

1 **School Lunch Debt Funding**

2025 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Jennifer Dailey-Provost**

Senate Sponsor:

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3 **LONG TITLE**

4 **General Description:**

5 This bill creates the School Meal Debt Relief Grant Program.

6 **Highlighted Provisions:**

7 This bill:

- 8 ▶ defines terms;
- 9 ▶ makes a technical change;
- 10 ▶ creates the School Meal Debt Relief Grant Program;
- 11 ▶ requires the State Board of Education to administer the program;
- 12 ▶ allows a local education agency to apply for a grant under the program; and
- 13 ▶ creates a conditional reporting requirement.

14 **Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

15 This bill appropriates \$2,000,000 in operating and capital budgets for fiscal year 2026, all  
16 of which is from the various sources as detailed in this bill.

17 **Other Special Clauses:**

18 This bill provides a special effective date.

19 **Utah Code Sections Affected:**

20 AMENDS:

21 **53E-1-201**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2024, Chapters 3, 460 and 525

22 ENACTS:

23 **53F-5-224**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

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25 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

26 Section 1. Section **53E-1-201** is amended to read:

27 **53E-1-201 . Reports to and action required of the Education Interim Committee.**

28 (1) In accordance with applicable provisions and Section 68-3-14, the following recurring  
29 reports are due to the Education Interim Committee:

30 (a) the report described in Section 9-22-109 by the STEM Action Center Board,

- 31 including the information described in Section 9-22-113 on the status of the computer  
32 science initiative and Section 9-22-114 on the Computing Partnerships Grants  
33 Program;
- 34 (b) the prioritized list of data research described in Section 53B-33-302 and the report on  
35 research and activities described in Section 53B-33-304 by the Utah Data Research  
36 Center;
- 37 (c) the report described in Section 53B-1-402 by the Utah Board of Higher Education on  
38 career and technical education issues and addressing workforce needs;
- 39 (d) the annual report of the Utah Board of Higher Education described in Section  
40 53B-1-402;
- 41 (e) the reports described in Section 53B-28-401 by the Utah Board of Higher Education  
42 regarding activities related to campus safety;
- 43 (f) the State Superintendent's Annual Report by the state board described in Section  
44 53E-1-203;
- 45 (g) the annual report described in Section 53E-2-202 by the state board on the strategic  
46 plan to improve student outcomes;
- 47 (h) the report described in Section 53E-8-204 by the state board on the Utah Schools for  
48 the Deaf and the Blind;
- 49 (i) the report described in Section 53E-10-703 by the Utah Leading through Effective,  
50 Actionable, and Dynamic Education director on research and other activities;
- 51 (j) the report described in Section 53F-2-522 regarding mental health screening  
52 programs;
- 53 (k) the report described in Section 53F-4-203 by the state board and the independent  
54 evaluator on an evaluation of early interactive reading software;
- 55 (l) the report described in Section 63N-20-107 by the Governor's Office of Economic  
56 Opportunity on UPSTART;
- 57 (m) the reports described in Sections 53F-5-214 and 53F-5-215 by the state board  
58 related to grants for professional learning and grants for an elementary teacher  
59 preparation assessment;
- 60 (n) upon request, the report described in Section 53F-5-219 by the state board on the  
61 Local Innovations Civics Education Pilot Program;
- 62 (o) the report described in Section 53F-5-405 by the state board regarding an evaluation  
63 of a partnership that receives a grant to improve educational outcomes for students  
64 who are low income;

- 65 (p) the report described in Section 53B-35-202 regarding the Higher Education and  
 66 Corrections Council;
- 67 (q) the report described in Section 53G-7-221 by the state board regarding innovation  
 68 plans; and
- 69 (r) the reports described in Section 53F-6-412 regarding the Utah Fits All Scholarship  
 70 Program.
- 71 (2) In accordance with applicable provisions and Section 68-3-14, the following occasional  
 72 reports are due to the Education Interim Committee:
- 73 (a) in 2027, 2030, 2033, and 2035, the reports described in Sections 53B-1-116,  
 74 53B-1-117, and 53B-1-118;
- 75 (b) if required, the report described in Section 53E-4-309 by the state board explaining  
 76 the reasons for changing the grade level specification for the administration of  
 77 specific assessments;
- 78 (c) if required, the report described in Section 53E-5-210 by the state board of an  
 79 adjustment to the minimum level that demonstrates proficiency for each statewide  
 80 assessment;
- 81 (d) the report described in Section 53E-10-702 by Utah Leading through Effective,  
 82 Actionable, and Dynamic Education;
- 83 (e) if required, the report described in Section 53F-2-513 by the state board evaluating  
 84 the effects of salary bonuses on the recruitment and retention of effective teachers in  
 85 high poverty schools;
- 86 (f) upon request, a report described in Section 53F-5-224 by the state board on the  
 87 School Meal Debt Relief Grant Program;
- 88 ~~[(f)]~~ (g) upon request, a report described in Section 53G-7-222 by an LEA regarding  
 89 expenditure of a percentage of state restricted funds to support an innovative  
 90 education program;
- 91 ~~[(g)]~~ (h) the reports described in Section 53G-11-304 by the state board regarding  
 92 proposed rules and results related to educator exit surveys; and
- 93 ~~[(h)]~~ (i) the report described in Section 26B-5-113 by the Office of Substance Use and  
 94 Mental Health, the state board, and the Department of Health and Human Services  
 95 regarding recommendations related to Medicaid reimbursement for school-based  
 96 health services.

97 Section 2. Section **53F-5-224** is enacted to read:

98 **53F-5-224 . School Meal Debt Relief Grant Program.**

- 99 (1) As used in this section:
- 100 (a) "Eligible school" means a public school where a student currently enrolled at the
- 101 school has outstanding debt for school meals.
- 102 (b) "Program" means the School Meal Debt Relief Grant Program created in Subsection
- 103 (2).
- 104 (2) There is created the School Meal Debt Relief Grant Program to provide funding to
- 105 relieve school meal debt in an LEA.
- 106 (3) Beginning September 1, 2026, and subject to legislative appropriations, the state board
- 107 shall:
- 108 (a) in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act,
- 109 make rules to:
- 110 (i) create an application process for an LEA to apply for program funds;
- 111 (ii) select an eligible school to receive program funds in accordance with Subsection
- 112 (3)(b); and
- 113 (iii) establish a system to distribute program funds to an eligible school the state
- 114 board selects to receive program funds through the program; and
- 115 (b) prioritize applications and distribute program funds to an eligible school based on:
- 116 (i) the greatest need for program funds; and
- 117 (ii) the potential benefit program funds may have on a school or community.
- 118 (4)(a) An LEA may submit an application to receive program funds under this section.
- 119 (b) In the LEA's application, the LEA shall:
- 120 (i) identify an eligible school within the LEA requesting program funds;
- 121 (ii) provide a statement of outstanding school meal debt of students currently enrolled
- 122 at an eligible school;
- 123 (iii) provide verification proving that the school meal debt for which an LEA is
- 124 requesting relief is from students currently enrolled a the eligible school; and
- 125 (iv) provide assurance that other federal or state school meals programs did not
- 126 already cover the debt.
- 127 (5) An LEA that receives program funds may:
- 128 (a) only use the program funds to relieve school meal debt of a student currently
- 129 enrolled within the LEA; and
- 130 (b) not use program funds to pay off school meal debt of a student who qualifies for free
- 131 meals under a federal or state meal assistance program.
- 132 (6) Upon request of the Education Interim Committee, the state board shall report to the

- 133 Education Interim Committee on:
- 134 (a) the implementation of the program;
- 135 (b) the number of applications the state board accepts;
- 136 (c) the use of program funds; and
- 137 (d) the impact of program funds on school meal debt at an LEA to which the state board
- 138 awards program funds.

139 **Section 3. FY 2026 Appropriations.**

140 The following sums of money are appropriated for the fiscal year beginning July 1,  
141 2025, and ending June 30, 2026. These are additions to amounts previously appropriated for  
142 fiscal year 2026.

143 **Subsection 3(a). Operating and Capital Budgets**

144 Under the terms and conditions of Title 63J, Chapter 1, Budgetary Procedures Act, the  
145 Legislature appropriates the following sums of money from the funds or accounts indicated for  
146 the use and support of the government of the state of Utah.

147	ITEM 1	To State Board of Education - Child Nutrition Programs	
148		From Public Education Economic Stabilization	
149		Restricted Account, One-time	2,000,000
150		Schedule of Programs:	
151		Child Nutrition	2,000,000

152 **Section 4. Effective Date.**

153 This bill takes effect on July 1, 2025.