

***USHE Weekly Legislative Report***  
**Fourth Week: February 17-20, 2015**  
**By David L. Buhler, Commissioner of Higher Education**  
February 23, 2015

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This is the fourth weekly report for 2015 on the legislative session from the perspective of the Utah System of Higher Education, for distribution to Regents, Presidents, and Trustees.

**Higher Education Luncheon.** Regents, Trustees, Presidents and student leaders gathered on Friday for the annual higher education luncheon in the Capitol Rotunda, attended by an estimated two-thirds of legislators. It was a good opportunity to visit informally and stress the importance of our legislative priorities.

**2015-2016 Budget.** Revised state tax revenue figures agreed upon by the Governor and legislative leadership were announced on Wednesday. Both one-time and ongoing revenue have been revised upward since the November 2014 estimates. The 2015 increase in one-time revenue is now \$350 million, up by \$37 million. The 2015 increase in ongoing revenue is now \$389 million, up by \$64 million. Additional information regarding the revenue projections is available on [The Senate Site blog](#).

The Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee co-chairs presented the committee budget priorities [approved by the subcommittee](#) to the Executive Appropriations Committee on Wednesday, February 18. Audio of their entire presentation is available [here](#). Action on the budget is expected in the next two weeks.

**Key Legislation of Interest to USHE**

- [HB 123, Tuition and Fees Assistance for Utah National Guard Members\\*](#) by Rep. Val Peterson, expands the allowable tuition assistance for a Utah National Guard member to include fees. The bill was passed unanimously by the House and is awaiting consideration by the Senate.
- [HB 198, Strengthening College and Career Readiness\\*](#) by Rep. Patrice Arent, creates the Strengthening College and Career Readiness Program to improve students' college and career readiness through enhancing the skill level of school counselors for college and career counseling. The bill was passed by the House Education Committee and awaits further consideration by the House.
- [HB 210, Early College High Schools\\*](#) by Rep. Val Peterson, distinguishes an early college high school from a regularly authorized charter school. Utah's early college high schools operate in partnership with seven USHE institutions. The bill awaits consideration by the House Education Committee.
- [HB257, Educator Licensing Amendments\\*\\*](#) by Rep. Norm Thurston, modifies provisions relating to educational personnel preparation programs. It restricts the State Board of Education to only recognize education programs that are accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) of which only one USHE institution is accredited. The bill awaits consideration by the House Education Committee.
- [HB 337, Career and Technical Education Comprehensive Study](#) by Rep. Rich Cunningham, creates a Career and Technical Education (CTE) Board, and directs the Board to conduct a comprehensive study, which includes: an inventory of all CTE programs in Utah; the

amount of funding dedicated to the program; the number of CTE certificates issued since 2010; employment information for students who have completed the program since October 1, 2010; and the extent to which overlap or duplication exists between the program and other CTE programs. The bill awaits consideration by a House standing committee.

- [HB 344, Longitudinal Data Center Management Act](#) by Rep. Jacob Anderegg, modifies the Utah Data Alliance by establishing the State Longitudinal Data Center. The bill establishes the position of state longitudinal data coordinator within the Governor's Office of Management and Budget, and defines procedures for government entities to access educational longitudinal data. USHE has not taken a formal position on the bill, but is working with the sponsor to address concerns. The bill awaits consideration by a House standing committee.
- [HR 5, House Resolution Regarding Mathematics Proficiency among High School Students](#), by Rep. Steve Eliason, expresses support for a requirement that a Utah high school student be enrolled in, and pass, a math course all four years of high school unless the student demonstrates math proficiency. The bill awaits consideration by a House standing committee.
- [SB 64 \(2<sup>nd</sup> Substitute\), Utah Educational Savings Plan Amendments\\*](#) by Sen. Todd Weiler, modifies tax credit provisions related to the Utah Educational Savings Plan to allow for a portion of an individual income tax refund to be contributed to a qualifying Utah Educational Savings Plan. The bill also makes technical and conforming changes. The bill was passed unanimously by the House Revenue and Taxation Committee and awaits consideration by the full House.
- [SB 196, Math Competency Initiative](#) by Sen. Ann Millner, designates several pathways that students can take to demonstrate quantitative literacy while in high school. Students who plan to attend college will have to show math competency at a college-entry level through an assessment, such as an AP or IB exam, a college placement exam or the ACT, or by earning a C grade or better in concurrent enrollment math. Students could even complete their general education college math requirements while in high school. The bill also requires the Board of Regents to develop ways for students to earn college credit as they fulfill the added math requirements in high school and to expand concurrent enrollment. The bill passed the Senate Education Committee and awaits consideration by the full Senate.
- [SB 232, Higher Education Performance Funding\\*](#) by Sen. Stephen Urquhart, is companion legislation to the funding priorities established by the Board of Regents. The bill directs the Board to establish performance funding for higher education institutions. It also requires the Board of Regents and higher education institutions to annually report to the Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee on the use of performance funding. The bill awaits consideration by a Senate Standing Committee.
- [SB 219, World Language Proficiency Recognition](#) by Sen. Howard Stephenson, attempts to modify the Regents' Scholarship to match a proposed graduation requirement in world language proficiency for high school graduation. The Commissioner's Office is working with the bill sponsor to make modifications to improve alignment of the proposal to the college readiness objectives of the Regents' Scholarship. The bill is scheduled to be heard by the Senate Education Committee on Tuesday.

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\* USHE has taken an official position in support; \*\* USHE has taken an official position in opposition.

For more information on legislation, committee agendas, or to view or listen to floor debates, see: <http://le.utah.gov/>