

Lincoln Fillmore proposes the following substitute bill:

**School-based Speech-language Pathologist Funding Amendments**

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Jill Koford**

Senate Sponsor: Ann Millner

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**LONG TITLE**

**General Description:**

This bill amends definitions related to teaching supplies and a certain salary supplement.

**Highlighted Provisions:**

This bill:

▸ amends certain definitions and provisions to expand eligibility related to appropriations for:

- teaching supplies; and
- salary supplements; and
- makes technical and conforming changes.

**Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

None

**Other Special Clauses:**

This bill provides a special effective date.

**Utah Code Sections Affected:**

AMENDS:

**53F-2-504 (Effective 07/01/26) (Partially Repealed 07/01/26)**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 394

**53F-2-527 (Effective 07/01/26)**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 6

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

Section 1. Section **53F-2-504** is amended to read:

**53F-2-504 (Effective 07/01/26) (Partially Repealed 07/01/26). Salary Supplement for Highly Needed Educators.**

(1) As used in this section:

- (a) "Eligible teacher" means a teacher or licensed education professional, including a speech-language pathologist or speech-language technician, who:

- 30 (i) has a qualifying assignment;
- 31 (ii) qualifies for the [teacher's] individual's assignment in accordance with an LEA's
- 32 policy described in Subsection (2); and
- 33 (iii)(A) is a new employee; or
- 34 (B) has not received an unsatisfactory rating on the [teacher's] individual's three
- 35 most recent evaluations.
- 36 (b) "High-needs area" means at least two and up to five [teaching-]assignments that an
- 37 LEA designates in a policy as challenging to fill or retain.
- 38 (c) "Program" means the Salary Supplement for Highly Needed Educators program.
- 39 (d) "Qualifying assignment" means [a teacher who is assigned to a high-needs area] an
- 40 assignment to a high-needs area.
- 41 (2)(a) An LEA shall create a policy describing the administration of the Salary
- 42 Supplement for Highly Needed Educators program within the LEA, including:
- 43 (i) identifying the LEA's high-needs areas;
- 44 (ii) the amount of the salary supplement;
- 45 (iii) establishing an appeals process for [a teacher] an individual to follow if the [
- 46 teacher] individual does not receive a salary supplement, including:
- 47 (A) allowing [a teacher] an individual to appeal eligibility as an eligible teacher
- 48 with a qualifying assignment on the basis that the [teacher] individual has [a
- 49 teaching assignment] an assignment that is substantially equivalent to a
- 50 high-needs area; and
- 51 (B) requiring [a teacher] an individual to provide transcripts and other
- 52 documentation to the LEA governing board in order for the LEA governing
- 53 board to determine if the [teacher] individual is an eligible teacher with a
- 54 qualifying [teaching-]background;
- 55 (iv) a process for determining if [a teacher] an individual is an eligible teacher,
- 56 including a verification process; and
- 57 (v) a process for certifying a list of eligible teachers [to be awarded] whom the LEA
- 58 awards a salary supplement under this section.
- 59 (b) An LEA shall update the policy described in Subsection (2)(a) annually and provide
- 60 notice of any changes to [teachers] potential eligible teachers within the LEA.
- 61 (3) Subject to legislative appropriations and an LEA having the policy described in
- 62 Subsection (2), the state board shall allocate funding appropriated for the Salary [
- 63 Supplements] Supplement for Highly Needed Educators program in accordance with this

section by:

(a) for charter schools:

(i) distributing an amount that is equal to the product of:

(A) charter school enrollment on October 1 in the prior year, or, for a new charter school, projected enrollment for a charter school in the charter school's first year of operations, divided by enrollment on October 1 in public schools statewide in the prior year; and

(B) the total amount available for distribution; and

(ii) allocating to each charter school:

(A) an equally divided portion of 20% of the amount described in Subsection (3)(a)(i); and

(B) 80% of the amount described in Subsection (3)(a)(i) on a per-student basis; and

(b) for school districts and the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind[;],

~~[(i)]~~ distributing the remainder of funds available for distribution after the distribution to charter schools under Subsection (3)(a)(i) by allocating to each school district:

~~[(A)]~~ (i) an equally divided portion of 20% of the amount described in Subsection (3)(b)(i); and

~~[(B)]~~ (ii) 80% of the amount described in Subsection (3)(b)(i) on a per-student basis.

~~[(e)]~~ (4) An LEA shall use funds described in Subsections (3)(a) and (3)(b) to pay the LEA's proportional part of an eligible teacher's salary supplement if:

~~[(i)]~~ (a) the eligible teacher is an employee of a regional education service agency, as defined in Section 53G-4-410; and

~~[(ii)]~~ (b) the LEA is a member of the regional education service agency that employs the eligible teacher.

~~[(4)]~~ (5)(a) An LEA shall include employer-paid benefits in the amount of each salary supplement.

(b) Employer-paid benefits are an addition to the salary supplement amount ~~[established by an LEA]~~ an LEA establishes under Subsection (2).

~~[(5)]~~ (6) The salary supplement is part of an eligible teacher's base pay, subject to eligible teacher's qualification as an eligible teacher every year, semester, or quarter.

~~[(6)]~~ (7) The state board shall annually report to the Education Interim Committee:

(a) which ~~[teaching]~~ assignments LEAs have designated as high-needs; and

(b) the number of eligible teachers.

~~[(7)]~~ (8) An LEA may increase the amount of funds the LEA provides to the LEA's eligible

teachers under the program if the LEA:

(a) first ensures proper distribution of funds the LEA receives under the program to the LEA's eligible teachers; and

(b) experiences a carry forward or leftover balance.

Section 2. Section **53F-2-527** is amended to read:

**53F-2-527 (Effective 07/01/26). Appropriations for teaching supplies and materials.**

(1) As used in this section:

(a) "Classroom teacher" means a teacher ~~[who]~~ or licensed education professional, including a speech-language pathologist or speech-language technician, that:

(i) ~~[is assigned by an LEA in]~~ an LEA assigns to a permanent [teacher] instructional or related service position filled by one teacher, speech-language pathologist, speech-language technician, or two or more job-sharing teachers [employed by an LEA] an LEA employs;

(ii) is licensed and paid on an LEA's salary schedule;

(iii) is employed for an entire contract period; and

(iv) is primarily responsible to provide instruction, therapy, or a combination of instructional, therapeutic, and counseling services to ~~[students in public schools]~~ a student in a public school.

(b) "Teaching supplies and materials" means consumable and non-consumable items that are used for educational or therapeutic purposes by ~~[teachers]~~ a classroom teacher in a classroom [activities] activity that [are approved by the LEA] an LEA approves.

(2) ~~[For the fiscal year that begins on or after July 1, 2024, and except]~~ Except as provided in Subsection (3), the state board shall distribute money appropriated for teaching supplies and materials as follows:

(a) \$500 to each classroom teacher position for pre-kindergarten special education and kindergarten through grade 6; and

(b) \$250 to each classroom teacher position for grades 7 through 12.

(3) If funding is insufficient to provide the per-teacher amounts described in Subsection (2), the state board may proportionally adjust the per-teacher amount based on the amount of available funding.

Section 3. **Effective Date.**

This bill takes effect on July 1, 2026.