

Proposal for a Statewide Charter School Literacy Coaching Initiative

Submitted to the Utah State Charter School Board

Purpose

The Utah State Charter School Board has been entrusted with \$1,000,000 to support literacy improvement efforts in Utah's charter schools pursuant to the goals and requirements established by SB 241 during the 2026 General Legislative Session. Following consultation with charter school leaders authorized by multiple authorizers, a consensus has emerged that the most effective use of these funds is not direct allocation to individual schools, but rather the creation of a shared statewide literacy support system that provides expertise, coaching, and implementation support directly to educators.

This proposal recommends investing these funds in a statewide network of literacy coaches trained in the Science of Reading who will provide ongoing support to charter schools throughout Utah.

Background and Need

During the 2026 General Legislative Session, the Utah Legislature passed SB 241, establishing new statewide expectations and accountability measures focused on ensuring that all students achieve reading proficiency. As part of this effort, the Utah State Charter School Board will receive \$1,000,000 to support literacy improvement initiatives for charter schools in consultation with other charter school authorizers.

Following discussions among charter school leaders and stakeholders throughout the state, a consensus has emerged that the most impactful use of these funds is not direct allocation of small grants to individual schools, but rather the creation of a shared statewide literacy support system that provides high-quality expertise directly to educators and students.

While distributing the available funds directly to individual schools may initially appear equitable, the practical impact would be limited. Once divided among Utah's charter schools, each school would receive only a modest amount of funding—insufficient to sustain meaningful literacy interventions, hire specialized personnel, or implement comprehensive professional development initiatives.

By contrast, a centralized approach allows charter schools to collectively leverage these resources to access highly qualified literacy experts who can provide ongoing support, coaching, training, and implementation assistance.

The proposed model aligns with the intent of SB 241 by building statewide capacity to improve literacy instruction, accelerate student achievement, and ensure that charter schools have access to evidence-based support grounded in the Science of Reading.

Proposed Program

The State Charter School Resource Center will administer a statewide literacy coaching initiative focused on improving reading outcomes through evidence-based instructional practices aligned with the Science of Reading. Funds will be used to hire approximately 8–10 literacy coaches and trainers assigned to charter schools throughout Utah.

Strategic Partnership

The initiative will establish a partnership with the Center for the School of the Future at Utah State University to provide coach training, implementation support, instructional frameworks, and quality assurance.

Timeline

2026–2027: Establish the State Charter School Resource Center, recruit and hire coaches, execute partnership agreements, develop training systems, onboard staff, and begin phased implementation.

2027–2028: Full implementation with all coaches deployed, regional support structures established, and comprehensive services available statewide.

Expected Outcomes

- Increase educator capacity to deliver evidence-based literacy instruction aligned with the Science of Reading.
- Increase the percentage of K–3 students reading on or above grade level each year through 2030, supporting the statewide goal established by SB 241 that all students read at grade level by the end of third grade.
- Ensure that every participating charter school implements a systematic process for identifying students who are reading below grade level and provides evidence-based intervention and more intensive reading instruction to those students.
- Improve the consistency and quality of literacy instruction across Utah charter schools.
- Provide equitable access to high-quality literacy expertise regardless of school size or geographic location.
- Build sustainable instructional leadership and literacy capacity within charter schools.
- Create a collaborative statewide literacy support network that benefits all participating authorizers and schools.

Future Funding Strategy

In addition to the \$1 Million allocation for the coming school year, SCSB has carry-forward funds that can supplement the launch of the program if needed. The Board, Resource Center, and charter school stakeholders will pursue future legislative appropriations to ensure literacy support resources increase to match the proportional charter school statewide enrollment and is sustainable over the long term.

Alignment with Legislative Intent

This proposal directly advances the objectives of SB 241 by investing in instructional expertise and long-term capacity building rather than distributing limited one-time allocations to individual schools.

Budget

Category	Estimated Amount	
Literacy Coaches (10 positions incl. benefits, starting mid-year)	\$	785,400
USU Center for the School of the Future Contract	\$	182,000
Travel and Regional Support	\$	50,000
Materials and Professional Development	\$	10,000
Administrative Operations (most covered through CSRC appropriation)	\$	5,000
Total	\$	1,032,400

Recommendation

Authorize the State Charter School Resource Center to utilize the allocated \$1,000,000 to establish and administer a statewide literacy coaching initiative, including the hiring of approximately 8–10 literacy coaches and a partnership with the Center for the School of the Future at Utah State University.