

USEA Legislative Updates

March 12, 2010

[Second Substitute SB 2: Minimum School Program Budget Amendments](#) passed the legislature late in the evening on the last day of the session. This bill, along with [HB1: Minimum School Program Base Budget](#), funds the public education system in Utah for the 2010-2011 school year.

The combination of these two bills reduces the public education budget by less than 1% of current year funding levels. The Weighted Pupil Unit (WPU) will remain at \$2,577. However, there is no new money to help fund the 11,000 plus additional new students that will be entering the public education system for the coming school year.

2nd Substitute SB 2 fills many of the holes left in the education base budget from HB1 and most of the added money is on-going, which will be helpful to the education budget in future years.

Because the new funding is less than 1% below current year levels, you will hear some say that public education was “held harmless”. Keep in mind that most school districts will have increased costs for the coming year. These increased costs may include new students, increases in health insurance for employees and increased retirement costs.

As a result, this will be a very challenging year for public education. That being said, public education fared much better in the budget process than higher education and other State agencies. Everyone who lobbied on behalf of public education should be congratulated and for the many legislators who worked so hard to improve funding for education, a sincere thank you!

[First Substitute HB 166: Reductions to Education Mandates](#)

The original version of this bill would have reduced the mandated transportation of secondary school students to only those students living more than three miles from school, instead of the present two mile requirement.

USEA was strongly opposed to this bill because it was not in the best interest of students and because the change would have resulted in additional reductions to pupil transportation funding for school districts, which would have negatively impacted our members.

We encouraged legislators to amend the bill and return to a two mile requirement. The bill was amended in the Senate on March 9th, which returned the bill to the current two mile requirement and received final passage yesterday.

[Second Substitute HB 295: Expanded Use of School District Property Tax Revenue](#)

This bill allows school districts the flexibility to use funding for capital projects (construction, renovations, etc.) to be used for general school district operations. This legislation is very important to school districts that are having financial challenges in their maintenance and operations (M&O) budgets. USEA supported this legislation, which may save reductions to programs and staff. This bill received final passage late in the evening on the last day of the session.

For more detailed information on the 2010 Legislative Session and to review all of the previous USEA legislative updates, please go to www.useautah.org.

A complete legislative report will be provided to USEA local leaders in the USEA Leadership and Collective Bargaining Workshop, scheduled for Saturday, March 20, 2010.

Thank you to those USEA members who helped us during the legislative session by contacting your Senators and/or Representatives. Your efforts were more helpful and effective than you may realize.