

Agency: UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Program or Request Title: Reducing the Shortage of Utah Special Education Teachers

Summary of Request: (briefly articulate the need for the policy change or funding request and the anticipated outcomes)

Provide scholarships to paraprofessionals and licensure candidates to incentivize and increase the return on investment (ROI) of individuals interested in becoming Utah special education teachers.

What is the nature of your request?

Please select one:

- ☐ POLICY REQUEST – You are seeking changes to Utah State Code to improve your program/services.
- ☒ BUSINESS CASE - You are seeking new or additional financial resources to support a program/service for education.
- ☐ BOTH POLICY and BUSINESS – You are proposing a new program or expansion of an existing program that will require new/amended state code and financial resources.

Questions? Please contact:

Angie Stallings for questions related to a policy request and

Dale Frost for questions related to a business case/funding request.

USBE Lead Point of Contact:

Name: Leah Voorhies

Email Address: leah.voorhies@schools.utah.gov

Phone Number: 801-538-7898

USBE Section: Special Education

Additional USBE points of contact (as needed):

Name:

Email Address:

Phone Number:

USB E Section:

If you are already working with a policymaker or member of USB E leadership on this request, please identify them below:

POLICY REQUEST

This section only needs to be completed if you are making a policy request (creating or changing existing Utah Code language).

- 1. Section(s) of State Code to be addressed (if none, insert “N/A”):**
- 2. Describe the issues or concerns the legislation will address:**
- 3. Describe the history of the issues or concerns including relevant context and timelines:**
- 4. What are the suggested legislative solutions? Please include code references and suggested language where possible:**
- 5. What data needs to be collected to support this potential legislation? Please include whether this data is currently collected and available:**

BUSINESS CASE

This section only needs to be completed if you are making a business case request (only if you are seeking new or additional funding).

1. Total Amount Requested:

Funding Source	Amount (\$)
FY 2022 one-time funding	\$
FY 2023 one-time funding	\$ 1,465,000
FY 2023 ongoing funding	\$
TOTAL funding requested	\$ 1,465,000

2. Describe how the business case supports the goals and metrics of the [USBE Strategic Plan](#).

2.b Assist districts and schools in providing in continuous personalized professional learning for each educators and leader.

2.e Promote equitable access to highly effective teachers

2.f Increase the supply of transformational school leaders across the state

3.c Build capacity of educators and other stakeholders to meet students' mental, emotional, and social needs

3. Identify how the business case aligns with specific action steps within Strategic Priority #2 (Education innovation and investment) of the [One Utah Roadmap](#).

Education innovation and investment

Every Utah child receives a high-quality education

Prioritize at-risk learners

D: EQUITY – Provide every child with equitable opportunities and resources

- i. Identify and overcome learning or equity gaps caused by COVID-19 through summer and after-school programs, tutors, and other strategies
- ii. Allocate funding to address disparities

4. Explain how the business case advances the Board’s mission of “creating equitable conditions for student success: advocating for necessary resources, developing policy, and providing effective oversight and support.”

Ensure that students with disabilities have access to state-qualified educators who can compliantly implement the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Utah Statute and Utah State Board of Education (USB E) Rule. Ensure that special education teachers develop and implement the individual education programs (IEPs) of students with disabilities with fidelity ensuring that each student receives a free appropriate public education.

5. Which populations or geographic areas will benefit most from this request? What safeguards will be implemented to prevent inequities or other unintended distributional consequences as it relates to this request?

All areas of the state will benefit. General and special education staff from universities across the participated in the development of this request and are supportive of the proposal and working with the candidates that will receive the scholarships. Staff from large, medium and small local education agencies (LEAs) also participate and anticipate profiting from the licensed teachers that are produced from the scholarships.

6. Which stakeholders have you engaged and coordinated with during the development of this request?

This request was co-developed by a stakeholder group of USB E special education and teaching and learning staff, LEA special education and general education staff, Utah Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) faculty in both general and special education programs. The proposal was reviewed at a state-wide meeting with all LEA special education directors and the feedback received was incorporated into the proposal.

7. Summarize the current budget for the project or program that is being funded. If this is a new project or program, summarize resources that are available for like-objectives within USBE.

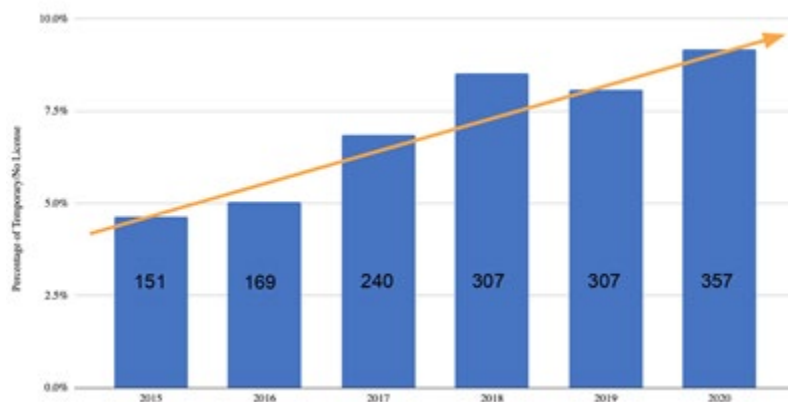
Tuition scholarships to teacher training programs at IHEs as chosen by individual students)

1. 100 students (undergraduate degree + initial license), \$5,000 per student, per year for 2 years = \$1,000,000
2. 30 students (graduate degree + initial license), \$7,750 per student, per year for 2 years = \$465,000

8. What problems would be solved with the additional funding? (Provide details and sources on any research or analysis that supports the evidence-basis for this request or the associated program such as a cost benefit analysis, program evaluation, results from a pilot program, etc.)

There is a documented shortage of special education teachers and Utah students with the most educational needs are being taught by unqualified teachers.

- From 2015 to 2019, the number of students in special education K-12 has increased from 73,054 to 80,358, a growth of 7,304 students.
- From 2015-2020, the number of special education teachers who were underqualified was steadily increasing.



- In Spring of 2021, the number of underqualified special education teachers increased to 524, which was 9.4% of the special education teachers in the state.
- Before the USBE updated the licensure structure in 2020, requests for Letters of Authorization (LOAs) for special education teachers made up the largest percentage of the total

requests: 14%. This data shows that Utah's greatest area of teacher shortage is in special education.

The requested funding would:

1. Reduce the number of students in special education who are taught by unqualified teachers.
2. Increase the number of fully prepared and licensed special education teachers.
3. Reduce the shortage of special education teachers.

See the response to question #11 for current investments to address the issue.

There is an existing pool of candidates for recruitment to earn a license in special education.

- The target population for recruitment would be existing special education paraprofessionals, previous teachers who are not currently teaching, and currently unlicensed teachers who are currently underqualified.
- Many of these individuals would be able to be fully licensed in two years or less, as many of them have both classroom experience and have already completed some coursework towards licensure.

	Academic Preparation			
Classroom Experience	Some SPED Coursework	Program - Ready	Need some prior coursework	Need to start UG coursework
Current LOA	Sweet Spot			
Previous Teacher				
Current Para				
No Experience				

- The main barrier to earning a special education license for this population is the cost of tuition.

9. Provide an itemized budget, including revenue and expenditure sources, for how the funding will be utilized.

Funding Source(s):

Program Name		
Cost Category	FY 2022	FY 2023
Personnel Services	\$	\$
Travel/In State	\$	\$
Travel/Out State	\$	\$
Current Expenses	\$	\$ 1,465,000
Data Processing Current Expenses	\$	\$
Data Processing Capital Outlay	\$	\$
Capital Outlay	\$	\$
Other Charges/Pass Through	\$	\$
Transfers	\$	\$
Other	\$	\$
Total	\$	\$ 1,465,000

USBE FTEs	FY 2022	FY 2023
USBE FTEs	0	0

Tuition scholarships to teacher training programs at Utah IHE (as chosen by individual students)

3. 100 students (undergraduate degree + initial license), \$5,000 per student, per year for two years = \$1,000,000
4. 30 students (graduate degree + initial license), \$7,750 per student, per year for two years = \$465,000

10. To what extent is this request scalable? Articulate the impacts if lower funding amounts were provided for this request.

Since the request is based on a tuition scholarships for 130 teacher candidates, it could certainly be scaled down to fewer teacher candidates.

11. What has been done or considered to address this problem with existing resources, instead of requesting additional state funding? Can any of the costs in the business case be covered with federal funds? Do any of the requested funds fall under one or more of the federal allowable use cases for [ARP ESSER](#)?

This shortage was not created by the COVID-19 pandemic, though it may be affected by it in now and in the future but would not be an appropriate use of ARP ESSER funds.

Funding for special education teacher preparation produces qualified teachers

- IDEA funds have been used for years in this capacity.
- These funds have produced well-trained, effective, and licensed special education teachers.

Federal IDEA funds are insufficient and are inflexible

- The number of licensed teachers produced is severely limited by the level of funding.
- IDEA funding structure is very time-constrained and is not conducive to recruitment.
 - Due to the timing of the release of funding to the state (in spring of the academic year), these funds reward those who have already made the decision to seek a special education license.

- IHEs cannot use the funds as a marketing tool because the state does not know how much IDEA funding will be available from year-to-year.

There is capacity to prepare more special education teachers

- Federal funds have always been completely expended.
- In 2020-2021, USBE had \$755,000 of IDEA funds for personnel preparation.
 - If the maximum of \$5,000 per student for two years was awarded, meaning approximately 75 students received awards.
- In 2021-2022, IHEs made \$2.5 million in proposals requests.
 - If the maximum of \$5,000 per student for two years was awarded, approximately 250 students would have been prepared.
- Even this is an under-estimate because proposals were capped by the funding limits.
 - This shows the existing capacity for more teacher preparation.
 - IHE's have existing infrastructure to produce enough special education teachers to meet the needs of LEA's.

Existing Utah programs are helpful and can be leveraged, but must be supplemented

- USBE has a program for scholarships for paraprofessionals to earn their first 60 credits: \$20,000 total annually. (\$2,000 per student for 2 years).
- The teacher Salary Supplement Program (TSSP) provides incentive to become a special education teacher.
 - Funding for the preparation process would enable many prospective teachers to become qualified and access TSSP.
- T. H. Bell provides funds for some prospective special education teachers.
 - There are not enough funds for the majority of prospective special education teachers.
 - T. H. Bell funds are not sufficiently focused on producing *special education* teachers.

Existing funding and supports are important, but not enough

- The existing Federal IDEA funds, paraprofessional scholarships, TSSP, and T. H. Bell scholarships are the reasons why the problem is not worse.

- To reduce the existing deficit of qualified special education teachers, we must leverage those existing resources with new, focused funding.

12. Are there any future funding obligations (operations and maintenance, multi-year scale up, etc.) created by this request? What are the long-term funding or policy needs for this project or program outside the current budget window of two years? How should the state prepare to address these longer-term needs?

Tuition will be provided to special education teacher candidates for two years. So, half of the funding will be awarded to candidates the first year and half the second year. It is possible that some candidates will require three years to finish and if there are funds available, that need will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

If the project is successful, it could be scaled up to with a request for ongoing funding.

13. What value will these additional resources create for Utah and how will this value be measured? List the performance measure(s) that will be used to track outcomes for this business case.

These additional resources will incentivize individuals interested in becoming special educators who have not chosen to enroll in a program because they simply couldn't afford tuition or because they didn't see that there would be adequate return on their tuition investment to become a special education teacher.

Outcomes Measures:

1. Does the program produce licensed special education teachers who are teaching special education in Utah schools?
 1. How many licenses? (throughput/quality)
 1. total number of licenses produced
 2. How many get a job as a special education teacher? (throughput/quality)
 1. location
 3. What is the 5-year Utah retention rate of these teachers?
 4. What is the 5-year Utah mobility rate of these teachers?
2. How efficient is the program? (costs/throughput)
 1. cost per individual at each IHE

1. already have a bachelor's degree (approximately \$18,000/student)
 2. have an associate's degree (approximately \$10,000/student)
2. length of the program
 1. average length to completion

14. Is this request related to an effort to streamline, modernize, or innovate processes or systems within USBE? If so, describe how this request furthers those efforts.

Since USBE already engages in a similar process with IDEA funds and with the ongoing Legislative allocation for the Paraeducator to Teacher (PETT) scholarship, we would be able to subsume the administrative work for this new project into our current processes. It won't streamline any systems, but it won't complicate them either.

15. Please create a quad chart for your business case and send to Dale Frost (dale.frost@schools.utah.gov) when you submit your request. You can find examples of quad charts and a template [here](#).

SUBMISSION:

Once you have completed this document, please [upload your application here](#) for USBE leadership review and consideration.