

2024 USBA Legislative Priorities

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USBA Legislative Committee:

Julie Jackson, Becky Dunn, April Torgerson, Janis Christensen,
James Winn, Tracy Miller

How did we develop the priorities?

Julie Jackson,
USBA Board of Directors

2024 PROCESS

- JAN: JLC representatives elected
- MAR: Spring Regional Meetings
- APR: JLC Meeting
Email JLC Priority Survey
- MAY: JLC Meeting
- JUN: USBA BOD approves draft
- JUNE 8: Delegates refine & approve
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Our “WHY”

**Julie Jackson, USBA Board of
Directors**

Uses legislators’ own words (code)

Empowers our organizations in unity

Supports positive relationships

Keeps it clear

Speaks to legislative interests

Policy and Process Priorities

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Tier II Retirement



Becky Dunn, Board Member, Washington County
Kodey Hughes, Superintendent, Juab
Brent Bills, BA, Washington County

Background Information

Tier II Retirement Background Knowledge

- 2008 - Recession resulting in the Utah Retirement Systems (URS) being funded at 70%
- 2011 - Implementation of Tier II System
 - Tier II employees are required to select an option (Defined Contribution or Hybrid)

Why is this a priority?

- State law allows LEAs to contribute only 10% to the Hybrid Tier II System.
 - The defined benefit to the hybrid system is greater than 10%, which requires the employee to contribute to their own personal benefit.
- What the State is providing is not a fix for LEAs.
 - It is actually creating two separate pay scales for employees.
- This is a disadvantage to our staff members and creates the have and have not.
- LEAs need to be able to pay the entire value of the Tier II Defined Benefit

How will this solve the problem?

- If LEAs can fund the entire value of the Tier II Defined Benefit:
 - We will create better equity for all employees.
 - Improve teacher retention and recruitment.
 - We can show professional and personal value to all employees.
 - LEAs will not be required to manage two separate salary and payroll systems.

How does this impact all districts?

- Whether large or small, every LEA is faced with the inequity seen in the current Tier II Defined Benefit System.
- Due to this law, all LEAs face issues of employee morale, messaging value, and extended payroll issues.

What will happen if the priority does not pass?

- Tier II employees will continue to see payroll deductions in order to pay for their individual benefits.
- Teachers will continue to leave the profession due to the inequity of their veteran counterparts.
- LEAs will continually be forced to manage two separate salary and payroll systems to accommodate the divide of teachers employed post-2011 moving forward.

Priority “Elevator Speech”

- The Tier II Retirement System the State is providing is not a fix for districts. It is actually creating two separate pay scales for employees.
- This is a disadvantage to Utah educators and the Utah education system.

Economic Stabilization Account

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Robin McClellan, Board Member, Uintah
Cade Douglas, Superintendent, Sevier
Leon Wilcox, BA, Canyons

Background Information

- In the November 2020 election, Utah voters approved Amendment G which went into effect January 2021. With the passage of Amendment G, HB357: Public Education Funding Stabilization (Representative Spendlove) created the Economic Stabilization Account for K-12 Public Schools.
- Representative Brad Last and Senator Darrin Owens sponsored and passed HB475: Use of Public Education Stabilization Account One-Time Funding with significant input from USSA, UASBO, and USBA during the 2022 Legislative Session.

Why is this a priority?

With the passage of HB475 LEA's had access to a much needed consistent funding source and opportunity for "ONE-TIME" funds. The first year under the distribution formulas found in HB475 (the 2022-23 school year), \$91.5 million was allocated for LEAs to use on capital projects, safety, and technology needs. \$50 million was allocated to the Small School District Capital Projects Fund. Additional funds were allocated to Educator Professional Hours, the Minimum School Program, and a capital project for the Utah Schools for the Deaf and Blind.

LEA's used the funds to address many safety concerns such as remodels for over-crowded classrooms and parking lot and playfield improvements.

How will this solve the problem?

The Economic Stabilization Account (ESA) has continued to grow. This year \$520 million was appropriated. Unfortunately, the ESA has become a source for legislative pilot projects instead of flowing directly to the school districts as it did with HB475.

The Governor's Office would like "guardrails or criteria" established for the ESA as it's difficult for them to budget.

What will happen if the priority does not pass?

LEAs will continue to see these much needed funds go to legislative pilot projects such as SB173: Market Informed Compensation for Teachers (Senator Fillmore) from the 2024 session (Performance Pay) \$150 million is one example.

Priority “Elevator Speech”

Using HB 475: Use of Public Education Stabilization Account One-Time Funding, from the 2022 Legislative Session, and the successful local projects that were completed according to LEA needs and priorities as an example, we can easily demonstrate that the best use of ESA is distribution at the local level. The promises of Amendment G and HB357: Public Education Funding Stabilization from 2020 are fulfilled as it was intended.

Education Working Group

Julie Jackson, USBA Board of
Directors

What we are asking for here:

A seat at the table.

Investment Priorities

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Creation of a Funding Framework

Julie Jackson, USBA Board of
Directors

Amendment A on the ballot this fall promises “the creation of a funding framework.” If the Amendment passes, we want to be a part of this discussion and want to ensure that this happens sooner rather than later.

WPU Growth

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Ryan Despain, Board Member, Tintic
Shane Farnsworth, Superintendent, Alpine
Lark Reynolds, BA, Tooele

Background Information

- Primary funding formula for Utah Schools since the 1970's
 - Recently USBE hired West Ed to research funding formulas
 - No recommendations or changes to the WPU formula
- Two Types of growth in Weighted Pupil Unit's (WPU's)
 - Value Growth - additional dollars added to the value of a WPU which benefits everyone
 - Important to address ongoing costs not associated with enrollment increases
 - Volume Growth - As student numbers increase, so do the number of WPU's
 - Funding follows student numbers (Built into Utah Code)

Why is this a priority?

- Has traditionally been one of the top legislative priorities for USBA
- Accounts for approximately 70% of the State Revenues sent to LEAs
 - Excluding Capital Outlay Foundation
- With the population of students in Utah declining, it's important that the value of the WPU continues to grow to address various needs of LEA's outside of population increase/decrease.

How will this solve the problem?

- This allows us to pay for maintenance and operations of our schools
- Steady growth in the value of the WPU allows for a consistent increase without extreme variations from year to year
 - 3% annually plus inflation allows for steady value growth in the WPU
- Largest source of Unrestricted Funds District's Receive
 - Flexibility for Board Members and District Administrator's to meet goals

How does this impact all districts?

- 40 of the 41 Districts receive State Funds to supplement the Basic School Program
 - Park City is the only exception
- When the “Related to Basic Programs” are included all District then receive State Funds (Below the line)
- All Districts face unique needs that increasing the value of the WPU would address;
 - Student Social & Emotional Needs
 - Additional UHSAA programs
 - Unfunded Mandates (Such as HB84)
 - Removal of School Fees
 - Capital and Safety Concerns

What will happen if the priority does not pass?

- Without sufficient growth, employee raises won't keep up with inflation
- Without Value growth to the WPU, LEAs will not have the funds to pay for increases in
 - Wages
 - Benefits
 - Resources to meet students of diverse needs
 - Future unfunded mandates we are given

Priority “Elevator Speech”

- Let's commit to steady value growth in the WPU to address ongoing costs for all Districts
- An additional 3% of value growth above inflation would over 3 years result in almost 10% growth above the inflationary factor
- Emphasize the importance of Value Growth even as overall student numbers are declining

Questions?

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Julie Jackson, USBA Board of Directors