**USBA/USSA/UASBO Legislative Priorities - 2011-2012**

**Final – August 13, 2011**

**Updated: December 2011**

**Results Added: March 2012**

**Highest Priorities:**

* **New funding for enrollment growth**
  1. Growth was funded as expected by the State Board. We received $40,997,200 to fund enrollment growth from both state funds and increased funds through the Basic Levy. State funding is $36,094,100.
  2. For regular programs, the WPU value increased .92% from $2,816 to $2,842.
  3. For CTE and Special Ed. Add-on, the WPU value increased 1.16% from $2,577 to $2,607.
  4. The Board and Voted Leeway guarantee increased from $27.17 to $27.36 ($2 million statewide)
* **Restore the line items and funding for Social Security and Retirement**

The Flexible Allocation line remained and was increased by $261,000 which reflects the WPU increase of 1.16%.

* **Fully fund (at 85%) “to and from” transportation**

Transportation received $6.3 million ongoing. This replaced the $6.3 million of one-time funds for transportation in the FY12 budget.

* **Do not allow taking local replacement funds for charter schools from district property taxes and work to eliminate the 25% that is currently diverted for that purpose from district property taxes. Advocate for a statewide basic levy to support charter schools or take the funding off the top of income tax revenue before the WPU is calculated.**

The intent language coming from the Public Education Appropriations Subcommittee Chairs included language to provide for total replacement of charter school funding from district property taxes over 13 years. The intent language was seen by Executive Appropriations as an overreach and they instructed Public Education Appropriations Subcommittee Chairs that language would be required in bills to carry each concept outlined in intent language. No bill ever emerged on local replacement funding. There are no increasing local replacement funds required for FY13.

* **Maintain $15 million in state matching funds for K-3 Reading Improvement Program and allow flexibility in use**

The $15 million for K-3 Reading was maintained and in the base budget bill. <http://le.utah.gov/~2012/bills/hbillenr/hb0001.pdf>

* **Maintain $7.5 million (representing Optional Extended Day Kindergarten) as part of the Early Intervention block grant. Allow full flexibility in its use.**

The $7.5 million was maintained for Early Intervention and another $2.5 million was allocated, specifically for using technology to address Early Intervention needs.

* **Restore $8 million from the Enhancement for At-Risk Students Program.**

Nothing was restored for at-risk funding. SB81 passed, however, providing $300,000 for para educators in Title I improvement schools.

* **Restore funding for Professional Development time/days**

There were neither days restored nor funding for professional development.

* **Urge local governance for education**

Local governance was honored in a host of bills and seems to be the prevailing climate for many discussions on the Hill as it relates to public schools, however, there were still some bills that sought to govern schools at the state level.

* **Educate legislators on the importance and impact of funding formulas and tax levies; encouraging interim study committees on legislative funding proposals and revisiting the changes made to tax levies in HB301 School District Property Tax Revisions.**

The leaders of USBA/USSA/UASBO met with Representative Newbold, Senator Stephenson and Senator Osmond multiple times ahead of the Session to review the impact of HB301 (2011 Session) and the Minimum School Program formulas. The detailed discussion led to greater understanding for all participants. Particular credit for leading the discussion goes to Tim Leffel, Davis District. Although there was agreement from Rep. Newbold to put all districts under the same cap, there was no proposed legislation to do so. There was no legislation that sought to take away any part of the MSP factors, including no efforts to redistribute Professional Staff Costs or NESS funding. There were a few efforts to move toward “backpack” type funding but all failed.

**Needed Now:**

* **Revise SB65 so that the mandate allows for all districts and charter schools to successfully meet the mandate without losing funds related to enrollment counts. Consider how the addition of rigorous online courses may prepare students to be better career and college ready.**

SB178S1 amended SB65 almost entirely, eliminating the artificial price point for online courses, preserving the Electronic High School, ensuring that payment supports continued online enrollment, and prohibiting the use of incentives to encourage enrollment in online courses. See: <http://le.utah.gov/~2012/bills/sbillamd/sb0178s01.pdf>

* **Restore the ATC add-on funding that was eliminated in the 2011 Session.**

Funding for students in high school taking UCAT courses was fully restored so that students will be counted in high school as they attend UCAT during the day. The funding mechanism came from increasing the WPU count by the number of WPU’s accessing UCAT during the day, and then decreasing the WPU valuation. Thus, paying for UCAT services was taken out of the WPU, a measure supported by the USSA in October 2011. The loss in the WPU equates to about $5 per student in each district and charter school.

* **Work with the USOE and 2011 bill sponsor to make the grades for schools an accurate and fair portrayal of the school, with emphasis on growth scores of students, not status.**

Senator Neiderhauser significantly amended his Grading Schools bill from 2011, based upon what he learned, in terms of calculating each factor in the grading schools formula. See his 2012 bill, SB175 School Grading Amendments. <http://le.utah.gov/~2012/bills/sbillint/SB0175.pdf>

**Still Very Important:**

* **Retain the structure of local and state school boards and urge a nonpartisan, direct approach to elections.**

A bill concept to restructure the State School Board was pulled by its sponsor, Senator Reid. But he has indicated his desire to bring it back in 2013. Meanwhile, HB331 School Board Election Provisions (J. Nielson) would have required the direct, nonpartisan election of members of the State Board of Education. The bill failed in committee in the House. See: <http://le.utah.gov/~2012/bills/hbillint/hb0331.pdf>

* **Understand backpack funding (weighted student unit funding) and how various legislative actions may impact a movement toward or away from the idea.**

This concept was central to the discussion held with Rep. Newbold, and Senators Stephenson and Osmond ahead of the Session. A handful of bills focused on this topic; none succeeded.

* **Understand the implications of the State Board’s discussion/actions about teacher tenure and performance pay.**

After convening key public education entities in a dozen meetings from November 2011 and into the Session, Senator Osmond moved SB64 S1 forward, calling for administrative action to evaluate and be evaluated, as well as tying performance pay to administrative and teacher quality. The bill had the full support of USBA/USSA/UASBO, UEA, Utah State Board of Education, and the USEA. See: <http://le.utah.gov/~2012/bills/sbillamd/sb0064s01.pdf>

* **Increase funding for Enhancement for Accelerated Students Program**

Arts Outreach increased by $75,000 and Science Outreach increased by $125,000. No increased funds were appropriated directly to the Enhancement of Accelerated Students Program.

**On the radar screen:**

* **Advocate for deregulation of No Child Left Behind, with emphasis on giving states far greater options in every section of the code, i.e., assessment types, accountability actions, etc.**

Leaders of USBA and USOE have met with Congressional representatives since September 2011 to stress our need for waivers on NCLB and to remind them that Utah’s common core belongs to Utah, not the federal government and that no use of common core incentives should be tied to any federal programs or grants. USBA/USSA/UASBO leaders are now calling the new standards, Utah’s Core or Utah’s Standards. A Utah resolution, SCR13 S2 would have urged the State Board to “reconsider” use of the new standards. The resolution remained in House Rules on the final day of the Session.