

Jill Koford 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

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53F-2-504 (Effective 07/01/26) (Partially Repealed 07/01/26), as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 394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

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53F-2-504 (Effective 07/01/26) (Partially Repealed 07/01/26).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)(i) "Eligible teacher" means a teacher who:
 - [(i)] (A) has a qualifying assignment;

30 [(ii)] (B) qualifies for the teacher's assignment in accordance with an LEA's policy
 31 described in Subsection (2); and
 32 [(iii)] (C)[(A)] (I) is a new employee; or
 33 [(B)] (II) has not received an unsatisfactory rating on the teacher's three most
 34 recent evaluations.

35 (ii) "Eligible teacher" includes a:

36 (A) speech-language pathologist; and

37 (B) speech-language technician.

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

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

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

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

45 (i) identifying the LEA's high-needs areas;

46 (ii) the amount of the salary supplement;

47 (iii) establishing an appeals process for [~~a teacher~~] an individual to follow if the [
 48 ~~teacher~~] individual does not receive a salary supplement, including:

49 (A) allowing a teacher to appeal eligibility as an eligible teacher with a qualifying
 50 assignment on the basis that the teacher has a teaching assignment that is
 51 substantially equivalent to a high-needs area; and

52 (B) requiring [~~a teacher~~] an individual to provide transcripts and other
 53 documentation to the LEA governing board in order for the LEA governing
 54 board to determine if the [~~teacher~~] individual is an eligible teacher with a
 55 qualifying [~~teaching-~~]background;

56 (iv) a process for determining if [~~a teacher~~] an individual is an eligible teacher,
 57 including a verification process; and

58 (v) a process for certifying a list of eligible teachers [~~to be awarded~~] whom the LEA
 59 awards a salary supplement under this section.

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

62 (3) Subject to legislative appropriations and an LEA having the policy described in
 63 Subsection (2), the state board shall allocate funding appropriated for the Salary [

64 ~~Supplements]~~ Supplement for Highly Needed Educators program in accordance with this
 65 section by:

66 (a) for charter schools:

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

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

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

73 (ii) allocating to each charter school:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

90 [(4)] (5)(a) An LEA shall include employer-paid benefits in the amount of each salary
 91 supplement.

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

94 [(5)] (6) The salary supplement is part of an eligible teacher's base pay, subject to eligible
 95 teacher's qualification as an eligible teacher every year, semester, or quarter.

96 [(6)] (7) The state board shall annually report to the Education Interim Committee:

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

98 (b) the number of eligible teachers.

99 ~~[(7)]~~ (8) An LEA may increase the amount of funds the LEA provides to the LEA's eligible
100 teachers under the program if the LEA:

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

103 (b) experiences a carry forward or leftover balance.

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

105 **53F-2-527 (Effective 07/01/26). Appropriations for teaching supplies and**
106 **materials.**

107 (1) As used in this section:

108 (a)(i) "Classroom teacher" means a teacher [~~who~~] that:

109 ~~[(i)]~~ (A) [~~is assigned by an LEA in~~] an LEA assigns to a permanent [teacher]
110 instructional or related service position filled by one [teacher] individual or two
111 or more job-sharing [teachers employed by an LEA] individuals an LEA
112 employs;

113 ~~[(ii)]~~ (B) is licensed and paid on an LEA's salary schedule;

114 ~~[(iii)]~~ (C) is employed for an entire contract period; and

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

118 (ii) "Classroom teacher" includes a:

119 (A) speech-language pathologist; and

120 (B) speech-language technician.

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

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

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

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

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

132 available funding.

133 Section 3. **Effective Date.**

134 This bill takes effect on July 1, 2026.