

Budget Brief – Utah Schools for the Deaf and Blind

PED USDB-01

SUMMARY

The Utah Schools for the Deaf and Blind (USDB) were established in 1896 to meet the educational needs of children with hearing or visual impairments. The purpose of the schools is to provide direct and indirect education services to children with sensory impairments, and their families, from birth to age 21. USDB serves approximately 1,600 students in three main programs: self-contained classrooms, residential services, and student consultations. USDB has established geographical service regions in Ogden (North), Salt Lake City (Central), and Orem (South) as well as operating the Jean Massieu School for the Deaf in South Jordan.

ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Teacher Base, Step and Lane Increases

In order for USDB teachers to be compensated comparable to teachers in school districts, statute (UCA 53A-25-111) requires that USDB teacher salaries be adjusted equal to a weighted average of adjustments made in the school districts. The average is weighted by the number of teachers in each district. Further, in any year in which USDB teachers aren't ranked in the top ten in twenty-year earnings, the weighted average must be increased by ten percent. However, teacher salary adjustments appropriated directly by the Legislature are not counted in the calculation.

The weighted average for base increases in recently completed school district negotiations is 1.39 percent. This doesn't include salary increases appropriated directly by the Legislature in the 2007 General Session. Step and Lane increases are calculated based on schedules that recognize longevity and continued professional development. The total is:

Base Adjustment	1.39%	\$141,700
Step Increases	1.97%	\$200,600
Lane Increases	0.89%	\$90,300
Total		<u>\$432,600</u>

Of the total amount, \$404,800 would be from the Uniform School Fund, \$16,800 from revenue transfers, and \$11,000 from dedicated credits.

Recommendation: The Analyst recommends the Legislature appropriate \$432,600 in FY 2009 for USDB teacher salary adjustments.

Figure 1: State Board of Education - School for the Deaf and Blind - Budget History

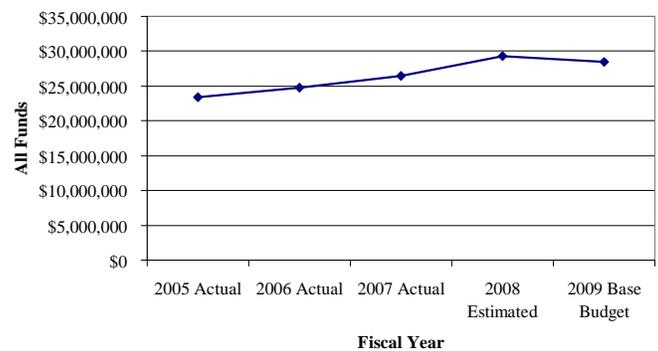


Figure 2: State Board of Education - School for the Deaf and Blind - FTE History

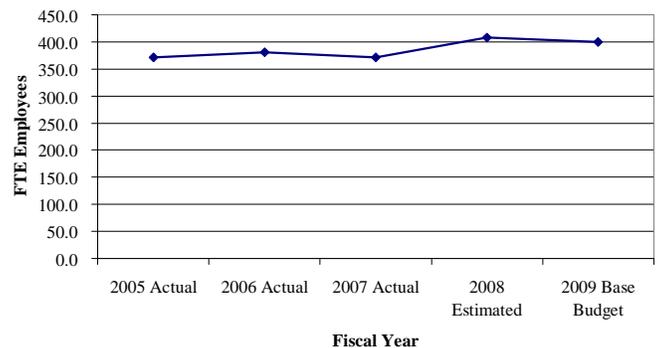
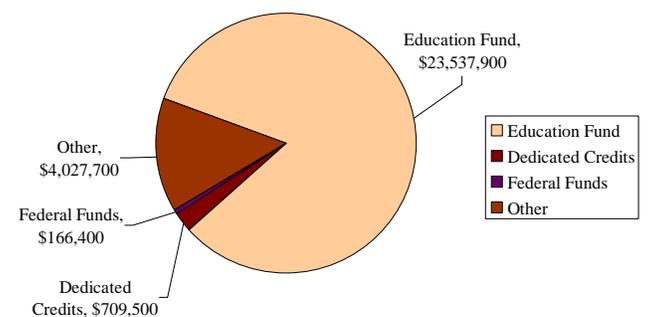


Figure 3: State Board of Education - School for the Deaf and Blind - FY 2009 Funding Mix



Facility Leases

During the 2007 General Session the Legislature authorized the sale of the Human Services building and used the proceeds to purchase a building for the USDB. The building is located on 3700 South and Highland Drive and was formerly the BYU Education Center. After the sale, building inspectors determined the building doesn't meet specific code requirements for disabled elementary age school children and the cost of remodeling the building for this purpose is prohibitive.

As a result, USDB will need to remain in leased space until another building is acquired. The lease of the current Jean Massieu School (old South Jordan Elementary School) is \$114,000 per year for 26,400 square feet and expires June 30, 2008. The Connor Street facility lease is \$355,000 per year for 23,000 square feet and expires June 30, 2009. The JMS lease cost has not been appropriated to USDB, but has been paid out of their existing budget while anticipating a move into a new state-owned facility. The Connor Street lease cost has been appropriated. The Division of Facilities Construction and Management (DFCM) has recently reached a tentative agreement with the owners of the JMS facility to extend the lease in South Jordan for another year for \$8.00/square foot, or \$164,800. Barring acquisition of a new state-owned facility, DFCM is looking for another leased facility large enough to accommodate the JMS and Connor Street functions combined for a longer term. One facility currently being considered is the Rosslind Elementary School owned by Salt Lake School District.

Recommendation: The Analyst recommends the Legislature appropriate \$264,800 in one-time Uniform School Funds to the USDB for the one-year extension of the JMS lease. Once a more permanent location is found, the Analyst will bring this issue back to the Legislature.

Utah State Instructional Materials Access Center (USIMAC)

For students with visual, physical or learning difficulties, the limitations of print technology raise barriers to access, and therefore to learning. The federal Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), reauthorized in 2004, makes the state responsible to ensure all students with disabilities receive accessible instructional materials at the same time as their non-disabled peers. Under the status quo the first few chapters are delivered to disabled students at the beginning of the school year, and then the USDB attempt to keep up with teachers as best they can.

Under IDEA, publishing houses must provide their material in digital format to authorized Instructional Materials Access Centers. Since the material is copyrighted, it can only be shared with authorized centers. The USIMAC would be Utah's authorized center. When it receives digital material from publishers, it can print the material in various formats (Braille, large print, audio, or others) or pass along the licenses to school districts.

The State Library has material for the blind, but it isn't instructional material and is intended for adults. The State Library does have some printing and reproduction capability, as does the USDB's Educational Resource Center (ERC), but both are incapable of making materials available to disabled students at the same time as their non-disabled peers. The USIMAC would essentially augment the functions currently performed by the ERC.

Recommendation: The Analyst recommends establishing the USIMAC at USDB by making an ongoing appropriation of \$505,200 for hardware and software, two FTEs and for production materials and maintenance. An itemized list of equipment, personnel and materials is provided to the Legislature under separate cover.

Support Services Caseload Increases

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) sets certain standards for educational services provided by USDB to children receiving direct services. All these services are required through Individual Education Plan (IEP) contracts. Currently USDB is not reaching the required standards.

<u>Service</u>	<u>National Standard</u>	<u>USDB Caseload</u>
School Psychology	1 to 70	1 to 197
Orientation and Mobility	1 to 12	1 to 35
Occupational and Physical Therapy	1 to 42	1 to 95
Nurses	1 to 250	1 to 213
One-on-One Nursing	1 to 1	3 to 4

The consequences of not reaching the IDEA standards are lower educational quality and potential loss of federal funds. The level of risk for loss of federal funds is low, however, so the impetus behind this request is improved educational quality.

The USDB has requested \$444,100 in ongoing money from the Uniform School Fund for 7.4 FTE as follows:

Registered Nurses:	1.7 FTE, \$107,400
Psychologists:	2.0 FTE, \$137,200
Interpreters:	2.7 FTE, \$144,400
O&M Specialist:	1.0 FTE, \$ 55,100

Some of these people are already employed by USDB on a temporary basis using money from turnover savings. USDB's request would normalize the employees. According to USDB officials, this staffing increase would change USDB caseload ratios to:

<u>Service</u>	<u>New USDB Caseload</u>
School Psychology	1 to 70
Orientation and Mobility	1 to 26
Occupational and Physical Therapy	1 to 95
Nurses	1 to 213
One-on-One Nursing	1 to 1

Several of these services could be contracted out, but the market of providers is limited. One nursing services agency recently dropped its contract. There are two interpreting agencies in the area, one of which is too expensive for USDB's budget. Occupational therapists are also limited.

Recommendation: The Analyst recommends the Legislature appropriate \$299,700 in ongoing money from the Uniform School Fund for USDB's request except for the 2.7 educational interpreters. This should help cover the most critical needs as determined by IDEA.

BUDGET DETAIL

The Utah Schools for the Deaf and Blind receives almost 83 percent of its operating revenue from the Uniform School Fund. The remaining revenue supporting USDB operations comes from dedicated credits generated primarily through contracted services, a small portion of federal funds and revenue transfers (including federal fund revenue transfers) from other agencies. These agencies include the Utah State Office of Education, Child Nutrition Programs, and the Utah Department of Health.

The total USDB budget slightly exceeds \$28 million. Funding information shown in the Budget Detail Table below does not include appropriation increases recommended by the Analyst or other increases that may be added later by the Legislature.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

This section summarizes the Analyst's recommendations. The Analyst recommends the Legislature adopt:

1. A total base appropriation of \$28,441,500 for the USDB Line Item.
2. An ongoing appropriation of \$432,600 for USDB base, step, and lane changes.
3. A one-time appropriation of \$264,800 for a one-year extension of the JMS facility lease.
4. An ongoing appropriation of \$505,200 for USIMAC.
5. An ongoing appropriation of \$299,700 for improving caseload ratios as required by IDEA.

BUDGET DETAIL TABLE

State Board of Education - School for the Deaf and Blind						
	FY 2007	FY 2008		FY 2008		FY 2009*
Sources of Finance	Actual	Appropriated	Changes	Revised	Changes	Base Budget
Uniform School Fund	21,992,200	23,537,900	0	23,537,900	0	23,537,900
Uniform School Fund, One-time	132,700	0	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	181,800	169,900	(3,500)	166,400	0	166,400
Dedicated Credits Revenue	526,900	865,200	(155,700)	709,500	0	709,500
Transfers	3,673,400	3,801,500	226,200	4,027,700	0	4,027,700
Beginning Nonlapsing	786,900	0	836,500	836,500	(836,500)	0
Closing Nonlapsing	(836,500)	0	0	0	0	0
Total	\$26,457,400	\$28,374,500	\$903,500	\$29,278,000	(\$836,500)	\$28,441,500
Programs						
Instructional Services	14,972,100	16,766,200	548,700	17,314,900	(159,400)	17,155,500
Support Services	11,485,300	11,608,300	354,800	11,963,100	(677,100)	11,286,000
Total	\$26,457,400	\$28,374,500	\$903,500	\$29,278,000	(\$836,500)	\$28,441,500
Categories of Expenditure						
Personal Services	20,084,600	22,540,200	507,400	23,047,600	(551,200)	22,496,400
In-State Travel	440,100	243,300	173,000	416,300	(26,100)	390,200
Out of State Travel	69,500	21,600	23,000	44,600	(8,000)	36,600
Current Expense	5,446,300	5,462,300	84,300	5,546,600	(213,200)	5,333,400
DP Current Expense	337,200	107,100	102,800	209,900	(38,000)	171,900
DP Capital Outlay	36,100	0	0	0	0	0
Capital Outlay	43,600	0	13,000	13,000	0	13,000
Total	\$26,457,400	\$28,374,500	\$903,500	\$29,278,000	(\$836,500)	\$28,441,500
Other Data						
Budgeted FTE	371.3	371.1	37.0	408.1	(7.9)	400.2
Vehicles	62.0	62.0	0.0	62.0	0.0	62.0

*Does not include amounts in excess of subcommittee's state fund allocation that may be recommended by the Fiscal Analyst.