

## Fiscal Highlights

### **Public School Enrollment Continues to Grow** - Ben Leishman

While student enrollment continues to grow, overall growth is slowing, and fewer new students enroll in Utah's public schools each year. This past October, schools enrolled 622,153 students, an increase of 10,413 students over fall 2013. Estimates used during the 2014 General Session indicated that approximately 622,813 students would enroll, an overestimate of approximately 660 students.

The fall enrollment count forms the basis for projecting student enrollment in the next year (fall 2015) and estimating the cost of student enrollment growth for the coming fiscal year (FY 2016). An informal group, called the Common Data Committee (CDC), establishes a consensus projection for student enrollment in the next school year. The CDC includes representatives from the Legislative Fiscal Analyst, the Governor's Office of Management and Budget, and the Utah State Office of Education.

Projections produced by the CDC indicate that 630,104 students will enroll in the public schools next fall. This is an increase of 7,951 students over the current year, an increase of 1.3%. Again, this percent increase is lower than the 1.7% increase last year.

The projected student enrollment for fall 2015 is converted into Weighted Pupil Units (WPU) in order to estimate the cost of enrollment growth. When converted to WPU, the total anticipated enrollment of 630,104 students will generate approximately 825,656 WPU. This is an increase of 8,380 WPU over the 817,276 WPU funded in the FY 2015 budget. Preliminary cost estimates indicate that student enrollment growth may cost approximately \$50 million in FY 2016. This amount includes the increased costs associated with additional WPU and other adjustments to the Minimum School Program required in statute.

Additional information can be found in the following issue brief titled: "[Minimum School Program - Growth & WPU Value Estimates.](#)"