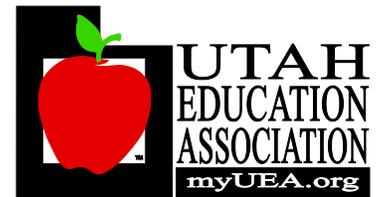


# 2019 UEA Legislative Summary



## Modest funding increase, programs to address teacher shortage

The 2019 Legislative Session started off with an announcement of a large budget surplus, proclamations from the Speaker of the House and the Governor to deliver a record-breaking tax cut and the UEA calling for the largest education funding increase in the state's history. While none of these materialized, there was progress on several key issues impacting public education.



*Teachers like these from Salt Lake Education Association were among more than 450 who met with legislators and participated in UEA Educator Day on the Hill events during the 2019 session.*

“Given the overall budget situation, education was clearly prioritized,” said UEA President Heidi Matthews. “Education fared better than most other departments and agencies.” She thanked lawmakers for a commitment to study Utah’s tax structure rather than pass legislation without full public discussion. “We look forward to working with legislators in coming months to devise a solution that stabilizes state funding and grows investment in public education.”

A few public education highlights include:

- Full funding of student enrollment growth;
- 4% increase in the Weighted Pupil Unit;
- More than \$60 million (the equivalent of about 2% on the WPU) in additional new money that can be used for school mental health professionals, teacher salaries or directed at the school level;
- New programs to address the teacher shortage;
- Blocks on proposals to cut the Education Fund.

Here are a few results from this legislative session:

### Public Education Funding—

The news leading up to the 2019 session was about a revenue surplus near \$1 billion, later revised downward. Next came a push for tax reform that included a \$300 million cut to the Education Fund (see ‘Tax Reform,’ below). Resistance to the plan prompted the legislature to deal with tax reform later. The end result was a decent funding year but not what many originally hoped for. New education funding includes:

- 4% increase on the WPU;
- Student enrollment growth fully funded;
- \$33.8 million in the TSSA Account (see below);
- \$27.3 million for mental health professionals in schools (see ‘Health and Safety,’ below); and
- \$300,000 for conversion of the T.H. Bell loan program to a scholarship program for students pursuing education as a career.

The legislature created a new funding mechanism called the Teacher and Student Success Account (TSSA). For 2019, TSSA will have \$33.8 million, plus \$65.1 million from last session, for a total of nearly \$99 million in ongoing funding. Up to 25 percent can be used for teacher salaries. The rest will be spent according to an outcome-based plan developed by the school principal in consultation with teachers, parents and others at the school. Local teachers and school district bargaining teams are encouraged to collaborate with administration in determining how this money is directed.



*More teachers participated in UEA Educator Day on the Hill events in 2019 than in any previous year.*

## Tax Reform—

The need for tax reform is due to a decline in sales tax revenue, which is the primary funding source for all state government services outside of education. The public reacted very negatively to a bill that would have lowered sales and income tax rates and expanded the number of services to which sales tax is applied. The opposition led legislators to drop the bill and instead form a task force to study tax reform over the summer.

One possible tax reform solution was troubling to education stakeholders. Senate Joint Resolution 3 would have allowed money from the Education Fund to be used for social services. The proposal passed the Senate but was not heard in the House.



*The Cat in the Hat was presented in the House and Senate in celebration of NEA Read Across America Day.*

## Teacher Shortage—

One of UEA's key legislative priorities is to address recruiting and retaining teachers. The legislature passed several bills this year that could have a positive impact on the teacher shortage:

[House Bill 130](#) requires the Utah State Board of Education to create a model exit survey for educators leaving employment. The goal is to gather statewide data on why teachers leave employment to help address retention.

[House Bill 188](#) changes the existing T.H. Bell loan forgiveness program to a scholarship program for students pursuing a degree in teaching. The scholarship prioritizes first-generation college students and those interested in teaching in high needs areas.

[House Bill 236](#) expands the Teacher Salary Supplement Program (TSSP) slightly so that math,

science, computer science and special education teachers who have been teaching those subjects in a Utah public school for at least 10 years are eligible for the stipend. These would be teachers who previously did not meet qualifying criteria for educational background. It is expected about 500 more teachers will be eligible.

[Senate Bill 115](#) creates a new grant program to hire first-year teachers in high needs schools and cap their class size at 20 students. The goal is to help attract and retain first year teachers to high needs schools by offering a lower class size.

[Senate Bill 208](#) increases the existing stipend for National Board-certified teachers to \$1,000 for any certified teacher and \$2,000 for a certified teacher in a Title I school. The bill also creates a new program for educators pursuing certification to have the cost of each component paid for upfront replacing the current process of being reimbursed after certification is completed.

## Health and Safety—

Student and school safety issues have been a frequent legislative discussion for the last few years. [House Bill 120](#) went through six different versions before finally passing. The final version is significantly pared down from the original proposal. The bill requires the Utah State Board of Education to create model policies for student safety and support, provide training to schools and develop a student support team pilot program. [House Bill 373](#) creates a \$27 million matching grant program for districts to hire or contract with school counselors, psychologists, social workers or nurses to support student health. [House Bill 71](#) provides clarification that health curriculum can include information about contraception.



*Seven teachers volunteered to be 2019 UEA Policy Ambassadors, including Sam Dixon (left) and Warren Brodhead (right). They received training, engaged with their legislators and shared their experiences online.*

## Legislation of Note in the 2019 Legislative Session

The UEA tracked nearly 100 education-related bills in 2019. Here are a few bills of note and their final status:

☺ = Outcome favorable to the UEA position / ☹ = Outcome neutral / ☹ = Outcome unfavorable

<b>Bill</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Result (Yea-Nay)</b>
<a href="#">HB71: Health Education Amendments</a> (R. Ward)	Clarifies instruction in health education classes regarding contraception.	☺ Passed the House 72-0 and the Senate 27-0
<a href="#">HB118: Incentives for Statewide Assessment Performance</a> (M. Winder)	Allows teachers to use statewide standardized tests to improve a student's academic grade.	☺ Passed the House <a href="#">58-14</a> and the Senate <a href="#">16-9</a>
<a href="#">HB120: Student and School Safety Assessment</a> (R. Ward)	Directs USBE to develop model policies and procedures for threat assessment and creates a 'school safety center' to coordinate training.	☺ Passed the House <a href="#">45-27</a> and the Senate 28-0
<a href="#">HB130: Public Education Exit Survey</a> (C. Moss)	Directs the Utah State Board of Education to create standards for an educator "exit survey" when a teacher leaves employment.	☺ Passed the House <a href="#">48-24</a> and the Senate <a href="#">24-3</a>
<a href="#">HB133: Initiative Amendments</a> (B. Daw)	Delays the implementation of successful ballot initiatives by one year to give the legislature time to consider and make changes.	☹ Passed the House <a href="#">50-20</a> and the Senate <a href="#">22-5</a>
<a href="#">HB168: School Bus Safety Requirements</a> (C. Hall)	Requires new school buses to have three-point seat belts after 2020.	☹ Failed in the House <a href="#">23-50</a>
<a href="#">HB188: T.H. Bell Program Amendments</a> (L. Snow)	Changes the T.H. Bell Program for education students from a loan forgiveness program to a scholarship program.	☺ Passed the House 72-0 and the Senate <a href="#">22-4</a>
<a href="#">HB198: Education Accountability Amendments</a> (M. Poulson)	Removes the requirement for the State Board of Education to use a single letter grade when assigning a school an overall rating.	☹ Passed the House <a href="#">68-2</a> but not heard in the Senate
<a href="#">HB236: Teacher Salary Supplement Amendments</a> (K. Christofferson)	Allows teachers who have taught 10 years in an approved subject to receive a salary supplement.	☹ Passed the House 67-0 and the Senate 23-0
<a href="#">HB250: School Fee Revisions</a> (K. Lisonbee)	Requires the State Board of Education to report recommendations on activity-based fees.	☺ Passed the House 66-0 and the Senate 25-0
<a href="#">HB273: School Fees Modifications</a> (A. Robertson)	Would prohibit the charging of curricular fees in schools. Did not include funding to offset fund losses to school districts.	☹ Held in House committee
<a href="#">HB373: Student Support Amendments</a> (S. Eliason)	Provides matching grant funds to hire school counselors, psychologists, social workers and nurses.	☺ Passed the House <a href="#">62-6</a> and the Senate 27-0

<b>Bill</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Result (Yea-Nay)</b>
<a href="#">HB441: Tax Equalization and Reduction Act</a> (T. Quinn)	Lowers the state sales tax rate and adds new taxes on services, reduces the income tax rate from 4.95% to 4.75%.	☺ Passed House committee but not heard in the House
<a href="#">HB495: Tax Restructuring and Equalization Task Force</a> (M. Schultz)	Creates a task force to make recommendations for addressing revenue structural imbalances and to solicit public feedback and involvement.	☺ Passed the Senate <a href="#">23-5</a> and the House 71-0
<a href="#">SB115: High Need School Amendments</a> (K. Riebe)	Provides a matching grant to bring first-year teachers to high-need schools to create lower class sizes.	☺ Passed the Senate 26-0 and the House 66-0
<a href="#">SB149 (1st sub.): Teacher and Student Success Act</a> (A. Millner)	Creates a new funding distribution system and requires each school to create an “outcome-based program plan” to access the money.	☹ Passed the Senate 25-0 and the House <a href="#">61-11</a>
<a href="#">SB177: Scholarships for Special Needs Students</a> (L. Fillmore)	Creates a new voucher program to redirect public money to private schools and requires the State Board to oversee the program.	☺ Passed the Senate <a href="#">16-12</a> but not heard in the House
<a href="#">SB208: National Certification Teacher Incentive Program</a> (K. Mayne)	Increases stipend for National Board teachers to \$1,000 (\$2,000 for Title 1). Certification costs covered upfront rather than reimbursed.	☺ Passed Senate 28-0 and the House 66-0
<a href="#">SB236: State Board of Education Candidacy Amendments</a> (A. Millner)	Allows State Board of Education candidates to run as a partisan candidate, unaffiliated candidate or write-in candidate.	☹ Passed Senate <a href="#">23-5</a> and passed in the House <a href="#">38-37</a>
<a href="#">SJR3: Proposal to Amend Utah Constitution -- Income Tax Amendments</a> (D. McCay)	Puts a Constitutional change on the 2020 ballot allowing income tax (Education Fund) to also pay for selected social services.	☺ Passed Senate <a href="#">21-8</a> but not heard in the House

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