

Lincoln Fillmore proposes the following substitute bill:

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

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Jill Koford

Senate Sponsor: Ann Millner

2 **LONG TITLE**

3 **General Description:**

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

5 **Highlighted Provisions:**

6 This bill:

7 ▶ amends certain definitions and provisions to expand eligibility related to appropriations

8 for:

9 • teaching supplies; and

10 • salary supplements; and

11 ▶ makes technical and conforming changes.

12 **Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

13 None

14 **Other Special Clauses:**

15 This bill provides a special effective date.

16 **Utah Code Sections Affected:**

17 **AMENDS:**

18 **53F-2-504 (Effective 07/01/26) (Partially Repealed 07/01/26)**, as last amended by Laws
19 of Utah 2025, Chapter 394

20 **53F-2-527 (Effective 07/01/26)**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 6

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

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

23 **53F-2-504 (Effective 07/01/26) (Partially Repealed 07/01/26). Salary Supplement
24 for Highly Needed Educators.**

25 (1) As used in this section:

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

- (i) has a qualifying assignment;
- (ii) qualifies for the [teacher's] individual's assignment in accordance with an LEA's policy described in Subsection (2); and
- (iii)(A) is a new employee; or
 - (B) has not received an unsatisfactory rating on the [teacher's] individual's three most recent evaluations.

(b) "High-needs area" means at least two and up to five [teaching] assignments that an LEA designates in a policy as challenging to fill or retain.

(c) "Program" means the Salary Supplement for Highly Needed Educators program.

(d) "Qualifying assignment" means [a teacher who is assigned to a high-needs area] an assignment to a high-needs area.

(2)(a) An LEA shall create a policy describing the administration of the Salary Supplement for Highly Needed Educators program within the LEA, including:

- (i) identifying the LEA's high-needs areas;
- (ii) the amount of the salary supplement;
- (iii) establishing an appeals process for [a teacher] an individual to follow if the [teacher] individual does not receive a salary supplement, including:
 - (A) allowing [a teacher] an individual to appeal eligibility as an eligible teacher with a qualifying assignment on the basis that the [teacher] individual has [a teaching assignment] an assignment that is substantially equivalent to a high-needs area; and
 - (B) requiring [a teacher] an individual to provide transcripts and other documentation to the LEA governing board in order for the LEA governing board to determine if the [teacher] individual is an eligible teacher with a qualifying [teaching] background;
- (iv) a process for determining if [a teacher] an individual is an eligible teacher, including a verification process; and
- (v) a process for certifying a list of eligible teachers [to be awarded] whom the LEA awards a salary supplement under this section.

(b) An LEA shall update the policy described in Subsection (2)(a) annually and provide notice of any changes to [teachers] potential eligible teachers within the LEA.

(3) Subject to legislative appropriations and an LEA having the policy described in Subsection (2), the state board shall allocate funding appropriated for the Salary [Supplements] Supplement for Highly Needed Educators program in accordance with this

64 section by:

65 (a) for charter schools:

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

67 (A) charter school enrollment on October 1 in the prior year, or, for a new charter

68 school, projected enrollment for a charter school in the charter school's first

69 year of operations, divided by enrollment on October 1 in public schools

70 statewide in the prior year; and

71 (B) the total amount available for distribution; and

72 (ii) allocating to each charter school:

73 (A) an equally divided portion of 20% of the amount described in Subsection

74 (3)(a)(i); and

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

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

77 [(t)] distributing the remainder of funds available for distribution after the distribution

78 to charter schools under Subsection (3)(a)(i) by allocating to each school district:

79 [(A)] (i) an equally divided portion of 20% of the amount described in Subsection

80 (3)(b)(i); and

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

82 [(e)] (4) An LEA shall use funds described in Subsections (3)(a) and (3)(b) to pay the LEA's

83 proportional part of an eligible teacher's salary supplement if:

84 [(i)] (a) the eligible teacher is an employee of a regional education service agency, as

85 defined in Section 53G-4-410; and

86 [(ii)] (b) the LEA is a member of the regional education service agency that employs the

87 eligible teacher.

88 [(4)] (5)(a) An LEA shall include employer-paid benefits in the amount of each salary

89 supplement.

90 (b) Employer-paid benefits are an addition to the salary supplement amount [established

91 by an LEA] an LEA establishes under Subsection (2).

92 [(5)] (6) The salary supplement is part of an eligible teacher's base pay, subject to eligible

93 teacher's qualification as an eligible teacher every year, semester, or quarter.

94 [(6)] (7) The state board shall annually report to the Education Interim Committee:

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

96 (b) the number of eligible teachers.

97 [(7)] (8) An LEA may increase the amount of funds the LEA provides to the LEA's eligible

98 teachers under the program if the LEA:

99 (a) first ensures proper distribution of funds the LEA receives under the program to the
100 the LEA's eligible teachers; and
101 (b) experiences a carry forward or leftover balance.

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

103 **53F-2-527 (Effective 07/01/26). Appropriations for teaching supplies and**
104 **materials.**

105 (1) As used in this section:

106 (a) "Classroom teacher" means a teacher [who] or licensed education professional,
107 including a speech-language pathologist or speech-language technician, that:
108 (i) [is assigned by an LEA in] an LEA assigns to a permanent [teacher] instructional
109 or related service position filled by one teacher, speech-language pathologist,
110 speech-language technician, or two or more job-sharing teachers [employed by an
111 LEA] an LEA employs;
112 (ii) is licensed and paid on an LEA's salary schedule;
113 (iii) is employed for an entire contract period; and
114 (iv) is primarily responsible to provide instruction, therapy, or a combination of
115 instructional, therapeutic, and counseling services to [students in public schools] a
116 student in a public school.

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

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

123 (a) \$500 to each classroom teacher position for pre-kindergarten special education and
124 kindergarten through grade 6; and
125 (b) \$250 to each classroom teacher position for grades 7 through 12.

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

129 Section 3. **Effective Date.**

130 This bill takes effect on July 1, 2026.