

Aug 7, 2026

Utah State Board of Education

The meeting was conducted virtually.

Members Present: Cindy Davis, Cole Kelley, Matt Hymas, Randy Boothe, and Christina Boggess (CB – present unless noted).

Committee Staff: Scott Jones, Deborah Jacobson, and Cammy Wilcox.

Others Present: Sam Urie, Aaron Brough, Jared Felt, Cathy Gray, Dale Frost, Rachel Schechter, Greg Connell, Jeff Wilcox, Marcus Chen, Michael Iwasaki, Paul Chase, Paula Plant, Tim Davis, Lara Smith, Winona Moss, Rebecca Nielsen, Kira Bennett, Mark Waddoups, Don Modde, and Jerry Record.

Committee Chair Davis called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

USBE Staff Highlights:

- Jeff Wilcox, Fiscal Monitor, Financial Operations

Public Comment:

There were no requests for public comment.

4.2 R277-113, Local Education Agency (LEA) Fiscal and Auditing Policies (Continuation & Amendment)

Committee Discussion: The Committee reviewed R277-113, Local Education Agency (LEA) Fiscal and Auditing Policies, as part of its upcoming five-year review. Staff noted that the rule is approaching its required review date and recommended that it be continued without substantive changes.

Authorizing, and Implemented or Interpreted Law: [Art X, Sec 3](#); [53E-3-401\(4\)](#); [53E-3-501\(1\)\(e\)](#)

Committee Action:

Member Kelley Motion:

That the Committee continue and approve R277-113, Local Education Agency (LEA) Fiscal and Auditing Policies, Draft 1, on first reading and forward to the Board for continuation and approval on second and final reading. - CB absent.

Motion: Passed unanimously

MOTION FOR THE BOARD: That the Board continue and approve R277-113, Local Education Agency (LEA) Fiscal and Auditing Policies, Draft 1, on second and final reading.

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4.3 R277-109, Legislative Reporting and Accountability (Continuation)

Committee Discussion: The Committee reviewed R277-109, Legislative Reporting and Accountability, as part of its upcoming five-year review. Staff explained that the rule is approaching its required five-year review date and recommended that it be continued without substantive changes.

Authorizing, and Implemented or Interpreted Law: [Art X Sec 3](#); [53E-3-501\(1\)](#); [53E-3-401\(2\)\(a\)](#); [53E-3-401](#)

Committee Action:**Member Kelley Motion:**

That the Committee continue R277-109, Legislative Reporting and Accountability, on first reading and forward to the Board for continuation on second and final reading.
- CB absent.

Motion: Passed unanimously.

MOTION FOR THE BOARD: That the Board continue R277-109, Legislative Reporting and Accountability, on first reading and forward to the Board for continuation on second and final reading.

4.4 R277-712, Personalized, Competency-based Learning Grant Programs (Continuation & Repeal)

Committee Discussion: The committee reviewed R277-712, Personalized, Competency-based Learning Grant Programs, as part of its upcoming five-year review. Staff explained that the recommendation is to repeal the rule. Because the Office of Administrative Rules (OAR) discourages allowing rules to expire, staff recommended first continuing the rule and then initiating the repeal process.

Authorizing, and Implemented or Interpreted Law: [Art X Sec 3](#); [Title 53F, Chapter 5, Part 5](#); [53E-3-401\(4\)](#)

Committee Action:**Member Davis Motion:**

That the Committee continue R277-712, Personalized, Competency-based Learning Grant Programs, through the September end date, and forward to the Board for approval. - CB absent.

Motion: Passed unanimously.

Member Kelley Motion:

That the Committee repeal R277-712, Personalized, Competency-based Learning

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Grant Programs, after the September end date, on first reading and recommend the Board repeal the rule on second and final reading. – CB Absent

Motion: Passed unanimously.

MOTION FOR THE BOARD: That the Board continue R277-712, Personalized, Competency-based Learning Grant Programs, through the September end date.

MOTION FOR THE BOARD: That the Board repeal R277-712, Personalized, Competency-based Learning Grant Programs, after the September end date, on second and final reading.

4.5 R277-720, Reimbursement Program for Early Graduation from Competency-Schools (Continuation & Repeal)

Committee Discussion: The committee reviewed R277-720, Reimbursement Program for Early Graduation from Competency-Schools, as part of its upcoming five-year review. Staff explained that the recommendation is to repeal the rule. Because the OAR discourages allowing rules to expire, staff recommended first continuing the rule and then initiating the repeal process.

Authorizing, and Implemented or Interpreted Law: [Art X Sec 3](#); [53E-3-401](#)(4); [53F-2-511](#)(1)(c)(ii); [53F-2-511](#)(6)

Committee Action:

Member Davis Motion:

That the Committee continue R277-720, Reimbursement Program for Early Graduation from Competency-Schools, through the September end date, and forward to the Board for approval. – CB absent.

Motion: Passed unanimously.

Member Kelley Motion:

That the Committee repeal R277-720, Reimbursement Program for Early Graduation from Competency-Schools, after the September end date, on first reading and recommend the Board repeal the rule on second and final reading. – CB absent.

Motion: Passed unanimously.

MOTION FOR THE BOARD: That the Board continue R277-720, Reimbursement Program for Early Graduation from Competency-Schools, through the September end date.

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MOTION FOR THE BOARD: That the Board repeal R277-720, Reimbursement Program for Early Graduation from Competency-Schools, after the September end date, on second and final reading.

4.6 Early Literacy Research Study

Committee Discussion: The committee reviewed a proposed early literacy research study to be funded through Federal Mineral Release Funds. The study would provide family licenses to an application that trains parents in the Science of Reading and offers literacy activities for kindergarten and first grade students. The research would evaluate the impact of parent support on student reading outcomes by tracking Acadience assessment scores. LXD Research Founder Rachel Schechter confirmed that siblings could use the same license and any adult in the household could access the app.

The proposed study aligns with the USBE Strategic Plan 2025 by supporting student learning and educator quality through evidence-based literacy practices. The committee discussed how the research could provide objective data to inform future policy and funding decisions while ensuring transparency and compliance with Board research and governance responsibilities.

Committee Action:

Member Kelley Motion:

The Committee recommends that the Utah State Board of Education approve funding the Early Literacy Research Study, using Federal Mineral Lease funds from their discretionary account, at the expansion level of \$397,200.

Motion: Passed 4 to 1, with Members Davis, Hymas, Boothe, and Kelley in favor and Member Boggess opposed.

MOTION FOR THE BOARD: That the Board approve funding the Early Literacy Research Study, using Federal Mineral Lease funds from their discretionary account, at the expansion level of \$397,200.

4.7 Public Education Equalization Stabilization Restricted Fund

Committee Discussion: The committee reviewed additional information and potential options for establishing guardrails for the Public Education Economic Stabilization Restricted Fund (PEESRF), following direction provided at the May 22, 2026, special Finance Committee meeting. Staff presented background on the purpose and funding mechanism of the PEESRF, recent legislative actions, and the use of one-time funds for school trust land transactions.

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**Committee Action:**

The Committee requested that the Public Education Equalization Stabilization Restricted Fund item be brought back to the September Finance Committee meeting as an action item for further discussion and consideration.

4.8 Operational & Legal Framework Update for Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) and the Utah Data Research Center (UDRC) BRIDGE System

Committee Discussion: The committee reviewed an update on the BRIDGE Project, a federally funded Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) grant initiative being implemented in partnership with the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) and the Utah Data Research Center (UDRC). Staff explained that the project is intended to modernize and secure the sharing of individual-level data among state agencies for authorized operational purposes.

Staff discussed recent legislative changes, including the passage of S.B. 195, which provides UDRC with statutory authority to receive and share personally identifiable information and requires the adoption of administrative rules governing security, privacy, and operational procedures. The committee reviewed the proposed Administrative Rule R765-1002, noting that the rule preserves USBE's ownership and control of its data, establishes federal security standards for data storage, and requires UDRC to maintain incident response protocols and provide prompt notification of any privacy or security incidents.

Committee Action:

The Committee requested an agenda item for the September Finance Committee to explore a UDRC research project on the math waiver granted to Wasatch School District.

4.9 Special Education Funding Options for Schools/LEAs with High Rates of SPED Students

Committee Discussion: In February 2026, the Utah State Board of Education approved a rule change to R277-479 to bring allocations from the Special Education Add-On formula for certain charter schools in line with other LEAs. Spectrum Academy, because of its high rates of SPED students, was exempted from this rule changes. However, with an expansion into St. George, Spectrum Academy, according to R277-479 would receive a very significant cut in Special Education Add-On funding. This effectively prevents Spectrum Academy from expanding.

On June 4, 2026, USBE approved a motion to seek "a legislative change to address the special education funding issues raised by LEAs and schools with unusually high rates of special education students (e.g. greater than 70%)."

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Over the summer, USBE staff have met with the Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst and other legislative staff to assess different approaches to address both the issues faced by Spectrum Academy and other LEAs and schools that have unusually high rates of special education students.

The purpose of this item is to inform Finance Committee and the public of the different options being explored through this process.

4.10 Recognition of Progress, Achievements, or Improvements

Staff recognized the School Children's Trust section for their outstanding work in improving the FY27 funding distribution process. Staff reported that funds would be distributed to all but eight new schools across 1,024 total schools.

Staff recognized the Financial Operations team for its stewardship of federal funds, noting that a state review found USBE's use of ARPA funds fully compliant with U.S. Treasury guidance, with no findings or discrepancies.

Staff recognized Cole Shakespear and Jeff Wilcox for recently earning their Certified Fraud Examiner credentials.

4.10.1 INFORMATION: Program Monthly Report (PMR) on USIMS

Committee Information: Staff provided an update on the Utah Schools Information Management System (USIMS) project and ongoing efforts to modernize USBE data systems and improve data access and reporting.

4.10.2 INFORMATION: Program Monthly Report (PMR) on Utah Grants

Committee Information: Staff provided an update on Utah Grants, USBE's grant management system used for applications, awards, payments, and monitoring for USBE staff, LEAs, and CBO partners.

Committee Action:

Staff will coordinate with Rebecca Nielsen to present an update on Utah Grants at the September 16 Reports and Requirements Task Force meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.