



3DE by Junior Achievement: Aligning Education and Industry to Prepare Students for a Changing Economy

Public Education

Requester Information

Legislator Name: Defay, Ariel

Created Date: January 23rd 2026

Submitted Date: January 23rd 2026

Section 1: Requester Details

Description:

We respectfully request state appropriations to launch and scale 3DE by Junior Achievement, a proven high school model that integrates real world case studies into core academic courses, enabling students to solve real problems tied to in-demand industries and graduate with professional portfolios and experience. As Utah’s economy grows and industries rapidly evolve, 3DE aligns education with the state’s workforce and economic development priorities by building whole-student, durable skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and problem solving. By turning classroom learning into career-ready action, Utah can reduce workforce gaps, increase postsecondary readiness, and support long-term economic mobility. The model is delivered in partnership with Junior Achievement and national/local business mentors and educators, with Granite and Jordan School Districts each preparing to pilot a school in 2026-2027 and student participation commencing in 2027 and expanding to six 3DE high schools by 2030 with more to follow. This initiative reflects a long-term commitment to aligning education and industry, creating systems and community-based partnerships that prepare students not just for their first job, but for a changing workforce.

Legislative designee contact information:

Name: Jaime Argyle

Organization: Junior Achievement

Position: Chief Development Officer

Section 2: Funding Information

How will the appropriation be used?



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Category	One-time		Ongoing
Personnel Services	2026:	\$0.00	\$0.00
	2027:	\$1,850,000.00	
In-State Travel	2026:	\$0.00	\$0.00
	2027:	\$17,000.00	
Out-of-State Travel	2026:	\$0.00	\$0.00
	2027:	\$67,500.00	
Supplies and Equipment	2026:	\$0.00	\$0.00
	2027:	\$125,000.00	
Technology Purchases	2026:	\$0.00	\$0.00
	2027:	\$13,400.00	
Infrastructure/Capital Investments	2026:	\$0.00	\$0.00
	2027:	\$1,644,500.00	
Other Charges/Pass Thru	2026:	\$0.00	\$0.00
	2027:	\$0.00	

Expenditure Total

One-time 2026	One-time 2027	Ongoing 2027
\$0.00	\$3,717,400.00	\$0.00

Funding Sources:

Income Tax Fund

Amount Requested:

2026 (One-time)	\$0.00
2027 (One-time)	\$3,717,400.00
2027 (Ongoing)	\$0.00

Revenue Total



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One-time 2026	One-time 2027	Ongoing 2027
\$0.00	\$3,717,400.00	\$0.00

Is this a multi-year project?

Yes

Is this project scalable if the Legislature does not fund the full requested amount?

Yes

A short explanation describing how the project might be scaled?

Could be distributed and implemented on a smaller scale by enrolling fewer LEA's in the program.

Section 3: Agency Information

Subjects:

Education and Research

Agency:

400 / State Board of Education

Type of entity to receive pass-through funding:

Private Not for Profit

Grant recipient

Yes

Requested Direct Award Grant Recipient

Junior Achievement

Section 4: Performance Outcome Measurement



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Who would benefit the most from this request (who is the target audience)?

Investment in 3DE delivers measurable value for Utah students, educators, employers, and the state's economy. Public high school students benefit through increased engagement and access to meaningful, career-connected learning that helps them understand how academic skills translate into real opportunities in the world of work. This early exposure supports informed postsecondary decisions, improves readiness for employment or further education, and strengthens long-term economic mobility. Students develop transferable skills that are relevant across industries and prepare them to adapt and succeed in a rapidly changing economy. Educators benefit from instructional support that enhances relevance, effectiveness, and alignment with real-world expectations, allowing classroom learning to better connect with emerging career pathways. Utah employers and industry partners benefit from a more informed, prepared talent pipeline aligned with current and future labor demands. Collectively, these outcomes support Utah's broader workforce development strategy and ensure that public education investments translate into measurable benefits for students, employers, and the state as a whole.

What is this project or program intended to accomplish?

This program is intended to launch students into life after graduation with the skills, confidence, and experience needed to succeed in post-secondary education and the world of work. Students collaborate with over 20 industry partners and graduate with a portfolio of applied projects, résumés, and professional connections. Classrooms become active learning environments where math, English, and science connect directly to real careers, helping prepare each student for whatever their future holds. The model supports educators with high-quality training, curriculum, and community partnerships paired with on-site implementation support that integrates seamlessly into existing instruction rather than adding new responsibilities. Teachers move beyond content delivery to guide students through meaningful, applied learning experiences intentionally designed and implemented in collaboration with business leaders and Junior Achievement, reducing burnout while strengthening retention and satisfaction.



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How will the Legislature know whether the project or program achieved its intended purpose?

The Legislature can assess success by measuring outcomes from a proven program model that is already demonstrating strong results nationwide. The 3DE model is currently implemented in more than 80 schools across 14 states and is expanding rapidly as communities adopt its approach to student engagement, academic achievement, and workforce alignment. In existing 3DE communities, 82 percent of seniors report being engaged in school, compared to 34 percent nationally, and one-third more students demonstrate proficiency in English Language Arts, supporting improved academic and graduation outcomes. Educator outcomes are similarly strong, with an 89 percent teacher retention rate and 85 percent of students, teachers, and principals reporting improvements in school culture. Utah will track these indicators within the first 12–24 months, along with implementation fidelity and business partner participation, to ensure transparency, fiscal accountability, and readiness for future expansion.

Section 5: Other Supporting Documents

Intent Language Documents

Previous Funding Documents

NA

Full Time Employees

0