

1 **R277. Education, Administration.**

2 **R277-731. [~~Catalyst Center~~] Applied Professional Education Experience (APEX)**  
3 **Grant Program Policy.**

4 **R277-731-1. Authority[;] and Purpose[, ~~and Oversight Category~~].**

5 (1) This rule is authorized by:

6 (a) Utah Constitution Article X, Section 3, which vests general control and  
7 supervision over public education in the Board;

8 (b) Subsection 53E-3-401(4), which allows the Board to make rules to execute  
9 the Board's duties and responsibilities under the Utah constitution and state law;

10 (c) Section [~~53E-3-507.1~~]53F-5-224, which:

11 (i) establishes the [~~Catalyst Center~~] Applied Professional Education Experience  
12 (APEX) Grant Program; and

13 (ii) requires the State Board of Education to make rules to implement the  
14 program; and

15 (d) Section 53F-9-204, which describes legislative appropriation for the program.

16 (2) The purpose of this rule is to establish standards and procedures for Local  
17 Education Agencies (LEAs) to qualify for and administer funds from the [~~Catalyst~~  
18 ~~Center~~] APEX Grant Program to create new or expand existing catalyst centers to  
19 enhance career readiness and align students' skills with Utah's workforce needs.

20 [~~(3) This Rule R277-731 is categorized as Category 4 as described in Rule~~  
21 ~~R277-111.~~]

22

23 **R277-731-2. Definitions.**

24 (1) "Advisory board" means a group of individuals composed of industry,  
25 postsecondary, and community representatives that review program direction and  
26 ensure alignment with workforce needs.

27 (2) "Consortium" means two or more LEAs located within the same CTE  
28 geographic planning region.

29 (3) "Profession-based learning center" means an ~~an [Catalyst]~~ APEX Model Center  
30 as defined in Section ~~[53E-3-507.4]~~ 53F-5-224.

31 (4) "Program" means the ~~[Catalyst Center]~~ APEX Grant Program defined in  
32 Section ~~[53E-3-507.4]~~ 53F-5-224.

33 (5) "Unwarranted duplication" means the overlap of resources that lead to  
34 inefficiencies, wasted resources, or a lack of coordination in providing comprehensive  
35 CTE programs.

36

37 **R277-731-3. LEA Grant Requirements.**

38 (1) An LEA or LEA consortium may annually apply for grant funding beginning  
39 with the 2025-2026 school year.

40 (2) An LEA or LEA consortium may not apply for an additional grant that would  
41 overlap with an existing award.

42 (a) An LEA or LEA consortium may not apply for an implementation grant that  
43 overlaps with a planning grant.

44 (3) An LEA shall apply for a grant by submitting an application to the state board  
45 that includes:

46 (a) a general plan, including a proposed timeline for the project;

47 (b) a detailed budget, identifying proposed expenditures and any matching funds  
48 used for the project;

49 (c) justification for any capital expenditures, including plans for building use, cost  
50 analyses, and estimates;

51 (d) a description of how the grant will be used to improve student outcomes;

52 (e) a description of the well-defined metrics that will be used to establish and  
53 measure student proficiency;

54 (f) evidence of any existing partnerships with industry, including letters of  
55 collaboration;

56 (g) evidence of alignment with the LEA's strategic plan;

57 (h) evidence of alignment with local labor market and industry needs;

- 58 (i) an explanation of how awarded funds will be used within the defined  
59 performance period without unnecessary carryforward;
- 60 (j) as applicable, a description of how the [~~Catalyst Center~~] APEX center  
61 programming will align with or enhance programs funded by the weighted pupil unit add-  
62 on described in Section 53F-2-311;
- 63 (k) for applications submitted by a consortium of LEAs, a description of:  
64 (i) which LEA will be the fiscal agent;  
65 (ii) how the ~~catalyst~~ APEX center will serve students across the consortium;  
66 (iii) how costs and resources will be shared; and  
67 (iv) how economies of scale will be achieved;
- 68 (l) a description of any proposed planning activities, including expected timelines  
69 and outcomes;
- 70 (m) evidence of collaboration with the LEA CTE Director; and  
71 (n) if applicable, an explanation of the LEA's process for employing an individual  
72 with industry experience as an educator who is not a licensed teacher through  
73 Subsection 53E-6-204(3), including how the LEA will:
- 74 (i) determine and verify the individual's industry expertise; and  
75 (ii) provide any required training to the individual before or during the teaching  
76 assignment.
- 77 (4) Grant funding shall not be used for the unwarranted duplication of existing  
78 resources, including physical assets and programmatic offerings, provided by other  
79 state or local entities.
- 80 (5) To maximize resources and impact, LEAs may apply for funding as a  
81 consortium.

82

83 **R277-731-4. Superintendent Responsibilities and Award Prioritization.**

84 (1) Beginning with the 2026-2027 fiscal year, dependent on available funds, the  
85 Superintendent shall make the application available beginning May 15.

86 (2) Prioritization for grant funding will be given to an LEA that:

- 87 (a) proposes innovative programming supported by local labor market data;  
88 (b) collaborates with local postsecondary institutions and industry;  
89 (c) demonstrates the ability to sustain the ~~catalyst~~ APEX center after the grant  
90 period;  
91 (d) demonstrates a strong focus on student outcomes and workforce alignment;  
92 (e) addresses gaps in high-demand, high-skill career pathways;  
93 (f) ensures funds are used to enhance programming quality before expansion;  
94 and  
95 (g) provides for a large number of students to participate in ~~catalyst~~ APEX  
96 center programs without limiting participation to students based on socioeconomic  
97 challenges.

98 (3) For the purposes of subsection (2)(b):

99 (a) coordination with local postsecondary institutions and industry shall be  
100 directed by the LEA in a manner that the LEA determines is in the best interest of  
101 the program; and

102 (b) the level of collaboration may be tailored to the individual needs of  
103 each program, and each offering within the program.

104 (4) Subsection (2)(g) shall not be interpreted to mean that LEAs with more  
105 students are prioritized over LEAs with fewer students.

106 (5) Grant funds may be distributed through smaller planning grants.

107 (6) The Superintendent may use up to 1% of the funds appropriated by the  
108 Legislature to administer the program.

109

110 **R277-731-5. Program Requirements.**

111 (1) An LEA receiving a grant shall utilize funds to plan for, create, establish,  
112 enhance, or expand profession-based learning programs that:

113 (a) provide learning experiences and instruction that:

114 (i) replicates professional environments and workplace practices;

115 (ii) builds leadership skills;

- 116 (iii) builds durable professional skills;
- 117 (iv) allows students to advance as they demonstrate proficiency through well-
- 118 defined metrics;
- 119 (v) utilizes student projects that address the specific needs or objectives of
- 120 industry partners;
- 121 (vi) incorporates industry-standard tools, technologies, and methods;
- 122 (vii) provides opportunities for students to develop a product or presentation that
- 123 is shared with an audience; and
- 124 (viii) facilitates mentorship by industry professionals to guide and evaluate the
- 125 student's work;
- 126 (b) align programming with labor market needs and local industry demands;
- 127 (c) establish or enhance partnerships with:
- 128 (i) local industries and employers to ensure workforce relevance; or
- 129 (ii) as determined by the LEA, technical colleges, degree-granting institutions, or
- 130 other postsecondary entities to support postsecondary transitions for students;
- 131 (d) address gaps in regional workforce training or opportunities;
- 132 (e) incorporate:
- 133 (i) career and technical student organizations as the LEA determines relevant;
- 134 (ii) advisory boards with representation from local industries and workforce
- 135 experts;
- 136 (iii) professional learning opportunities for instructors to improve workforce-
- 137 focused skills; and
- 138 (iv) strategies for using labor market data to refine and improve program
- 139 offerings;
- 140 (f) is tailored to the unique needs and circumstances of the local student body,
- 141 community, and industry partners; and
- 142 (g) align with CTE Quality Standards.
- 143 (2) LEAs or LEA consortiums shall use any equipment or capital purchased with
- 144 awarded funds for the purposes outlined in the application.

145 (3) If the award includes a portion of the grant as a lump sum payment, the LEA  
146 shall work with the Superintendent to establish a payment timeline requiring milestones  
147 and documentation;

148 (4) [~~Catalyst~~] APEX centers may be collocated on the campus of an institution  
149 of higher education with an agreement between the LEA and the institution of higher  
150 education.

151

152 **R277-731-6. Oversight, Monitoring, and Reports.**

153 (1) An LEA that receives a grant shall submit an annual report to the state board  
154 no later than September 15.

155 (a) An LEA that receives an implementation grant shall submit an annual report  
156 during each year they receive funding and for three years following the last year  
157 the LEA receives funding.

158 (2) The annual report shall include:

159 (a) the use of grant funds;

160 (b) progress in meeting proposed goals and benchmarks, including student  
161 proficiency measurements using the well-defined metrics described in the application;

162 (c) updates on partnerships with industry and postsecondary institutions;

163 (d) a demonstration of the alignment of programming with labor market data; and

164 (e) a description of applicable student participation and outcomes.

165 (3) An LEA receiving funds will be monitored to ensure that awarded funds are  
166 used in accordance with an LEA's application.

167 (a) An LEA receiving funds shall participate in scheduled desk monitoring and  
168 onsite monitoring visits.

169 (b) An LEA receiving funds shall submit quarterly reimbursement requests.

170 (4) If requesting a portion of the grant as an initial lump sum payment, the LEA  
171 must provide evidence of achieved benchmarks before receiving the remainder of the  
172 awarded funds on a reimbursement basis.

173           (5) Annually, funds that are not used within the defined performance period will  
174 be recaptured for reallocation.

175           (6) An LEA that does not comply with the requirements of this Rule R277-731,  
176 including not providing evidence of adherence to program standards or misuse of funds,  
177 may be subject to a corrective action plan and potential reduction of funds or penalty in  
178 accordance with Rule R277-114.

179           (7) Upon request, the Superintendent shall submit a report on the program to the  
180 Education Interim Committee and the Public Education Appropriations Subcommittee.

181

182 **KEY: catalyst center, grant program, career readiness, workforce development,**  
183 **profession-based learning**

184 **Date of Last Change: January 7, 2026**

185 **Authorizing, and Implemented or Interpreted Law: Art X Sec 3; 53E-3-401(4); 53E-**  
186 **3-507.1; 53F-9-204**

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