J. Miller
Rep. Carol S. Moss

Rep. Jason E. Thompson

Members Absent:

Sen. Lincoln Fillmore, Senate Vice Chair
President J. Stuart Adams
Rep. Walt Brooks
Rep. Candice B. Pierucci

Staff Present:

Ben Leishman, Finance Manager
Rachelle Gunderson, Senior Financial Analyst
Kiki Hudson, Financial Analyst
Jennifer Kunzler, Committee Secretary

Note: A copy of related materials and an audio recording of the meeting can be found at www.le.utah.gov.

Chair Balderree called the meeting to order at 8:14 AM.

1. Call to Order/Approval of Minutes - January 23, 2026

2. Recognition of Excellence in Education

[2. Recognition of Excellence in Education - Nibley Elementary](#)

Cindy King, Principal, Nibley Elementary, Cache County School District, and Nicole Pickett, 6th Grade Teacher, Nibley Elementary, Cache County School District, gave a presentation on the achievements at Nibley Elementary School.

Chair Balderree expressed appreciation to Nibley Elementary for their presentation.

3. Budget Review: Fine Arts Outreach

Kiki Hudson reviewed the Fine Arts Outreach line item.

[3a. Fine Arts Outreach Line Item Overview](#)

Rep. MacPherson asked for clarification on POPS and BTS programs. Kiki Hudson responded.

Rep. Moss asked for more information on the subsidy program. Ben Leishman responded.

Rep. Miller asked for clarification on what happens without the subsidy program. Ben Leishman responded.

Rep. Auxier asked for clarification on what percentage of BTS' budget is provided by the state. Ben Leishman responded.

Rep. MacPherson asked clarifying questions on sources of funding. Ben Leishman responded.

[3b. USBE Fine Arts Line-item Reponse](#)

Matt Hymas, Chair, State Board of Education (USBE), Scott Jones, Deputy Superintendent of Operations, USBE, Amanda Bollinger, Vice Chair, USBE presented a response to the Fine Arts Outreach Line Item Review.

Rep Auxier expressed concern over cutting art programs and asked for clarification on future plans. Amanda Bollinger and Scott Jones responded.

Sen. Johnson , Rep. Thompson, and Rep. Auxier provided comment.

[3c. POPs 2026 Legislative Presentation](#)

[POPS](#)

Katie Lee-Koven, Executive Director, Nora Eccles Harrison Museum of Art, Utah State University, introduced Michael Bahr, Director, Utah State Shakespeare Festival, and Emily Larsen, Executive Director, Springville Museum of Art and asked them to give the POPS presentation.

Rep. Thompson also introduced Emily Larsen and Michael Bahr and requested to publicly withdraw the 8% RFA request in order to make a case instead as to why POPS should not receive a 5% cut.

Michael Bahr and Emily Larsen gave a presentation on the Professional Outreach Programs. Elliot Maxfield, 8th grader, Centennial Middle School, demonstrated drawing skills during the presentation.

Andrew Maxfield, resident, spoke about the benefits of POPS.

Rep. Eliason expressed appreciation for POPS.

Rep. Whyte and Rep. Moss provided comment.

Rep. MacPherson asked clarifying questions on Spy Hop and how programs are selected. Michael Burr and Emily Larsen responded.

Rep. Thompson thanked Rep MacPherson for his comments and added assurance that his support and committee support is contingent upon rules and standards being followed.

4. Budget Review: Minimum School Programs

[4a. MSP Overview_26GS](#)

Rachelle Gunderson gave a presentation on Minimum School Programs.

Rep. Miller asked for clarification on the Stabilization Deposit. Rachelle Gunderson responded.

Rachelle Gunderson continued the presentation.

Rep. Miller asked for further information on the Salary Supplement for Higher Education. Rachelle Gunderson responded.

Rep Whyte asked for clarification on the definition of a non-lapsing balance. Rachelle Gunderson responded.

Ben Leishman added further clarification to Rep. Miller's prior question.

Rep. Eliason asked for clarification on the Student Health and Counseling Support Program. Rachelle Gunderson responded.

Rachelle Gunderson continued the presentation.

Rep. Whyte asked questions on the Flexible Allocation and how those figures were determined. Rachelle Gunderson and Ben Leishman responded.

Rep. Miller asked what percentage is allocated to professional staff and how reductions in the Flexible Allocation will affect teachers' salaries. Ben Leishman responded.

Rachelle Gunderson continued the presentation.

Rep. MacPherson asked questions on transportation funding. Ben Leishman responded.

Chair Balderree commented that her bill will seek to allow the same benefit.

Rachelle Gunderson continued the presentation.

[4b. USBE MSP Line-item Reponse](#)

Matt Hymas, Scott Jones, and Amanda Bollinger, presented the USBE response to Minimum School Programs.

Rep. MacPherson asked for clarification on procedures when cutting ongoing and one-time funding items. Ben Leishman and Amanda Bollinger responded.

Rep. Whyte asked for a recommendation from the Board on where the desired increase should come from. Matt Hymas responded.

Rep. Auxier asked questions on funding cuts in the dual immersion program. Amanda Bollinger responded.

Rep. Miller provided comment.

Chair Balderree expressed hope that the committee and USBE can collaborate as a team to solve issues.

5. 9:25 a.m. Budget Review: MSP Categorical Program Administration

[5a. MSP Categorical Program Administration_26GS](#)

Rachelle Gunderson gave a presentation on MSP Categorical Program Administration.

Rep. Auxier asked for clarification on CTE Student Organizations. Rachelle Gunderson responded.

Ben Leishman added further clarification.

Rep. Eliason provided comment.

Rep. Thompson asked for clarification on allowing private individuals to pay for travel costs. Rachelle Gunderson responded.

Rachelle Gunderson continued the presentation.

[5b. USBE MSP Categorical Program Administration_26GS.pdf](#)

Matt Hymas, Scott Jones, and Amanda Bollinger presented the USBE response to MSP Categorical Program recommendations.

Sen. Escamilla expressed concern over categorical cuts. Amanda Bollinger responded.

Ben Leishman added further clarification.

6. Budget Review: School Building Programs

[6a. School Building Program 26GS](#)

Rachelle Gunderson presented the School Building Program.

Rep. Whyte assumed the chair.

[6b. USBE Rural Schools Sports Facilities FY26](#)

Sam Urie, School Finance Director, USBE, presented recommendations for Rural Sports Facilities Grants.

[6c. USBE Small School District Capital Projects FY26](#)

Sam Urie, presented recommendations for Small School District Capital Projects.

Chair Whyte expressed appreciation for the presentation.

7. Requests for Appropriations

Rep. MacPherson assumed the chair.

Rep Whyte presented a Request For Appropriation for an Education and Leadership matching grant.

[7a. Rep. Whyte RFA Education and Leadership Matching Grant](#)

[Education & Leadership Matching Grants RFA Fact Sheet](#)

Michael Parker, Executive Director, City Strong Foundation, and Sean Covey, President, Franklin Covey, gave a presentation on building leadership.

Chair Balderree assumed the chair.

Rep. Thompson and Sen. Johnson provided comment.

[7bi. Rep. Defay RFA Tools for Transforming Classrooms](#)

[7bii. Rep. Defay RFA Tools for Transforming Classrooms](#)

Rep. Defay presented a request for Tools for Transforming Classrooms and Behavioral Support.

Amie Huggins, teacher, Davis School District, gave a presentation about the Tools for Transforming Classrooms and Behavioral Support Program .

Rep. Auxier asked for specific examples on the program. Amie Huggins responded.

8. Other Business



MOTION: Rep. Whyte moved to adjourn. The motion passed with a vote of 7 - 0 - 9.

Yeas - 7

Rep. T. Auxier
Sen. H. Balderree
Sen. L. Escamilla
Rep. M. MacPherson
Rep. T. Miller
Rep. J. Thompson
Rep. S. Whyte

Nays - 0

Absent - 9

Sen. J. Adams
Rep. W. Brooks
Rep. S. Eliason
Sen. L. Fillmore
Sen. D. Hinkins
Sen. J. Johnson
Sen. A. Millner
Rep. C. Moss
Rep. C. Pierucci

Chair Balderree adjourned the meeting at 10:54 AM.