

POST CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC ADDITIONAL FUNDING BOOSTING STUDENT LEARNING

- WHEREAS, The coronavirus pandemic impacted three consecutive school years from 2019 through 2022, and has disrupted Utah students' opportunities to learn, as evidenced by the chronic absenteeism rate dramatic increase from 13% pre-pandemic to 19%;^{1,2} and
- WHEREAS, Utah students performed better than most states according to the the national report card (NAEP)³ and Utah standardized tests, however it still showed declining ACT scores,⁴ and graduation rates from the 2018-2019 baseline school year, and noticeable longitudinal declines which wiped out the last decade of previous gains and is leaving many students with a troubling learning and achievement deficit; and
- WHEREAS, The academic losses did not affect students equally and some student groups were more affected than others;^{5, 6, 7} and
- WHEREAS, The goal of K-12 public education is to prepare students for life in the real world, preparation that includes not only a solid academic base in language arts, mathematics and science, but also an understanding of Utah's values, heritage, place in the nation and the world, as well as developing the skills that make up the strength of our state, from problem solving, resilience, civic, financial, economic and digital literacy, and a sense of service to others;^{8,9,10} now therefore be it
- Resolved, That Utah PTA and its constituent associations strongly support any additional funding designed to academically catch up Utah students, whether Utah state budget surpluses or any Utah one-time funding traditionally used for higher education, and be it further
- Resolved, That Utah PTA and its constituent associations support the extension of the September 2024 deadline of already secured Covid-19 related funding, such as federal ARP Covid-19 funding or state GEER II funding, and be it further
- Resolved, That Utah PTA and its constituent associations urge that the funding be targeted at students most at risk of academic failure, and be it further
- Resolved, That Utah PTA and its constituent associations urge Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to fund programs based on evidence-based practices, such as extended learning opportunities, including, but not limited to, afterschool and summer programs, online learning, career-based experiences, internships, job shadowing, community-based projects, and off-site postsecondary learning, and be it further
- Resolved, That Utah PTA and its constituent associations advocate for transparency and accountability of the funds used as well as a tracking of academic progress attributable to the additional funding, and be it further
- Resolved, That Utah PTA and its constituent associations urge the academic proficiency of students be tracked longitudinally per cohort and continue the appropriation of additional funding until the pre-pandemic proficiency rates have been reached or exceeded.

Documentation:

¹ from USBE, 2021: 19.0%, 2020: 9.2%, 2019: 14.3%, 2018: 12.9%, 2017: 12.5%, 2016: 11.9%, 2015: 11.3%, 2014: 12.2%, 2013: 11.9%, 2012: 10.6%.

² Kufeld, M., Soland, J., Tarasawa, B., Johnson, A., Ruzek, E., and Lewis, K., Brookings Institution. (Dec 3, 2020). "How is COVID-19 affecting student learning? Initial findings from fall 2020." <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2020/12/03/how-is-covid-19-affecting-student-learning/>

³ <https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/>. The "nation report card" evaluates 4th and 8th grade students in mathematics and reading.

Using the metric of average scale score, Utah fourth graders dropped from fourth best state in 2019 to seventh place in reading in the nation. Eighth graders rose from sixth to third best state in the nation in reading, NAEP reported. In state mathematics, Utah fourth graders rose from ninth best in 2019 to fifth. Utah eighth graders rose from 16th to second best in the nation.

Utah fourth grade reading scores fell from 219 to 216, also considered statistically significant. Eighth grades scores, which fell from 267 to 265, were not considered statistically significant. Utah was one of 18 states that did not see a statistical decline in eighth grade reading.

In mathematics scores in fourth grade fell from 244 in 2019 to 240 nationally and from 240 to 235 in Utah. In eighth grade national scores fell from 281 to 273, a significant drop. In Utah scores fell from 285 to 282, not considered statistically significant.

[Utah 2022 4th Grade Mathematics](#); [National 2022 4th Grade Mathematics](#); [Utah 2022 8th Grade: Mathematics](#); [National 2022 8th Grade Mathematics](#); [Utah 2022 4th Grade Reading](#); [National 2022 4th Grade Reading](#); [Utah 2022 8th Grade Reading](#); [National 2022 8th Grade Reading](#)

⁴ ACT Composite score Utah 2021: 20.6; 2022: 19.9.

<https://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/2022/2022-Average-ACT-Scores-by-State.pdf>

Utah Graduation Rates: 2021: 88.1%, 2020: 88.2%; 2019: 87.4%.

<https://datagateway.schools.utah.gov/Assessment/StateGraduationRate?action=Index>.

⁵ Voices for Choices In Salt Lake City School District. (2020). "Remote learning is leaving some Utah students behind." <https://www.ksl.com/article/50033694/remote-learning-is-leaving-some-utah-students-behind>

⁶ Exploring the Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Student Achievement in Utah. December 2021. <https://schools.utah.gov/file/45c7eabe-05a3-45d3-99e1-d2e8d700d503>

⁷ Hernandez, DJ, The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (January 1, 2012). "Double jeopardy: how third-grade reading skills and poverty influence high school graduation." <https://www.aecf.org/resources/double-jeopardy/>

⁸ Sturgis, Chris, (Nov 2, 2017), "Readiness for College, Career and Life: The Purpose of K-12 Public Education Today." <https://aurora-institute.org/blog/readiness-for-college-career-and-life-the-purpose-of-k-12-public-education-today/>

⁹ Penn State University, The Future of American Education, (April 9, 2017), "The Purpose of K-12 Education." <https://sites.psu.edu/pandyacivic/2017/04/09/the-purpose-of-k-12-education/>

¹⁰ Solomon, Bonnie; Katz, Emily; Steed, Heather; and Temkin, Deborah; (2018). “Creating Policies to Support Healthy Schools: Policymaker, Educator, and Student Perspectives,” p.15-16.
https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/healthyschoolstakeholderreport_ChildTrends_October2018.pdf