

USHE Weekly Legislative Report
Sixth Week: March 2-6, 2015
By David L. Buhler, Commissioner of Higher Education
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This is the sixth 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.

2015-2016 Budget. The Executive Appropriations Committee [approved its first round of funding items](#) on Thursday. For higher education, initial items include a beginning 2% merit increase in compensation, \$8 million in performance funding (\$2 million ongoing, \$6 million one-time), and \$2.5 million for growth in the Regents' Scholarship. In addition, three of the Regents' capital development priorities were approved: The new Science Building at Snow College, the Crocker Science Building at the University of Utah, and a new Clinical Services Building at Utah State University. Efforts continue this week as the budget gets finalized and bills continue their march to the end of the Legislative Session at midnight Thursday, March 12, 2015. Recent news on the budget is available from the [Salt Lake Tribune](#) and [Deseret News](#).

Key Legislation of Interest to USHE

- [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 awaits final consideration by the full Senate.
- [HB 210 \(1st Sub.\), 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 was approved by the Senate Education Committee and awaits consideration by the full Senate.
- [HB 233, Military Education Amendments](#)* by Rep. Curt Oda, aligns state law with recent federal law requiring in-state tuition to be provided to veterans and other eligible individuals, ensuring higher education institutions in Utah are eligible to award United States GI bill benefits. The bill awaits final consideration by the full Senate.
- [HB 257, 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 335 \(1st Sub.\), Southern Utah STEM Initiative](#) by Rep. Jon Stanard, creates the Southern Utah STEM Center. The bill requires the State STEM Action Center to coordinate with Southern Utah University and Dixie State University to promote science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education and professional development in southern Utah. The bill was approved by the House and awaits further consideration by the Senate.
- [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, and the extent to which overlap or duplication

exists between the program and other CTE programs. The bill was approved by the House and awaits further consideration by the Senate.

- [HB 409, Amendments to the Procurement Code](#) by Rep. V. Lowry Snow, proposes changes to the state procurement code that allows institutional procurement officers to make more direct decisions and have direct accountability of purchasing action. The bill also allows for exemptions for individual financial advisors associated with an organization's contracted financial retirement manager. The bill was approved by the House Business and Labor Committee and awaits consideration by the full House.
- [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 pass a math course all four years of high school unless the student demonstrates math proficiency. The resolution awaits consideration by the full House.
- [SB 64 \(2nd Substitute\), 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 has passed the Senate and the House and awaits the Governor's signature.
- [SB 196, Math Competency Initiative](#) by Sen. Ann Millner, designates several pathways for high school students to demonstrate quantitative literacy before graduation. Students who plan to attend college will have to show math competency at a college-entry level. The bill also requires the Board of Regents to develop ways for students to earn college credit as they fulfill math requirements in high school and to expand concurrent enrollment. The bill passed the House Education Committee and awaits consideration by the full House.
- [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 USHE institutions to annually report to the Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee on the use of performance funding. The bill unanimously passed the Senate Education Committee and awaits consideration by the full Senate.
- [SB 219, World Language Proficiency Recognition](#) by Sen. Howard Stephenson, attempts to modify the Regents' Scholarship to match a proposed requirement in world language proficiency for high school students. The Commissioner's Office is working to make additional modifications to improve alignment of the proposal to the college readiness objectives of the Regents' Scholarship. The bill awaits consideration by the House.
- [SB 253, Exceptions for Privately Funded Scholarships](#) by Sen. Scott Jenkins, modifies provisions related to verification requirements for receipt of state, local, or federal public benefits. Highlighted Provisions: This bill exempts certain publicly funded scholarships from verification requirements and makes technical changes. The bill unanimously passed the Senate Education Committee and awaits consideration by the full Senate.
- [SB 273, Higher Education Tax Credits](#) by Sen. Jim Dabakis, enacts a nonrefundable tax credit for certain parents whose adjusted gross income is less than 200% of the federal poverty guideline for certain higher education costs, and provides that the tax credit is subject to apportionment. The bill was passed unanimously by the Senate Revenue & Taxation Committee, and awaits further consideration by the full Senate.

* 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:

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