



# PRIORITIES FOR THE 2024 UTAH LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The following priorities are critical to supporting Utah's educator workforce and students. We urge the legislature to recognize educators as experts on public education and work collaboratively.

## **EDUCATION FUNDING:**

- Provide at least an **8% increase on the WPU** (est. \$344 million) for a total WPU increase of at least 12%, including inflation.
- Fund and **increase Paid Professional Hours** for all licensed educators (\$100 million one-time).
- Create a **program for education preparation program students** to provide financial support during their student teaching experience (est. \$12 million one-time).
- Fund a program **to assist educators in paying for advanced degrees** to enhance professional skills and support educator retention (\$3 million one-time).
- Support a **Healthy School Meals for All initiative** to allow more families to qualify for no-cost access to school meals (est. \$3 million ongoing).

## **QUALITY INSTRUCTION AND STUDENT EQUITY:**

- Value educators as trusted professionals to **develop instructional materials that serve all students** based on adopted Utah core standards and local district policies.
- Ensure each classroom has an effective teacher by funding strategies to identify and address the root causes of **Utah's critical educator shortage**.
- Invest in **programs that develop a pathway for diverse educators** to the teaching profession, including in rural areas or hard-to-staff subjects and schools.
- Improve teacher retention through comprehensive **educator induction and mentoring programs**.
- Increases resources for **school safety and student social and emotional well-being**, including physical facilities, school psychologists, social workers and counselors.
- **Provide additional resources and staff** to support educators in managing volatile behavior and situations within their classrooms.
- Ensure that **all educators have access to** cultural competencies, age-appropriate responses and interventions, and restorative practices and techniques.

## **EDUCATION POLICY:**

- Ensure **no additional funding for any voucher program** since they lack taxpayer accountability, demonstrated student effectiveness and comparable oversight to public schools.
- Enact a **moratorium on new mandated education initiatives** to recognize the overwhelming workload and stress already heaped on Utah educators.
- Improve educator retention by allowing all entities in the State and School System to pick up increased mandatory contributions costs for employees in the Tier II Utah Retirement System.