

# EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION



THE UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Report to the Education Interim  
Committee and the Public Education  
Appropriations Subcommittee

## Grant for Professional Learning and Elementary Teacher Preparation Assessment Grant

November 2021

**Julie Clark**  
K-3 Literacy Specialist  
[Julie.Clark@schools.utah.gov](mailto:Julie.Clark@schools.utah.gov)

**Lisa McLachlan**  
Educator Preparation and Licensing Specialist  
[Lisa.McLachlan@schools.utah.gov](mailto:Lisa.McLachlan@schools.utah.gov)

**Sara Wiebke**  
P-12 Literacy and Library Media Coordinator  
[Sara.Wiebke@schools.utah.gov](mailto:Sara.Wiebke@schools.utah.gov)

**Jennifer Thronson**  
Director of Teaching and Learning  
[Jennifer.Thronson@schools.utah.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Thronson@schools.utah.gov)

## LEGAL REQUIREMENT

### **U.C.A. Sections 53F-5-214 Grant for Professional Learning.**

The state board shall annually report to the Education interim Committee on or before the November interim committee meeting regarding the administration and outcomes of the grant described in this section.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During legislative session 2020, HB114 was passed, but due to COVID-19 disruptions, it was unfunded until the 2021 session. The Grant for Professional Learning is meant to provide preschool through grade three teachers with professional learning opportunities in early literacy and/or early mathematics. The majority of eligible Local Education Agencies (LEAs) chose to apply and the allocation of \$3,965,000 was distributed to 100 LEAs during the 2021-2022 school year, using a per teacher allotment. Of those LEAs the majority chose to support early literacy professional learning opportunities. A pre and post survey was distributed to measure outcomes of the Grant for Professional Learning. Outcomes of this survey will be reported in the fall of 2022.

## Background - Grant for Professional Learning

The purpose of the Grant for Professional Learning is to award grants to LEAs to provide teachers preschool through grade 3 with professional learning opportunities in early literacy and/or early mathematics. LEAs completed an application that included a comprehensive, evidence-based, job-embedded, focused and sustained, professional learning opportunities the LEA will provide. These professional learning opportunities must be based on assessment data and aligned with the professional learning standards and targeted to achieving their local and state early learning goals.

## Funding - Grant for Professional Learning

The Grant for Professional Learning allocation of \$3,965,000 was distributed to eligible LEAs using a per teacher allotment. The funding formula used was calculated by dividing the total amount of grant funds by the total number of preschools through grade three teachers of all applicants, using employee data from the previous school year. An LEA can choose to forgo these grant funds. In this instance, the grant funds are reallocated to those LEAs that applied.

Funding for the Grants for Professional learning may be used in the following ways; teacher stipends to attend trainings, presenter fees, coaching supports, substitute teachers, to hire a coach or specialist, and supplies and materials for teacher professional learning. Funds may not be used for the purchase of property, equipment, other services, student materials and supplies, or travel.

## **Participation - Grant for Professional Learning**

Any LEAs who have preschool through grade 3 teachers are eligible to apply for the Grant for Professional Learning funds. Eighty-one percent (100/124) of eligible LEAs applied to receive these funds. Ninety-five percent (39/41) of districts and seventy-three percent (61/83) of charter schools chose to participate in providing early literacy and/or mathematics professional learning opportunities for their preschool through grade three teachers. Of the 100 LEAs, eighty-three percent choose to support only early literacy, 9% choose to support only early mathematics, and 8% choose to support both early literacy and early mathematics.

## **Outcomes - Grant for Professional Learning**

A pre and post survey was created and shared with participating LEAs to measure professional learning outcomes of the Grant for Professional Learning. In August, the pre survey was shared with LEA leaders and is intended to provide the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) with feedback on the current needs of educators in grades P-3; specifically in the areas of early literacy and/or early math. Likewise in September, the post survey was shared and is intended to provide the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) with feedback to determine if the early literacy and/or early math professional learning opportunities provided had a positive impact.

LEAs have until the end of the school year to allow teachers to complete the surveys. As of October 1, 2021, 3,000 preschools through grade three teachers have completed the pre survey. Additional LEAs are continuing to complete the pre survey. After the school year ends, survey data will be analyzed, and outcomes will be ready to be reported by fall of 2022.

## LEGAL REQUIREMENT

### U.C.A. Sections 53F-5-215 Elementary teacher preparation assessment grant

The state board shall annually report to the Education interim Committee on or before the November interim committee meeting regarding the administration and outcomes of the grant described in this section.

## Executive Summary - Elementary teacher preparation assessment grant.

Candidates seeking licensure in early childhood, elementary, special education, or preschool special education, will be required to demonstrate their knowledge in the science of reading related to literacy instruction by passing the Foundations of Reading test. This grant will cover the cost of the initial administration of the assessment. The first three years will be a pilot to gather data. By 2024-2025, a cut score will be established, and candidates will need to pass the assessment to receive their teaching license. USBE will collect data on the number of candidates who complete and pass the assessment.

## Background - Elementary teacher preparation assessment grant.

Beginning fall of 2021, the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) will begin awarding grants to institutions of higher education for the cost of the initial attempt of the literacy preparation assessment for applicants graduating from universities during the relevant year. This literacy preparation assessment is a requirement for those seeking licensure in the following areas of concentration: early childhood, elementary, special education, or preschool special education. Institutions of higher education may apply for the grant by submitting to the State Board of Education an application, including an estimate of the number and the names of prospective license applicants. USBE issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking a qualified vendor to provide a teacher literacy preparation assessment to measure teacher candidate's foundational knowledge in the science of reading related to literacy instruction described in Utah Code Annotated § 53F-5-215. An RFP was run, and Pearson's Foundations of Reading assessment was chosen.

## Funding - Elementary teacher preparation assessment grant.

The maximum contract budget for this assessment is \$275,000.00 for year 1 and \$375,000.00 per year for years 2-5, for a maximum contract total of \$1,775,000.00. Funds will cover the initial administration of the assessment for teacher candidates in special education, early childhood, and elementary education licensure programs.

A voucher system is available beginning October 2021. Pearson currently provides a voucher model that will allow an individual to register for the test without paying the registration fee.

Candidates will use vouchers as a form of full payment when registering for the exam. Pearson will work with the USBE to develop the process for USBE voucher purchase and voucher distribution.

### **Participation - Elementary teacher preparation assessment grant.**

During the 2021-2022 school year, there are six of the nine Utah universities choosing to participate in the voluntary pilot year. Beginning in 2022-2023 and through 2023-2024, the pilot will be mandatory for all 9 universities in Utah. Participation in the pilot means that graduates will be required to take the teacher preparation assessment for literacy.

In 2024, after 3 years of data collection, USBE and Pearson will work collaboratively to determine a Utah passing score through a standards setting process. Once a passing score has been established, that score will be used to determine who is eligible to receive their license in the following license areas: early childhood, elementary, special education, or preschool special education. By 2024-2025, any candidate graduating and seeking licensure in one of those areas will need to pass the teacher preparation assessment for literacy in order to receive a license.

### **Outcomes - Elementary teacher preparation assessment grant.**

As the first year of implementation is beginning as a voluntary pilot, USBE will gather data over the next three school years. After the pilot years are complete, the cut score will be established and USBE will be able to report on passing rates as a state and for each university.