

# UEA HB 215 Issue Brief

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## Funding for Teacher Salaries & Optional Education Opportunities



UEA opposes House Bill 215 (Substitute 3):

- Educator salary increases are tied to the passage of a private school voucher (lines 194-197).
- “Accountability” for scholarship recipients is to submit an annual “portfolio” without defined minimum expectations. The portfolio may be completed by the student *or the parent*, and the program manager is prohibited from disclosing the contents of the portfolio. **Private schools have no accountability** to demonstrate student performance or achievement (lines 369-374)
- The “*enrollment preference*” for lower-income families to receive a scholarship *does not exclude* higher-income families from qualifying. **All recipients could be high-income families** subsidizing their child’s private education with public tax dollars (lines 401-414).
- The \$8,000 scholarship is **nearly double** the current weighted pupil unit (WPU) value of \$4,038 public school students receive (line 352).
- Parents are **required to waive** federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) rights for special education services (lines 378-387).
- Approved scholarship expenses are **extremely broad** and include everything from private school tuition to extracurricular fees, transportation, afterschool programs, tutoring, and “*any other expense for a good or service...the program manager approves*” (lines 292-326).
- Private schools with at least 150 students must require employees to submit to a fingerprint-based criminal background check and ongoing monitoring (lines 832-841). Schools with fewer than 150 students or other “service providers” have **no background check requirement** to work with students.
- Scholarship students reentering public school must **return the balance** of the scholarship funds to the program rather than having the money follow the student into the public school (lines 969-973).
- There are **no provisions** to require private schools or service providers to be:
  - Accredited
  - Use curricula aligned to Utah core standards
  - Use statewide standardized assessments
  - Employ professionally licensed teachers and administrators
- Private schools and private educational service providers are **not subject to the same professional and ethical standards** as public school educators and cannot be disciplined by the Utah Professional Practices Advisory Commission for misconduct.

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