

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Members, Utah State Board of Education

**FROM:** Natalie Grange, CPA CFE  
School Finance Director

**DATE:** April 14-15, 2016

**ACTION:** Statewide Online Education Program (SOEP) Home and Private Tuition and Courses of Action for Enrollments

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**Background:**

The growth in the SOEP home and private school tuition program over the past few years has resulted in enrollments in excess of available funding. School Finance staff has prepared three different courses of action to allocate available funding, to ensure that home and private school students have an equal opportunity to participate in the SOEP program.

School Finance staff will also update the Finance Committee on the contractual relationship between Canyons District and Juan Diego private school.

**Board Strategic Plan:**

This item supports the following imperative(s) and strategies in the Board's Strategic Plan:

- Educational Equity
- System Values

**Action:**

It is anticipated that the Finance Committee will evaluate the courses of action presented, recommend a policy direction, and direct staff to take steps necessary to enact the policy decision.

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## SOEP Home and Private Enrollment Courses of Action

Prepared by School Finance 4/4/2016

The following are three potential courses of action to allocate unobligated appropriations available for Home and Private School student enrollment in online courses through the Statewide Online Education Program (SOEP). Unobligated appropriations are considered new fiscal year monies and prior year funds that are unobligated either by a student not completing the course work or not completing course work timely, resulting in a reduction of tuition payments.

### Courses of Action:

1. **First Come, First Serve** - Presently we are accepting enrollment requests to the SOEP on a first come first serve basis. Students are required to enroll individually, and are given a number. Courses are funded in order of enrollment requests received until unobligated funds are obligated. Our systems are capable of this type of enrollment and this process is in place currently.

*Pros* – This method is both simple transparent and does not evidently preference a home school student over a private school student.

*Cons* – Could result in access being limited to students who are part of an organized effort to enroll, disadvantaging home school students relative to private school students. May hamper efforts by private schools to enroll students in courses in groups.

2. **Earmarking Award between home and private school students** – A percentage of the unobligated balances could be earmarked for home school students and for private school students, to ensure that each type of student has adequate access to the SOEP program. Staff recommends 30 percent for home school students and 70 percent for private school students, based on a historical ratio of program usage. Enrollments would then be awarded based on a first come first serve basis for each type of enrollment.

*Pros* – utilizes historical demand to allocate current and future funding to ensure that home school students have an opportunity to access coursework at least relative to historical levels of participation.

*Cons* – History is a relatively arbitrary method of allocation and is biased toward private school students simply because home school students have been historically less aware of the program and private school enrollments have come in groups, using more of the available funding. May hamper efforts by private schools to enroll students in courses in groups.

3. **Rolling Admission with Preference given to Home School students** - Beginning at any point in a school year when it appears likely (given the volume of requests received to date in relation to available funding) that enrollment will exceed the value of available funding or as a general rule, enrollment preference is given to home school students to ensure that all home school students receive admissions priority.
- a. Home School Preference until funding runs out - there is no absolute guarantee that a home school student would gain admission.
  - b. Absolute Home School Preference - may mean closing enrollment to private school students for some period or in some volume, to ensure that all home school students will receive admission.

*Pros* – Home school students receive priority admission and are more likely not to be shut out of coursework, maintaining access for students with most limited recourse to quality instruction and curriculum.

*Cons* – Preferences one variety of users. Could result in some students that are part of an organized effort to enroll being unable to access courses while classmates are able to access courses. May hamper efforts by private schools to enroll students in courses in groups.