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# Utah State Legislature

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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Senator Lyle Hillyard, Senate Chair  
Representative Dean Sanpei, House Chair  
Senator Jerry Stephenson, Senate Vice Chair  
Representative Brad Dee, House Vice Chair  
Executive Appropriations Committee

**From:** Senator Howard Stephenson, Senate Chair  
Representative Steve Eliason, House Chair  
Representative Mike Kennedy, House Vice Chair  
Public Education Appropriations Subcommittee

**Date:** December 13, 2016

**Subject:** Public Education Appropriations Interim Meeting Report

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The Public Education Appropriations Subcommittee met twice over the interim to discuss approximately 12 budget-related issues. These issues were determined in May after consultation with the Senate President, House Speaker, and Chairs of Executive Appropriations. The following subsections summarize the actions taken by the subcommittee.

### **August Meeting**

The subcommittee scheduled six agenda items, but due to robust discussion only completed two items.

- 1. School Community Councils** – The subcommittee evaluated the capacity and consistency of school community council operations across the state to determine the feasibility of distributing additional funding or managing statewide programs through the councils. Subcommittee members heard from State Board of Education staff, local school board representatives, school district superintendents, and school district business administrators on the subject.

**Issue Outcome:** Subcommittee members determined that school community councils do not currently have the capacity nor consistency of operations statewide to manage additional state programs. Significant investment would need to occur to improve the operation and accounting capacity within the councils statewide to facilitate increased programmatic oversight. In most

cases, this would replicate functions already occurring in local education agency business offices. The discussion also focused on the importance of maintaining the focus of school community councils on improving the academic outcomes of schools.

2. **Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind** – Subcommittee members heard a detailed report from the USDB Superintendent on the budget, operations, and educational outcomes of the schools.

*Issue Outcome:* This item was informational only and the subcommittee took no action.

### **September Meeting**

Agenda items not covered during the August meeting were moved to the September meeting. The subcommittee met all day and discussed the following budget issues.

1. **USBE Financial Management** – Members of the State Board of Education updated the subcommittee on efforts to improve the management of the public education budget.

*Issue Outcome:* This item was information only and the subcommittee took no action.

2. **Statutory Reports** – The subcommittee reviewed statutorily required reports to the subcommittee and discussed which reports should continue or be abandoned.

*Issue Outcome:* The subcommittee did not take formal action this item. However, committee members generally agreed to have the co-chairs review the reports, determine which reports should be abandoned, and begin draft legislation to implement any required changes.

3. **Minimum School Program Oversight** – Bills implementing several changes to categorical programs within the Minimum School Program did not pass during the 2016 General Session. Subcommittee reviewed these items again.

*Issue Outcome:* The subcommittee did not take formal action on this item. Representative Bruce Cutler reported that he had re-opened a bill file to implement the changes. Subcommittee members generally supported the changes and Rep. Cutler proceeding with legislation to implement them.

4. **Evaluation of Future Budget Requests** – Representative Kennedy led the subcommittee in a discussion on how to effectively evaluate various programs that come before the subcommittee for funding during the General Session.

*Issue Outcome:* Subcommittee discussion focused primarily on the time available within the session to review budget requests. The subcommittee voted to request that the subcommittee request an additional meeting in January to begin to evaluate budget requests and to provide a higher ranking for requests heard during this additional meeting.

5. **Evaluation of Contracted Educational Services** – The Governor vetoed funding for several education programs following the 2016 General Session. These items were reinstated during the

May Special Session with an agreement to evaluate the effectiveness of each program. Subcommittee members heard from USBE staff, the Governor's Office, private contractors, and the public on most of the items.

**Issue Outcome:** The subcommittee did not take formal action on any program but reviewed the information presented.

6. **State Charter School Board – Staffing & Budget Requests** – The subcommittee did not discuss additional funding provided to the Board to increase staff. The discussion focused on the process for reviewing future budget requests from the State Charter School Board and the interplay with other education priorities determined by the State Board of Education.

**Issue Outcome:** The subcommittee did not take formal action on this item but generally affirmed it would like to know from the State Board of Education how budget requests from the State Charter School Board fit within all the budget requests for public education.

7. **Education Programs Scheduled to be Repealed** – Subcommittee staff quickly highlighted three programs scheduled to be repealed on July 1, 2017. These programs include Charter School Start-up Costs, Peer Assistance & Review, and the Pilot Online School Survey Program.

**Issue Outcome:** The subcommittee did not take action on these items.

8. **Regional Service Centers** – Subcommittee members heard from USBE staff on an emerging budget issues with the funding for Regional Service Centers.

**Issue Outcome:** The subcommittee did not take formal action on this item. The chairs determined that more time was needed to discuss the budgetary issues and agreed to include it on the agenda for a potential meeting in January or the beginning of the General Session.