Matching Fund for School Nurses  
Budget Review

What is it? Why is the State involved?
The Legislature created the Matching Fund for School Nurses during the 2007 General Session. The fund assists local education agencies (LEAs) in providing school nurses in the public schools. Program participation is optional and schools must apply to the State Board of Education for funding. As the name suggests, schools that receive a grant must provide an equal amount of matching funds and agree not to supplant other funding currently used for school nurses.

Statute, 53A-11-204, provides that students in public schools “may be better protected against risks to health and safety if schools were to have registered nurses readily available to assist in providing educational and nursing services in the public schools.” The statute does not include a formal state program, but, directs school districts, local health departments, private medical providers, and parents to “work together in determining needs and risks to student health . . . and in developing and implementing plans to meet those needs and minimize risks.”

Discussion Items
Legislators may wish to consider the following:

- The state program does not represent all funding LEAs expend for school nurses. These expenditures are not independently reported by LEAs, but the Utah Department of Health estimates that schools expend approximately $10.0 million to employ or contract for 150 nurses statewide. (See Report: Medicaid Funding for School Nurses, Division of Medicaid and Health Financing, Utah Department of Health, August 31, 2017.)

- Financial reports submitted to the state by school districts and charter schools show that a total of $3.7 million in revenues and $4.2 million in expenditures for FY 2016. See the pie charts on this page.

- The Utah Department of Health estimates that schools may be able use approximately $2.7 million in Medicaid funding to pay some school nursing costs for Medicaid eligible students. However, schools must provide approximately $0.8 million in funds to draw down the Medicaid funding. More information can be found in the “Medicaid Funding for School Nurses” report posted to the Social Services Appropriations Subcommittee meeting on September 19, 2017 (Afternoon Session).

- Statute provides for a collaborative role between public schools, local health departments, and parents in determining school nursing services. The direct role of the state is not provided in statute. This program, along with other general unrestricted state funding local school may provide, supports the provision of local nursing services.
Recommended Legislative Action

- Determine the state role in the provision of school nurses and if the Matching Fund for School Nurses should continue as a categorical program, a block-grant program, or funding moved into the WPU Value. The Public Education Appropriations Funding Decision Tree may be useful in this process.
- If the program remains a categorical program, the Legislature may wish to direct the State Board of Education to work with the Utah Department of Health to investigate the potential of using Medicaid funding to pay certain school nursing costs. The Legislature may wish to have the State Board of Education report on coordination efforts, the impact on local school districts and charter schools in using Medicaid funding, and the possibility of using current matching program funds to draw down Medicaid funding and pay statewide administration costs.